

Workers of All Countries, Unite!



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**Questions of the Socialist
Organisation of the Economy**

Articles and Speeches



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The October Socialist Revolution in Russia raised the problem of the transition from capitalist to socialist economic development in its practical form for the first time in world history; in the speeches and writings published in this book Lenin summarises the experience of the years immediately following the Revolution and indicates the chief ways of setting economic development on the socialist path.

In the nineteenth century, Marx and Engels, the founders of scientific socialism, showed that the capitalist socio-economic formation, based on the exploitation of man by man, would inevitably perish and be replaced by the socialist system of society. This was a scientifically established fact, and, wrote Lenin in 1918 "we knew this when we took power in order to set about socialist reorganisation, but we could not know either the forms the transformation would take or the rate of development of the actual reorganisation. Instructions of a decisive nature can be evolved only by collective experience, by the experience of millions, because for our business, the business of socialist construction, the experience of the hundreds and hundreds of thousands of the upper strata of society who have hitherto made history in both landowner and capitalist society is insufficient."

Great credit accrues to Lenin in this sphere; by summarising the experience of millions of people he found profoundly true solutions to the most difficult and complicated problems of socialist construction; the correctness of his solutions has been proved by the further course of history, the high rate of growth of Soviet economy, the magnificent achievements of the Soviet people in science and technology and the successful development of socialist economy in other socialist countries.

The writings and speeches here published cover a wide range of problems—questions of the nationalisation and management of industry, the scientific basis for the solution of the agrarian problem contained in the famous Decree on the Land, ways of socialising farming and its prospects, questions of economic planning, the creation of a new, socialist labour discipline and the organisation of socialist competition, the participation of workers and peasants in the government, Workers' and Peasants' Inspection, and many other problems. It was found impossible to include all Lenin's works on these problems since they would fill several books of this size; the chief works in which the principles and methods of building socialist economy were formulated and scientifically grounded are, however, given here in chronological order.

The translations have been made from the *Collected Works*, Fourth (Russian) Edition, and the numbers of the volumes from which they are taken are given at the end of each article; the volumes of the English edition bear the same numbers.

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THE IMPENDING CATASTROPHE AND HOW TO COMBAT IT

FAMINE IS APPROACHING

Unavoidable catastrophe is threatening Russia. The railways are incredibly disorganised and the disorganisation is progressing. The railways will come to a standstill. The transport of raw materials and coal to the factories will cease. The transport of grain will cease. The capitalists are deliberately and consistently sabotaging (damaging, stopping, disrupting, hampering) production, hoping that an unparalleled catastrophe will mean the collapse of the republic and democracy, and of the Soviets and proletarian and peasant associations generally, thus facilitating the return to a monarchy and the restoration of the supremacy of the bourgeoisie and landlords.

The danger of a catastrophe of unprecedented dimensions and of famine is imminent. All the newspapers have written about this time and again. An incredible number of resolutions have been adopted by the parties and by the Soviets of Workers', Soldiers' and Peasants' Deputies—resolutions which admit that a catastrophe is unavoidable, that it is very close, that desperate measures are necessary to combat it, that "heroic efforts" by the people are necessary to avert ruin, and so on.

Everybody says this. Everybody admits it. Everybody has decided that it is so.

And yet nothing is being done.

Half a year of the revolution has elapsed. The catastrophe is still closer. Unemployment has assumed a mass scale. Just think of it: there is a shortage of goods in the country, the country is perishing from a shortage of food, from a shortage of labour, although there is a sufficient quantity of grain and raw materials—yet in such a country, at such a critical moment, there is mass unemployment! What better

evidence is required to show that after six months of revolution (which some call a great revolution, but which so far it would perhaps be fairer to call a rotten revolution), in a democratic republic, with an abundance of unions, organs and institutions which proudly call themselves "revolutionary-democratic", absolutely *nothing* of any importance has actually been done to avert catastrophe, to avert famine? We are nearing ruin with increasing speed; the war will not wait; it is causing increasing dislocation in every sphere of national life.

Yet the slightest attention and thought will suffice to convince us that the ways of combating catastrophe and famine are available, that the measures required to combat them are quite clear, simple, perfectly feasible, and fully within the powers of the people's forces, and that these measures are *not* being adopted *only* because, *exclusively* because, their realisation would affect the fabulous profits of a handful of landowners and capitalists.

And, indeed, we can guarantee that you will not find a single speech, a single article in a newspaper of any trend, a single resolution passed by any meeting or institution which does not quite clearly and definitely recognise the chief and principal measure of combating, of averting catastrophe and famine. This measure is control, supervision, accounting, regulation by the state, introduction of a proper distribution of labour-power in the production and distribution of goods, husbanding of the people's forces, elimination of all waste of effort, economy of effort. Control, supervision and accounting—these are the prime requisites for combating catastrophe and famine. That is indisputable and generally recognised. And that is just what *is not being done* for fear of encroaching on the supremacy of the landowners and capitalists, on their immense, unheard-of and scandalous profits, profits derived from high prices and war contracts (and, directly or indirectly, nearly everybody is now "working" for the war), profits about which everybody knows and which everybody sees, and over which everybody is sighing and groaning.

And absolutely nothing is being done by the state to introduce such control, accounting and supervision as would be in the least effective.

COMPLETE GOVERNMENT INACTIVITY

There is a universal, systematic and persistent sabotage of every kind of control, supervision and accounting and of all attempts on the part of the state to institute them. And one must be incredibly naïve not to understand, one must be an utter hypocrite to pretend not to understand, where this sabotage comes from and by what means it is being carried on. For this sabotage by the bankers and capitalists, their *frustration* of every kind of control, supervision and accounting, is being adapted to the state forms of a democratic republic, is being adapted to the existence of "revolutionary-democratic" institutions. The capitalist gentry understand full well that truth which all believers in scientific socialism profess to recognise, but which the Mensheviks¹ and Socialist-Revolutionaries² tried to forget as soon as their friends secured jobs as Ministers, Deputy Ministers, etc. This truth is that the economic substance of capitalist exploitation is in no wise affected by the substitution of republican-democratic forms of government for monarchist forms, and that, consequently, the reverse is true—only the *form* of the struggle for the inviolability and sacredness of capitalist profits need be changed in order to protect them under a democratic republic just as effectively as under an absolute monarchy.

The present, modern republican-democratic sabotage of every kind of control, accounting and supervision consists in the capitalists "warmly" accepting in words the "principle" of control and the necessity for control (as, it need hardly be said, do all the Mensheviks and Socialist-Revolutionaries), insisting only that this control should be introduced "gradually", systematically and in a "state-regulated" way. In practice, however, these specious words serve to conceal the *frustration* of control, its nullification, its reduction to a fiction, the mere playing at control, the postponement of all business-like and practically effective measures, the creation of extraordinarily complicated, bulky and bureaucratically inert institutions of control which are fully dependent on the capitalists, and which do absolutely nothing and cannot do anything.

In order not to engage in unfounded statements, let us cite witnesses from among the Mensheviks and Socialist-Revolu-

tionaries, i.e., the very people who had the majority in the Soviets during the first six months of the revolution, who took part in the "coalition government"³ and who are therefore politically responsible to the Russian workers and peasants for aiding the capitalists and allowing them to frustrate all control.

Izvestia Tsik (i.e., the newspaper of the Central Executive Committee of the All-Russia Congress of Soviets of Workers', Soldiers' and Peasants' Deputies), the official organ of the highest of the so-called "authoritative" (no joke!) bodies of "revolutionary" democracy, in its issue of September 7, 1917, No. 164, printed a *resolution* passed by a special control organisation created by, and in the hands of, these very Mensheviks and Socialist-Revolutionaries. This special institution is the "Economic Section" of the Central Executive Committee. In its resolution it officially records as a fact "*the complete inactivity of the central bodies set up under the government for the regulation of economic life*".

In truth, could one imagine any more eloquent testimony to the collapse of the Menshevik and Socialist-Revolutionary policy than this statement signed by the Mensheviks and Socialist-Revolutionaries themselves?

The need for the regulation of economic life was already recognised under tsarism, and certain institutions were set up for the purpose. But under tsarism economic chaos steadily grew and reached monstrous proportions. It was at once recognised that it was the task of the republican, revolutionary government to adopt effective and resolute measures to put an end to the economic chaos. When the "coalition" government was formed with the Mensheviks and Socialist-Revolutionaries participating, it promised and undertook in its most solemn public declaration of May 6 to introduce state control and regulation. The Tseretelis and Chernovs, like all the Menshevik and Socialist-Revolutionary leaders, vowed and swore that not only were they responsible for the government, but that "authoritative organs of revolutionary democracy" under their control actually kept an eye on the work of the government and supervised its activities.

Four months have elapsed since May 6, four long months, in which Russia has sacrificed the lives of hundreds of thousands of soldiers for the sake of the absurd imperialist "of-

fensive",⁴ in which chaos and disaster have been advancing in seven-league strides, in which the summer season afforded an exceptional opportunity to do a great deal in the matter of water transport, agriculture, prospecting for minerals, and so on and so forth—and after the lapse of four months the Mensheviks and Socialist-Revolutionaries have been obliged officially to admit the "complete inactivity" of the institutions of control set up under the government!!

And these Mensheviks and Socialist-Revolutionaries, with the mien of serious statesmen, now prate (we are writing this on the very eve of the Democratic Conference of September 12⁵) that matters can be furthered by replacing the coalition with the Cadets⁶ by a coalition with commercial and industrial Kit Kityches,⁷ the Ryabushinskys, Bublikovs, Tere-shchenkos and Co.

How, be it asked, are we to explain this astonishing blindness of the Mensheviks and Socialist-Revolutionaries? Are we to regard them as political infants who in their extreme foolishness and naïveté do not realise what they are doing and have honestly gone astray? Or does the abundance of posts they occupy as Ministers, Deputy Ministers, Governors-General, Commissars and the like possess the power of engendering a special kind of "political" blindness?

MEASURES OF CONTROL ARE GENERALLY KNOWN AND EASY TO PUT INTO EFFECT

It might be asked, are not the methods and measures of control extremely complex, difficult, untried and even unknown? Is not the delay due to the fact that although the statesmen of the Cadet Party, the merchant and industrial class, and the Menshevik and Socialist-Revolutionary parties have already for six months been toiling in the sweat of their brow, investigating, studying and discovering measures and methods of control—still the problem is an incredibly difficult one and has not yet been solved?

Alas, this is how they are trying to present matters to fool the ignorant, illiterate and downtrodden muzhiks and the gullible people who believe everything and never go deeply into

things. In reality, however, even tsarism, even the "old regime", when it set up the War Industry Committees, *knew* the principal measure, the chief method and way to introduce control, namely, by uniting the population according to profession, purpose of work, branch of labour, etc. But tsarism *feared* the union of the population and therefore tried in every way to restrict and artificially hinder this generally-known, very easy and quite practical method and means of control.

All the belligerent countries, suffering as they do from the extreme burdens and hardships of the war, suffering—in one degree or another—from economic chaos and famine, have long ago outlined, defined, applied and tested a *whole series* of measures of control, consisting in nearly every case in uniting the population and in creating or encouraging the activities of unions of various kinds, in which representatives of the state participate, which are under the supervision of the state, etc. All these measures of control are generally known, much has been said and written about them, and the laws passed by the advanced belligerent powers relating to control have been translated into Russian or explained in detail in the Russian press.

If our state really *wanted* to exercise control in a business-like and earnest fashion, if its institutions had not condemned themselves to "complete inactivity" by their servility to the capitalists, all the state would have to do would be to draw largely on the rich store of measures of control which are already known and already being put into effect. The only obstacle to this—an obstacle concealed from the eyes of the people by the Cadets, Socialist-Revolutionaries and Mensheviks—was, and still is, that control would bring to light the fabulous profits of the capitalists and would cut the ground from under these profits.

In order the more clearly to explain this most important question (a question which is essentially equivalent to that of the programme of *any* truly revolutionary government that would wish to save Russia from war and famine), let us enumerate these principal measures of control and examine each of them separately.

We shall see that all a government would have had to do, if its name of revolutionary-democratic government is not

merely a joke, was to decree, in the very first week of its existence, that the principal measures of control be carried into effect, that strict and severe punishment be meted out to capitalists who fraudulently evaded control, and to call upon the population itself to exercise supervision over the capitalists and see to it that they scrupulously observed the regulations on control—and control would have been introduced in Russia long ago.

These principal measures are as follows:

(1) Amalgamation of all the banks into a single bank and state control over its operations, or the nationalisation of the banks.

(2) The nationalisation of the Syndicates, i.e., the largest, monopolistic capitalist associations (sugar, oil, coal, iron and steel syndicates, etc.).

(3) Abolition of commercial secrecy.

(4) Compulsory Syndication (i.e., compulsory amalgamation into associations) of industrialists, merchants and employers generally.

(5) Compulsory organisation of the population into consumers' societies, or the encouragement of such organisation, and the exercise of control over it.

Let us examine what would be the significance of each of these measures if carried out in a revolutionary-democratic way.

NATIONALISATION OF THE BANKS

The banks, as we know, are the centres of modern economic life, the principal nerve centres of the whole capitalist economic system. To talk about "regulating economic life" and at the same time to evade the question of the nationalisation of the banks is either to betray the most profound ignorance or to deceive the "common people" by florid words and grandiloquent promises with the deliberate intention of not fulfilling these promises.

It is utterly absurd to control and regulate deliveries of grain, or the production and distribution of goods generally, without controlling and regulating bank operations. It is like trying to save odd kopeks and closing one's eyes to millions

of rubles. Banks nowadays are so closely and intimately bound up with trade (in grain and everything else) and with industry that without "laying hands" on the banks nothing of any value, nothing "revolutionary-democratic" can be accomplished.

But perhaps for the state to "lay hands" on the banks is a very difficult and complex operation? They usually try to scare gullible people with this very idea—that is to say, the capitalists and their defenders try it, because it is to their advantage to do so.

But, as a matter of fact, the nationalisation of the banks, which would not deprive any "owner" of a single kopek, presents absolutely no technical or cultural difficulties whatsoever, and is being delayed *exclusively* because of the vile greed of an insignificant handful of the rich. If the nationalisation of the banks is so often confused with the confiscation of private property, it is the bourgeois press, whose interest it is to deceive the public, that is responsible for the dissemination of this confusion of ideas.

The ownership of the capital wielded by and concentrated in the banks is certified by printed and written certificates called shares, bonds, bills, receipts, etc. Not a single one of these certificates would disappear or be altered if the banks were nationalised, i.e., if all the banks were amalgamated into a single state bank. Whoever owned fifteen rubles on a savings account would continue to be the owner of fifteen rubles after the nationalisation of the banks; and whoever had fifteen million rubles would continue after the nationalisation of the banks to have fifteen million rubles in the form of shares, bonds, bills, commercial certificates and the like.

What, then, is the significance of the nationalisation of the banks?

It is that no effective control of any kind over the individual banks and their operations is possible (even if commercial secrecy, etc., were abolished) because it is impossible to keep an eye on the extremely complex, involved and wily tricks that are resorted to in drawing up balance sheets, in founding fictitious enterprises and subsidiaries, in resorting to the services of figure-heads, and so on and so forth. Only the amalgamation of all banks into one, which in itself would

imply no change whatever in respect of ownership, and which, we repeat, would not deprive any owner of a single kopek, would make it *possible* to exercise real control—provided, of course, that all the other measures indicated above were carried out. Only by the nationalisation of the banks *can the state* put itself in a position to know where and how, whence and when, millions and millions of rubles flow. And only control over the banks, over the centre, over the pivot and chief mechanism of capitalist circulation, would make it possible to organise real and not fictitious control over the whole economic life and the production and distribution of staple goods, and introduce that "regulation of economic life" which otherwise is inevitably doomed to remain a ministerial phrase designed to fool the common people. Only control over banking operations, provided they are concentrated in a single state bank, would make it possible, if certain other easily-practicable measures were adopted, to arrange the effective collection of income tax in such a way as really to prevent the concealment of property and incomes; for at present the income tax is very largely a fiction.

The nationalisation of the banks has only to be decreed, and it would be carried out by the directors and employees themselves. No special machinery, no special preparatory measures on the part of the state would be required, for this is a measure that can be effected by one single decree, at a "single stroke". The economic feasibility of such a measure was created by capitalism itself once it had developed to the stage of bills, shares, bonds and the like. *All* that is required is to *unify accountancy*. And if the revolutionary-democratic government were to decide that immediately, by telegraph, meetings of managers and employees should be called in every city, and conferences in every region and in the country as a whole, for the immediate amalgamation of all the banks into a single state bank, this reform would be carried out in a few weeks. Of course, it would be the directors and the higher bank officials who would offer resistance, who would try to deceive the state, delay matters, and so on, for these gentlemen would lose their highly remunerative posts and the opportunity of performing highly profitable fraudu-

lent operations. *That is the crux of the matter.* But there is not the slightest technical difficulty in the way of the amalgamation of the banks; and if the state power were revolutionary not only in word (i.e., would not fear to do away with inertia and routine), if it were democratic not only in word (i.e., if it acted in the interests of the majority of the people and not of a handful of rich men), it would be enough to decree confiscation of property and imprisonment as the penalty for directors, board members and large shareholders for the slightest delay or for attempting to conceal documents and accounts; it would be enough, for example, to organise the poorer employees *separately* and to reward them for detecting fraud and delay on the part of the rich—and the nationalisation of the banks could be effected as smoothly and rapidly as can be.

The advantages accruing to the whole people from the nationalisation of the banks—not to the workers especially (for the workers have little to do with banks) but to the mass of peasants and small industrialists—would be enormous. The saving in labour would be gigantic, and, assuming that the state would retain the former number of bank employees, nationalisation would be a highly important step towards making the use of the banks universal, towards increasing the number of their branches, making their operations more easily available, etc., etc. The availability of credit on easy terms precisely for the *small* owners, for the peasantry, would increase immensely. As to the state, it would for the first time be in a position first to *review* all the chief monetary operations, which would be unconcealed, then to *control* them, then to *regulate* economic life, and finally to *obtain* millions and millions for large state transactions without paying the capitalist gentry sky-high “commissions” for their “services”. That is the reason—and the only reason—why all the capitalists, all the bourgeois professors, all the bourgeoisie, and all the Plekhanovs, Potresovs and Co., who serve them, foam at the mouth and are prepared to fight against the nationalisation of the banks and invent thousands of excuses to prevent the adoption of this easiest and most essential measure, although *even* from the standpoint of the “defence” of the country, i.e., from the military standpoint, this measure would

be a gigantic advantage and would enhance the “military might” of the country tremendously.

The following objection might be raised: why do such advanced states as Germany and the U.S.A. “regulate economic life” so magnificently and yet do not even think of nationalising the banks?

Because, we reply, *both* these states, although one is a monarchy and the other a republic, are not merely capitalist, but also imperialist states. That being the case, they carry out the reforms they need by reactionary-bureaucratic methods, whereas we are speaking here of revolutionary-democratic methods.

This “little difference” is of major importance. In most cases it is “not the custom” to pay attention to it. The term “revolutionary democracy” has become with us (especially among the Socialist-Revolutionaries and Mensheviks) almost a conventional phrase, like the expression “Thank God!”—which is used also by people who are not so ignorant as to believe in God; or like the expression “respectable citizen”—which is sometimes used even in addressing members of the staff of *Dyen* or *Yedinstvo*, although nearly everybody understands that these newspapers have been founded and are maintained by the capitalists in the interests of the capitalists, and that there is therefore very little “respectable” about pseudo-socialists contributing to these newspapers.

If we do not employ the words “revolutionary democracy” as a stereotyped and ceremonial phrase, as a conventional epithet, but *reflect* on their significance, we shall find that being a democrat in fact means reckoning with the interests of the majority of the people and not the minority, and that being a revolutionary means destroying everything pernicious and obsolete in the most resolute and ruthless manner.

Neither in America nor in Germany, as far as we know, is any claim laid by either the government or the ruling classes to the title “revolutionary democrats”, a title to which our Socialist-Revolutionaries and Mensheviks lay claim (and which they prostitute).

In Germany there are only *four* very large private banks of national importance; in America there are only *two*. It is easier, more convenient, more profitable for the financial

magnates of these banks to unite privately, surreptitiously, in a reactionary and not a revolutionary way, in a bureaucratic and not a democratic way, bribing state officials (this is the general rule both in *America and in Germany*), and preserving the private character of the banks precisely in order to preserve secrecy of operations, precisely in order to milk the state of millions and millions in "superprofits", and precisely in order to perform fraudulent financial machinations.

Both America and Germany "regulate economic life" in such a way as to create conditions of *war-time penal servitude* for the workers (and partly for the peasants) and a *paradise* for the bankers and capitalists. Their regulation consists in "squeezing" the workers to the point of starvation, while the capitalists are guaranteed (surreptitiously, in a reactionary-bureaucratic fashion) profits *higher* than before the war.

Such a course is quite possible in republican-imperialist Russia too; it is indeed the course that is being followed not only by the Milyukovs and Shingaryovs, but also by Kerensky in partnership with Tereshchenko, Nekrasov, Bernatsky, Prokopovich and Co., who *also protect* the reactionary-bureaucratic "inviolability" of the banks and their sacred right to fabulous profits. Let us better tell the *truth*, namely, that in republican Russia they want to regulate economic life in a reactionary-bureaucratic manner, but "often" find it difficult to do so owing to the existence of the "Soviets" that Kornilov No. 1⁸ did not manage to disperse, but which Kornilov No. 2 will endeavour to disperse...

That would be the truth. And this simple but bitter truth is more useful for the enlightenment of the people than the honeyed lies about "our", "great", "revolutionary" democracy....

* * *

The nationalisation of the banks would at the same time greatly facilitate the nationalisation of the insurance business, i.e., the amalgamation of all the insurance companies into one, the centralisation of their operations, and state control over them. Here, too, conferences of insurance company employees could carry out this amalgamation immediately and without any great effort, provided a revolutionary-democratic

government decreed this and ordered directors and large shareholders to effect the amalgamation without the slightest delay and held every one of them strictly accountable for it. Hundreds of millions of rubles have been invested in the insurance business by the capitalists; the work is all done by the employees. The amalgamation of this business would lead to lower insurance premiums, would provide a host of advantages and conveniences for the insured and would make it possible to increase their number without increasing expenditure of effort and funds. Absolutely nothing but the inertia, routine and greed of a handful of holders of remunerative jobs is delaying this reform, which, again, would enhance the "defence potential" of the country by economising national labour and creating a number of highly important opportunities to "regulate economic life" not in word, but in deed.

NATIONALISATION OF THE SYNDICATES

Capitalism differs from the old, pre-capitalist systems of economy in having created the closest ties and interdependence between the various branches of economy. Were this not so, incidentally, no steps towards socialism would be technically feasible. Modern capitalism, under which the banks dominate production, has carried this interdependence of the various branches of the economy to an extreme. The banks and the more important branches of industry and commerce have become inseparably merged. This means, on the one hand, that it is impossible to nationalise the banks alone, without proceeding to create a state monopoly of commercial and industrial syndicates (sugar, coal, iron, oil, etc.), and without nationalising them. It means, on the other hand, that if carried out in earnest, the regulation of economic life would demand the simultaneous nationalisation of both the banks and the syndicates.

Let us take the Sugar Syndicate as an example. It was created under tsarism, and at that time developed into a huge capitalist combine of splendidly equipped refineries and factories. And, of course, this combine, thoroughly imbued as it was with the most reactionary and bureaucratic spirit,

secured scandalously high profits for the capitalists and reduced its employees to the status of humiliated and downtrodden slaves without any rights whatever. Even at that time the state controlled and regulated production—in the interests of the rich, the magnates.

All that remains to do here is to transform reactionary-bureaucratic regulation into revolutionary-democratic regulation by simple decrees providing for the summoning of a conference of employees, engineers, directors and shareholders, for the introduction of uniform accountancy, for control by the workers' unions, etc. This is an exceedingly simple thing—yet it has not been done! Under the democratic republic the regulation of the sugar industry *actually* remains reactionary-bureaucratic; everything remains as of old: the wasteful dissipation of national labour, routine and stagnation, and the enrichment of the Bobrinskys and Tereshchenkos. Democracy, and not bureaucracy, the employees, and not the "sugar kings", should be called upon to exercise independent initiative—and this could and should be done in a few days, at a single stroke, if only the Socialist-Revolutionaries and Mensheviks did not befog the minds of the people by plans for "association" with these very sugar kings, for the very coalition with the wealthy from which, and as a consequence of which, the "complete inactivity" of the government in the matter of regulating economic life follows with absolute inevitability.*

Take the oil business. It had already to a vast extent been "socialised" by the earlier development of capitalism. Just a couple of oil kings wield millions and hundreds of millions of rubles, clipping coupons and accumulating fabulous profits from the "business" which is *already* actually, technically and socially organised on a national scale and is *already* being conducted by hundreds and thousands of employees, engineers, etc. The nationalisation of the oil industry could be effected *at once*, and it is imperative for a revolutionary-

* These lines had already been written when I learned from the newspapers that the Kerensky government is introducing a sugar monopoly, and, of course, is introducing it in a reactionary-bureaucratic way, without conferences of employees, without publicity, and without bridling the capitalists!

democratic state, especially when the latter suffers from an acute crisis and when it is essential to economise national labour and to increase the output of fuel at all costs. It is clear that here bureaucratic control can achieve nothing and can change nothing, for the "oil kings" can cope with the Tereshchenkos, the Kerenskys, the Avksentyevs and the Skobelevs as easily as they coped with the tsar's Ministers, by means of delays, excuses and promises, and by the direct and indirect bribery of the bourgeois press (this is called "public opinion", and the Kerenskys and Avksentyevs "reckon" with it), and the bribery of officials (left by the Kerenskys and Avksentyevs in their old jobs in the old state machine which remains intact).

If anything is to be done in earnest, bureaucracy must be abandoned for democracy, and in a truly revolutionary way, i.e., war must be declared on the oil kings and shareholders, the confiscation of their property and punishment by imprisonment must be decreed for delaying the nationalisation of the oil business, for concealing incomes or accounts, for sabotaging production, and for failing to take measures to increase production. The initiative of the workers must be appealed to; *they* must be immediately summoned to conferences and congresses; a certain part of the profits must be assigned to *them* if they institute overall control and increase production. If such revolutionary-democratic steps had been taken at once, immediately, in April 1917, Russia, which is one of the richest countries in the world in deposits of liquid fuel, might, using water transport, have done a very great deal during this summer to supply the people with the necessary quantities of fuel.

Neither the bourgeois nor the coalition Socialist-Revolutionary-Menshevik-Cadet government has done anything whatever; both have confined themselves to a bureaucratic playing at reforms. They have not dared to take a single revolutionary-democratic step. Everything has remained as it was under the tsars—the same oil kings, the same stagnation, the same hatred of the workers for their exploiters, the same dislocation as a consequence, and the same dissipation of national labour—only the *letterheads* on the incoming and outgoing papers in the "republican" offices have been changed!

Take the coal industry; it is technically and culturally no less "ripe" for nationalisation, and is being no less shamelessly managed by the robbers of the people, the coal kings, and there are a number of most striking *facts* of direct sabotage, direct *damage* to production and its suspension by the industrialists. Even the ministerial *Rabochaya Gazeta* of the Mensheviks has admitted these facts. And what do we find? Absolutely nothing has been done, except to call the old, reactionary-bureaucratic conferences "on half-and-half basis"—half workers and half bandits from the Coal Syndicate! Not a single revolutionary-democratic step has been taken, not a shadow of an attempt has been made to establish the only control which is real—control from *below*, through the employees' union, through the workers, and by using terror against the coal-owners, who are ruining the country and bringing production to a standstill! How can this be done when we are "all" in favour of the "coalition",—if not with the Cadets, then with commercial and industrial circles; and coalition means leaving the power in the hands of the capitalists, letting them go unpunished, allowing them to hamper affairs, to blame everything on the workers; to intensify the chaos and *thus* to pave the way for a new Kornilov revolt!

ABOLITION OF COMMERCIAL SECRECY

Unless commercial secrecy is abolished, either control over production and distribution will remain an empty promise, only needed by the Cadets to fool the Socialist-Revolutionaries and Mensheviks, and by the Socialist-Revolutionaries and Mensheviks to fool the working people, or control can be exercised only by reactionary-bureaucratic methods and means. Although this is obvious to every unprejudiced person, and although *Pravda*⁹ persistently demanded the abolition of commercial secrecy (and was suppressed largely for this reason by the Kerensky government which is subservient to capital), neither our republican government nor the "authoritative organs of revolutionary democracy" have even thought of this *first step* of real control.

This is the very key to all control. Here we have the most sensitive spot of capital, which is robbing the people and

sabotaging production. And that is exactly why the Socialist-Revolutionaries and Mensheviks are afraid to do anything about it.

The usual argument of the capitalists, one repeated by the petty bourgeoisie without reflection, is that under the capitalist system of economy the abolition of commercial secrecy is in general absolutely impossible, for the private ownership of the means of production and the dependence of the individual enterprises on the market render essential the "sacred inviolability" of commercial books and commercial operations, including, of course, banking operations.

Those who in one form or another repeat this or similar arguments allow themselves to be deceived and themselves deceive the people by shutting their eyes to two fundamental, highly important and generally known facts of modern economic life. The first fact is the existence of large-scale capitalism, i.e., the peculiar features of the economic system of banks, syndicates, large factories, etc. The second fact is the war.

It is precisely modern large-scale capitalism, which is everywhere becoming monopoly capitalism, that deprives commercial secrecy of every shadow of reasonable justification, turns it into hypocrisy and into an instrument exclusively for concealing financial fraud and the incredibly high profits of big capital. Large-scale capitalist economy, by its very technical nature, is socialised economy, that is, it both operates for millions of people and, directly or indirectly, unites by its operations hundreds, thousands and tens of thousands of families. It is not like the economy of the small artisan or the average peasant, who keep no commercial books at all, and who would therefore not be affected by the abolition of commercial secrecy!

As it is, the operations conducted in large-scale business are known to hundreds or more persons. Here the law protecting commercial secrecy does not serve the interests of production or exchange, but those of speculation and profit-mongering in their crudest form, and of direct fraud, which, as we know, in the case of joint-stock companies is particularly widespread and very skilfully concealed by reports and balance sheets, so compiled as to deceive the public.

While commercial secrecy is unavoidable in small commodity production, i.e., among the small peasants and artisans, where production itself is not socialised but scattered and disunited, in large-scale capitalist production, the protection of commercial secrecy means the protection of the privileges and profits of literally a handful of people *against* the interest of the whole people. This has already been recognised by the law, inasmuch as provision is made for the publication of the accounts of joint-stock companies. But *this* control, which has already been introduced in all advanced countries, as well as in Russia, is a reactionary-bureaucratic control which does not open the eyes of the *people* and which *does not allow* the *whole truth* about the operations of joint-stock companies to become known.

To act in a revolutionary-democratic way it would be necessary to pass immediately another law abolishing commercial secrecy, compelling the big enterprises and the wealthy to render the fullest possible account, and investing every group of citizens of substantial democratic numerical strength (1,000 or 10,000 voters, let us say) with the right to examine *all* the documents of any large enterprise. Such a measure could be fully and easily effected by a simple decree. It *alone* would develop *popular* initiative in control, through the office employees' unions, the workers' unions and all the political parties, and it alone would make control effective and democratic.

Add to this the fact of the war. The vast majority of commercial and industrial establishments are now working not for the "free market", but *for the government*, for the war. I have therefore already stated in *Pravda* that people who oppose us with the argument that socialism cannot be introduced are liars, and barefaced liars at that, because it is not a question of introducing socialism now, directly, overnight, but of *exposing robbery of the treasury*.

Capitalist "war" economy (i.e., economy directly or indirectly connected with war contracts) is systematic and legalised *robbery of the treasury*, and the Cadet gentry, together with the Mensheviks and Socialist-Revolutionaries, who are opposing the abolition of commercial secrecy, are nothing but *aiders and abettors of this robbery of the treasury*.

The war is now costing Russia fifty million rubles *a day*. These fifty million go mostly to army contractors. Of these fifty, at least five million *daily*, and probably ten million or more, constitute the "honest income" of the capitalists and the officials who are in one way or another in collusion with them. The very large firms and banks which lend money for war contract transactions thereby earn unheard-of profits, and do so by robbing the treasury, for no other epithet can be applied to this defrauding and plundering of the people "on the occasion of" the hardships of war, "on the occasion of" the deaths of hundreds of thousands and millions of people.

"Everybody" knows about these scandalous profits made on war contracts, "everybody" knows about the "letters of guarantee" which are concealed by the banks, "everybody" knows who is gaining by the rising cost of living; it is discussed with a smile in "society". Quite a number of precise references are made to it *even* in the bourgeois press, which as a general rule keeps silent about "unpleasant" facts and avoids "ticklish" questions. Everybody knows about it, yet everybody keeps silent, everybody tolerates it, everybody puts up with the government, which prates eloquently about "control" and "regulation"!!

The revolutionary democrats, were they real revolutionaries and democrats, would immediately pass a law abolishing commercial secrecy, compelling contractors and merchants to render public accounts, forbidding them to abandon their field of activity without the permission of the authorities, imposing the penalty of confiscation of property and shooting* for concealment and for deceiving the people, organising supervision and control *from below*, democratically, by the people themselves, by unions of employees, consumers, etc.

Our Socialist-Revolutionaries and Mensheviks fully deserve to be called scared democrats, for on this question they repeat what is said by all the scared philistines, namely, that the

* I have already had occasion to point out in the Bolshevik press that objections to the death penalty can be entertained only when the latter is applied by the exploiters against the *mass* of the toilers with the purpose of maintaining exploitation. It is hardly likely that any revolutionary government whatever could avoid applying the death penalty to the *exploiters* (i.e., the landowners and capitalists).

capitalists will "run away" if "too severe" measures are adopted, that "we" will be unable to get along without the capitalists, that the British and French millionaires, who are "supporting" us, will most likely be "offended", and the like. It might be thought that the Bolsheviks were proposing something unknown to history, something that has never been tried before, something "utopian", although as a matter of fact even 125 years ago in France, people who were real "revolutionary democrats", who were really convinced of the just and defensive character of the war they were waging, who really had the support of the masses which were also sincerely convinced of this, were able to establish *revolutionary* control over the rich and to achieve results which earned the admiration of the whole world. And in the century and a quarter that has since elapsed, the development of capitalism, which resulted in the creation of banks, syndicates, railways and so forth, has greatly facilitated and simplified the adoption of measures of really democratic control by the workers and peasants over the exploiters, the landowners and capitalists.

In point of fact, the whole question of control boils down to who controls whom, i.e., which class is in control and which is being controlled. In our country, in republican Russia, with the help of the "authoritative organs" of supposedly revolutionary democracy, it is the landowners and capitalists who are still recognised as, and who still are, the controllers. The inevitable result is the capitalist robbery that is provoking the universal indignation of the people, and the economic chaos that is being artificially fostered by the capitalists. We must resolutely and irrevocably, not fearing to break with the old, not fearing boldly to build the new, pass to control *over* the landowners and capitalists *by* the workers and peasants. And this is what our Socialist-Revolutionaries and Mensheviks fear worse than the plague.

COMPULSORY UNIFICATION INTO ASSOCIATIONS

Compulsory syndication, i.e., compulsory organisation of the industrialists, for example, into unions, is already being practised in Germany. Nor is there anything new in it. And

here, too, through the fault of the Socialist-Revolutionaries and Mensheviks, we see the utter stagnation of republican Russia, which these little-to-be-respected parties "entertain" by dancing a quadrille with the Cadets, or with the Bublikovs, or with Tereshchenko and Kerensky.

Compulsory syndication is on the one hand a means whereby the state as it were expedites capitalist development, which everywhere leads to the organisation of the class struggle and to a growth in the number, variety and importance of unions. And, on the other hand, compulsory "unionisation" is an indispensable prerequisite for any kind of effective control and economy of national labour.

The German law, for instance, binds the leather manufacturers of a given locality or of the whole country to form an association, on the board of which there is a representative of the state for the purpose of control. A law of this kind does not directly, i.e., in itself, affect property relations in any way; it does not deprive any owner of a single kopek and does not predetermine whether the control is to be exercised in a reactionary-bureaucratic or a revolutionary-democratic form, direction or spirit.

Such laws can and should be passed in our country immediately, without losing a single week of precious time; it should be left to *social conditions themselves* to determine the more concrete forms for putting the law into effect, the speed with which it is put into effect, the methods of supervision over its implementation, etc. The state requires no special machinery for this, nor any special investigation, nor any preliminary enquiries for the passing of such a law; all that is required is the determination to break with certain private interests of the capitalists, who are "not accustomed" to such interference and who have no desire to forfeit the superprofits which are ensured by the old methods of management and the absence of control.

No machinery and no "statistics" (which Chernov wanted to substitute for the revolutionary initiative of the peasants) are required to *pass* such a law, inasmuch as the implementation of the law must be made the duty of the manufacturers and industrialists themselves and of the *available* public forces, under the control of the available public (i.e., non-govern-

mental, non-bureaucratic) forces too, which, however, must consist in all cases of the so-called "lower estates", i.e., of the oppressed and exploited classes, which in history have always proved to be immensely *superior* to the exploiters in their capacity for heroism, self-sacrifice and comradely discipline.

Let us assume that we have a really revolutionary-democratic government and that it decides that the manufacturers and industrialists in every branch of production who employ, let us say, not less than two workers shall be obliged immediately to amalgamate into *uyezd* and *gubernia* associations. Responsibility for the strict observance of the law is laid in the first place on the manufacturers, directors, members of boards and large shareholders (for they are the real leaders of modern industry, its real masters). They are to be regarded as deserters from military service, and punished as such, if they do not work for the immediate implementation of the law, and are to bear mutual responsibility, each answering for all, and all for each, with the whole of their property. Responsibility is next laid on all office employees, who shall also be obliged to form *one* union, and on all workers and their trade union. The purpose of "unionisation" is to institute the fullest, strictest and most detailed accountancy, but chiefly to *combine operations* in the purchase of raw materials, the sale of products, and the *economy* of national funds and forces. When the disunited establishments are amalgamated into a single syndicate, this economy can attain tremendous proportions, as economic science teaches us and as is shown by the example of all syndicates, cartels and trusts. And it must again be repeated that this syndication will not itself alter property relations one iota and will not deprive any owner of a single kopek. This circumstance must be strongly stressed, for the bourgeois press constantly "frightens" small and medium proprietors by asserting that the socialists in general, and the Bolsheviks in particular, want to "expropriate" them—an obviously false assertion, as socialists do not intend to, cannot and will not expropriate the small peasant *even if there is a fully socialist* revolution. All the time we are speaking *only* of the immediate and urgent measures, which have already been introduced in West-

ern Europe and which a democracy that is at all consistent ought to introduce immediately in our country in order to combat the impending and inevitable catastrophe.

Serious difficulties, both technical and cultural, would be encountered in amalgamating the small and very small proprietors into associations, owing to the extreme disunity and technical primitiveness of their enterprises and the illiteracy or lack of education of the owners. But precisely such enterprises could be exempted from the law (as was pointed out above in our hypothetical example); their non-amalgamation, let alone their belated amalgamation, would not create any serious obstacle, for the part played by the huge number of small enterprises in the sum total of production and their importance to the economy as a whole are *insignificant*, and, moreover, they are often in one way or another dependent on the big enterprises.

Only the big enterprises are of decisive importance; and here the technical and cultural means and forces for "unionisation" *do exist*; what is lacking is the firm, determined initiative of a *revolutionary* government which should be ruthlessly severe towards the exploiters to set these forces and means in motion.

The poorer the country is in technically trained forces, and in intellectual forces generally, the more *urgent* it is to decree compulsory amalgamation as early and as resolutely as possible and to begin with the bigger and biggest enterprises when putting the decree into effect, for only amalgamation will *economise* intellectual forces and make it possible to utilise them *to the full* and to distribute them more correctly. If, after 1905, even the Russian peasants in their out-of-the-way districts, under the tsarist government, in face of the thousands of obstacles created by that government, were able to make a tremendous forward stride in the creation of all kinds of associations, it is clear that the amalgamation of large- and medium-scale industry and trade could be effected in several months, if not more rapidly, provided compulsion to this end were exercised by a really revolutionary-democratic government, which relied on the support, aid, interest and advantage of the "lower classes", the democracy, the working people, and called upon *them* to exercise control.

REGULATION OF CONSUMPTION

The war has compelled all the belligerent and many of the neutral countries to resort to the regulation of consumption. Bread cards have been introduced and have become customary, and this has led to the appearance of other cards. Russia is no exception and has also introduced bread cards.

Using this as an example, we can draw, perhaps, the most striking comparison of all between reactionary-bureaucratic methods of combating a catastrophe, which are confined to minimum reforms, and revolutionary-democratic methods, which, to justify their name, must directly aim at a violent rupture with the old, obsolete system and the achievement of the speediest possible progress.

The bread card—this typical example of regulating consumption in modern capitalist countries—aims at, and achieves (at best), one thing only, namely, the distribution of available supplies of grain so that everybody gets his ration. A maximum limit of consumption is established, not for all foodstuffs by far, but only for principal foodstuffs, those of “popular” consumption. And that is all. There is no intention of doing anything else. Available supplies of grain are calculated in a bureaucratic way, then divided according to the number of the population, a ration is fixed and introduced, and there the matter ends. Luxury articles are not affected, for they are “anyway” scarce and “anyway” so dear as to be beyond the reach of the “people”. And so, in *all* the belligerent countries without exception, *even* in Germany, which evidently, without fear of contradiction, can be said to be a model of most accurate, pedantic and strict regulation of consumption—*even* in Germany we find that the rich constantly *get around* all “rations” of every kind. This too “everybody” knows and “everybody” talks about with a smile; and in the German socialist press, and sometimes even in the bourgeois press, despite the fierce military stringency of the German censorship, we constantly find stories and reports about the “menus” of the rich, saying how the wealthy can obtain white bread in any quantity at a certain health resort (visited, on the plea of illness, by everybody . . . who has plenty of money), and how the

wealthy substitute for articles of popular consumption choice and rare articles of luxury.

A reactionary capitalist state which *fears* to undermine the foundations of capitalism, the foundations of wage slavery, the foundations of the economic supremacy of the rich, which *fears* to develop the independent activity of the workers and the working people generally, which *fears* to “stir up” their demands, *such* a state will be quite content with bread cards. Such a state does not for a moment, in any measure it adopts, lose sight of the *reactionary* aim of strengthening capitalism, preventing its being undermined, and confining the “regulation of economic life” in general, and the regulation of consumption in particular, to such measures as are absolutely essential to feed the people, without any *attempt* at real regulation of consumption by exercising *control over the rich* and laying the *greater part* of the burden in times of war on those who are better off, who are privileged, well-fed and overfed in times of peace.

The reactionary-bureaucratic solution of the problem with which the war has confronted the peoples confines itself to bread cards, to the equal distribution of absolutely essential “popular” foodstuffs, without retreating one iota from bureaucratic and reactionary methods, that is, from the aim of *not* developing the initiative of the poor, the proletariat, the mass of the people (“demos”), of *not* allowing *them* to exercise control over the rich, and of leaving *as many* loopholes *as possible* for the rich to compensate themselves with articles of luxury. And a great number of loopholes are left in *all* countries, we repeat, *even* in Germany—not to speak of Russia; the “common people” starve while the rich visit health resorts, supplement the meagre official ration by all sorts of “extras” obtained on the side, and do *not* allow *themselves* to be controlled.

In Russia, which has only just made a revolution against the tsarist regime in the name of freedom and equality, in Russia which, as far as its actual political institutions are concerned, has at once become a democratic republic, what particularly strikes the people, what particularly arouses the discontent, irritation, anger and indignation of the masses is the easy way, patent to *all*, in which the wealthy can get around

the "bread cards". They do it very easily indeed. From "under the counter", and for a very high price, especially if one has "pull" (which only the rich have), one can obtain anything, and in large quantities, too. It is the people who are starving. The regulation of consumption is confined within the narrowest bureaucratic-reactionary limits. The government has not the slightest intention of arranging regulation on really revolutionary-democratic lines, and is not in the least concerned about doing so.

"Everybody" is suffering from the queues but . . . but the rich send their servants to stand in the queues, and even engage special servants for the purpose! And that is "democracy"!

At a time when the country is suffering untold calamities, a revolutionary-democratic policy would not confine itself to bread cards to combat the impending catastrophe but would add, firstly, the compulsory organisation of the whole population in consumers' societies, for otherwise control over consumption cannot be fully exercised; secondly, labour service for the rich, making them perform without pay secretarial and similar duties for these consumers' societies; thirdly, the equal distribution among the population of absolutely all articles of consumption, so as really to distribute the burdens of the war equitably; fourthly, the organisation of control in such a way that the consumption of the rich in particular would be controlled by the poorer classes of the population.

The establishment of real democracy in this sphere and the display of a real revolutionary spirit in the organisation of control by the most needy classes of the people would be a very great stimulus to the employment of all available intellectual forces and to the development of the truly revolutionary energies of the entire people. Whereas now the ministers of republican and revolutionary-democratic Russia, exactly like their confrères in all other imperialist countries, eloquently prate about "working in common for the good of the people" and about "exerting every effort", but it is the people who see, feel and sense the hypocrisy of such utterances.

The result is that no progress is being made, chaos is spreading irresistibly, and a catastrophe is approaching, for

our government cannot introduce war-time penal servitude for the workers in the Kornilov, Hindenburg, generally imperialist, way—the traditions, memories, survivals, habits and institutions of the *revolution* are still too much alive among the people; our government does not want to take any really serious steps in a revolutionary-democratic direction, for it is thoroughly infected and thoroughly enmeshed by its dependence on the bourgeoisie, its "coalition" with the bourgeoisie, and its fear to encroach on the latter's real privileges.

DISRUPTION OF THE WORK OF THE DEMOCRATIC ORGANISATIONS BY THE GOVERNMENT

We have examined various ways and methods of combating catastrophe and famine. We have seen everywhere that the contradictions between the democrats, on the one hand, and the government and the bloc of the Socialist-Revolutionaries and Mensheviks which is supporting it, on the other, are irreconcilable. To prove that these contradictions exist in reality, and not merely in our exposition, and that their irreconcilability is *actually* borne out by conflicts of national dimensions, we have only to recall two very typical "results" and lessons of the six months' history of our revolution.

The history of the "reign" of Palchinsky is one lesson. The history of the "reign" and fall of Peshekhonov is the other.

The measures to combat catastrophe and famine described above boil down to the all-round encouragement (even to the extent of compulsion) of the "unionisation" of the population and in the first place of the democrats, i.e., the majority of the population—and that means above all the oppressed classes, the workers and peasants, and especially the poor peasants. And this is the path which the population itself spontaneously began to adopt in order to cope with the unparalleled difficulties, burdens and hardships of the war.

Tsarism did everything to hamper the free and independent "unionisation" of the population. But after the fall of the tsarist monarchy, democratic organisations began to spring up and grow rapidly all over Russia. The struggle against the

catastrophe began to be waged by spontaneously arising democratic organisations—by all sorts of committees of supply, food committees, fuel councils, and so on and so forth.

And the most remarkable thing in the whole six months' history of our revolution, as far as the question we are examining is concerned, is that the *government* which calls itself republican and revolutionary, the government *supported* by the Mensheviks and Socialist-Revolutionaries in the name of the "authoritative organs of revolutionary democracy", this government *fought* the democratic organisations and *defeated* them!

By this fight, Palchinsky earned extremely wide and very sad notoriety all over Russia. He acted behind the government's back, without coming out publicly (just as the Cadets generally preferred to act, willingly pushing forward Tsereteli "for the people", while they themselves arranged all the important business on the quiet). Palchinsky hampered and thwarted every serious measure taken by the spontaneously arising democratic organisations, for there could be no serious measure which would not "injure" the excessive profits and wilfulness of the Kit Kityches. And Palchinsky was in fact a loyal defender and servant of the Kit Kityches. Palchinsky went so far—and this fact was reported in the newspapers—as directly to *annul* the orders of the spontaneously arising democratic organisations!

The whole history of Palchinsky's "reign"—and he "reigned" for many months, and, moreover, at the very time when Tsereteli, Skobelev and Chernov were "ministers"—was a monstrous scandal from beginning to end; the will of the people and the decisions of the democracy were frustrated *to please* the capitalists and for the sake of their filthy greed. Of course, only an insignificant part of Palchinsky's "feats" could find their way to the press, and a full investigation of the way he *hindered* the struggle against famine can be made only by a truly democratic government of the proletariat when it conquers power and submits all the deeds of Palchinsky and his like, without concealing anything, *to the judgement* of the people.

It will perhaps be objected that Palchinsky was an exception, and that after all he was removed. . . . But the fact is

that Palchinsky was not the exception but the *rule*, that the situation has in no way improved with his removal, that his place has been taken by similar Palchinskys with different names, and that all the "*influence*" of the capitalists, and the entire policy of *frustrating the struggle against famine to please the capitalists* has remained unaltered. For Kerensky and Co. are only a screen for the interests of the capitalists.

The most striking proof of this is the resignation of Peshkikhonov, the Minister of Food. As we know, Peshkikhonov is a very, very moderate Narodnik. But in the organisation of food supply he wanted to work honestly, in contact with and relying on the democratic organisations. The *experience* of Peshkikhonov's work and his *resignation* are all the more interesting because this extremely moderate Narodnik, this member of the Popular Socialist Party, who was ready to accept any compromise with the bourgeoisie, was nevertheless compelled to resign! For the Kerensky government, to please the capitalists, landlords and kulaks, had *raised* the fixed prices of grain!

This is how M. Smith describes this "step" and its significance in the newspaper *Svobodnaya Zhizn* No. 1, of September 2:

"Several days before the government decided to raise the fixed prices, the following scene was enacted in the National Food Committee: Rolovich, a representative of the Right, a stubborn defender of the interests of private trade and a ruthless opponent of the grain monopoly and state interference in economic affairs, publicly announced with a smug smile that, according to information at his disposal, the fixed grain prices would very shortly be raised.

"The representative of the Soviet of Workers' and Soldiers' Deputies replied by declaring that he knew nothing of the kind, that as long as the revolution in Russia lasted such an act could not take place, and that at any rate the government could not take such a step without first consulting the authoritative democratic organs—the Economic Council and the National Food Committee. This statement was supported by a representative of the Soviet of Peasants' Deputies.

"But, alas, reality introduced a very harsh amendment to this second statement! It was the representative of the wealthy elements and not the representatives of democracy who turned out to be right. He proved to be excellently informed of the preparations for an attack on democratic liberties, although the democratic representatives indignantly denied the very possibility of such an attack."

And so, both the representative of the workers and the representative of the peasants definitely express their opinion in the name of the vast majority of the people, yet the Kerensky government acts contrary to that opinion in the interests of the capitalists!

Rolovich, a representative of the capitalists, turned out to be excellently informed behind the backs of the democrats—just as we have always observed, and now observe, that the bourgeois newspapers, *Rech* and *Birzhevka*, are best informed of the doings in the Kerensky government.

What does this possession of excellent information show? Obviously, that the capitalists have their "channels" and *virtually* hold the power in their own hands. Kerensky is a figure-head which they use as and when they find necessary. The interests of tens of millions of workers and peasants are sacrificed to the profits of a handful of the rich.

And how do our Socialist-Revolutionaries and Mensheviks react to this outrageous humiliation of the people? Did they address the workers and peasants to declare that after this, prison was the only place for Kerensky and his colleagues?

God forbid! The Socialist-Revolutionaries and Mensheviks, through their "Economic Section", confined themselves to adopting the impressive resolution to which we have already referred! In this resolution they declare that the raising of grain prices by the Kerensky government is "a *ruinous* measure which deals a *severe blow* both to the food supply and to the whole economic life of the country", and that these ruinous measures had been taken in direct "*violation*" of the law!

Such are the results of the policy of compromise, the policy of flirting with Kerensky and desiring to "spare" him!

The government violates the law by adopting, in the interests of the rich, the landlords and capitalists, a measure which *ruins* the whole work of control, food supply and the stabilisation of the extremely shaky finances, yet the Socialist-Revolutionaries and Mensheviks continue to talk about reaching an understanding with commercial and industrial circles, continue to attend conferences with Tereshchenko, continue to spare Kerensky and confine themselves to a paper resolution of protest, which the government very calmly pigeon-holes!!

This reveals with great clarity the truth that the Socialist-Revolutionaries and Mensheviks have betrayed the people and the revolution, and that the Bolsheviks are becoming the real leaders of the masses, *even* of the Socialist-Revolutionary and Menshevik masses.

For, in fact, only the conquest of power by the proletariat, headed by the Bolshevik Party, could put an end to the outrageous actions of Kerensky and Co. and *restore* the work of democratic food distribution, supply and other organisations, which Kerensky and his government are *disrupting*.

The Bolsheviks—and this is borne out with clarity by the above example—are acting as the representatives of the interests of the *whole* people, which are to ensure food distribution and supply and meet the most urgent needs of the workers and peasants, despite the vacillating, irresolute and truly treacherous policy of the Socialist-Revolutionaries and Mensheviks, a policy which has brought the country to an act as shameful as this raising of grain prices!

FINANCIAL COLLAPSE AND MEASURES TO COMBAT IT

There is another side to the problem of raising the fixed grain prices. This raising of prices involves a new chaotic increase in the emission of paper money, a new advance in the rising cost of living, increased financial disorganisation and the approach of financial collapse. Everybody admits that the emission of paper money constitutes the worst form of compulsory loan, that it affects most of all the conditions of the workers, the poorest section of the population, and that it is the chief evil engendered by financial disorder.

And it is to this measure that the Kerensky government, supported by the Socialist-Revolutionaries and Mensheviks, is resorting!

There is no way of effectively combating financial disorganisation and inevitable financial collapse except that of revolutionary rupture with the interests of capital and that of the organisation of really democratic control, i.e., control from "below", control by the workers and the poor peasants

over the capitalists, the way to which we referred throughout the earlier part of this exposition.

Immense issues of paper money encourage profiteering, enable the capitalists to make millions of rubles, and place tremendous difficulties in the way of a very necessary expansion of production—for the already high cost of materials, machinery, etc., is rising further by leaps and bounds. What can be done about it when the wealth acquired by the rich through profiteering is being concealed?

An income tax with progressive and very high rates for larger and very large incomes might be introduced. Our government has introduced one, following the example of other imperialist governments. But it is to a large extent a fiction, a dead letter, for, firstly, the value of money is falling ever more precipitately, and, secondly, the more incomes are derived from speculation and the more securely commercial secrecy is protected the greater their concealment.

Real and not nominal control is required to make the tax real and not fictitious. But control over the capitalists is impossible if it remains bureaucratic control, for the bureaucracy is itself bound to and interwoven with the bourgeoisie by thousands of threads. That is why in the West-European imperialist states, be they monarchies or republics, financial improvement is obtained solely by the introduction of "labour service", which creates *war-time penal servitude* or *war-time slavery* for the workers.

Reactionary-bureaucratic control is the only method known to imperialist states—not excluding the democratic republics of France and America—of foisting the burdens of the war on the proletariat and the working masses.

The basic contradiction in the policy of our government is this: in order not to quarrel with the bourgeoisie and not to destroy the "coalition" with it, the government has to introduce reactionary-bureaucratic control, which it calls "revolutionary-democratic" control, deceiving the people at every step and irritating and angering the masses who have just overthrown tsarism.

Yet only revolutionary-democratic measures, only the organisation of the oppressed classes, the workers and peasants,

the masses, into unions would make it possible to establish a most effective control *over the rich* and wage a most successful fight against the concealment of incomes.

An attempt is being made to encourage the use of cheques as a means of avoiding excessive emission of paper money. This measure is of no significance as far as the poor are concerned, for anyway they live from hand to mouth, complete their "economic cycle" in one week and return to the capitalists the few meagre coppers they manage to earn. The use of cheques might have great significance as far as the rich are concerned; it might enable the state, especially in conjunction with such measures as the nationalisation of the banks and the abolition of commercial secrecy, *really to control* the incomes of the capitalists, really to impose taxation on them, and really to "democratise" (and at the same time bring order into) the financial system.

But the obstacle to this is the fear of encroaching on the privileges of the bourgeoisie and destroying the "coalition" with it. For unless really revolutionary measures are adopted and compulsion is seriously resorted to, the capitalists will not submit to any control, will not make known their budgets, and will not surrender their holdings of stocks for the democratic state to "keep account" of.

The workers and peasants, organised in unions, by nationalising the banks, making the use of cheques legally compulsory for all rich persons, abolishing commercial secrecy, imposing confiscation of property as a penalty for concealment of incomes, etc., might with extreme ease render control both effective and universal—control, that is, over the rich, and such control as would *secure the return* of paper money from those who have it, from those who conceal it, to the treasury that issues it.

This requires a revolutionary dictatorship of the democracy, headed by the revolutionary proletariat; that is, it requires that the democracy should become revolutionary *in fact*. That is the crux of the matter. But that is just what is not wanted by our Socialist-Revolutionaries and Mensheviks, who are deceiving the people by displaying the *flag* of "revolutionary democracy" while they are in fact supporting the reactionary-bureaucratic policy of the bourgeoisie, which, as

always, is guided by the rule: *après nous le déluge*—after us the deluge!

We usually do not even notice how thoroughly we are permeated by the anti-democratic customs and prejudices of the "sacredness" of bourgeois property. When an engineer or banker publishes the income and expenditure of a worker, data about his wages and the productivity of his labour, this is regarded as absolutely legitimate and fair. Nobody thinks of regarding it as an intrusion into the "private life" of the worker, as "spying or informing" on the part of the engineer. Bourgeois society regards the labour and earnings of a wage-worker as *its* open book, any bourgeois being entitled to peer into it at any moment, and at any moment to expose the "luxurious living" of the worker, his supposed "laziness", etc.

Well, and what about the reverse control? What if the unions of employees, clerks and *domestic servants* were invited by a *democratic* state to verify the incomes and expenditures of capitalists, to publish information on the subject and to assist the government in combating concealment of incomes?

What a furious howl against "spying" and "informing" would be raised by the bourgeoisie! When the "masters" control servants, when capitalists control workers, this is considered to be in the nature of things; the private life of the working and exploited people is *not* considered inviolable; the bourgeoisie is entitled to call to account any "wage slave" and at any time to make public his income and expenditure. But if the oppressed attempted to control the oppressor, to throw light on *his* income and expenditure to expose *his* luxurious living, even in time of war, when his luxurious living is directly responsible for the fact that the armies at the front are starving and perishing—oh no, the bourgeoisie will not tolerate "spying" and "informing"!

It all boils down to the same thing: the rule of the bourgeoisie is *irreconcilable* with truly-revolutionary true democracy. One cannot be a revolutionary democrat in the twentieth century and in a capitalist country *if one fears* to advance towards socialism.

CAN ONE GO FORWARD IF ONE FEARS TO ADVANCE TOWARDS SOCIALISM?

What has been said so far might easily arouse the following objection on the part of a reader who has been brought up on the current opportunist ideas of the Socialist-Revolutionaries and Mensheviks. The majority of the measures described here, he may say, are *already* essentially socialist and not democratic measures!

This current objection, one that is usually raised (in one form or another) in the bourgeois, Socialist-Revolutionary and Menshevik press, is a reactionary defence of backward capitalism, a defence decked out in the Struve garb. We are not ripe for socialism, it is claimed, it is too early to "introduce" socialism, our revolution is a bourgeois revolution, and therefore we must be the menials of the bourgeoisie (although the great bourgeois revolutionaries in France 125 years ago made their revolution by exercising *terror* against all oppressors, both landlords and capitalists!).

The pseudo-Marxist lackeys of the bourgeoisie, who have been joined by the Socialist-Revolutionaries and who argue in this way, do not understand (as an examination of the theoretical basis of their opinion shows) what imperialism is, what capitalist monopoly is, what the state is, and what revolutionary democracy is. For when one has understood this, one cannot help admitting that there can be no advance except towards socialism.

Everybody talks about imperialism. But imperialism is nothing but monopoly capitalism.

That capitalism in Russia has also become monopoly capitalism is sufficiently borne out by the examples of the Coal Syndicate, the Metal Syndicate, the Sugar Syndicate, etc. This Sugar Syndicate is an object-lesson in the way monopoly capitalism grows into state monopoly capitalism.

And what is the state? It is an organisation of the ruling class—in Germany, for instance, of the Junkers and capitalists. And therefore what the German Plekhanovs (Scheidemann, Lensch and others) call "war-time socialism" is in fact war-time state-monopoly capitalism or, to put it more simply

and clearly, war-time penal servitude for the workers and war-time protection for the profits of the capitalists.

Now, try to *substitute* for the Junker-capitalist state, for the landlord-capitalist state, a *revolutionary-democratic* state, i.e., a state which in a revolutionary way destroys *all* privileges and does not fear to introduce the fullest democracy in a revolutionary way, and you will find that, given a really revolutionary-democratic state, state-monopoly capitalism inevitably and unavoidably implies a step, and more than one step, towards socialism!

For if a huge capitalist enterprise becomes a monopoly, it means that it serves the whole nation. If it has become a state monopoly, it means that the state (i.e., the armed organisation of the population, the workers and peasants in the first place, provided there is *revolutionary* democracy) directs the whole enterprise. In whose interest?

Either in the interest of the landlords and capitalists, in which case what we have is not a revolutionary-democratic, but a reactionary-bureaucratic state, and imperialist republic.

Or in the interest of the revolutionary democracy—and then *it will be a step towards socialism.*

For socialism is nothing but the next step forward from state-capitalist monopoly. Or, in other words, socialism is nothing but state-capitalist monopoly *which is made to serve the interests of the whole people* and has to that extent *ceased* to be capitalist monopoly.

There is no middle course here. The objective process of development is such that it is *impossible* to advance from *monopolies* (and the war has magnified their number, role and importance tenfold) without advancing towards socialism.

Either one must be a revolutionary democrat in fact—in which case one must not fear to take steps towards socialism; or one fears to take steps towards socialism, condemns them in the Plekhanov, Dan, or Chernov way, by arguing that our revolution is a bourgeois revolution, that socialism cannot be “introduced”, etc.—in which case one inevitably sinks to the position of Kerensky, Milyukov and Kornilov, i.e., one will in a *reactionary-bureaucratic* way suppress the “revolutionary-democratic” strivings of the worker and peasant masses.

There is no middle course.

And therein lies the fundamental contradiction of our revolution.

It is impossible to stand still in history in general, and in time of war in particular. One must either advance or retreat. It is *impossible* in twentieth-century Russia, which has won a republic and democracy in a revolutionary way, to go forward without *advancing* towards socialism, without taking *steps* towards it (steps conditioned and determined by the level of technology and culture: large-scale machine production cannot be “introduced” in peasant agriculture, and cannot be abolished in the sugar industry).

But to fear to advance *means* to retreat—which the Kerenskys, to the delight of the Milyukovs and Plekhanovs, and with the foolish assistance of the Tseretelis and Chernovs, are doing.

The dialectics of history is such that the war, by extraordinarily expediting the transformation of monopoly capitalism into state-monopoly capitalism, has *thereby* extraordinarily advanced mankind towards socialism.

Imperialist war is the eve of socialist revolution. And this not only because the horrors of the war give rise to proletarian revolt—no revolt can bring about socialism if the economic conditions for it have not ripened—but because state-monopoly capitalism is a complete *material* preparation for socialism, the *threshold* of socialism, a rung in the ladder of history between which and the rung called socialism *there are no intermediate rungs.*

* * *

Our Socialist-Revolutionaries and Mensheviks approach the question of socialism in a doctrinaire way, from the standpoint of a doctrine learned by heart but poorly understood. They picture socialism as some remote, unknown and dim future.

But socialism is now gazing at us from all the windows of modern capitalism; socialism is outlined directly, *practically*, by every important measure that constitutes a forward step on the basis of this modern capitalism.

What is universal labour conscription?

It is a step forward on the basis of modern monopoly capitalism, a step towards the regulation of economic life as a whole in accordance with a certain general plan, a step towards the economy of national labour and towards the prevention of its senseless wastage by capitalism.

In Germany it is the Junkers (landowners) and capitalists who are introducing universal labour conscription, and therefore it inevitably becomes war-time penal servitude for the workers.

But take the same institution and ponder over its significance in a revolutionary-democratic state. Universal labour conscription, introduced, regulated and directed by the Soviets of Workers', Soldiers' and Peasants' Deputies, will *still not* be socialism, but it will *no longer* be capitalism. It will be a tremendous *step towards* socialism, a step from which, if complete democracy is preserved, there can no longer be any retreat back to capitalism, without unparalleled violence being committed against the masses.

THE STRUGGLE AGAINST ECONOMIC CHAOS—AND THE WAR

A consideration of the measures to avert the impending catastrophe leads us to another supremely important question, namely, the connection between home policy and foreign policy, or, in other words, the relation between a war of conquest, an imperialist war, and a revolutionary, proletarian war, between a criminal predatory war and a just democratic war.

All the measures to avert catastrophe we have described would, as we have already stated, greatly enhance the defence potential, or, in other words, the military might of the country. That, on the one hand. On the other hand, these measures cannot be put into effect without turning the war of conquest into a just war, turning the war waged by the capitalists in the interests of the capitalists into a war waged by the proletariat in the interests of all the working and exploited people.

And, indeed, the nationalisation of the banks and syndicates, taken in conjunction with the abolition of commercial

secrecy and the establishment of workers' control over the capitalists, would not only imply a tremendous saving of the people's labour, the possibility of economising forces and means, but would also imply an improvement in the condition of the working *masses* of the population, of the majority of the people. As everybody knows, economic organisation is of decisive importance in modern warfare. Russia has enough grain, coal, oil and iron; in this respect we are in a better position than any of the belligerent European countries. And given a struggle against economic chaos by the measures indicated above, enlisting the initiative of the masses in this struggle, improving their condition, and nationalising the banks and syndicates, Russia could utilise her revolution and her democracy to raise the whole country to an incomparably higher level of economic organisation.

If instead of the "coalition" with the bourgeoisie which is hampering every measure of control and sabotaging production, the Socialist-Revolutionaries and Mensheviks had in April effected the transfer of power to the Soviets and had directed their efforts not to playing a game of "ministerial leapfrog", not to bureaucratically occupying, side by side with the Cadets, ministerial, deputy-ministerial and similar posts, but to guiding the workers and peasants in *their* control over the capitalists, in their *war against* the capitalists, Russia would now be a country completely transformed economically, with land in the hands of the peasants, and with the banks nationalised, i.e., would *to that extent* (and these are extremely important economic bases of modern life) be *superior* to all other capitalist countries.

The defence potential, the military might of a country whose banks have been nationalised is *superior to* that of a country whose banks remain in private hands. The military might of a peasant country whose land is in the hands of peasant committees is *superior to* that of a country whose land is in the hands of landlords.

Reference is constantly made to the heroic patriotism and the miracles of military valour displayed by the French in 1792-93. But the material, historical and economic conditions which alone made such miracles possible are forgotten. The suppression of obsolete feudalism in a really revolutionary

way, and the introduction throughout the country of a superior method of production and a free peasant land tenure, effected, moreover, with truly revolutionary-democratic speed, determination, energy and self-sacrifice—such were the material, economic conditions which with “miraculous” speed saved France by *regenerating* and *rejuvenating* her economic foundation.

The example of France shows one thing and one thing only, namely, that in order to render Russia capable of self-defence, in order to obtain in Russia, too, “miracles” of mass heroism, all that is obsolete must be swept away with “Jacobin” ruthlessness and Russia rejuvenated and regenerated *economically*. And in the twentieth century this cannot be done merely by sweeping away tsarism (France did not confine herself to this 125 years ago). It cannot be done even by the mere revolutionary abolition of landed proprietorship (we have not even done that, for the Socialist-Revolutionaries and Mensheviks have betrayed the peasantry!), by the mere transfer of the land to the peasantry. For we are living in the twentieth century, and mastery over the land *without mastery over the banks* cannot regenerate and rejuvenate the life of the people.

The material, industrial rejuvenation of France at the end of the eighteenth century was associated with a political and spiritual rejuvenation, with the dictatorship of revolutionary democrats and the revolutionary proletariat (from which the democrats had not separated themselves and with which they were still almost fused), and with a ruthless war proclaimed against everything reactionary. The whole people, and especially the masses, i.e., the *oppressed* classes, were swept up by boundless revolutionary enthusiasm: *everybody* considered the war a just war of defence, and such *it in fact was*. Revolutionary France was defending herself against reactionary monarchist Europe. It was not in 1792-93, but many years later, *after* the victory of reaction within the country, that the counter-revolutionary dictatorship of Napoleon transformed France's wars from defensive wars into wars of conquest.

And what about Russia? We are continuing to wage an imperialist war in the interests of the capitalists, in alliance with the imperialists and in accordance with the secret treat-

ties the *tsar* concluded with the capitalists of Britain and other countries, promising the Russian capitalists in these treaties the spoliation of foreign parts, Constantinople, Lvov, Armenia, etc.

The war will continue to be an unjust, reactionary and predatory war on Russia's part as long as she does not propose a just peace and does not break with imperialism. The social character of the war, its real meaning, is not determined by the position of the enemy troops (as the Socialist-Revolutionaries and Mensheviks think, sinking to the vulgarity of an ignorant muzhik). What determines this character is the *policy* of which the war is a continuation (“war is the continuation of politics”), the *class* that is waging the war, and the aims for which it wages this war.

You cannot lead the masses in a war of conquest in accordance with secret treaties and expect them to be enthusiastic. The foremost class in revolutionary Russia, the proletariat, is coming more and more clearly to realise the criminal character of the war, and not only have the bourgeoisie been unable to shatter this conviction of the masses but, on the contrary, the realisation of the criminal character of the war is growing. The proletariat of *both metropolitan cities* of Russia has definitely become internationalist!

How, then, can you expect mass enthusiasm for the war!

Two things are inseparably bound up, home policy and foreign policy. The country cannot be rendered capable of self-defence unless the people display supreme heroism in carrying out great economic transformations boldly and resolutely. And it is impossible to arouse the heroism of the masses without breaking with imperialism, without proposing a democratic peace to all the nations, and without transforming the war in this way from a predatory and criminal war of conquest into a just, revolutionary war of defence.

Only a thorough and irrevocable break with the capitalists in both home and foreign policies can save our revolution and our country, which is gripped in the iron vice of imperialism.

**THE REVOLUTIONARY DEMOCRACY
AND THE REVOLUTIONARY PROLETARIAT**

To be really revolutionary, the democracy of present-day Russia must march in closest alliance with the proletariat, supporting it in its struggle as the only thoroughly revolutionary class.

Such is the conclusion to which we are led by an analysis of the problem of combating an unavoidable catastrophe of unparalleled dimensions.

The war has created such an immense crisis, has so strained the material and moral forces of the people, has dealt such blows at the entire modern social organisation, that humanity finds itself faced by an alternative: either it perishes, or it entrusts its fate to the most revolutionary class for the swiftest and most radical transition to a superior mode of production.

Owing to a number of historical causes—the greater backwardness of Russia, the unusual hardships brought upon her by the war, the utter rottenness of tsarism and the extreme tenacity of the traditions of 1905—the revolution broke out in Russia earlier than in other countries. The revolution has resulted in Russia catching up with the advanced countries in a few months, insofar as her *political* system is concerned.

But that is not enough. The war is inexorable; it puts the alternative with ruthless severity: either perish, or overtake and outstrip the advanced countries *economically as well*.

That is possible, for we have available the experience of a large number of advanced countries, the fruits of their technology and culture. We are receiving moral support from the protest against the war that is growing in Europe, from the atmosphere of the growing world-wide workers' revolution. We are being inspired and encouraged by a revolutionary-democratic freedom which is extremely rare in time of imperialist war.

Perish or drive full-steam ahead. That is the alternative with which history has confronted us.

And the attitude of the proletariat to the peasantry at such a moment confirms the old Bolshevik concept—correspondingly modifying it—the peasantry must be wrested from the influence

of the bourgeoisie. That is the sole guarantee of salvation for the revolution.

And the peasantry is the most numerous section of the entire petty-bourgeois mass.

Our Socialist-Revolutionaries and Mensheviks have assumed the reactionary function of keeping the peasantry under the influence of the bourgeoisie and leading it to form a coalition with the bourgeoisie, and not with the proletariat.

The masses are learning rapidly from the experience of revolution. And the reactionary policy of the Socialist-Revolutionaries and Mensheviks is meeting with failure: they have been beaten in the Soviets of both Petrograd and Moscow.¹⁰ A "Left" opposition is growing in both petty-bourgeois democratic parties. On September 10, 1917, a city conference of Socialist-Revolutionaries held in Petrograd had a two-thirds, majority of *Left* Socialist-Revolutionaries, who incline towards an alliance with the proletariat and reject an alliance (coalition) with the bourgeoisie.

The Socialist-Revolutionaries and Mensheviks repeat the comparison beloved of the bourgeoisie—bourgeoisie and democracy. But, in essence, such a comparison is as meaningless as comparing pounds with yards.

There is such a thing as a democratic bourgeoisie, and there is such a thing as bourgeois democracy; one would have to be completely ignorant of both history and political economy to deny this.

The Socialist-Revolutionaries and Mensheviks needed this false comparison to *conceal* the incontrovertible fact that between the bourgeoisie and the proletariat there stands the *petty bourgeoisie*. And, by virtue of its economic class status, it inevitably vacillates between the bourgeoisie and the proletariat.

The Socialist-Revolutionaries and Mensheviks are trying to draw the petty bourgeoisie into an alliance with the bourgeoisie. That is the whole meaning of their "coalition", of the coalition Cabinet and of the whole policy of Kerensky, a typical semi-Cadet. In the six months of the revolution this policy has suffered a complete fiasco.

The Cadets are full of malicious glee: the revolution, they

say, has suffered collapse; the revolution has been *unable* to cope either with the war or with economic dislocation.

That is not true. It is the *Cadets, the Socialist-Revolutionaries and the Mensheviks* who have suffered collapse, for this bloc has ruled Russia for half a year, only to increase the economic dislocation and confuse and aggravate the military situation.

The more complete the collapse of the *union* of the bourgeoisie with the *Socialist-Revolutionaries and Mensheviks*, the sooner will the people *learn their lesson* and the more easily will they find the *correct* way out, namely, the alliance of the poor peasantry, i.e., the majority of the peasantry, with the proletariat.

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THE STATE AND REVOLUTION

(Excerpts)

We are not utopians, we do not indulge in "dreams" of dispensing *at once* with all administration, with all subordination; these anarchist dreams, based upon a lack of understanding of the tasks of the proletarian dictatorship, are totally alien to Marxism, and, as a matter of fact, serve only to postpone the socialist revolution until people are different. No, we want the socialist revolution with people as they are now, with people who cannot dispense with subordination, control and "foremen and accountants".

The subordination, however, must be to the armed vanguard of all the exploited and working people, i.e., to the proletariat. A beginning can and must be made at once, overnight, of replacing the specific "bossing" of state officials by the simple functions of "foremen and accountants", functions which are already fully within the capacity of the average town dweller and can well be performed for "workmen's wages".

We ourselves, the workers, will organise large-scale production on the basis of what capitalism has already created, relying on our own experience as workers, establishing strict, iron discipline backed up by the state power of the armed workers; we will reduce the role of the state officials to that of simply carrying out our instructions as responsible, revocable, modestly paid "foremen and accountants" (of course, with the aid of technicians of all sorts, types and degrees). This is *our* proletarian task, this is what we can and must *start* with in accomplishing the proletarian revolution. Such a beginning, on the basis of large-scale production, will of itself lead to the gradual "withering away" of all bureaucracy,

to the gradual creation of an order, an order without quotation marks, an order bearing no similarity to wage slavery, an order in which the functions of control and accounting—becoming more and more simple—will be performed by each in turn, will then become a habit and will finally die out as the *special* functions of a special section of the population.

A witty German Social-Democrat of the seventies of the last century called the *postal service* an example of the socialist economic system. This is very true. At present the postal service is a business organised on the lines of a state-*capitalist* monopoly. Imperialism is gradually transforming all trusts into organisations of a similar type, in which, standing over the “common” people who are overworked and starved, is the same bourgeois bureaucracy. But the mechanism of social management is here already to hand. We have simply to overthrow the capitalists, to crush the resistance of these exploiters with the iron hand of the armed workers, to smash the bureaucratic machine of the modern state—and we shall have a splendidly-equipped mechanism, freed from the “parasite”, a mechanism which can very well be set going by the united workers themselves, who will hire technicians, foremen and accountants, and pay them *all*, as, indeed *all* “state” officials in general, a workman’s wage. Here is a concrete, practical task, immediately possible to fulfil in relation to all trusts, a task that will rid the working people of exploitation and take account of what the Commune¹⁴ had already begun to practise (particularly in building up the state).

To organise the *whole* national economy on the lines of the postal service, so that the technicians, foremen, accountants, as well as *all* officials, shall receive salaries no higher than “a workman’s wage”, all under the control and leadership of the armed proletariat—this is our immediate aim. It is this state, standing on this economic foundation, that we need. This is what will bring about the abolition of parliamentarism and the preservation of representative institutions. This is what will rid the labouring classes of the prostitution of these institutions by the bourgeoisie.

2. THE TRANSITION FROM CAPITALISM TO COMMUNISM

(Excerpt from Chapter V)

Marx continues:

“... Between capitalist and communist society lies the period of the revolutionary transformation of the one into the other. There corresponds to this also a political transition period in which the state can be nothing but *the revolutionary dictatorship of the proletariat*...”¹²

Marx bases this conclusion on an analysis of the role played by the proletariat in modern capitalist society, on the facts concerning the development of this society, and on the irreconcilability of the antagonistic interests of the proletariat and the bourgeoisie.

Previously the question was put in this way: in order to achieve its emancipation, the proletariat must overthrow the bourgeoisie, win political power and establish its revolutionary dictatorship.

Now the question is put somewhat differently: the transition from capitalist society—which is developing towards communism—to a communist society is impossible without a “political transition period”, and the state in this period can only be revolutionary dictatorship of the proletariat.

What, then, is the relation of this dictatorship to democracy?

We have seen that the *Communist Manifesto* simply places side by side the two concepts: “to raise the proletariat to the position of the ruling class” and “to win the battle of democracy”. On the basis of all that has been said above, it is possible to determine more precisely how democracy changes in the transition from capitalism to communism.

In capitalist society, providing it develops under the most favourable conditions, we have a more or less complete democracy in the democratic republic. But this democracy is always hemmed in by the narrow limits set by capitalist exploitation, and consequently always remains, in reality, a democracy for the minority, only for the propertied classes,

only for the rich. Freedom in capitalist society always remains about the same as it was in the ancient Greek republics: freedom for the slave-owners. Owing to the conditions of capitalist exploitation the modern wage slaves are so crushed by want and poverty that "they cannot be bothered with democracy", "they cannot be bothered with politics"; in the ordinary peaceful course of events the majority of the population is debarred from participation in public and political life.

The correctness of this statement is perhaps most clearly confirmed by Germany, precisely because in that country constitutional legality steadily endured for a remarkably long time—for nearly half a century (1871-1914)—and during this period Social-Democracy there was able to achieve far more than in other countries in the way of "utilising legality", and organised a larger proportion of the workers into a political party than anywhere else in the world.

What is this largest proportion of politically conscious and active wage slaves that has so far been observed in capitalist society? One million members of the Social-Democratic Party—out of fifteen million wage-workers! Three million organised in trade unions—out of fifteen million!

Democracy for an insignificant minority, democracy for the rich—that is the democracy of capitalist society. If we look more closely into the machinery of capitalist democracy, we shall see everywhere, in the "petty"—supposedly petty—details of the suffrage (residential qualification, exclusion of women, etc.), in the technique of the representative institutions, in the actual obstacles to the right of assembly (public buildings are not for "beggars"!), in the purely capitalist organisation of the daily press, etc., etc.—we shall see restriction after restriction upon democracy. These restrictions, exceptions, exclusions, obstacles for the poor, seem slight, especially in the eyes of one who has never known want himself and has never been in close contact with the oppressed classes in their mass life (and nine-tenths, if not ninety-nine hundredths, of the bourgeois publicists and politicians are of this category); but in their sum total these restrictions exclude and squeeze out the poor from politics, from active participation in democracy.

Marx grasped this *essence* of capitalist democracy splen-

didly, when, in analysing the experience of the Commune, he said that the oppressed are allowed once every few years to decide which particular representatives of the oppressing class shall represent and repress them in parliament!

But from this capitalist democracy—that is inevitably narrow, and stealthily pushes aside the poor, and is therefore hypocritical and false to the core—forward development does not proceed simply, directly and smoothly towards "greater and greater democracy", as the liberal professors and petty-bourgeois opportunists would have us believe. No, forward development, i.e., towards communism, proceeds through the dictatorship of the proletariat, and cannot do otherwise, for the *resistance* of the capitalist exploiters cannot be *broken* by anyone else or in any other way.

And the dictatorship of the proletariat, i.e., the organisation of the vanguard of the oppressed as the ruling class for the purpose of suppressing the oppressors, cannot result merely in an expansion of democracy. *Simultaneously* with an immense expansion of democracy, which *for the first time* becomes democracy for the poor, democracy for the people, and not democracy for the money-bags, the dictatorship of the proletariat imposes a series of restrictions on the freedom of the oppressors, the exploiters, the capitalists. We must suppress them in order to free humanity from wage slavery, their resistance must be crushed by force; it is clear that where there is suppression, where there is violence, there is no freedom and no democracy.

Engels expressed this splendidly in his letter to Bebel¹³ when he said, as the reader will remember, that "the proletariat uses the state not in the interests of freedom but in order to hold down its adversaries, and as soon as it becomes possible to speak of freedom the state as such ceases to exist".

Democracy for the vast majority of the people, and suppression by force, i.e., exclusion from democracy, of the exploiters and oppressors of the people—this is the change democracy undergoes during the *transition* from capitalism to communism.

Only in communist society, when the resistance of the capitalists has been completely crushed, when the capitalists have disappeared, when there are no classes (i.e., when there is

no distinction between the members of society as regards their relation to the social means of production), *only* then "the state... ceases to exist", and it "*becomes possible to speak of freedom*". Only then will a truly complete democracy become possible and be realised, a democracy without any restrictions whatever. And only then will democracy begin to *wither away*, owing to the simple fact that, freed from capitalist slavery, from the untold horrors, savagery, absurdities and infamies of capitalist exploitation, people will gradually *become accustomed* to observing the elementary rules of social intercourse that have been known for centuries and repeated for thousands of years in all copy-book maxims; they will become accustomed to observing them without force, without compulsion, without subordination, *without the special apparatus* for compulsion called the state.

The expression "the state *withers away*" is very well chosen, for it indicates both the gradual and the spontaneous nature of the process. Only habit can, and undoubtedly will, have such an effect; for we see around us on millions of occasions how readily people become accustomed to observing the necessary rules of social intercourse when there is no exploitation, when there is nothing that rouses indignation, nothing that evokes protest and revolt and creates the need for *suppression*.

Thus, in capitalist society we have a democracy that is curtailed, wretched, false; a democracy only for the rich, for the minority. The dictatorship of the proletariat, the period of transition to communism, will for the first time create democracy for the people, for the majority along with the necessary suppression of the minority—the exploiters. Communism alone is capable of giving really complete democracy, and the more complete it is the more quickly will it become unnecessary and wither away of itself.

In other words: under capitalism we have the state in the proper sense of the word, that is, a special machine for the suppression of one class by another, and, what is more, of the majority by the minority. Naturally, to be successful, such an undertaking as the systematic suppression of the exploited majority by the exploiting minority calls for the utmost ferocity and savagery in the work of suppressing, it calls for

seas of blood through which mankind has to wade in slavery, serfdom and wage labour.

Furthermore, during the *transition* from capitalism to communism suppression is *still* necessary; but it is now the suppression of the exploiting minority by the exploited majority. A special apparatus, a special machine for suppression, the "state", is *still* necessary, but this is now a transitional state; it is no longer a state in the proper sense of the word; for the suppression of the minority of exploiters by the majority of the wage slaves of *yesterday* is comparatively so easy, simple and natural a task that it will entail far less bloodshed than the suppression of the risings of slaves, serfs or wage-labourers, and it will cost mankind far less. And it is compatible with the extension of democracy to such an overwhelming majority of the population that the need for a *special machine* of suppression will begin to disappear. The exploiters are naturally unable to suppress the people without a highly complex machine for performing this task, but *the people* can suppress the exploiters even with a very simple "machine", almost without a "machine", without a special apparatus, by the simpler *organisation of the armed people* (such as the Soviets of Workers' and Soldiers' Deputies, we would remark, running ahead).

Lastly, only communism makes the state absolutely unnecessary, for there is *nobody* to be suppressed—"nobody" in the sense of a *class*, in the sense of a systematic struggle against a definite section of the population. We are not utopians, and do not in the least deny the possibility and inevitability of excesses on the part of *individual persons*, or the need to suppress *such* excesses. In the first place, however, no special machine, no special apparatus of suppression is needed for this; this will be done by the armed people themselves, as simply and as readily as any crowd of civilised people, even in modern society, interferes to put a stop to a scuffle or to prevent a woman from being assaulted. And, secondly, we know that the fundamental social cause of excesses, which consist in the violation of the rules of social intercourse, is the exploitation of the people, their want and their poverty. With the removal of this chief cause, excesses will inevitably begin to "*wither away*". We do not know how

quickly and in what succession, but we know that they will wither away. With their withering away the state will also *wither away*.

Without indulging in utopias, Marx defined more fully what can be defined *now* regarding this future, namely, the difference between the lower and higher phases (levels, stages) of communist society.

3. THE FIRST PHASE OF COMMUNIST SOCIETY

In the *Critique of the Gotha Programme*, Marx goes into detail to disprove Lassalle's idea that under socialism the worker will receive the "undiminished" or "full product of his labour". Marx shows that from the whole of the social labour of society there must be deducted a reserve fund, a fund for the expansion of production, for the replacement of the "wear and tear" of machinery, and so on. Then, from the means of consumption must be deducted a fund for administration expenses, for schools, hospitals, old people's homes and so on.

Instead of Lassalle's hazy, obscure, general phrase ("the full product of his labour to the worker") Marx makes a sober estimate of exactly how socialist society will have to manage its affairs. Marx proceeds to make a *concrete* analysis of the conditions of life of a society in which there will be no capitalism, and says:

"What we have to deal with here" (in analysing the programme of the workers' party) "is a communist society, not as it has *developed* on its own foundations, but, on the contrary, just as it *emerges* from capitalist society; which is thus in every respect, economically, morally and intellectually, still stamped with the birthmarks of the old society from whose womb it emerges."

And it is this communist society—a society which has just emerged into the light of day out of the womb of capitalism and which, in every respect, bears the birthmarks of the old society—that Marx terms the "first", or lower phase of communist society.

The means of production are no longer the private property of individuals. The means of production belong to the whole of society. Every member of society, performing a certain part of the socially-necessary work, receives a certificate from society to the effect that he has done a certain amount of work. And with this certificate he receives from the public store of consumption articles a corresponding quantity of products. After a deduction is made of the amount of labour which goes to the public fund, every worker, therefore, receives from society as much as he has given to it.

"Equality" apparently reigns supreme.

But when Lassalle, having in view such a social order (usually called socialism, but termed by Marx the first phase of communism), says that this is "equitable distribution", that this is "the equal right of all members of society to an equal product of labour", Lassalle is mistaken and Marx exposes his error.

"Equal right," says Marx, we certainly do have here; but it is *still* a "bourgeois right", which, like every right, *presupposes inequality*. Every right is an application of an *equal* measure to *different* people who in fact are not alike, are not equal to one another; that is why "equal right" is really a violation of equality and an injustice. In fact, every man, having performed as much social labour as another, receives an equal share of the social product (after the above-mentioned deductions).

But people are not alike: one is strong, another is weak; one is married, another is not; one has more children, another has less, and so on. And the conclusion Marx draws is:

"...with an equal performance of labour, and hence an equal share in the social consumption fund, one will in fact receive more than another, one will be richer than another, and so on. To avoid all these defects, right instead of being equal would have to be unequal..."

The first phase of communism, therefore, cannot yet produce justice and equality: differences, and unjust differences, in wealth will still exist, but the *exploitation* of man by man will have become impossible, because it will be impossible to seize the *means of production*, the factories, machines,

land, etc., as private property. While smashing Lassalle's petty-bourgeois, confused phrases about "equality" and "justice" in general, Marx shows the *course of development* of communist society, which is *compelled* to abolish at first *only* the "injustice" of the means of production seized by individuals, and which is *unable* at once to eliminate the other injustice, which consists in the distribution of articles of consumption "according to the amount of labour performed" (and not according to needs).

The vulgar economists, including the bourgeois professors and "our" Tugan among them, constantly reproach the socialists with forgetting the inequality of people and with "dreaming" of eliminating this inequality. Such a reproach, as we see, only proves the extreme ignorance of the bourgeois ideologists.

Marx not only most scrupulously takes account of the inevitable inequality of men, but he also takes into account the fact that the mere conversion of the means of production into the common property of the whole society (commonly called "socialism") *does not remove* the defects of distribution and the inequality of "bourgeois right" which *continues to prevail* as long as products are divided "according to the amount of labour performed". Continuing, Marx says:

"... But these defects are inevitable in the first phase of communist society as it is when it has just emerged after prolonged birth pangs from capitalist society. Right can never be higher than the economic structure of society and its cultural development conditioned thereby..."

And so, in the first phase of communist society (usually called socialism) "bourgeois right" is *not* abolished in its entirety, but only in part, only in proportion to the economic revolution so far attained, i.e., only in respect of the means of production. "Bourgeois right" recognises them as the private property of individuals. Socialism converts them into *common* property. *To that extent*—and to that extent alone—"bourgeois right" disappears.

However, it continues to exist as far as its other part is concerned; it continues to exist in the capacity of regulator

(determining factor) in the distribution of products and the allotment of labour among the members of society. The socialist principle: "He who does not work, neither shall he eat," is *already* realised; the other socialist principle: "An equal amount of products for an equal amount of labour," is also *already* realised. But this is not yet communism, and it does not yet abolish "bourgeois right", which gives to unequal individuals, in return for unequal (really unequal) amounts of labour, equal amounts of products.

This is a "defect", says Marx, but it is unavoidable in the first phase of communism; for if we are not to indulge in utopianism, we must not think that having overthrown capitalism people will at once learn to work for society *without any standard of right*; and in fact the abolition of capitalism *does not immediately create* the economic premises for *such* a change.

And there is no other standard than that of "bourgeois right". To this extent, therefore, there still remains the need for a state, which, while safeguarding the common ownership of the means of production, would safeguard equality in labour and equality in the distribution of products.

The state withers away in so far as there are no longer any capitalists, any classes, and, consequently, no *class* can be *suppressed*.

But the state has not yet completely withered away, since there still remains the safeguarding of "bourgeois right", which sanctifies actual inequality. For the state to wither away completely full communism is necessary.

4. THE HIGHER PHASE OF COMMUNIST SOCIETY

Marx continues:

"... In a higher phase of communist society, after the enslaving subordination of the individual to the division of labour, and therewith also the antithesis between mental and physical labour, has vanished; after labour has become not only a means of life but life's prime want; after the productive forces have also increased with the all-round development of the individual, and all

the springs of co-operative wealth flow more abundantly—only then can the narrow horizon of bourgeois right be crossed in its entirety and society inscribe on its banners: From each according to his ability, to each according to his needs!"

Only now can we fully appreciate the correctness of Engels's remarks in which he mercilessly ridiculed the absurdity of combining the words "freedom" and "state". So long as the state exists there is no freedom. When there will be freedom, there will be no state.

The economic basis for the complete withering away of the state is such a high stage of development of communism when the antithesis between mental and physical labour disappears, when there, consequently, disappears one of the principal sources of modern *social inequality*—a source, moreover, which cannot on any account be removed immediately by the mere conversion of the means of production into public property, by the mere expropriation of the capitalists.

This expropriation will create *the possibility* of an enormous development of the productive forces. And when we see how incredibly capitalism is already *retarding* this development, when we see how much progress could be achieved on the basis of the level of technique now already attained, we are entitled to say with the fullest confidence that the expropriation of the capitalists will inevitably result in an enormous development of the productive forces of human society. But how rapidly this development will proceed, how soon it will reach the point of breaking away from the division of labour, of doing away with the antithesis between mental and physical labour, of transforming labour into "the prime necessity of life"—we do not and *cannot* know.

That is why we are entitled to speak only of the inevitable withering away of the state, emphasising the protracted nature of this process and its dependence upon the rapidity of development of the *higher phase* of communism, and leaving the question of the time required for, or the concrete forms of, the withering away quite open, because there is *no* material for answering these questions.

It will become possible for the state to wither away completely when society adopts the rule: "From each according to his ability, to each according to his needs", i.e., when people have become so accustomed to observing the fundamental rules of social intercourse and when their labour becomes so productive that they will voluntarily work *according to their ability*. "The narrow horizon of bourgeois right", which compels one to calculate with the cold-heartedness of a Shylock whether one has not worked half an hour more than somebody else, whether one is not getting less pay than somebody else—this narrow horizon will then be crossed. There will then be no need for society to regulate the quantity of products to be received by each; each will take freely "according to his needs".

From the bourgeois point of view, it is easy to declare that such a social order is "sheer utopia" and to sneer at the socialists for promising everyone the right to receive from society, without any control over the labour of the individual citizen, any quantity of truffles, cars, pianos, etc. Even to this day, most bourgeois "savants" confine themselves to sneering in this way, thereby displaying both their ignorance and their mercenary defence of capitalism.

Ignorance—for it has never entered the head of any socialist to "promise" that the higher phase of the development of communism will arrive; whereas the great socialists, in *foreseeing* that it will arrive presuppose not the present productivity of labour *and not the present* ordinary run of people, who, like the seminary students in Pomyalovsky's stories,¹⁴ are capable of damaging the stocks of public wealth "just for fun", and of demanding the impossible.

Until the "higher" phase of communism arrives, the socialists demand the *strictest* control by society *and by the state* of the measure of labour and the measure of consumption; but this control must *start* with the expropriation of the capitalists, with the establishment of workers' control over the capitalists, and must be exercised not by a state of bureaucrats, but by a state of *armed workers*.

The mercenary defence of capitalism by the bourgeois ideologists (and their hangers-on, like the Tseretelis, Chernovs and Co.) consists precisely in that they *substitute* con-

troversies and discussions about the distant future for the vital and burning question of *present-day* politics, namely, the expropriation of the capitalists, the conversion of *all* citizens into workers and employees of *one* huge "syndicate"—the whole state—and the complete subordination of the entire work of this syndicate to a genuinely democratic state, to *the state of the Soviets of Workers' and Soldiers' Deputies*.

In fact, when a learned professor, followed by the philistine, followed in turn by the Tseretelis and Chernovs, talk of unreasonable utopias, of the demagogic promises of the Bolsheviks, of the impossibility of "introducing" socialism, it is the higher stage or phase of communism they have in mind, which no one has ever promised or even thought to "introduce", because generally speaking it cannot be "introduced".

And this brings us to the question of the scientific distinction between socialism and communism, which Engels touched on in his above-quoted argument about the incorrectness of the name "Social-Democrat". Politically the distinction between the first, or lower, and the higher phase of communism will in time, probably, be tremendous; but it would be ridiculous to identify this distinction now, under capitalism, and only individual anarchists, perhaps, could invest it with primary importance (if there still remain people among the anarchists who have learned nothing from the "Plekhanovite" conversion of the Kropotkins, the Graveses, the Cornelissens and other "stars" of anarchism into social-chauvinists or "anarcho-trenchists", as Ghe, one of the few anarchists who have still preserved a sense of honour and a conscience, has put it).

But the scientific distinction between socialism and communism is clear. What is usually called socialism was termed by Marx the "first" or lower phase of communist society. In so far as the means of production become *common* property, the word "communism" is also applicable here, providing we do not forget that this is *not* full communism. The great significance of Marx's explanations is that here, too, he consistently applies materialist dialectics, the theory of development, and regards communism as something which develops *out of* capitalism. Instead of scholastically invented, "concocted" definitions and fruitless disputes about words (What is

socialism? What is communism?), Marx gives an analysis of what might be called the stages of the economic maturity of communism.

In its first phase, or first stage, communism *cannot* as yet be fully mature economically and entirely free from traditions or traces of capitalism. Hence the interesting phenomenon that communism in its first phase retains "the narrow horizon of *bourgeois* right". Of course, bourgeois right in regard to the distribution of *consumption* goods inevitably presupposes the existence of the *bourgeois state*, for right is nothing without an apparatus capable of *enforcing* the observance of the standards of right.

It follows that under communism there remains for a time not only bourgeois right, but even the bourgeois state without the bourgeoisie!

This may sound like a paradox or simply a dialectical conundrum, of which Marxism is often accused by people who do not take the slightest trouble to study its extraordinarily profound content.

But as a matter of fact, remnants of the old, surviving in the new, confront us in life at every step, both in nature and in society. And Marx did not arbitrarily insert a scrap of "bourgeois" right into communism, but indicated what is economically and politically inevitable in a society emerging *out of the womb* of capitalism.

Democracy is of enormous importance to the working class in its struggle against the capitalists for its emancipation. But democracy is by no means a boundary not to be overstepped; it is only one of the stages on the road from feudalism to capitalism, and from capitalism to communism.

Democracy means equality. The great significance of the proletariat's struggle for equality and of equality as a slogan will be clear if we correctly interpret it as meaning the abolition of *classes*. But democracy means only *formal* equality. And as soon as equality is achieved for all members of society *in relation* to ownership of the means of production, that is, equality of labour and equality of wages, humanity will inevitably be confronted with the question of advancing farther, from formal equality to actual equality, i.e., to the operation of the rule, "from each according to his ability,

to each according to his needs". By what stages, by means of what practical measures humanity will proceed to this supreme aim—we do not and cannot know. But it is important to realise how infinitely mendacious is the ordinary bourgeois conception of socialism as something lifeless, petrified, fixed once and for all, whereas in reality *only* under socialism will a rapid, genuine, really mass forward movement, embracing first the *majority* and then the whole of the population, commence in all spheres of public and personal life.

Democracy is a form of the state, one of its varieties. Consequently, it, like every state, represents on the one hand the organised, systematic use of violence against persons; but on the other hand it signifies the formal recognition of equality of citizens, the equal right of all to determine the structure of, and to administer, the state. This, in turn, results in the fact that, at a certain stage in the development of democracy, it first welds together the class that wages a revolutionary struggle against capitalism—the proletariat and enables it to crush, smash to atoms, wipe off the face of the earth the bourgeois, even the republican bourgeois, state machine, the standing army, the police and the bureaucracy. And it enables it to substitute for them a *more* democratic state machine, but a state machine nevertheless, in the shape of the armed masses of workers who form a militia in which the entire population takes part.

Here "quantity turns into quality": *such* a degree of democracy implies overstepping the boundaries of bourgeois society, the beginning of its socialist reconstruction. If really *all* take part in the administration of the state, capitalism cannot retain its hold. And the development of capitalism, in turn, itself creates the *premises* that *enable* really "all" to take part in the administration of the state. Some of these premises are: universal literacy, which has already been achieved in a number of the most advanced capitalist countries, then the "training and disciplining" of millions of workers by the huge, complex, socialised apparatus of the postal service, railways, big factories, large-scale commerce, banking, etc., etc.

Given these *economic* premises it is quite possible, after the overthrow of the capitalists and the bureaucrats, to pro-

ceed immediately, overnight, to replace them in the *control* of production and distribution, in the work of *keeping account* of labour and products by the armed workers, by the whole of the armed population. (The question of control and accounting should not be confused with the question of the scientifically trained staff of engineers, agronomists and so on. These gentlemen are working today in obedience with the wishes of the capitalists; they will work even better tomorrow in obedience with the wishes of the armed workers.)

Accounting and control—that is the *main* thing required for "arranging" the smooth working, the correct functioning of the *first phase* of communist society. *All* citizens are transformed here into hired employees of the state, which consists of the armed workers. *All* citizens become employees and workers of a *single* nation-wide state "syndicate". All that is required is that they should work equally, do their proper share of work, and get equally paid. The accounting and control necessary for this have been *simplified* by capitalism to the extreme and reduced to the extraordinarily simple operations—which any literate person can perform—of supervising and recording, knowledge of the four rules of arithmetic, and issuing appropriate receipts.*

When the *majority* of the people begin independently and everywhere to keep such accounts and maintain such control over the capitalists (now converted into employees) and over the intellectual gentry who preserve their capitalist habits, this control will really become universal, general, popular; and there will be no way of getting away from it, there will be "nowhere to go".

The whole of society will have become a single office and a single factory, with equality of labour and equality of pay.

But this "factory" discipline, which the proletariat, after defeating the capitalists, after overthrowing the exploiters, will extend to the whole of society, is by no means our ideal, or our ultimate goal. It is but a necessary *step* for the

* When most of the functions of the state are reduced to such accounting and control by the workers themselves, it will cease to be a "political state" and the "public functions will lose their political character and be transformed into simple administrative functions" (cf. above, Chapter IV, § 2, Engels's Controversy with the Anarchists).

purpose of thoroughly cleaning society of all the infamies and abominations of capitalist exploitation, *and for further progress.*

From the moment all members of society, or even only the vast majority, have learned to administer the state *themselves*, have taken this work into their own hands, have "set in motion" control over the insignificant minority of capitalists, over the gentry who wish to preserve their capitalist habits and over the workers who have been profoundly corrupted by capitalism—from this moment the need for government of any kind begins to disappear altogether. The more complete the democracy, the nearer the moment approaches when it becomes unnecessary. The more democratic the "state" which consists of the armed workers, and which is "no longer a state in the proper sense of the word", the more rapidly *every form* of state begins to wither away.

For when *all* have learned to administer and actually do independently administer social production, independently keep account and exercise control over the idlers, the gentlefolk, the swindlers and suchlike "guardians of capitalist traditions", the escape from this popular accounting and control will inevitably become so incredibly difficult, such a rare exception, and will probably be accompanied by such swift and severe punishment (for the armed workers are practical men and not sentimental intellectuals, and they will scarcely allow anyone to trifle with them), that the *necessity* of observing the simple, fundamental rules of human intercourse will very soon become a *habit*.

Then the door will be wide open for the transition from the first phase of communist society to its higher phase, and with it to the complete withering away of the state.

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REPORT ON THE LAND TO THE SECOND ALL-RUSSIA CONGRESS OF SOVIETS

October 26 (November 8), 1917

We maintain that the revolution has proved and demonstrated how important it is that the land question should be put clearly. The outbreak of the armed uprising, the second, the October Revolution, clearly proves that the land must be turned over to the peasants. The government that has been overthrown and the compromising parties of the Mensheviks and Socialist-Revolutionaries committed a crime when they kept postponing the settlement of the land question on various pretexts and thereby brought the country to economic dislocation and a peasant revolt. Their talk about riots and anarchy in the countryside sounds false, cowardly, and deceitful. Where and when have riots and anarchy been provoked by wise measures? If the government had acted wisely, and if their measures had met the needs of the poor peasants, would there have been unrest among the peasant masses? But all the measures of the government, approved by the Avksentyev and Dan Soviets, went counter to the interests of the peasants and compelled them to revolt.

Having provoked the revolt, the government raised a hue and cry about riots and anarchy, for which they themselves were responsible. They were going to crush it by blood and iron, but were themselves swept away by the armed uprising of the revolutionary soldiers, sailors, and workers. The first duty of the government of the workers' and peasants' revolution must be to settle the land question, which can pacify and satisfy the vast masses of poor peasants. I shall read to you the clauses of a decree your Soviet Government must issue. In one of the clauses of this decree is embodied the Mandate to the Land Committees, compiled from 242 mandates from local Soviets of Peasants' Deputies,

DECREE ON LAND

(1) Landlord ownership of land is abolished forthwith without any compensation.

(2) The landed estates, as also all crown, monastery, and church lands, with all their livestock, implements, buildings and everything pertaining thereto, shall be placed at the disposal of the volost land committees and the uyezd Soviets of Peasants' Deputies pending the convocation of the Constituent Assembly.

(3) All damage to confiscated property, which henceforth belongs to the whole people, is proclaimed a grave crime to be punished by the revolutionary courts. The uyezd Soviets of Peasants' Deputies shall take all necessary measures to assure the observance of the strictest order during the confiscation of the landed estates, to determine the size of estates, and the particular estates subject to confiscation, to draw up exact inventories of all property confiscated and to protect in the strictest revolutionary way all agricultural enterprises transferred to the people, with all buildings, implements, livestock, food stocks, etc.

(4) The following peasant Mandate, compiled by the newspaper *Izvestia of the All-Russia Soviet of Peasants' Deputies* from 242 local peasant mandates and published in No. 88 of *Izvestia* (Petrograd, No. 88, August 19, 1917), shall serve everywhere to guide the implementation of the great land reforms until a final decision on the latter is taken by the Constituent Assembly.

(5) The land of ordinary peasants and ordinary Cossacks shall not be confiscated.

PEASANT MANDATE ON THE LAND

"The land question in its full scope can be settled only by the popular Constituent Assembly.

"The most equitable settlement of the land question is to be as follows:

"(1) *Private ownership of land shall be abolished for ever*; land shall not be sold, purchased, leased, mortgaged, or otherwise alienated.

"All land, whether *state, crown, monastery, church, possessional*¹⁵ *entailed, private, public, peasant, etc.*, shall be alienated without compensa-

tion and become the property of the whole people, and pass into the use of all those who cultivate it.

"Persons who suffer by this property revolution shall be deemed to be entitled to public support only for the period necessary for adaptation to the new conditions of life.

"(2) All mineral wealth, e.g., ore, oil, coal, salt, etc., as well as all forests and waters of state importance, shall pass into the exclusive use of the state. All the small streams, lakes, woods, etc., shall pass into the use of the communes, to be administered by the local self-government bodies.

"(3) Lands on which *high-level scientific farming* is practised, e.g., orchards, plantations, seed plots, nurseries, hothouses, etc., shall not be divided up, but shall be converted into model farms, to be turned over for exclusive use to the state or to the communes, depending on the size and importance of such lands.

"Household land in towns and villages, with orchards and vegetable gardens, shall be reserved for the use of their present owners, the size of the holdings, and the size of tax levied for the use thereof, to be determined by law.

"(4) Stud farms, government and private pedigree stock and poultry farms, etc., shall be confiscated and become the property of the whole people, and pass into the exclusive use of the state or a commune, depending on the size and importance of such farms.

"The question of compensation shall be examined by the Constituent Assembly.

"(5) All livestock and farm implements of the confiscated estates shall pass into the exclusive use of the state or a commune, depending on their size and importance, and no compensation shall be paid for this.

"The farm implements of peasants with little land shall not be subject to confiscation.

"(6) The right to use the land shall be accorded to all citizens of the Russian state (without distinction of sex) desiring to cultivate it by their own labour, with the help of their families, or in partnership, but only as long as they are able to cultivate it. The employment of hired labour is not permitted.

"In the event of the temporary physical disability of any member of a village commune for a period of up to two years, the village commune shall be obliged to assist him for this period by collectively cultivating his land until he is again able to work.

"Peasants who, owing to old age or ill-health, are permanently disabled and unable to cultivate the land personally, shall lose their right to the use of it, but, in return, shall receive a pension from the state.

"(7) Land tenure shall be on an equality basis, i.e., the land shall be distributed among the toilers in conformity with a labour standard or a consumption standard, depending on local conditions.

"There shall be absolutely no restriction on the forms of land tenure: household, farm, communal, or co-operative, as shall be decided in each individual village and settlement.

"(8) All land, when alienated, shall become part of the national land fund. Its distribution among the toilers shall be in charge of the local

and central self-government bodies, from democratically organised village and city communes, in which there are no distinctions of social rank, to central regional government bodies.

"The land fund shall be subject to periodical redistribution, depending on the growth of population and the increase in the productivity and the scientific level of farming.

"When the boundaries of allotments are altered, the original nucleus of the allotment shall be left intact.

"The land of the members who leave the commune shall revert to the land fund; preferential right to such land shall be given to the near relatives of the members who have left, or to persons designated by the latter.

"The cost of fertilisers and improvements put into the land, to the extent that they have not been fully used up at the time the allotment is returned to the land fund, shall be compensated.

"Should the available land fund in a particular district prove inadequate for the needs of the local population, the surplus population shall be settled elsewhere.

"The state shall take upon itself the organisation of resettlement and shall bear the cost thereof, as well as the cost of supplying implements, etc.

"Resettlement shall be effected in the following order: landless peasants desiring to resettle, then members of the commune who are of vicious habits, deserters, and so on, and, finally, by lot or by agreement."

The entire contents of this Mandate, as expressing the absolute will of the vast majority of the class-conscious peasants of all Russia, is proclaimed a provisional law, which, pending the convocation of the Constituent Assembly, shall be carried into effect as far as possible immediately, and as to certain of its provisions with due gradualness, as shall be determined by the uyezd Soviets of Peasants' Deputies.

* * *

Voices are being raised here that the decree itself and the Mandate were drawn up by the Socialist-Revolutionaries. What of it? Does it matter who drew them up? As a democratic government, we cannot ignore the decision of the masses of the people, even though we may disagree with it. In the fire of experience, applying the decree in practice, and carrying it out locally, the peasants will themselves realise where the truth lies. And even if the peasants continue to follow the Socialist-Revolutionaries, even if they give this party a majority in the Constituent Assembly, we shall still

say—what of it? Life is the best teacher and it will show who is right. Let the peasants solve this problem from one end and we shall solve it from the other. Life will oblige us to draw together in the general stream of revolutionary creative work, in the elaboration of new state forms. We must be guided by experience; we must allow complete freedom to the creative facilities of the masses. The old government, which was overthrown by armed uprising, wanted to settle the land question with the help of the old, unchanged tsarist bureaucracy. But instead of solving the question, the bureaucracy only fought the peasants. The peasants have learnt something during the eight months of our revolution; they want to settle all land questions themselves. We are therefore opposed to all amendments to this draft law. We want no details in it, for we are writing a decree, not a programme of action. Russia is vast, and local conditions vary. We trust that the peasants themselves will be able to solve the problem correctly, properly, better than we could do it. Whether they do it in our spirit or in the spirit of the programme of the Socialist-Revolutionaries is not the point. The point is that the peasants should be firmly assured that there are no more landlords in the countryside, that they themselves must decide all questions, and that they themselves must arrange their own lives.

Izvestia No. 209,
October 28, 1917
and *Pravda* No. 171,
November 10 (October 28), 1917

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DRAFT REGULATIONS ON WORKERS' CONTROL

1. *Workers' control* over the production, storage, purchase and sale of all products and raw materials shall be introduced in all industrial, commercial, banking, agricultural and other enterprises employing not less than five workers and employees (together), or with an annual turnover of not less than 10,000 rubles.

2. Workers' control shall be exercised by all the workers and employees of an enterprise, either directly, if the enterprise is small enough to permit it, or through their elected representatives, who shall be elected *immediately* at general meetings, at which minutes of the elections shall be taken and the names of those elected communicated to the government and to the local Soviets of Workers', Soldiers' and Peasants' Deputies.

3. Unless permission is given by the elected representatives of the workers and employees, the suspension of work of an enterprise or an industrial establishment of state importance (see §7), or any change in its operation is absolutely prohibited.

4. The elected representatives shall be given access to *all* books and documents and to *all* warehouses and stocks of materials, instruments and products, without exception.

5. The decisions of the elected representatives of the workers and employees are binding upon the owners of enterprises and may be annulled only by trade unions and their congresses.

6. In all enterprises of state importance *all* owners and *all* representatives of the workers and employees elected for the purpose of exercising workers' control shall be answerable to the state for the maintenance of the strictest order and

discipline and for the protection of property. Persons guilty of neglect of duty, concealment of stocks, accounts, etc., shall be punished by the confiscation of the whole of their property and by imprisonment for a term of up to five years.

7. By enterprises of state importance are meant all enterprises working for defence, or in any way connected with the manufacture of articles necessary for the existence of the masses of the population.

8. More detailed rules on workers' control shall be drawn up by the local Soviets of Workers' Deputies and by conferences of factory trade union committees, and also by committees of employees at general meetings of their representatives.

Written between October 26 and 31
(November 8 and 13), 1917

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**DRAFT DECREE ON THE NATIONALISATION
OF THE BANKS AND ON MEASURES
NECESSARY FOR ITS IMPLEMENTATION**

The critical food situation and the threat of famine caused by the profiteering and sabotage of the capitalists and officials, as well as by the general economic ruin, make it necessary to adopt extraordinary revolutionary measures to combat this evil.

In order that all citizens of the state, and in the first place all the toiling classes, may be able, under the leadership of their Soviets of Workers', Soldiers' and Peasants' Deputies, to undertake this struggle and normalise the country's economic life immediately and comprehensively, stopping at nothing and acting in the most revolutionary manner, the following regulations are decreed:

**DRAFT DECREE
ON THE NATIONALISATION OF THE BANKS
AND ON MEASURES NECESSARY
FOR ITS IMPLEMENTATION**

1. All joint-stock companies are proclaimed the property of the state.

2. Members of boards and directors of joint-stock companies, as well as all shareholders belonging to the wealthy classes (i.e., possessing property exceeding 5,000 rubles in value or an income exceeding 500 rubles per month), shall be obliged to continue to conduct the affairs of these enterprises in good order, observing the law on workers' control, presenting all shares to the State Bank and submitting to the local Soviets of Workers', Soldiers' and Peasants' Deputies weekly reports on their activities.

3. State loans, foreign and domestic, are annulled (abrogated).

4. The interests of small holders of bonds and all kinds of shares, i.e., holders belonging to the toiling classes of the population, shall be fully guaranteed.

5. General labour conscription is introduced. All citizens of both sexes between the ages of sixteen and fifty-five shall be obliged to perform work assigned to them by the local Soviets of Workers', Soldiers' and Peasants' Deputies, or by other bodies of Soviet power.

6. As a first step towards the introduction of general labour conscription, it is decreed that members of the wealthy classes (see § 2) shall be obliged to keep, and make proper entries in, consumer-worker books, or workers' budget books, which must be presented to the appropriate workers' organisations or to the local Soviets and their bodies for weekly recording of the performance of work undertaken by each.

7. For the purpose of proper accounting and distribution of food and other necessary products, every citizen of the state shall be obliged to join a consumers' society. The food boards, committees of supply and other similar organisations, as well as the railway and transport unions, shall, under the direction of the Soviets of Workers', Soldiers' and Peasants' Deputies, establish supervision to ensure the observance of the present law. Members of the wealthy classes, in particular, shall be obliged to perform the work to be assigned to them by the Soviets in the sphere of organising and conducting the affairs of the consumers' societies.

8. The railway workers' and employees' unions shall be obliged urgently to draw up and immediately begin to carry into effect emergency measures for the better organisation of transport, particularly as regards the delivery of food, fuel and other prime necessities, and shall be guided in the first place by the instructions and orders of the Soviets of Workers', Soldiers' and Peasants' Deputies and then of the bodies authorised by the latter and by the Supreme Economic Council.

Similarly, the railway unions, working in conjunction with the local Soviets, shall be responsible for most vigorously

combating bag-trading and mercilessly suppressing all profiteering, without hesitating to adopt revolutionary measures.

9. Workers' organisations, unions of office employees and local Soviets shall be obliged immediately to set about placing enterprises which are closing down or are to be demobilised, and also unemployed workers, on the performance of useful work and the production of necessities, and searching for orders, raw materials and fuel. While under no circumstances postponing this work as well as the beginning of the exchange of country produce for city goods pending receipt of special instructions from higher bodies, the local unions and Soviets shall be strictly guided by the orders and instructions of the Supreme Economic Council.

10. Members of the wealthy classes shall be obliged to keep all their monetary possessions in the State Bank and its branches, or in the savings-banks, and shall be entitled to withdraw not more than 100-125 rubles a week (as shall be established by the local Soviets) for living expenses; withdrawals for the needs of production and trade shall be made only on presentation of written certificates of the organs of workers' control.

To facilitate supervision ensuring the due observance of the present law, regulations will be introduced providing for the exchange of existing currency notes for new currency notes. Persons guilty of deceiving the state and the people shall be liable to have all their property confiscated.

11. All offenders against the present law, saboteurs and government officials who go on strike, as well as profiteers, shall be liable to a similar penalty, and also to imprisonment, dispatch to the front, or hard labour. The local Soviets and their bodies shall urgently decide upon the most revolutionary measures to combat these real enemies of the people.

12. The trade unions and other organisations of the working people, in conjunction with the local Soviets, and with the collaboration of the most reliable persons recommended by Party and other organisations, shall form mobile groups of inspectors to supervise the observance of the present law, to verify the quantity and quality of work performed and

to bring to trial before the revolutionary courts persons guilty of violating or evading the law.

The workers and office employees of the nationalised enterprises must exert every effort and adopt extraordinary measures to improve the organisation of the work, strengthen the discipline and raise the productivity of labour. The organs of workers' control are to present to the Supreme Economic Council weekly reports on the results achieved in this respect. Those found guilty of shortcomings and neglect are to be brought before revolutionary courts.

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No. 11

HOW TO ORGANISE EMULATION

Bourgeois authors have been using up reams of paper praising competition, private enterprise, and all the other magnificent virtues and blessings of the capitalists and of the capitalist system. Socialists have been accused of refusing to understand the importance of these virtues, and of ignoring "human nature". As a matter of fact, however, capitalism long ago replaced small, independent commodity production, under which competition could develop enterprise, energy and bold initiative to any *considerable* extent, with large- and very large-scale factory production, joint-stock companies, trusts and other monopolies. Under *such* capitalism, competition means the incredibly brutal suppression of the enterprise, energy and bold initiative of the *mass* of the population, of its overwhelming majority, of ninety-nine out of every hundred toilers; it also means that competition is replaced by financial fraud, despotism, servility on the upper rungs of the social ladder.

Far from extinguishing emulation, socialism, on the contrary, for the first time creates the opportunity for employing it on a really *wide* and on a really *mass* scale, for actually drawing the majority of toilers into an arena of such labour in which they can display their abilities, develop the capacities, reveal the talents that are so abundant among the people, and that capitalism crushed, suppressed and strangled in thousands and millions.

Now that a socialist government is in power our task is to organise emulation.

The hangers-on and spongers on the bourgeoisie described socialism as a uniform, routine, monotonous and drab barrack system. The lackeys of the money-bags, the lickspittles of the

exploiters—the bourgeois intellectual gentlemen—used socialism as a bogey to "frighten" the people, who, under capitalism, were doomed to penal servitude and the barracks, to arduous, monotonous toil, to a life of dire poverty and semi-starvation. The first step towards the emancipation of the people from this penal servitude is the confiscation of the landed estates, the introduction of workers' control and the nationalisation of the banks. The next steps will be the nationalisation of the factories and works, the compulsory organisation of the whole population in consumers' co-operative societies, which are at the same time societies for the sale of products, and the state monopoly of the trade in grain and other necessities.

Only now is the opportunity created for the truly mass display of enterprise, emulation and bold initiative. Every factory from which the capitalist has been ejected, or in which he has at least been curbed by genuine workers' control, every village from which the landlord exploiter has been smoked out and his land confiscated, is now, and has only now become a field in which the working man can reveal his talents, somewhat unbend his back, straighten himself, and feel that he is a human being. For the first time after centuries of working for others, of working in subjection for the exploiter, it has become possible to *work for oneself* and moreover to employ all the achievements of modern technique and culture in one's work.

Of course, this greatest change in human history from working in subjection to working for oneself cannot take place without friction, difficulties, conflicts and violence against the inveterate parasites and their hangers-on. No worker has any illusions on that score. Hardened by many long years of penal servitude for the exploiters, by the exploiters' innumerable insults and mockery, and by dire want, the workers and poor peasants know that time is needed to *break* the resistance of the exploiters. The workers and peasants are not in the least infected by the sentimental illusions of the intellectual gentlemen, of the whole crowd of *Novaya Zhizn*¹⁶ and other slush, who "shouted" against the capitalists until they were hoarse, "gesticulated" against them and "denounced" them, only to burst into tears and to behave

like whipped puppies when it came to *deeds*, to putting threats into action, to carrying out in practice the work of *removing* the capitalists.

The great change from working in subjection to working for oneself, to labour planned and organised on a gigantic, national (and to a certain extent international, world) scale also requires—in addition to “*military*” measures for the suppression of the resistance of the exploiters—tremendous *organisational*, organising effort on the part of the proletariat and the poor peasants. The organisational task is interwoven to form a single whole with the task of ruthlessly suppressing by military methods yesterday’s slave-owners (capitalists) and their packs of lackeys—the bourgeois intellectual gentlemen. Yesterday’s slave-owners and their stooges, the intellectuals, say and think, “We have always been organisers and chiefs. We have commanded, and we want to continue doing so. We shall refuse to obey the ‘common people’, the workers and peasants. We shall not submit to them. We shall convert knowledge into a weapon for the defence of the privileges of the money-bags and of the rule of capital over the people.”

That is what the bourgeoisie and the bourgeois intellectuals say, think, and do. From the point of view of *self-interest* their behaviour is comprehensible. The hangers-on and spongers on the feudal landlords—the priests, the scribes, the bureaucrats as Gogol depicted them, and the “intellectuals” who hated Belinsky—also found it “hard” to part with serfdom.¹⁷ But the cause of the exploiters and of their intellectual menials is hopeless. The workers and peasants are breaking their resistance—unfortunately, not yet firmly, resolutely and ruthlessly enough—and *will break it*.

“They” think that the “common people”, the “common” workers and poor peasants, will be unable to cope with the great, truly heroic, in the world-historic sense of the word, organisational tasks which the socialist revolution has imposed upon the working people. The intellectuals who are accustomed to serving the capitalists and the capitalist state say in order to console themselves: “You cannot do without us.” But their insolent calculations will fall to the ground: educated men are already appearing, who are coming over

to the side of the people, to the side of the working people, and are helping to break the resistance of the servants of capital. There are a great many talented organisers among the peasants and the working class, and they are only just beginning to become aware of themselves, to awaken, to stretch out towards the great living creative work, to tackle with their own forces the task of building socialist society.

One of the most important tasks today, if not the most important task, is to develop this independent initiative of the workers, and of all the working people and the exploited generally, as widely as possible in creative *organisational work*. At all costs we must break the old, *absurd*, savage, despicable and disgusting prejudice that only the so-called “upper classes”, only the rich, and those who have gone through the school of the rich, are capable of administering the state and directing the organisational construction of socialist society.

This is a prejudice. It is fostered by rotten routine, by petrified views, slavish habits, and still more by the sordid selfishness of the capitalists, in whose interest it is to administer while plundering and to plunder while administering. No. The workers will not forget for a moment that they need the power of knowledge. The extraordinary striving after knowledge which the workers reveal, particularly now, shows that mistaken ideas about this do not and cannot exist among the proletariat. But every *rank-and-file* worker and peasant who can read and write, who can judge people and has practical experience, is capable of *organisational work*. Among the “common people”, of whom the bourgeois intellectuals speak with such haughtiness and contempt, there is a *mass* of men and women of this kind. This sort of talent among the working class and the peasants is a rich and still untapped spring.

The workers and peasants are still “timid”, they have not yet become accustomed to the idea that *they* are the *ruling* class now; they are not yet sufficiently resolute. The revolution could not *at one stroke* instil these qualities in millions and millions of people who all their lives had been compelled by want and hunger to work under the threat of the stick. But the strength, the viability, the invincibility of the Revolution of October 1917 lie exactly in the fact that it

awakens these qualities, breaks down the old impediments, tears the worn-out shackles, and leads the working people on to the road of *independent* creation of a new life.

Accounting and control—this is the *main* economic task of every Soviet of Workers', Soldiers' and Peasants' Deputies, of every consumers' society, of every union or committee of supplies, of every factory committee or organ of workers' control in general.

We must fight against the old habit of regarding the measure of labour, the means of production, from the point of view of the man in subjection—i.e., the habit of shirking burdens, of trying to get at least something *out of the bourgeoisie*. The advanced, class-conscious workers have already started this fight, and they are offering determined resistance to the newcomers of whom particularly many came into the factory environment during the war and who now would like to treat the *people's* factory, the factory that has come into the possession of the people, in the old way, with the sole aim in view of "getting as much as possible and clearing out". All the class-conscious, honest and thinking peasants and working people will take their place in this fight by the side of the advanced workers.

Accounting and control, *if* carried on by the Soviets of Workers', Soldiers' and Peasants' Deputies as the supreme state power, or on the instructions, on the authority, of *this* power—widespread, general, universal accounting and control, the accounting and control of the amount of labour performed and of the distribution of products—is the *essence* of the socialist transformation, once the political rule of the proletariat has been established and secured.

The accounting and control essential for the transition to socialism can be only exercised by the people. Only the voluntary and conscientious co-operation of the *mass* of the workers and peasants in accounting and controlling *the rich, the rogues, the idlers and hooligans*, a co-operation marked by revolutionary enthusiasm, can conquer these survivals of accursed capitalist society, this offal of humanity, these hopelessly decayed and atrophied limbs, this contagion, this plague, this ulcer that socialism has inherited from capitalism.

Workers and peasants, working and exploited people! The land, the banks, the factories and works have now become the property of the entire people! You *yourselves* must set to work to take account of and control the production and distribution of products—this, and this *alone* is the road to the victory of socialism, the only guarantee of its victory, the guarantee of victory over all exploitation, over all poverty and want! For there is enough bread, iron, timber, wool, cotton and flax in Russia to satisfy the needs of everyone, provided only labour and its products are properly distributed, provided only the *businesslike, practical* control over this distribution by the entire people is established, provided only we can defeat the enemies of the people: the rich and their hangers-on, and the rogues, the idlers and the hooligans, *not only* in politics, but also in *everyday economic* life.

No mercy for these enemies of the people, the enemies of socialism, the enemies of the working people! War to the death against the rich and their hangers-on, the bourgeois intellectuals; war on the rogues, the idlers and hooligans! All of them are of the same brood—the spawn of capitalism, the offspring of aristocratic and bourgeois society; the society in which a handful of men robbed and insulted the people; the society in which poverty and want forced thousands and thousands on to the path of hooliganism, corruption and roguery, and caused them to lose all semblance of human beings; the society which inevitably cultivated in the toiler the desire to escape exploitation even by means of deception, to wriggle out of it, to escape, if only for a moment, from loathsome labour, to procure at least a crust of bread by any possible means, at any cost, so as not to starve, so as to subdue the pangs of hunger suffered by himself and by his near ones.

The rich and the rogues are two sides of the same coin, they are the two principal categories of *parasites* which capitalism fostered; they are the principal enemies of socialism. These enemies must be placed under the special surveillance of the entire people; they must be ruthlessly punished for the slightest violation of the laws and regulations of socialist society. Any display of weakness, hesitation or

sentimentality in this respect would be an immense crime against socialism.

In order to render these parasites harmless to socialist society we must organise the accounting and control of the amount of labour performed, of production and distribution, to be exercised by the entire people, by millions and millions of workers and peasants, voluntarily, energetically and with revolutionary enthusiasm. And in order to organise this accounting and control, which is *fully within the ability* of every honest, intelligent and efficient worker and peasant, we must rouse their own organising talent, the talent which comes from their midst; we must rouse among them—and organise on a national scale—*emulation* in the sphere of organisational successes; the workers and peasants must be brought to see clearly the difference between the necessary advice of an educated man and the necessary control by the “common” worker and peasant of the *slovenliness* that is so usual among the “educated”.

This slovenliness, this carelessness, untidiness, unpunctuality, nervous haste, the inclination to substitute discussion for action, talk for work, the inclination to undertake everything under the sun without finishing anything, is one of the characteristics of the “educated”; and this is not due to the fact that they are bad by nature, still less is it due to their evil will; it is due to all their habits of life, the conditions of their work, to fatigue, to the abnormal separation of mental from manual labour, and so on, and so forth.

Among the mistakes, shortcomings and defects of our revolution a by no means unimportant place is occupied by the mistakes, etc., which are due to these deplorable—but at present inevitable—characteristics of the intellectuals in our midst, and to the *lack* of sufficient supervision by the *workers* over the *organisational* work of the intellectuals.

The workers and peasants are still “timid”; they must get rid of this timidity, and they *certainly* will get rid of it. We cannot dispense with the advice, the instruction of educated people, of intellectuals and specialists. Every sensible worker and peasant understands this perfectly well, and the intellectuals in our midst cannot complain of a lack of attention and comradely respect on the part of the workers and peas-

ants. Advice and instruction, however, is one thing, and the organisation of *practical* accounting and control is another. Very often the intellectuals give excellent advice and instruction, but they prove to be ridiculously, *absurdly*, shamefully “unhandy” and incapable of *carrying out* this advice and instruction, of exercising *practical control* over the translation of words into deeds.

In this very respect it is utterly impossible to dispense with the help and the *leading role* of the practical worker-organisers from among the “people”, from among the workers and toiling peasants. “It is not the gods who make pots”—this is the truth that the workers and peasants should get well drilled into their minds. They must understand that the whole thing now is *practical work*; that the historical moment has arrived when theory is being transformed into practice, is vitalised by practice, corrected by practice, tested by practice; when the words of Marx, “Every step of real movement is more important than a dozen programmes”,¹⁸ become particularly true—every step in really curbing in practice, restricting, fully registering and supervising the rich and the rogues is worth more than a dozen excellent arguments about socialism. For “theory, my friend, is grey, but green is the eternal tree of life”.¹⁹

Emulation must be organised among practical organisers from the workers and peasants. Every attempt to establish stereotyped forms and to impose uniformity from above, as intellectuals are so inclined to do, must be combated. Stereotyped forms and uniformity imposed from above have nothing in common with democratic and socialist centralism. The unity of essentials, of fundamentals, of the substance, is not disturbed but ensured by *variety* in details, in specific local features, in methods of *approach*, in *methods* of exercising control, in *ways* of exterminating and rendering harmless the parasites (the rich and the rogues, slovenly and hysterical intellectuals, etc., etc.).

The Paris Commune gave a great example of how to combine initiative, independence, freedom of action and vigour from below with voluntary centralism free from stereotyped forms. Our Soviets are following the same road. But they are still “timid”; they have not yet got into their stride,

have not yet "bitten into" their new, great, creative task of building the socialist system. The Soviets must set to work more boldly and display greater initiative. Every "commune", every factory, every village, every consumers' society, every committee of supplies, must *emulate* its neighbours as a practical organiser of accounting and control of labour and distribution of products. The programme of this accounting and control is simple, clear and intelligible to all; it is: everyone to have bread; everyone to have sound footwear and good clothing; everyone to have warm dwellings; everyone to work conscientiously; not a single rogue (including those who shirk their work) should be allowed to be at liberty, but kept in prison, or serve his sentence of compulsory labour of the hardest kind; not a single rich man who violates the laws and regulations of socialism should be allowed to escape the fate of the rogue, which should, in justice, be the fate of the rich man. "He who does not work, neither shall he eat"—this is the *practical* commandment of socialism. This is how things should be organised *practically*. These are the *practical* successes our "communes" and our worker- and peasant-organisers should be proud of. And this applies particularly to the organisers among the intellectuals (*particularly*, because they are *too much, far too much* in the habit of being proud of their general instructions and resolutions).

Thousands of practical forms and methods of accounting and controlling the rich, the rogues and the idlers should be devised and put to a practical test by the communes themselves, by small units in town and country. Variety is a guarantee of effectiveness here, a pledge of success in achieving the single common aim—to *clean* the land of Russia of all vermin, of fleas—the rogues, of bugs—the rich, and so on and so forth. In one place half a score of rich, a dozen rogues, half a dozen workers who shirk their work (in the hooligan manner in which many compositors in Petrograd, particularly in the Party printing-shops, shirk their work) will be put in prison. In another place they will be put to cleaning latrines. In a third place they will be provided with "yellow tickets" after they have served their time, so that everyone shall keep an eye on them, as *harmful* persons, until they reform. In a fourth place, one out of every ten idlers will be shot on the

spot. In a fifth place mixed methods may be adopted, and by probational release, for example, the rich, the bourgeois intellectuals, the rogues and hooligans who are corrigible will be given an opportunity to reform quickly. The more variety there will be, the better and richer will be our general experience, the more certain and rapid will be the success of socialism, and the easier will it be for practice to devise—for only practice can devise—the *best* methods and means of struggle.

In what commune, in what district of a large town, in what factory and in what village are there *no* starving people, *no* unemployed, *no* idle rich, *no* despicable lackeys of the bourgeoisie, saboteurs who call themselves intellectuals? Where has most been done to raise the productivity of labour, to build good new houses for the poor, to put the poor in the houses of the rich, to regularly provide a bottle of milk for every child of every poor family? It is on these points that *emulation* should develop between the communes, communities, producer-consumers' societies and associations, and Soviets of Workers', Soldiers' and Peasants' Deputies. This is the work in which *organising talent* should become apparent *in practice* and be promoted to work in state administration. There is a great deal of this talent among the people. It is merely suppressed. It must be given an opportunity to display itself. It, *and it alone*, with the support of the people, can save Russia and save the cause of socialism.

Written in December 25-28, 1917
(January 7-10, 1918)

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Signed: V. Lenin

**FROM THE REPORT ON WAR AND PEACE
DELIVERED AT THE SEVENTH CONGRESS
OF THE R.C.P.(B.)**

March 7, 1918

One of the fundamental differences between bourgeois revolution and socialist revolution is that in the bourgeois revolution, which arises out of feudalism, the new economic organisations are gradually created in the womb of the old order, gradually changing all the aspects of feudal society. The bourgeois revolution faced only one task—to sweep away, to cast aside, to destroy all the fetters of the preceding social order. By fulfilling this task every bourgeois revolution fulfils all that is required of it; it accelerates the growth of capitalism.

The socialist revolution is in an altogether different position. The more backward the country which, owing to the zigzags of history, has proved to be the one to start the socialist revolution, the more difficult is it for her to pass from the old capitalist relations to socialist relations. New incredibly difficult tasks, organisational tasks, are added to the tasks of destruction. Had not the popular creative spirit of the Russian revolution, which had gone through the great experience of the year 1905,²⁰ given rise to the Soviets as early as February 1917, they could not under any circumstances have assumed power in October, because success depended entirely upon the existence of available organisational forms of a movement embracing millions. The Soviets were the available form, and that is why in the political sphere the future held out to us those brilliant successes, the continuous triumphal march, that we had; for the new form of political power was already available, and all we had to do was to pass a few decrees, and transform the power of the Soviets from the embryonic state in which it existed in the first months

of the revolution into the legally recognised form which has become established in the Russian state—i.e., into the Russian Soviet Republic. The Republic was born at one stroke; it was born so easily because in February 1917 the masses had created the Soviets even before any party had managed to proclaim this slogan. It was the great creative spirit of the people, which had passed through the bitter experience of 1905 and had been made wise by it, that gave rise to this form of proletarian power. The task of achieving victory over the internal enemy was an extremely easy one. The task of creating the political power was an extremely easy one because the masses had created the skeleton, the basis of this power. The Republic of Soviets was born at one stroke. But two exceedingly difficult problems still remained, the solution of which could not possibly be the triumphal march we experienced in the first months of our revolution—we did not doubt, we could not doubt, that the socialist revolution would be later confronted with enormously difficult tasks.

First, there was the problem of internal organisation which confronts every socialist revolution. The bourgeois revolution differs from the socialist revolution in finding ready-made forms of capitalist relationships; Soviet power—the proletarian power—does not inherit such ready-made relationships, if we leave out of account the most developed forms of capitalism, which, strictly speaking, extended to but a small top layer of industry and hardly touched agriculture. The organisation of accounting, of the control of large enterprises, the transformation of the whole of the state economic mechanism into a single huge machine, into an economic organism that will work in such a way as to enable hundreds of millions of people to be guided by a single plan—such was the enormous organisational problem that rested on our shoulders. Under the present conditions of labour this problem could not possibly be solved by the “hurrah” methods by which we were able to solve the problems of the civil war. The very nature of the task prevented a solution by these methods. We achieved easy victories over the Kaledin²¹ revolt and created the Soviet Republic in face of a resistance that was not even worth serious consideration; the course of events was predetermined by the whole of the preceding objective

development, so that all we had to do was say the last word and change the signboard, i.e., take down the sign "The Soviet exists as a trade union organisation", and put up instead the sign "The Soviet is the sole form of state power"; the situation, however, was altogether different in regard to organisational problems. In this field we encountered enormous difficulties. It immediately became clear to everyone who cared to ponder over the tasks of our revolution that only by long and rigorous self-discipline would it be possible to overcome the disintegration that the war had caused in capitalist society, that only by extraordinarily hard, long and persistent effort could we cope with this disintegration and defeat those elements aggravating it, elements which regarded the revolution as a means of discarding old fetters and getting as much out of it for themselves as they possibly could. The emergence of a large number of such elements was inevitable in a petty-bourgeois country at a time of incredible economic chaos, and the fight against these elements that is ahead of us will be a hundred times more difficult, it will be a fight that we have only just started and which promises no spectacular situation. We are only in the first stage of this fight. Severe trials await us. The objective situation precludes any idea of limiting ourselves to a triumphal march with flying banners such as we had in fighting against Kaledin. Anyone who attempted to apply these methods of struggle to the organisational tasks that confront the revolution would only prove his bankruptcy as a politician, as a socialist, as an active worker in the socialist revolution.

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THE IMMEDIATE TASKS OF THE SOVIET GOVERNMENT

THE INTERNATIONAL POSITION OF THE RUSSIAN SOVIET REPUBLIC AND THE FUNDAMENTAL TASKS OF THE SOCIALIST REVOLUTION

Thanks to the peace which has been achieved²²—despite its extremely onerous character and extreme instability—the Russian Soviet Republic has received an opportunity for a while to concentrate efforts on the most important and most difficult aspect of the socialist revolution, namely, the task of organisation.

This task was clearly and definitely set before all the working and oppressed people in the fourth paragraph (Part 4) of the resolution adopted at the Extraordinary Congress of Soviets in Moscow on March 15, 1918, in that paragraph (or part) which speaks of the self-discipline of the working people and of the ruthless struggle against chaos and disorganisation.

Of course, the peace achieved by the Russian Soviet Republic is unstable not because she is now thinking of resuming military operations; apart from bourgeois counter-revolutionaries and their henchmen (the Mensheviks and others) no sane politician thinks of doing that. The instability of the peace is due to the fact that in the imperialist states bordering on Russia to the west and the east, which command enormous military forces, the military party, tempted by Russia's momentary weakness and egged on by capitalists who hate socialism and are eager for plunder, may gain the upper hand at any moment.

Under these circumstances the only real, not paper, guarantee of peace we have is the antagonism among the imperialist powers, which has reached extreme limits, and which is apparent on the one hand in the resumption of the imperialist butchery of the peoples in the West, and on the other hand in the extreme intensification of imperialist rivalry

between Japan and America for supremacy in the Pacific and on the Pacific coast.

It goes without saying that with such an unreliable guard for protection, our Soviet Socialist Republic is in an extremely unstable and certainly critical international position. All our efforts must be exerted to the very utmost to make use of the respite given us by the combination of circumstances so that we can heal the very severe wounds inflicted by the war upon the entire social organism of Russia and bring about the economic revival of the country, without which a real increase in our country's ability to defend itself is inconceivable.

It goes without saying also that we shall be able to effectively help the socialist revolution in the West, which has been delayed for a number of reasons, only to the extent that we are able to fulfil the task of organisation confronting us.

A fundamental condition for the successful accomplishment of the primary task of organisation confronting us is that the people's political leaders, i.e., the members of the Russian Communist Party (Bolsheviks), and following them all the class-conscious representatives of the mass of the working people shall fully appreciate the fundamental distinction in this respect between previous bourgeois revolutions and the present socialist revolution.

In bourgeois revolutions, the principal task of the mass of working people was to fulfil the negative or destructive work of destroying feudalism, monarchy and medievalism. The positive or constructive work of organising the new society was carried out by the property-owning bourgeois minority of the population. And the latter carried out this task with relative ease, despite the resistance of the workers and the poor peasants, not only because the resistance of the people exploited by capital was then extremely weak since they were scattered and uneducated, but also because the chief organising force of anarchically-built capitalist society is the spontaneously growing and expanding national and international market.

In every socialist revolution, however—and consequently in the socialist revolution in Russia which we began on

October 25, 1917—the principal task of the proletariat, and of the poor peasants which it leads, is the positive or constructive work of setting up an extremely intricate and delicate system of new organisational relationships extending to the planned production and distribution of the goods required for the existence of tens of millions of people. Such a revolution can be successfully carried out only if the majority of the population, and primarily the majority of the working people, engage in independent creative work as makers of history. Only if the proletariat and the poor peasants display sufficient class-consciousness, devotion to principles, self-sacrifice and perseverance will the victory of the socialist revolution be assured. By creating a new, Soviet type of state, which gives the working and oppressed people the chance to take an active part in the independent building up of a new society, we solved only a small part of this difficult problem. The principal difficulty lies in the economic sphere, namely, the introduction of the strictest and universal accounting and control of the production and distribution of goods, raising the productivity of labour and *socialising production in actual practice*.

* * *

The development of the Bolshevik Party, which today is the governing party in Russia, very strikingly indicates the nature of the turning-point in history we are now passing through, which represents the peculiar feature of the present political situation and which calls for a new orientation of Soviet power, i.e., for a new presentation of new tasks.

The first task of every party of the future is to convince the majority of the people that its programme and tactics are correct. This task stood in the forefront in tsarist times as well as in the period of the Chernovs' and Tseretelis' policy of compromise with the Kerenskys and Kishkins.²³ This task has now been fulfilled in the main for, as the recent Congress of Soviets in Moscow incontrovertibly proved, the majority of the workers and peasants of Russia are obviously on the side of the Bolsheviks; but of course, it is far from being completely fulfilled (and it can never be completely fulfilled).

The second task that confronted our Party was to capture political power and to suppress the resistance of the exploiters. This task has not been completely fulfilled either and it cannot be ignored because the monarchists and Cadets on the one hand, and their henchmen and hangers-on, the Mensheviks and Right Socialist-Revolutionaries, on the other, are continuing their efforts to unite for the purpose of overthrowing Soviet power. In the main, however, the task of suppressing the resistance of the exploiters was fulfilled in the period from October 25, 1917, to (approximately) February 1918, or to the surrender of Bogayevsky.

A third task is now coming to the fore as the immediate task and one which represents the peculiar feature of the present situation, namely, the task of organising *administration* of Russia. Of course, we advanced and tackled this task on the very day following October 25, 1917. Up to now, however, inasmuch as the resistance of the exploiters still took the form of open civil war, up to now the task of administration *could not* have become the *main*, the *central* task.

Now it has become the main and central task. We, the Bolshevik Party, have *convinced* Russia. We have *won* Russia from the rich for the poor, from the exploiters for the working people. Now we must *administer* Russia. And the whole peculiarity of the present situation, the whole difficulty, lies in understanding *the specific features of the transition* from the principal task of convincing the people and of suppressing the exploiters by armed force to the principal task of *administration*.

For the first time in human history a socialist party has managed to complete in the main the conquest of power and the suppression of the exploiters, and has managed to *approach directly* the task of *administration*. We must prove worthy executors of this most difficult (and most gratifying) task of the socialist revolution. We must *think over the fact* that *in addition* to being able to convince people, in addition to being able to win civil war, we must be able to do *practical organisational* work in order to administer successfully. It is the most difficult task, because it is a matter of organising in a new way the most deep-rooted, the economic, foundations of life of scores of millions of people. And it is the most

gratifying task because only *after* it has been fulfilled (in the principal and main outlines) will it be possible to say that Russia *has become* not only a Soviet, but also a Socialist Republic.

THE GENERAL SLOGAN OF THE MOMENT

The objective situation reviewed above, created by the extremely onerous and unstable peace, the terrible state of ruin, the unemployment and famine we inherited from the war and the rule of the bourgeoisie (represented by Kerensky and the Mensheviks and Right Socialist-Revolutionaries who supported him), all this inevitably caused extreme weariness and even exhaustion of wide sections of the working people. These people insistently demand—and cannot but demand—a respite. The task of restoring the productive forces destroyed by the war and by the mismanagement of the bourgeoisie comes to the fore, namely, healing the wounds inflicted by the war, by the defeat in the war, by the profiteering of the bourgeoisie and its attempts to restore the overthrown rule of the exploiters; the economic revival of the country; the reliable protection of elementary order. It may sound paradoxical, but in actual fact, considering the objective conditions indicated above, it is absolutely certain that at the present moment the Soviet system can secure Russia's transition to socialism only if these very elementary and extremely elementary problems of maintaining public life are solved practically in spite of the resistance of the bourgeoisie, the Mensheviks and the Right Socialist-Revolutionaries. In view of the specific features of the present situation, and in view of the existence of the Soviet state with its land socialisation law, workers' control law, etc., the practical solution of these extremely elementary problems and the overcoming of the organisational difficulties of the first stages of progress towards socialism are now two sides of the same picture.

Keep regular and honest accounts of money, manage economically, do not be lazy, do not steal, observe the strictest labour discipline—precisely these slogans, which were justly scorned by the revolutionary proletariat when the bourgeoisie used them to conceal its rule as an exploiting class, are now,

after the overthrow of the bourgeoisie, becoming the immediate and the principal slogans of the moment. On the one hand, the practical application of these slogans by *the mass* of working people is the *sole* condition for the salvation of the country which has been tortured almost to death by the imperialist war and by the imperialist robbers (headed by Kerensky); on the other hand, the practical application of these slogans by the *Soviet* state, by *its* methods, on the basis of *its* laws, is a necessary and *sufficient* condition for the final victory of socialism. This is precisely what those who contemptuously brush aside the idea of putting such "hackneyed" and "trivial" slogans in the forefront fail to understand. In a small-peasant country, which overthrew tsarism only a year ago, and which liberated itself from the Kerenskys less than six months ago, there has naturally remained not a little of spontaneous anarchy, intensified by the brutality and savagery that accompany every protracted and reactionary war, and there has arisen not a little despair and aimless bitterness. And if we add to this the provocative policy of the lackeys of the bourgeoisie (the Mensheviks, the Right Socialist-Revolutionaries, etc.) it will become perfectly clear what prolonged and persistent efforts must be exerted by the best and most class-conscious workers and peasants in order to bring about a complete change in the mood of the people and to bring them on to the proper path of steady and disciplined labour. Only such a transition brought about by the mass of the poor (the proletarians and semi-proletarians), can consummate the victory over the bourgeoisie and particularly over the more stubborn and numerous peasant bourgeoisie.

THE NEW PHASE OF THE STRUGGLE AGAINST THE BOURGEOISIE

The bourgeoisie in our country has been conquered, but it has not yet been uprooted, not yet destroyed, and not even utterly broken. That is why we are faced with a new and higher form of struggle against the bourgeoisie, the transition from the very simple task of further expropriating the

capitalists to the much more complicated and difficult task of creating conditions in which it will be impossible for the bourgeoisie to exist, or for a new bourgeoisie to arise. Clearly, this task is immeasurably more significant than the previous one; and until it is fulfilled there will be no socialism.

If we measure our revolution by the scale of West-European revolutions we shall find that at the present moment we are approximately at the level reached in 1793 and 1871. We can be legitimately proud of having risen to this level, and in one respect we have certainly advanced somewhat further, namely: we have decreed and introduced in the whole of Russia the highest *type* of state-Soviet power. Under no circumstances, however, can we rest content with what we have achieved, because we have only just started the transition to socialism, we have *not yet* done the decisive thing in *this* respect.

The decisive thing is the organisation of the strictest and country-wide accounting and control of production and distribution of goods. And yet, we have *not yet* introduced accounting and control in those enterprises and in those branches and fields of economy which we have taken away from the bourgeoisie; and without this there can be no thought of achieving the second and equally essential material condition for introducing socialism, namely, raising the productivity of labour on a national scale.

That is why the task of the present moment could not be defined by the simple formula: continue the offensive against capital. Although we have certainly not finished off capital and although it is certainly necessary to continue the offensive against this enemy of the working people, such a formula would be inexact, would not be concrete, would not take into account the *peculiarity* of the present situation in which, in order that the *future* offensive may be successful, we must "halt" the offensive *for the time being*.

This can be explained by comparing our position in the war against capital with the position of a victorious army that has captured, say, a half or two-thirds of the enemy's territory and is compelled to halt in order to muster its forces, to replenish its supplies of munitions, repair and reinforce the communication lines, build up new storehouses,

bring up new reserves, etc. To suspend the offensive of a victorious army under such conditions is necessary precisely in order to gain the rest of the enemy's territory, i.e., in order to achieve complete victory. Those who have failed to understand that the objective state of affairs at the present moment dictates to us precisely such a "suspension" of the offensive against capital have failed to understand anything at all about the present political situation.

It goes without saying that we can speak about the "suspension" of the offensive against capital only in quotation marks, i.e., only metaphorically. In ordinary war, a general order can be issued to stop the offensive, the advance can actually be stopped. In the war against capital, however, the advance cannot be stopped, and there can be no thought of our abandoning the further expropriation of capital. What we are discussing is the shifting of the *centre of gravity* of our economic and political work. Up to now measures for the direct expropriation of the expropriators were *in the forefront*. Now the organisation of accounting and control in those branches of the economy in which the capitalists have already been expropriated, and in all other branches of the economy, advances *to the forefront*.

If we decided to continue to expropriate capital at the same rate at which we have been doing it up to now, we would certainly suffer defeat, because our work of organising proletarian accounting and control has obviously—obviously to every thinking person—*fallen behind* the work of *directly* "expropriating the expropriators". If we now concentrate all our efforts on the organisation of accounting and control, we shall be able to solve this problem, we shall be able to make up for lost time, we shall *completely* win our "campaign" against capital.

But is not the admission that we must make up for lost time tantamount to admission of some kind of an error? Not in the least. Take another military example. If it is possible to defeat and push back the enemy merely with detachments of light cavalry, it should be done. But if this can be done successfully only up to a certain point, then it is quite conceivable that when this point has been reached, it will be necessary to bring up heavy artillery. By admitting that it is

now necessary to make up for lost time in bringing up heavy artillery, we do not admit that the successful cavalry attack was a mistake.

Frequently, the lackeys of the bourgeoisie reproached us for having launched a "Red Guard" attack on capital. The reproach is absurd and is worthy only of the lackeys of the money-bags, because *at one time* the "Red Guard" attack on capital was absolutely dictated by circumstances: firstly, at that time capital put up military resistance through the medium of Kerensky and Krasnov, Savinkov and Gotz (Gegechkori is putting up such resistance even now), Dutov and Bogayevsky. Military resistance cannot be broken except by military means, and the Red Guards fought in the noble and supreme historical cause of liberating the working and exploited people from the yoke of the exploiters.

Secondly, we could not at that time put the methods of administration in the forefront in place of the methods of suppression, also because the art of administration, is not innate, but acquired by experience. At that time we lacked this experience; now we have it. Thirdly, at that time we could not have specialists in the various fields of knowledge and technology at our disposal because those specialists were either fighting in the ranks of the Bogayevskys, or were still able to put up systematic and stubborn passive resistance by way of *sabotage*. Now we have broken the sabotage. The "Red Guard" attack on capital was successful, was victorious, because we broke capital's military resistance and its resistance by sabotage.

Does that mean that a "Red Guard" attack on capital is *always* appropriate, under *all* circumstances, that we have *no* other means of fighting capital? It would be childish to think so. We achieved victory with the aid of light cavalry, but we also have heavy artillery. We achieved victory by methods of suppression; we can achieve victory also by methods of administration. We must know how to change our methods of fighting the enemy to suit changes in the situation. We shall not for a moment renounce "Red Guard" suppression of the Savinkovs and Gegechkoris and all other landlord and bourgeois counter-revolutionaries. We shall not be so foolish, however, as to put "Red Guard" methods in the forefront at

a time when the epoch in which Red Guard attacks were necessary has, in the main, drawn to a close (and to a victorious close), and when the epoch of utilising bourgeois specialists by the proletarian state power for the purpose of reploughing the soil in order to prevent the growth of any bourgeoisie whatever is knocking at the door.

This is a peculiar epoch, or rather stage of development, and in order to utterly defeat capital, we must be able to adapt the forms of our struggle to the peculiar conditions of this stage.

Without the guidance of specialists in the various fields of knowledge, technology and experience, the transition to socialism will be impossible, because socialism calls for a conscious mass advance to greater productivity of labour compared with capitalism, and on the basis achieved by capitalism. Socialism must achieve this advance *in its own way*, by its own methods—or, to put it more concretely, by *Soviet* methods. And the specialists, because of the whole social environment which made them specialists, are, in the main, inevitably bourgeois. Had our proletariat, after capturing power, quickly solved the problem of accounting, control and organisation on a national scale (which was impossible owing to the war and Russia's backwardness), then we, after breaking the sabotage, would have also completely subordinated these bourgeois specialists to ourselves by means of universal accounting and control. Owing to the considerable "delay" in introducing accounting and control generally, we, although we have managed to conquer sabotage, have *not yet* created the conditions which would place the bourgeois specialists at our disposal. The mass of saboteurs are "going to work", but the best organisers and the biggest specialists can be utilised by the state either in the old way, in the bourgeois way (i.e., for high salaries), or in the new way, in the proletarian way (i.e., creating the conditions of national accounting and control from below, which would inevitably and of themselves subordinate the specialists and enlist them for our work).

Now we have to resort to the old bourgeois method and to agree to pay a very high price for the "services" of the biggest bourgeois specialists. All those who are familiar with

the subject appreciate this, but not all ponder over the significance of this measure being adopted by the proletarian state. Clearly, this measure is a compromise, a departure from the principles of the Paris Commune and of every proletarian power, which call for the reduction of all salaries to the level of the wages of the average worker, which call for fighting careerism, not in words, but in deeds.

Moreover, it is clear that this measure not only implies the cessation—in a certain field and to a certain degree—of the offensive against capital (for capital is not a sum of money, but a definite social relation); it is also a *step backward* on the part of our socialist Soviet state power, which from the very outset proclaimed and pursued the policy of reducing high salaries to the level of the wages of the average worker.

Of course, the lackeys of the bourgeoisie, particularly the small fry, such as the Mensheviks, the *Novaya Zhizn* people and the Right Socialist-Revolutionaries, will giggle over our confession that we are taking a step backward. But we need not mind their giggling. We must study the peculiar features of the extremely difficult and new path to socialism without concealing our mistakes and weaknesses, and aim in good time to do what has been left undone. To conceal from the people the fact that the enlistment of bourgeois specialists by means of extremely high salaries is a retreat from the principles of the Paris Commune would be sinking to the level of bourgeois politicians and deceiving the people. Frankly explaining how and why we took this step backward, and then publicly discussing what means are available for making up for lost time, means educating the people and learning from experience, learning together with the people how to build socialism. There is hardly a single victorious military campaign in history in which the victor did not commit certain mistakes, suffer partial reverses, temporarily yield something and in some places retreat. The "campaign" which we have undertaken against capitalism is a million times more difficult than the most difficult military campaign, and it would be silly and disgraceful to give way to despondency because of a particular and partial retreat,

We shall now discuss the question from the practical point of view. Let us assume that the Russian Soviet Republic requires one thousand first-class scientists and specialists in various fields of knowledge, technology and practical experience for the purpose of directing the labour of the people with a view to securing the speediest possible economic revival of the country. Let us assume also that we shall have to pay these "stars of the first magnitude"—of course the majority of those who shout loudest about the corruption of the workers are themselves utterly corrupted by bourgeois morals—25,000 rubles per annum each. Let us assume that this sum (25,000,000 rubles) will have to be doubled (assuming that we have to pay bonuses for particularly successful and rapid fulfilment of the most important organisational and technical tasks), or even quadrupled (assuming that we have to enlist several hundred foreign specialists who are more demanding). The question is, would the annual expenditure of fifty or a hundred million rubles by the Soviet Republic for the purpose of reorganising the labour of the people according to the last word in science and technology be excessive or too heavy? Of course not. The overwhelming majority of the class-conscious workers and peasants will approve of this expenditure because they know from practical experience that our backwardness causes us to lose millions, and that we have *not yet* reached that degree of organisation, accounting and control which would induce all the "leading lights" of the bourgeois intellectuals to participate voluntarily in *our* work.

It goes without saying that this question has another side to it. The corrupting influence of high salaries—both upon the Soviet authorities (especially since the revolution occurred so rapidly that it was impossible to prevent a certain number of adventurers and rogues from getting into positions of authority, and they, together with a number of inept or dishonest commissars, would not be averse to becoming "star" embezzlers of state funds) and upon the mass of the workers—is indisputable. Every thinking and honest worker and poor peasant, however, will agree with us, will admit, that we cannot immediately rid ourselves of the evil legacy of capitalism, and that we can liberate the Soviet Republic

from the duty of paying an annual "tribute" of fifty million or one hundred million rubles (a tribute for our own backwardness in organising *country-wide* accounting and control *from below*) only by organising ourselves, by tightening up discipline in our own ranks, by purging our ranks of all those who are "preserving the legacy of capitalism", who "follow the traditions of capitalism", i.e., of idlers, parasites and embezzlers of state funds (now all the land, all the factories and all the railways are the "state funds" of the Soviet Republic). If the class-conscious advanced workers and poor peasants manage with the aid of the Soviet institutions to organise, become disciplined, pull themselves together, create powerful labour discipline in the course of one year, then in a year's time we shall throw off this "tribute", which can be reduced even before that... in exact proportion to the successes we achieve in our workers' and peasants' labour discipline and organisation. The sooner we ourselves, workers and peasants, learn the best labour discipline and the most modern technique of labour, using the bourgeois specialists to teach us, the sooner we shall liberate ourselves from any "tribute" to these specialists.

Our work of organising country-wide accounting and control of production and distribution under the supervision of the proletariat has lagged very much behind our work of directly expropriating the expropriators. This proposition is of fundamental importance for understanding the specific features of the present situation and the tasks of the Soviet government that follow from it. The centre of gravity of our struggle against the bourgeoisie is shifting to the organisation of such accounting and control. Only with this as our starting-point will it be possible to correctly determine the immediate tasks of economic and financial policy in the sphere of nationalisation of the banks, monopolisation of foreign trade, the state control of money circulation, the introduction of a property and income tax satisfactory from the proletarian point of view, and the introduction of compulsory labour service.

We have been lagging very far behind in introducing socialist reforms in these spheres (very, very important spheres), and that precisely because accounting and control are

insufficiently organised in general. It goes without saying that this is one of the most difficult tasks, and in view of the ruin caused by the war, it can be fulfilled only over a long period of time; but we must not forget that it is precisely here that the bourgeoisie—and particularly the numerous petty and peasant bourgeoisie—are putting up the most serious fight, disrupting the control that is already being organised, disrupting the grain monopoly, for example, and are gaining positions for profiteering and speculative trade. We have far from adequately carried out the things we have decreed, and the principal task of the moment is to concentrate all efforts on the business-like, practical *realisation* of the principles of the reforms which have already become law (but not yet reality).

In order to proceed with the nationalisation of the banks and to go on steadfastly towards transforming the banks into nodal points of public accounting under socialism, we must first of all, and above all, achieve real success in increasing the number of branches of the People's Bank, in attracting deposits, in simplifying the paying in and withdrawal of deposits by the public, in abolishing queues, in catching and *shooting* bribe-takers and rogues, etc. At first we must really carry out the simplest things, properly organise what is available, and then prepare for the more intricate things.

Consolidate and improve the state monopolies (in grain, leather, etc.) which have already been introduced, and by that prepare for the state monopoly of foreign trade. Without this monopoly we shall not be able to "free ourselves" from foreign capital by paying "tribute". And the possibility of building up socialism depends entirely upon whether we shall be able, by paying a certain tribute to foreign capital during a certain transitional period, to safeguard our internal economic independence.

We are also lagging very far behind in regard to the collection of taxes generally, and of the property and income tax in particular. The imposing of indemnities upon the bourgeoisie—a measure which in principle is absolutely permissible and deserves proletarian approval—shows that in this respect we are even nearer to the methods of warfare

(to win Russia from the rich for the poor) than to the methods of administration. In order to become stronger, however, and in order to be able to stand firmer on our feet, we must adopt the latter methods, we must substitute for the indemnities imposed upon the bourgeoisie the constant and regular collection of a property and income tax, which will bring a *greater* return to the proletarian state, and which calls for better organisation on our part and better accounting and control.

The fact that we are late in introducing compulsory labour service also shows that the work that is coming to the front at the present time is precisely the preparatory organisational work that, on the one hand, will finally consolidate our gains and that, on the other, is necessary in order to prepare for the operation of "surrounding" capital and compelling it to "surrender". We ought to begin introducing compulsory labour service immediately, but to do so more gradually and circumspectly, testing every step by practical experience, and, of course, taking the first step by introducing compulsory labour service *for the rich*. The introduction of labour and consumers' budget books for every bourgeois, including every rural bourgeois, would be an important step towards completely "surrounding" the enemy and towards the creation of a truly popular accounting and control of the production and distribution of goods.

THE SIGNIFICANCE OF THE STRUGGLE FOR COUNTRY-WIDE ACCOUNTING AND CONTROL

The state, which for centuries has been an organ of oppression and robbery of the people, has left us a legacy of the people's supreme hatred and suspicion of everything that is connected with the state. It is very difficult to overcome this, and only a Soviet government can do it. Even a Soviet government, however, will require plenty of time and enormous perseverance to accomplish it. This "legacy" is especially apparent in the problem of accounting and control—the fundamental problem facing the socialist revolution on the morrow of the overthrow of the bourgeoisie. A certain amount

of time will inevitably pass before the people, who for the first time feel free after the overthrow of the landlords and the bourgeoisie, will understand—not from books, but from their own, *Soviet* experience—will understand and *feel* that without comprehensive state accounting and control of production and distribution of goods, the power of the working people, the freedom of the working people, *cannot* maintain itself, and that a return to the yoke of capitalism is *inevitable*.

All the habits and traditions of the bourgeoisie, and of the petty bourgeoisie in particular, also oppose *state* control, and uphold the inviolability of "sacred private property", of "sacred" private enterprise. It is now particularly clear to us how correct is the Marxist thesis that anarchism and anarcho-syndicalism are *bourgeois* trends, how irreconcilably opposed they are to socialism, proletarian dictatorship and communism. The fight to instil into the people's minds the idea of *Soviet* state control and accounting, and to carry out this idea in practice; the fight to break with the rotten past, which taught the people to regard the procurement of bread and clothes as a "private" affair, as buying and selling, as a transaction "which concerns only myself"—is a great fight of world-historical significance, a fight between socialist consciousness and bourgeois-anarchist spontaneity.

We have introduced workers' control as a law, but this law is only just beginning to operate and is only just barely beginning to penetrate the minds of broad sections of the proletariat. In our agitation we do not sufficiently explain that lack of accounting and control in the production and distribution of goods means the death of the rudiments of socialism, means the embezzlement of state funds (for all property belongs to the state and the state is the Soviet state in which power belongs to the majority of the working people). We do not sufficiently explain that carelessness in accounting and control is downright aiding and abetting the German and the Russian Kornilovs who can overthrow the power of the working people *only* if we fail to cope with the task of accounting and control and who, with the aid of the whole of the rural bourgeoisie, with the aid of the Cadets, the Mensheviks and the Right Socialist-Revolutionaries, are "watching" us and

waiting for an opportune moment to attack us. And the advanced workers and peasants do not think and speak about this sufficiently. Until workers' control has become a fact, until the advanced workers have organised and carried out a victorious and ruthless crusade against the violators of this control, or against those who are careless in matters of control, it will be impossible to pass from the first step (from workers' control) to the second step towards socialism, i.e., to pass on to workers' regulation of production.

The socialist state can arise only as a network of producers' and consumers' communes, which conscientiously keep account of their production and consumption, economise on labour, steadily raise the productivity of labour, thus making it possible to reduce the working day to seven, six and even fewer hours per day. Nothing will be achieved unless the strictest, country-wide, comprehensive accounting and control of *grain* and *the production of grain* (and later of all other necessities) are set going. Capitalism left us a legacy of mass organisations which can facilitate our transition to the mass accounting and control of the distribution of goods, namely, the consumers' co-operative societies. In Russia these societies are not so well developed as in the advanced countries, nevertheless, they have over ten million members. The Decree on Consumers' Co-operative Societies, issued the other day, is an extremely remarkable phenomenon, which strikingly illustrates the peculiar position and the tasks of the Soviet Socialist Republic at the present moment.

The decree represents an agreement with the bourgeois co-operative societies and the workers' co-operative societies which still adhere to the bourgeois point of view. The agreement, or compromise, consists firstly in that the representatives of the above-mentioned institutions not only took part in discussing the decree, but actually were granted the right to vote, for the parts of the decree which were strongly opposed by these institutions were dropped. Secondly, in essence the compromise consists in that the Soviet government has abandoned the principle of admission of new members to co-operative societies without entrance fees (which is the only consistently proletarian principle) and also of uniting the whole of the population in a given locality in *a single* co-

operative society. An exception was made from this principle, which alone is a socialist principle and which corresponds to the task of abolishing classes, only for the "working-class co-operative societies" (which in this case call themselves "class" societies only because they subordinate themselves to the class interests of the bourgeoisie) which were given the right to continue to exist. Finally, the Soviet government's proposal to expel the bourgeoisie entirely from the boards of the co-operative societies was also considerably modified, and only owners of private capitalist trading and industrial enterprises were forbidden to serve on the boards.

Had the proletariat, acting through the Soviet government, managed to organise accounting and control on a national scale, or at least laid the foundation for such control, it would not have been necessary to make such compromises. Through the food departments of the Soviets, through the supply organisations under the Soviets we would have organised the population into a single co-operative society under proletarian management. We would have done this without the assistance of the bourgeois co-operative societies, without making any concession to the purely bourgeois principle which prompts the workers' co-operative societies to remain workers' societies *side by side* with bourgeois societies, *instead of* subordinating these bourgeois co-operative societies entirely to themselves, merging the two together and taking the *entire* management of the society and the supervision of the consumption of the rich *in their own hands*.

In concluding such an agreement with the bourgeois co-operative societies, the Soviet government concretely defined its tactical tasks and its peculiar methods of action in the present stage of development as follows: by directing the bourgeois elements, utilising them, making certain partial concessions to them, we create the conditions for further progress that will be slower than we at first anticipated, but surer, with the base and lines of communication better secured and with the positions which have been won better consolidated. The Soviets can (*and should*) now gauge their successes in the field of socialist construction, among other things, by extremely clear, simple and practical standards, namely, in how many communities (communes or villages, or

blocks of houses, etc.) co-operative societies have been organised, and to what extent their development has reached the point of embracing the whole population.

RAISING THE PRODUCTIVITY OF LABOUR

In every socialist revolution, after the proletariat has solved the problem of capturing power, and to the extent that the task of expropriating the expropriators and suppressing their resistance has been carried out in the main, there necessarily comes to the forefront the fundamental task of creating a social system superior to capitalism, namely, raising the productivity of labour, and in this connection (and for this purpose) securing better organisation of labour. Our Soviet state is precisely in the position where, thanks to the victories over the exploiters—from Kerensky to Kornilov—it is able to approach this task directly, to tackle it in earnest. And here it becomes immediately clear that while it is possible to capture the central government in a few days, while it is possible to suppress the military resistance (and sabotage) of the exploiters even in different parts of a great country in a few weeks, the capital solution of the problem of raising the productivity of labour requires, at all events (particularly after a most terrible and devastating war), several years. The protracted nature of the work is certainly dictated by objective circumstances.

The raising of the productivity of labour first of all requires that the material basis of large-scale industry shall be assured, namely, the development of the production of fuel, iron, the engineering and chemical industries. The Russian Soviet Republic enjoys the favourable position of having at its command, even after the Brest Peace, enormous reserves of ore (in the Urals), fuel in Western Siberia (coal), in the Caucasus and the South-East (oil), in Central Russia (peat), enormous timber reserves, water power, raw materials for the chemical industry (Karabugaz), etc. The development of these natural resources by methods of modern technology will lay the basis for the unprecedented progress of the productive forces.

Another condition for raising the productivity of labour is, firstly, the raising of the educational and cultural level of the mass of the population. This is now taking place extremely rapidly, which those who are blinded by bourgeois routine are unable to see; they are unable to understand what an urge towards enlightenment and initiative is now developing among the "lower ranks" of the people thanks to the Soviet form of organisation. Secondly, a condition for economic revival is the raising of the working people's discipline, their skill, their dexterity, increasing the intensity of labour and improving its organisation.

In this respect the situation is particularly bad and even hopeless if we are to believe those who allowed themselves to be intimidated by the bourgeoisie or by those who are serving the bourgeoisie for their own ends. These people do not understand that there has not been, nor could there be, a revolution in which the supporters of the old system did not raise a howl about chaos, anarchy, etc. Naturally, among the people who have only just thrown off an unprecedentedly savage yoke there is deep and widespread scething and ferment; the working out of new principles of labour discipline by the people is a very protracted process, and this process could not even start until complete victory had been achieved over the landlords and the bourgeoisie.

We, however, without in the least yielding to despair, a despair that is very often pretended, and which is spread by the bourgeoisie and the bourgeois intellectuals (who have despaired of retaining their old privileges), must under no circumstances conceal an obvious evil. On the contrary, we shall expose it and intensify the Soviet methods of combating it, because the victory of socialism is inconceivable without the victory of proletarian conscious discipline over spontaneous petty-bourgeois anarchy—this real guarantee against a possible restoration of Kerenskyism and Kornilovism.

The more class-conscious vanguard of the Russian proletariat has already set itself the task of raising labour discipline. For example, both the Central Committee of the Metal Workers' Union and the Central Council of Trade Unions have begun to draft the necessary measures and decrees. This work must be supported and pushed ahead with all speed.

We must raise the question of piece-work and apply and test it in practice; we must raise the question of applying much of what is scientific and progressive in the Taylor system; we must make wages correspond to the total amount of goods turned out, or to the amount of work done by the railways, the water transport system, etc., etc.

The Russian is a bad worker compared with people in advanced countries. It could not be otherwise under the tsarist regime and in view of the tenacity of the remnants of serfdom. The task that the Soviet government must set the people in all its scope is—learn to work. The Taylor system, the last word of capitalism in this respect, like all capitalist progress, is a combination of the refined brutality of bourgeois exploitation and a number of the greatest scientific achievements in the field of analysing mechanical motions during work, the elimination of superfluous and awkward motions, the elaboration of correct methods of work, the introduction of the best system of accounting and control, etc. The Soviet Republic must at all costs adopt all that is valuable in the achievements of science and technology in this field. The possibility of building socialism depends exactly upon our success in combining the Soviet power and the Soviet organisation of administration with the up-to-date achievements of capitalism. We must organise in Russia the study and teaching of the Taylor system and systematically try it out and adapt it to our own ends. At the same time, in working to raise the productivity of labour, we must take into account the specific features of the transition period from capitalism to socialism, which, on the one hand, require that the foundations be laid of the socialist organisation of emulation, and, on the other hand, the use of compulsion, so that the slogan of the dictatorship of the proletariat shall not be desecrated by the practice of a lily-livered proletarian government.

THE ORGANISATION OF EMULATION

Among the absurdities which the bourgeoisie are fond of spreading about socialism is the allegation that socialists deny the importance of competition. In fact, it is only socialism which, by abolishing classes, and consequently, by abolishing

the enslavement of the people, for the first time opens the way for competition on a really mass scale. And it is precisely the Soviet form of organisation, which ensures transition from the formal democracy of the bourgeois republic to the real participation of the mass of working people in *administration*, that for the first time puts competition on a broad basis. It is much easier to organise this in the political field than in the economic field; but for the success of socialism, precisely the latter is important.

Take, for example, such means of organising competition as publicity. The bourgeois republic ensures publicity only formally; as a matter of fact, it subordinates the press to capital, entertains the "mob" with sensationalist political trash, conceals what takes place in the workshops, in commercial transactions, contracts, etc., behind a veil of "trade secrets", which protect "the sacred right of property". The Soviet government has abolished trade secrets; it has entered a new path; but we have done hardly anything to utilise publicity for the purpose of encouraging economic emulation. While ruthlessly suppressing the thoroughly mendacious and insolently slanderous bourgeois press, we must set to work systematically to create a press that will not entertain and fool the people with political sensation and trivialities, but which will place the questions of everyday economic life before the court of the people and assist in the serious study of these questions. Every factory, every village, is a producers' and consumers' commune, whose right and duty it is to apply the general Soviet laws in their own way ("in their own way", not in the sense of violating them, but in the sense that they can apply them in various forms) and in their own way to solve the problems of accounting in the production and distribution of goods. Under capitalism, this was the "private affair" of the individual capitalist, landlord or kulak. Under the Soviet system, it is not a private affair, but the most important affair of state.

We practically have not yet started on the enormous, difficult, but gratifying task of organising emulation between communes, of introducing accounting and publicity in the process of the production of grain, clothes and other things, of transforming dry, dead, bureaucratic accounts into living

examples, some repulsive, others attractive. Under the capitalist mode of production, the significance of individual example, say the example of some co-operative workshops, was inevitably very much restricted, and only those imbued with petty-bourgeois illusions could dream of "correcting" capitalism by force of example of virtuous institutions. After political power has passed to the proletariat, after the expropriators have been expropriated, the situation radically changes and—as prominent socialists have repeatedly pointed out—force of example for the first time is able to influence the people. Model communes must and will serve as educators, teachers, helping to raise the backward communes. The press must serve as an instrument of socialist construction, give publicity to the successes achieved by the model communes in all their details, must study the causes of these successes, the methods of management these communes employ, and, on the other hand, must put on the "black list" those communes which persist in the "traditions of capitalism", i.e., anarchy, laziness, disorder and profiteering. In capitalist society, statistics were entirely a matter for "bureaucrats", or for narrow specialists; we must carry statistics to the people and make them popular so that the working people themselves may gradually learn to understand and see how long and in what way it is necessary to work, how much time and in what way one may rest, so that *the comparison of the business results* of the various communes may become a matter of general interest and study, and that the most outstanding communes may be rewarded immediately (by reducing the working day for a certain period of time, raising remuneration, placing a larger amount of cultural or aesthetic facilities or values at their disposal, etc.).

When a new class comes on to the historical scene as the leader and guide of society, a period of strong "tossing", shocks, struggle and storm, on the one hand, of uncertain steps, experiments, wavering, hesitation in regard to the selection of new methods corresponding to new objective circumstances, on the other, is inevitable. The moribund feudal nobility avenged themselves on the bourgeoisie which vanquished them and took their place, not only by conspiracies and attempts at rebellion and restoration, but also by

pouring ridicule over the lack of skill, the clumsiness and the mistakes of the "upstarts" and the "insolent" who dared to take hold of the "sacred helm" of state without the centuries of training which the princes, barons, nobles and dignitaries had had, in exactly the same way as the Kornilovs and Kerenskys, the Gotzes and Martovs and the whole of that fraternity of heroes of bourgeois swindling or bourgeois scepticism avenge themselves on the working class of Russia for having had the "audacity" to take power.

Of course, not weeks, but long months and years are required in order that the new social class, and the class which up to now has been oppressed and crushed by poverty and ignorance at that, may get used to its new position, look around, organise its work and promote its *own* organisers. It goes without saying that the Party which leads the revolutionary proletariat could not acquire the experience and habits of large organisational undertakings embracing millions and tens of millions of citizens; the remoulding of the old, almost exclusively agitators' habits is a very lengthy process. But there is nothing impossible in this, and as soon as the necessity for a change is clearly appreciated, as soon as there is firm determination to effect the change and perseverance in pursuing a great and difficult aim, we shall achieve it. There is an enormous amount of organising talent among the "people", i.e., among the workers and the peasants who do not exploit the labour of others. Capital crushed these talented people in thousands; it killed them and threw them on to the scrap-heap. We are not yet able to find them, encourage them, put them on their feet, promote them. But we shall learn to do so if we set about it with all the revolutionary enthusiasm, without which there can be no victorious revolutions.

No profound and mighty popular movement has ever occurred in history without dirty scum rising to the top, without adventurers and rogues, boasters and shouters attaching themselves to the inexperienced innovators, without senseless fuss, confusion, aimless bustling, without individual "leaders" trying to deal with twenty matters at once and not finishing any one of them. Let the lap-dogs of bourgeois society, from Belorussov to Martov, squeal and yelp about

every extra chip that is sent flying in cutting down the big, old wood. What else are lap-dogs for if not to yelp at the proletarian elephant? Let them yelp. We shall go our way and try as carefully and as patiently as possible to test and discover real organisers, people with sober and practical minds, people who combine loyalty to socialism with ability without fuss (and in spite of bustle and fuss) to organise the strongly-welded and concerted joint work of a large number of people within the framework of Soviet organisation. *Only* such people, after testing them a dozen times, by transferring them from the simplest to the more difficult tasks, should be promoted to the responsible posts of leaders of the people's labour, leaders of administration. We have not yet learned to do this, but we shall learn.

"HARMONIOUS ORGANISATION" AND DICTATORSHIP

The resolution adopted by the recent Moscow Congress of Soviets advanced as the primary task of the moment the establishment of a "harmonious organisation", and the tightening of discipline. Everyone now readily "votes for" and "subscribes to" resolutions of this kind; but usually people do not think over the fact that the application of such resolutions calls for coercion—coercion precisely in the form of dictatorship. And yet it would be extremely stupid and absurdly utopian to assume that the transition from capitalism to socialism is possible without coercion and without dictatorship. Marx's theory very definitely opposed this petty-bourgeois-democratic and anarchist absurdity long ago. And Russia of 1917-18 confirms the correctness of Marx's theory in this respect so strikingly, palpably and imposingly that only those who are hopelessly dull or who have obstinately decided to turn their backs on the truth can be under any misapprehension concerning this. Either the dictatorship of Kornilov (if we take him as the Russian type of bourgeois Cavaignac), or the dictatorship of the proletariat—any other choice is *out of the question* for a country which has gone through an extremely rapid development with extremely sharp turns and

amidst desperate ruin created by one of the most horrible wars in history. Every solution that offers a middle path is either a deception of the people by the bourgeoisie—for the bourgeoisie dare not tell the truth, dare not say that they need Kornilov—or an expression of the dull-wittedness of the petty-bourgeois democrats, of the Chernovs, Tseretelis and Martovs who chatter about the unity of democracy, the dictatorship of democracy, the general democratic front, and similar nonsense. Those whom even the progress of the Russian Revolution of 1917-18 has not taught that a middle course is impossible, must be given up as lost.

On the other hand, it is not difficult to see that during every transition from capitalism to socialism, dictatorship is necessary for two main reasons, or along two main channels. Firstly, capitalism cannot be defeated and eradicated without the ruthless suppression of the resistance of the exploiters, who cannot at once be deprived of their wealth, of their advantages of organisation and knowledge, and consequently for a fairly long period will inevitably try to overthrow the hated rule of the poor; secondly, every great revolution, and a socialist revolution in particular, even if there were no external war, is inconceivable without internal war, i.e., civil war, which is even more devastating than external war, and involves thousands and millions of cases of wavering and desertion from one side to another, implies a state of extreme indefiniteness, lack of equilibrium and chaos. And of course, all the elements of disintegration of the old society, which are inevitably very numerous and connected mainly with the petty bourgeoisie (because it is the petty bourgeoisie that every war and every crisis ruins and destroys first), are bound to "reveal themselves" during such a profound revolution. And these elements of disintegration *cannot* "reveal themselves" otherwise than in the increase of crime, hooliganism, corruption, profiteering and outrages of every kind. To put these down requires time and *requires an iron hand*.

There has not been a single great revolution in history in which the people did not instinctively realise this and did not reveal salutary firmness by shooting thieves on the spot. The misfortune of previous revolutions was that the revolutionary enthusiasm of the people which sustained them

in their state of tension and gave them the strength to ruthlessly suppress the elements of disintegration, did not last long. The social, i.e., the class, reason for this instability of the revolutionary enthusiasm of the people was the weakness of the proletariat, which *alone* is able (if it is sufficiently numerous, class-conscious and disciplined) to win over to its side *the majority* of the working and exploited people (the majority of the poor, to speak more simply and popularly) and retain power sufficiently long to suppress completely all the exploiters as well as all the elements of disintegration.

It was this historical experience of all revolutions, it was this world-historic-economic and political-lesson that Marx summed up in giving his short, sharp, concise and expressive formula: dictatorship of the proletariat. And the fact that the Russian revolution correctly approached this world-historic task *has been proved* by the victorious progress of the Soviet form of organisation among all the peoples and tongues of Russia. For Soviet power is nothing but an organisational form of the dictatorship of the proletariat, the dictatorship of the advanced class, which raises to a new democracy and to independent participation in the administration of the state tens upon tens of millions of working and exploited people, who by their own experience learn to regard the disciplined and class-conscious vanguard of the proletariat as their most reliable leader.

Dictatorship, however, is a big word, and big words should not be thrown about carelessly. Dictatorship is iron rule, government that is revolutionarily bold, swift and ruthless in suppressing the exploiters as well as hooligans. But our government is excessively mild, very often it resembles jelly more than iron. We must not forget for a moment that the bourgeois and petty-bourgeois element is fighting against the Soviet system in two ways: on the one hand, it is operating from without, by the methods of the Savinkovs, Gotzes, Gegechkoris and Kornilovs, by conspiracies and rebellions, and by their filthy "ideological" reflection, the flood of lies and slander in the Cadet, Right Socialist-Revolutionary and Menshevik press; on the other hand, this element operates from within and takes advantage of every manifestation of disintegration, of every weakness, in order to bribe, to

increase indiscipline, laxity and chaos. The nearer we approach the complete military suppression of the bourgeoisie, the more dangerous does the element of petty-bourgeois anarchy become. And the fight against this element cannot be waged solely with the aid of propaganda and agitation, solely by organising emulation and by selecting organisers. The struggle must also be waged by means of compulsion.

As the fundamental task of the government becomes, not military suppression, but administration, the typical manifestation of suppression and compulsion will be, not shooting on the spot, but trial by court. In this respect also the revolutionary people after October 25, 1917, entered on to the right path and demonstrated the virility of the revolution by setting up their own workers' and peasants' courts, even before the decrees dissolving the bourgeois bureaucratic judiciary were passed. But our revolutionary and people's courts are extremely, incredibly weak. One feels that we have not yet done away with the people's attitude towards the courts as towards something official and alien, an attitude inherited from the yoke of the landlords and of the bourgeoisie. It is not yet sufficiently realised that the court is an organ which enlists precisely the poor, every one of them, in the work of state administration (for the work of the courts is one of the functions of state administration), that the court is an *organ of the power* of the proletariat and of the poor peasants, that the court is an instrument *for inculcating discipline*. There is not yet sufficient appreciation of the simple and obvious fact that if the principal misfortunes of Russia at the present time are hunger and unemployment, these misfortunes cannot be overcome by spurts, but only by comprehensive, all-embracing country-wide organisation and discipline in order to increase the output of food for the people and food for industry (fuel), to transport these in good time to the places where they are required, and to distribute them properly; and it is not fully appreciated that, consequently, it is *those* who violate labour discipline at any factory, in any undertaking, in any matter, who are *responsible* for the sufferings caused by the famine and unemployment, that we must know how to find the guilty ones, to bring them to trial and ruthlessly punish. The petty-bourgeois element against

which we must now wage a most persistent struggle is apparent precisely in the failure to appreciate the economic and political connection between famine and unemployment on the one hand and general laxity in matters of organisation and discipline on the other—in the tenacity of the *small-proprietor* outlook, namely, I'll grab all I can for myself; what do I care about the rest?

In the rail transport service, which perhaps most strikingly embodies the economic ties of an organism created by large-scale capitalism, the struggle between the element of petty-bourgeois laxity and proletarian organisation is particularly evident. The "administrative" elements provide a host of saboteurs and bribe-takers; the best part of the proletarian elements fight for discipline; but among both elements there are, of course, many waverers and "weak" characters who are unable to withstand the "temptation" of profiteering, bribery, personal gain obtained by spoiling the whole apparatus, upon the proper working of which the victory over famine and unemployment depends.

The struggle that was developing around the recent decree on the management of the railways, the decree which grants individual executives dictatorial powers or "unlimited" powers, is characteristic. The conscious (and mostly, probably, unconscious) representatives of petty-bourgeois laxity would like to see in this granting of "unlimited" (i.e., dictatorial) powers to individuals a departure from the collegiate principle, from democracy and from the principles of Soviet government. Here and there, among Left Socialist-Revolutionaries, a positively hooligan agitation, i.e., agitation appealing to the base instincts and to the small proprietor's urge to "grab all he can", has been developed against the dictatorship decree. The question has become one of really enormous significance: firstly, the question of principle, namely, is the appointment of individuals, dictators with unlimited powers, in general compatible with the fundamental principles of Soviet government? Secondly, what relation has this case—this precedent, if you will—to the special tasks of government in the present concrete situation? We must deal very thoroughly with both these questions.

That in the history of revolutionary movements the dictatorship of individuals was very often the expression, the vehicle, the channel of the dictatorship of the revolutionary classes has been shown by the irrefutable experience of history. Undoubtedly, the dictatorship of individuals was compatible with bourgeois democracy. On this point, however, the bourgeois denigrators of the Soviet system, as well as their petty-bourgeois henchmen, always display remarkable trickery: on the one hand, they declare the Soviet system to be something absurd and anarchistically savage, and they carefully pass over in silence all our historical examples and theoretical arguments which prove that the Soviets are a higher form of democracy, and even more, the beginning of the *socialist* form of democracy; on the other hand, they demand of us a higher democracy than bourgeois democracy and say: personal dictatorship is absolutely incompatible with your, Bolshevik (i.e., not bourgeois, *but socialist*) Soviet democracy.

These are exceedingly poor arguments. If we are not anarchists, we must admit that the state, *that is, compulsion*, is necessary for the transition from capitalism to socialism. The form of compulsion is determined by the degree of development of the given revolutionary class, and also by special circumstances, such as, for example, the legacy of a long and reactionary war and the forms of resistance put up by the bourgeoisie and the petty bourgeoisie. There is, therefore, absolutely *no* contradiction in principle between Soviet (*that is, socialist*) democracy and the exercise of dictatorial powers by individuals. The difference between proletarian dictatorship and bourgeois dictatorship is that the former strikes at the exploiting minority in the interests of the exploited majority, and that it is exercised—*also through individuals*—not only by the working and exploited people, but also by organisations which are built in such a way as to rouse these people to history-making activity. (The Soviet organisations are organisations of this kind.)

In regard to the second question concerning the significance of individual dictatorial powers from the point of view of the specific tasks of the present moment, it must be said that large-scale machine industry—which is precisely the material source, the productive source, the foundation of social-

ism—calls for absolute and strict *unity of will*, which directs the joint labours of hundreds, thousands and tens of thousands of people. The technical, economic and historical necessity of this is obvious, and all those who have thought about socialism have always regarded it as one of the conditions of socialism. But how can strict unity of will be ensured?—By thousands subordinating their will to the will of one.

Given ideal class-consciousness and discipline on the part of those taking part in the common work, this subordination would be quite like the mild leadership of a conductor of an orchestra. It may assume the sharp forms of a dictatorship if ideal discipline and class-consciousness are lacking. But be that as it may, *unquestioning subordination* to a single will is absolutely necessary for the success of processes organised on the pattern of large-scale machine industry. On the railways it is twice and three times as necessary. In this transition from one political task to another, which *on the surface* is totally dissimilar to the first, consists the peculiar nature of the present situation. The revolution has only just smashed the oldest, strongest and heaviest fetters to which the people submitted under duress. That was yesterday. Today, however, the same revolution demands—precisely in the interests of its development and consolidation, precisely in the interests of socialism—that the people *unquestioningly obey the single will* of the leaders of labour. Of course, such a transition cannot be made at one step. Clearly, it can be achieved only as a result of tremendous jolts, shocks, reversions to old ways, the enormous exertion of effort on the part of the proletarian vanguard, which is leading the people to the new ways. Those who drop into the philistine hysterics of *Novaya Zhizn* or *Vperyod*,²⁴ *Dyelo Naroda*²⁵ or *Nash Vek*²⁶ do not stop to think about this.

Take the psychology of the average, ordinary workingman; compare it with the objective, material conditions of his social life. Before the October Revolution he did *not* see a single instance of the propertied exploiting classes making any real sacrifice for him, giving up anything for his benefit. He did *not* see them giving him land and liberty that had been repeatedly promised him, giving him peace, sacrificing "Great Power" interests and the interests of Great Power

secret treaties, sacrificing capital and profits. He saw this only *after* October 25, 1917, when he took this himself by force, and had to defend by force what he had taken against the Kerenskys, Gotzes, Gegechkoris, Dutovs and Kornilovs. Naturally, for a certain time, all his attention, all his thoughts, all his spiritual strength, were concentrated on taking a breath, on unbending his back, on straightening his shoulders, on taking the blessings of life which became immediately accessible and which the overthrown exploiters had never given him. Of course, a certain amount of time is required to enable the ordinary workingman not only to see for himself, not only to become convinced, but also to feel that he cannot simply "take", snatch, grab things, that this leads to increased dislocation, to ruin, to the return of the Kornilovs. The corresponding change in the conditions of life (and consequently in the psychology) of the ordinary workingmen is only just beginning. And our whole task, the task of the Communist Party (Bolsheviks), which is the class-conscious spokesman for the strivings of the exploited for emancipation, is to appreciate this change, to understand that it is necessary, to stand at the head of the exhausted people who are wearily seeking a way out and lead them along the true path, along the path of labour discipline, along the path of coordinating the task of arguing at mass meetings *about* the conditions of work with the task of unquestioningly obeying the will of the Soviet leader, of the dictator, *during* the work.

The "mania for meetings" is an object of the ridicule, and still more often of the spiteful hissing of the bourgeoisie, the Mensheviks, the *Novaya Zhizn* people, who see only the chaos, the confusion and the outbursts of small-proprietor egoism. But without the discussions at public meetings the mass of the oppressed could never have changed from the discipline forced upon them by the exploiters to conscious, voluntary discipline. The airing of questions at public meetings is the genuine democracy of the working people, their way of unbending their backs, their awakening to a new life, their first steps along the road which they themselves have cleared of vipers (the exploiters, the imperialists, the landlords and capitalists) and which they want to learn to build themselves, in their own way, for themselves, on the prin-

ciples of their own *Soviet*, and not alien, not aristocratic, not bourgeois rule. It required precisely the October victory of the working people over the exploiters, it required a whole historical period in which the working people themselves could first of all discuss the new conditions of life and the new tasks, in order to make possible the durable transition to superior forms of labour discipline, to the conscious appreciation of the necessity for the dictatorship of the proletariat, to unquestioning obedience to the orders of individual representatives of the Soviet government during the work.

This transition has now commenced.

We have successfully fulfilled the first task of the revolution; we have seen how the mass of working people created in themselves the fundamental condition for its success: they united their efforts against the exploiters in order to overthrow them. Stages like that of October 1905, February and October 1917 are of world-historic significance.

We have successfully fulfilled the second task of the revolution: to awaken, to raise precisely those social "lower ranks" whom the exploiters had pushed down, and who only after October 25, 1917, obtained complete freedom to overthrow the exploiters and to begin to take stock of things and arrange life in their own way. The airing of questions at public meetings of precisely the most oppressed and downtrodden, of the least educated mass of working people, their going over to the side of the Bolsheviks, establishment by them everywhere of their own Soviet organisation—this was the second great stage of the revolution.

The third stage is now beginning. We must consolidate what we ourselves have won, what we ourselves have decreed, made law, discussed, planned—consolidate all this in stable forms of *everyday labour discipline*. This is the most difficult, but the most gratifying task, because only its fulfilment will give us socialist conditions. We must learn to combine the "public meeting" democracy of the working people—turbulent, surging, overflowing its banks like a spring flood—with *iron* discipline while at work, with *unquestioning obedience* to the will of a single person, the Soviet leader, while at work.

We have not yet learned to do this.

We shall learn it.

Yesterday we were menaced by the restoration of bourgeois exploitation personified by the Kornilovs, Gotzes, Dutovs, Gegechkoris and Bogayevskys. We conquered them. This restoration, this very same restoration menaces us today in another form, in the form of the element of petty-bourgeois laxity and anarchism, or small-proprietor "it's not my business" psychology, in the form of the daily, petty, but numerous sorties and attacks of this element against proletarian discipline. We must and we shall vanquish this element of petty-bourgeois anarchy.

THE DEVELOPMENT OF SOVIET ORGANISATION

The socialist character of Soviet, i.e., *proletarian*, democracy, as concretely applied today, consists first in that the electors are the working and exploited people; the bourgeoisie is excluded. Secondly, it consists in the fact that all bureaucratic formalities and restrictions of elections are abolished; the people themselves determine the order and time of elections, and are completely free to recall any elected person. Thirdly, it consists in the fact that the best mass organisation of the vanguard of the working people, i.e., the proletariat engaged in large-scale industry, is created, which enables it to lead the vast mass of the exploited, to draw them into independent political life, to educate them politically by their own experience; therefore for the first time a start is made by the *entire* population in learning the art of administration, and in beginning to administer. These are the principal distinguishing features of the democracy now applied in Russia, which is a higher *type* of democracy, a break with the bourgeois distortion of democracy, a transition to socialist democracy and to the conditions in which the state can begin to wither away.

It goes without saying that the element of petty-bourgeois disorganisation (which must *inevitably* be apparent to some extent in *every* proletarian revolution, and which is especially apparent in our revolution, owing to the petty-bourgeois

character of our country, its backwardness and the consequences of a reactionary war) cannot but leave its impress upon the Soviets as well.

We must work unremittingly to develop the organisation of the Soviets and of the Soviet government. There is a petty-bourgeois tendency to transform the members of the Soviets into "parliamentarians", or else into bureaucrats. We must combat this by drawing *all* the members of the Soviets into the practical work of administration. In many places the departments of the Soviets are gradually becoming merged with the Commissariats. Our aim is to draw *the whole of the poor* into the practical work of administration, and every step that is taken in this direction—the more varied they are, the better—should be carefully recorded, studied, systematised, tested by wider experience and embodied in law. Our aim is to ensure that *every* toiler, after having finished his eight hours' "task" in productive labour, shall perform state duties *without pay*: the transition to this is particularly difficult, but this transition alone can guarantee the final consolidation of socialism. Naturally, the novelty and difficulty of the change cause an abundance of steps taken, as it were, gropingly, an abundance of mistakes, vacillation—without this, any marked progress is impossible. The reason why the present position seems peculiar to many of those who would like to be regarded as socialists is that they have been accustomed to contrasting capitalism to socialism abstractly and that they profoundly put between the two the word: "leap" (some of them, recalling fragments of what they have read of Engels's writings, still more profoundly add the phrase: "leap from the realm of necessity into the realm of freedom"²⁷). The majority of these so-called socialists, who have "read in books" about socialism but who have never seriously thought over the matter, are unable to understand that by "leap" the teachers of socialism meant turning-points on a world-historical scale, and that leaps of this kind extended over decades and even longer periods. Naturally, in such times, the notorious "intellectuals" provide an infinite number of mourners of the dead. Some mourn over the Constituent Assembly,²⁸ others mourn over bourgeois discipline, others again mourn over the capitalist system, still others mourn over the

cultured landlord, and still others again mourn over imperialist Great Power policy, etc., etc.

The real interest of the epoch of great leaps lies in that the abundance of fragments of the old, which sometimes accumulate more rapidly than the rudiments (not always immediately discernible) of the new, calls for the ability to discern what is most important in the line or chain of development. History knows moments when the most important thing for the success of the revolution is to heap up as large a quantity of the fragments as possible, i.e., to blow up as many of the old institutions as possible; moments arise when enough has been blown up and the next task is to perform the "prosaic" (for the petty-bourgeois revolutionary, the "boring") task of clearing away the fragments; and moments arise when the careful nursing of the rudiments of the new system, which are growing amidst the wreckage on a soil which as yet has been badly cleared of rubble, is the most important thing.

It is not enough to be a revolutionary and an adherent of socialism or a Communist in general. You must be able at each particular moment to find the particular link in the chain which you must grasp with all your might in order to hold the whole chain and to prepare firmly for the transition to the next link; the order of the links, their form, the manner in which they are linked together, their difference from each other in the historical chain of events, are not as simple and not as senseless as those in an ordinary chain made by a smith.

The fight against the bureaucratic distortion of the Soviet form of organisation is assured by the firmness of the connection between the Soviets and the "people", meaning by that the working and exploited people, and by the flexibility and elasticity of this connection. Even in the most democratic capitalist republics in the world, the poor never regard the bourgeois parliament as "their own" institution. But the Soviets are "their own" and not alien institutions to the mass of workers and peasants. The modern "Social-Democrats" of the Scheidemann or, what is almost the same thing, of the Martov type are repelled by the Soviets, and they are drawn towards the respectable bourgeois parliament, or to the Con-

stituent Assembly, in the same way as Turgenev, sixty years ago, was drawn towards a moderate monarchist and nobleman's Constitution and was repelled by the peasant democracy of Dobrolyubov and Chernyshevsky.

It is precisely the closeness of the Soviets to the "people", to the working people, that creates the special forms of recall and other means of control from below which must be most zealously developed now. For example, the Councils of Public Education, as periodical conferences of Soviet electors and their delegates called to discuss and control the activities of the Soviet authorities in the given field, deserve full sympathy and support. Nothing would be sillier than to transform the Soviets into something congealed and self-contained. The more resolutely we now have to stand for a ruthlessly firm government, for the dictatorship of individuals *in definite processes of work*, in definite aspects of *purely executive* functions, the more varied must be the forms and methods of control from below in order to counteract every shadow of a possibility of distorting the principles of Soviet government, in order repeatedly and tirelessly to weed out bureaucracy.

CONCLUSION

An extraordinarily difficult, complex and dangerous situation in international affairs; the necessity of manoeuvring and retreating; a period of waiting for new outbreaks of the revolution which is maturing in the West at a painfully slow pace; within the country a period of slow construction and ruthless "tightening up", of prolonged and persistent struggle waged by stern, proletarian discipline against the menacing element of petty-bourgeois laxity and anarchy—these in brief are the distinguishing features of the special stage of the socialist revolution in which we are now living. This is the link in the historical chain of events which we must at present grasp with all our might in order to prove equal to the tasks that confront us before passing to the next link which is attracting us by its particular brightness, the brightness of the victories of the international proletarian revolution.

Try to compare the slogans that follow from the specific conditions of the present stage, namely, manoeuvre, retreat, wait, build slowly, ruthlessly tighten up, rigorously discipline, smash laxity—with the ordinary everyday concept “revolutionary”.... Is it surprising that when certain “revolutionaries” hear this they are seized with noble indignation and begin to “thunder” abuse at us for forgetting the traditions of the October Revolution, for compromising with the bourgeois specialists, for compromising with the bourgeoisie, for being petty bourgeois, reformists, and so on and so forth?

The misfortune of these sorry “revolutionaries” is that even those of them who are prompted by the best motives in the world and are absolutely loyal to the cause of socialism fail to understand the particular, and particularly “unpleasant”, state that a backward country, lacerated by a reactionary and disastrous war and which began the socialist revolution long before the more advanced countries, inevitably has to pass through; they lack stamina in the difficult moments of a difficult transition. Naturally, it is the “Left Socialist-Revolutionaries” who are acting as an “official” opposition of *this* kind against our Party. Of course, there are and always will be individual exceptions from group and class types. But social types remain. In the land in which the small-proprietor population greatly predominates over the purely proletarian population, the difference between the proletarian revolutionary and petty-bourgeois revolutionary will inevitably make itself felt, and from time to time will make itself felt very sharply. The petty-bourgeois revolutionary wavers and vacillates at every turn of events; he is an ardent revolutionary in March 1917 and praises “coalition” in May, hates the Bolsheviks (or laments over their “adventurism”) in July and apprehensively turns away from them at the end of October, supports them in December, and finally in March and April 1918 such types, more often than not, turn up their noses contemptuously and say: “I am not one of those who sing hymns to ‘organic’ work, to practicalness and gradualness.”

The social origin of such types is the small proprietor who has been driven to frenzy by the horrors of war, the sudden devastation, the unprecedented torments of famine and ruin,

who hysterically rushes about seeking a way out, seeking salvation, places his confidence in the proletariat and supports it one moment and the next gives way to fits of despair. We must clearly understand and firmly remember the fact that socialism cannot be built on such a social basis. The only class that can lead the working and exploited people is the class that unswervingly follows its path without losing courage and without giving way to despair even at the most difficult, arduous and dangerous stages. Hysterical spurts ahead are of no use to us. What we need is the steady advance of the iron battalions of the proletariat.

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Izvestia No. 85
Signed: N. Lenin

Collected Works, Vol. 27

DRAFT PLAN OF SCIENTIFIC AND TECHNICAL WORK

The Supreme Economic Council should immediately give its instructions to the Academy of Sciences that has begun the systematic study and investigation of the natural productive forces* of Russia, to set up a number of expert commissions for the speediest possible compilation of a plan for the reorganisation of industry and the economic progress of Russia.

The plan should include:

the rational *distribution* of industry in Russia from the standpoint of closeness to raw materials and the lowest consumption of labour-power in the transition from the processing of the raw materials to all subsequent stages in the processing of semi-manufactured goods, up to and including the output of the finished product;

the rational merging and concentration of industry in a few big enterprises from the standpoint of the most up-to-date large-scale industry, especially trusts;

the fullest possible *independent* supply of the present Russian Soviet Republic (without the Ukraine and the regions occupied by the Germans) with *all* the chief items of raw materials; the organisation of the main branches of industry;

special attention must be paid to the electrification of industry and transport and the application of electricity to

* The *publication* of this material must be accelerated to the utmost; a note about this must be sent to the Commissariat of Public Education, the Printing Workers' Trade Union and the Commissariat of Labour.

farming, and the use of lower grades of fuel (peat, low-grade coal) for the production of electricity, with the lowest possible expenditure on extraction and transport;

water power and wind motors in general and in their application to farming.

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Collected Works, Vol. 27

"LEFT-WING" CHILDISHNESS AND PETTY-BOURGEOIS MENTALITY

(Excerpt)

III

We shall pass on to the misfortunes of our "Left" Communists in the sphere of home policy. It is difficult to read the following phrases in the theses on the *present* situation without smiling.

"... The systematic use of the remaining means of production is conceivable only if a most determined policy of socialisation is pursued" ... "not to capitulate to the bourgeoisie and its servile petty-bourgeois intelligentsia, but to rout the bourgeoisie and to completely put down sabotage..."

Dear "Left Communists", how determined they are, but how little thinking they display. What do they mean by pursuing "a determined policy of socialisation"?

One may or may not be determined on the question of nationalisation or confiscation, but the whole point is that even the greatest possible "determination" in the world is not enough to pass *from* nationalisation and confiscation *to* socialisation. The misfortune of our "Lefts" is that by their naïve, childish combination of words "most determined policy of socialisation" they reveal their utter failure to understand the crux of the question, the crux of the "present" situation. The misfortune of our "Lefts" is that they have missed the very essence of the "present situation", the transition from confiscation (the carrying out of which requires above all a determination in a politician) to socialisation (the carrying out of which requires a *different* quality in the revolutionary).

Yesterday, the main task of the moment was, as determinedly as possible, to nationalise, confiscate, beat down and crush the bourgeoisie, and put down sabotage. Today, only a

blind man could fail to see that we have nationalised, confiscated, beaten down and put down more *than we have been able to keep count*. The difference between socialisation and simple confiscation is that confiscation can be carried out by "determination" alone, without the ability to calculate and distribute properly, *whereas socialisation cannot be brought about without this ability*.

The historical service we have rendered is that yesterday we were determined (and we shall be tomorrow) in confiscating, in beating down the bourgeoisie, in putting down sabotage. To write about this today in "Theses on the Present Situation" is to face the past and to fail to understand the transition to the future.

"... To completely put down sabotage..." What a task they have found! Our saboteurs are quite sufficiently "put down". What we lack is something quite different. We lack the proper *calculation* of which saboteurs to set to work and where to place them. We lack the organisation of *our own* forces for supervision, say, by one Bolshevik leader or controller over a hundred saboteurs who are now coming into our service. With such a state of affairs to flaunt such phrases as "the most determined policy of socialisation", "beating down", and "completely putting down" is just missing the mark. It is typical of the petty-bourgeois revolutionary not to notice that beating down, putting down, etc., is not enough for socialism. It is sufficient for a small proprietor enraged against the big proprietor, but no proletarian revolutionary would ever fall into such error.

If the words we have quoted provoke a smile, the following discovery made by the "Left Communists" will provoke nothing short of Homeric laughter. According to them, under the "Bolshevik deviation to the right" the Soviet Republic is threatened with "evolution towards state capitalism". They have really frightened us this time! And with what gusto these "Left Communists" repeat this threatening revelation in their theses and articles...

It has not occurred to them that state capitalism would be a *step forward* as compared with the present state of affairs in our Soviet Republic. If in approximately six months' time state capitalism sets in in our republic, it would be a great

success and a sure guarantee that within a year socialism will have gained a permanently firm hold and will have become invincible in our country.

I can imagine with what noble indignation a "Left Communist" will recoil from these words, and what "devastating criticism" he will make to the workers against the "Bolshevik deviation to the right". What! The transition to state capitalism in the Soviet Socialist Republic would be a step forward? ... Isn't this the betrayal of socialism?

Therein lies the root of the economic mistake of the "Left Communists". And that is why we must deal with this point in greater detail.

In the first place, the "Left Communists" do not understand the nature of the transition from capitalism to socialism which gives us the right and the grounds on which to call our country the Socialist Republic of Soviets.

Secondly, they reveal their petty-bourgeois character precisely in not recognising the petty-bourgeois element as the principal enemy of socialism in our country.

Thirdly, in making a bugbear of "state capitalism", they betray their failure to understand that the Soviet state differs from the bourgeois state economically.

Let us examine these three points.

No one, I think, in studying the question of the economic system of Russia, has denied its transitional character. Nor, I think, has any Communist denied that the term Socialist Soviet Republic implies the determination of Soviet power to achieve the transition to socialism, and not that the new economic system is recognised as a socialist order.

But what does the word "transition" mean? Does it not mean, as applied to economic system that the present system contains elements, particles, pieces of both capitalism and socialism? Everyone will admit that it does. But not all who admit this take the trouble to consider the precise elements that constitute the various socio-economic structures which exist in Russia at the present time. And this is the crux of the question.

Let us enumerate these elements:

(1) patriarchal, i.e., to a considerable extent natural, peasant farming;

(2) small commodity production (this includes the majority of those peasants who sell their grain);

(3) private capitalism;

(4) state capitalism;

(5) socialism.

Russia is so vast and so varied that all these different types of socio-economic structures are intermingled. This is what constitutes the specific feature of the situation.

The question arises: what elements predominate? Clearly, in a small-peasant country, the petty-bourgeois element predominates and it must predominate, for the great majority of those working the soil are small commodity producers. The shell of state capitalism (grain monopoly, state-controlled entrepreneurs and traders, bourgeois co-operators) is pierced in one place or another by profiteers, the chief object of profiteering being grain.

It is precisely in this field that the struggle is mainly proceeding. Between what elements is this struggle being waged if we are to speak in terms of economic categories such as "state capitalism"? Between the fourth and the fifth in the order in which I have just enumerated them? Of course not. It is not state capitalism that is at war with socialism, but the petty bourgeoisie plus private capitalism fighting together against both state capitalism and socialism. The petty bourgeoisie oppose every kind of state interference, accounting and control, whether it be state capitalist or state socialist. This is an absolutely unquestionable fact of reality, the failure to understand which lies at the root of the economic mistake of the "Left Communists". The profiteer, the trade marauder, the disrupter of monopoly—these are our principal "internal" enemies, the enemies of the economic measures of Soviet power. A hundred and twenty-five years ago it might have been excusable for the French petty bourgeoisie, the most ardent and sincere revolutionaries, to endeavour to crush the profiteer by executing a few of the "chosen" and by thunderous declamations. Today, however, the purely rhetorical attitude to this question assumed by some Left Socialist-Revolutionaries can rouse nothing but disgust and revulsion in every politically conscious revolutionary. We know perfectly well that the economic basis of profiteering is

both the small proprietors, who are exceptionally widespread in Russia, and private capitalism, of which *every* petty bourgeois is an agent. We know that the million tentacles of this petty-bourgeois hydra now and again encircle various sections of the workers, that, *instead of state monopoly*, profiteering forces its way through all the pores of our social and economic organism.

Those who fail to see this show by their blindness that they are slaves of petty-bourgeois prejudices. This is precisely the case with our "Left Communists", who in words (and of course in their deepest convictions) are merciless enemies of the petty bourgeoisie, while in deeds they help only the petty bourgeoisie, serve only this section of the population and express only its point of view by fighting—*in April 1918!!*—against... "state capitalism". They are wide of the mark!

The petty bourgeoisie have money put away, several thousands gained during the war by "honest" and especially by dishonest means. They are the economic types, the typical characters who serve as the basis of profiteering and private capitalism. Money is a certificate entitling the possessor to receive social wealth; and a vast section of small proprietors, numbering millions, cling to this certificate and conceal it from the "state". They do not believe in socialism or communism, and "mark time" until the proletarian storm blows over. Either we subordinate the petty bourgeoisie to *our* control and accounting (we can do this if we organise the poor, that is, the majority of the population or semi-proletarians, around the politically conscious, proletarian vanguard), or they will overthrow our workers' power as surely and as inevitably as the revolution was overthrown by the Napoleons and Cavaignacs who sprang from this very soil of petty proprietorship. This is how the question stands. Only the Left Socialist-Revolutionaries fail to see this plain and evident truth through their mist of empty phrases about the "toiling" peasants. But who takes these phrase-mongering Left Socialist-Revolutionaries seriously?

The petty bourgeois who hoards his thousands is an enemy of state capitalism. He wants to employ his thousands just for himself, against the poor, in opposition to any kind of

state control. And the sum total of these thousands, amounting to many thousands of millions, forms the base for profiteering, which undermines our socialist construction. Let us assume that a certain number of workers produce in a few days values equal to 1,000. Let us then assume that 200 of this total vanishes owing to petty profiteering, all kinds of embezzlement and the "evading" by the small proprietors of Soviet decrees and regulations. Every politically conscious worker will say that if better order and organisation could be obtained at the price of 300 out of the 1,000 he would willingly give 300 instead of 200, for it will be quite easy under Soviet power to reduce this "tribute" later on to, say, 100 or 50, once order and organisation are established and once the petty-bourgeois disruption of state monopoly is completely overcome.

This simple illustration in figures, which I have deliberately simplified to the utmost in order to make it absolutely clear, explains the present *correlation* of state capitalism and socialism. The workers hold state power and have every legal opportunity of "taking" the whole thousand, i.e., without giving up a single kopek, except for socialist purposes. This legal opportunity, which rests upon the actual transition of power to the workers, is an element of socialism.

But in many ways, the small proprietary and private capitalist element undermines this legal position, drags in profiteering, hinders the execution of Soviet decrees. State capitalism would be a gigantic step forward *even if* we paid *more* than we are paying at present (I took this numerical example deliberately to bring this out more sharply), because it is worth while paying for "tuition", because it is useful for the workers, because victory over disorder, economic ruin and slackness is the most important thing; because the continuation of small proprietary anarchy is the greatest, the most serious danger which will *certainly* be our ruin (unless we overcome it), whereas not only will the payment of a heavier tribute to state capitalism not ruin us, it will lead us to socialism by the surest road. When the working class has learned how to defend the state system against small proprietary anarchy, when it has learned to organise large-scale production on a national scale, along state capitalist lines, it will

hold, if I may use the expression, all the trump cards, and the consolidation of socialism will be assured.

In the first place, *economically*, state capitalism is immeasurably superior to our present economic system.

In the second place, there is nothing terrible in it for Soviet power, for the Soviet state is a state in which the power of the workers and the poor is assured. The "Left Communists" failed to understand these unquestionable truths, which, of course, a "Left Socialist-Revolutionary", who cannot connect any ideas on political economy in his head in general, will never understand, but which every Marxist *must* admit. It is not even worth while arguing with a Left Socialist-Revolutionary. It is enough to point to him as a "repulsive example" of a windbag. But the "Left Communists" *must* be argued with because those who are wrong are Marxists, and an analysis of their mistake will help the *working class* to find the true road.

IV

To elucidate the question still more, let us first of all take the most concrete example of state capitalism. Everybody knows what this example is. It is Germany. Here we have "the last word" in modern large-scale capitalist engineering and planned organisation, *subordinated to junker-bourgeois imperialism*. Cross out the words in italics, and in place of the militarist, junker, bourgeois, imperialist *state* put *also* a *state*, but of a different social type, of a different class content—a *Soviet* state, that is, a proletarian state, and you will have the *sum total* of the conditions necessary for socialism.

Socialism is inconceivable without large-scale capitalist engineering based on the last word in modern science. It is inconceivable without planned state organisation which subordinates tens of millions of people to the strictest observance of a single standard in production and distribution. We Marxists have always spoken of this, and it is not worth while wasting two seconds talking to people who do not understand *even* this (anarchists and a good half of the Left Socialist-Revolutionaries).

At the same time socialism is inconceivable unless the proletariat is the ruler of the state. This also is ABC. And history (which nobody except Menshevik blockheads of the first order ever expected to bring about "complete" socialism smoothly, gently, easily and simply) took such a peculiar course that it *gave birth* in 1918 to two unconnected halves of socialism existing side by side like two future chicks in the single shell of international imperialism. In 1918 Germany and Russia were the most striking embodiment of the material realisation of the economic, the productive and the socio-economic conditions for socialism, on the one hand, and the political conditions, on the other.

A successful proletarian revolution in Germany would immediately and very easily have shattered any shell of imperialism (which unfortunately is made of the best steel, and hence cannot be broken by the efforts of *any... chicken*) and would have brought about the victory of world socialism for certain, without any difficulty, or with slight difficulty—if, of course, by "difficulty" we mean difficult on a world-historical scale, and not in the very narrow sense.

While the revolution in Germany is still slow in "coming forth", our task is to study the state capitalism of the Germans, to spare *no effort* in copying it and not shrink from adopting *dictatorial* methods to hasten the copying of it. Our task is to do this even more thoroughly than Peter hastened the copying of Western culture by barbarian Russia, and we must not hesitate to use barbarous methods in fighting barbarism. If there are anarchists and Left Socialist-Revolutionaries (I recall offhand the speeches of Karelin and Ghe on the Central Executive Committee) who indulge in Narcissus-like reflections and say that it is unbecoming for us revolutionaries to "take lessons" from German imperialism, there is only one thing we can say in reply: the revolution that took these people seriously would perish irrevocably (and deservedly).

At present, petty-bourgeois capitalism prevails in Russia, and it is *one and the same road* that leads from it to *both* large-scale state capitalism *and* to socialism, through *one and the same* intermediary station called "national accounting and control of production and distribution". Those who fail

to understand this are committing an unpardonable mistake in economics. Either they do not know the facts of life, do not see what actually exists and are unable to look the truth in the face, or they confine themselves to abstractly comparing "capitalism" with "socialism" and fail to study the concrete forms and stages of the transition that is taking place in our country. Let it be said in parenthesis that this is the very theoretical mistake which misled the best people in the *Novaya Zhizn* and *Vperyod* camp. The worst and the mediocre of these, owing to their stupidity and spinelessness, drag at the tail of the bourgeoisie, of whom they stand in awe. The best of them failed to understand that it was not without reason that the teachers of socialism spoke of a whole period of transition from capitalism to socialism and emphasised the "prolonged birth-pangs" of new society. And this new society is again an abstraction which can come into being only by passing through a series of varied, imperfect, concrete attempts to create this or that socialist state.

It is precisely because Russia cannot advance from the economic situation now existing here without traversing the ground *that is common* to state capitalism and to socialism (national accounting and control) that the attempt to frighten others as well as themselves with "evolution *towards* state capitalism" (*Kommunist* No. 1, p. 8, col. 1) is utter theoretical nonsense. It is to let one's thoughts wander away from the true road of "evolution", and is to fail to understand what this road is. In practice it is equivalent to dragging back to small proprietary capitalism.

In order to convince the reader that this is not the first time I have given this "high" appreciation of state capitalism and that I gave it *before* the Bolsheviks seized power I take the liberty of quoting the following passage from my pamphlet *The Impending Catastrophe and How to Combat It*, written in September 1917.

"...Try to substitute *for* the Junker-capitalist state, for the landlord-capitalist state, a *revolutionary-democratic* state, i.e., a state which in a revolutionary way destroys *all* privileges and does not fear to introduce the fullest democracy in a revolutionary way, and you will find that, given a really revolutionary-democratic state, state monopoly capitalism

inevitably and unavoidably implies a step, and more than one step, towards socialism!

"...For socialism is nothing but the next step forward from state-monopoly capitalism.

"...State-monopoly capitalism is a complete *material* preparation for socialism, the *threshold* of socialism, a rung in the ladder of history between which and the rung called socialism *there are no intermediate rungs*" (pp. 27 and 28).

Please note that this was written when Kerensky was in power, that we are discussing *not* the dictatorship of the proletariat, *not* the socialist state, but the "revolutionary-democratic" state. Is it not clear that the *higher* we stand on this political ladder, *the more completely* we incorporate the socialist state and the dictatorship of the proletariat in the Soviets, *the less* ought we to fear "state capitalism"? Is it not clear that from the *material*, economic and productive point of view, we are not yet "on the threshold" of socialism? Is it not clear that we cannot pass through the door of socialism other than by crossing the threshold we have not yet reached?

From whatever side we approach the question, only one conclusion can be drawn: the argument of the "Left Communists" about the "state capitalism" which is alleged to be threatening us is an utter mistake in economics and is evident proof that they are complete slaves of petty-bourgeois ideology.

V

The following is also extremely instructive.

In our controversy with Comrade Bukharin on the Central Executive Committee, he declared, among other things, that on the question of high salaries for specialists "we" (evidently meaning the "Left Communists") "were more to the right than Lenin", for in this case we see no deviation from principle, bearing in mind Marx's words that under certain conditions it is more expedient for the working class to "buy out the whole lot of them"²⁹ (namely, the whole lot of capitalists, i.e., *to buy* from the bourgeoisie the land, factories, works and other means of production).

This extremely interesting statement shows, in the first place, that Bukharin is head and shoulders above the Left Socialist-Revolutionaries and anarchists, that he is by no means hopelessly stuck in the mud of phrase-mongering, but on the contrary is making efforts to think out the *concrete* difficulties of the transition—the painful and difficult transition—from capitalism to socialism.

In the second place, this statement makes Bukharin's mistake still more glaring.

Let us consider Marx's idea carefully.

Marx was talking about Britain of the seventies of the last century, about the culminating point in the development of pre-monopoly capitalism. At that time Britain was a country in which militarism and bureaucracy were less pronounced than in any other country; Britain was a country in which there was the greatest possibility of a "peaceful" victory for socialism in the sense of the workers "buying out" the bourgeoisie. And Marx said that under certain conditions the workers would certainly not refuse to buy out the bourgeoisie. Marx did not commit himself, or the future leaders of the socialist revolution, to matters of form, to ways and means of bringing about the revolution. He understood perfectly well that a vast number of new problems would arise, that the whole situation would change in the course of the revolution, and that the situation would change *radically* and *often* in the course of revolution.

Well, and what about Soviet Russia? Is it not clear that *after* the seizure of power by the proletariat and *after* the crushing of the exploiters' armed resistance and sabotage, *certain* conditions prevail which correspond to those which might have existed in Britain half a century ago had a peaceful transition to socialism begun there? The subordination of the capitalists to the workers in Britain would have been assured at that time owing to the following circumstances: (1) the absolute preponderance of workers, of proletarians, in the population owing to the absence of a peasantry (in Britain in the seventies there was every hope of an extremely rapid spread of socialism among agricultural labourers); (2) the excellent organisation of the proletariat in trade unions (Britain was at that time the leading country in the world in

this respect); (3) the comparatively high level of culture of the proletariat which had been trained by centuries of development of political liberty; (4) the old habit of the well-organised British capitalists of settling political and economic questions by compromise—at that time the British capitalists were better organised than the capitalists of any country in the world (this superiority has now passed to Germany). These were the circumstances which at that time gave rise to the idea that the *peaceful* subjugation of the British capitalists by the workers was possible.

In our country, at the present time, this subjugation is assured by certain premises of fundamental significance (the victory in October and the suppression, from October to February, of the capitalists' armed resistance and sabotage). But *instead of* the absolute preponderance of workers, of proletarians, in the population, and *instead of* a high degree of organisation among them, the important factor of victory in Russia was the support the proletarians received from the poor peasants who had been ruined in a short time. Finally, we have neither a high degree of culture nor the habit of compromise. If these concrete conditions are carefully considered, it will become clear that we can and ought to employ two methods *simultaneously*. On the one hand we must ruthlessly suppress* the uncultured capitalists who refuse to have anything to do with "state capitalism" or to consider any form of compromise, and who continue by means of profiteering, by bribing the poor peasants, etc., to hinder the realisation of the measures taken by the Soviets. On the other hand we must use the *method of compromise*, or of buying

* In this case also we must look truth in the face. There is still too little of that ruthlessness which is indispensable for the success of socialism, not because we lack determination. We have sufficient determination. What we do lack is the ability to *capture* quickly enough a sufficient number of profiteers, marauders and capitalists—the people who infringe the measures passed by the Soviets. The "ability" to do this can only be acquired by establishing accounting and control. Another thing is that the courts are not sufficiently firm. Instead of sentencing people who take bribes to be shot, they sentence them to six months' imprisonment. These two defects have the same social root: the influences of the petty-bourgeois element, its flabbiness.

off the cultured capitalists who agree with "state capitalism", who are capable of putting it into practice and who are useful to the proletariat as the clever and experienced organisers of the *largest* types of enterprises which actually supply products to tens of millions of people.

Bukharin is a well-educated Marxist economist. He therefore remembered that Marx was profoundly right when he taught the workers the importance of preserving the organisation of large-scale production, precisely for the purpose of facilitating the transition to socialism. Marx taught that (as an exception, and Britain was then an exception) the idea was conceivable of *paying the capitalists well*, of buying them off, *if* the circumstances were such as to compel the capitalists to submit peacefully and to come over to socialism in a cultured and organised fashion, provided they were bought off.

But Bukharin went astray because he did not sufficiently study the specific features of the situation in Russia at the present time—an exceptional situation when we, the Russian proletariat, are in *advance* of any Britain or any German as regards our political order, as regards the strength of the workers' political power, but we are *behind* the most backward West-European country as regards well-organised state capitalism, as regards our level of culture and the degree of material and productive preparedness for the "introduction" of socialism. Is it not clear that the specific nature of the present situation creates the need for a specific type of "buying off" which the workers must offer to the most cultured, the most skilled, the most capable organisers among the capitalists who are ready to enter the service of Soviet power and to help honestly in organising "state" production on the largest possible scale? Is it not clear that in this specific situation we must make every effort to avoid two mistakes, both of which are of a petty-bourgeois nature? On the one hand, it would be a fatal mistake to declare that since there is a discrepancy between our economic "forces" and our political forces, it "follows" that we should not have seized power. Such an argument can be advanced only by "the man in a muffler"³⁰ and who forgets that there will always be such a "discrepancy", that it always exists in the development of

nature as well as in the development of society, that only by a series of attempts—each of which, taken by itself, will be one-sided and will suffer from certain inconsistencies—will full socialism be created by the revolutionary co-operation of the proletarians of *all* countries.

On the other hand, it would be an obvious mistake to give free rein to bawlers and phrase-mongers who allow themselves to be carried away by the "dazzling" revolutionary spirit but who are incapable of sustained, thoughtful and deliberate revolutionary work which takes into account the most difficult stages of transition.

Fortunately, the history of the development of the revolutionary parties and of the struggle that Bolshevism waged against them has left us a heritage of sharply defined types, of which the Left Socialist-Revolutionaries and anarchists are striking examples of bad revolutionaries. They are now shouting hysterically, choking and shouting themselves hoarse, against the "compromise" of the "Right Bolsheviks". But they are incapable of thinking *what* is bad in "compromise", and *why* "compromise" has been justly condemned by history and the course of the revolution.

Compromise in Kerensky's time meant the surrender of power to the imperialist bourgeoisie, and the question of power is the fundamental question of every revolution. The compromise of a section of the Bolsheviks in October-November 1917 either meant that they feared the proletariat seizing power or wished to *share* power equally, not only with "unreliable fellow-travellers" like the Left Socialist-Revolutionaries, but also with the enemies, with the Chernovists and the Mensheviks. The latter would inevitably have hindered us in fundamental matters, such as the dissolution of the Constituent Assembly, the ruthless suppression of the Bogayevskys, the complete establishment of the Soviet institutions, and in every act of confiscation.

Now power has been seized, retained and consolidated in the hands of a single party, the party of the proletariat, even without the "unreliable fellow-travellers". To speak of compromise at the present time when there is no question, and can be none, of sharing *power*, of renouncing the dictatorship of the proletariat over the bourgeoisie, is merely to repeat.

parrot-fashion, words which have been learned by heart, but not understood. To describe as "compromise" the fact that, having arrived at a situation when we can and must rule the country, we try to win over to our side, not grudging the cost, the most skilled people capitalism has trained and to take them into our service against small proprietary disintegration, reveals a total incapacity to think out the economic tasks of socialist construction.

Therefore, while it is to Comrade Bukharin's credit that on the Central Executive Committee he "felt ashamed" of the "service" rendered him by the Karelins and Ghe, nevertheless, as far as the "Left Communist" trend is concerned, the references to their political comrades-in-arms still remain a serious warning.

Take for example *Znamya Truda*, the organ of the Left Socialist-Revolutionaries, of April 25, 1918, which proudly declares, "The present position of our party coincides with that of another trend in Bolshevism (Bukharin, Pokrovsky and others)." Or take the Menshevik *Vperyod* of the same date, which contains, among other articles, the following "thesis" by the notorious Menshevik Isuv:

"The policy of Soviet power, alien from the very outset to a genuinely proletarian character, has lately pursued more and more openly a course of compromise with the bourgeoisie and has assumed an obviously anti-working-class character. On the pretext of nationalising industry, they are pursuing a policy of establishing industrial trusts, and on the pretext of restoring the productive forces of the country, they are attempting to abolish the eight-hour day, to introduce piece-work and the Taylor system, black lists and victimisation. This policy threatens to deprive the proletariat of its most important economic gains and to make it a victim of the unrestricted exploitation by the bourgeoisie."

Isn't it marvellous?

Kerensky's friends, who, together with him, conducted an imperialist war for the sake of the secret treaties, which promised annexations to the Russian capitalists, the colleagues of Tsereteli, who, on June 11, threatened to disarm the workers, the Lieberdants who screened the rule of the bourgeoisie with high-sounding phrases—these are the very people who

accuse Soviet power of "compromising with the bourgeoisie", of "establishing trusts" (that is, of establishing "state capitalism"!), of introducing the Taylor system.

Indeed, the Bolsheviki ought to present Isuv with a medal, and his thesis ought to be exhibited in every workers' club and union as an example of the *provocative speeches of the bourgeoisie*. The workers know these Lieberdants, Tseretelis and Isuvs very well now. They know them from experience, and it would be extremely useful indeed for the workers to think over the reason why *such lackeys of the bourgeoisie* should incite the workers to resist the Taylor system and the "establishment of trusts".

Class-conscious workers will carefully compare the thesis of Isuv, a friend of the Lieberdants and the Tseretelis, with the following thesis of the "Left Communists":

"The introduction of labour discipline in connection with the restoration of capitalist management of industry cannot considerably increase the productivity of labour, but it will diminish the class initiative, activity and organisation of the proletariat. It threatens to enslave the working class; it will rouse discontent among the backward elements as well as among the vanguard of the proletariat. In order to implement this system in the face of the hatred prevailing among the proletariat against the 'capitalist saboteurs', the Communist Party would have to rely on the petty bourgeoisie, as against the workers, and in this way would ruin itself as the party of the proletariat" (*Kommunist* No. 1, p. 8, col. 2).

This is most striking proof that the "Lefts" have fallen into the trap, have allowed themselves to be provoked by the Isuvs and the other Judases of capitalism. It serves as a good lesson for the workers, who know that it is precisely the vanguard of the proletariat which stands for the introduction of labour discipline and that it is precisely the petty bourgeoisie which is doing its utmost to disrupt this discipline. Speeches such as the thesis of the "Lefts" quoted above are a terrible disgrace and imply the complete renunciation of communism in practice and complete desertion to the camp of the petty bourgeoisie.

"In connection with the restoration of capitalist management"—these are the words with which the "Left Communists"

hope to "defend themselves". A perfectly useless defence, because, in the first place, in placing "management" in the hands of capitalists Soviet power appoints workers' commissars or workers' committees. They will watch the manager's every step, they will learn from his management experience and will not only have the right to appeal against his orders, but to secure his removal through the organs of Soviet power. In the second place, "management" is entrusted to capitalists only for executive functions while at work, the conditions of which are determined by Soviet power by whom they may be abolished or revised. In the third place, "management" is entrusted by Soviet power to capitalists not as capitalists, but as technicians or organisers for higher salaries. And the workers know very well that ninety-nine per cent of the organisers and first-class technicians of really large-scale and giant enterprises, trusts or other establishments belong to the capitalist class. But it is precisely these people whom we, the proletarian party, must appoint to "manage" the labour process and the organisation of production, for there are *no* other people who have practical experience in this business. The workers, having grown out of the infancy when they could have been misled by "Left" phrases or petty-bourgeois loose thinking, are advancing towards socialism precisely through the capitalist management of trusts, through gigantic machine industry, through enterprises which have a turnover of several millions per annum—only through such a system of production and such enterprises. The workers are not petty bourgeois. They are not afraid of large-scale "state capitalism", they prize it as their *proletarian* weapon which *their Soviet* power will use against small proprietary disintegration and disorganisation.

This is incomprehensible only to the declassed and consequently thoroughly petty-bourgeois intelligentsia, typified among the "Left Communists" by Osinsky, when he writes in their journal:

... "The whole initiative in the organisation and management of any enterprise will belong to the 'organisers of the trusts'. We are not going to *teach* them, or make rank-and-file workers out of them, we are going to *learn* from them" (*Kommunist* No. 1, p. 14, col. 2).

The attempted irony in this passage is aimed at my words "learn socialism from the organisers of the trusts".

Osinsky thinks this is funny. He wants to make "rank-and-file workers" out of the organisers of the trusts. If this had been written by a man of the age of which the poet wrote "Fifteen years, not more?..."³¹ there would have been nothing surprising about it. But it is somewhat strange to hear such things from a Marxist who has learned that socialism is impossible unless it makes use of the achievements of the engineering and culture created by large-scale capitalism. There is no trace of Marxism in this.

No. Only those are worthy of the name of Communists who understand that it is *impossible* to create or introduce socialism *without learning* from the organisers of the trusts. For socialism is not a figment of the imagination, but the assimilation and application by the proletarian vanguard, which has seized power, of what has been created by the trusts. We, the party of the proletariat, have *no other way* of acquiring the ability to organise large-scale production of the trust type, as trusts, except by acquiring it from the first-class capitalist specialists.

We have nothing to teach them, unless we undertake the childish task of "teaching" the bourgeois intelligentsia socialism. We must not teach them, but expropriate them (as is being done in Russia "determinedly" enough), *put a stop* to their sabotage, *subordinate* them as a section or group to Soviet power. We, on the other hand, if we are not Communists of infantile age and infantile understanding, must learn from them, and there is something to learn, for the party of the proletariat and its vanguard have *no experience* of independent work in organising giant enterprises which serve the needs of scores of millions of people.

The best workers in Russia have realised this. They have begun to learn from the capitalist organisers, the managing engineers and the technicians. They have begun to learn steadily and cautiously with easy things, gradually passing on to the more difficult things. If things are going more slowly in the iron and steel and engineering industries, it is because they present greater difficulties. But the textile, tobacco and leather workers are not afraid of "state capitalism"

or of "learning from the organisers of the trusts" as the declassed petty-bourgeois intelligentsia are. These workers in the central leading institutions like Chief Leather Committee and Central Textile Committee take their place by the side of the capitalists, *learn from them*, establish trusts, establish "state capitalism" which under Soviet power represents the threshold of socialism, the condition of its firm victory.

This work of the advanced workers of Russia, together with their work of introducing labour discipline, has gone on and is proceeding quietly, unobtrusively, without the noise and fuss so necessary to some "Lefts". It is proceeding very cautiously and gradually, taking into account the lessons of practical experience. This hard work, the work of *learning* practically how to build up large-scale production, is the guarantee that we are on the right road, the guarantee that the class-conscious workers in Russia are carrying on the struggle against small proprietary disintegration and disorganisation, against petty-bourgeois indiscipline*—the guarantee of the victory of communism.

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Signed: *N. Lenin*

Collected Works, Vol. 27

* It is extremely characteristic that the authors of the theses do not say a single word about the significance of the *dictatorship* of the proletariat in the *economic* sphere. They talk only of the "state of organisation" and so on. But the latter is accepted also by the petty bourgeoisie, who avoid precisely the *dictatorship* of the workers in economic relations. A proletarian revolutionary could never at such a moment "forget" this core of the proletarian revolution which is directed against the economic foundations of capitalism.

REPORT TO THE ALL-RUSSIA CONGRESS OF REPRESENTATIVES OF FINANCIAL DEPARTMENTS OF SOVIETS

May 18, 1918

The country's financial situation is critical. The problem of transforming the country on socialist lines offers many difficulties that at times appear insurmountable, but no matter how arduous the work that at every step meets with the resistance of the petty bourgeoisie, the speculators and propertied classes, I think we shall have to carry it out.

You experienced, practical people know better than anybody what difficulties have to be overcome in advancing from general assumptions and decrees to daily practice. The propertied classes will put up a desperate resistance, so that we have tremendous work ahead of us, but the more difficult the task, the greater the benefits when we have conquered the bourgeoisie and subordinated them to the control of the Soviet authorities. Our tasks are such that it is worth while working and fighting the last decisive battle against the bourgeoisie, since the success of the socialist reform of the country depends on the fulfilment of those tasks.

The basic tasks presented by the Soviet government in the field of finance must be immediately put into effect in practice, and this meeting we are holding with you will help towards ensuring that our planned reforms do not remain mere declarations.

We must effect sound financial reforms at all costs, and we must remember that any radical reforms will be doomed to failure unless our financial policy is successful.

In the name of the Council of People's Commissars I draw your attention to the tasks that have been elaborated at a large number of meetings and ask you to develop them in detail for their practical application. The tasks are the following.

CENTRALISATION OF FINANCES

The centralisation of finances and the concentration of our forces are essential; unless these principles are applied in practice we shall be unable to carry out the economic reforms that will provide every citizen with a piece of bread and the possibility of satisfying his cultural needs.

The need for centralisation is now reaching the consciousness of the masses; this change is taking place slowly and for this reason it will be more extensive and more profound; an urge towards decentralisation is to be observed, but it is a disease of the transitional period, a disease due to growth, and is quite natural because the centralism of the tsar and the bourgeoisie engendered among the masses the hatred and disgust of all centralised authority.

I regard centralism as the least we can do to ensure a certain minimum for the working people. I am in favour of the broadest autonomy for local Soviet organisations but at the same time I believe that if our work of consciously transforming the country is to be fruitful, there must be a single, strictly defined financial policy and that instructions must be carried out from top to bottom.

From you we expect a decree on the centralisation of the country's finances.

INCOME AND PROPERTY TAXATION

The second task confronting us is the correct organisation of a progressive income and property tax. You know that all socialists are against indirect taxation because the only correct tax from the socialist point of view is the progressive income and property tax. I will not conceal the fact that we shall meet with tremendous difficulty in introducing this tax—the propertied classes will put up a desperate resistance.

The bourgeoisie are today evading taxation by bribery and through their connections; we must close all loopholes. We have many plans in this sphere and have cleared the ground on which to build the foundation, but the foundation of that building itself has not yet been built. The time for this has now come.

Decrees alone will be insufficient to put the income tax into effect; practical methods and experience will be needed.

We assume that we shall have to go over to the monthly collection of the income tax. The section of the population receiving its income from the State Treasury is increasing, and measures must be taken to collect the income tax from these people by stopping it out of their wages.

All income and earnings, without exception, must be subject to income tax; the work of the printing press that has so far been practised, may be justified as a temporary measure, but it must give place to a progressive income and property tax that is collected at very frequent intervals.

I should like to ask you to elaborate this measure in detail and draw up practical and precise plans that can be incorporated in decrees and instructions in the shortest time.

On the question of indemnities, Lenin said:

I am not against indemnities in general; the proletariat had to collect indemnities in order to destroy the bourgeoisie; it was the correct measure in the period of transition, but now that period is past and the taxation of the propertied classes must be replaced by a centralised state tax.

There is no doubt that the bourgeoisie will try with every means in their power to evade our laws and indulge in petty frauds. We shall struggle against that and in the end will defeat the remnants of the bourgeoisie.

LABOUR CONSCRIPTION

The third aim of our financial policy is the introduction of labour conscription and the registration of the propertied classes.

The old capitalism, based on free competition, has been completely killed by the war—it has given way to state, monopolised capitalism. Because of the war, the most advanced countries of Western Europe, Britain and Germany, have introduced strict accounting for, and control of, all production; they have introduced labour conscription for the propertyless classes but have left many loopholes open for the bourgeoisie. We must apply the experience of these countries, but must introduce labour conscription primarily for the

propertied classes who have grown rich from the war, and not for the poor people who have already made more than enough sacrifices on the altar of war.

The time has come to introduce labour taxation—income books primarily for the bourgeoisie so that it will be obvious what fraction of his work each of them devotes to the country. Control must be maintained by the local Soviets. This measure is at present quite superfluous as far as the poor are concerned since they already have to work enough; furthermore, the trade unions will adopt all the necessary measures to increase labour productivity and introduce labour discipline.

The registration of all propertied people and a law compelling rich people to carry labour, taxation or income books—this is something we have to settle immediately. It must be elaborated practically and concretely and is a measure that will enable us to place the burden of taxation on the rich, which is only just.

NEW CURRENCY

The fourth task of the moment is the substitution of new currency for the old. Money, banknotes—everything that is called money today—this evidence of social well-being, has a disruptive effect and is dangerous insofar as the bourgeoisie, by retaining their stores of these banknotes, retain economic power.

To reduce this effect we must undertake the precise registration of all banknotes in circulation in order to change all old currency for new. It is beyond all doubt that in putting this measure into effect we shall come up against terrific economic and political difficulties; the preparatory work must be thorough—several thousand millions in the new money must be ready; in every volost, in every block in the towns, we must have savings banks, but these difficulties will not make us hesitate. We shall announce the shortest possible time for everyone to declare the amount of money he possesses and to obtain new currency for it; if the sum is a small one he will get ruble for ruble; if it is above the established limit he will get only part of it. This is a measure that will

undoubtedly meet with counteraction, not only on the part of the bourgeoisie, but also on the part of the kulaks in the countryside who have been growing rich from the war and burying thousands of banknotes in bottles. We shall come face to face with the class enemy. It will be an arduous but thankful struggle. Among us there is no doubt as to whether we have to take upon ourselves the full burden of this struggle, since it is necessary and inevitable. Tremendous preparatory work will be necessary to effect this measure; we must draw up a type of declamatory leaflet, we must develop propaganda in the localities, fix a time for the exchange of old money for new, etc. We shall, however, do it. It will be the last decisive battle with the bourgeoisie and will enable us to pay temporary tribute to foreign capital—until the hour of the social revolution strikes in the West—and carry out the necessary reforms in the country.

In conclusion Lenin, speaking in the name of the Council of People's Commissars, wished the Congress success in its work.

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Collected Works, Vol. 27

SPEECH AT THE FIRST CONGRESS OF ECONOMIC COUNCILS

May 26, 1918

Comrades, permit me first of all to greet the Congress of Economic Councils in the name of the Council of People's Commissars.

Comrades, the Supreme Economic Council has had now a most difficult, but a most thankful task. There is not the slightest doubt that the further the gains of the October Revolution progress, the more profound the upheaval which it commenced becomes, the more firmly the socialist revolution's gains become established and the socialist system becomes consolidated, the greater and higher will become the role of the Economic Councils, which alone of all the state institutions are to endure. And this place will become all the more durable the closer we approach the establishment of the socialist system and the less need there will be for a purely administrative apparatus, for an apparatus which is solely engaged in administration. After the resistance of the exploiters has been finally broken, after the working people have learned to organise socialist production, this apparatus of administration in the proper, strict, narrow sense of the word, this apparatus of the old state, is doomed to die; while the apparatus of the type of the Supreme Economic Council is destined to grow, to develop and become strong, performing all the main activities of organised society.

That is why, comrades, when I look at the experience of our Supreme Economic Council and of the local councils, with the activities of which it is closely and inseparably connected, I think that in spite of much that is unfinished, incomplete and unorganised, we have not even the slightest grounds for pessimistic conclusions. For the task which the Supreme Economic Council sets itself, and the task which all

the regional and local councils set themselves, is so enormous, so all-embracing, that there is absolutely nothing that gives rise to alarm in what we all observe. Very often—of course, from our point of view, perhaps too often—the proverb “measure thrice and cut once” is not applied. Unfortunately, things are not so simple in regard to the organisation of the economy on socialist lines as they are expressed in that proverb.

With the transition of all power—this time not only political and not even mainly political, but economic power, that is, power that affects the most deep-seated foundations of everyday human existence—to a new class, and moreover to a class which for the first time in the history of humanity is the leader of the overwhelming majority of the population, of the whole mass of working people and of the exploited—our tasks become more complicated. It goes without saying that in view of the supreme importance and the supreme difficulty of the organisational tasks that confront us, when we must organise the most deep-seated foundations of the existence of hundreds of millions of people on entirely new lines, there is no possibility to set things going as it might have been in the proverb “measure thrice and cut once”. We, indeed, are not in a position to measure a thing innumerable times and then cut out and fix what has been finally measured and fitted. We must build our economic edifice in the very process of the work, trying out various institutions, watching their work, testing them by the collective common experience of the working people, and, above all, by the results of their work. We must do this in the very process of the work, and, moreover, in a state of desperate struggle and the furious resistance of the exploiters, who become all the more furious the nearer we come to the time when we can pull out the last bad teeth of capitalist exploitation. It is understandable that if, even for a short space of time, we have to alter the types, regulations and bodies of administration in various branches of the national economy several times, there are not the slightest grounds for pessimism in these conditions, although, of course, it gives considerable grounds for malicious outbursts on the part of the bourgeoisie and the exploiters, whose best feelings are hurt. Of course, those who

take too close and too direct a part in this work, say, of the Chief Water Board, do not always find it pleasant to alter the rules, the norms and the laws of administration, three times; the pleasure obtained from the work of this kind cannot be great. But if we abstract ourselves somewhat from the direct unpleasantness of extremely frequent alteration of decrees, and if we look a little more deeply and further into the enormous world-historical task that the Russian proletariat has to carry out with the aid of its own still inadequate forces, it will become immediately understandable that even far more numerous alterations and testing in practice of various systems of administration and various forms of discipline are inevitable; that in such a gigantic task, we could never claim, and no sensible socialist who has ever written on the prospects of the future ever even thought, that we could immediately establish and compose the forms of organisation of the new society according to some predetermined order, and at one stroke.

All that we knew, all that the best experts on capitalist society, the greatest minds who foresaw its development, exactly indicated to us was that transformation was historically inevitable and must proceed along a certain main line, that private ownership of the means of production was doomed by history, that it would burst, that the exploiters would inevitably be expropriated. This was established with scientific precision, and we knew this when we grasped the banner of socialism, when we declared ourselves socialists, when we founded socialist parties, when we transformed society. We knew this when we took power for the purpose of proceeding with socialist reorganisation; but we could not know the forms of transformation, or the rate of development of the concrete reorganisation. Collective experience, the experience of millions alone can give us decisive guidance in this respect, precisely because, for our task, for the task of building socialism, the experience of the hundreds and hundreds of thousands of those upper sections which have made history up to now in landlord society and in capitalist society is insufficient. We cannot proceed in this way precisely because we rely on joint experience, on the experience of millions of working people.

We know, therefore, that organisation, which is the main and fundamental task of the Soviets, will inevitably entail a vast number of experiments, a vast number of steps, a vast number of alterations, a vast number of difficulties, particularly in regard to the question of how to put every person in his proper place, because we have no experience of this, here we have to devise every step ourselves, and the more serious the mistakes we make on this path, the more the certainty will grow that with every increase in the membership of the trade unions, with every additional thousand, with every additional hundred thousand that come over from the camp of the working people, of the exploited who have hitherto lived according to tradition and habit, into the camp of the builders of Soviet organisations, the number of people who answer to the requirements of the tasks and who will organise the work on proper lines will grow.

Take one of the secondary tasks that the Economic Council—the Supreme Economic Council—comes up against with particular frequency, the task of utilising bourgeois specialists. We all know, at least those who stand on the basis of science and socialism, that this task can be fulfilled only when and to the extent that international capitalism has developed the material and technical prerequisites of labour, organised on an enormous scale and based on science, and hence on the training of an enormous number of scientifically educated specialists. We know that without this socialism is impossible. If we re-read the works of those socialists who have observed the development of capitalism during the last half-century, and who again and again came to the conclusion that socialism is inevitable, we shall find that all of them without exception pointed out that socialism alone will liberate science from its bourgeois fetters, from its enslavement to capital, from its slavery to the interests of dirty capitalist greed. Socialism alone will make possible the wide expansion of social production and distribution on scientific lines and their actual subordination to the aim of easing the lives of the working people and of improving their welfare as much as possible. Socialism alone can achieve this. And we know that it must achieve this, and in the understanding of this truth lies the whole difficulty and the whole strength of Marxism.

We must achieve this while relying on elements which are opposed to it, because the bigger capital becomes the more the bourgeoisie suppresses the workers. Now that power is in the hands of the proletariat and the poor peasants and power is setting itself tasks with the support of the people, we have to achieve these socialist changes with the help of bourgeois specialists who have been trained in bourgeois society, who know no other conditions, who cannot conceive of any other social system. Hence, even in those cases when these specialists are absolutely sincere and loyal to their work they are filled with thousands of bourgeois prejudices, they are connected by thousands of ties, imperceptible to themselves, with bourgeois society, which is dying and decaying and is therefore putting up furious resistance.

We cannot conceal these difficulties of the tasks and achievements from ourselves. Of all the socialists who have written about this, I cannot recall the work of a single socialist or the opinion of a single prominent socialist on future socialist society, which pointed to this concrete, practical difficulty that would confront the working class when it took power, when it set itself the tasks of turning the sum total of the very rich, historically inevitable and necessary for us store of culture and knowledge and technique, accumulated by capitalism, from an instrument of capitalism into an instrument of socialism. It is easy to do this in a general formula, in abstract contrasts, but in the struggle against capitalism, which does not die at once but puts up increasingly furious resistance the closer death approaches, this task is one that calls for tremendous effort. If experiments take place in this field, if we make repeated corrections of partial mistakes, this is inevitable because we cannot, in this or that sphere of the national economy, immediately turn specialists from servants of capitalism into the servants of the working people, into their advisers. If we cannot do this at once it should not give rise to the slightest pessimism, because the task which we set ourselves is a task of world-historical difficulty and significance. We do not shut our eyes to the fact that in a single country, even if it were a much less backward country than Russia, even if we were living in better conditions than those prevailing after four years of unprece-

ented, painful, severe and ruinous war, we could not carry out the socialist revolution completely, solely by our own efforts. He who turns away from the socialist revolution now taking place in Russia and points to the obvious disproportion of forces is like the conservative man who lives in a shell and who cannot see further than his nose, who forgets that not a single historical change of any importance takes place without there being several instances of a disproportion of forces. Forces grow in the process of the struggle, with the revolution's growth. When a country has taken the path of profound change, it is to the credit of that country and the party of the working class which achieved victory in that country, that they have taken up in a practical manner the tasks that were formerly raised abstractly, theoretically. This experience will never be forgotten. The experience which the workers now united in trade unions and local organisations are acquiring in the practical work of organising the whole of production on a national scale cannot be lost, no matter what happened, how difficult are the vicissitudes the Russian revolution and the international socialist revolution may pass through. It has gone into history as socialism's gain, and on it the future world revolution will erect its socialist edifice.

Permit me to mention another problem, perhaps the most difficult task that the Supreme Economic Council has to solve in a practical manner, that is, the task of labour discipline. Strictly speaking, in mentioning this task, we ought to admit and emphasise with satisfaction that it was precisely the trade unions, their largest organisations, namely, the Central Committee of the Metal Workers' Union and the All-Russia Trade Union Council, the supreme trade union organisations uniting millions of working people, that were the first to set to work independently to solve this task; and this task is of world-historical importance. In order to understand it we must abstract ourselves from those partial, minor failures, from the incredible difficulties which, if taken separately, seem to be insurmountable. We must rise to a higher level and survey the historical change of systems of social economy. Only from this angle will it be possible to appreciate the immensity of the task which we have undertaken. Only then will it be possible to appreciate the enormous significance of the

fact that on this occasion, the most advanced representatives of society, the working and exploited people, are, on their own initiative, taking on themselves the task which hitherto, in feudal Russia, up to 1861,³² was solved by a handful of landlords who regarded it as their own affair. At that time it was their affair to create national connections and discipline.

We know how the feudal landlords created this discipline. It was oppression, torture and the incredible torments of penal servitude for the majority of the people. Recall the whole of this transition from serfdom to the bourgeois economy. From all that you have witnessed—although the majority of you could not have witnessed it—and from all that you have learned from the older generations, you know how easy, historically, seemed the transition to the new bourgeois economy after 1861, the transition from the old feudal discipline of the stick, from the discipline of the most senseless, arrogant and brutal insult and violence against the person, to bourgeois discipline, to the discipline of starvation, to so-called free hire, which in fact was the discipline of capitalist slavery. This was because mankind passed from one exploiter to another; because one minority of plunderers and exploiters of the people's labour gave way to another minority who were also plunderers and exploiters of the people's labour; because the landlords gave way to the capitalists, one minority gave way to another minority, while the toiling and exploited classes were oppressed. And even this change from one exploiter's discipline to another exploiter's discipline took years, if not decades, of effort; it extended over a transition period of years, if not decades. During this period the old feudal landlords quite sincerely believed that everything was going to rack and ruin, that it was impossible to manage the country without serfdom; while the new capitalist boss encountered practical difficulties at every step and gave up his enterprise as a bad job. The material sign, one of the substantial proofs of the difficulty of this transition was that Russia at that time imported machinery from abroad, in order to employ the best machinery, and it turned out that no people were available to handle this machinery, and there were no managers. And all over Russia one could see excellent machinery lying around unused, so difficult was the transi-

tion from the old feudal discipline to the new bourgeois, capitalist discipline.

And so, comrades, look at the matter from this angle, if you do not allow yourselves to be misled by those people, by those classes, by those bourgeoisie and their hangers-on, whose sole task is to sow panic, to sow despondency, to cause complete despondency concerning the whole of our work, to make it appear to be hopeless, who point to every single case of indiscipline and corruption and for that reason give up the revolution as a bad job, as if there was ever in the world, in history, a single really great revolution in which there was no corruption, no loss of discipline, no painful steps of practice when the people were creating a new discipline. We must not forget that this is the first time that this preliminary turning-point in history has been reached, when a new discipline, labour discipline, the discipline of comradesly contact, Soviet discipline, is being created in fact by millions of working and exploited people. We do not claim, nor do we expect quick successes in this field. We know that this task will take an entire historical epoch. We have begun this historical epoch, an epoch in which we are breaking up the discipline of capitalist society in a country which is still bourgeois, and we are proud that all politically conscious workers, absolutely all the toiling peasants are everywhere helping this destruction; an epoch in which the people voluntarily, on their own initiative, are becoming aware that they must—not on instructions from above, but on the instructions of their own living experience—change this discipline based on the exploitation and slavery of the working people into the new discipline of united labour, the discipline of the united, organised workers and toiling peasants of the whole of Russia, of a country with a population of tens and hundreds of millions. This is a task of enormous difficulty, but it is also a thankful one, because only when we solve it in practice shall we have driven the last nail into the coffin of capitalist society which we are burying.

THE CHARACTER OF OUR NEWSPAPERS

Far too much space is allotted in our political agitation to outdated themes—to political twaddle—and far too little to the building of the new life about which we should give facts and more facts.

Why, instead of turning out 200-400 lines, do we not write 20, or even ten lines, on such simple, generally known, clear topics with which the masses are already fairly well acquainted, such as the foul treachery of the Mensheviks—lackeys of the bourgeoisie—the Anglo-Japanese invasion for the sake of restoring the sacred right of capital, the American multi-millionaires baring their fangs against Germany, etc., etc.? It is necessary to write about these things, every new fact in this sphere should be noted, but there is no need to write articles, to repeat old arguments; what is needed is to convey “in telegraphic style” the latest manifestation of the old, known and already evaluated politics and to brand them in a few lines.

The bourgeois press in the “good old bourgeois times” never mentioned the “holy of holies”—the conditions in privately-owned factories, in the private enterprises. This custom was in accordance with the interests of the bourgeoisie. We must radically break with it. We have *not* broken with it. So far our type of newspaper has *not* changed as it should in a society in course of transition from capitalism to socialism.

Less politics. Politics has been “elucidated” fully and reduced to the struggle of the two camps: the rebellious proletariat and the handful of capitalist slaveowners (with the whole gang, right down to the Mensheviks and others). We can, and, I repeat, we must speak very briefly about these politics.

More economics. But not in the sense of “general” discussions, learned reviews, intellectualist plans and similar piffle, for, I regret to say, they are just piffle and nothing more. By economics we mean the gathering, *careful checking* and study of the facts of the actual organisation of the new life. Have we *real* successes in building the new economy by big factories, agricultural communes, the Poor Peasants’ Committees, and local economic councils? What, precisely, are these successes? Have they been verified? Are they not fables, boasting, intellectualist promises (“things are moving”, “the plan has been drawn up”, “we are getting under way”, “we now vouch for”, “there is undoubted improvement”, etc.—charlatan phrases of which “we” are such masters)? How have the successes been achieved? What must be done to extend them?

Where is the black list with the names of the lagging factories which since nationalisation have remained models of disorder, disintegration, dirt, hooliganism and parasitism? It is not to be found. But there *are* such factories. We shall not be able to do our duty unless we wage *war* against these “guardians of the traditions of capitalism”. We shall be jelly-fish, not Communists, so long as we tolerate such factories. We are not able to wage the class struggle in the newspapers as skilfully as the bourgeoisie did. Recall the skill with which it *hounded its* class enemies in the press, ridiculed them, disgraced them, and swept them away. And we? Does not the class struggle in the epoch of the transition from capitalism to socialism take the form of safeguarding the interests of the working *class* against the few, the groups and strata of workers who stubbornly cling to the traditions (habits) of capitalism and who continue to regard the Soviet state in the old way: do less work and worse work and grab as much money as possible from the state. Are there few such scoundrels, even among the compositors in Soviet printing works, among the Sormovo and Putilov workers, etc.? How many of them have we found, how many have we exposed and how many have we pilloried?

The press is silent about this. And if it mentions the subject at all it does so in a stereotyped, official way, not in the manner of a *revolutionary* press, not as an organ of the *dictating* class, demonstrating by its deeds that the resistance

of the capitalists and of the parasites—the custodians of capitalist traditions—will be crushed by an iron hand.

The same can be said about the war. Do we harass cowardly or inefficient officers? Have we denounced before the whole of Russia the really bad regiments? Have we “caught” a sufficient number of the bad examples who should be removed from the Army with the greatest publicity for unsuitability, carelessness, procrastination, etc.? We are not yet waging an effective, ruthless and truly revolutionary war against the *specific* evil-doers. We do very little to *educate the masses* by living, concrete examples and models taken from all spheres of life, although that is the chief task of the press during the transition from capitalism to communism. We give little attention to that aspect of *everyday* life inside the factories, in the villages and in the regiments where, more than anywhere else, the new is being built, where attention, publicity, public criticism, elimination of what is bad and appeals to learn from the good are needed most.

Less political twaddle. Fewer high-brow discussions. Closer to life. More attention to the way in which the worker and peasant masses are *actually* building the *new* in their everyday work, and more *verification* in order to ascertain the extent to which the new is *communist*.

Pravda No. 202, September 20,
1918
Signed: N. Lenin

Collected Works, Vol. 28

**FROM A SPEECH DELIVERED ON THE OCCASION
OF THE ANNIVERSARY OF THE REVOLUTION
AT THE SIXTH (EXTRAORDINARY)
ALL-RUSSIA CONGRESS OF SOVIETS
OF WORKERS', PEASANTS', COSSACKS'
AND RED ARMY DEPUTIES**

November 6, 1918

Comrades, at first our slogan was workers' control. We said that despite all the promises of the Kerensky government, the capitalists continued to sabotage production and increase dislocation. We can now see that it would have ended in complete collapse. The first fundamental step that any socialist, workers' government had to take was the institution of workers' control. We did not decree socialism all at once throughout the whole of industry, because socialism can take shape and become firmly established only when the working class has learned to run the economy, only when the authority of the masses is securely established. Without that socialism is mere wishful thinking. That is why we introduced workers' control, knowing that it was a contradictory and partial measure; but it is necessary for the workers themselves to tackle the momentous tasks of building up industry in a huge country without exploiters, and opposed to exploiters. And, comrades, everyone who took a direct, or even indirect, part in this process of organisation, everyone who lived through all the oppression and cruelties of the old capitalist system, has learned much, very much. We know that little has been accomplished. We know that, because of the countless obstacles and barriers it has encountered in this most backward and ruined country, it will take the working class a long time to learn to run industry. But we consider it most important and valuable that the workers have themselves tackled the job, that from workers' control, which in the principal industries was bound to be chaotic, disunited,

amateurish and partial, we have passed to workers' administration of industry on a nation-wide scale.

The position of the trade unions has changed. Their main function now is to send their representatives to all agencies and centres, to all those new organisations which took over from capitalism a ruined and deliberately sabotaging industry and proceeded to run it without the help of those intellectual forces which from the very start made it their object to utilise their knowledge and higher education—the accumulated scientific knowledge of mankind—in an attempt to disrupt the cause of socialism, and not to help the masses build up a socially-owned economy without exploiters. What these men wanted was to utilise science to put obstacles in our way, to obstruct the workers who tackled the job of running industry one they were least prepared for, but we can say that the chief interference has been removed. This was an extremely difficult job, but the sabotage of all the elements gravitating to the bourgeoisie has been checked. Despite the tremendous obstacles, the workers have succeeded in taking this basic step, one which has laid the foundations of socialism. We are not exaggerating and do not fear to tell the truth. It is true that in terms of our ultimate goal, little has been accomplished, but in consolidating the foundations we have accomplished much, very much indeed. When speaking of socialism, we must not understand the conscious building of its foundations among the widest sections of the workers to mean that the workers have taken to reading books and pamphlets, but that they have with their own hands, by their own efforts, tackled this formidable task, and made thousands of mistakes from each of which they have themselves suffered. Every mistake has served to train and steel them in organising the management of industry, that has now been created and placed on a firm foundation. They have finished their job. From now on the work will be different, for now the entire mass of workers—not merely the leaders and front-rankers, but really the broadest sections of the workers—know that they themselves, by their own efforts, are building socialism and have already laid its foundations, and that no force within the country can prevent them from completing the job.

We have encountered these big difficulties in industry, we have had to travel what many consider to be a long road, although in reality it was a short one, from workers' control to workers' administration, but in the more backward rural areas the preparatory work has been very much greater. Anyone who has observed rural life and has come into contact with the peasant masses will say that the October Revolution of the cities became a real October Revolution for the villages only in the summer and autumn of 1918. And the Petrograd proletariat and the soldiers of the Petrograd garrison realised full well when they took power that big difficulties would arise in rural organisational work, that our progress there would have to be more gradual, and that it would be the greatest absurdity to try to introduce socialised agriculture by decree; for we would have the support of only an insignificant number of politically conscious peasants because the vast majority did not set themselves this goal. We, therefore, confined ourselves to what was absolutely necessary in the interests of the Revolution—under no circumstances must we run ahead of the development of the masses, but wait until their own experience, their own struggle, has given rise to a forward movement. In October we confined ourselves to eliminating, at one blow, the age-old enemy of the peasants, the feudal landowner, the big landed proprietor. This was a struggle in which all the peasants joined. At this stage the peasantry was still not divided into their proletarian, semi-proletarian, poor-peasant and bourgeois groups. We socialists knew that there would be no socialism without such a struggle. But we also knew that our knowledge of it was not enough—it had to be brought home to the millions, and not through propaganda, but through their own experience. And for that reason, since the peasantry as a whole could imagine the revolution only on the basis of equalitarian land tenure, we declared in our decree of October 26, 1917, that we would take the Peasants' Mandate³³ as our starting-point.

We said frankly that it did not accord with our own views, that it was not communism, but we did not impose on the peasantry something that was not in accordance with their own views, though it was in accordance with our programme.

We said we were marching side by side with them, as with fellow-workers, fully confident that the development of the revolution would lead them to the conclusions we ourselves had drawn. The result of this policy is the peasant movement. The agrarian reform began with the socialisation of the land which we voted for and carried out, though openly declaring that it did not accord with our views. But we knew that the idea of equalitarian land tenure was supported by the vast majority, and we had no desire to force anything upon them. We were prepared to wait until the peasants themselves abandoned this idea and advanced beyond it. That time has come, and we have been able to prepare our forces.

The law we promulgated in October 1917 proceeded from the general democratic concept that unites the rich kulak peasant with the poor peasant—hatred of the landed proprietor and the general idea of equality which undoubtedly was a revolutionary idea directed against the old monarchist system—but from this law we had to pass to differentiation within the peasantry. The land socialisation law was universally accepted; it was unanimously adopted both by us and those who did not subscribe to Bolshevik policy. In deciding who should own the land, we gave first place to the agricultural communes. We left the road open for agriculture to develop along socialist lines, knowing perfectly well that at that time, in October 1917, the peasants were not yet prepared for it. But our preparatory work cleared the way for the gigantic and epochal step we have now taken, one that has not been taken by any other country, not even by the most democratic republic. That step was made this summer by the entire peasant mass, even in the most remote villages of Russia. When food difficulties arose and the country was faced with famine, when the heritage of the past and the aftermath of the accursed four years of war made themselves felt, when counter-revolution and the civil war had deprived us of our richest grain-growing areas, when things reached the stage at which the cities were threatened with starvation—we sent to the villages organised units of industrial workers, the only, the most reliable and firm bulwark of our government. Those who say the workers went there to wage an armed struggle against the peasants are slandering us. And that slander is refuted

by the facts. The workers went to the villages to fight back against the exploiting element there, the kulaks who were making huge fortunes out of grain profiteering at a time when the people were starving. They went there to help the poor peasants, that is, the majority of the rural population. The July crisis, when kulak revolts swept the whole of Russia, showed that the workers' mission was not in vain, that they had extended the hand of alliance, and in their preparatory work had merged with the masses. The working and exploited elements in the villages settled the July crisis by coming out in alliance with the urban proletariat. Today Comrade Zinoviev told me over the telephone that 18,000 people had rallied in Petrograd for the regional congress of Poor Peasants' Committees³⁴ and that the spirit there was one of remarkable enthusiasm and inspiration. As events unfolding throughout Russia became more clearly defined, as the village poor arose, they realised that the struggle was against the kulaks, and realised from their own experience that in order to keep the cities supplied with food and re-establish commodity exchange, without which the countryside cannot live, they must part company with the rural bourgeoisie and the kulaks. They have to organise separately. And we have now taken the first and most momentous step of the socialist revolution in the countryside. We could not have taken that step in October. We correctly gauged the moment when we could approach the masses. And we have now reached a point when the socialist revolution in the rural areas has begun, when in every village, even the most remote, the peasant knows that his rich neighbour, the kulak, if he engages in grain profiteering, sees everything in the light of his old, backwoods mentality.

And so the rural economy, the rural poor, uniting with its leaders, the city workers, is only now providing us with a firm and stable foundation for real socialist construction. For only now will socialist construction begin in the countryside. Only now do we see the formation of Soviets and the enterprises which are systematically working towards large-scale socialised agriculture, towards making full use of knowledge, science and technology, realising that even simple, elementary human culture cannot be based on the old, reactionary,

ignorant way of life. The work here is even more difficult than in industry, and even more mistakes are being made by our local committees and Soviets. They learn from their mistakes. We are not afraid of mistakes when they are made by the masses, who take a conscientious attitude to our organisational work, because we rely only on the experience and effort of our own people.

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**SPEECH DELIVERED TO A MEETING OF DELEGATES
FROM THE MOSCOW CENTRAL
WORKERS' CO-OPERATIVE**

November 26, 1918

Comrades, I greet you as representatives of the workers' co-operatives that have a tremendous part to play in the proper organisation of distribution. In the Council of People's Commissars we have frequently, especially in recent times, had to discuss questions that concern co-operative societies and the attitude of the workers' and peasants' government towards them.

In this respect one must remember how important the role of the co-operative movement was at the time of the capitalist regime, when the principle on which it was organised was that of the economic struggle against the capitalist class.

It is true that in their approach to the practical work of distribution, the co-operatives often turned the interests of the people into the interests of an individual group of people, and were often guided by the urge to share trading profits with the capitalists. With purely commercial interests as their guide, the co-operators often forgot about the socialist system that seemed to them to be too far away, or even unattainable.

The co-operatives were often associations of mainly petty-bourgeois elements, the middle peasantry, whose efforts in the co-operative movement were determined by their own petty-bourgeois interests. Nevertheless these co-operatives did that which undoubtedly developed the initiative of the masses and thereby rendered great service. The co-operatives really did build big economic organisations based on the initiative of the masses, and in this—we shall not deny it—they played an important role.

In some cases these economic organisations developed into institutions capable of replacing and complementing the

capitalist apparatus; this is something we must admit, but in the meantime the urban proletariat had been drawn into the organisation of big capitalist industry to such an extent that it had grown strong enough to overthrow the landowning and capitalist class, and to be capable of using the entire capitalist apparatus.

The urban proletariat understood well enough that owing to the ruination caused by the imperialist war the distribution system had to be put in order and for that purpose it used, first and foremost, the big administrative apparatus of the capitalists.

That is what we have to remember. The co-operative movement is a huge cultural legacy that we must treasure and use.

And that is why we approached the problem cautiously in the Council of People's Commissars when we had to deal with it, knowing full well how important it was to make use of that well-ordered economic apparatus.

At the same time we could not forget that the chief organisers of co-operatives were Mensheviks, Right Socialist-Revolutionaries and members of other conciliationist and petty-bourgeois parties. We could not forget it as long as those political groups standing between the two belligerent classes used the co-operatives partially as a screen for counter-revolutionaries, even to support the Czechoslovaks³⁵ out of the funds accumulated by the co-operatives. Yes, we were informed of this. This, however, was not the case everywhere and we frequently invited the co-operatives to work with us, if they wished to.

The international situation of Soviet Russia has recently become such that many petty-bourgeois groups have come to realise the significance attaching to the workers' and peasants' government.

When Soviet Russia was faced with the Brest negotiations and we were forced to conclude the harshest peace with the German imperialists, the Mensheviks and Right Socialist-Revolutionaries made a particular point of raising their voices against us. When Soviet Russia was forced to conclude that peace, the Mensheviks and Socialist-Revolutionaries shouted far and wide that the Bolsheviks were ruining Russia.

Some of those people thought that the Bolsheviks were

utopians, dreamers who believed in the possibility of world revolution. Others thought that the Bolsheviks were agents of German imperialism.

What is more, many of them in those days assumed that the Bolsheviks had made concessions to German imperialism and gloated over their belief that it was an agreement with the ruling German bourgeoisie.

I will not quote here the more unflattering expressions, if not call them by a worse name, that these groups at that time hurled in the face of the Soviet government.

The events that have recently been developing throughout the world, however, have taught the Mensheviks and Right Socialist-Revolutionaries a lot. The manifesto of the Menshevik Central Committee addressed to all working people, published recently in our press, states that although they have ideological differences with the Communists they consider it necessary to fight against world imperialism that is today headed by the Anglo-American capitalists.

Really, events of tremendous importance have occurred. Soviets of Workers' Deputies have been formed in Rumania and Austria-Hungary. In Germany the Soviets have opposed the Constituent Assembly and soon, perhaps in a few weeks, the Haase-Scheidemann government will fall and will be replaced by the Liebknecht government. At the same time British and French capitalism is bending every effort to crush the Russian revolution and thereby halt the world revolution. It has now become obvious to everyone that the aspirations of allied imperialism go still farther than those of German imperialism; the terms imposed on Germany are still worse than those of the Peace of Brest, and on top of that they want in general to crush the revolution and play the role of the world policeman. The Mensheviks have shown by their resolution that they realise which way the British winds are blowing. Today we must not repel them, but, on the contrary, accept them and give them an opportunity to work with us.

Last April the Communists showed that they are not averse to working with co-operators. It is the task of the Communists, who rely on the support of the urban proletariat, to be able to use all those who can be brought into the work, all those who formerly adopted socialist slogans but who did not

have the courage to continue fighting for them until they achieved victory or were defeated. Marx said that the proletariat must expropriate the capitalists and be able to make use of petty-bourgeois groups. And we said that everything must be taken from the capitalists but only pressure must be brought to bear on the kulaks and they must be kept under the control of the grain monopoly. We must come to an agreement with the middle peasant, take him under our control while nevertheless actually promoting the ideals of socialism.

We must say forthrightly that the factory workers and poor peasants will devote all their efforts to promoting the ideals of socialism, and if there are people who are not going the same way, we shall go forward without them. We must, however, use everyone who can really help us in this most difficult struggle.

And the Council of People's Commissars in discussing this question last April, arrived at an agreement with the co-operators. This was the only meeting that was attended by representatives of the non-governmental co-operative movement as well as the Communist People's Commissars.

We came to an agreement with them. This was the only meeting that adopted a decision by a minority, by co-operators, and not by a majority of Communists.

The Council of People's Commissars resorted to this because it deemed it necessary to make use of the experience and knowledge of the co-operators and of their apparatus.

You also know that a decree on the organisation of distribution was adopted a few days ago and published in Sunday's *Izvestia*, and that a considerable role is allotted to the co-operatives and the co-operative movement in that decree. This is because the organisation of socialist economy is impossible without a network of co-operative organisations and because much that has been done in this sphere up to now is incorrect. Some co-operatives have been closed or nationalised although the Soviets were unable to cope with distribution and with the organisation of Soviet shops.

According to this decree everything taken from the co-operatives must be returned to them.

The co-operatives must be de-nationalised, they must be re-established.

It is true that the decree is cautious in respect of those co-operatives that were closed because counter-revolutionaries had wormed their way into them. We stated definitely that in this respect the work of the co-operatives must be kept under control; however, we said that the co-operatives must be used to the full.

It is obvious to all of you that one of the basic tasks of the proletariat is the immediate and proper organisation of the supply and distribution of food.

Since we have an apparatus possessing the necessary experience and which, most important of all, is based on the initiative of the masses, we must direct it towards the fulfilment of these tasks. In this field it is particularly important to apply the initiative of the masses that created these organisations. It is essential for the lowest ranks to be drawn into this work, and this is the main task we must set the co-operatives, the workers' co-operatives in particular.

The supply and distribution of food is a matter everybody understands. It can be understood even by a man who has no book-learning. In Russia the greater part of the population is still ignorant and illiterate because everything has been done to prevent the workers and the oppressed masses from obtaining an education.

Among the masses, however, there are very many live forces that can display tremendous ability, far greater than might be imagined. It is, therefore, the duty of the workers' co-operatives to enlist these forces, to find them and give them direct work in the supply and distribution of food. Socialist society is one single co-operative.

I do not doubt that the initiative of the masses in the workers' co-operatives will really lead to the conversion of the workers' co-operatives into a single Moscow City consumers' commune.

**SPEECH TO THE FIRST ALL-RUSSIA CONGRESS
OF LAND DEPARTMENTS,
POOR PEASANTS' COMMITTEES, AND COMMUNES**

December 11, 1918

Comrades, the composition of this Congress, in my opinion, is in itself an indication of the profound change that has taken place and the great progress we, the Soviet Republic, have made in the work of socialist construction, in particular in the sphere of agricultural relations, which are of the utmost importance to our country. The present congress embraces representatives of the land departments, the Poor Peasants' Committees, and the agricultural communes, a combination which shows that within a short space of time, within a single year, our Revolution has made great strides in recasting those relations that are the most difficult to recast and which in all previous revolutions have constituted the greatest hindrance to the cause of socialism, but which must be most fully recast to ensure the triumph of socialism.

The first stage, the first period in the development of our Revolution after October, was mainly devoted to defeating the common enemy of all the peasants, the landed proprietors.

Comrades, you are all very well aware that even the February Revolution—the revolution of the bourgeoisie, the revolution of the compromisers—promised the peasants victory over the landowners, and that this promise was not fulfilled. Only the October Revolution, only the victory of the working class in the cities, only the government of the Soviets could relieve the whole of Russia, from end to end, of the ulcer of the old feudal heritage—the old feudal exploitation, landed proprietorship and the landowners' oppression of the peasantry as a whole, of all peasants without distinction.

This fight against the landowners was one in which all the peasants were bound to participate, and participate they did. The fight united the poor labouring peasants, who do not live

by exploiting the labour of others. But it also united the most prosperous and even wealthy section of the peasantry, which cannot get along without hired labour.

As long as our Revolution was occupied with this task, as long as we had to exert every effort for the independent movement of the peasants, aided by the urban workers' movement, to sweep away and completely destroy the power of the landowners, the Revolution remained a general revolution of the peasants and could therefore not go beyond bourgeois limits.

It had still not touched the more powerful and more modern enemy of all working people—capital. It therefore threatened to end half-way, like the majority of the revolutions in Western Europe, in which a temporary alliance of the urban workers and the whole of the peasantry succeeded in sweeping away the monarchy and the survivals of medievalism, in more or less thoroughly sweeping away the landed estates and the power of the landowners, but never succeeded in undermining the actual foundations of the power of capital.

Our Revolution began to tackle this much more important and much more difficult task in the summer and autumn of the present year. The wave of counter-revolutionary uprisings which arose in the summer of the present year—when the attack of the West-European imperialists and their Czechoslovak hirelings on Russia was joined by all the exploiting and oppressing elements in Russian life—invoked a new spirit and fresh life in the countryside.

In practice, all these revolts united the European imperialists, their Czechoslovak hirelings, and all those in Russia who remained on the side of the landowners and capitalists, united them in a desperate struggle against the Soviet government. These revolts were followed by the revolt of all the village kulaks.

The village was no longer united. The peasants who had fought as one man against the landowners, now split into two camps—the camp of the more wealthy peasants and the camp of the poor labouring peasants who, side by side with the workers, continued their steadfast advance towards socialism and went over from the struggle against the landowners to the struggle against capital, against the power of money, and

against the use of the great land reform for the benefit of the kulaks. This struggle cut the property-owning and exploiting classes off from the Revolution completely; it put our revolution on the socialist road the urban working class had tried with such firm determination to put it on in October, but along which the revolution cannot be successfully directed without firm, conscious and solid support in the countryside.

Herein lies the significance of the revolution which took place this summer and autumn even in the most remote villages of Russia, a revolution which was not spectacular, not as striking and obvious as the Revolution of October of last year, but the significance of which is incomparably deeper and greater.

The formation of the Poor Peasants' Committees in the rural districts was the turning-point; it showed that the urban working class which in October had united with the entire peasantry to crush the landowners, the principal enemy of the free, socialist Russia of the working people, had progressed from this to the much more difficult and historically more lofty and truly socialist task—that of carrying the conscious socialist struggle into the rural districts, and awakening the consciousness of the peasants as well. The great agrarian revolution—proclamation in October of the abolition of private property in land, the proclamation of the socialisation of the land—would inevitably have remained a paper revolution had not the urban workers roused to life the rural proletariat, the poor peasants, the labouring peasants, who constitute the vast majority; like the middle peasants, they do not exploit the labour of others and are not interested in exploitation, and are therefore capable of advancing, and have already advanced beyond the joint struggle against the landowners to the general proletarian struggle against capital, against the power of the exploiters, against those who rely on the power of money and property other than real estate; they have advanced from the task of sweeping Russia clean of landowners to that of establishing a socialist system.

This, comrades, was an extremely difficult step to take. Those who doubted the socialist character of our Revolution prophesied that in taking this step we would inevitably fail. Today, however, socialist construction in the countryside

depends entirely on this step. The formation of the Poor Peasants' Committees, the wide network of these Committees throughout Russia, their coming conversion, which in part has already begun, into fully competent rural Soviets of Deputies that will have to put the fundamental principles of Soviet organisation, the power of the working people, into effect in the rural districts, constitute a real guarantee that we have not confined ourselves to the tasks to which ordinary bourgeois-democratic revolutions in West-European countries confined themselves. We have destroyed the monarchy and the medieval power of the landowners, and are now going over to the real work of socialist construction. This is the most difficult but at the same time most important work in the countryside, and, moreover, it is very rewarding work. We have aroused the consciousness of the working peasants right in the villages; the wave of capitalist revolts has fully isolated them from the interests of the capitalist class; the peasants in the Poor Peasants' Committees and in the Soviets which are now undergoing changes are joining forces more and more closely with the urban workers—in all this we see the sole, yet true and undoubtedly permanent guarantee that socialist development in Russia has now become more stable, and has now acquired a basis among the vast masses of the agricultural population.

There is no doubt that socialist construction is a very difficult task in a peasant country like Russia. There is no doubt that it was comparatively easy to sweep away an enemy like tsarism, the power of the landowners, the landed estates. A body at the centre could accomplish that task in a few days; throughout the country it could be accomplished in a few weeks. But the task we are now tackling can, because of its very nature, be accomplished only by extremely persistent and protracted effort. Here we shall have to fight, step by step and inch by inch. We shall have to fight for every achievement the new, socialist Russia has won; we shall have to fight for the collective cultivation of the land.

And it goes without saying that a revolution of this kind, the transition from small, individual peasant farms to the collective cultivation of the land, will require considerable time and can in no case be accomplished at one stroke.

We know very well that in countries where small-peasant farming prevails the transition to socialism cannot be effected except by a series of gradual preliminary stages. In the light of this, the first aim set by the October Revolution was merely to overthrow and destroy the power of the landowners. The February fundamental law on the socialisation of the land, which, as you know, was passed by the unanimous vote both of the Communists and of those members of the Soviet government who did not share the point of view of the Communists, was at the same time an expression of the conscious will of the vast majority of the peasants and proof that the working class, the workers' Communist Party, aware of their task, are persistently and patiently advancing towards the new socialist construction—advancing by a series of gradual measures, by awakening the working peasantry, and forging ahead only in step with that awakening, only in the measure that the peasantry is independently organised.

We fully realise that such tremendous changes in the lives of tens of millions of people as the transition from small individual peasant farming to the joint cultivation of the land, affecting as they do the most deep-going roots of their way of life and their mores, can be accomplished only by long effort, and can in general be accomplished only when necessity compels people to reshape their lives.

After a long and desperate war all over the world, we clearly discern the beginnings of a socialist revolution everywhere in the world. This has become a necessity for even the most backward countries and—irrespective of any theoretical views or socialist doctrines—is impressing most forcefully on everybody that it is impossible to live in the old way.

The country has suffered such tremendous ruin and collapse, and we see this collapse spreading all over the world, we see many centuries of man's achievements in culture, science and technology swept away in these four years of criminal, destructive, and predatory war, and the whole of Europe, and not merely Russia alone, returning to a state of barbarism; in the face of these facts, the broad masses, and particularly the peasantry, who perhaps have suffered most from this war, are coming clearly to realise that tremendous efforts are required, that every ounce of energy must be

exerted in order to get rid of the legacy of this accursed war which has left us nothing but ruin and want. It is impossible to live in the old way, in the way we lived before the war, and the waste of human toil and effort associated with individual, small-scale peasant farming cannot continue. The productivity of labour would be doubled or trebled, there would be a double or triple saving of human labour in agriculture and human activity in general if a transition were made from this disunited, small-scale farming to collective farming.

The ruination bequeathed us by the war simply does not allow us to restore the old small-scale peasant farms. Not only have the mass of the peasants been awakened by the war, not only has the war shown them what technical marvels now exist and how these marvels have been adapted for the extermination of people; the war has given rise to the idea that these technical marvels must be used primarily to reshape agriculture, the form of production which is the most common in the country, in which the greatest number of people are engaged, but which at the same time is most backward. Not only has this idea been provoked, but the monstrous horrors of modern warfare have made people realise what forces modern technology has created, how these forces are wasted in frightful and senseless war, and that it is the forces of technology themselves that are the only means of salvation from such horrors. It is our obligation and duty to use these forces to give new life to the most backward form of production, agriculture, to reshape it, and to transform it from production conducted indiscriminately, in the old, unenlightened way, into production based on science and technical achievements. The war has made people realise this much more than any of us can imagine. But besides this the war has also made it impossible to restore production in the old way.

Those who cherish the hope that after this war the pre-war situation can be restored, that the old system and methods of farming can be resumed, are mistaken—and are coming to realise their mistake more and more every day. The war has resulted in such frightful ruination that some small farms now possess neither draught animals nor implements. We cannot allow the waste of the labour of the people to continue. The poor working peasants, who have borne the greatest

sacrifices for the Revolution and have suffered most from the war, did not take the land from the landowners so that it could fall into the hands of new kulaks. The latest developments are now confronting these working peasants with the question of turning to the collective cultivation of the land as the only means of restoring the culture that has been ruined and destroyed by the war, and as the only means of escaping from the state of ignorance, duress, and oppression to which the whole mass of the agricultural population was condemned by capitalism—the ignorance and oppression (due to which the capitalists were able to burden mankind with war for four years) from which the toilers of all countries are striving with revolutionary energy and fervour to rid themselves at all costs.

These, comrades, are the conditions that had to be created on a world scale for this most difficult and at the same time most important socialist reform, this most important and fundamental socialist measure, to be placed on the order of the day, and in Russia it has been placed on the order of the day. The formation of the Poor Peasants' Committees and this joint Congress of land departments, Poor Peasants' Committees and agricultural communes, taken in conjunction with the struggle which took place in the countryside in the summer and autumn of the present year, go to show that very wide sections of the working peasantry have been awakened, and that the peasants themselves, the majority of the working peasants, are striving towards collective cultivation of the land. Of course, I repeat, we must tackle this great reform gradually. Here, nothing can be done at one stroke. But I must remind you that the fundamental law on the socialisation of the land, the adoption of which was a foregone conclusion on the first day after the Revolution of October 25, at the very first session of the first organ of Soviet power, the Second All-Russia Congress of Soviets, not only abolished private property in land for ever, not only did away with landed estates, but also stipulated, among other things, that farm property, draught animals, and farm implements which passed into the possession of the people and of the working peasants should also become public property and cease to be the private property of individual farms. And on the fundamental

question of our present aims, of what tasks of land disposal we want carried out, and what we call on the supporters of the Soviet government, the working peasants, to do in this respect, Article 11 of the law on the socialisation of the land, which was adopted in February 1918, states that the aim is to develop collective farming, the most advantageous from the point of view of economy of labour and products, at the expense of individual farming and with the aim of passing over to a socialist system of economy.

Comrades, when we passed this law complete unanimity and agreement did not exist between the Communists and the other parties. On the contrary, we passed this law when the Soviet government consisted of a union of the Communists and the Party of Left Socialist-Revolutionaries, who did not hold communist views. Nevertheless, we arrived at a unanimous decision, to which we adhere to this day, remembering, I repeat, that the transition from individual farming to the collective cultivation of the land cannot be effected at one stroke, and that the struggle which developed in the cities was resolved more easily. In the cities thousands of workers were confronted by one capitalist, and it did not require much effort to remove him. The struggle which developed in the rural districts, however, was much more complex. At first there was the general assault of the peasants on the landowners; at first there was the complete abolition of the power of the landowners in such a way that it could never be restored again. This was followed by a struggle among the peasants themselves, among whom new capitalists arose in the shape of the kulaks, the exploiters and profiteers who used their surplus grain to enrich themselves at the expense of the starving non-agricultural parts of Russia. Here a new struggle began, and you know that in the summer of this year it led to the outbreak of a number of revolts. We do not say of the kulak as we do of the capitalist landowner that he must be deprived of all his property. What we say is that we must break the kulak's resistance to indispensable measures, such as the grain monopoly, which he is violating in order to enrich himself by selling grain surpluses at exorbitant prices, while the workers and peasants in the non-agricultural areas are suffering the torments of hunger. And our policy here was

to wage a struggle as merciless as that waged against the landowners and capitalists. But there also remained the question of the attitude of the poor section of the working peasantry to the middle peasantry. Our policy has always been to form an alliance with the middle peasant. He is no enemy of Soviet institutions; he is no enemy of the proletariat and socialism. He will, of course, vacillate and will consent to adopt socialism only when he sees by definite and convincing example that it is necessary. The middle peasant, of course, cannot be convinced by theoretical arguments or by agitational speeches; and we do not count on it. But he can be convinced by the example and the solid front of the working section of the peasantry. He can be convinced by an alliance of the working peasantry with the proletariat. And here we count on a prolonged and gradual process of persuasion and on a number of transitional measures which will embody the agreement between the proletarian socialist section of the population, the agreement between the Communists who are conducting a resolute fight against capital in all its forms, and the middle peasantry.

Realising this state of affairs, realising that the task confronting us in the rural areas is incomparably more difficult, we present the question in the way it was presented in the law on the socialisation of the land. You know that this law proclaimed the abolition of private property in land and the equalitarian distribution of land and you know that the enforcement of this law was begun in that spirit, and that it has been put into effect in the majority of rural areas. The law, moreover, contains, with the unanimous consent both of Communists and of people who at that time did not yet share communist views, the thesis I have just read to you, which declares that our common task and our common aim is the transition to socialist farming, to collective land tenure and collective cultivation of the land. As organisation develops, both the peasants who have already settled on the land and the prisoners of war who are now returning from captivity, in hundreds of thousands and millions, worn and exhausted, are coming to realise more and more clearly the vast scope of the work that must be done in order to restore agriculture and emancipate the peasant for ever from his old neglected,

downtrodden, and ignorant state. It is becoming more and more clear to them that the only sure way of escape, one that will bring the masses of the peasants nearer to a cultured life and place them in a position of equality with other citizens, is the collective cultivation of the land which the Soviet government is now systematically striving to put into effect by gradual measures. It is for this purpose, for the collective cultivation of the land, that the communes and state farms are being formed. The importance of this type of farming is indicated in the law on the socialisation of the land. In the clause of the law stating who is entitled to the use of the land, you will find that among the persons and institutions so entitled first place is given to the state, the second to public organisations, the third to agricultural communes, and the fourth to agricultural co-operative societies. I again draw your attention to the fact that these fundamental theses of the law on the socialisation of the land were laid down when the Communist Party was carrying out not only its own will, when it made deliberate concessions to those who in one way or another expressed the ideas and will of the middle peasantry. We made such concessions, and are still making them. We concluded and are concluding an agreement of this kind because the transition to the collective form of landownership, to the collective cultivation of the land, to state farms, to communes, cannot be effected at one stroke; it requires the determined and persistent co-operation and guidance of the Soviet government, which has assigned one thousand million rubles for the improvement of agriculture³⁶ on condition that collective cultivation of the land is adopted. This law shows that we desire to influence the mass of middle peasants mainly by force of example, by inviting them to improve their husbandry, and that we count only on the gradual effect of such measures to bring about this profound and most important revolution in agricultural production in Russia.

The alliance of the Poor Peasants' Committees, agricultural communes, and land departments at the present Congress shows us, and gives us full assurance, that this transition to the collective cultivation of the land has got things going correctly, on a truly socialist scale. This steady and systematic work must ensure an increase in the productivity of labour.

For this purpose we must adopt the best farming methods and enlist the agronomical forces of Russia so that we may be able to work the best organised farms, which hitherto have served as a source of enrichment for individuals, as the source of a revival of capitalism, as the source of a new bondage and a new enslavement of wage-labourers, but which now, under the law on the socialisation of the land and the complete abolition of private property in land, must serve as a source of agricultural knowledge and culture and of increased productivity for the millions of working people. This alliance between the urban workers and the working peasantry, the formation of the Poor Peasants' Committees and the new elections to them as Soviet institutions are a guarantee that agricultural Russia has taken a path which is being taken by one West-European state after another, later than us, but with greater certainty. It was much harder for them to start the revolution, because their enemy was not a rotten autocracy, but a highly cultured and united capitalist class. But you know that this revolution has begun. You know that the revolution has not been confined to Russia, and that our chief hope, our chief support, is the proletariat of the more advanced countries of Western Europe, and that this chief support of the world revolution, this proletariat, has been set in motion. And we are firmly convinced, and the course of the German revolution has shown it in practice, that in those countries the transition to socialist farming, the use of more advanced agricultural techniques and the organisation of the agricultural population will proceed more rapidly and easily than in our country.

In alliance with the urban workers and with the socialist proletariat of the whole world, the working peasants of Russia can now be certain that they will overcome all their adversities, beat off the attacks of the imperialists, and accomplish that without which the emancipation of the working people is impossible, the collective cultivation of the land, the gradual but steady transition from small individual farms to the collective cultivation of the land.

A LITTLE PICTURE IN ILLUSTRATION OF BIG PROBLEMS

Comrade Sosnovsky, editor of *Bednota*,³⁷ has brought me a remarkable book. As many workers and peasants as possible should be made familiar with it. Most valuable lessons, splendidly illustrated by vivid examples, are to be drawn from it on some of the most important problems of socialist construction. This book, written by Comrade Alexander Todorsky, is called *A Year With Rifle and Plough* and was published in the town of Veseyegonsk by the local district Executive Committee on the occasion of the anniversary of the October Revolution.

The author describes the year's experience of the men in charge of organising Soviet power in the Veseyegonsk district—first the civil war, the revolt of the local kulaks and its suppression, and then "peaceful creative life". The author has succeeded in giving so simple, and at the same time so lively, an account of the course of the revolution in this rural backwater, that to attempt to retell it would only weaken its effect. This book should be distributed as widely as possible, and it is greatly to be desired that many more of those who have been working among the masses and with the masses, in the very thick of real life, sit down to describe their experiences. The publication of several hundred, or even several dozen, such descriptions, the best, most truthfully and plainly told and containing the largest number of valuable facts, would be infinitely more useful to the cause of socialism than many of the newspaper and magazine articles and books by professional journalists who only too often cannot see the real life behind the paper they write on.

Let me give a brief example from Comrade A. Todorsky's narrative. It was suggested that "merchant hands" should not be allowed to go "unemployed", and that they should be made to "get down to work".

"...With this purpose in view, three young, energetic and very business-like manufacturers, E. Yefremov, A. Loginov and N. Kozlov, were summoned to the Executive Committee and ordered on pain of imprisonment and confiscation of property to set up a sawmill and tannery. The work was started immediately.

"The Soviet authorities were not mistaken in their choice of men, and the manufacturers, be it said to their credit, were among the first to realise that they were not dealing with 'casual and transitory guests', but with real masters who had taken power firmly into their hands.

"Having quite rightly realised this, they set energetically to work to carry out the orders of the Executive Committee, with the result that Vesyegonsk now has a sawmill going at full swing, covering the needs of the local population and filling orders for a new railway under construction.

"As to the tannery, the premises are now ready, and the engine, drums and other machinery, obtained from Moscow, are being installed, so that in a month and a half, or two at most, Vesyegonsk will be getting fine leather of its own manufacture.

"The building of two Soviet plants by 'non-Soviet' hands is a good example of how to fight a class which is hostile to us.

"To rap the exploiters over the knuckles, to render them harmless or 'finish them off', is only half the job. The whole job will be done only when we compel them to work, and with the fruits of their labour help to improve the new life and strengthen Soviet power."

These fine and absolutely true words should be carved in stone and prominently displayed in every economic council, food organisation, factory, land department and so on. For what has been understood by our comrades in remote Vesyegonsk, is all too often stubbornly ignored by Soviet workers in the capitals. It is no rare thing to meet a Soviet intellectual or worker, a Communist, who sniffs contemptuously at the mere mention of co-operative societies and proclaims with an air of profound importance—and with equally profound stupidity—that these are not Soviet hands, they are bourgeois, shopkeepers, Mensheviks, that at such and such a place and time the co-operators used their financial manipulations to conceal aid given to whiteguards, and that in our socialist republic the machinery of supply and distribution must be built up only by clean Soviet hands.

Such arguments are typical insofar as the truth in them is so mingled with falsehood that they constitute a most dangerous distortion of the aims of communism that can do incalculable harm to our cause.

The co-operatives certainly are an apparatus of bourgeois society, an apparatus which grew up in an atmosphere of "shopkeeping" and which has trained its leaders in the spirit of bourgeois politics and in a bourgeois outlook, and has therefore been producing a large proportion of whiteguards or their accomplices. That is undeniable. But it is a bad thing when from undeniable truths, by their over-simplification and slap-dash application, absurd conclusions are drawn. We can only build communism from the materials created by capitalism, from that cultural apparatus which has been reared under bourgeois conditions and which—as far as concerns the human material as part of the cultural apparatus—is therefore inevitably imbued with the bourgeois mentality. That is what makes the building of communist society difficult, but it is also a guarantee that it can and will be built. In fact, what distinguishes Marxism from the old, utopian socialism is that the latter wanted to build the new society not from the mass human material produced by bloodstained, sordid, rapacious, shopkeeping capitalism, but from particularly virtuous men and women reared in special hothouses and cucumber frames. Everyone now sees that this absurd idea is ridiculous and everyone has abandoned it, but not everyone is willing or able to give thought to the opposite doctrine of Marxism and to think out how communism can (and should) be built from the mass human material, which has been corrupted by hundreds and thousands of years of slavery, serfdom, capitalism, by small individual enterprise, and by the war of every man against his neighbour to obtain a place in the market, or a higher price for his product or his labour.

The co-operative societies are a bourgeois apparatus. From this it follows that they do not deserve to be trusted *politically*; but it does not follow that we may turn our backs on the task of using them for purposes of administration and construction. Political distrust means that we must not place non-Soviet people in *politically* responsible posts. It means that the Cheka must keep a sharp eye on the representatives

of classes, strata or groups that have leanings towards the whiteguards. (Though, be it said in parenthesis, one need not go to the same absurd lengths as Comrade Latsis, one of our finest tried and tested Communists, did in his Kazan magazine, *Krasny Terror*; when he wanted to say that Red terror meant the forcible suppression of exploiters who attempted to restore their rule, he put it this way [on page 2 of the first issue of his magazine]: "Do not search [!?!] in the records for evidence to show whether his revolt against the Soviet was an armed or only a verbal one.")

Political distrust of the members of a bourgeois apparatus is legitimate and essential. But to refuse to use them in the work of administration and construction would be the height of folly, fraught with untold harm to communism. If anybody attempted to recommend a Menshevik as a socialist, or as a political leader, or even as a political adviser, he would be committing a great mistake, for the history of the revolution in Russia has definitely shown that the Mensheviks (and the Socialist-Revolutionaries) are not socialists, but petty-bourgeois democrats who are capable of siding with the *bourgeoisie* every time the class struggle between the proletariat and the bourgeoisie becomes particularly acute. But petty-bourgeois democracy is not a chance political formation, not an exception, but a *necessary* product of capitalism; and it is not only the old, pre-capitalist, economically reactionary middle peasantry that are the "purveyors" of this democracy; so are the co-operative societies with their capitalist culture that have sprung from the soil of large-scale capitalism, the intelligentsia, etc. Why, even backward Russia produced, side by side with the Kolupayevs and Razuvayevs,³⁸ capitalists who knew how to make use of the services of cultured intellectuals, be they Menshevik, Socialist-Revolutionary or non-party. Are we to show ourselves more stupid than these capitalists and fail to use such "building material" in the construction of a communist Russia?

Written at the end of 1918
or beginning of 1919

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FROM THE DRAFT PROGRAMME OF THE R.C.P.(B.)

II

POINTS FROM THE ECONOMIC SECTION OF THE PROGRAMME

Elaborating in greater detail the general tasks of the Soviet government, the R.C.P. formulates these at the present time as follows:

THE ECONOMIC SPHERE

The task of the Soviet government at the present time is as follows:

(1) To continue steadily and finish the work already begun of expropriating the bourgeoisie and of transforming the means of production and exchange into the property of the Soviet Republic, i.e., the common property of all the working people, which has, in the main, been completed.

(2) To pay particular attention to the development and strengthening of comradely discipline among the working people, and to stimulate their initiative and sense of responsibility in every field. This is the most important if not the sole means of finally overcoming capitalism and the habits created by the domination of the private ownership of the means of production. To achieve this object it is necessary to carry on slow and steady activities to re-educate the masses, and such re-education has not only become possible now that the masses have really seen the elimination of the landowners and the capitalists and merchants, but is actually proceeding in a thousand ways through the practical experience gained by the workers and peasants themselves. Of extreme importance in this respect is the work of developing the unity of the working people in trade unions which has never, at any time or anywhere in the world been done as rapidly as it is being done under Soviet power, but which must be extended to cover the organisation of literally all

working people in properly constituted, centralised and disciplined trade unions.

8. This same task of developing the productive forces calls for the immediate, wide and thorough utilisation of the services of the specialists in science and technology left to us by capitalism, although in most cases they are imbued with a bourgeois world-outlook and bourgeois habits. The Party, in close alliance with the trade union organisations, must continue its former policy—on the one hand, not make the slightest political concession to this bourgeois stratum and ruthlessly suppress every attempt at counter-revolutionary activity on their part; and on the other hand, relentlessly combat the pseudo-radical, but actually ignorant, conceit that the working people are capable of overcoming capitalism and the bourgeois system without learning from the bourgeois specialists, without making use of their services, without undergoing a long period of training working side by side with them.

Although the ultimate object of the Soviet government is to achieve full communism and equal remuneration for all kinds of work, it cannot, however, introduce this equality straight away, at the present time, when only the first steps of the transition from capitalism to communism are being taken. For a certain period of time, therefore, we must retain the present higher remuneration for specialists in order to give them an incentive to work no worse, and even better, than they have worked before; and with the same object in view, we must not reject the system of paying bonuses for the most successful work, particularly organising work.

It is equally necessary to place the bourgeois specialist in an environment of comradely co-operation with the masses of the rank-and-file workers who are guided by the class-conscious Communists in order to promote mutual understanding and friendship between workers by hand and by brain whom capitalism kept apart.

The mobilisation of the entire able-bodied population by the Soviet government, aided by the trade unions, for the purpose of carrying out certain public works should be practised on a much wider scale and more systematically than hitherto.

In the sphere of distribution, the present task of the Soviet government is steadily to continue the policy of replacing trade by the planned, organised and nation-wide distribution of goods. The object is to organise the entire population in a single system of consumers' communes capable of distributing all the necessary goods, most rapidly, systematically, economically, and with the least expenditure of labour, and of strictly centralising the entire machinery for distribution.

To achieve this object it is particularly important in the present period, when there are transitional forms based on different principles, for the Soviet food supply organisation to make use of the co-operative societies, which constitute the only mass apparatus for systematic distribution inherited from capitalism.

Being of the opinion that in principle the only correct policy is such further communist development of this apparatus and not its rejection, the R.C.P. must systematically pursue the policy of making it obligatory for all members of the Party to work in the co-operative and, with the aid of the trade unions, direct them in a communist spirit, develop the initiative and discipline of the working people who belong to co-operatives, endeavour to get the entire population to join the co-operatives, and the co-operatives themselves to merge into one single co-operative that embraces the Soviet Republic in its entirety. Lastly, and most important, the dominating influence of the proletariat over the rest of the working people must be constantly maintained, and everywhere the most diverse measures must be tried with a view to facilitating and bringing about the transition from petty-bourgeois co-operatives of the old capitalist type to consumers' communes directed by proletarians and semi-proletarians.

(6) It is impossible to abolish money at one stroke in the first period of transition from capitalism to communism. As a consequence, the bourgeois elements of the population continue to utilise privately-owned currency notes—these tokens by which the exploiters obtain the right to receive public wealth—for the purpose of speculation, profiteering and robbing the working population. The nationalisation of the banks is insufficient in itself to combat this survival of bourgeois robbery. The R.C.P. will strive as speedily as possible to

introduce the most radical measures to pave the way for the abolition of money, first and foremost to replace it by savings-bank books, checks, short-term notes entitling the holders to receive goods from the public stores, and so forth, to make it compulsory for money to be deposited in the banks, etc. Practical experience in paving the way for, and carrying out, these and similar measures will show which of them are the most expedient.

(7) In the sphere of finance, the R.C.P. will introduce a graduated income and property tax in all cases where it is feasible. But these cases cannot be numerous after the abolition of the private property in land, the majority of factories, and other enterprises. In the epoch of the dictatorship of the proletariat and of the state ownership of the most important means of production, the state finances must be based on the direct conversion of a certain part of the revenue from the different state monopolies to the use of the state. Revenue and expenditure can be balanced only if the exchange of commodities is properly organised, and this will be achieved by the organisation of consumers' communes and the restoration of the transport system, which is one of the major immediate objects of the Soviet government.

12

AGRARIAN SECTION OF THE PROGRAMME

Soviet power, having completely abolished private property in land, has already started on the implementation of a whole series of measures aimed at the organisation of large-scale socialist agriculture. The most important of these measures are the organisation of state farms (i.e., large socialist farms), the encouragement of agricultural communes (i.e., voluntary associations of tillers of the land for large-scale farming in common), and societies and co-operatives for the collective cultivation of the land; cultivation by the state of all uncultivated lands, no matter whom they belong to; mobilisation by the state of all agricultural specialists for vigorous measures to raise efficiency in farming, etc.

Regarding all these measures as the only way to raise productivity of agricultural labour, which is absolutely imperative, the R.C.P. seeks to carry them out as fully as possible, to extend them to the more backward regions of the country, and to take further steps in this direction.

Inasmuch as the antithesis between town and country is one of the root-causes of the economic and cultural backwardness of the countryside, one which in a period of so deep a crisis as the present confronts both town and country with the direct threat of ruin and collapse, the R.C.P. regards the eradication of this antithesis as one of the basic tasks in the building of communism and alongside the above measures, considers it necessary extensively and systematically to enlist industrial workers for the communist development of agriculture, to promote the activities of the nation-wide Workers' Committee of Assistance set up by the Soviet government with this aim in view, and so on.

In all its work in the countryside the R.C.P. will continue to rely on the proletarian and semi-proletarian sections of the rural population, primarily organising them into an independent force, setting up Poor Peasants' Committees, Party cells in the villages, a specific type of trade union for rural proletarians and semi-proletarians, etc., exerting every effort to bring them closer to the urban proletariat and wresting them from the influence of the rural bourgeoisie and petty-property interests.

In regard to the kulaks, the rural bourgeoisie, it is the policy of the R.C.P. to wage a resolute struggle against their attempts at exploitation, to suppress their resistance to Soviet, communist, policy.

In regard to the middle peasantry, it is the policy of the R.C.P. gradually and systematically to enlist them in the work of socialist construction. The Party aims to separate them from the kulaks, to attract them to the side of the working class by a considerate attitude toward their needs, to combat their backwardness by ideological persuasion, not by coercion, to seek a practical agreement with them in all cases affecting their vital interests, and to make concessions in defining ways of effecting socialist reforms.

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A GREAT BEGINNING

HEROISM OF THE WORKERS IN THE REAR.
"COMMUNIST SUBBOTNIKS"

The press reports many instances of the heroism of the Red Army men. In the fight against Kolchak, Denikin and other forces of the landowners and capitalists, the workers and peasants very often display miracles of bravery and endurance, defending the gains of the socialist revolution. Overcoming the guerrilla spirit, weariness and indiscipline is a slow and difficult process, but it is making headway in spite of everything. The heroism of the working people voluntarily making sacrifices for the cause of the victory of socialism—this is the foundation of the new, comradely discipline in the Red Army, the foundation on which it is regenerating, gaining strength and growing.

The heroism of the workers in the rear is no less worthy of attention. In this connection, the *communist subbotniks** organised by the workers on their own initiative are really of enormous significance. Evidently, this is only a beginning, but it is a beginning of exceptionally great importance. It is the beginning of a revolution that is more difficult, more tangible, more radical and more decisive than the overthrow of the bourgeoisie, for it is a victory over our own conservatism, indiscipline, petty-bourgeois egoism, a victory over the habits that accursed capitalism left as a heritage to the worker and peasant. Only when *this* victory is consolidated will the new social discipline, socialist discipline, be created; then and only then will a reversion to capitalism become impossible, will communism become really invincible.

* *Subbotnik*—voluntary unpaid work for the benefit of society in the workers' spare time (Saturday evening, Sunday). The Russian word *subbota* means Saturday.—*Ed.*

Pravda in its issue of May 17 published an article by Comrade A. J. entitled: "Work in a Revolutionary Way (A Communist Saturday)." This article is so important that we reproduce it here in full.

"WORK IN A REVOLUTIONARY WAY"

A Communist Saturday

"The letter of the Russian Communist Party's Central Committee on working in a *revolutionary way* gave a powerful impetus to communist organisations and to Communists. The general wave of enthusiasm carried many communist railway workers to the front, but the majority of them could not leave their responsible posts or find new forms of working in a revolutionary way. Reports from the localities about the tardiness with which the work of mobilisation was proceeding and the prevalence of red tape compelled the Moscow-Kazan Railway district to turn its attention to the performance of railway services. It turned out that, owing to the shortage of labour and the inadequate intensity of work, urgent orders and repairs to locomotives were being held up. At a general meeting of Communists and sympathisers of the Moscow-Kazan Railway district held on May 7, the question was raised of passing from words to deeds in helping to achieve victory over Kolchak. The following resolution was moved:

"In view of the grave internal and external situation, the Communists and sympathisers, in order to gain the upper hand over the class enemy, must spur themselves on again and deduct an extra hour from their rest, i.e., lengthen their working day by one hour, accumulate these extra hours and put in six extra hours of manual labour on Saturday for the purpose of creating material value of immediate worth. Agreeing that Communists should not spare their health and life for the gains of the revolution, this work should be performed without pay. *Communist Saturdays* are to be introduced throughout the district and to continue until complete victory over Kolchak has been achieved."

"After some hesitation, the resolution was adopted unanimously.

"On Saturday, May 10, at 6 p.m., the Communists and sympathisers turned up to work like soldiers, formed ranks, and without fuss or bustle were taken by the foremen to their various jobs.

"The results of working in a *revolutionary way* are evident. The accompanying table (see p. 205) gives the places of work and the character of the work performed.

"The total value of the work performed at ordinary rates of pay is five million rubles; calculated at overtime rates it would be fifty per cent higher.

"The productivity of labour in loading waggons was 270 per cent higher than that of regular workers. The productivity of labour on other jobs was approximately the same.

"Jobs (urgent) which had been held up for periods ranging from seven days to three months owing to the shortage of labour and to red tape were carried through.

"The work was performed in spite of the state of disrepair (easily remedied) of accessories, as a result of which certain groups were held up from thirty to forty minutes.

"The foremen who were placed in charge of the work could hardly keep pace with the men in finding new jobs for them, and perhaps it was only a slight exaggeration when an old foreman said that as much

Place of work	Character of work	Number employed	Hours worked		Work performed
			Per person	Total	
Moscow. Main locomotive shops	Loading materials for the line, fixtures for repairing locomotives and carriage parts for Perovo, Murom, Alaty and Syzran	48	5	240	Loaded 7,500 poods. Unloaded 1,800 poods
		21	3	63	
		5	4	20	
Moscow. Passenger depot	Complex current repairs to locomotives	26	5	130	Repairs done on 1½ locomotives
Moscow. Shunting yards	Current repairs to locomotives	24	6	144	2 locomotives completed and parts to be repaired dismantled on 4
Moscow. Carriage department	Current repairs to passenger carriages	12	6	72	2 third-class carriages
Perovo. Main carriage work-shops	Carriage repairs and minor repairs on Saturday and Sunday	46	5	230	12 box carriages and 2 flat carriages
		23	5	115	
<i>Total</i>		205	—	1,014	4 locomotives and 16 carriages turned out and 9,300 poods unloaded and loaded

work was done at this *communist Saturday* as would have been done in a week by non-class conscious and slack workers.

"In view of the fact that many non-Communists, sincere supporters of the Soviet government, took part in the work, and that many more are expected on future Saturdays, and also in view of the fact that many other districts desire to follow the example of the communist railway workers of the Moscow-Kazan Railway, I shall deal in greater detail with the organisational side of the matter as seen from reports received from the localities.

"Of those taking part in the work, some ten per cent were Communists permanently employed in the localities. The rest were persons occupying responsible and elective posts, from the commissar of the railway to commissars of individual enterprises, representatives of the trade union, and employees of the head office and of the Commissariat for Railways.

"The enthusiasm and team spirit displayed during work were extraordinary. When the workers, clerks and head office employees, without even an oath or argument, caught hold of a forty-pood wheel tire of a passenger locomotive and, like industrious ants, rolled it into place, one's heart was filled with fervent joy at the sight of this collective effort, and one's conviction was strengthened that the victory of the working class was unshakable. The world marauders will not strangle the victorious workers; the internal saboteurs will not live to see Kolchak.

"When the work was finished those present witnessed an unprecedented scene: a hundred Communists, weary, but with the light of joy in their eyes, greeted their success with the solemn strains of the *Internationale*. And it seemed as if the triumphant strains of the triumphant anthem would sweep over the walls through the whole of working-class Moscow and that like the waves caused by a stone thrown into a pool they would spread through the whole of working-class Russia and shake up the weary and the slack.

"A.J."

Appraising this remarkable "example worthy of emulation", Comrade N. R. in an article in *Pravda* of May 20, under that heading, wrote:

"Cases of Communists working like this are not rare. I know of similar cases at an electric power station, and on various railways. On the Nikolayevsky Railway, the Communists worked overtime several nights to lift a locomotive that had fallen into the turn-table pit. In the winter, all the Communists and sympathisers on the Northern Railway worked several Sundays clearing the track of snow; and the communist cells at many freight stations patrol the stations at night to prevent the stealing of freights. But all this work was casual and unsystematic. The new thing introduced by the comrades on the Moscow-Kazan line is that they are making this work systematic and permanent. The Moscow-Kazan comrades say in their resolution, 'until complete victory over Kolchak has been achieved', and therein lies the significance of their work. They are lengthening the working day of every Communist and sympathiser by one

hour for the whole duration of the state of war; simultaneously, they are displaying exemplary productivity of labour.

"This example has called forth, and *is bound* to call forth, further emulation. A general meeting of the Communists and sympathisers on the Alexandrovsky Railway, after discussing the military situation and the resolution adopted by the comrades on the Moscow-Kazan Railway, resolved: (1) to introduce 'subbotniks' for the Communists and sympathisers on the Alexandrovsky Railway, the first subbotnik to take place on May 17; (2) to organise the Communists and sympathisers in exemplary, model teams which must show the workers how to work and what can really be done with the present materials and tools, and in the present food situation.

"The Moscow-Kazan comrades say that their example has produced a great impression and that they expect a large number of *non-Party* workers to turn up next Saturday. At the time these lines are being written, the Communists have not yet started working overtime in the Alexandrovsky Railway workshops, but as soon as the rumour spread that they were to do so the mass of the non-Party workers stirred themselves and said: 'We did not know yesterday, otherwise we would have worked as well! I will certainly come next Saturday,' can be heard on all sides. The impression created by work of this sort is very great.

"The example set by the Moscow-Kazan comrades should be emulated by all the communist cells in the rear; not only the communist cells in the Moscow Junction, but the whole Party organisation in Russia. In the rural districts too, the communist cells should in the first place set to work to till the fields of Red Army men and thus help their families.

"The comrades on the Moscow-Kazan line finished their first communist subbotnik by singing the *Internationale*. If the communist organisations throughout Russia follow this example and consistently apply it, the Russian Soviet Republic will successfully pass through the coming severe months to the mighty strains of the *Internationale* sung by all the working people of the republic. . . .

"To work, comrade Communists!"

On May 23, 1919, *Pravda* reported the following:

"The first communist 'subbotnik' on the Alexandrovsky Railway took place on May 17. In accordance with the resolution adopted by their general meeting, ninety-eight Communists and sympathisers worked five hours overtime without pay, receiving in return only the right to purchase a second dinner, and, as manual labourers, half a pound of bread to go with their dinner."

Although the work was poorly prepared and organised the *productivity of labour* was nevertheless from two to three times higher than usual.

Here are a few examples.

Five turners turned eighty spindles in four hours. The productivity is 213 per cent of the usual level.

Twenty labourers in four hours collected scrap materials of a total weight of 600 poods, and seventy laminated carriage springs, each weighing $3\frac{1}{2}$ poods, making a total of 850 poods. Productivity, 300 per cent of the usual level.

"The comrades explain this by the fact that ordinarily their work is boring and tiresome, whereas here they worked with a will and with enthusiasm. Now however, they will be ashamed to turn out less in regular working hours than they did at the communist subbotnik.

"Now many non-Party workers say that they would like to take part in the subbotniks. The locomotive crews volunteer to take locomotives from the 'cemetery', repair them and set them going during a subbotnik.

"It is reported that similar subbotniks are to be organised on the Vyazma line."

How the work is done at these communist subbotniks is described by Comrade A. Dyachenko in an article in *Pravda* of June 7, entitled "Notes of a Subbotnik Worker". We quote the main passages from this article.

"It was with great joy that I got ready with my comrade to do our subbotnik 'bit' on the decision of the railway district committee of the Party, and for a time, for a few hours, to give my head a rest and my muscles a bit of exercise. . . . We were detailed off to the railway carpentry shop. We got there, found a number of our people, exchanged greetings, engaged in banter for a bit, counted up our forces and found that there were thirty of us. . . . And in front of us lay a 'monster', a steam boiler weighing no less than six or seven hundred poods; our job was to 'shift' it, i.e., move it over a distance of a quarter or a third of a verst, to its base. We began to have our doubts. . . . However, we started on the job. Some comrades placed wooden rollers under the boiler, attached two ropes to it and we began to tug away. . . . The boiler gave way reluctantly, but at length it budged. We were delighted. After all, there were so few of us. . . . For nearly two weeks this boiler had resisted the efforts of thrice our number of non-Communist workers and nothing could make it budge until we tackled it. . . . We worked for an hour, strenuously, rhythmically, to the command of our 'foreman'—'one, two, three', and the boiler kept on rolling. Suddenly there was confusion, and a number of our comrades went tumbling on to the ground in the funniest fashion. The rope 'let them down'. . . . A moment's delay, and a thicker rope was made fast. . . . Evening. It was getting dark, but we had yet to overcome a small hillock, and then our job would soon be done. Our arms ached, our palms burned, we were hot and pulled for all we were worth—and were making headway. The 'manager' stood round and, somewhat shamed by our success, clutched at a rope. 'Lend a hand, it's time you did!' A Red Army man was watching our labours; in his hands he held a concertina. What was he thinking? Who were these people? Why should they work on Saturday when everybody was at home? I solved his riddle and said to him: 'Comrade, play us

a jolly tune. We are not raw hands, we are real Communists. Don't you see how fast the work is going under our hands? We are not lazy, we are pulling for all we are worth!' In response, the Red Army man carefully put his concertina on the ground and hastened to grab at a rope end. . . .

"Suddenly Comrade U. struck up the opening bars of 'Dubinushka' '*anglichanin mudrets*' in an excellent tenor voice and we all joined in the refrain of this labour chanty: '*Eh dubinushka, ukhnem, podyornem, podyornem. . .*'

"Unaccustomed to the work, our muscles were weary, our shoulders, our backs ached, . . . but tomorrow was a free day, our day of rest, and we would be able to get all the sleep we wanted. The goal was near, and after a little hesitation our 'monster' rolled almost right up to the base. 'Put some boards under, raise it on the base, and let the boiler do the work that has long been expected of it.' We went off in a crowd to the 'club room' of the local Party cell. The room was brightly lit; the walls decorated with posters; rifles stacked around the room. After lustily singing the *Internationale* we enjoyed a glass of tea and 'rum', and even bread. This treat, given us by the local comrades, was very welcome after our arduous toil. We took a brotherly farewell of our comrades and lined up. The strains of revolutionary songs echoed through the slumbering streets in the silence of the night and our measured tread kept time with the music. We sang 'Comrades, the Bugles Are Sounding', 'Arise Ye Prisoners of Starvation', the song *Internationale*, the song of labour.

"A week passed. Our arms and shoulders were back to normal and we were going to another 'subbotnik', nine versts away this time, to repair railway waggons. Our destination was Perovo. The comrades climbed on the roof of an 'American' box waggon and sang the *Internationale* well and with gusto. The people on the train listened to the singing, evidently in surprise. The wheels knocked a measured beat, and those of us who failed to get on to the roof clung to the ladder leading to the roof pretending to be 'devil-may-care' passengers. The train pulled in: We had reached our destination. We passed through a long yard and were warmly greeted by the commissar, Comrade G.

"There is plenty of work, but few to do it! Only thirty of us, and in six hours we have to do average repairs to a baker's dozen of waggons! Here are twin-wheels already marked. We have not only empty waggons, but also a filled cistern. . . . But that's nothing, we'll 'make a job of it', comrades!"

"Work went along in full swing. Five comrades and I were working with hoists. Under pressure of our shoulders and two hoists, and directed by our 'foreman', these twin-wheels, weighing from sixty to seventy poods apiece, skipped from one track to another in the liveliest possible manner. One pair disappeared, another rolled into place. At last all were in their assigned places, and swiftly we shifted the old worn-out junk into a shed. . . . One, two, three—and, raised by a revolving iron hoist, they were dislodged from the rails in a trice. Over there, in the dark, we heard the rapid strokes of hammers; the comrades, like working bees, were busy on their 'sick' cars. Some were carpentering, others painting, still others were covering roofs, to the joy of comrade the commissar and our own. The smiths also asked for our aid. In a portable smithy a white-hot rod with

coupling hook was gleaming; it had been bent owing to careless shunting. It was laid on the anvil, scattering white sparks, and, under the experienced direction of the smith, our trusty hammers beat it back into its proper shape. Still red-hot and spitting sparks, we rushed it on our shoulders to where it had to go. We pushed it into its socket. A few hammer strokes and it was fixed. We crawled under the waggon. The coupling system is not as simple as it looks; there are all sorts of contraptions with rivets and springs. . . .

"Work was in full swing. Night was falling. The torches seemed to burn brighter than before. Soon it would be time to knock off. Some of the comrades were taking a 'rest' against some tires and 'sipping' hot tea. The May night was cool, and the new moon shone beautifully like a gleaming sickle in the sky. People were laughing and joking.

"Knock off, Comrade G., thirteen waggons are enough!"

"But Comrade G. was not satisfied.

"We finished our tea, broke into our songs of triumph, and marched to the door. . . ."

The movement of "communist subbotniks" is not confined to Moscow. *Pravda* of June 6 reported the following:

"The first communist subbotnik in Tver took place on May 31. One hundred and twenty-eight Communists worked on the railway. In three and a half hours they loaded and unloaded fourteen waggons, repaired three locomotives, cut up ten sages of firewood and performed other work. The productivity of labour of the skilled communist workers was thirteen times above normal."

Again, on June 8 we read in *Pravda*:

Communist Subbotniks

"Saratov, June 5. In response to the appeal of their Moscow comrades, the communist railway workers here at a general Party meeting resolved: to work five hours overtime on Saturdays without pay in order to support the national economy."

* * *

I have given the information about the communist subbotniks in the fullest and most detailed manner because in this we undoubtedly observe one of the most important aspects of communist construction, to which our press pays insufficient attention, and which all of us have as yet failed properly to appreciate.

Less political fireworks and more attention to the simplest but living facts of communist construction, taken from and tested by actual life—this is the slogan which all of us, our

writers, agitators, propagandists, organisers, etc., should repeat unceasingly.

It was natural and inevitable in the first period after the proletarian revolution that we should be engaged primarily on the main and fundamental task of overcoming the resistance of the bourgeoisie, of vanquishing the exploiters, of crushing their conspiracy (like the "slave-owners' conspiracy" to surrender Petrograd, in which all from the Black Hundreds and Cadets to the Mensheviks and Socialist-Revolutionaries were involved). But simultaneously with this task, another task comes to the forefront just as inevitably and ever more imperatively as time goes on, namely, the more important task of positive communist construction, the creation of new economic relations, of a new society.

As I have had occasion to point out more than once, particularly in the speech I delivered at the meeting of the Petrograd Soviet of Workers', Soldiers' and Peasants' Deputies on March 12, the dictatorship of the proletariat is not only the use of force against the exploiters, and not even mainly the use of force. The economic foundation of this use of revolutionary force, the guarantee of its effectiveness and success is the fact that the proletariat represents and creates a higher type of social organisation of labour compared with capitalism. This is the essence. This is the source of the strength and the guarantee of the inevitable complete triumph of communism.

The feudal organisation of social labour rested on the discipline of the bludgeon, while the working people, robbed and tyrannised by a handful of landowners, were utterly ignorant and downtrodden. The capitalist organisation of social labour rested on the discipline of hunger, and, notwithstanding all the progress of bourgeois culture and bourgeois democracy, the vast mass of the working people in the most advanced, civilised and democratic republics remained an ignorant and downtrodden mass of wage-slaves, or oppressed peasants, robbed and tyrannised by a handful of capitalists. The communist organisation of social labour, the first step towards which is socialism, rests, and will do so more and more as time goes on, on the free and conscious discipline of the working people themselves who have thrown off the yoke both of the landowners and capitalists.

This new discipline does not drop from the skies, nor is it born from pious wishes; it grows out of the material conditions of large-scale capitalist production, and out of them alone. Without them it is impossible. And the repository, or the vehicle, of these material conditions is a definite historical class, created, organised, united, trained, educated and hardened by large-scale capitalism. This class is the proletariat.

If we translate the Latin, scientific, historico-philosophical term "dictatorship of the proletariat" into simpler language, it means just the following:

Only a definite class, namely, the urban workers and the factory, industrial workers in general, is able to lead the whole mass of the working and exploited people in the struggle for the overthrow of the yoke of capital, in the process of this overthrow, in the struggle to maintain and consolidate the victory, in the work of creating the new, socialist system, in the whole struggle for the complete abolition of classes. (Let us observe in parenthesis that the only scientific distinction between socialism and communism is that the first term implies the first stage of the new society arising out of capitalism, while the second implies the next and higher stage.)

The mistake the Berne yellow International³⁹ makes is that its leaders accept the class struggle and the leading role of the proletariat only in word and are afraid to think it out to its logical conclusion. They are afraid of that inevitable conclusion which particularly terrifies the bourgeoisie, and which is absolutely unacceptable to them. They are afraid to admit that the dictatorship of the proletariat is *also* a period of class struggle, which is inevitable as long as classes have not been abolished, and which changes in form, being particularly fierce and particularly peculiar in the period immediately following the overthrow of capital. The proletariat does not cease the class struggle after it has captured political power, but continues it until classes are abolished—of course, under different circumstances, in different form and by different means.

And what does the "abolition of classes" mean? All those who call themselves socialists recognise this as the ultimate goal of socialism, but by no means all ponder over its significance. Classes are large groups of people differing from each other by the place they occupy in a historically determined

system of social production, by their relation (in most cases fixed and formulated in law) to the means of production, by their role in the social organisation of labour, and, consequently, by the dimensions and mode of acquiring the share of social wealth of which they dispose. Classes are groups of people one of which can appropriate the labour of another owing to the different places they occupy in a definite system of social economy.

Clearly, in order to abolish classes completely, it is not enough to overthrow the exploiters, the landowners and capitalists, not enough to abolish *their* rights of ownership; it is necessary also to abolish *all* private ownership of the means of production, it is necessary to abolish the distinction between town and country, as well as the distinction between manual workers and brain workers. This requires a very long period of time. In order to achieve this an enormous step forward must be taken in developing the productive forces; it is necessary to overcome the resistance (frequently passive, which is particularly stubborn and particularly difficult to overcome) of the numerous survivals of small production; it is necessary to overcome the enormous force of habit and conservatism which are connected with these survivals.

The assumption that all "working people" are equally capable of doing this work would be an empty phrase, or the illusion of an antediluvian, pre-Marxist socialist; for this ability does not come of itself, but grows historically, and grows *only* out of the material conditions of large-scale capitalist production. This ability, at the beginning of the road from capitalism to socialism, is possessed by the proletariat *alone*. It is capable of fulfilling the gigantic task that confronts it, first, because it is the strongest and most advanced class in civilised societies; secondly, because in the most developed countries it constitutes the majority of the population, and thirdly, because in backward capitalist countries, like Russia, the majority of the population consists of semi-proletarians, i.e., of people who regularly live in a proletarian way part of the year, who regularly earn a part of their means of subsistence as wage-workers in capitalist enterprises.

Those who try to solve the problems involved in the transition from capitalism to socialism on the basis of general talk

about liberty, equality, democracy in general, equality of the labouring democracy, etc. (as Kautsky, Martov and other heroes of the Berne yellow International do), thereby only reveal their petty-bourgeois, philistine nature and ideologically slavishly follow in the wake of the bourgeoisie. The correct solution of this problem can be found only in a concrete study of the specific relations between the specific class which has conquered political power, namely, the proletariat, and the whole non-proletarian, and also semi-proletarian, mass of the working population—relations which do not take shape in fantastically harmonious, "ideal" conditions, but in the real conditions of the frantic resistance of the bourgeoisie which assumes many and diverse forms.

The vast majority of the population—and all the more so of the working population—of any capitalist country, including Russia, have thousands of times experienced, themselves and through their kith and kin, the oppression, the robbery and every sort of tyranny of capitalism. The imperialist war, i.e., the slaughter of ten million people in order to decide whether British or German capital was to have supremacy in plundering the whole world, intensified, increased and deepened these ordeals exceedingly, and made the people realise their meaning. Hence the inevitable sympathy displayed by the vast majority of the population, particularly the working people, for the proletariat, because it is with heroic courage and revolutionary ruthlessness overthrowing the yoke of capital, overthrowing the exploiters, suppressing their resistance, and shedding its blood to pave the road for the creation of the new society, in which there will be no room for exploiters.

Great and inevitable as may be their petty-bourgeois waverings and vacillations back to the bourgeois "order", under the "wing" of the bourgeoisie, the non-proletarian and semi-proletarian mass of the working population cannot but recognise the moral and political authority of the proletariat, which is not only overthrowing the exploiters and suppressing their resistance, but is building a new and higher social bond, a social discipline, the discipline of class-conscious and united working people, who know no yoke and no authority except the authority of their own unity, of their own, more class-conscious, bold, solid, revolutionary and steadfast vanguard.

In order to achieve victory, in order to build and consolidate socialism, the proletariat must fulfil a twofold or dual task: first, it must, by its supreme heroism in the revolutionary struggle against capital, win over the entire mass of the working and exploited people; it must win them over, organise them and lead them in the struggle to overthrow the bourgeoisie and utterly suppress their resistance. Secondly, it must lead the whole mass of the working and exploited people, as well as all the petty-bourgeois groups, on to the road of new economic construction, on to the road to the creation of new social ties, a new labour discipline, a new organisation of labour, which will combine the last word in science and capitalist technology with the mass association of class-conscious workers creating large-scale socialist production.

The second task is more difficult than the first, for it cannot possibly be fulfilled by single acts of heroic fervour; it requires the most prolonged, most persistent and most difficult mass heroism in *plain, everyday* work. But this task is more essential than the first, because, in the last analysis, the deepest source of strength for victories over the bourgeoisie and the sole guarantee of the durability and permanence of this victory can only be a new and higher mode of social production, the substitution of large-scale socialist production for capitalist and petty-bourgeois production.

* * *

"Communist subbotniks" are of such enormous historic significance precisely because they demonstrate the conscious and voluntary initiative of the workers in developing productivity of labour, in adopting a new labour discipline, in creating socialist conditions of economy and life.

J. Jacobi, one of the few, in fact it would be more correct to say one of the exceptionally rare, German bourgeois democrats who, after the lessons of 1870-71, went over not to chauvinism or national-liberalism, but to socialism, once said that the formation of a single trade union was of greater historical importance than the battle of Sadowa.⁴⁰ This is true. The battle of Sadowa decided the supremacy of one of two

bourgeois monarchies, the Austrian or the Prussian, in creating a German national capitalist state. The formation of one trade union was a small step towards the world victory of the proletariat over the bourgeoisie. And we may similarly say that the first communist subbotnik, organised by the workers of the Moscow-Kazan Railway in Moscow on May 10, 1919, was of greater historical significance than any of the victories of Hindenburg, or of Foch and the British, in the 1914-18 imperialist war. The victories of the imperialists mean the slaughter of millions of workers for the sake of the profits of the Anglo-American and French multi-millionaires, the brutality of doomed capitalism, which is bloated and rotting alive. The communist subbotnik organised by the workers of the Moscow-Kazan Railway is one of the cells of the new, socialist society, which brings to all the peoples of the earth emancipation from the yoke of capital and from wars.

The bourgeois gentlemen and their hangers-on, including the Mensheviks and Socialist-Revolutionaries, who are wont to regard themselves as the representatives of "public opinion", jeer of course at the hopes of the Communists, call them "a baobab tree in a mignonette pot", sneer at the insignificance of the number of subbotniks compared with the vast number of cases of thieving, idleness, decline of productivity, spoilage of raw materials and finished goods, etc. Our reply to this gentry is: if the bourgeois intellectuals had dedicated their knowledge to assisting the working people instead of giving it to the Russian and foreign capitalists in order to restore their power, the revolution would have proceeded more rapidly and more peacefully. But this is utopian, for the issue is decided by the class struggle, and the majority of the intellectuals gravitate towards the bourgeoisie. Not with the assistance of the intellectuals will the proletariat achieve victory, but in spite of their opposition (at least in the majority of cases), removing those of them who are incorrigibly bourgeois, reforming, re-educating and subordinating the waverers, and gradually winning ever larger sections of them to its side. Gloating over the difficulties and setbacks of the revolution, sowing panic, preaching a return to the past—these are all weapons and methods of class struggle of the bour-

geois intellectuals. The proletariat will not allow itself to be deceived by them.

If we take the matter in its essence, however, has it ever happened in history that a new mode of production took root immediately, without a long succession of setbacks, blunders and relapses? Half a century after the abolition of serfdom there were still quite a number of survivals of serfdom in the Russian countryside. Half a century after the abolition of slavery in America the position of the Negroes was still very often one of semi-slavery. The bourgeois intellectuals, including the Mensheviks and Socialist-Revolutionaries, are true to themselves in serving capital and in continuing to use utterly false arguments: before the proletarian revolution they accused us of being utopian; after the revolution they demand that we wipe out all traces of the past with fantastic rapidity!

We are not utopians, however, and we know the real value of bourgeois "arguments"; we also know that for some time after the revolution traces of the old ethics will inevitably predominate over the young shoots of the new. When the new has just been born the old always remains stronger than it for some time; this is always the case in nature and in social life. Jeering at the feebleness of the young shoots of the new order, cheap scepticism of the intellectuals and the like—these are, essentially, methods of class struggle of the bourgeoisie against the proletariat, a defence of capitalism against socialism. We must carefully study the new shoots, we must devote the greatest attention to them, do everything to promote their growth and "nurse" these feeble shoots. Some of them will inevitably perish. We cannot vouch that precisely the "communist subbotniks" will play a particularly important role. But that is not the point. The point is to foster each and every shoot of the new; and life will select the most virile. If the Japanese scientist, in order to help mankind vanquish syphilis, had the patience to test six hundred and five preparations before he developed a six hundred and sixth which met definite requirements, then those who want to solve a more difficult problem, namely, to vanquish capitalism, must have the perseverance to try hundreds and thousands

of new methods, means and weapons of struggle in order to elaborate the most suitable of them.

The "communist subbotniks" are so important because they were initiated by workers who were by no means placed in exceptionally good conditions, by workers of various specialities, and some with no speciality at all, just unskilled labourers, who are living under *ordinary*, i.e., *exceedingly hard*, conditions. We all know very well the main cause of the decline in the productivity of labour that is to be observed not only in Russia, but all over the world: it is ruin and impoverishment, embitterment and weariness caused by the imperialist war, sickness and malnutrition. The latter is first in importance. Starvation—that is the cause. And in order to do away with starvation, productivity of labour must be raised in agriculture, in transport and in industry. So, we get a sort of vicious circle: in order to raise productivity of labour we must save ourselves from starvation, and in order to save ourselves from starvation we must raise productivity of labour.

We know that in practice such contradictions are solved by breaking the vicious circle, by bringing about a radical change in the people's mood, by the heroic initiative of individual groups which, against the background of such a radical change, often plays a decisive role. The unskilled labourers and railway workers of Moscow (of course, we have in mind the majority of them, and not a handful of profiteers, officials and other whiteguards) are working people who are living in desperately hard conditions. They are constantly underfed, and now, before the new harvest is gathered, with the general worsening of the food situation, they are actually starving. And yet these starving workers, surrounded by the malicious counter-revolutionary agitation of the bourgeoisie, the Mensheviks and the Socialist-Revolutionaries, are organising "communist subbotniks", working overtime *without any pay*, and achieving *an enormous increase in the productivity of labour* in spite of the fact that they are weary, tormented, and exhausted from malnutrition. Is this not supreme heroism? Is this not the beginning of a change of momentous significance?

In the last analysis, productivity of labour is the most important, the principal thing for the victory of the new social

system. Capitalism created a productivity of labour unknown under serfdom. Capitalism can be utterly vanquished, and will be utterly vanquished by the fact that socialism creates a new and much higher productivity of labour. This is a very difficult matter and must take a long time; but *it has been started*, and that is the main thing. If in starving Moscow, in the summer of 1919, the starving workers who had gone through four trying years of imperialist war and another year and a half of still more trying civil war could start this great work, how will things develop later when we triumph in the civil war and win peace?

Communism is the higher productivity of labour—compared with that existing under capitalism—of voluntary, class-conscious and united workers employing advanced techniques. Communist subbotniks are extraordinarily valuable as the *actual* beginning of *communism*; and this is a very rare thing, because we are in a stage when "only the *first steps* in the transition from capitalism to communism are being taken" (as our Party Programme quite rightly says).

Communism begins when the *rank-and-file workers* begin to display a self-sacrificing concern that is undaunted by arduous toil for increasing the productivity of labour, husbanding *every pood of grain, coal, iron* and other products, which do not accrue to the workers personally or to their "close" kith and kin, but to their "distant" kith and kin, i.e., to society as a whole, to tens and hundreds of millions of people united first in one socialist state, and then in a Union of Soviet Republics.

In *Capital*, Karl Marx ridicules the pompous and grandiloquent bourgeois-democratic great charter of liberty and the rights of man, ridicules all this phrase-mongering about liberty, equality and fraternity *in general*, which dazzles the petty bourgeois and philistines of all countries, including the present despicable heroes of the despicable Berne International. Marx contrasts these pompous declarations of rights to the plain, modest, practical, simple manner in which the question is treated by the proletariat: legislative enactment of a shorter working day is a typical example of such treatment. The aptness and profundity of Marx's observation become

the clearer and more obvious to us the more the content of the proletarian revolution unfolds. The "formulas" of genuine communism differ from the pompous, intricate, and solemn phraseology of the Kautskys, the Mensheviks and the Socialist-Revolutionaries and their beloved "brethren" of Berne in that they reduce everything to the *conditions of labour*. Less chatter about "labour democracy", about "liberty, equality and fraternity", about "government by the people", and all such stuff; the class-conscious workers and peasants of our day see the trickery of the bourgeois intellectual through these pompous phrases as easily as a person of ordinary common sense and experience, when glancing at the irreproachably "polished" features and immaculate appearance of the "fain fellow, dontcher know", immediately and unerringly puts him down as "in all probability, a scoundrel".

Fewer pompous phrases, more plain, *everyday* work, concern for the pood of grain and the pood of coal! More concern for supplying this pood of grain and pood of coal needed by the hungry workers and ragged and barefoot peasants, *not* by means of *haggling*, not in a capitalist manner, but by means of the conscious, voluntary, boundlessly heroic labour of plain working men like the unskilled labourers and railwaymen of the Moscow-Kazan line.

We must all admit that traces of the bourgeois-intellectual phrase-mongering approach to questions of the revolution are in evidence at every step, everywhere, even in our own ranks. Our press, for example, does not fight sufficiently against these putrid survivals of the putrid, bourgeois-democratic past; it does not sufficiently foster the simple, modest, commonplace but virile shoots of genuine communism.

Take the position of women. Not a single democratic party in the world, not even in the most advanced bourgeois republic, has done in tens of years a hundredth part of what we did in the very first year we were in power. We literally did not leave a single stone standing of the despicable laws which placed women in a position of inequality, or which restricted divorce and surrounded it with disgusting formalities, or which denied recognition to illegitimate children and enforced a search for their fathers, etc.—laws, numerous sur-

vivals of which, to the shame of the bourgeoisie and of capitalism, are to be found in all civilised countries. We have a thousand times the right to be proud of what we have done in this sphere. But the more *thoroughly* we have cleared the ground of the lumber of the old, bourgeois laws and institutions, the clearer it is to us that we have only cleared the ground to build on, but are not yet building.

Notwithstanding all the laws emancipating woman, she continues to be a *domestic slave*, because *petty housework* crushes, strangles, stultifies and degrades her, chains her to the kitchen and to the nursery, and she wastes her labour on barbarously unproductive, petty, nerve-racking, stultifying and crushing drudgery. The real *emancipation of women*, real communism, will begin only where and when a mass struggle begins (led by the proletariat wielding the power of the state) against this petty domestic economy, or rather when its *wholesale transformation* into large-scale socialist economy begins.

Do we in practice pay sufficient attention to this question, which, theoretically, is indisputable for every Communist? Of course not. Are we sufficiently solicitous about the young *shoots* of communism which already exist in this sphere? Again we must say emphatically, No! Public canteens, nurseries, kindergartens—here we have examples of these shoots, here we have the simple, everyday means, involving nothing pompous, grandiloquent or ceremonial, which can *in actual fact emancipate women*, which can in actual fact lessen and abolish their inequality with men as regards their role in social production and public life. These means are not new, they (like all the material prerequisites for socialism) were created by large-scale capitalism; but under capitalism they remained, first, a rarity, and secondly, which is particularly important, either *profit-making* enterprises, with all the worst features of speculation, profiteering, cheating and fraud, or "acrobatics of bourgeois philanthropy", which the best workers quite rightly detested and despised.

There is no doubt that the number of these institutions in our country has increased enormously and that they are *beginning* to change in character. There is no doubt that there is far more *organising talent* among the working women and

peasant women than we are aware of, that there are far more people than we think who are capable of organising practical work, with the participation of large numbers of workers and of still larger numbers of consumers, without that abundance of talk, fuss, squabbling and chatter about plans, systems, etc., from which our big-headed "intellectuals" or half-baked "communists" "suffer". But we *do not nurse* these shoots of the new as we should.

Look at the bourgeoisie! How excellently they know how to advertise what *they* need! See how what the capitalists regard as "model" enterprises are lauded in millions of copies of *their* newspapers; see how "model" bourgeois institutions are made an object of national pride! Our press does not take the trouble, or hardly takes the trouble, to describe the best canteens or nurseries, in order, by daily insistence, to get some of them turned into models of their kind. It does not give them enough publicity, does not describe in detail what a saving of human labour, what conveniences for the consumer, what economy of products, what emancipation of women from domestic slavery, what an improvement in sanitary conditions can be achieved with *exemplary communist labour* and extended to the whole of society, to all the working people.

Exemplary production, exemplary communist subbotniks, exemplary care and conscientiousness in procuring and distributing every pood of grain, exemplary canteens, exemplary cleanliness in such and such a workers' house, in such and such a block—all these should receive ten times more attention and care from our press, as well as from *every* workers' and peasants' organisation, than they receive now. All these are young shoots of communism; and it is our common and primary duty to nurse them. Difficult as our food and production situation is, in the year and a half of Bolshevik rule there has been undoubted progress *along the whole front*: grain procurements have increased from thirty million poods (from August 1, 1917 to August 1, 1918) to one hundred million poods (from August 1, 1918 to May 1, 1919); vegetable gardening has expanded, the margin of unsown land has diminished, railway transport has begun to improve despite the enormous fuel difficulties, and so on. Against this general

background, and with the support of the proletarian state power, the young shoots of communism will not wither; they will grow and blossom into complete communism.

* * *

We must ponder very deeply over the significance of the "communist subbotniks", in order that we may draw all the very important practical lessons that follow from this great beginning.

The first and main lesson is that this beginning must have every assistance. The word "commune" is being handled much too freely. Any kind of enterprise started by Communists or with their participation is very often at once declared to be a "commune", it being not infrequently forgotten that this *very honourable title* must be *won* by prolonged and persistent effort, by *practical* achievement in genuine communist construction.

That is why, in my opinion, the decision that has matured in the minds of the majority of the members of the Central Executive Committee to *repeal* the decree of the Council of People's Commissars, as far as it pertains to the *title* "consumers' communes", is quite right. Let the title be simpler—and, incidentally, the defects and shortcomings of the *initial* stages of the new organisational work will not be blamed on the "communes", but (as in all fairness they should be) on *bad* Communists. It would be a good thing to eliminate the word "commune" from *common* use, to prohibit every firstcomer from snatching at it, or to *allow this title to be borne only* by genuine communes, which have really demonstrated in practice (and have proved by the unanimous recognition of the whole of the surrounding population) that they are capable of organising their work in a communist manner. First show that you are capable of working without remuneration in the interests of society, in the interests of all the working people, show that you are capable of "working in a revolutionary way", that you are capable of raising productivity of labour, of organising the work in an exemplary manner, and then hold out your hand for the honourable title "commune"!

In this respect, the "communist subbotniks" are a most valuable exception; for the unskilled labourers and railwaymen of the Moscow-Kazan Railway first demonstrated by *deeds* that they are capable of working like *Communists*, and then adopted the title of "communist subbotniks" for their undertaking. We must see to it and make sure that in future anyone who calls his enterprise, institution or undertaking a commune *without having proved* this by hard work and practical *success in prolonged effort*, by exemplary and truly communist organisation, is mercilessly ridiculed and pilloried as a charlatan or a windbag.

That great beginning, the "communist subbotniks", must also be utilised for another purpose, namely, to *purge* the Party. In the early period following the revolution, when the mass of "honest" and philistine-minded people was particularly timorous, and when the bourgeois intellectuals to a man, including, of course, the Mensheviks and Socialist-Revolutionaries, played the lackey to the bourgeoisie and carried on sabotage, it was absolutely inevitable that adventurers and other pernicious elements should hitch themselves to the ruling party. There never has been, and there never can be, a revolution without that. The whole point is that the ruling party should be able, relying on a sound and strong advanced class, to purge its ranks.

We started this work long ago. It must be continued steadily and untiringly. The mobilisation of Communists for the war helped us in this respect: the cowards and scoundrels fled the Party's ranks. Good riddance! *Such* a reduction in the Party's membership means an *enormous increase* in its strength and weight. We must continue the purging, and that new beginning, the "communist subbotniks", must be utilised for this purpose: members should be accepted into the Party only after six months', say, "trial", or "probation", at "working in a revolutionary way". A similar test should be demanded of *all* members of the Party who joined after October 25, 1917, and who have not proved by some special work or service that they are absolutely reliable, loyal and capable of being Communists.

The purging of the Party, through the steadily *increasing demands* it makes in regard to working in a genuinely com-

munist way, will improve the state *apparatus*, and will bring ever so much nearer the *final transition* of the peasants to the side of the revolutionary proletariat.

Incidentally, the "communist subbotniks" have thrown a remarkably strong light on the class character of the state apparatus under the dictatorship of the proletariat. The Central Committee of the Party drafts a letter on "working in a revolutionary way". The idea is suggested by the Central Committee of a party with from 100,000 to 200,000 members (I assume that that is the number that will remain after a thorough purging; at present the membership is larger).

The idea is taken up by the workers organised in trade unions. In Russia and the Ukraine they number about four million. The overwhelming majority of them are for the state power of the proletariat, for the proletarian dictatorship. Two hundred thousand and four million—such is the ratio of the "cog-wheels", if one may so express it. Then follow the *tens of millions* of peasants, who are divided into three main groups: the most numerous and the one standing closest to the proletariat is that of the semi-proletarians or poor peasants; then come the middle peasants, and lastly the numerically very small group of kulaks or rural bourgeoisie.

As long as it is possible to trade in grain and to make profit out of famine, the peasant will remain (and this will for some time be inevitable under the dictatorship of the proletariat) a semi-working man, a semi-profiteer. As a profiteer he is hostile to us, hostile to the proletarian state; he is inclined to agree with the bourgeoisie and their faithful lackeys, up to and including the Menshevik Sher or the Socialist-Revolutionary B. Chernenkoy, who stand for freedom to trade in grain. But *as a working man*, the peasant is a friend of the proletarian state, a most loyal ally of the worker in the struggle against the landowner and against the capitalist. As working men, the peasants, the vast mass of them, the peasant millions, support the state "machine" which is headed by the one or two hundred thousand Communists of the proletarian vanguard, and which consists of millions of organised proletarians.

A state more democratic, in the true sense of the word, one more closely connected with the working and exploited people, has *never yet existed*.

It is precisely proletarian work such as is put into "communist subbotniks" and which is performed at these subbotniks, that will win the complete respect and love of peasants for the proletarian state. Such work and such work alone will completely convince the peasant that we are right, that communism is right, and make him our devoted ally, and, hence, will lead to the complete elimination of our food difficulties, to the complete victory of communism over capitalism in the matter of the production and distribution of grain, to the unqualified consolidation of communism.

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Signed: *N. Lenin*

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ECONOMICS AND POLITICS IN THE ERA OF THE DICTATORSHIP OF THE PROLETARIAT

I had intended to write a short pamphlet on the subject indicated in the title on the occasion of the second anniversary of Soviet power. But owing to the rush of everyday work I have so far been unable to get beyond preliminary preparations for some of the sections. I have therefore decided to essay a brief, summarised exposition of what, in my opinion, are the most essential ideas on the subject. A summarised exposition, of course, possesses many disadvantages and shortcomings. Nevertheless, a short magazine article may perhaps achieve the modest aim in view, which is to present the problem and the groundwork for its discussion by the Communists of various countries.

I

Theoretically, there can be no doubt that between capitalism and communism there lies a definite transition period. It cannot but combine the features and properties of both these forms of social economy. This transition period has to be a period of struggle between dying capitalism and nascent communism—or, in other words, between capitalism which has been defeated but not destroyed and communism which has been born but which is still very feeble.

The necessity for a whole historical era distinguished by these transitional features should be obvious not only to Marxists, but to every educated person who is in any degree acquainted with the theory of development. Yet all the talk on the subject of the transition to socialism which we hear from present-day petty-bourgeois democrats (and such, in

spite of their spurious socialist label, are all the leaders of the Second International, including such individuals as MacDonald, Jean Longuet, Kautsky and Friedrich Adler) is marked by complete disregard of this obvious truth. Petty-bourgeois democrats are distinguished by an aversion to class struggle, by their dreams of avoiding it, by their efforts to smooth over and reconcile, to take the edge off sharp corners. Such democrats, therefore, either avoid recognising any necessity for a whole historical period of transition from capitalism to communism or regard it as their duty to concoct schemes for reconciling the two contending forces, instead of leading the struggle of one of these forces.

2

In Russia, the dictatorship of the proletariat must inevitably differ in certain particulars from what it would be in the advanced countries, owing to the very great backwardness and petty-bourgeois character of our country. But the basic forces—and the basic forms of social economy—are the same in Russia as in any capitalist country, so that these peculiarities can apply only to what is of lesser importance.

These basic forms of social economy are capitalism, petty commodity production, and communism. The basic forces are the bourgeoisie, the petty bourgeoisie (the peasantry in particular) and the proletariat.

The economic system of Russia in the era of the dictatorship of the proletariat represents the struggle of labour, united on communist principles on the scale of a single vast state and making its first steps—the struggle against petty commodity production and against the capitalism which still persists and that which is newly arising on the basis of petty commodity production.

In Russia, labour is united communistically insofar as, first, private ownership of the means of production has been abolished, and, secondly, the proletarian state power is organising large-scale production on state-owned land and in state-owned enterprises on a national scale, is distributing labour-power among the various branches of production and the various enterprises, and is distributing among the working

people large quantities of articles of consumption belonging to the state.

We speak of "the first steps" of communism in Russia (it is also put that way in the Programme of our Party adopted in March 1919), because all these conditions have been only partially achieved in our country, or, to put it differently, the achievement of these conditions is only in its early stages. We accomplished instantly, at one revolutionary blow, all that can be instantly accomplished in general: for instance, on the first day of the dictatorship of the proletariat, October 26 (November 8), 1917, the private ownership of land was abolished without compensation to the big landowners; the big landowners were expropriated. Within the space of a few months practically all the big capitalists, owners of mills and factories, joint-stock companies, banks, railways, and so forth, were also expropriated without compensation. The state organisation of large-scale production in industry and the transition from "workers' control" to "workers' administration" of factories and railways—this has, by and large, already been accomplished; but in relation to agriculture it has only just begun ("state farms", i.e., large farms organised by the workers' state on state-owned land). Similarly, we have only just begun the organisation of various forms of co-operative societies of small farmers as a transition from petty commodity agriculture to communist agriculture.* The same must be said of the state-organised distribution of products in place of private trade, i.e., the state procurement and delivery of grain to the cities and of industrial products to the countryside. Available statistical data on this subject will be given below.

Peasant farming continues to be petty commodity production. Here we have an extremely broad and very sound, deep-rooted basis for capitalism. On this basis capitalism persists and arises anew in a bitter struggle against communism. The

* The number of "state farms" and "agricultural communes" in Soviet Russia amounts to approximately 3,536 and 1,961 respectively, and the number of agricultural artels to 3,696. Our Central Statistical Board is at present taking an exact census of all state farms and communes. The results will begin coming in in November 1919.

forms of this struggle are private speculation and profiteering, as against state procurement of grain (and other products) and state distribution of products in general.

3

In illustration of these abstract theoretical propositions, we shall cite concrete data.

According to the figures of the People's Commissariat of Food, state procurements of grain in Russia between August 1, 1917 and August 1, 1918, amounted to about 30,000,000 poods, and in the following year to about 110,000,000 poods. During the first three months of the next campaign (1919-20) procurements will presumably total about 45,000,000 poods, as against 37,000,000 poods for the same period (August-October) in 1918.

These figures speak clearly of a slow but steady improvement in the state of affairs from the point of view of the victory of communism over capitalism. This improvement is being achieved in spite of the difficulties without world parallel, caused by the Civil War organised by Russian and foreign capitalists who are harnessing all the forces of the world's strongest powers.

Therefore, in spite of the lies and slanders of the bourgeoisie of all countries and of their open or masked henchmen (the "socialists" of the Second International), one thing remains beyond dispute—from the point of view of the basic economic problem of the dictatorship of the proletariat, the victory of communism over capitalism in our country is assured. Throughout the world the bourgeoisie is raging and fuming against Bolshevism and is organising military expeditions, plots, etc., against the Bolsheviks, because it realises full well that our success in reconstructing the social economy is inevitable, provided we are not crushed by military force. And its attempts to crush us in this way are not succeeding.

The extent to which we have already vanquished capitalism in the short time we have had at our disposal, and amidst the incredible difficulties under which we have had to work, will be seen from the following summarised figures. The Cen-

tral Statistical Board has just prepared for the press data on the production and consumption of grain, not for the whole of Soviet Russia, but only for twenty-six gubernias.

The results are as follows:

26 gubernias of Soviet Russia	Population in millions	Production of grain (excluding seed and fodder), million poods	Grain delivered, million poods		Total amount of grain at disposal of population, million poods	Grain consumption, poods per capita
			Commissariat of Food	Profiteers		
Producing gubernias	Urban 4.4	—	20.9	20.6	41.5	9.5
	Rural 28.6	625.4	—	—	481.8	16.9
Consuming gubernias	Urban 5.9	—	20.0	20.0	40.0	6.8
	Rural 13.8	114.0	12.1	27.8	151.4	11.0
Total (26 gubernias)	52.7	739.4	53.0	68.4	714.7	13.6

Thus, approximately half the amount of grain supplied to the cities is provided by the Commissariat of Food and the other half by profiteers. This same proportion is revealed by a careful survey, made in 1918, of the food consumed by city workers. It should be borne in mind that for bread supplied by the state the worker pays *one-ninth* of what he pays the profiteer. The profiteering price for bread is *ten times* greater than the state price. That is what is revealed by an accurate study of workers' budgets.

4

A careful study of the figures quoted shows that they present an exact picture of the fundamental features of Russia's present-day economy.

The working people have been emancipated from their age-old oppressors and exploiters, the landowners and capitalists. This step in the direction of real freedom and real equality, a step which for its extent, dimensions and rapidity is without

parallel in the world, is ignored by the followers of the bourgeoisie (including the petty-bourgeois democrats), who, when they talk of freedom and equality, mean parliamentary bourgeois democracy, which they falsely declare to be "democracy" in general, or "pure democracy" (Kautsky).

But the working people are concerned only with real equality and real freedom (freedom from the landowners and capitalists), and that is why they give the Soviet government such firm support.

In this peasant country, those who were the first to gain, to gain most, and gain immediately from the dictatorship of the proletariat, were the peasantry as a whole. The peasant in Russia starved under the landowners and capitalists. Throughout the long centuries of our history, the peasant never had an opportunity to work for himself: he starved while handing over hundreds of millions of poods of grain to the capitalists, for the cities and for export. The peasant *for the first time* has been working for himself and *feeding better than the city dweller* under the dictatorship of the proletariat. For the first time the peasant has seen real freedom—freedom to eat his bread, freedom from starvation. In the distribution of the land, as we know, the maximum equality has been established; in the vast majority of cases the peasants are dividing the land according to the number of "mouths to feed".

Socialism means the abolition of classes.

In order to abolish classes it is necessary, first, to overthrow the landowners and capitalists. This part of our task has been accomplished, but it is only a part, and moreover, *not* the most difficult part. In order to abolish classes it is necessary, secondly, to abolish the difference between factory worker and peasant, to make them *all workers*. This cannot be done all at once. This task is incomparably more difficult and will of necessity be a protracted one. It is not a problem that can be solved by overthrowing a class. It can be solved only by the organisational reconstruction of the whole social economy, by a transition from individual, disunited, petty commodity production to large-scale social production. This transition must of necessity be extremely protracted. It may only be delayed and complicated by hasty

and incautious administrative and legislative measures. It can be accelerated only by affording such assistance to the peasant as will enable him to effect an immense improvement in his whole agricultural technique, to reform it radically.

In order to solve the second and most difficult part of the problem, the proletariat, after having defeated the bourgeoisie, must unswervingly conduct its policy towards the peasantry along the following fundamental lines. The proletariat must separate, demarcate the working peasant from the peasant owner, the peasant worker from the peasant huckster, the peasant who labours from the peasant who profiteers.

In this demarcation lies the *whole essence* of socialism.

And it is not surprising that the socialists who are socialists in word but petty-bourgeois democrats in deed (the Martovs, the Chernovs, the Kautskys and others) do not understand this essence of socialism.

The demarcation we here refer to is extremely difficult, for in real life all the features of the "peasant", however diverse they may be, however contradictory they may be, are fused into one whole. Nevertheless, demarcation is possible; and not only is it possible, it inevitably follows from the conditions of peasant farming and peasant life. The working peasant has for ages been oppressed by the landowners, the capitalists, the hucksters and profiteers and by *their* state, including even the most democratic bourgeois republics. Throughout the ages the working peasant has trained himself to hate and loathe these oppressors and exploiters, and this "training", engendered by the conditions of life, *compels* the peasant to seek for an alliance with the worker against the capitalist and against the profiteer and huckster. Yet at the same time, economic conditions, the conditions of commodity production, inevitably turn the peasant (not always, but in the vast majority of cases) into a huckster and profiteer.

The statistics quoted above reveal a striking difference between the working peasant and the peasant profiteer. That peasant who during 1918-19 delivered to the hungry workers of the cities 40,000,000 poods of grain at fixed state prices, who delivered this grain to the state agencies in spite of all the shortcomings of the latter, shortcomings fully realised by the workers' government, but which were unavoidable in the

first period of the transition to socialism—that peasant is a working peasant, a comrade on an equal footing with the socialist worker, his most faithful ally, his blood brother in the fight against the yoke of capital. Whereas that peasant who clandestinely sold 40,000,000 poods of grain at ten times the state price, taking advantage of the need and hunger of the city worker, deceiving the state, and everywhere increasing and creating deceit, robbery and fraud—that peasant is a profiteer, an ally of the capitalist, a class enemy of the worker, an exploiter. For whoever possesses a surplus of grain gathered from land belonging to the whole state with the help of implements in which in one way or another is embodied the labour not only of the peasant but also of the worker and so on, whoever possesses a surplus of grain and profiteers in that grain is an exploiter of the hungry worker.

You are violators of freedom, equality, and democracy—they shout at us on all sides, pointing to the inequality of the worker and the peasant under our Constitution, to the dissolution of the Constituent Assembly, to the forcible confiscation of surplus grain, and so forth. We reply—never in the world has there been a state which has done so much to remove the actual inequality, the actual lack of freedom from which the working peasant has suffered for centuries. But we shall never recognise equality with the peasant profiteer, just as we do not recognise “equality” between the exploiter and the exploited, between the sated and the hungry, nor the “freedom” for the former to rob the latter. And those educated people who refuse to recognise this difference we shall treat as whiteguards, even though they may call themselves democrats, socialists, internationalists, Kautskys, Chernovs, or Martovs.

5

Socialism means the abolition of classes. The dictatorship of the proletariat has done all it could to abolish classes. But classes cannot be abolished at one stroke.

And classes still *remain* and *will remain* in the era of the dictatorship of the proletariat. The dictatorship will become unnecessary when classes disappear. Without the dictatorship of the proletariat they will not disappear.

Classes have remained, but in the era of the dictatorship of the proletariat *every* class has undergone a change, and the relations between the classes have also changed. The class struggle does not disappear under the dictatorship of the proletariat; it merely assumes different forms.

Under capitalism the proletariat was an oppressed class, a class bereft of all ownership in the means of production, the only class which stood directly and completely opposed to the bourgeoisie, and therefore the only one capable of being revolutionary to the very end. Having overthrown the bourgeoisie and conquered political power, the proletariat has become the *ruling* class; it wields state power, it disposes of means of production already socialised; it guides the wavering and intermediary elements and classes; it crushes the increasingly stubborn resistance of the exploiters. All these are *specific* tasks of the class struggle, tasks which the proletariat formerly did not and could not have set itself.

The class of exploiters, the landowners and capitalists, has not disappeared and cannot disappear all at once under the dictatorship of the proletariat. The exploiters have been smashed, but not destroyed. They still have an international base in the form of international capital, of which they are a branch. They still retain certain means of production in part, they still have money, they still have vast social connections. Because they have been defeated, the energy of their resistance has increased a hundred- and a thousandfold. The “art” of state, military and economic administration gives them a superiority, and a very great superiority, so that their importance is incomparably greater than their numerical proportion of the population. The class struggle waged by the overthrown exploiters against the victorious vanguard of the exploited, i.e., the proletariat, has become incomparably more bitter. And it cannot be otherwise in the case of a revolution, if this concept is not replaced (as it is by all the heroes of the Second International) by reformist illusions.

Lastly, the peasants, like the petty bourgeoisie in general, occupy a half-way, intermediate position even under the dictatorship of the proletariat: on the one hand, they are a fairly large (and in backward Russia, a vast) mass of working people, united by the common interest of all working people to

emancipate themselves from the landowner and the capitalist; on the other hand, they are disunited small proprietors, property-owners and traders. Such an economic position inevitably causes them to vacillate between the proletariat and the bourgeoisie. And in view of the acute form which the struggle between these latter has assumed, in view of the incredibly severe break-up of all social relations, and in view of the great attachment of the peasants and the petty bourgeoisie generally to the old, the routine, and the unchangeable, it is only natural that we should inevitably find them swinging from one side to the other, that we should find them wavering, changeable, uncertain, and so on.

The task of the proletariat in relation to this class—or to these social elements—is to strive to establish its influence over it, to guide it. The proletariat must take the leadership over the vacillating and unstable.

If we compare all the basic forces or classes and their interrelations, as modified by the dictatorship of the proletariat, we shall realise how unutterably nonsensical and theoretically stupid is the common petty-bourgeois idea shared by all representatives of the Second International, that the transition to socialism is possible “by means of democracy” in general. The fundamental source of this error lies in the prejudice inherited from the bourgeoisie that “democracy” is something absolute and not concerned with classes. As a matter of fact, democracy itself passes into an entirely new phase under the dictatorship of the proletariat, and the class struggle rises to a higher level, dominating over each and every form.

General talk about freedom, equality, and democracy is in fact but a blind repetition of concepts shaped by the relations of commodity production. To attempt to solve the concrete problems of the dictatorship of the proletariat by such generalities means accepting the theories and principles of the bourgeoisie in their entirety. From the point of view of the proletariat, the question can be put only in the following way: freedom from oppression by which class? equality of which class with which? democracy based on private property, or on a struggle for the abolition of private property?—and so forth.

Long ago Engels in his *Anti-Dühring* explained that the concept equality is moulded from the relations of commodity production; equality becomes a prejudice if it is not understood to mean the *abolition of classes*. This elementary truth regarding the distinction between the bourgeois-democratic and the socialist conception of equality is constantly being forgotten. But if it is not forgotten, it becomes obvious that by overthrowing the bourgeoisie the proletariat takes the most decisive step towards the abolition of classes, and that in order to complete the process the proletariat must continue its class struggle, making use of the apparatus of state power and employing various methods of combating, influencing, and bringing pressure to bear on the overthrown bourgeoisie and the vacillating petty bourgeoisie.

(To be continued)⁴¹

October 30, 1919

Pravda No. 250,
November 7, 1919
Signed: N. Lenin

Collected Works, Vol. 30

**SPEECH DELIVERED AT THE FIRST CONGRESS
OF AGRICULTURAL COMMUNES
AND AGRICULTURAL ARTELS**

December 4, 1919

Comrades, I am very glad to greet your first congress of agricultural communes and agricultural artels on behalf of the government. Of course, from all the activities of the Soviet government you know what tremendous significance we attach to the communes, artels, and all organisations generally that aim at transforming and are gradually assisting the transformation of small, individual peasant farming into social, co-operative, or artel farming. You are aware that the Soviet government long ago allotted the sum of one thousand million rubles to assist efforts of this kind. The Statute on Socialist Agrarian Measures particularly stresses the significance of communes, artels, and all enterprises for the joint cultivation of the land, and the Soviet government is exerting every effort to ensure that this law shall not remain on paper only, but shall really produce the benefits it is intended to produce.

The importance of all enterprises of this kind is tremendous, because if the old, poverty-stricken peasant farming remained unchanged there could be no question of building up a stable socialist society. Only if we succeed in proving to the peasants in practice the advantages of common, collective, co-operative, artel cultivation of the soil, only if we succeed in helping the peasant by means of co-operative or artel farming, will the working class, which wields state power, be really able to convince the peasant of the correctness of its policy and secure the real and lasting following of the millions of peasants. It is therefore impossible to exaggerate the importance of every measure intended to encourage co-operative, artel forms of agriculture. We have

millions of individual farms in our country, scattered and dispersed throughout remote rural districts. It would be absolutely absurd to attempt to reshape these farms in any rapid way, by issuing an order or bringing pressure to bear from without. We fully realise that we can influence the millions of small peasant farms only gradually and cautiously and only by a successful practical example. For the peasants are far too practical and cling far too tenaciously to the old methods of agriculture to consent to any serious change merely on the basis of advice or book instructions. That is impossible and it would be absurd. Only when it is proved in practice, by experience comprehensible to the peasants, that the transition to the co-operative, artel form of agriculture is essential and possible, shall we be entitled to say that in this vast peasant country, Russia, an important step towards socialist agriculture has been taken. Consequently, the vast importance that attaches to communes, artels, and co-operative farms lays on all of you tremendous state and social obligations and naturally compels the Soviet government and its representatives to treat this question with especial attention and caution.

In our law on socialist agrarian measures it is stated that we consider it the absolute duty of all co-operative, artel agricultural enterprises not to isolate and sever themselves from the surrounding peasant population, but to afford them assistance. This is stipulated in the law, it is repeated in the rules of all the communes, artels, and co-operatives; it is constantly stressed in the instructions and rulings of our Commissariat of Agriculture and of all Soviet government bodies. But the whole point is to find a really practical method of putting this into effect. I am still not convinced that we have overcome this principal difficulty. And I should like your congress, at which practical workers in collective farming from all parts of Russia have the opportunity of sharing their experience, to put an end to all doubts and to prove that we are mastering, are beginning to master in practice, the task of consolidating the artels, co-operative farms, and communes and every form of enterprise for collective and common farming generally. But in order to prove this, *practical* results are required.

When we read the rules of the agricultural communes, or books devoted to this question, it might appear that we devote too much space in them to propaganda and the theoretical justification of the necessity of organising communes. Of course, that is necessary, for without detailed propaganda, without explaining the advantages of co-operative agriculture, and without repeating this idea thousands and thousands of times we cannot expect the broad masses of peasants to take an interest in it and undertake practical tests of the methods of carrying it into effect. Of course, propaganda is necessary, and there is no need to fear repetition, for what may appear to us to be repetition is most likely for hundreds and thousands of peasants not repetition, but a truth revealed for the first time. And if it should occur to us that we are devoting too much attention to propaganda, it must be said that we ought to devote a hundred times more. And when I say this, I mean it in the sense that if we go to the peasant with general explanations of the advantages of organising agricultural communes, and at the same time are unable in actual fact to show the practical advantage that will accrue to him from co-operative, artel farms, he will not have the slightest confidence in our propaganda.

The law says that the communes, artels, and co-operative farms must assist the surrounding peasant population. But the state, the workers' government, is providing a fund of one thousand million rubles for the purpose of assisting the agricultural communes and artels. And, of course, if any commune were to assist the peasants out of this fund I am afraid it would only arouse ridicule among the peasants. And it would be absolutely justified. Every peasant will say: "It goes without saying that if you are getting a fund of one thousand million rubles it means nothing to you to throw a little our way." I am afraid the peasant will only jeer, for he regards this matter very attentively and very distrustfully. The peasant has been accustomed for centuries to expect only oppression from the state, and he is therefore in the habit of regarding everything that comes from the state with suspicion. And if the agricultural communes give assistance to the peasants merely for the purpose of fulfilling the letter of the law, such assistance will be not only useless but harm-

ful. For the name "agricultural commune" is a great one; it is associated with the conception of communism. It will be a good thing if the communes in practice show that they are indeed seriously working for the improvement of peasant farming; that will undoubtedly increase the prestige of the Communists and the Communist Party. But it has frequently happened that the communes have only succeeded in provoking a negative attitude among the peasantry, and the word "commune" has even at times become a call to fight communism. And this happened not only when stupid attempts were made to drive the peasants into the communes by force. The absurdity of this was so obvious that the Soviet government long ago forbade it. And I hope that if isolated examples of such coercion are to be met with now, they are very few, and that you will take advantage of the present congress to see to it that the last trace of this outrage is swept from the face of the Soviet Republic, and that the surrounding peasant population may not be able to point to a single instance in support of the old opinion that membership of a commune is in one way or another associated with coercion.

But even if we eliminate this old shortcoming and completely obliterate this outrage it will still be only a small fraction of what has to be done. For it will still be necessary for the state to help the communes, and we would not be Communists and champions of socialist economy if we did not give state aid to every kind of collective agricultural enterprise. We are obliged to do so for the added reason that it is in accordance with all our aims, and because we know that these co-operatives, artels, and collective organisations are innovations, and if support is not given them by the working class in power they will not take root. In order that they should take root, and in view of the fact that the state is affording them monetary and every other kind of support, we must see to it that they do not provoke the ridicule of the peasants. What we must be most careful about is that the peasants should not say of members of communes, artels and co-operatives that they are state pensioners, that they differ from the peasants only by the fact that they are receiving privileges. If we are to give land and subsidies for building purposes out of the thousand-

million-ruble fund, any fool will live somewhat better than the ordinary peasant. What is there communistic here the peasant will ask, and where is the improvement? What are we to respect them for? If you pick out a few score, or a few hundred individuals and give them thousands of millions, of course they will work.

Such an attitude on the part of the peasants is most to be feared, and I should like to draw the attention of the comrades assembled at the congress to this. The problem must be solved practically, so as to enable us to say that we have not only averted this danger, but have also found means whereby the peasant will not be led to think in this way, but will, on the contrary, find in every commune and artel something which the state is assisting, will find in them new methods of agriculture which show their advantages over the old methods not by books and speeches (that is not worth much) but in practice. That is why the problem is so difficult to solve, and that is why it is hard for us, who have only dry figures before us, to judge whether we have proved in practice that every commune and every artel is really superior to every enterprise of the old system and that the workers' government is here helping the peasant.

I think that for the practical solution of this problem, it would be very desirable for you, who have a practical acquaintance with a number of neighbouring communes, artels and co-operatives, to work out methods for the real and practical control over the implementation of the law demanding that the agricultural communes give assistance to the surrounding population, over the way the transition to socialist agriculture is being put into effect and what concrete forms it is taking in each commune, artel, and co-operative farm, how it is actually being put into practice, how many co-operatives and communes are in fact putting it into practice, and how many are only preparing to do so, how many cases have been observed when the communes have given assistance, and what character this assistance bears—philanthropic or socialist.

If out of the aid given them by the state the communes and artels set aside a portion for the peasants, that will only give the peasant grounds for believing that it is mere-

ly a case of being helped by kind-hearted people, but not by any means proof of a transition to a socialist system. The peasants have for ages been accustomed to regard such "kind-hearted people" with suspicion. We must know how to keep a check on the way this new social order has manifested itself, by what methods it is being proved to the peasants that co-operative, artel cultivation of the soil is better than individual peasant cultivation, and that it is better *not* because of state aid. We must be able to show the peasants the practical realisation of this new order even *without* state aid.

Unfortunately, I shall not be able to attend your congress to the end, and I shall therefore be unable to take part in elaborating these methods of control. But I am certain that with the aid of the comrades in charge of our Commissariat of Agriculture you will succeed in finding these methods. I have read with great satisfaction an article by the People's Commissar of Agriculture, Comrade Sereda, in which he stresses that the communes and co-operatives must not isolate themselves from the surrounding peasant population but must endeavour to improve the latter's farms. A commune must be organised so that it will serve as a model, and the neighbouring peasants feel attracted to it. We must be able to set them a practical example of how to assist people who are running their farms under difficult conditions, marked by a goods shortage and by general dislocation. In order to define the practical methods of effecting this, extremely detailed instructions must be drawn up, which should enumerate all forms of assistance that can be given to the surrounding peasant population, should ask each commune what it has done to help the peasants, and should indicate the methods whereby each of the existing two thousand communes and nearly four thousand artels may become a nucleus capable of strengthening the conviction in the peasants that collective agriculture, as a transition to socialism, is a beneficial thing, and not a whim or the ravings of a disordered mind.

I have already said that the law requires the communes to render assistance to the surrounding peasant population. We could not express ourselves otherwise in the law, or give any practical instructions in it. It was our business to establish the general principles, and to count on politically-

conscious comrades in the localities scrupulously applying the law and being able to find a thousand ways of applying it practically in the concrete economic conditions of each given locality. But, of course, every law can be evaded, even under a pretence of observing it. And so the law on assisting the peasants, if it is applied unscrupulously, may become a mere game, and lead to results quite contrary to those intended.

The communes must develop in such a way that, by contact with them and by the economic help they give, peasant farming conditions will begin to change, and every commune, artel, and co-operative will be able to make the beginnings of an improvement in these conditions and put it into effect, thereby proving to the peasants in practice that this change can be only beneficial for them.

Naturally, you may think that we shall be told that in order to improve farming we need conditions that differ from the present economic dislocation caused by the four years of imperialist war and the two years of civil war forced on us by the imperialists. With such conditions as now exist in our country, how can one think of any widespread improvement in farming—God grant that we may carry on somehow and do not die of starvation!

If doubts of this kind are expressed, it will be only natural. But if I had to reply to such objections, I would say: assume that owing to the disorganisation of economic life, to economic dislocation, goods shortage, poor transport and the destruction of cattle and implements, an extensive improvement of agriculture cannot be effected. But there is no doubt that a certain, not extensive, improvement is possible in a number of individual cases. But let us assume that even this cannot be done. Does that mean that the communes cannot produce changes in the life of the surrounding peasants and cannot prove to the peasants that collective agricultural enterprises are not an artificial, hothouse growth, but a new form of assistance to the working peasants on the part of the workers' government, and an aid to the working peasants in their struggle against the kulaks? I am convinced that even if the matter is regarded in this way, even if we grant the impossibility of effecting improvements under the present conditions of economic disruption, nevertheless, if there

are conscientious Communists in the communes and the artels, a very great deal may be accomplished.

To bear this out, I would refer to what in our cities have been called subbotniks. This is the name given to the several-hours unpaid voluntary work done by city workers over and above the usual working day and devoted to some public need. The subbotniks were initiated in Moscow by the workers of the Moscow-Kazan Railway. One of the appeals of the Soviet government has pointed out that the Red Army men at the front are making unprecedented sacrifices, and that, in spite of all the hardships they are obliged to undergo, they are gaining unprecedented victories over our enemies, and at the same time stated that we can clinch our victories only if such heroism and such self-sacrifice are displayed not only at the front, but also in the rear. The Moscow workers responded to this appeal by organising subbotniks. There can be no doubt that the workers of Moscow are undergoing greater hardship and want than the peasants. If you were to acquaint yourselves with their conditions of life and were to ponder over the fact that in spite of these incredibly hard conditions they were able to organise subbotniks, you would agree that no reference to arduous conditions can serve as an excuse for not doing what can be done under any conditions by applying the method of the Moscow workers. Nothing helped so much to enhance the prestige of the Communist Party in the towns, to increase the respect of non-Party workers for the Communists, as these subbotniks when they ceased to be isolated instances and when non-Party workers saw in practice that the members of the governing Communist Party have obligations and duties, and that the Communists admit new members to the Party not in order that they may enjoy the advantages connected with the position of a governing party, but that they may set an example of real communist labour, i.e., labour performed gratis. Communism is the highest stage in the development of socialism, when people work because they realise the necessity of working for the common good. We know that we cannot establish a socialist order now—God grant that it may be established in our country in our children's time, or perhaps in our grandchildren's time. But we say that the members of the governing

Communist Party assume the greater burden of the difficulties in the fight against capitalism, mobilise the best Communists for the front, and demand of such as cannot be used for this purpose that they take part in subbotniks.

By organising these subbotniks, which have become widespread in every large industrial city, participation in which the Party now demands from every one of its members, punishing non-fulfilment even by expulsion from the Party—by applying this method in the communes, artels, and co-operatives, you can, and must, even under the very worst conditions, see to it that the peasant regards every commune, artel, and co-operative as an association which is distinguished not by the fact that it receives state subsidies, but by the fact that within it are gathered some of the best representatives of the working class, who not only preach socialism for others, but are themselves capable of realising it, who are capable of showing that even under the worst conditions they can conduct their farms in a communist manner and help the surrounding peasant population in every possible way. On this question there can be no such excuses as the goods shortage, or absence of seed, or loss of cattle. This will be a test which, at all events, will enable us to say definitely to what extent the difficult task we have taken on ourselves has been carried out in practice.

I am certain that representatives of communes, co-operatives and artels present at this general meeting will discuss this and will realise that the application of this method will really serve as a powerful instrument for the consolidation of the communes and co-operatives, and will achieve such practical results that nowhere in Russia will there be a single case of hostility towards the communes, artels, and co-operatives on the part of the peasants. But that is not enough. What is required is that the peasants should show a sympathetic attitude towards them. For our part, we representatives of the Soviet government will do everything in our power to help to bring this about and to see to it that state assistance from the thousand-million-ruble fund, or from other sources, shall be forthcoming only in cases when closer relations between the working communes or artels and the life of the surrounding peasants have actually been established. Unless

these conditions are fulfilled, we consider any assistance given to the artels and the co-operatives not only useless, but definitely harmful. Assistance given by the communes to the surrounding peasants must not be regarded as assistance which is merely given out of superfluity; this assistance must be socialist assistance, i.e., it must enable the peasants to replace their isolated, individual farming by co-operative farming. And this can be done only by the subbotnik method of which I have here spoken.

If you learn from the experience of the city workers, who, although living in conditions immeasurably worse than those of the peasants, initiated the movement for subbotniks, I am certain that, with your general and unanimous support, we shall bring about a situation when each of the several thousand existing communes and artels will become a genuine nursery for communist ideas and views, a practical example to the peasants showing them that, although it is still a small and feeble growth, it is nevertheless not an artificial, hot-house growth, but a true growth of the new socialist system. Only then shall we gain a lasting victory over the old ignorance, impoverishment and want, and only then will the difficulties we meet in our future course hold out no terrors for us.

Pravda Nos. 273 and 274,
December 5 and 6, 1919

Collected Works, Vol. 30

**FROM REPORT ON THE WORK OF THE ALL-RUSSIA
CENTRAL EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE
AND THE COUNCIL OF PEOPLE'S COMMISSARS
TO THE FIRST SESSION OF THE ALL-RUSSIA
CENTRAL EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE
OF THE SEVENTH CONVOCATION**

February 2, 1920

Further, I should like to refer to the discussion on Workers' Inspection. There is to be a special report on this subject, and it would be wrong of me to dwell much on it. The most important problem confronting us here is that of drawing the mass of people into the field of management. This is the more acute problem than the task of large-scale construction. You will be presented with detailed plans, and when you have discussed and amended them, you will understand that this construction must continue with far greater participation by the mass of the workers. This is our main task, with which it is extremely difficult to get to grips in the existing chaos, but nevertheless we are approaching it steadily.

There is another question before us—the question of co-operation. We have set ourselves the task of uniting the whole population in co-operatives differing from previous forms of co-operation, which at best only covered an upper section of the population.

Socialism would be impossible if it did not make use of the technical knowledge, culture and the apparatus created by bourgeois, capitalist civilisation. Part of this apparatus is the co-operative movement whose growth is all the greater the higher the level of capitalist development in a country. We have set our co-operative movement the task of embracing the whole country. Up to now the co-operative movement only covered an upper section and benefited those able to pay their dues. The working people, however, were unable to make use of its services. We have resolutely broken with this type of co-operation, but not so that co-operation as

such is completely wiped out, for in March and April 1918 we set it the task of covering the whole population. If there are co-operators who value the ideas of the founders of the co-operative movement (the old aims of co-operation were to satisfy the needs of the working people), they will sympathise with this aim. We are certain that we have the sympathy of the majority of the members of the co-operative organisations, although we are by no means under the illusion that we have won to our side the majority of the leaders of the co-operatives, who subscribe to bourgeois and petty-bourgeois views, who see co-operation merely as another form of capitalist economy and the notorious freedom of trade which means fortunes for the few and ruin for the majority. Instead of this, we announced the country-wide task of co-operation to pass on to genuinely catering for the working people so that it covers the whole population. This could not be accomplished at once. Having set this task we worked systematically, and will go on working to achieve this end, so that ultimately all the population will be united in co-operatives; and we can say with certainty that the whole of the Soviet Republic, perhaps in a few weeks, or at most in a few months, will become one great co-operative of working people. After this the development of independent activity by the working people, their participation in construction will proceed along even broader lines.

In accomplishing this, we have decided that all types of co-operatives, not only consumers', but credit, production, etc., should, by appropriate stages and with due care, be amalgamated into a Central Union of Consumers' Societies (Centrosoyuz). We are confident that our steps in this direction will meet with the approval of the Central Executive Committee and the workers in the localities who, after the formal amalgamation of the co-operatives, will, by their work of economic construction and of drawing the majority of the workers and peasants into this, achieve what we regard as one of the major tasks: that of making co-operation also a prime factor in the struggle against bureaucracy, this legacy from the old capitalist state, a struggle which we proclaimed in our programme, too, as being of the highest importance. We shall carry on this struggle in

all offices and departments by every means and, incidentally, through the amalgamation of the co-operatives and by shifting the appeal from the bourgeois co-operative top sections to the genuine working people, who must all undertake independent work in co-operative construction.

From among the problems of internal construction I now wish to refer to what has been done in the sphere of agriculture. In order to place land tenure on a proper basis, the People's Commissar for Agriculture in July 1919 issued a circular on measures against the frequent redistribution of allotted land. This circular was published on July 1 in *Izvestia* and was included in "Collection of Statutes and Decrees of the Workers' and Peasants' Government". This circular is important because it meets the many suggestions and demands of the peasants who pointed out that the frequent re-allotment of the land in conditions of small-scale farming prevented better labour discipline and the higher productivity of labour. This view is shared by the Council of People's Commissars which has empowered the Commissariat for Agriculture to work out a draft decree on procedures relating to re-allotment. This draft will be considered shortly. Similarly, the People's Commissariat for Agriculture sees as its task a number of urgent measures for rehabilitation of livestock and farm equipment. In this connection the systematic efforts of local workers themselves are extremely important, and we hope that the members of the All-Russia Central Executive Committee will bring the appropriate pressure to bear on the authorities and render assistance, so that these measures of the People's Commissariat for Agriculture can be put into effect in the shortest space of time.

I shall now turn to the final, and in reality, the most important problem of our construction—the problem of the armies of labour and the labour mobilisation of the population. The most difficult task in the sharp turns and changes of social life is that of taking due account of the peculiar features of each transition. How socialists should fight within capitalist society is not a difficult question and has long since been decided. Nor is it difficult to visualise advanced socialist society. This problem has also

been decided. But how in practice to effect the transition from the old, customary, familiar capitalism to the new socialism, as yet unborn and without a firm basis, is the most difficult task of all. At best this transition will take many years, in the course of which our policy will split into a number of even smaller transitions. And the whole difficulty of the task which falls to us, the whole difficulty of politics and the art of politics, lies in the ability to take into account the specific tasks of each of these transitions.

We have only just solved the problem of the war in its principal and basic features, though not yet completely. Our main task was to repel at all costs the attack of the white-guards. We said: everything for the war effort. This was a correct policy. We are fully aware that this policy caused unparalleled hardships in the rear such as cold, famine and devastation. But the very fact that the Red Army, which is regarded, incidentally, in the way shown by the examples I have read out to you, has resolved this problem in the most backward country, proves that new forces in the country do exist. Otherwise the creation of this model army, and its victory over far better equipped armies, would have been inconceivable. But after we had geared the state apparatus to this task and had succeeded in surmounting the specific features of this problem—the subordination of everything to the war effort—the situation demands a swift and sharp change in policy. We have not yet finished the war. We must maintain our military readiness intact, we must destroy Denikin's troops, we must show the landlords and capitalists of every country that if they want to deal with Russia by war, they will meet the same fate as Kolchak and Denikin. We must not take a single step, therefore, which would weaken our military strength. At the same time, however, we must switch the whole country onto a different course, reconstruct its whole mechanism. We can no longer, and we have no need to, gear everything to the war effort, because in the main the problem of the war has been solved.

The task of the transition from war to peaceful construction arises in such peculiar conditions that we cannot disband the army, since we have to allow, say, for the possibility of an attack by that selfsame Poland or any

of the powers which the Entente continues to incite against us. This specific feature of the problem of not being able to reduce our military forces, yet at the same time having to switch the whole of the Soviet state machine which is geared to war onto the new course of peaceful economic construction, demands exceptional attention. It is the type of problem that cannot be coped with by general formulas, the general provisions of a programme, general communist principles, but which requires that the specific features of the transition from capitalism to communism have to be taken into consideration, the transition from the position of a country whose whole attention has been concentrated on the war, to the position of a country which has won a decisive military victory and must go on to solve economic questions by military methods, because the situation, as you all realise, is extremely grave. The end of the winter will bring and has brought the working people unbelievable hardships—cold, famine, devastation. We must overcome this at all costs. We know that we can do this. It has been proved by the enthusiasm of the Red Army.

If, up to the present, we were able to battle on, surrounded on all sides and cut off from the richest areas of grain and coal, now when we possess all this, when there is the possibility of solving the problems of economic construction, jointly with the Ukraine, we can solve the main problem: to get in large quantities of grain and foodstuffs, bring them to the industrial centres so that industrial construction can commence. We must concentrate all our efforts on this task. It is inadmissible to allow ourselves to be diverted from it to any other practical task. It has to be solved by adopting military methods, with absolute ruthlessness, absolute suppression of all other interests. We know that a whole number of perfectly legitimate demands and interests will go by the board, but if it were not for these sacrifices, we should not have won the war. The situation now demands that we make a sharp and swift turn towards the creation of a basis for peaceful economic construction. This basis must be the laying-in of great stocks of food and their transportation to the central regions; the task of transport is to convey raw materials and provisions. From

August 1917 to August 1918 we collected 30 million poods of grain, in the second year 110 million, and now in five months 90 million have been collected by our Commissariat for Food Supplies, collected by socialist, not capitalist methods, by compulsory delivery of grain by the peasants at fixed prices, and not by selling on the free market—and this means that we have found our way ahead. We are certain that it is the correct way and that it will enable us to achieve results which will ensure tremendous economic construction.

All our forces must be dedicated to this task. All our military power, which came to the fore in military organisation, must be switched onto this new way. This is the specific situation, the specific transition, which engendered the idea of armies of labour and led to the law on the creation of the first army of labour in the Urals and the Ukrainian army of labour. It was followed by the law on the utilisation of the army reserves for civilian labour and the decree issued by the Soviet government on the Committees for Labour Conscription. All these laws will be outlined to you by a member of the All-Russia Central Executive Committee in a fully detailed report. I naturally cannot trespass on this ground because the special report will throw sufficient light upon it. I only emphasise its significance in relation to our general policy, the significance of this transition which confronts us with its specific tasks, for which we are to redouble our efforts as in the military field, to organise them so that we can lay in large food reserves and bring them to the industrial centres. To achieve this we must at all costs create armies of labour, organise ourselves in a military way, reduce, even close down a whole number of institutions so that in the next few months, no matter what happens, we can overcome transport dislocation, and emerge from this desperate situation of cold, famine and impoverishment brought by the end of winter. We must and can get out of this situation. When the All-Russia Central Executive Committee endorses all the measures connected with labour conscription and the armies of labour, when it has succeeded in instilling these ideas in the broad mass of the population and demands that they be put into practice by the workers in the localities,

then we are absolutely convinced that we shall cope with this most difficult of tasks, while not in the least degree weakening our military readiness.

We must at all costs, without weakening our military readiness, switch the Soviet Republic onto the new course of economic construction. This task must be accomplished in the next few weeks, possibly months. Every Soviet or Party organisation must do everything in its power to end the transport dislocation and increase the grain reserves.

Then, and only then, shall we have a basis, a sound basis for industrial construction on a wide front, for the electrification of Russia. In order to prove to the population, and in particular to the peasants, that these extensive plans are not fantasies, but are borne out by and based on technology and science, I think we should adopt a resolution, and I hope that the Central Executive Committee will support this idea, recommending that the Supreme Economic Council and the Commissariat for Agriculture jointly draft a plan for the electrification of Russia.

Thanks to the aid of the State Publishing House and the energy of the workers at the former Kushnerev Printing Works, now the 17th State Printing Works, I succeeded in getting Krzhizhanovsky's pamphlet *The Main Tasks of the Electrification of Russia* published at very short notice, and tomorrow it will be distributed to all members of the All-Russia Central Executive Committee. This pamphlet of Comrade Krzhizhanovsky's, who works in the Electro-Technical Sub-Department of the Supreme Economic Council, summarises what has already been achieved and raises questions, the popularisation of which, not the practical application, is now one of the most important tasks.

I hope that the Central Executive Committee will adopt this resolution which instructs, in the name of the Central Executive Committee, the Supreme Economic Council and the People's Commissariat for Agriculture to work out over the next few months—our practical tasks during this period will be different—with the aid of scientists and engineers a broad and complete plan for the electrification of Russia. The author of this pamphlet is absolutely correct in choosing as its motto the saying: "The age of steam is the age

of the bourgeoisie, the age of electricity is the age of socialism." We must have a new technical foundation for the new economic construction. This new technical foundation is electricity, and everything will have to be built on this foundation, but it will take many long years. We shall not be afraid of working ten or twenty years, but we must prove to the peasants that in place of the old isolation of industry and agriculture, this very deep contradiction on which capitalism thrived and which sowed dissension between the industrial and agricultural workers, we set ourselves the task of returning to the peasant the loan we received from him in the form of grain, for we know that paper money, of course, is not the equivalent of bread. We must repay this loan by organising industry and supplying the peasants with its products. We must show the peasants that the organisation of industry based on modern, advanced technology, on electrification which will provide a link between town and country, will put an end to the division between town and country, will make it possible to raise the level of culture in the countryside, and to overcome, even in the most remote corners of the land, the backwardness, ignorance, poverty, disease and barbarism. We shall tackle the problem as soon as we have dealt with our current, basic task. Not for a single moment shall we allow ourselves to be deflected from our fundamental, practical task to achieve this.

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Collected Works, Vol. 30

**FROM A SPEECH DELIVERED AT A MEETING
OF THE MOSCOW SOVIET
OF WORKERS' AND RED ARMY DEPUTIES**

March 6, 1920

We have done a great deal of work during the past two years. We have enlisted the peasant and worker masses in this work, and have everywhere been able to secure what we needed. At a time when the White officers, the former tsarist officers, were fighting on the side of our enemies, we enlisted tens and hundreds of these experts in our work, which helped to remake them. In conjunction with our Commissars they helped us to work. They themselves learned from us how to work, and in return gave us the benefit of their technical knowledge. And it was only with their help that the Red Army was able to win the victories it did. We must now divert all this work into another channel. It must be work of a peaceful character; we must devote everything to the work on the labour front. We must supervise our former property owners, who were our enemies. We must mobilise all who are capable of working and make them work with us. We must at all costs wipe from the face of the earth the last traces of the policy of the Mensheviks and Socialist-Revolutionaries, the policy which talks of personal freedom, etc., because it would doom us to starvation. This attitude must be maintained in all our work. The advanced section of the proletariat is assuming the leadership of the rest of the population, and it says "We must get you to understand our ideas fully and to carry them into effect, just as we have convinced you to come more and more over to our side."

The first task that confronts us in this respect is to cleanse Moscow of its filth and to put an end to the state of neglect into which it has fallen. We must do this so as to set an example to the whole country, because this filth, which brings with it epidemics and disease, is becoming worse

and worse. We must set this example here, in Moscow, an example such as Moscow has set many times before.

We must bear in mind that we are faced with the task of restoring the transport system. In the spring we must introduce control by the worker masses. We must put it into effect with regard to those market gardeners round about Moscow who are taking advantage of the fact that there are starving fellow-beings around them to pocket millions. The fact that any rich market gardener can squeeze untold profits out of his poor neighbour is an atrocious injustice, which we cannot allow.

What must we do? The experts must give us the benefit of their knowledge for us to carry our ideas into effect. The class which has just elected the new Moscow Soviet must fling itself into this work, which must be tackled more practically and in greater detail than hitherto.

We know that the proletariat is not very large numerically; but we also know that the Petrograd workers, who marched in the vanguard of the Red Army, gave us their best forces whenever we needed them, gave more for the fight against the enemy than we had thought possible. We said then that Petrograd, Moscow and Ivanovo-Voznesensk had given us a vast number of people. But that is not enough; they must give us all we need. Now we must make use of all the bourgeois experts who accumulated knowledge in the past and who must now pay with this knowledge. It is with the help of these experts that we must do our work; it is with their help that we must master all we need—master it, and create our own militant ranks of workers who will learn from them and direct them, and who will always turn to the broad masses of the workers to pass on the experience they have gained. That is what the Moscow Soviet, as one of the most important and one of the largest of the proletarian Soviets, must accomplish at all costs. The fifteen hundred members of the Moscow Soviet, plus the candidate members, constitute an apparatus through which we can draw upon the broad masses and constantly enlist them, inexperienced though they are, in the work of administering the state.

The worker and peasant masses who are to build up our entire state must now establish state control. You will obtain

this apparatus through the worker and peasant masses, through the young workers and peasants who have been fired as never before with the independent desire, the readiness and determination to set about the work of administering the state themselves. Profiting by the experiences of the war, we shall promote thousands of people who have passed through the school of the Soviets and are capable of administering the state. We must recruit for the Workers' Inspection the most diffident and undeveloped, the most timid of the workers, and promote them. Let them make progress in the course of the work. When they have seen how the Workers' Inspection participates in state affairs, let them gradually proceed from the simplest duties they can do—at first only as witnesses—to more important functions of state. You will secure a flow of assistants from the widest sources who will take upon themselves the burden of government, who will come to lend a hand and to work. We need tens of thousands of new advanced workers. Turn for support to the non-Party workers and peasants, turn to them, for our Party must remain a narrow party, surrounded as it is by enemies on all sides. At a time when hostile elements are trying by every method of warfare, deceit and provocation to attach themselves to us and to take advantage of the fact that membership of a government party offers certain privileges, we must act in contact with the non-Party people. The laws on the Workers' and Peasants' Inspection include the right to enlist non-Party workers and peasants and their conferences in the work of administering the state. This organisation is one of the means whereby we can increase the number of workers and peasants who will help us to achieve victory on the internal front in the course of a few years. For a long time this victory will not be as simply, decisively and clearly apparent as the victory on the military front. This victory demands vigilance and effort, and you can do your part towards it by developing Moscow and its environs and helping in the general work of restoring the transport system, of restoring that general economic organisation which will help you to get rid of the direct and indirect influence of the profiteers and vanquish the old traditions of capitalism. We should not begrudge a few years spent on this. Even

under such conditions, social reforms like these have no parallel in the past; and here to set ourselves tasks designed only for a short period of time would be a great mistake.

Allow me to conclude by expressing the hope and assurance that the new Moscow Soviet, bearing in mind all the experience gained by its predecessor in the course of the civil war, will draw upon new forces from among the youth and will tackle the affairs of economic development with all the energy, firmness and persistence with which we tackled military affairs, so as to gain victories which, if not as brilliant, will be the more solid and substantial.

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Collected Works, Vol. 30

**SPEECH DELIVERED
AT THE THIRD ALL-RUSSIA CONGRESS
OF WATER TRANSPORT WORKERS**

March 15, 1920

The water transport system is at the moment of the greatest importance and significance to Soviet Russia, and the Congress will certainly devote the most serious attention and care to the tasks that confront the water transport workers. Allow me to dwell on the question which the Communist Party and the trade unions are interested in more than in any other, and which you too no doubt are keenly debating; I refer to the management of industry. This question figures as a special point on the agenda of the Party Congress. Theses on the subject are being published. The comrades in the water transport system must also discuss it.

You know that one of the points in dispute, one that arouses the liveliest discussion both in the press and at meetings, is that of one-man management or corporate management. I think that the preference for corporate management not infrequently betrays an inadequate comprehension of the tasks confronting the Republic; even more, it often testifies to insufficient class-consciousness. When I reflect on this question, I always want to say that the workers have not yet learned enough from the bourgeoisie. This is graphically shown by the countries where the democratic socialists, or Social-Democrats, prevail, who in Europe and America, under various guises, in some form of alliance with the bourgeoisie, are now participating in the government. They have been ordained by God himself to share the old prejudices; but in our country, after two years of proletarian rule, we should not only want, but strive to inculcate upon the proletariat a class-consciousness that does not fall short of that of the bourgeoisie. Look how the bourgeoisie administers the state; how they have organised the bourgeois class. In the old days

could you have found anyone who shared the views of the bourgeoisie and was its loyal defender, and yet argued that individual authority is incompatible with the administration of the state? If there had been such a blockhead among the bourgeoisie he would have been laughed to scorn by his own class fellows, and would not have been allowed to talk or hold forth at any important meeting of capitalists and bourgeois. They would have asked him what the question of administration through one person or through a corporate body had to do with the question of class?

The shrewdest and richest bourgeoisies are the British and American; the British is in many respects more experienced, and it knows how to rule better than the American. And does it not furnish us with examples of maximum individual dictatorship, of maximum speed in administration, yet keeping the power fully and entirely in the hands of its own class? There you have a lesson, comrades, and I think that if you give it some thought, if you recall the not very distant past, when the Ryabushinskys, Morozovs and other capitalists ruled Russia—if you recall how, after the overthrow of the autocracy, during the eight months Kerensky, the Mensheviks and the Socialist-Revolutionaries were in power, they managed so perfectly and with such remarkable rapidity to change their hue, to assume every kind of label, to make every kind of outward, formal concession, and yet keep the power fully and completely in the hands of their own class—I think that a little reflection on the lesson of Britain and on this concrete example will do much more to help understand the matter of one-man management than many abstract resolutions linked with theory and compiled in advance.

It is claimed that corporate management means management by the workers, and that individual management means non-worker management. The mere fact that the question is presented in this way, the mere fact that this sort of argument is used shows that we still lack a sufficiently clear class-consciousness; and not only so, but that our class-consciousness is less clear than that of the bourgeois gentry. And that is natural. They did not learn to rule in two years, but in two hundred years, and much more than two hundred years if you take the European bourgeoisie. We must not

give way to despair because we have not been able to learn everything in two years; but it is important—events demand it—that we should learn more rapidly than our enemies. They have had hundreds of years to learn in; they have opportunities to learn all over again and correct their mistakes, because on a world scale they are infinitely stronger than we are. We have no time to learn; we must approach the question of corporate management from the standpoint of positive and concrete facts. I am sure you will come to adopt the policy on this question outlined by the Central Committee of the Party; it has been published and is being discussed at every Party meeting, but for the men on the job, for the water transport workers, who have been at it for two years, it is indisputable. And I hope the vast majority of those present here, who are familiar with practical management, will understand that we must not confine ourselves to a general discussion of the question, but must act like serious practical men, abolishing the collegiums and managing without them.

All administrative work requires special qualifications. You may be a very good revolutionary and propagandist, and yet be absolutely useless as an administrator. But anybody who studies real life and has practical experience knows that management necessarily implies competency, that a knowledge of all the conditions of production down to the last detail and of the latest technology of your branch of production is required; you must have had a certain scientific training. These are the conditions we must satisfy at any cost. And when we move general resolutions in which we talk with the pomposity of experts about corporate management and one-man management, the conviction gradually dawns upon us that we know practically nothing about management, but we are beginning to learn a little from experience, to weigh every step and to promote every administrator who shows any ability.

You know from the debates in the Central Committee that we are not opposed to placing workers at the head, but we say that the decision must be subordinated to the interests of production. We cannot wait. The country is so badly ruined, calamities—famine, cold and general want—have reached

such a pitch that we cannot continue like this any longer. No devotion, no self-sacrifice can save us if we do not keep the workers alive, if we do not provide them with bread, if we do not succeed in procuring large quantities of salt, so as to recompense the peasants by properly organising trade and not with pieces of coloured paper which cannot keep us going for long. The very existence of the power of the workers and peasants, the very existence of Soviet Russia is at stake. With management in the hands of incompetent people, with fuel not delivered in time, with locomotives, steamers and barges standing unrepaired, the very existence of Soviet Russia is at stake.

Our rail transport system is in a greater state of ruin than our water transport system. It has been ruined by the civil war, which was mainly conducted along the land routes; both sides destroyed mostly bridges, and this has helped to put the whole railway system in a desperate state of ruin. We shall restore it. Almost daily we are doing a little bit towards restoring it. But it will be some time before the system is completely restored. If even advanced and cultured countries are suffering from disrupted transport systems, how are we to restore ours in Russia? But repaired it must be, and quickly, for the population cannot endure another winter like the last. Whatever the heroism of the workers, whatever their spirit of self-sacrifice, they cannot go on enduring all the torments of hunger, cold, typhus and so on. So tackle the question of management like practical men. See to it that management is conducted with the minimum expenditure of our forces; see to it that the administrators, whether experts or workers, are capable men, that they all work and manage, and let it be considered a crime for them not to take part in the work of management. Learn from your own practical experience. Learn from the bourgeoisie as well. It knew how to maintain its class rule; it had the experience we cannot do without; to ignore it would be sheer conceit and would entail the utmost danger to the Revolution.

Earlier revolutions perished because the workers were unable to retain power by means of a firm dictatorship and did not realise that they could not retain power by dictatorship, by force, by coercion alone; power can be maintained

only by adopting the whole experience of cultured, technical, progressive capitalism and by enlisting the services of all these people. When workers undertaking the job of management for the first time adopt an unfriendly attitude towards the expert, the bourgeois, the capitalist who only recently was a director, raked in millions, and oppressed the workers, we say, and no doubt the majority of you also say, that these workers have only just begun to move towards communism. If communism could be built with experts who were not imbued with the bourgeois outlook, that would be very easy; but such communism is a myth. We know that nothing drops from the skies; we know that communism grows out of capitalism and can be built only from its remnants; they are bad remnants, it is true, but there are no others. Whoever dreams of a mythical communism should be driven from every business conference, and only those should be allowed to remain who know how to get things done with the remnants of capitalism. The difficulties of the job are tremendous, but it is fruitful work, and every expert must be treasured as being the only heritage of technology and culture, without which there can be nothing, without which there can be no communism.

Our Red Army was victorious in another sphere because we solved this problem in relation to the Red Army. Thousands of former officers, generals, and colonels of the tsarist army betrayed and sold us, and thousands of the finest Red Army men perished as a result—that you know. But tens of thousands are serving us although they remain supporters of the bourgeoisie, and without them there would have been no Red Army. And you know that when two years ago we tried to create a Red Army without them, it ended in guerrilla methods and chaos; the result was that our ten to twelve million soldiers did not make up a single division. There was not a single division fit to fight, and with our millions of soldiers we were unable to cope with the tiny regular army of the Whites. We learned this lesson at the cost of much bloodshed, and it must now be applied to industry.

Experience tells us that everyone with a knowledge of bourgeois culture, bourgeois science and bourgeois technology must be treasured. Without them we shall be unable to

build communism. The working class, as a class, rules; it created Soviet power, holds that power as a class, and can take every supporter of bourgeois interests and fling him out neck and crop. Therein lies the power of the proletariat. But if we are to build a communist society, let us frankly admit our complete inability to conduct affairs, to be organisers and administrators. We must approach the matter with the greatest caution, bearing in mind that only that proletarian is class-conscious who is able to prepare the bourgeois expert for the forthcoming navigation season and who does not waste his time and energy, which are always wasted on corporate management.

I repeat, our fate may depend more on the forthcoming navigation season than on the forthcoming war with Poland, if it is forced upon us. War too, you know, is hampered by the breakdown of the transport system. We have plenty of troops, but we cannot transport them, we cannot supply them with food; we cannot bring up salt, of which we have large quantities, and without an exchange of goods, proper relations with the peasants are inconceivable. That is why the entire Republic, Soviet power as a whole, the very existence of the power of the workers and peasants, imposes on the present navigation season tasks of great and exceptional importance. Not one week, not one day, not one minute must be lost; we must put an end to this state of disruption and increase our possibilities three- and fourfold.

Everything, perhaps, depends on fuel, but the fuel situation is now better than it was last year. We can float more timber, if we do not allow mismanagement. Things are much better with regard to oil, to say nothing of the fact that in the near future Grozny will most likely be in our hands; and although this is still problematical, the Emba fields are ours, and there we have ten to fourteen million poods of oil already. And if the water transport system helps us to deliver large quantities of building material to Saratov promptly and rapidly, we shall cope with the railway to the Emba fields. And you know what it means to have oil for the water transport system. We shall not be able to put the railways on their feet in a short time. God grant—not God, of course, but our ability to overcome the old prejudices of the workers

-that we improve the railways a little in four or five months. And so, the water transport system must carry out a task of heroic proportions during this year's navigation period.

Dash, ardour and enthusiasm alone can do nothing; organisation, endurance and honest effort are what will help, when the loudest voice is not that of the man who fears the bourgeois expert and treats us to general talk, but that of the man who is able to establish and to exercise firm authority—let it be even individual authority, provided it is used in the interests of the proletariat—and who realises that everything depends on the water transport system.

To make progress we must erect a ladder; in order to get the sceptical to climb that ladder, we must put things in order, we must select and promote people who are able to put the water transport system in order. There are some who say in reference to military discipline: "The idea! What do we want it for?" Such people do not realise the situation in Russia and do not realise that if the fight on the bloody front is coming to an end, the fight on the bloodless front is only beginning, that no less effort, exertion and sacrifice is required here, and that the stakes are no smaller and the resistance not less, but much greater. Every wealthy peasant, every kulak and every member of the old administration who does not want to act in the interests of the workers is our enemy. Do not cherish any illusions. Victory demands a tremendous struggle and iron, military discipline. Whoever does not understand this understands nothing about the conditions needed to maintain the power of the workers, and his ideas do great harm to this power of the workers and peasants.

That is why, comrades, I will conclude my speech by expressing the hope and certainty that you will devote the greatest attention to the tasks of the forthcoming navigation season, and will make it your aim, and will stop at no sacrifice, to create real, iron, military discipline and to perform in the sphere of water transport miracles as great as those performed during the past two years by our Red Army.

FROM THE DESTRUCTION OF THE ANCIENT SOCIAL SYSTEM TO THE CREATION OF THE NEW

Our newspaper⁴² is devoted to the question of communist labour.

This is the paramount problem in the building of socialism. First of all, we must make it quite clear to ourselves that this question *could* be raised in a practical way only after the proletariat had captured political power, only after the landowners and capitalists had been expropriated, only after the proletariat, having captured state power, had achieved decisive victories over the exploiters who put up a desperate resistance and organised counter-revolutionary rebellions and civil war.

In the beginning of 1918, it seemed that that time had arrived—and it had indeed arrived after the February (1918) military campaign of German imperialism against Russia. But on that occasion the period was so short-lived, a new and more powerful wave of counter-revolutionary rebellions and invasions swept over us so quickly, that the Soviet government had no opportunity to devote itself at all closely and persistently to problems of peaceful development.

We have now passed through two years of unprecedented and incredible difficulties, of famine, privation, and suffering, accompanied by the unprecedented victories of the Red Army over the hordes of international capitalist reaction.

Today there are serious grounds for hoping (if the French capitalists do not drive Poland into war with us) that we shall get a more durable and lasting peace.

During these two years we obtained some experience in organising on the basis of socialism. That is why we can, and should, get right down to the problem of communist labour, or rather, it would be more correct to say, not

communist, but socialist labour; for we are dealing not with the higher, but the lower, the primary stage of development of the new social system that is growing out of capitalism.

Communist labour in the narrower and stricter sense of the term is labour performed gratis for the benefit of society, labour performed, not as a definite duty, not for the purpose of obtaining a right to certain products, not according to previously established and legally fixed quotas, but voluntary labour, irrespective of quotas, labour performed without expectation of reward, without the condition of reward, labour performed because it has become a habit to work for the common good, and because of a conscious realisation (become a habit) of the necessity of working for the common good—labour as the requirement of a healthy organism.

It must be clear to everybody that we, i.e., our society, our social system, are still a very long way from the application of *this* form of labour on a broad, really mass scale.

But the very fact that this question has been raised, and raised both by the whole of the advanced proletariat (the Communist Party and the trade unions) and by the state, is a step in this direction.

To achieve big things we must start with little things.

On the other hand, after the "big things", after the revolution which overthrew capitalist ownership and placed the proletariat in power, the organisation of economic life on the *new* basis *can* only start from *little* things.

Subbotniks, labour armies, labour conscription—these are the practical realisation of socialist and communist labour in various forms.

This practical realisation still suffers from numerous defects. Only people who are totally incapable of thinking, if we leave aside the champions of capitalism, can laugh (or rage) at them.

Defects, mistakes, blunders in such a new, difficult and great undertaking are inevitable. Those who are afraid of the difficulties of building socialism, those who allow themselves to be scared by them, those who give way to despair or cowardly dismay, are no socialists.

The creation of a new labour discipline, of new forms of social ties between people, of new forms and methods of

drawing people into labour, will be the work of many years and decades.

It is a most gratifying and noble work.

It is our good fortune that, by overthrowing the bourgeoisie and suppressing its resistance, we have been able to win the ground on which this work *has become possible*.

And we will set about this work with all our might. Perseverance, persistence, willingness, determination and ability to test a thing a hundred times, to alter it a hundred times, but to achieve the goal come what may—these are qualities which the proletariat acquired in the course of the ten, fifteen or twenty years that preceded the October Revolution, and which it has acquired in the two years that have passed since this revolution, years of unprecedented privation, hunger, ruin and destitution. These qualities of the proletariat are a guarantee that the proletariat will conquer.

April 8, 1920

Kommunistichesky Subbotnik,
April 11, 1920
Signed: N. Lenin

Collected Works, Vol. 30

**FROM THE FIRST SUBBOTNIK
ON THE MOSCOW-KAZAN RAILWAY
TO THE ALL-RUSSIA MAY DAY SUBBOTNIK**

The distance indicated in the above title has been traversed in one year. It is an enormous distance. Although all our subbotniks are still weak, although every subbotnik reveals a host of defects in arrangement, organisation and discipline, the main thing has been done. The cumbersome machine has been shifted, and that is what matters.

We are not deceiving ourselves in the least about the little that has been done and about the infinite amount of work that has still to be done; but only the malicious enemies of the working people, only the malicious supporters of the bourgeoisie, can treat the First of May subbotnik with disdain; only the most contemptible people who have irrevocably sold themselves to the capitalists can condemn the utilisation of the great First of May festival for an attempt to introduce communist labour on a mass scale.

This is the very first time since the overthrow of the tsars, landowners and capitalists that the ground is being cleared for the actual building of socialism, to create new social ties, a new discipline of common labour, a new national (and later an international) system of economy of historical importance. It is a matter of transforming the very habits of the people, habits that have for a long time been defiled and debased by the accursed private ownership of the means of production, and also by the atmosphere of bickering, distrust, enmity, disunity and mutual intrigue that is inevitably generated—and constantly regenerated—by small individual economy, the economy of private owners and of “free” exchange among them. For hundreds of years free trade, free exchange, has been for millions of people the

supreme gospel of economic wisdom, the most firmly-rooted habit of hundreds and hundreds of millions of people. This freedom is as thoroughly false, is as much a screen for capitalist deception, violence and exploitation as are the other “freedoms” proclaimed and practised by the bourgeoisie, such as “freedom to work” (read: freedom to die of starvation), and so forth.

We have broken with this “freedom” of the property owner to be a property owner, with this “freedom” of capital to exploit labour, and are breaking with it irrevocably, combating it ruthlessly, with all our might.

Down with the old social bonds, the old economic relationships, the old “freedom” (*subjected to capital*) to work, the old laws, the old habits!

We shall build a new society!

We were not daunted by defeats during the great revolutionary war against tsarism, against the bourgeoisie, against the omnipotent imperialist world powers.

We shall not be daunted by the gigantic difficulties and by the mistakes that are inevitable when we begin a most difficult task; for the task of transforming all the labour habits and customs is one that requires decades. And we shall make a solemn and firm pledge to each other to make every sacrifice, to hold out and win in this most arduous struggle, the struggle against force of habit, to work without relaxation for years and decades. We shall work to eradicate the accursed rule “every man for himself and God alone for us all”, to eradicate the habit of regarding work only as a duty, and of regarding as legitimate only such work as is paid for at certain rates. We shall work to inculcate upon people’s minds, to convert into a habit, to introduce in the daily life of the masses, the rule “all for one and one for all”, and the rule “from each according to his ability, to each according to his needs”; gradually but steadily to introduce communist discipline and communist labour.

We have moved a boulder of incredible weight, the rock of conservatism, ignorance, stubborn adherence to the habits of “free trade” and of the “free” purchase and sale of human labour power like any other commodity. We have begun to shake and to destroy the most deep-rooted prejudices, the

firmest, age-long, ingrained habits. In one year our subbotniks have made an immense stride forward. They are still infinitely weak. But we shall not let that scare us. Under our very eyes we have seen our "infinitely weak" Soviet state gaining strength and becoming a mighty world force as a result of our own efforts. We shall work for years and decades applying subbotniks, developing them, spreading them, improving them and converting them into a habit. We shall achieve the victory of communist labour.

Pervomaisky Subbotnik,
May 2, 1920
Signed: *N. Lenin*

Collected Works, Vol. 31

**FROM THE SPEECH
ON OUR FOREIGN AND DOMESTIC POSITION
AND THE TASKS OF THE PARTY**

We have convinced the peasants that the proletariat provides them with better living conditions than the bourgeoisie did; we have convinced them of this in practice. When the peasants, although dissatisfied with the Bolshevik regime, compared it in practice with the rule of the Constituent Assembly, Kolchak and others they, nevertheless, drew the conclusion that the Bolsheviks guaranteed them a better existence and defended them militarily from the violence of world imperialism. Yet, under conditions of bourgeois rule, half the peasants lived in a bourgeois way, and it could not have been otherwise. The proletariat must now solve the second problem: it must prove to the peasant that the proletariat can provide him with the example and practice of economic relations of a higher level than those under which every peasant family farms on its own. The peasant still believes only in this old system, he still considers this to be the normal state of affairs. There can be no doubt of this. That the peasant should alter his attitude to life's problems, to economics, as a result of our propaganda—that's absurd. His is an attitude of wait and see. From being neutrally hostile, he has become neutrally sympathetic. He prefers us to any other form of government because he sees that the workers', proletarian state, the proletarian dictatorship, is not a crude force or usurpation, as it has been described, but is a better protector of the peasants than Kolchak, Denikin, etc.

But this is not enough; we have not accomplished the main thing—to show that the proletariat will restore large-scale industry and social economy so that the peasants can be transferred to a higher economic system. Having proved that

by revolutionary organisation we can repulse the force used against the exploited, we must prove the same thing in another field by setting an example which would convince the whole vast mass of peasants and petty-bourgeois elements, and other countries, not by words, but in practice, that a communist system, way of life, can be created by a proletariat which has won a war. This is a task of world-wide significance. In order to achieve the second half of the victory in the international sense, we must resolve the second half of the task, that in the sphere of economic construction. We spoke about this at the last Party conference so that there seems to be no need or possibility to go into detail on the various aspects; this task covers every aspect of economic construction. I have briefly indicated the conditions guaranteeing grain to the industrial workers and guaranteeing fuel to industry. These conditions are the foundation ensuring the possibility of further construction. I should add that, as you have seen from the agenda published in the newspapers, the central question to be discussed at the forthcoming Congress of Soviets must be the question of economic construction. The whole agenda is designed so that all the attention and concern of the delegates attending and of the whole mass of Soviet and Party workers in the entire Republic will be concentrated on the economic aspect, on the restoration of transport and industry, on what is cautiously termed "aid to the peasant economy" but which implies far more, which implies a whole system of well thought-out measures to raise the peasant economy, which will continue to exist for some time to come, to the appropriate level.

The Congress of Soviets, therefore, will discuss a report on the electrification of Russia so that a single economic plan for the rehabilitation of the national economy, of which we have spoken, can be laid down from the technological side. There can be no question of rehabilitating the national economy or of communism unless Russia is put on to a different, a higher technical basis than that which has existed up to now. Communism is Soviet power plus the electrification of the whole country, for it is impossible to develop industry without electrification. This is a long-term task which will take at least ten years provided that very many technical

experts are drawn into the work. A number of printed documents in which this project has been worked out in detail by technical experts will be presented to the Congress. We cannot accomplish the fundamentals of this plan—create 30 large areas of electric power stations which would enable our industry to be modernised—in less than ten years. Naturally, without this reconstruction of the whole of industry from the standpoint of the conditions of large-scale machine industry, socialist construction will remain only a set of decrees, will remain a political link of the working class with the peasants, will remain the means of saving the peasants from Kolchak and Denikin rule, will remain an example to all powers of the world, but will not have its own basis. Communism implies Soviet power as a political organ, enabling the mass of the oppressed to run all state affairs—without this communism is unthinkable. And throughout the world we see proof of this because the idea of Soviet power and its programme are undoubtedly becoming victorious throughout the world. We see this in every phase of the struggle against the Second International which survives with the support of the police, the church and the old bourgeois officials of the labour movement.

This looks after the political side of the matter, but the economic side can be assured only when the Russian proletarian state really holds all the strands of a large industrial machine based on modern technique; and this means—electrification. For this, we must appreciate the basic conditions required for the application of electricity and understand both industry and agriculture accordingly. This is an enormous task, and a far greater period of time is required for its realisation than was needed to defend our right to exist against military invasion. But we do not fear this period, and we regard it as a victory that we have been able to attract tens and hundreds of engineers and scientists imbued with bourgeois ideas, whom we have given the task of reorganising the entire economy, industry and agriculture, in whom we have aroused interest and from whom we have received a great deal of information summarised in a number of pamphlets. Every area down for electrification is dealt with in a separate pamphlet. The plan for the electrification

of the northern area is ready, and those interested may receive it. Pamphlets dealing with each area and giving the full plans for reorganisation are to be published by the time the Congress of Soviets meets. Our task is to carry on systematic work all over the country, in all Party cells, in every Soviet institution, according to this single plan covering many years, so that in the near future we may have a clear picture of how we are progressing and how far, neither deceiving ourselves nor concealing the difficulties before us. The entire Republic is confronted by the task of accomplishing this single economic plan by all means. All the Communist Party's activities, propaganda and agitation must be centred around this task. In theory, it has been dealt with on more than one occasion; no one argues against it, but scarcely a hundredth part of what needs to be done has been accomplished.

Published in 1920 in the pamphlet *Current Questions of the Party's Present Work*. Publishers: Moscow Committee, R.C.P.(B.)

Collected Works, Vol. 31

THE SINGLE ECONOMIC PLAN

The articles and talks on this subject produce a painful impression. Look at the articles of L. Kritsman in *Ekonomicheskaya Zhizn*⁴³ (I—December 14, 1920; II—December 23; III—February 9; IV—February 16; V—February 20). The sheerest verbosity and literary word-spinning. Refusal to take into account what has actually been produced in this sphere and to study it. Reflections—in five long articles!—on how to approach the study of data and facts, instead of studying them.

Take the theses of Milyutin (*Ekonomicheskaya Zhizn*, February 19), of Larin (*Ekonomicheskaya Zhizn*, February 20), listen to the speeches of "responsible" comrades. The same radical defects as in the case of Kritsman. The dreariest scholasticism, including idle chatter about the law of chain connections, etc., scholasticism which is sometimes literary, sometimes bureaucratic, but with the vital thing absent.

Worse than that. A condescendingly bureaucratic lack of attention to the vital work that has already been done and which needs to be continued. Again and again the emptiest "drawing-up of theses" or concoction of slogans and plans instead of an attentive and careful study of our own practical experience.

The only serious work on the question of the single economic plan is the *Plan for the Electrification of the R.S.F.S.R.*, the report of GOELRO (the State Commission for Electrification of Russia) to the Eighth Congress of Soviets, published in December 1920 and distributed at the Eighth Congress. This book describes the single economic plan which has been worked out—of course, only as a first approximation—by the best scientific forces of our Republic on the instructions of

its supreme bodies. And the fight against the ignorant conceit of the dignitaries, and against the intellectualist conceit of the communist literati, needs to be begun with a most modest thing, a simple account of the history of this book, its contents and significance.

More than a year ago, on February 2-7, 1920, the All-Russia Central Executive Committee met in session and adopted the resolution on electrification. This resolution states:

"... Along with the most immediate, vital and urgent tasks in organising transport, abolishing fuel and food crises, combating epidemics and organising disciplined labour armies, Soviet Russia for the first time has an opportunity of proceeding to a more planned economic development, to the scientific elaboration and consistent implementation of a state plan for the entire national economy. Taking into account the prime importance of electrification... appraising the importance of electrification for industry, agriculture, transport... etc., etc.... the All-Russia Central Executive Committee decides to instruct the Supreme Economic Council, together with the People's Commissariat of Agriculture, to work out a plan for constructing a network of electric power stations...."

That seems clear enough, does it not? "The scientific elaboration of a state plan for the entire national economy"—is it possible to misunderstand these words, this decision of our supreme authority? If the literati and dignitaries who plume themselves on their communism in front of the "experts" are not aware of this decision, one can only remind them that ignorance of our laws is no argument.

In fulfilment of the decision of the All-Russia Central Executive Committee, the Presidium of the Supreme Economic Council on February 21, 1920 endorsed the Electrification Commission formed under the Electrical Department, and later the Council of Defence endorsed the decree on GOELRO, whose composition the Supreme Economic Council was instructed to determine and establish in agreement with the People's Commissariat of Agriculture. Already on April 24, 1920, GOELRO issued No. 1 of its *Bulletin* with a detailed programme of work, with a register of responsible persons, scientists, engineers, agronomists and statisticians, who were included in the various subcommissions guiding the work in individual areas, and who had undertaken

various, exactly defined assignments. A list of these assignments and of the persons who had undertaken them occupies ten printed pages in the *Bulletin* No. 1. All the best forces that could be found in the Supreme Economic Council and the People's Commissariat of Agriculture, as well as in the People's Commissariat of Railways, were drawn into the work.

The result of GOELRO's work was the above-mentioned extensive—and excellent—scientific publication. Over 180 specialists took part in it. The list of works contributed by them to GOELRO includes over 200 items. We have, firstly, a summary of these works (the first part of the above-mentioned volume, occupying over 200 pages): (a) electrification and the state economic plan; followed by (b) fuel supply (with a detailed "fuel budget" of the R.S.F.S.R. for the next decade, with an account of the number of workers required); (c) water power; (d) agriculture; (e) transport and (f) industry.

The plan is calculated for approximately a decade with an indication of the number of workers and power capacities (in thousands of h.p.). Of course, this plan is only approximate, initial, crude, with errors, a plan "as a first approximation", but it is a real scientific plan. We have the precise calculations of specialists for each of the main questions. We have their calculations for all the branches of industry. We have—as one little example—a calculation of the size of output of leather, of footwear at the rate of two pairs per head (300 million pairs), and so on. As a total result we have both a material and a financial (in gold rubles) balance-sheet on electrification (about 370 million working days, so many barrels of cement, so many bricks, poods of iron, copper, etc., such and such power of turbine generators, etc.). The balance-sheet is based on an increase ("at a very rough estimate") of manufacturing industry during 10 years by 80 per cent and of extractive industry by 80-100 per cent. The deficit of the gold balance (+ 11,000 million - 17,000, total deficit about 6,000 million) "can be covered by concessions and credit operations".

The location of 20 district steam and 10 hydroelectric power stations of the first series is pointed out with a detailed description of the economic importance of each station.

Included in the same volume, after the general summary and with a separate pagination, are works for each area, Northern, Central industrial (these two are especially good, accurate, detailed, and based on very rich scientific material), Southern, Volga, Urals, Caucasian (the Caucasus is taken as a whole, presupposing economic agreement between the various republics), Western Siberia and Turkestan. For each area there are calculations for electric power stations not only of the first series. Next we have what is termed "GOELRO Programme A", i.e., a plan for the most rational and economical exploitation of the *existing* electric power stations. One more small example; for the Northern (Petrograd) Area, it is calculated that the amalgamation of the Petrograd stations could yield a saving defined as follows. Up to half of the power could be directed (page 69 of the report on the Northern Area) to places where timber is floated in the North, in Murmansk, Archangel, etc. Under such conditions the increase in procurements of timber and in floating it abroad could give "up to 500 million rubles in foreign exchange annually within a very short time".

"The annual receipts for northern timber in the next few years could reach the size of our gold reserve" (*ibid.*, p. 70), provided, of course, we are able to pass from talking about a plan to studying and *applying* the plan that has actually been worked out by the scientists!

It should be said further that for a number of questions (of course, not for all by a very long way) we have the beginnings of a calendar programme, i.e., not only a plan in general, but a calculation for each year from 1921 to 1930: how many new stations can be put into operation and how far existing stations can be expanded (once again, with the above-mentioned proviso that it is not so easily realisable in view of our intellectualist-literary and bureaucratic-dignitary habits).

In order to appreciate to the full the immensity and value of the work accomplished by GOELRO, let us take a look at Germany. There an analogous work was carried out by the scientist Ballod. He compiled a scientific plan for the socialist reconstruction of the entire national economy of Germany. In capitalist Germany the plan was left hanging

in the air, it remained a literary production, the work of a solitary individual. We made a state assignment, mobilised hundreds of specialists and obtained in ten months (not, of course, in two, as was originally planned) a single economic plan, scientifically constructed. We are legitimately entitled to be proud of this work; it has only to be *understood how* it should be utilised, and it is against the failure to understand *this* that a fight has now to be waged.

The resolution of the Eighth Congress of Soviets states: "The Congress ... approves the work of the Supreme Economic Council, etc., and especially of GOELRO in drawing up the plan for the electrification of Russia ... appraises this plan as the first step of a great economic initiative, instructs the All-Russia Central Executive Committee, etc., to complete the elaboration of this plan and to endorse it, and this absolutely must be done at the earliest date... It instructs that all measures be taken for the *widest possible propaganda* for this plan... The study of this plan must be introduced into all educational establishments in the Republic without exception."

Nothing affords such a vivid illustration of the existence of weak spots in our apparatus, especially in its upper strata, both bureaucratic and intellectualist weak spots, as the attitude to this resolution seen in Moscow, the attempts to "interpret" it at random, going so far as to disown it. The literati do not make propaganda for the plan that has been elaborated, but write theses and empty disquisitions on how to approach the elaboration of a plan! The dignitaries lay stress in a purely bureaucratic fashion on the need to "endorse" the plan, understanding by this not the adoption of concrete assignments (to build this and that at such and such a time, to buy such and such abroad, etc.), but something completely confused, like the drafting of a *new* plan! A monstrous lack of understanding occurs; one hears it said: let us first of all restore part of the old before building anything new; electrification resembles "electro-fiction"; why not gasification; in GOELRO there are bourgeois specialists and few Communists; GOELRO should provide expert cadres and not cadres for a general planning commission, etc.

These discordant opinions are dangerous for they demon-

strate an inability to work, the domination of intellectualist and bureaucratic conceit over the real issue. Sneering at the fantastic nature of the plan, questions about gasification, etc., reveal the conceit of ignorance. To correct in an offhand manner the work of hundreds of the best specialists, to dismiss it with trite-sounding jokes, to boast of one's right "not to endorse"—is this not disgraceful?

One must learn to appreciate science, to reject the "communist" conceit of dilettantes and bureaucrats, one must learn to work systematically, making use of one's own experience and one's own practice!

Of course, "plans" are something which by their very nature can give rise to endless discussion and dispute. But we should not allow general disquisitions and disputes about "principles" (of the construction of a plan) when it is necessary to set about studying the existing plan, the only scientific one, and correcting it on the basis of *practical* experience and more detailed study. Of course, the right to "endorse" or "not to endorse" always remains the prerogative of a dignitary or dignitaries. If this right is to be understood rationally and a rational interpretation given to the decisions of the Eighth Congress on endorsement of the plan approved by it and presented for the widest possible propaganda, then endorsement must be taken to mean a series of orders to buy and instructions: this or that has to be bought at this or that time and place, the construction of this or that has to be begun, these or those materials must be collected and transported, etc. If, however, the interpretation is along bureaucratic lines, then "endorsement" signifies the tyranny of the dignitaries, red-tapism, a game with control commissions, in short, a purely bureaucratic murder of a vital matter.

Let us look at it from yet another angle. It is essential particularly to link the scientific electrification plan with current practical plans and their actual implementation. This, of course, is quite beyond dispute. How is this link to be made? To know this requires that the economists, literati and statisticians should stop chattering about a plan in general, but should study in detail the fulfilment of our plans, our mistakes in this practical matter, and the methods of correcting these mistakes. Without such study we are blind. With such

a study and alongside it, provided the practical experience is studied, there remains the quite small question of administrative technique. We have plenty of planning commissions. Take for amalgamation two persons from the department entrusted to Ivan Ivanovich and one from the department entrusted to Pal Palych, or vice versa. Combine them with a subcommission of the general planning commission. It is clear that this is just a matter of administrative technique and nothing more. To try it out in this way or that, and choose the best—it is ridiculous even to talk about it.

The essence of the matter is that the ability to pose the question is lacking, and intellectualist and bureaucratic project-making is substituted for the vital activities. We have had and have current food and fuel plans. We have made an obvious mistake in regard to both of them. There cannot be two opinions about that. An efficient economist, instead of writing trivial theses, will set to work studying facts, figures and data, will analyse our practical experience and will say: the mistake lies in this or that, it should be corrected in such and such a manner. An efficient administrator, on the basis of such a study, will propose or himself carry out a transfer of persons, a change of accounting methods, a reconstruction of the apparatus, etc. Neither the one nor the other business-like and efficient approach to the single economic plan is to be seen among us.

The weak spot lies in the fact that the question of the relation of the Communist to the specialists, of the administrator to the scientists and writers, is incorrectly put. In the question of the single economic plan, as in every other question, there are aspects—and new aspects can always arise—which require to be decided only by the Communists or which require only an administrative approach. There is no doubt of that. But that is an empty abstraction. But among us at present it is just the communist writers and communist administrators who approach this question wrongly. For they have failed to understand that it is necessary here to learn from the bourgeois specialists and scientists rather more and to play at administration rather less. There is not, and cannot be, any other single economic plan than that already worked out by GOELRO. It needs to be supplemented,

developed further, corrected and put into effect on the basis of the indications furnished by attentive study of practical experience. The opposite opinion is only "pseudo-radical, in actual fact ignorant conceit", to cite the Party Programme. No less ignorant conceit is the idea that some other general planning commission than GOELRO is possible in the R.S.F.S.R., which, of course, does not mean rejecting the possible advantage of partial, business-like correction in its composition. Only on this basis, only by continuing what has been begun, is it possible to construct something serious in the sense of an improvement of the general plan of our national economy. Otherwise it will be playing at administration or, more simply, petty tyranny. The task of the Communists within GOELRO is to issue fewer commands, or rather not to command at all, but to approach the scientific and technological specialists ("in most cases they are inevitably imbued with a bourgeois world outlook and habits", as the Programme of the R.C.P. states) extremely cautiously and skilfully, learning from them and helping them to widen their horizon, proceeding from the achievements and data of the science concerned, remembering that an engineer comes to recognise communism *not in the same way* as an illegally working propagandist or writer, but *through the data of his own science*, that an agronomist comes to recognise communism *by his own path*, and similarly a forestry expert, etc. A Communist who has not proved his ability to unite and modestly direct the work of the specialists, getting to the heart of the matter and studying it in detail—such a Communist is often harmful. We have many such Communists; and I would give dozens of them for a single well-qualified bourgeois specialist who conscientiously studies his job.

The Communists outside GOELRO can help the creation and implementation of the single economic plan in two ways. If they are economists, statisticians or writers, they must first study our own practical experience, and only on the basis of a detailed study of the facts in question recommend the correction of errors and improvements in the work. It is the business of the scientist to study, and here again, since with us it has long ceased to be a matter of general principles but of practical experience, a "scientific and tech-

nological specialist", even if bourgeois but one who knows his job, is ten times more valuable than a conceited Communist who is ready at any time of the day or night to write "theses", issue "slogans" and dish up empty abstractions. Let us have more knowledge of the facts and less word-spinning allegedly based on communist principles.

On the other hand, if a Communist is an administrator his first duty is to beware of a fondness of giving orders, to be able from the beginning to take account of what has already been worked out by science, from the beginning to enquire whether the facts have been checked, from the beginning to study (in reports, in the press, at meetings, and so on) where exactly we had made a mistake and only on this basis to correct what has been done. Let us have less of the methods of Tit Titych ("I am able to endorse, I am able not to endorse"), and more study of our practical errors.

It was noticed long ago that people's defects are, for the most part, bound up with their merits. The defects of many leading Communists are of this kind. For decades we worked for a great cause, preached the overthrow of the bourgeoisie, taught distrust of bourgeois specialists, exposed them, took away their power, crushed their resistance. It was a great, historic cause. But it needs only a slight exaggeration and we have a confirmation of the truth that it is only a step from the sublime to the ridiculous. We convinced Russia, we won Russia from the exploiters for the working people, we crushed the exploiters—we must learn to govern Russia. For this it is necessary to learn modesty and respect for the business-like work of "scientific and technological specialists", for this it is necessary to learn to make a business-like and attentive analysis of our numerous *practical* errors and gradually but steadily correct them. Less intellectualist and bureaucratic conceit, more study of what our practical experience, in the centre and locally, is giving and of what science has already given us.

February 21, 1921

**FROM THE REPORT
ON THE SUBSTITUTION OF A TAX IN KIND
FOR THE SURPLUS-APPROPRIATION SYSTEM
DELIVERED AT THE TENTH CONGRESS
OF THE R.C.P.(B.)**

March 15, 1921

As difficult as our position is in regard to resources, the needs of the middle peasantry must be satisfied. There are far more middle peasants now than before, antagonisms have been smoothed out, the land has been distributed for use far more equally, the kulak's position has been undermined and he has been in considerable measure expropriated—in Russia more than in the Ukraine, and in Siberia less. On the whole, however, statistics show absolutely definitely that there has been a levelling out, an equalisation, in the village, that is, there no longer is the same sharp division into kulaks and cropless peasants. Everything has become more equable, the peasantry in general has acquired the status of the middle peasant.

Can we satisfy this middle peasantry as such, with its economic peculiarities and economic roots? A Communist who thought the economic basis, the economic roots, of small farming could be reshaped in three years was of course a dreamer. We need not hide the fact that there were a good many such dreamers among us. Nor is there anything particularly reprehensible in this. How could one start a socialist revolution in a country like ours without dreamers? Practice has, of course, shown how tremendous a role can be played by all kinds of experiments and undertakings in the sphere of collective agriculture. But it has also afforded instances of these experiments as such playing a negative role when people full of the best of intentions and desires went to the countryside to set up communes, collectives, but did not know how to run them because they had no experience in collective endeavour.

You know perfectly well how many cases there have been of this kind. I repeat that this is not surprising, for it will take generations to remake the small farmer, to remake his entire psychology and habits. The only way to solve this problem of the small farmer, to improve, so to speak, his whole mentality, is through the material basis, technical equipment, the use of tractors and machines on a mass scale in agriculture, electrification on a mass scale. This would remake the small farmer fundamentally and with tremendous speed. If I say this will take generations, it does not mean centuries. But you know perfectly well that to obtain tractors and machines and to electrify our vast country is a matter that at any rate may take decades. This is the objective situation.

We must try to satisfy the demands of the peasants who are not satisfied, who are disgruntled and quite legitimately so, and who cannot be otherwise. We must say to them: "Yes, this cannot go on any longer." How is the peasant to be satisfied and what does satisfying him mean? Where can we find the answer to the question of how to satisfy him? Naturally in the very demands of the peasantry. We know these demands. But we must verify them, examine all that we know of the farmer's economic demands from the standpoint of economic science. If we go into this, we shall see at once that the small farmer can be satisfied essentially through two things. Firstly, what is needed is a certain freedom of exchange, freedom for the small private proprietor, and, secondly, commodities and products must be procured. What indeed would free exchange amount to if there is nothing to exchange, and free trade, if there is nothing to trade with! It would all remain on paper, and classes cannot be satisfied by scraps of paper, they want material things. These two conditions must be clearly understood. The second condition—how to get commodities and whether we shall be able to obtain them—we shall discuss later. It is the first condition—free exchange—that we must dwell on now.

What is free exchange? Free exchange is free trade, and free trade means turning back towards capitalism. Free exchange and free trade mean circulation of commodities among separate petty proprietors. All of us who have studied

at least elementary Marxism know that this exchange and free trade inevitably lead to a division of commodity producers into owners of capital and owners of labour-power, division into capitalists and wage-workers, i.e., a revival of capitalist wage-slavery, which does not drop down from the skies but springs the world over precisely from agricultural commodity economy. This we know perfectly well in theory, and in Russia nobody who has observed the small farmer's life and the conditions under which he farms can have avoided noticing this.

How then can the Communist Party recognise free trade and accept it? Does not the proposition contain irreconcilable contradictions? The answer is that the practical solution of the problem naturally presents exceedingly great difficulties. I can foresee, and I know from the talks I have had with comrades, that the preliminary draft on replacing surplus-appropriation by a tax—the draft has been handed out to you—gives rise to legitimate and inevitable questions mostly as regards permitting exchange of goods within the bounds of local economic turnover. This is set forth at the end of Paragraph 8. What does it mean, what limits are there to this exchange, how is it all to be implemented? Anyone who expects to get the answer at this Congress will be disappointed. We shall find the answer in our legislation; it is our task to lay down the principle to be followed, to issue the slogan. Our Party is the government Party and the decision the Party Congress will pass will be obligatory for the entire republic: here we must decide the question in principle. We must decide the question in principle and inform the peasantry of our decision, for the sowing season is almost here. Further we must muster our whole administrative apparatus, all our theoretical forces, all our practical experience, in order to see how it can be done. Can it be done at all, theoretically speaking, can free trade, freedom of capitalist enterprise for the small farmer, be restored to a certain extent without thereby undermining the political power of the proletariat? Can it be done? It can, for the question here is of extent. If we were able to obtain even a small quantity of goods and were to hold them in the hands of the state, in the hands of the proletariat exercising political power, and if we

could release these goods into circulation, we, as the state, would add economic power to our political power. Release of these goods into circulation would stimulate small farming, which is in a terrible state of decline owing to the grievous war conditions and economic chaos and the impossibility of developing small farming. The small farmer, so long as he remains small, needs a stimulus, a spur, an incentive that accords with his economic basis, i.e., the individual small farm. Here you cannot avoid local free exchange. If this turnover gives to the state in exchange for manufactured goods a certain minimum of grain sufficient to cover the requirements of the cities, factories, industry, economic circulation will be revived with state power remaining in the hands of the proletariat and growing stronger. The peasants want to be shown in practice that the worker who holds the factories, mills, industry in his hands is able to organise exchange with the peasantry. And, on the other hand, the vastness of our agricultural country with its poor transport system, boundless expanses, varying climate, different farming conditions, etc., makes a certain freedom of exchange between local agriculture and local industry on a local scale inevitable. In this respect we are very much to blame for having gone too far; we have pushed nationalisation of trade and industry more than necessary, clamping down on local exchange of commodities. Was this a mistake? Undoubtedly it was.

In this respect we have made many outright mistakes, and it would be a great crime not to see this and not to realise that we have failed to keep within bounds, that we did not know where to stop. There has, of course, also been the factor of necessity—until now we have been living in conditions of a savage war that laid an unprecedented burden on us and left us no choice but to take wartime measures in the economic sphere. It was a miracle that the ruined country withstood this war, yet the miracle did not drop out of the sky, it grew out of the economic interests of the working class and the peasantry, whose mass enthusiasm created the miracle that defeated the landowners and capitalists. But at the same time it is an unquestionable fact that we went further than was theoretically and politically necessary, and this

should not be concealed in our agitation and propaganda. We can allow free local exchange to a sizable extent and not destroy but strengthen the political power of the proletariat. How this is to be done, practice will show. I only wish to prove to you that theoretically this is conceivable. The proletariat, which wields state power, can, if it possesses any reserves at all, put them into circulation and thereby satisfy the middle peasant to a certain extent—satisfy him on the basis of local economic exchange.

Now a few words about local economic exchange. First of all I must touch on the question of the co-operatives. The co-operatives, which are now in an extreme state of decline, are of course something we need as an agency of local economic exchange. Our programme stresses that the best distribution agency are the co-operatives left over from capitalism, and that this agency must be preserved. This is what the programme says. Have we lived up to this? To a very slight extent, or not at all, again partly because we have made mistakes, partly because of wartime necessity. The co-operatives, which brought to the fore the more business-like, economically more advanced elements, thereby produced in political life Mensheviks and Socialist-Revolutionaries. This is a law of chemistry—you can't do anything about it! The Mensheviks and Socialist-Revolutionaries are people who either consciously or unconsciously work to restore capitalism or help the Yudeniches. This too is a law. We must fight them. And to fight means to take action as in war; we had to defend ourselves, and we did so. But are we bound to perpetuate the present situation? No, we are not. It would be a mistake to tie one's hands in this way. Because of this I submit a resolution on the question of the co-operatives; it is very brief and I shall read it to you:

"In view of the fact that the resolution of the Ninth Congress of the R.C.P. on the attitude towards co-operatives was based wholly on recognition of the principle of surplus-appropriation, which is now replaced by the tax in kind, the Tenth Congress of the R.C.P. resolves:

"To annul the above-mentioned resolution.

"The Congress instructs the Central Committee to draft and carry out through Party and Soviet channels decisions

that would improve and develop the structure and activity of the co-operatives in conformity with the Programme of the R.C.P. and with a view to substituting a tax in kind for the surplus-appropriation system."

You will say that this is rather vague. Yes, it is, it is necessarily vague to a certain extent. Why necessarily? Because to be absolutely definite we must know exactly what we are going to do for the whole coming year. Who knows that? Nobody knows or can know.

But the resolution of the Ninth Congress ties our hands by calling for "subordination to the Commissariat of Food". The Commissariat of Food is a fine institution, but it would be an obvious political mistake to subordinate the co-operatives to it and no other and to tie our hands at a time when we are reviewing our relations with the small farmers. We must instruct the newly elected Central Committee to elaborate and carry out definite measures and changes and to check up on every step we take forwards or backwards—to what extent we must act, how to uphold our political interests, to what extent there must be a relaxation to make things easier, how to check up on the results of our experience. Theoretically speaking, in this respect we are facing a number of transitional stages, transitional measures. One thing is clear to us: the resolution of the Ninth Congress presupposed that our movement forward would proceed in a straight line, but it turned out, as has constantly happened throughout the entire history of revolutions, that the movement took a zigzag course. To tie one's hands with such a resolution would be a political mistake. Annuling it, we say that we must be guided by our programme, which stresses the importance of the machinery of the co-operatives.

As we annul the resolution, we say: work with a view to replacing surplus-appropriation by a tax. But when shall we do this? Not before the harvest, that is, several months from now. Will it be done in the same way in all localities? Under no circumstances. It would be the height of stupidity to apply the same pattern to Central Russia, the Ukraine, and Siberia. I propose that this fundamental idea of freedom of local exchange be formulated as a decision of this Congress. I presume that following this decision the Central

Committee will without fail send out a letter within the next few days which will point out, and of course do it better than I can here, that nothing is to be radically changed, that there should be no undue haste, no decisions on the spur of the moment, that things should be done so as to satisfy the middle peasantry to the maximum without damaging the interests of the proletariat. Try one thing and another, study things in practice, through experience, then share your experience with us, and let us know what you have managed to do, and we shall set up a special commission or even several commissions to consider the experience that has been accumulated. This is a highly important question, for money circulation is a splendid test of the state of commodity circulation in the country; when this is unsatisfactory, money turns into worthless scraps of paper. In order to proceed on the basis of experience, we must check the measures we have adopted ten times over.

We shall be asked where the goods are to come from. For free trade requires goods, and the peasants are very shrewd people and very good at scoffing. Can we obtain goods now? Today we can, for our economic position on the international arena has greatly improved. We are waging a fight against the international capitalists, who, when they were first confronted by our Republic, called us "brigands and crocodiles" (I was told by an English artist that she had heard literally these words from one of the most influential politicians). And crocodiles can only be despised. This was the voice of international capital. This was the voice of the class enemy and from his point of view quite correct. However, the correctness of such conclusions has to be verified in practice. If you are a world power, world capital, and you resort to words like "crocodile" and have all the technical means at your disposal, then try and shoot it! But when world capital tried this, it only hurt itself. It was then that the capitalists, which are forced to reckon with political and economic realities, declared: "We must trade." This is the greatest of victories for us. I can tell you now that we have two offers of a loan to the amount of nearly one hundred million in gold. We have gold, but you can't sell gold, because you can't eat it. Everybody has been reduced to a

state of impoverishment, currency relations between all the capitalist countries are in an incredible state of confusion as a result of the war. Moreover, for communication with Europe a fleet is needed, and we have none. The fleet is in hostile hands. We have concluded no treaty with France, which considers that we are her debtors and, consequently, that every ship we have is hers. They have a navy and we have none. Under these circumstances we have so far been in a position to make use of our gold on a limited, insignificant, ridiculously insignificant scale. Now we have two offers from capitalist bankers to float a loan of one hundred million. Of course they will charge exorbitant interest. Yet until now they have not proposed anything of the kind; so far they have said: "I'll shoot you and take everything for nothing." Now, unable to shoot us, they are ready to trade with us. Trade agreements with America and Britain can now be said to be on the way; the same applies to concessions. Yesterday I received another letter from Mr. Vanderlip who is here and who, besides numerous complaints, sets forth a whole series of plans concerning concessions and a loan. He is a representative of finance capital of the shrewdest type connected with the Western States of the U.S.A., those that are more hostile to Japan. So it is economically possible for us to obtain goods. How we shall manage to do it is another question, but a certain possibility does exist.

I repeat, the type of economic relations which looks like a bloc with foreign capitalism from above makes it possible for the proletarian state authority to arrange for free exchange with the peasantry below. I know—and I have had occasion to say this before—that this has evoked some sneers. There is a whole intellectual-bureaucratic stratum in Moscow which is trying to shape "public opinion". "See what communism has come to!" these people sneer. "It's like a man on crutches and face all bandaged up—nothing but a picture puzzle." I have heard enough of this kind of gibe—they are either bureaucratic or just irresponsible. Russia emerged from the war in a condition that can most of all be likened to a man beaten within an inch of his life; for seven years she was beaten and now we can be grateful if she can hobble about on crutches! That is the situation we are

in! To think that we can get out of this state without crutches is to understand nothing! So long as there is no revolution in other countries, it would take us decades to get out of this situation, and under these circumstances we cannot grudge hundreds of millions' or even thousands of millions' worth of our inestimable wealth, our rich raw material sources, in order to obtain help from the big leading capitalists. Later we shall recover it all and to spare. The rule of the proletariat cannot be maintained in a country ruined as no country has ever been before—a country where the vast majority are peasants who are equally ruined—without the help of capital, for which, of course, exorbitant interest will be extorted. This we must understand. And hence the choice is between economic relations of this type and nothing at all. He who puts the questions otherwise understands absolutely nothing in practical economics and is avoiding the issue by resorting to gibes. We must recognise the fact that the masses are utterly worn out and exhausted. What can you expect after seven years of war in our country, if four years of war are still making themselves felt in the more advanced countries?!

In our backward country, the workers, who have made unprecedented sacrifices, and the mass of the peasants are in a state of utter exhaustion after seven years of war. This exhaustion, this condition borders on complete loss of working capacity. What is needed now is an economic breathing spell. We counted on using our gold reserve to obtain means of production. It would be best of all to make our own machines, but even if we bought them, we would thereby build up our industry. But to do this you must have a worker and a peasant who can work; yet in most cases they are in no condition for it, they are exhausted, worn out. They must be assisted, the gold reserve must be used for consumer goods, contrary to our former programme. Our former programme was theoretically correct, but practically unsound. I shall pass on to you some information I have here from Comrade Lezhava. We see from it that several hundred thousand poods of various items of food have already been bought in Lithuania, Finland, and Latvia and are being shipped in with utmost speed. Today we learned that a deal has been concluded in London for the purchase of 18,500,000

poods of coal, which we decided to buy in order to revive the industry of Petrograd as well as the textile industry. If we obtain goods for the peasant, it will, of course, be a violation of the programme, an irregularity, but we must have a respite, for the people are exhausted to a point when they are not able to work.

I must say a few words about individual exchange of commodities. When we speak of free exchange, we mean individual exchange of commodities, which in turn means encouraging the kulaks. What is to be done? We must not close our eyes to the fact that a tax instead of the appropriation of surpluses will mean more kulaks under the new system. They will appear where they could not appear before. This must not be combated by prohibitive measures but by association under state auspices and by government measures from above. If you can give the peasant machines you will help his growth, and when you provide machines or electric power, tens or hundreds of thousands of small kulaks will be wiped out. So long as you cannot give all this, you must give a certain quantity of goods. If you hold the goods in your hands, you are in power; to preclude, deny, renounce any such possibility means making all exchange impossible and not satisfying the middle peasant so that it will not be possible to get along with him. A greater proportion of peasants in Russia have become middle peasants, and there is nothing to fear in exchange being conducted on an individual basis. Everyone can give something in exchange to the state. One can give his grain surplus, another, garden produce, a third, his labour. Basically the situation is this: we must satisfy the middle peasantry economically and go over to free exchange; otherwise it will be impossible, economically impossible, in view of the delay in world revolution, to preserve the rule of the proletariat in Russia. We must clearly realise this and not be afraid to talk about it. In the draft decision to substitute a tax in kind for the surplus-appropriation system (the text has been handed out to you) you will find many discrepancies, even contradictions, and because of this we added these words at the end: "The Congress, approving in substance (this is a rather loose word covering a great deal of ground) the propositions submitted

by the Central Committee to substitute a tax in kind for the surplus-appropriation system, instructs the Central Committee of the Party to correlate these propositions with the utmost dispatch." We know that they have not been correlated, we had no time to do so. We did not go into the details. The ways of levying the tax in practice will be worked out in detail and the tax implemented by a law dealing with the matter which the All-Russia Central Executive Committee and the Council of People's Commissars will issue. The procedure outlined is this: if you adopt the draft today, it will be given the force of a decision at the very first session of the All-Russia Central Executive Committee, which too will issue not a law, but modified regulations; the Council of People's Commissars and the Council of Labour and Defence will later make them into a law, and, what is still more important, issue the practical instructions. It is important that people in the localities should understand the significance of this and lend us assistance.

Why must we replace surplus-appropriation by a tax? Surplus-appropriation implied confiscation of all surpluses and establishment of a compulsory state monopoly. We could not do otherwise, for our need was extreme. Theoretically speaking, state monopoly is not necessarily the best system from the viewpoint of the interests of socialism. A system of taxation and free exchange can be employed as a transitional measure in a peasant country possessing an industry—if this industry operates—and if there is a certain quantity of goods available.

The exchange itself is a stimulus, an incentive, a spur to the peasant. The proprietor can and will surely make an effort in his own interest when he knows that all his surplus produce will not be taken away from him, that he will only have to pay a tax, which should whenever possible be established in advance. The basic thing is to have a stimulus, an incentive, a spur for the small farmer to till the soil. We must adapt our state economy to the economy of the middle peasant, which we could not remake in three years and shall not be able to remake in another ten.

The state had to face definite responsibilities in the sphere of food. Because of this the appropriation quotas were in-

creased last year. The tax must be less. The exact figures have not been defined, nor can they be defined. Popov's booklet *Grain Production of the Soviet and Federated Republics* cites data issued by our Central Statistical Board giving exact figures and showing why agricultural production has fallen off.

If there is a crop failure, surpluses cannot be collected because there are none. They would have to be taken out of the peasants' mouths. If the crop does not fail, everybody will go moderately hungry and the state will be saved, or, if we are unable to take from people who themselves cannot eat their fill, the state will perish. This is what we must make clear in our propaganda among the peasants. A fair harvest will mean a surplus of up to five hundred million poods. This will cover consumption and yield a certain reserve. The important thing is to give the peasants a stimulus, an economic incentive. The small proprietor must be told: "It is your job as a proprietor to produce, and the state will take a minimum tax."

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**INSTRUCTIONS
OF THE COUNCIL OF LABOUR AND DEFENCE
TO LOCAL SOVIET BODIES**

Draft

The primary task of the Soviet Republic is to restore the productive forces, to revive agriculture, industry and transport. The ruin and impoverishment caused everywhere by the imperialist war are so vast that an economic crisis is raging throughout the world. And even in the advanced countries, which before the war were far ahead of Russia in their development and which suffered far less from the war than she did, the restoration of the economy is proceeding with enormous difficulty and will drag out for many years. This situation prevails even in many of the "victor" countries, despite the fact that they are allied with the richest capitalist countries and are receiving vast tribute from the vanquished, dependent and colonial countries.

It goes without saying that backward Russia, which in addition to the imperialist war endured more than three years of civil war, imposed upon the workers and peasants by the landowners and capitalists with the assistance of the world bourgeoisie, finds it ever so much more difficult to restore her economy. The severe crop failure in 1920, the lack of fodder and the loss of cattle have had a disastrous effect on peasant farming.

In conformity with the law passed by the All-Russia Central Executive Committee, the surplus-appropriation system has been abolished and a tax in kind substituted for it. The farmer is free to exchange for any goods all surpluses remaining in his hands after the tax has been paid. The rate of taxation has been published by order of the Council of People's Commissars. The tax amounts to approximately one half the produce

obtained under the surplus-appropriation system. The Council of People's Commissars has issued a new law on the co-operative societies, which gives them wider powers in connection with the free exchange of surplus agricultural produce.

These laws contribute greatly to the immediate improvement in the condition of peasant farms; they give the peasants a greater interest in enlarging the area under crops and improving their methods of farming and livestock breeding. At the same time they will help to revive and develop small, local industry, for which it is unnecessary to acquire and transport large, state stocks of food, raw materials and fuel.

Independent local initiative in improving peasant farming, developing industry and establishing exchange between agriculture and industry now acquires particularly great importance. Great opportunities are being created for the application of new forces and fresh energy to the work of restoring the country's economy.

The Council of Labour and Defence, upon whom, in pursuance of the decision of the Eighth All-Russia Congress of Soviets, devolves the duty of co-ordinating and directing the activities of the People's Commissariats of the various branches of economy, urgently calls upon all local bodies to exert every effort to develop at all costs extensive activities with a view to securing an all-round improvement in peasant farming and reviving industry, strictly in conformity with the new laws and guided by the fundamental propositions and instructions given below.

We have two main criteria of success in our work of economic development on a national scale. First, success in the speedy, full and, from the state point of view, proper collection of the tax in kind; secondly—and this is particularly important—success in the exchange of manufactured goods for agricultural produce, success in exchange between agriculture and industry.

This is the most urgent. It must be achieved immediately, and at all costs. It will be a test of all our work, and will lay the foundations for the implementation of our great electrification plan, which will result in the restoration of our large-

scale industry and transport to an extent and on a technical basis such as will completely conquer starvation and poverty for ever.

We must collect the tax in kind 100 per cent, and, in addition, a quantity of food products equal to the tax by the free exchange of surplus agricultural products for manufactured goods. Of course, this will not be achieved everywhere at one stroke. But this is what we must set out to achieve; and we can achieve it in a very short time if we correctly understand the state of our economy and set vigorously to work in the right way to revive it. All local authorities, all the local bodies in every gubernia, every uyezd, every regional centre and every autonomous republic must unite and co-ordinate their efforts to stimulate the exchange of surplus products. Experience will show how far we succeed in stimulating this exchange by increasing the output and delivery of goods manufactured by the state in the big socialist factories; how far we succeed in expanding and developing small local industry; what part the co-operative societies and the private traders, manufacturers and capitalists who are under state control play in this. All methods must be tried, with the utmost scope given to local initiative. We are confronted by a new task, one that has never been undertaken anywhere in the world. We are carrying out this task in conditions of post-war ruin, which prevent a precise calculation of our resources, prevent us from knowing in advance what strain the workers and peasants, who have made such incredible sacrifices for victory over the landowners and capitalists, can stand. We must more boldly and widely employ a variety of methods and approach the work from different angles. We must allow freedom for capital and private trade in varying degrees, without being afraid of implanting capitalism to some extent, as long as we succeed in stimulating exchange at once, and thereby revive agriculture and industry; we must ascertain the country's resources by practical experience, and determine the best way to improve the conditions of the workers and peasants to enable us to proceed with the wider and more fundamental work of building up the economy, with the plan for electrification.

Over and above the tax, how much of their surplus agricultural produce have the peasants exchanged for the manufactures of small industry and private trade, and how much for manufactured goods provided by the state? These are the two main questions to which every Soviet official engaged in economic work should pay attention. These are the main lines we must follow in the immediate future in order to achieve the greatest results. They will serve as the criteria of success in our work and enable us to decide how to proceed to the next tasks. All questions concerning economic development in general must be co-ordinated with these two immediate questions.

To achieve this co-ordination, to encourage local initiative, independence and large-scale operations to the utmost, and to make sure that the work of the central bodies is guided by local experience and local supervision, and vice versa, and thereby secure the elimination of red tape and bureaucracy, the Council of Labour and Defence has ordered (see particularly the text of the order):

firstly, that regular Economic Conferences be convened in all districts for the purpose of co-ordinating the work of the local departments of all the People's Commissariats of the various branches of economy;

secondly, that proper records of the local Economic Conferences be kept for the purpose of facilitating the pooling of experience and organising emulation, and mainly for the purpose of utilising the work of the local organisations and its results as a means of checking the methods and system of organisation of the central bodies.

The local Economic Conferences should be organised on the lines of the C.L.D. (Council of Labour and Defence) and their relations with the local executive committees should be the same as those between the C.L.D. and the Council of People's Commissars. The C.L.D. functions as a committee of the Council of People's Commissars. The appointment of members of the Council of People's Commissars to the C.L.D. ensures the fullest co-ordination of the work of both bodies, eliminates all possibility of friction between them and ensures expeditious work and simplicity of procedure. For the C.L.D.

has no staff of its own, it utilises that of the various government departments and strives to simplify their procedure as much as possible and to co-ordinate their activities.

Gubernia economic councils should stand in the same relation to the gubernia executive committees. In practice, this is becoming the case. In endorsing the appointment of members and chairmen of regional and territorial economic councils, the C.L.D. strives to take into account the experience of local workers and makes no endorsement without first consulting them. The regional economic councils must certainly strive, and will strive, to co-ordinate their work with that of the gubernia economic councils, secure their fullest co-operation and keep them informed and interested in their work. At the moment it would scarcely be timely to attempt to formulate these relationships in a set of regulations; very little experience has yet been accumulated and attempts to draw up such regulations might result in sheer bureaucracy. It is far more expedient, at first, to allow practice to determine what form of relationships are suitable (the C.L.D. worked side by side with the Council of People's Commissars for about a year, virtually without a constitution). It would be better if, at the beginning these forms were not absolutely stable; variety is desirable, useful and even necessary, to enable us to study more precisely, and more fully compare, different systems of relationships.

Uyezd and volost economic councils should be organised on the same lines—allowing, of course, all sorts of departures from the main type. That is to say, the executive committees may entirely take over the functions and duties of the Economic Conferences, may convert their own “executive” or “economic” meetings into Economic Conferences, appoint (in the volosts, and sometimes in the uyezds, for example) special committees or individual persons to carry out all, or some, of the functions of the Economic Conferences, and so on and so forth. The *village committees* should serve as the lowest units; they should serve as the local units of the C.L.D. in the rural districts. The Council of People's Commissars has already passed a law, issued on May 28, 1921, which gives the

village committees wider powers and defines their relation to the village Soviets. The gubernia Executive Committees must draw up provisional regulations suitable for the given locality, which, however, must not restrict “local” initiative towards independence in general, and that of the lowest units *in particular*, but must give it *the greatest possible scope*.

In industrial uyezds and settlements, the district committees and factory committees, or the management boards of factories, should serve as the lowest units of the C.L.D.—depending upon whether one, or several, branches of industry are concerned. In any case, *co-operation* with the uyezd executive committees, volost executive committees and village committees for directing *all* local economic life is absolutely essential in one form or another.

To proceed. It is exceptionally important that the local organisations should give the C.L.D. regular and precise information of their activities, for one of the main evils we are suffering from is the inadequate study of practical experience, inadequate exchange of experience and mutual control—subjecting the orders from the centre to the test of local experience, and subjecting local work to control by the centre. One of the most important means of combating bureaucracy and red tape should be the checking of the way the laws and orders from the centre are carried out locally. For this purpose, reports are needed, printed in the form of *general returns*, in the compilation of which *non-Party people* and not departmental officials must take a *more extensive part*. A journal like *Nashe Khozyaistvo*, “the fortnightly organ of the Tver Gubernia Economic Council” (No. 1, April 15, 1921; No. 2, April 30, 1921), shows that people in the localities feel the need to study, elucidate and publish the results of our economic experience, and are finding the correct way to satisfy it. It will not be possible, of course, to publish a journal in every gubernia, not within the next few months, at any rate; not everywhere will it be possible to print 3,000 copies twice a month, as is done in Tver. But every gubernia, and even every uyezd can—and should—draw up, once in two months (at first, by way of exception, longer intervals may be permitted), a report on local economic activities and print

it in, say, 100 to 300 copies. Paper and printing facilities for such a small operation will undoubtedly be found everywhere if we realise its importance and urgency, if we realise that the paper needed for the purpose must be taken from many of the departments which print a mass of useless, or not very urgent material. If the copy is set up in small type and printed in two columns (as the comrades in Tver do); if the simple truth is realised that even a hundred copies, distributed one to each gubernia library and all the important state libraries, will provide a scanty, perhaps, but *certain* source of information for *the whole of Russia*, and make possible a record of experience, then its feasibility and urgency will be clear.

To maintain a proper record of experience, a real pooling of experience, and to enlist all the prominent and capable organisers among non-Party people, reports must be published regularly, even if in a very small number of copies. This can and must be done immediately.

When drawing up the reports, the questions put must be answered as briefly and precisely as possible. The questions fall into four groups. The first group are those that are particularly prominent at the present time. They must be answered in every report, and with maximum precision and detail. This is particularly necessary because this group of questions is extremely urgent and topical at the moment for most uyezds. For a minority of uyezds and districts, that is, the purely industrial ones, other questions will be more prominent. The second group consists of questions which must also be answered in every report, but very often the answers can and should be given in the form of brief summaries of reports already submitted to the government departments concerned. In all such cases, the reports to the C.L.D. must give: dates the reports were sent; to which departments; brief summary of the reports in figures. The C.L.D. needs such reports for supervision over the various departments, as well as to obtain total figures indicating results achieved in food supplies, fuel, industry, and so forth. The third group contains questions that need *not* be answered in every report. Answers to these questions must be given in the first instance, i.e., in the first report, but in subsequent reports only sup-

plementary and new information should be added as it accumulates. In many cases there will be nothing to report on these questions every two months. The fourth group consists of miscellaneous, supplementary questions, which are not indicated in advance, are not put by the centre, but arise in the locality. This group must be compiled by the local bodies, and it is not limited in any way. It goes without saying that questions concerning state secrets (army, or such as are connected with military operations, the security of the state, and so forth) must be answered in special reports, not for publication, but intended exclusively for the C.L.D. as confidential reports.

We will now enumerate the questions.

FIRST GROUP OF QUESTIONS

1. COMMODITY EXCHANGE WITH THE PEASANTRY

This question comes first in importance and urgency at the present time. Firstly, unless the army and the urban workers are sufficiently and regularly supplied with food, the state cannot carry on any economic development work; the exchange of commodities must become the principal means of collecting food supplies. Secondly, commodity exchange serves to test the correctness of the relations between industry and agriculture, and is also the foundation of all our work to establish a money system that functions reasonably well. Commodity exchange (including under this exchange of goods; because state manufactured goods, those produced by socialist factories and exchanged for foodstuffs produced by the peasants, are not commodities in the sense in which this term is used in political economy, at all events, they are not only commodities, have ceased or are ceasing to be commodities), commodity exchange must be the question on which the main attention of all Economic Councils, of all bodies connected with economic development, must now be focussed.

Preparations for commodity exchange. What has been done to prepare for this? By the Commissariat of Food Supplies? By the co-operative societies? Number of co-operative shops

available for this purpose? Are there such in every volost? In how many villages? Stock of goods for commodity exchange? Prices on the "free" market? Surplus stocks of grain and other agricultural produce? Is there any experience of commodity exchange, if so, how much? Totals and results? Combating the theft of stocks of commodities held for exchange and food stocks? (a particularly important point, demanding investigation of *every case* of theft).

Salt and kerosene as articles for commodity exchange? Textiles? Other goods? What goods are most urgently needed? What are the peasants mostly short of? What can be provided by local, small, handicraft industry? Or by developing local industry?

Figures and facts showing how commodity exchange is organised and the results achieved are most important in summing up experience for the whole country.

Have proper relations been established between the Commissariat of Food Supplies, the body that controls and supervises commodity exchange, and the co-operative societies, the bodies that carry on commodity exchange? How do these relations operate in practice? In each locality?

What part does private trade play in commodity exchange? To what extent is private trade developed, or developing? Number of private traders; their turnover on staple goods, particularly food products?

2. THE STATE'S ATTITUDE TOWARDS THE CAPITALISTS

Commodity exchange and free trade inevitably imply the appearance of capitalists and capitalist relationships. There is no reason to fear this. The workers' state possesses sufficient means to keep the development of these relations, useful and necessary under conditions of small production, *within proper bounds*, and to control them. At present, the thing to do is study their dimensions closely and devise suitable methods (not restrictive, or rather, not prohibitive) by which the state can register and control them.

To what extent is private trade developing as a result of the substitution of the tax for the surplus-appropriation

system? Can it be estimated or not? Is it merely food speculation or regular trade? Is it registered, if so what are the results?

Private enterprise: have there been any offers from capitalists and entrepreneurs to lease enterprises or establishments, or commercial premises? Exact number of such offers and an analysis of them? How is the assessment, even if only approximate, of the results of trading operations organised? Ditto as regards the accounts of leaseholders and commission agents, if any?

Have there been any offers from commission agents? To buy produce for the state on a commission basis? Or to sell and distribute? Or to organise industrial enterprises?

Handicraft industry: changes since the introduction of the tax in kind? Degree of development? Source of information?

3. ENCOURAGEMENT OF INDEPENDENT INITIATIVE IN COMMODITY EXCHANGE, AND IN ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT IN GENERAL

This question is closely bound up with the preceding one. The encouragement of initiative may often prove to have no connection with capitalist relationships. What forms should this encouragement take? This question should engage the attention of the Economic Councils, and of all bodies engaged in economic development in general. In view of the novelty of this task, it is scarcely possible to issue definite instructions at present. The thing is to pay great attention to this question, to encourage all initiative in economic matters, to make a careful study of practical experience and to inform the whole country about it.

The small farmer pays his tax to the state and enters into commodity exchange with it, with the socialist factory, this is an economic situation which imperatively demands that the state, through its local bodies, give all possible encouragement to enterprise and initiative. The interchange of the observations and experience of the local bodies will enable us to collect material and later on, perhaps, to supplement this general and inadequate formulation of the question with a number of examples and detailed instructions.

4. CO-ORDINATION OF THE ECONOMIC WORK
OF DIFFERENT DEPARTMENTS
IN THE LOCAL ADMINISTRATIVE AREAS:
VOLOSTS, UYEZDS AND GUBERNIAS

The absence of co-ordination in the work of the different local departments is one of the big evils that hinder economic development. Great attention must be devoted to this question. The function of the Economic Councils is to eliminate this fault and to stimulate the independent activities of the local bodies. Practical examples must be collected to secure improvement, and examples of successful work should serve as patterns for all. When there was an extreme food shortage, for example, it was natural and inevitable that the independent use of grain collected by local bodies should be severely restricted. As the stocks of grain increase, independence must also increase, within proper limits and under proper control. This can and should help to lessen red tape, reduce the haulage of goods, encourage production and improve the conditions of the workers and peasants. The food supply, small local industry, fuel, large-scale state industry, etc., are all closely linked together, and their division into "departments", which is necessary for the administration of the state, causes harm if constant efforts are not made to co-ordinate them, to remove friction, red tape, departmental narrow-mindedness and bureaucratic methods. The local bodies, which are closer to the masses of workers and peasants, are better able to see these defects, and it is therefore their business to devise—by pooling experience—methods of combating them successfully.

What work has been done, and how has it been done to co-ordinate the activities of the local state farms, timber committees, uyezd land departments, economic councils, and so forth? Definite, careful and detailed replies to this question are absolutely essential.

What penalties have been inflicted on officials who have satisfied local requirements to the detriment of the centre and in violation of orders from the centre? The names of those punished? Is the number of such offences diminishing? Have the penalties been increased? If so, in what way?

5. IMPROVEMENT OF THE CONDITIONS OF THE WORKERS
AND 6. DITTO OF THE PEASANTS

Every success achieved in economic development improves the conditions of the workers and peasants. But firstly, here, too, departmental narrow-mindedness and the lack of co-ordination cause much harm. And secondly, special prominence must be given these questions, so that the results achieved in the above sphere may be carefully traced. What has been achieved? How? Replies to these questions are essential.

Weariness, and very often, sheer exhaustion as a result of the long years of war, first the imperialist war and then the civil war, are so great, that it is absolutely essential to make special efforts to improve the conditions of the workers and peasants. Far, very far from everything is being done that could and should be done, even with our scanty resources. By no means all the departments and offices are concentrating attention on this. Therefore, to collect and study local experience in this field is a matter of urgent necessity. The reports on this matter should be compiled as precisely, as fully and as carefully as possible. If that is done, it will at once become evident which departments in which districts lag behind most; and by common effort we shall secure an improvement more quickly.

7. INCREASING THE NUMBER OF STATE ADMINISTRATORS
IN ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT WORK

It is extremely important for us to enlarge this group of workers, but very little systematic effort is made to do so. Under capitalism, the individual proprietors strove to obtain—secretly from one another, and putting spokes in each other's wheel—the services of good agents, managers and directors. Decades were spent on this, and only a few of the best firms achieved good results. Today, the workers' and peasants' state is the proprietor, and it must select the best administrators and organisers for the development of economy, special and general, local and national, doing this on a wide scale, *publicly*, and in a methodical, systematic manner. We still

see frequent traces of the first period of the Soviet power—the period of fierce civil war and intense sabotage; Communists still shut themselves up in a close circle of rulers and fear, or do not know how, to enlist the services of non-Party people in sufficient numbers.

We must set to work quickly and energetically to correct this. From the ranks of the workers, peasants and intellectuals quite a number of capable and honest non-Party people are coming to the fore, and these should be promoted to more important positions in economic work, while the Communists continue to exercise the necessary control and direction. Conversely, we must have non-Party people to control the Communists. For this purpose groups of non-Party workers and peasants of tried honesty should be drawn into the work of the Workers' and Peasants' Inspection; they should also be enlisted temporarily, without being given any official position, to assist in the verification and appraisal of the work done.

In their reports to the C.L.D., the local bodies, particularly in the volosts, uyezds and districts, who know the worker and peasant masses best, should give *lists* of non-Party people who have proved their honesty at work, or who have simply become prominent at non-Party conferences, or who undoubtedly enjoy respect in their factory, village, volost, etc., and indicate the work these persons have been given in economic development. By "work" is meant official position occupied as well as *temporary participation in the work of control or verification*, regular participation in informal conferences, etc.

Regular replies to the questions in this group are mandatory. Without them the socialist state will be unable to organise correctly the enlistment of the masses in the work of economic development. New, honest and loyal workers can be found. There are many of them among the non-Party people. We do not know them. Only local reports can help us to find them and test them in wider and gradually expanding fields of work, can help us to remove the evil of the isolation of the Communist Party units from the masses; and this evil is observed in many places.

8. MEANS AND RESULTS OF COMBATING BUREAUCRATIC METHODS AND RED TAPE

At first, the majority of replies to this question will probably be very simple: methods—nil; results—nil. The decisions of the Eighth All-Russia Congress of Soviets have been read and forgotten.

But although the situation here is deplorable, we will certainly not follow the example of those who give way to despair. We know that in Russia routine and red tape are most of all due to the low standard of culture and to the consequences of the extreme ruin and impoverishment resulting from the war. This evil can be successfully combated only by strenuous and persistent effort over a long period of years. Therefore, we must not give way to despair, but start work over and over again, pick it up where it was dropped, and try diverse methods of achieving the goal.

The reorganisation of the Workers' and Peasants' Inspection; enlisting the services of non-Party people in this Inspection, as well as outside it; legal proceedings; reduction and careful selection of staffs; verification and co-ordination of the work of the various departments, and so on and so forth—all these measures, everything indicated in the decisions of the Eighth Congress of Soviets, all the measures and methods mentioned in the press must be methodically, steadily and repeatedly tried, compared and studied.

The Gubernia Economic Councils, and all the other bodies that co-ordinate and direct the work of economic development in the localities, must insist on the implementation of measures prescribed by the law and indicated by practical experience. Local experience must be pooled. Replies to questions put—no matter how hard it may be at first to teach people to make exact, full and timely replies—must be sent to the C.L.D. The C.L.D. will see to it that this is done. And this will undoubtedly produce good results, even if not as quickly as is expected by people who often reduce "combating red tape" to a mere phrase (or to the repetition of whiteguard, Socialist-Revolutionary, and also Menshevik, gossip), instead of persistently and perseveringly applying definite measures.

SECOND GROUP OF QUESTIONS

9. REVIVAL OF AGRICULTURE:

- (A) PEASANT FARMING; (B) STATE FARMS;
(C) COMMUNES; (D) ARTELS; (E) CO-OPERATIVES;
(F) OTHER FORMS OF COLLECTIVE FARMING

The briefest summaries, giving the figures of the reports sent to the respective departments, with the date on which each report was sent.

More detailed information—not in every report, but periodically, every four or six months, and so forth—on the more important aspects of local farming, results of investigations, the more important measures adopted, and their verified results.

Not less than twice a year exact information must be given on the number of collective farms (all types, *b-f*), classified according to degree of organisation—good, fair and unsatisfactory. Not less than twice a year a typical farm in each of these three groups must be described in detail, giving exact data on the farm described—size, where located, production results, what assistance it gives to peasant farming, etc.

10. REVIVAL OF INDUSTRY:

- (A) LARGE-SCALE INDUSTRY CONTROLLED ENTIRELY BY THE CENTRE;
(B) LARGE-SCALE INDUSTRY CONTROLLED PARTLY
OR ENTIRELY BY LOCAL BODIES;
(C) SMALL, HANDICRAFT, DOMESTIC, ETC.,
INDUSTRIES

The replies should be on the same lines as those for the preceding point. As regards category *a*, the local bodies, which have opportunities of closely observing the life and work of the large national establishments, their influence on the surrounding population and the attitude of the population towards them, must in every report give information on these establishments, on what assistance the local bodies give these establishments, the results of this assistance, the assistance the establishments render the local population, their most urgent requirements, defects in their organisation, etc.

11. FUEL: (A) FIREWOOD; (B) COAL; (C) OIL;
(D) SHALE; (E) OTHER TYPES OF FUEL (WASTE FUEL, ETC.)

The same as for the two preceding questions: brief summaries, giving the figures in the reports sent to the respective department and dates on which they were sent.

Detailed information on what is most important, on what is outside the scope of the department, on local co-ordination of work, etc.

Special attention must be paid to economising fuel. What measures are being taken? What are the results?

12. FOOD SUPPLIES

Summary of reports to the Commissariat of Food Supplies, adhering to rules enumerated above.

Market gardening and suburban farming (connected with industrial establishments). Results.

Local experience in organising school meals, the feeding of children, dining-rooms, public catering in general, etc.

Bi-monthly summaries in two figures are obligatory, i.e., total number of persons receiving food, and total quantity of foodstuffs distributed.

In every large consuming centre (large or middle-sized towns, military institutions in special settlements, etc.) we are feeding many superfluous people, former government officials who have crept into Soviet offices, hidden bourgeois and profiteers, etc. A persistent effort must be made to catch these superfluous mouths who are infringing the fundamental law "He who does not work neither shall he eat". For this purpose, a responsible statistician must be appointed in all such places to study the returns of the census of August 28, 1920, as well as current statistical returns, and submit a signed report on the number of superfluous consumers every two months.

13. BUILDING INDUSTRY

Replies must be on the same lines as the preceding. Local initiative and self-reliance are particularly important in this sphere and must be given particularly wide scope. Detailed information on the more important measures and results is obligatory.

14. EXEMPLARY AND HOPELESS ENTERPRISES AND ESTABLISHMENTS

A description of every enterprise, establishment and office connected with economic development and worthy of being called exemplary, or at all events outstanding, or successful (if there is no exemplary and no outstanding one) is obligatory. Names of the members of the management boards of these establishments. Their methods. Results. Attitude of the workers and population.

The same as regards hopeless and useless enterprises.

Particularly important is the question of closing enterprises that are not absolutely essential (hopeless ones, such as might be closed and their work transferred to a smaller number of larger enterprises, etc.). Statistical summary of such superfluous establishments, their number and in what order the Republic should gradually get rid of them.

15. IMPROVEMENT IN ECONOMIC WORK

Enumerate particularly important and exemplary cases of improvements introduced by inventors and workers of exceptional ability. Give their names; enumerate experiments which the local bodies regard as important, and so forth.

16. BONUSSES IN KIND

This is one of the most important factors in socialist development. The enlistment of labour is one of the most important and difficult problems of socialism.

Practical experience in this field must be systematically collected, recorded and studied.

Obligatory bi-monthly reports showing: how many bonuses

issued? What the bonus consists of? What branch of industry? (separately—forestry work, and all other branches). How do the results, output, compare with the number of bonuses issued?

Have there been cases where bonuses have been converted into a wage reserve? If so, report every case individually.

Have bonuses been issued to particularly successful enterprises and individual workers? Give exact details of each case.

Investigate—can a local product be obtained (for export, or one particularly valuable for use in Russia) by increasing the bonuses in kind by so much and so much? This is very important, because if this investigation is properly conducted all over the country, we will find many valuable products which we could profitably export, even if we have to import a certain quantity of goods for the bonuses in kind.

17. THE TRADE UNIONS. THEIR PART IN PRODUCTION

The gubernia trade union councils and the uyezdz trade union bodies must immediately appoint reporters and their deputies who must themselves and with the aid of local statisticians draw up bi-monthly reports on this subject.

As regards production propaganda, state precisely facts and the number of lectures, meetings and demonstrations, with the names of the organisers, etc.

But immeasurably more important than production propaganda are facts about the part the factory committees, and the trade unions generally, actually take in production. How do they participate? Describe every typical case. Practical results. Compare establishments where the participation of a trade union in production is well, or fairly well, organised with those where it is not organised.

The question of labour discipline is particularly important. Reports on the number of absentees are obligatory. Compare factories where labour discipline is bad with those where it is good.

Methods of improving labour discipline:

Comrades' disciplinary courts. How many, and when established? How many cases do they examine per month? Results?

18. STEALING

While some organisations see this widespread evil and are fighting it, there are others which report "In the department, office or factory in our charge there is no stealing"; "everything is in order".

Precise bi-monthly reports are obligatory. How many offices, establishments, and so forth, send in information? How many do not?

Brief summary of this information.

The measures taken to combat stealing.

Are managers, management boards, or factory committees called to account (for laxity in combating stealing)?

Are people searched? Are other methods of control employed, if so, what methods?

Is the new law on commodity exchange, and on the permission given the workers to retain part of their output for this purpose, having the effect of reducing stealing? Give precise details.

Local warehouses, *i.e.*, warehouses located in the given district and belonging to the state or to the local authorities. Brief summary of the reports on these warehouses, giving the date on which each was sent.

Reports by the local authorities on state warehouses. Methods of protection. Theft. Number of persons employed, etc.

19. FOOD SPECULATION

Extent of this according to local information. Predominating type of speculators. Workers? Peasants? Railway employees? Other Soviet employees? And so forth.

State of the railways and waterways.

Measures to combat speculation and results obtained.

What records are being kept of speculators and speculation?

20. USE OF ARMY UNITS FOR LABOUR

The labour armies. Composition, numerical strength and work performed. Methods of accounting? Attitude of the local population?

Other forms of using army units—ditto universal military training units—for labour purposes.

Numerical strength of local army units—ditto local universal military training administration, and number of youths undergoing training in the units.

Concrete cases of employing youths undergoing universal military training and men of the Red Army for definite forms of control work, sanitary inspection, helping the local population, various economic operations. Give a detailed description of every case, or if there are a number of cases, give two typical ones: the most successful and most unsuccessful.

21. LABOUR SERVICE AND LABOUR MOBILISATION

How are the local departments of the People's Commissariat of Labour organised? What are they doing?

Brief summaries of their reports sent to the People's Commissariat of Labour; the date on which each report was sent must be given.

Describe, not less than once in four months, two typical cases of labour mobilisation; the most successful and the most unsuccessful.

Enumerate purposes for which labour service was enforced. Total figures of the number engaged and results of work done.

What part do the local departments of the Central Statistical Board take in organising labour service and labour mobilisation?

THIRD GROUP OF QUESTIONS

22. REGIONAL AND LOCAL ECONOMIC COUNCILS

When and how were the economic councils established in the localities at gubernia, uyezd and volost level? How is their work co-ordinated between themselves and with the village committees, the factory committees?

Economic councils of district Soviets in big cities. Their composition, work, how is the work organised, relations with the city Soviet?

Are there district committees and district economic coun-

cils? Are they needed? Is it necessary to set up the larger factory or industrial settlements, with their environs, as independent areas, and so forth?

23. THE GOSPLAN
(THE STATE GENERAL PLANNING COMMISSION OF THE C.L.D.)
AND ITS RELATIONS WITH THE LOCAL ECONOMIC BODIES

Are there any regional bodies of the Gosplan? Or special representatives of the latter? Or groups of experts acting in such capacity?

Is the work of the local bodies co-ordinated with that of the Gosplan? If so, how? Is there any need for such co-ordination?

24. ELECTRIFICATION

Have the gubernia and uyezd libraries copies of the *Plan for the Electrification of the R.S.F.S.R.* that was submitted to the Eighth Congress of Soviets? If so, how many copies? If not, it shows that the local delegates to the Eighth Congress of Soviets are dishonest and ought to be expelled from the Party and dismissed from their responsible posts, or else are idlers who ought to be taught by imprisonment to do their duty (at the Eighth Congress of Soviets 1,500-2,000 copies were given out for distribution to local libraries).

What measures have been taken to carry out the decision of the Eighth Congress of Soviets to conduct extensive propaganda on the electrification plan? How many articles on this have appeared in the local newspapers? How many lectures have been delivered? Number of persons attending these?

Have all local workers possessing theoretical or practical knowledge of electricity been mobilised for the purpose of delivering lectures on, or teaching, the subject? Number of such persons? How is their work conducted? Are the local or nearest electric power stations utilised for lectures and purposes of instruction? Number of such stations.

How many educational establishments have included the electrification plan in their syllabus, in conformity with the decision of the Eighth Congress of Soviets?

Has anything practical been done towards carrying out this

plan? Or any electrification work outside of the plan? If so, what has been done?

Is there a local plan and schedule of work on electrification?

25. COMMODITY EXCHANGE WITH FOREIGN COUNTRIES

It is absolutely obligatory for all frontier districts to give replies to this question, but not only for them. Uyezds and gubernias adjacent to frontier areas also have opportunities for engaging in such commodity exchange and of observing how it is organised. Furthermore, as indicated above (point 16: Bonuses in Kind) localities even very remote from the frontier have opportunities of engaging in commodity exchange with foreign countries.

State of the ports? Protection of the frontier? Volume and forms of trade? Brief summaries of the reports on this sent to the People's Commissariat of Foreign Trade, giving the date on which each report was sent.

Supervision of the work of the People's Commissariat of Foreign Trade by the local Economic Councils? Their opinions on practical organisation and results?

26. RAILWAY, WATER AND LOCAL TRANSPORT

Brief summaries of the reports sent to the relevant department, giving date on which each report was sent.

Review of the situation from the local point of view.

Defects in the transport system. Measures taken to improve it and their results?

The state of local transport facilities, and measures taken to improve them.

27. PRESS PUBLICITY FOR ECONOMIC WORK

Local publications and *Ekonomicheskaya Zhizn*. How is economic work treated in the press? What part do non-Party people take in this? Verification and appraisal of practical experience?

Circulation of local publications and of *Ekonomicheskaya Zhizn*? Are they kept in the libraries and accessible to the public?

Publication of pamphlets and books on economic development. Give list of the publications issued.

Demand for foreign literature; to what extent is it satisfied? Are the publications of the Bureau of Foreign Science and Technology delivered? If so, what opinion is expressed about them? Other foreign publications in Russian and other languages?

FOURTH GROUP OF QUESTIONS

This group should include questions chosen at the discretion of and suggested by the local bodies themselves, as well as by individual persons; moreover, these questions may be directly or indirectly, closely or remotely connected with economic development.

These reports must be drawn up in co-operation with the members of the local staffs of the Central Statistical Board. Whether they, or other persons, draw them up is a matter that can be left to the discretion of the local Economic Councils; but the co-operation of the gubernia statistical bureau and the uyezd statisticians is obligatory. Every report, or the reply to every question, if written by different persons, must be signed by the author, giving his official position, if he holds one. Responsibility for the reports rests upon the authors, as well as upon the local Economic Councils as a whole, whose duty it is to send regular, punctual and veracious reports.

In those localities where there is a shortage of capable forces, courses of instruction in the compilation of reports must be organised under the supervision of statisticians and comrades especially appointed for the purpose (from the Workers' and Peasants' Inspection, and other bodies). The names of the persons responsible for these courses and the schedule of instruction must be published.

Lenin

May 21, 1921

Published as a pamphlet in 1921

Collected Works, Vol. 32

THE LOCAL ECONOMIC BODIES

SPEECH DELIVERED AT THE SESSION OF THE ALL-RUSSIA CENTRAL EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE

May 30, 1921

Comrades, I have very little to add to what Comrade Osinsky has said, for he has already explained the preliminary draft of the Instructions,⁴⁴ copies of which you have, and the main idea underlying it as a draft bill. As there are details in this matter which virtually determine the whole issue, it was decided not to limit its examination to the Council of Labour and Defence and the Council of People's Commissars, but to bring it before the Party Conference, where the Instructions were approved in principle, and before the supreme legislative body—the Session of the All-Russia Central Executive Committee. Local economic workers must carefully verify the methods by which this law is to be carried out, and it may be necessary, at first, to lay down a number of supplementary rules.

Care must be taken that this measure is not, under any circumstances, converted into just another means to increase red tape. This is by no means precluded if we begin to receive too many reports, or if the methods of compiling them do not guarantee that they can be checked. Here, comrades, we must give thought to the methods of compiling the reports, and perhaps you will consider it expedient to elect a special committee which, guided by the observations that will be made here and the instructions that you give it, will put the matter of reports in final shape. We already have a fair amount of material on this question. Naturally, if reports are to be submitted, they must come not only from the various economic bodies, but also from the People's Commissariats, including those which do not run branches of the economy but are,

nevertheless, closely connected with economic work. One of the main objects of printing the reports is to bring them within the reach of the non-Party masses, and of the population generally. We cannot use mass production methods and print these reports in large numbers, and so we must concentrate them in the libraries. That being the case, we must arrange for brief printed summaries of these reports, for the gist of what most interests the whole population. Technical facilities for this are available. Before coming here to speak I made inquiries of the representative of the Chief Paper Committee. He sent me a minute report, covering 339 uyezd centres, which shows that each of these uyezd centres possesses printing facilities and also a sufficient quantity of paper to print very brief reports. He based his calculations on the assumption that the smallest of these uyezd centres would print 16 pages in octavo, once a month, of course. Once a month is too often. Whether you decide on once in two months, or in four, or perhaps even a longer period, will evidently be determined by the reports we get from the localities. He proposes that they be printed in a thousand copies, and in this way, he calculates, the paper now available will suffice. A thousand copies would enable us to supply them at least to every uyezd library and so bring them within the reach of all who are interested in them, particularly the masses of non-Party people. At first, of course, this will have to be tried as an experiment; no one can guarantee that it will be successful at once, and that there will be no defects.

To conclude my brief supplementary remarks I would like to emphasise one more thing. One of the most important tasks that confronts us at the present time is that of widely enlisting non-Party people for this work and ensuring that not only members of the Party and, at all events, not only representatives of the department concerned, but also the largest possible number of non-Party people are interested in the work and enlisted for it. It appeared to us that this could not be achieved in any way except by publishing the reports, at any rate, the more essential parts of them. Some organisations send in extremely full reports. All the information that we have received on this question up to now shows that some local bodies are excellently organised. At all events,

the work in the localities is constantly providing us with a lot of very encouraging material. What we really lack is the ability to make the best examples widely known—we have only a few—and to set them up as models which all should be obliged to follow. Our newspapers and journals give no publicity to these really exemplary local organisations which have practical experience. Printing these reports and bringing them within the reach of the broad masses of the population, by supplying copies to every, even if only uyezd, library, should help, if conferences of non-Party people are properly convened, to enlist far larger numbers in the work of economic development. Any number of resolutions have been passed on this subject. In some places something has been done. But taking the country as a whole, certainly far too little is being done. By this method, however, we shall improve the work of the organisations and make it possible for every local worker with a responsible job in economic development to provide the centre with reports over his own signature that contain precise and definite information on his practical experience, which can be used as a model. This, perhaps, is what we lack most at the present time.

As for the question of how these reports are subsequently to be summarised and studied, and utilised at conferences, congresses and by local organisations—that will be determined by experience. The main thing now, considering the present experience of local workers, is to endorse this decree and try it out experimentally, so that at the forthcoming All-Russia Congress (approximately in December) we are certain to have results that will show how to enlarge, improve, amend and supplement this measure on the basis of experience.

These are the brief supplementary remarks that I would like to confine myself to for the time being.

First printed in full in 1922, in
*I-IV Sessions of the All-Russia
Central Executive Committee
(Eighth Convocation). Verbatim
Report.* Moscow

Collected Works, Vol. 32

LETTER TO THE EDITORS OF "EKONOMICHESKAYA ZHIZN"

September 1

The conversion of *Ekonomicheskaya Zhizn* into the official organ of the Council of Labour and Defence should not be a simple and empty formality.

The paper must become a militant organ that not only, first, provides regular and truthful information on our economy but, secondly, analyses the information, processes it scientifically to arrive at the right conclusions for the management of industry, etc., and, thirdly and lastly, *tightens up the discipline* of all workers on the economic front, ensures punctuality in reporting, approves good work and exposes to the judgement of all inaccurate, backward and incompetent workers in a certain factory, office, branch of economy, etc.

The paper provides a mass of valuable, especially statistical, material on our economy. That material, however, suffers from two faults—it is casual, incomplete, unsystematic and, what is more, not processed, not analysed.

I will give you an example to explain this.

The article "The Moscow Basin in July" (No. 188) is one of the best because it analyses the data, compares them with the past and compares the enterprises one with another. The analysis, however, is incomplete. There is no explanation of why one enterprise (the Tovarkovo mines) has solved a problem others have not solved. No practical deduction is made. There is no comparison of annual data.

In issue No. 190, on page 2, there is an abundance of statistical details, usual for the paper, but they are not "digested" at all, they are casual, raw, without a suggestion of analysis and are not compared (with the past and with other enterprises), etc.

The following changes must be made if the paper is to be the real organ of the Council of Labour and Defence and not an organ in words alone.

(1) Maintain a strict check on unpunctual and incomplete reports sent to relevant organisations and publicly list those that are inaccurate; at the same time *work to ensure* (through the People's Commissariat concerned or through the directorate of the Council of Labour and Defence) precise reporting.

(2) All statistical data must be much more strictly, that is, more carefully and thoroughly, systematised, and data must be obtained for comparison, always using the data for past years (past months, etc.); always select material for analysis that will explain the *reasons* for failure, and will *make prominent* some successfully operating enterprises or, at least, those that are ahead of the rest, etc.

(3) Organise a network of local correspondents, both Communists and non-Party people, allot greater space to local correspondence from factories, mines, state farms, railway depots and workshops, etc.

(4) Publish returns on the most important problems of our economy as special supplements. The returns absolutely must be processed, with an all-round analysis and practical conclusions.

Since there is no paper, we must economise. And we probably can. For instance, reduce the number of copies from 44,000 to 30,000 (quite enough if correctly distributed, allowing two copies to each of 10,000 volosts, four to each of 1,000 uyezds, ten to each of 100 gubernias and 5,000 extra—all of them to go only to libraries, editorial offices and a few institutions). That will leave enough paper for eight supplements, each of two pages, a month.

That would be sufficient for monthly returns on a large number of important points (fuel; industry—two or three supplements; transport; food supplies; state farms, etc.).

These supplements should provide summarised statistics on the most important branches of the economy and they should be processed, analysed and practical conclusions should be drawn from them.

The entire statistical material in the daily paper—there is a great deal of it but it is fragmentary—should be *adjusted*

to the monthly summaries and shorn of all details and trivialities, etc.

Since *Ekonomicheskaya Zhizn* and the *Central Statistical Board* use the same sources in many cases, the supplements to the newspaper should (for the time being) replace the publications of the *Central Statistical Board*.

(5) All current statistical material should be divided between (a) employees of *Ekonomicheskaya Zhizn*, (b) members of the *State Planning Commission* and (c) members or employees of the *Central Statistical Board* in such a way that each of them should be in charge of *one* branch of economy, and should be *responsible for*—

(aa) the timely receipt of reports and summaries; for a successful “struggle” to get them; for repeated demands for them, etc.;

(bb) for the summarising and analysis of data, and

(cc) for practical conclusions.

(6) *Ekonomicheskaya Zhizn* must keep track of enterprises granted as concessions and those *leased*, as far as their reporting is concerned and also by way of supervision and the drawing of conclusions, *in the same way* as it keeps track of all others.

Please arrange for a conference to include an editor of *Ekonomicheskaya Zhizn*, one member of the *Central Statistical Board* and one member of the *State Planning Commission* to discuss these questions and measures to be taken. Please inform me of the decisions of the conference.

Lenin,

Chairman of the Council of Labour and Defence

P.S. Will that conference please discuss the question of elaborating an *index-number** (index figure) to determine the general state of our economy. This index should be published every month.

First published
on November 6, 1923
in *Ekonomicheskaya Zhizn* No. 31

Collected Works, Vol. 33

* These words are in English in the original.—Ed.

THE FOURTH ANNIVERSARY OF THE OCTOBER REVOLUTION

(Excerpt)

Our last, but most important and most difficult task, the one we have done least about, is economic development, the laying of economic foundations for the new, socialist edifice on the site of the demolished feudal edifice and the semi-demolished capitalist edifice. It is in this most important and most difficult task that we have sustained the greatest number of reverses and have made most mistakes. How could anyone expect that a task so new to the world could be begun without reverses and without mistakes! But we have begun it and shall continue it. And at this very moment we are, by our New Economic Policy, correcting a number of our mistakes. We are learning how to continue erecting the socialist edifice in a country of small-peasant farming without committing such mistakes.

The difficulties are immense. But we are accustomed to grappling with immense difficulties. Not for nothing do our enemies call us “stone-hard” and exponents of a “bone-breaking policy”. But we have also learned, at least to some extent, another art that is essential in revolution, namely, flexibility, the ability to effect swift and sudden changes of tactics if changes in objective conditions demand them, and to choose another path for the achievement of our goal if the former path proves to be inexpedient or impossible at the given moment.

Borne along on the crest of the wave of enthusiasm, rousing first the political enthusiasm and then the military enthusiasm of the people, we expected to accomplish economic tasks just as great as the political and military tasks we had accomplished by relying directly on this enthusiasm. We expected—or perhaps it would be truer to say that we

presumed without having given it adequate consideration—to be able to organise the state production and the state distribution of products on communist lines in a country of small-peasant farming directly as ordered by the proletarian state. Experience has proved that we were wrong. It appears that a number of transitional stages are necessary—state capitalism and socialism—in order to *prepare*—to prepare by many years of effort—for the transition to communism. Not directly relying on enthusiasm, but aided by the enthusiasm engendered by the great revolution, and on the basis of personal interest, personal incentive and business principles, we must first set to work in this country of small-peasant farming to build solid gangways to socialism by way of state capitalism. Otherwise we shall never get to communism; we shall never bring scores of millions of people to communism. That is what experience, the objective course of the development of the revolution, has taught us.

And we, who during these three and four years have learned to make abrupt changes of front (when abrupt changes of front are needed), have begun zealously, attentively and sedulously (although still not zealously, attentively and sedulously enough) to learn to make a new change of front, namely, the New Economic Policy. The proletarian state must become a cautious, assiduous and shrewd “businessman”, a punctilious *wholesale merchant*—otherwise it will never succeed in putting this country of small-peasant farming economically on its feet. Under existing conditions, living as we are side by side with the capitalist (for the time being capitalist) West, there is no other way of progressing to communism. A wholesale merchant is an economic type as remote from communism as heaven from earth. But this is one of the contradictions which, in the actual conditions of life, lead from a small-peasant economy via state capitalism to socialism. Personal incentive will develop production; and our primary task is to increase production at all costs. Wholesale trade economically unites millions of small peasants; it gives them a personal incentive, links them up and leads them to the next step, namely, to various forms of association and alliance in the process of production itself. We have already set to work to make the necessary changes in our economic policy; and here we already

have certain successes to our credit; it is true they are small and partial, but nonetheless they are successes. In this new field of “tuition” we are already finishing our preparatory class. By persistent and assiduous study, by making practical experience the test of every step we take, by not fearing to alter over and over again what we have already begun, by correcting our mistakes and most carefully analysing their significance, we shall pass to the higher classes. We shall go through the whole “course”, although the present state of world economics and world politics has made that course much longer and much more difficult than we would like. No matter at what cost, no matter how severe the hardships of the transition period may be—despite disaster, famine and ruin, we shall not flinch; we shall triumphantly carry our cause to its goal.

October 14, 1921

Pravda No. 234, October 18, 1921
Signed: N. Lenin

Collected Works, Vol. 33

THE IMPORTANCE OF GOLD NOW AND AFTER THE COMPLETE VICTORY OF SOCIALISM

The best way to celebrate the anniversary of a great revolution is to concentrate attention on its unsolved problems. It is particularly appropriate and necessary to celebrate the revolution in this way at a time when we are faced with fundamental problems that the revolution has not yet solved; when we must master something new (from the point of view of what the revolution has accomplished up to now) for the solution of these problems.

What is new for our revolution at the present time is the need to resort to a "reformist", gradual, cautious and round-about mode of operation in solving the fundamental problems of economic development. This "novelty" gives rise to a number of questions, perplexities and doubts in both theory and practice.

A theoretical question. How can we explain the transition from a series of extremely revolutionary actions to extremely "reformist" actions in the same field at a time when the revolution as a whole is making victorious progress? Does this not imply a "surrender of positions", an "admission of defeat", or something of that sort? Of course, our enemies—from the semi-feudal type of reactionaries to the Mensheviks or other knights of the Two-and-a-Half International⁴⁵—say that it does. They would not be enemies if they did not shout something of this sort on every pretext, and even without any pretext. The touching unanimity that prevails on this question among all parties, from the feudal reactionaries to the Mensheviks, is only further proof that opposed to the proletarian revolution is the "one reactionary mass" of all these parties (as Engels foresaw in his letters to Bebel of 1875 and 1884—be it said in parenthesis).

But there is some "perplexity" among friends too.

Restore large-scale industry, organise the direct interchange of its output for the produce of small-peasant farming, and thus assist the socialisation of the latter. For the purpose of restoring large-scale industry, borrow from the peasants a certain quantity of foodstuffs and raw materials by means of the surplus-appropriation system—this was the plan (or method, system) that we followed for more than three years, up to the spring of 1921. This was a revolutionary approach to the problem, namely, to proceed at once to break up the old social-economic system completely and to substitute a new one for it.

Since the spring of 1921, instead of this approach, plan, method, or mode of action, we have been adopting (we have not yet "adopted" but are still "adopting", and we have not yet fully realised this) a totally different method, a reformist type of method: not to *break up* the old social-economic system—trade, small production, small proprietorship, capitalism—but to *revive* trade, small proprietorship, capitalism, while cautiously and gradually getting the upper hand over them, or creating the possibility of subjecting them to state regulation *only to the extent* that they revive.

This is quite a different approach to the problem.

Compared with the previous, revolutionary, approach, this is a reformist approach (revolution is a change which breaks the old order to its very foundations, and not one that cautiously, slowly and gradually remodels it, taking care to break as little as possible).

The question that arises is this. If, after trying revolutionary methods, you find they have failed and adopt reformist methods, does this not prove that you are declaring the revolution to have been a mistake in general? Does it not prove that you should not have started with the revolution but should have started with and confined yourselves to reforms?

This is the conclusion that is drawn by the Mensheviks and others like them. But this conclusion is either sophistry and simply a fraud perpetrated by hardened politicians, or the childishness of political tyros. The greatest, perhaps the only danger for the genuine revolutionary is that of extreme revolutionism, ignoring the limits and conditions in which

revolutionary methods are appropriate and can be successfully employed. Genuine revolutionaries have come a cropper most often when they began to write "revolution" with a capital R, to elevate "revolution" to something almost divine, to lose their heads, to lose the ability to reflect, weigh and ascertain in the coolest and most dispassionate manner at what moment, under what circumstances and in which sphere of action it is necessary to act in a revolutionary manner, and at what moment, under what circumstances and in which sphere it is necessary to apply reformist action. Genuine revolutionaries will perish (not that they will be defeated from outside, but that their work will suffer internal collapse) only if they abandon their sober outlook and take it into their heads that the "great, victorious, world" revolution can and must solve all problems in a revolutionary manner under all circumstances and in all spheres of action. If they do this, their doom is certain.

Whoever gets such ideas into his head, must perish, because he is getting foolish ideas in connection with a fundamental problem; and in the midst of fierce war (and revolution is the fiercest sort of war) the penalty for folly is defeat.

What grounds are there for assuming that the "great, victorious, world" revolution can and must employ only revolutionary methods? There are none at all. It is absolutely untrue, and if we stick to Marxism it is proved by purely theoretical propositions. The experience of our revolution also shows it to be untrue. From the theoretical point of view—foolish things are done in time of revolution just as at any other time, said Engels, and he was right. We must try to do as few foolish things as possible and rectify those that are done as quickly as possible; we must estimate as soberly as possible which problems can be solved by revolutionary methods at any given time and which cannot. From the point of view of our own practical experience—the Brest Peace was an example of action that was not revolutionary at all; it was reformist, and even worse, because it was a retreat, whereas, as a general rule, reformist action advances slowly, cautiously, gradually, and does not move backwards. The proof that our tactics in signing the Brest Peace were correct is now so complete, is so evident to all and generally admitted, that there is no need to say any more about it.

Our revolution has completed only its bourgeois-democratic work; and we can be legitimately proud of this. The proletarian or socialist part of its work may be summed up in three main points: (1) The revolutionary emergence from the imperialist world war; the exposure and *halting* of the slaughter organised by the two world groups of capitalist predators. Our part of this we accomplished in full; it could have been accomplished in all parts only by a revolution in a number of advanced countries. (2) The creation of the Soviet system, the form in which the dictatorship of the proletariat is effected. This epoch-making change has been made. The era of bourgeois-democratic parliamentarism has come to an end. A new chapter in world history—the era of proletarian dictatorship—has been started. The Soviet system and all forms of proletarian dictatorship will have the finishing touches put to them and be completed only by the efforts of a number of countries. There is still a great deal we have not done in this field. It would be unpardonable to lose sight of this. Again and again we shall have to put the finishing touches to the work, re-do it, start from the beginning. Every step forward and upward that we take in developing our productive forces and our culture must be accompanied by the work of finishing and altering our Soviet system, for we are still low in the scale of economics and culture. Much will have to be altered, and to be "embarrassed" by this would be the height of folly (if not something worse than folly). (3) The creation of the economic basis of the socialist system. This has not yet been completed in the main, fundamental aspects, but it is our surest foundation, surest from the point of view of principle and from the practical point of view, from the point of view of the R.S.F.S.R. today and from the international point of view.

Since this chief thing has not yet been completed in the main, we must concentrate all our attention upon it. The difficulty here lies in the form of the transition.

In April 1918, in my *Immediate Tasks of the Soviet Government*, I wrote:

"It is not enough to be a revolutionary and an adherent of socialism or a Communist in general. You must be able at each particular moment to find the particular link in the chain which you must grasp with all your might in order to hold the

whole chain and to prepare firmly for the transition to the next link; the order of the links, their form, the manner in which they are linked together, their difference from each other in the historical chain of events are not as simple and not as senseless as those in an ordinary chain made by a smith."

At the present time, in the sphere of activity with which we are dealing, this link is the revival of home *trade* under proper state regulation (direction). Trade—that is the "link" in the historical chain of events, in the transitional forms of our socialist construction in 1921-22, which we, the proletarian state, we, the leading Communist Party, "*must grasp with all our might*". If we "grasp" this link firmly enough *now* we shall certainly control the *whole* chain in the very near future. If we do not, we shall not control the whole chain, we shall not create the foundation for socialist social and economic relations.

Communism and trade?! It sounds strange. The two seem to be unconnected, incongruous, remote from each other. But if we study it from the point of view of *economics*, we shall find that the one is no more remote from the other than communism is from small-peasant, patriarchal agriculture.

When we are victorious on a world scale I think we shall use gold for the purpose of building public lavatories in the streets of some of the largest cities of the world. This would be the most "just" and most educational way of utilising gold for the benefit of those generations which have not forgotten how, for the sake of gold, ten million men were killed and thirty million maimed in the "great war for freedom", in the war of 1914-18, in the war that was waged to decide the great question of which peace was the worst, the Brest Peace or the Versailles Peace; and how, for the sake of this gold, they certainly intend to kill twenty million men and to maim sixty million in a war, say, in 1925, or 1928, between, say, Japan and America, or between Britain and America, or something like that.

But however "just", useful, or humane it would be to utilise gold for this purpose, we nevertheless say: let us work for another decade or two with the same intensity and with the same success as in the 1917-21 period, only in a much wider field, in order to reach this stage. Meanwhile, we must save

the gold in the R.S.F.S.R., sell it at the highest price; buy goods with it at the lowest price. "When you live among wolves, you must howl like a wolf." As for exterminating all the wolves, as should be done in a rational human society, we shall act up to the wise Russian proverb: "Boast not before but after the battle."

Trade is the only possible economic link between the scores of millions of small farmers and large-scale industry *if* ... *if* there is not alongside these farmers an excellently equipped large-scale machine industry linked up by a network of electric cables, an industry well enough equipped technically, with its organisational "superstructures" and accompanying accessories, to be able to supply the small farmers with the best goods in larger quantities, more quickly and more cheaply than before. On a world scale this "*if*" *has already been achieved*, this condition already exists. But the country, formerly one of the most backward capitalist countries, which tried alone directly and at one stroke to create, to put into use, to organise practically the *new* links between industry and agriculture, failed to achieve this task by "direct assault", and must now try to achieve it by a number of slow, gradual, and cautious "siege" operations.

The proletarian state can control trade, direct it into definite channels, keep it within certain limits. I shall quote a small, a very small example: in the Donets Basin a slight, still very slight, but undoubted economic revival has commenced, partly due to an increase in the productivity of labour at the large state mines, and partly due to the leasing of small mines to peasants. As a result the proletarian state is receiving a small quantity (a miserably small quantity compared with what is obtained in the advanced countries, but an appreciable quantity considering our poverty-stricken condition) of extra coal at a cost of, say, 100; and it is selling this coal to various government departments at a price of, say, 120, and to private people at a price of, say, 140. (I must say in parenthesis that my figures are quite arbitrary, first because I do not know the exact figures, and, secondly, I would not now make them public even if I did.) This looks as if we are *beginning*, if only in very modest dimensions, to control *trade* between industry and agriculture, to control wholesale trade, to cope with the

task of taking in hand the available, small, backward industry, or large-scale but enfeebled and ruined industry; of reviving trade on the *present* economic basis; of making the ordinary, average peasant (and this is the typical peasant, representative of the masses and the vehicle of anarchy) feel the benefit of the economic revival; of taking advantage of it for the purpose of more systematically and persistently, more widely and successfully, restoring large-scale industry.

We shall not surrender to "sentimental socialism", or to the old Russian, semi-aristocratic, semi-muzhik and patriarchal mood, with their supreme contempt for trade. We can use, and, since it is necessary, we *must* learn to use, all transitional economic forms for the purpose of strengthening the link between the peasantry and the proletariat, for the purpose of immediately reviving the economy of our ruined and tormented country, of reviving industry, and facilitating future, more extensive and more deep-going measures like electrification.

Only Marxism has precisely and correctly defined the relation of reforms to revolution. However, Marx was able to see this relation only from one aspect, namely, under the conditions preceding the first to any extent permanent and lasting victory of the proletariat, if only in one country. Under those conditions, the basis of the proper relation was: reforms are a by-product of the revolutionary class struggle of the proletariat. In the capitalist world this relation is the foundation of the revolutionary tactics of the proletariat—the ABC, which is being distorted and obscured by the corrupt leaders of the Second International and the half-pedantic and half-mincing knights of the Two-and-a-Half International. After the victory of the proletariat, if only in one country, something new enters into the relation between reforms and revolution. In principle, it is the same as before, but a change in form takes place, which Marx himself could not foresee, but which can be appreciated only on the basis of the philosophy and politics of Marxism. Why were we able to carry out the Brest retreat successfully? Because we had advanced so far that we had room in which to retreat. At such dizzy speed, *in a few weeks*, from October 25, 1917, to the Brest Peace, we built up the Soviet state, withdrew from the imperialist war in a revolutionary manner and completed the bourgeois-

democratic revolution so that *even* the great backward movement (the Brest Peace) left us sufficient room in which to take advantage of the "respite" and to march forward victoriously, against Kolchak, Denikin, Yudenich, Pilsudski and Wrangel!

Before the victory of the proletariat, reforms are a by-product of the revolutionary class struggle. After the victory (while still remaining a "by-product" on an international scale) they are, in addition, for the country in which victory has been achieved, a necessary and legitimate respite in those cases when, after the utmost exertion of effort, it becomes obvious that sufficient strength is lacking for the revolutionary accomplishment of some transition or another. Victory creates such a "reserve of strength" that it is possible to hold out even in a forced retreat, hold out both materially and morally. Holding out materially means preserving a sufficient superiority of forces to prevent the enemy from inflicting utter defeat. Holding out morally means not allowing oneself to become demoralised and disorganised, keeping a sober view of the situation, preserving vigour and firmness of spirit, even making a long retreat, but within bounds, and in such a way as to stop the retreat in time, and again return to the offensive.

We retreated to state capitalism, but we retreated within bounds. We are now retreating to the state regulation of trade, but we shall retreat within bounds. Signs are already visible that the retreat is coming to an end; the prospect of stopping this retreat in the not too distant future is dawning. The more conscious, the more unanimous, the more free from prejudice we are in carrying out this necessary retreat, the sooner shall we be able to stop it, and the more lasting, speedy and extensive will our subsequent victorious advance be.

November 5, 1921

Pravda No. 251,
November 6-7, 1921
Signed: N. Lenin

Collected Works, Vol. 33

**THE ROLE AND FUNCTIONS
OF THE TRADE UNIONS
UNDER THE NEW ECONOMIC POLICY**

**DECISION OF THE CENTRAL COMMITTEE
OF THE RUSSIAN COMMUNIST PARTY (BOLSHEVIKS),
ADOPTED JANUARY 12, 1922**

(Excerpt)

**6. THE TRADE UNIONS
AND THE MANAGEMENT OF INDUSTRY**

Following its capture of political power, the principal and fundamental interest of the proletariat lies in securing an enormous increase in the productive forces of society and in the output of manufactured goods. This task, which is clearly formulated in the Programme of the Russian Communist Party, is particularly urgent in our country today owing to post-war ruin, starvation and devastation. Hence, the speediest and most enduring success in restoring large-scale industry is a condition without which no success can be achieved in the general cause of emancipating labour from the yoke of capital and securing the victory of socialism. To achieve this success in Russia, in her present state, it is absolutely essential that all authority in the factories should be concentrated in the hands of the management. The factory management, usually built up on the principle of one-man responsibility, must have authority independently to fix wages and distribute money wages, rations, working clothes, and all other supplies on the basis and within the limits of collective agreements concluded with the trade unions; it must enjoy the utmost freedom to manoeuvre, exercise strict control of the actual successes achieved in increasing production, in making the factory pay its way and in increasing profits, and carefully select the most talented and capable administrative personnel, etc.

Under these circumstances, all direct interference by the trade unions in the management of factories must be regarded as positively harmful and impermissible.

It would be absolutely wrong, however, to interpret this indisputable axiom to mean that the trade unions must play no part in the socialist organisation of industry and in the management of state industry. Their participation in this is necessary in the following strictly defined forms.

**7. THE ROLE AND FUNCTIONS
OF THE TRADE UNIONS IN THE BUSINESS
AND ADMINISTRATIVE ORGANISATIONS
OF THE PROLETARIAN STATE**

The proletariat is the class foundation of the state which is in a process of transition from capitalism to socialism. The proletariat can successfully fulfil this function in a country where the small peasantry greatly predominates only if it very skilfully, cautiously and gradually establishes an alliance with the overwhelming majority of the peasantry. The trade unions must collaborate closely and constantly with the government, all the political and economic activities of which are guided by the class-conscious vanguard of the working class—the Communist Party. Being a school of communism in general the trade unions must, in particular, be a school for training the whole mass of workers, and eventually all working people, in the art of managing socialist industry (and gradually also agriculture).

Proceeding from these principles, the trade unions' part in the activities of the business and administrative organisations of the proletarian state should, in the ensuing period, assume the following main forms:

1. The trade unions should collaborate in constituting all the business and administrative bodies of the state that are connected with economic affairs, and nominate their candidates for them, indicating their length of service, experience, and so forth. Right of decision lies solely with the business organisations, which also bear full responsibility for the

activities of the respective organisations. The business organisations, however, must give careful consideration to the views on all candidates expressed by the trade unions concerned.

2. One of the most important functions of the trade unions is to promote and train factory managers from the ranks of the workers and of the masses of the working people generally. At the present time we have scores of such factory managers who are quite satisfactory, and hundreds who are more or less satisfactory, but very soon, however, we must have hundreds of the former and thousands of the latter. The trade unions must much more carefully and regularly than hitherto keep a systematic register of all workers and peasants capable of holding posts of this kind, and thoroughly, practically and from every aspect verify the progress they make in learning the art of management.

3. The trade unions must take a far greater part in the activities of all the planning bodies of the proletarian state, in drawing up economic plans, in elaborating programmes of production and expenditure of stocks of material supplies for the workers, in choosing the factories that are to continue to receive state supplies, to be leased, or to be given out as concessions, etc. The trade unions should undertake no direct functions of controlling production in private and leased enterprises, but participate in the regulation of private capitalist production exclusively by sharing in the activities of the competent state bodies. In addition to participating in all cultural and educational activities and in production propaganda, the trade unions must also, on an increasing scale, enlist the working class and the masses of the working people generally for all branches of the work of building up the state economy; they must make them familiar with all aspects of economic life and with all details of industrial operations—from the procurement of raw materials to the marketing of the product—give them a more and more concrete understanding of the single state plan of socialist economy and the worker's and peasant's practical interest in its implementation.

4. The drawing up of scales of wages and supplies, etc., is one of the essential functions of the trade unions in the building of socialism and in their participation in the management

of industry. In particular, disciplinary courts should steadily improve labour discipline and proper ways of promoting it and achieving increased productivity; but they must not interfere with the functions of the ordinary People's Courts or with the functions of factory management.

This list of the major functions of the trade unions in the work of building up socialist economy should, of course, be drawn up in greater detail by the competent trade union and government bodies. Taking into account the experience of the enormous work accomplished by the unions in organising the economy and its management, and also the mistakes which have caused no little harm and which result from direct, unqualified, incompetent and irresponsible interference in administrative matters, it is most important, in order to restore the economy and strengthen the Soviet system, deliberately and resolutely to start persevering and practical activities calculated to extend over a long period of years and designed to give the workers, and all working people generally, practical training in the art of managing the economy of the whole country.

8. CONTACT WITH THE MASSES— THE FUNDAMENTAL CONDITION FOR ALL TRADE UNION ACTIVITY

Contact with the masses, i.e., with the overwhelming majority of the workers (and eventually of all the working people) is the most important and most fundamental condition for the success of all trade union activity. In all the trade union organisations and their machinery, from bottom up, there should be instituted, and verified in practice over a period of many years, a system of responsible comrades—who must not all be Communists—who should live right among the workers, study their lives in every detail, be able unerringly, on any question, and at any time, to judge the mood, the real aspirations, needs and thoughts of the masses. They must be able without a shadow of false idealisation to define the degree of their class-consciousness and the extent to which they are influenced by various prejudices and survivals of the

past; and they must be able to win the boundless confidence of the masses by comradeship and concern for their needs. One of the greatest and most serious dangers that confronts the numerically small Communist Party which, as the vanguard of the working class, is guiding a vast country in the process of transition to socialism (for the time being without the direct support of the more advanced countries), is isolation from the masses, the danger that the vanguard may run too far ahead and fail to "straighten out the line", fail to maintain firm contact with the whole army of labour, i.e., with the overwhelming majority of workers and peasants. Just as the very best factory, with the very best motors and first-class machines, will be forced to remain idle if the transmission belts from the motor to the machines are damaged, so our work of socialist construction must meet with inevitable disaster if the trade unions—the transmission belts from the Communist Party to the masses—are badly fitted or function badly. It is not sufficient to explain, to reiterate and corroborate this truth; it must be backed up organisationally by the whole structure of the trade unions and by their everyday activities.

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FIVE YEARS OF THE RUSSIAN REVOLUTION AND THE PROSPECTS OF THE WORLD REVOLUTION

REPORT DELIVERED AT THE FOURTH
CONGRESS OF THE COMMUNIST INTERNATIONAL,
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Comrades, I am down in the list as the main speaker, but you will understand that after my lengthy illness I am not able to make a long report. I can only make a few introductory remarks on the most important questions. My subject will be a very limited one. The subject, "Five Years of the Russian Revolution and the Prospects of the World Revolution", is in general too broad and too large for one speaker to exhaust in a single speech. That is why I shall take only a small part of this subject, namely, the question of the New Economic Policy. I have deliberately taken only this small part in order to make you familiar with what is now the most important question—at all events, it is the most important to me, because I am now working on it.

And so, I shall tell you how we launched the New Economic Policy, and what results we have achieved with the aid of this policy. If I confine myself to this question, I shall, perhaps, succeed in giving you a general survey and a general idea of it.

To begin with how we arrived at the New Economic Policy, I must quote from an article I wrote in 1918.⁴⁶ At the beginning of 1918, in a brief polemic, I touched on the question of the attitude we should adopt towards state capitalism. I then wrote:

"State capitalism would be a *step forward* as compared with the present state of affairs (i.e., the state of affairs at that time) in our Soviet Republic. If in approximately six months' time state capitalism sets in in our republic, it would be a great success and a sure guarantee that within a year

socialism will have gained a permanently firm hold and will have become invincible in our country."

Of course, this was said at a time when we were more foolish than we are now, but not so foolish as to be unable to deal with such matters.

Thus, in 1918, I was of the opinion that with regard to the economic situation then obtaining in the Soviet Republic, state capitalism would be a step forward. This sounds very strange, and perhaps even absurd, for already at that time our republic was a socialist republic and we were every day hastily—perhaps too hastily—adopting various new economic measures which could not be described as anything but socialist measures. Nevertheless, I then held the view that in relation to the economic situation then obtaining in the Soviet Republic state capitalism would be a step forward, and I explained my idea simply by enumerating the elements of the economic system of Russia. In my opinion these elements were the following: "(1) patriarchal, i.e., the most primitive form of agriculture; (2) small commodity production (this includes the majority of the peasants who trade in grain); (3) private capitalism; (4) state capitalism and (5) socialism." All these economic elements were present in Russia at that time. I set myself the task of explaining the relation in which these elements stood to each other, and whether one of the non-socialist elements, namely, state capitalism, should not be rated higher than socialism. I repeat. It seems very strange to everyone that a non-socialist element should be rated higher than, regarded as superior to, socialism in a republic which declares itself a socialist republic. But the fact will become intelligible if you recall that we definitely did not regard the economic system of Russia as something homogeneous and highly developed; we were fully aware that in Russia we had patriarchal agriculture, i.e., the most primitive form of agriculture, alongside the socialist form. What role could state capitalism play in these circumstances?

I then asked myself which of these elements predominated? Clearly, in a petty-bourgeois environment the petty-bourgeois element predominates. I recognised then that the petty-bourgeois element predominated; it was impossible to take a different view. The question I then put to myself—this was

in a specific controversy which had nothing to do with the present question—was: what is our attitude towards state capitalism? And I replied: although it is not a socialist form, state capitalism would be for us, and for Russia, a more favourable form than the existing one. What does that show? It shows that we did not overrate either the rudiments or the principles of socialist economy, although we had already accomplished the social revolution. On the contrary, at that time we already realised to a certain extent that it would be better if we first arrived at state capitalism and only after that at socialism.

I must lay special emphasis on this, because I assume that it is the only point of departure we can take, firstly, to explain what the present economic policy is; and, secondly, to draw very important practical conclusions for the Communist International. I do not want to suggest that we had then a ready-made plan of retreat. This was not the case. Those brief lines set forth in a polemic were not by any means a plan of retreat. For example, they made no mention whatever of that very important point, free trade, which is of fundamental significance to state capitalism. Yet they did contain a general, indefinite idea of retreat. I think that we should take note of that not only from the viewpoint of a country whose economic system was, and is to this day, very backward, but also from the viewpoint of the Communist International and the advanced West-European countries. For example, just now we are engaged in drawing up a programme. I personally think that it would be best to hold just a general discussion on all the programmes, to make the first reading, so to speak, and to get them printed, but not to take a final decision now, this year. Why? First of all, of course, because I do not think we have considered all of them thoroughly enough, and also because we have given scarcely any thought to possible retreat, and to preparations for it. Yet that is a question which, in view of such fundamental changes in the world as the overthrow of capitalism and the building of socialism with all its enormous difficulties, absolutely requires our attention. We must not only know how to act when we pass directly to the offensive and are victorious. In revolutionary times this is not so difficult, nor

so very important; at least, it is not the most decisive thing. There are always times in a revolution when the opponent loses his head; and if we attack him at such a time we may win an easy victory. But that is nothing, because our enemy, if he has enough endurance, can rally his forces beforehand, and so forth. He can easily provoke us to attack him and then throw us back for many years. For this reason, I think the idea that we must prepare for ourselves the possibility of retreat is very important, and not only from the theoretical point of view. From the practical point of view, too, all the parties which are preparing to take the direct offensive against capitalism in the near future must now give thought to the problem of preparing for a possible retreat. I think it will do us no harm to learn this lesson together with all the other lessons which the experience of our revolution offers. On the contrary, it may prove beneficial in many cases.

Now that I have emphasised the fact that as early as 1918 we regarded state capitalism as a possible line of retreat, I shall deal with the results of our New Economic Policy. I repeat: at that time it was still a very vague idea, but in 1921, after we had passed through the most important stage of the Civil War—and passed through it victoriously—we felt the impact of a grave—I think it was the gravest—internal political crisis in Soviet Russia, which caused discontent among a considerable section of the peasantry, and even of the workers. This was the first and, I hope, the last time in the history of Soviet Russia that feeling ran against us among large masses of peasants, not consciously but instinctively. What gave rise to this peculiar, and for us, of course, very unpleasant, situation? The reason for it was that in our economic offensive we had run too far ahead, that we had not provided ourselves with an adequate base, that the masses sensed what we ourselves were not then able to formulate consciously but what we admitted soon after, a few weeks later, namely, that the direct transition to a purely socialist form of economy, to purely socialist distribution, was beyond our strength, and that if we were unable to effect a retreat so as to confine ourselves to easier tasks, we would face disaster. The crisis began, I think, in February 1921. In the spring of that year we decided unanimously—I did not observe

any considerable disagreement among us on this question—to adopt the New Economic Policy. Now, after eighteen months have elapsed, at the close of 1922, we are able to make certain comparisons. What has happened? How have we fared during this period of over eighteen months? What is the result? Has this retreat been of any benefit to us? Has it really saved us, or is the result still indefinite? This is the main question that I put to myself, and I think that this main question is also of first-rate importance to all the Communist Parties; for if the reply is in the negative, we are all doomed. I think that we can all with a clear conscience reply to this question in the affirmative, namely, that the past eighteen months provide positive and absolute proof that we have passed the test.

I shall now try to prove this. To do that I must briefly enumerate all the constituent parts of our economy.

First of all I shall deal with our financial system and our famous Russian ruble. I think we can say that Russian rubles are famous, if only for the reason that their number now in circulation exceeds a trillion. That is something! It is an astronomical figure. I am sure that not everyone here knows what this figure signifies. But we do not think that the figure is so very important even from the point of view of economic science, for the noughts can always be crossed out. We have achieved a thing or two in this art, which is likewise of no importance from the economic point of view, and I am sure that in the further course of events we shall achieve much more. But what is really important is the problem of stabilising the ruble. We are now grappling with this problem, our best forces are working on it, and we attach decisive importance to it. If we succeed in stabilising the ruble for a long period, and then for all time, it will prove that we have won. In that case all these astronomical figures, these trillions and quadrillions, will not have mattered in the least. We shall then be able to place our economy on a firm basis, and develop it further on a firm basis. On this question I think I can cite some fairly important and decisive data. In 1921 the rate of exchange of the paper ruble remained stable for a period of less than three months. This year, 1922, which has not yet drawn to a close, the rate remained stable for a

period of over five months. I think that this proof is sufficient. Of course, if you demand scientific proof that we shall definitely solve this problem, then it is not sufficient; but in general, I do not think it is possible to prove this entirely and conclusively. The data I have cited show that between last year, when we started on the New Economic Policy, and the present day, we have already learned to make progress. Since we have learned to do this, I am sure we shall learn to achieve further successes along this road, provided we avoid doing anything very foolish. The most important thing, however, is trade, namely, the circulation of commodities, which is essential for us. And since we have successfully coped with this problem for two years, in spite of having been in a state of war (for, as you know, Vladivostok was recaptured only a few weeks ago), and in spite of the fact that only now we are able to proceed with our economic activities in a really systematic way—since we have succeeded in keeping the rate of the paper ruble stable for five months instead of only three months, I think I can say that we have grounds to be pleased. After all, we stand alone. We have not received any loans, and are not receiving any now. We have received no assistance from any of the powerful capitalist countries which organise their capitalist economy so “brilliantly” that they do not know to this day which way they are going. By the Treaty of Versailles they have created a financial system that they themselves cannot make head or tail of. If these great capitalist countries are managing things in this way, I think that we, backward and uneducated as we are, may be pleased with the fact that we have grasped the most important thing—the conditions for the stabilisation of the ruble. This is proved not by theoretical analysis but by practical experience, which in my opinion is more important than all the theoretical discussions in the world! Practice shows that we have achieved decisive results in that field, namely, we are beginning to push our economy towards the stabilisation of the ruble, which is of supreme importance for trade, for the free circulation of commodities, for the peasants, and for the vast masses of small producers.

Now I come to our social objectives. The most important factor, of course, is the peasantry. In 1921 discontent un-

doubtedly prevailed among a vast section of the peasantry. Then came the famine. This was the severest trial for the peasants. Naturally, all our enemies abroad shouted: “There, that’s the result of socialist economy!” Quite naturally, of course, they said nothing about the famine actually being the terrible result of the Civil War. All the landowners and capitalists who had begun their offensive against us in 1918 tried to make out that the famine was the result of socialist economy. The famine was indeed a great and grave disaster which threatened to nullify the results of all our organisational and revolutionary efforts.

And so, I ask now, after this unprecedented and unexpected disaster, what is the position today, after we have introduced the New Economic Policy, after we have granted the peasants freedom to trade? The answer is clear and obvious to everyone; in one year the peasants have not only got over the famine, but have paid so much tax in kind that we have already received hundreds of millions of poods of grain, and that almost without employing any measures of coercion. Peasant uprisings, which previously, before 1921, were, so to speak, a common occurrence in Russia, have almost completely ceased. The peasants are satisfied with their present position. We can confidently assert that. We think that this evidence is more important than any amount of statistical proof. Nobody questions the fact that the peasants are a decisive factor in our country. And the position of the peasantry is now such that we have no reason to fear any movement against us from that quarter. We say that quite consciously, without exaggeration. This we have already achieved. The peasantry may be dissatisfied with one aspect or another of the work of our authorities. They may complain. That is possible, of course, and inevitable, because our machinery of state and our state-operated economy are still too inefficient to avert it; but serious dissatisfaction with us of any kind on the part of the peasantry as a whole is quite out of the question. This has been achieved in the course of one year. I think that is already quite a lot.

Now I come to our light industry. In industry we have to make a distinction between heavy and light industry because the situation in them is different. As regards light

industry, I can safely say that there is a general revival. I shall not go into details. I did not set out to quote a lot of statistics. But this general impression is based on facts, and I can assure you that it is not based on anything untrue or inexact. We can speak of a general revival in light industry, and, as a result, of a definite improvement in the conditions of the workers in Petrograd and Moscow. In other districts this is observed to a lesser degree, because heavy industry predominates in them. So this does not apply generally. Nevertheless, I repeat, light industry is undoubtedly on the upgrade, and the conditions of the workers in Petrograd and Moscow have unquestionably improved. In the spring of 1921 there was discontent among the workers in both these cities. That is not the case now. We, who watch the condition and mood of the workers from day to day, make no mistake on that score.

The third question is that of heavy industry. I must say that the situation here is still grave. Some turn for the better occurred in 1921-22, so that we may hope that the situation will improve in the near future. We have already gathered some of the resources necessary for this. In a capitalist country a loan of hundreds of millions would be required to improve the situation in heavy industry. No improvement would be possible without it. The economic history of the capitalist countries shows that heavy industry in backward countries can only be developed with the aid of long-term loans of hundreds of millions of dollars or gold rubles. We did not get such loans, and so far have received nothing. All that is now being written about concessions and so forth is not worth much more than the paper it is written on. We have written a great deal about this lately and in particular about the Urquhart concession. Yet I think our concessions policy a very good one. However, we have not concluded a single profitable concession agreement so far. I ask you to bear that in mind. Thus, the situation in heavy industry is really a very grave problem for our backward country, because we cannot count on loans from the wealthy countries. In spite of that, we see a visible improvement, and we also see that our trading has brought us some capital. True, it is only a very modest sum as yet—a little over twenty million

gold rubles. At any rate, a beginning has been made; our trade is providing us with funds which we can employ in improving the situation in heavy industry. At the present moment, however, our heavy industry is still in great difficulties. But I think that we are already in a position to save a little. And we shall go on saving. We must economise now though it is often at the expense of the population. We are trying to reduce the state budget, to reduce staffs in our government offices. Later on, I shall have a few words to say about our state apparatus. At all events, we must reduce it. We must economise as much as possible. We are economising in all things, even in schools. We must do this, because we know that unless we save heavy industry, unless we restore it, we shall not be able to build up an industry at all; and without an industry we shall go under as an independent country. We realise this very well.

The salvation of Russia lies not only in a good harvest on the peasant farms—that is not enough; and not only in the good condition of light industry, which provides the peasantry with consumer goods—this, too, is not enough; we also need *heavy* industry. And to put it in a good condition will require many years of work.

Heavy industry needs state subsidies. If we are not able to provide them, we shall be doomed as a civilised state—let alone as a socialist state. In this respect, we have taken a determined step. We have raised the funds that we need to put heavy industry on its feet. True, the sum we have obtained so far barely exceeds twenty million gold rubles; but at any rate this sum is available, and it is earmarked exclusively for the purpose of reviving our heavy industry.

I think that, on the whole, I have, as I have promised, briefly outlined the principal elements of our economy, and feel that we may draw the conclusion from all this that the New Economic Policy has already yielded dividends. We already have proof that, as a state, we are able to trade, to maintain our strong positions in agriculture and industry, and to make progress. Practical activity has proved it. I think this is sufficient for us for the time being. We shall have to learn much, and we have realised that we still have much to learn. We have been in power for five years, and during

these five years we have been in a state of war. Hence, we have been successful.

This is understandable, because the peasantry were on our side. Probably no one could have supported us more than they did. They were aware that the whiteguards had the landlords behind them, and they hate the landlords more than anything in the world. That is why the peasantry supported us with all their enthusiasm and loyalty. It was not difficult to get the peasantry to defend us against the whiteguards. The peasants, who had always hated war, did all they possibly could in the war against the whiteguards, in the Civil War against the landlords. But this was not all, because in substance it was only a matter of whether power would remain in the hands of the landlords or of the peasants. This was not enough for us. The peasants know that we have captured power for the workers and that it is our aim to use this power to establish the socialist system. Therefore, the most important thing for us was to lay the economic foundation for socialist economy. We could not do it directly. We had to do it in roundabout fashion. The state capitalism that we have introduced in our country is of a peculiar kind. It does not agree with the usual conception of state capitalism. We are in command of all the key positions. We hold the land; it belongs to the state. This is very important, although our opponents try to make out that it is of no importance at all. That is untrue. The fact that the land belongs to the state is extremely important, and economically it is also of great practical purport. This we have achieved, and I must say that all our future activities should develop only within that framework. We have already succeeded in making the peasantry content and in reviving both industry and trade. I have already said that our state capitalism differs from state capitalism in the literal sense of the term in that our proletarian state not only owns the land, but also all the vital branches of industry. To begin with, we have leased a certain number of the small and medium plants, but all the rest remain in our hands. As regards trade, I still want to emphasise that we are trying to found mixed companies, that we are already forming them, i.e., companies in which part of the capital belongs to private capitalists—and foreign capitalists

at that—and the other part belongs to the state. Firstly, in this way we are learning how to trade, and this is what we need. Secondly, we are always in a position to dissolve these companies if we deem it necessary, and do not, therefore, so to speak, run any risks. We are learning from the private capitalist and looking round to see how we can progress, and what mistakes we make. It seems to me that I need say no more.

I should still like to deal with several minor points. Undoubtedly, we have done, and will still do, a host of foolish things. No one can judge and see this better than I. Why do we do these foolish things? The reason is clear: firstly, because we are a backward country; secondly, because education in our country is at a low level; and thirdly, because we are receiving no assistance. Not a single civilised country is helping us. On the contrary, they are all working against us. Fourthly, our machinery of state is to blame. We took over the old machinery of state, and that was our misfortune. Very often this machinery operates against us. In 1917, after we captured power, the government officials sabotaged us. This frightened us very much and we pleaded: "Please come back." They all came back, but that was our misfortune. We now have a vast army of government employees, but lack sufficiently educated forces to exercise real control over them. In practice it often happens that here at the top, where we exercise political power, the machine functions somehow; but down below government employees have arbitrary control and they often exercise it in such a way as to counteract our measures. At the top, we have I don't know how many, but at all events, I think, no more than a few thousand, at the outside several tens of thousands, of our own people. Down below, however, there are hundreds of thousands of old officials whom we got from the tsar and from bourgeois society and who, partly consciously and partly unconsciously, work against us. It is clear that nothing can be done in that respect overnight. It will take many years of hard work to improve the machinery, to remodel it, and to enlist new forces. We are doing this fairly quickly, perhaps too quickly. Soviet schools and Workers' Faculties have been formed; a few hundred thousand young people are studying; they are

studying too fast perhaps, but at all events, a start has been made, and I think this work will bear fruit. If we do not work too hurriedly we shall, in a few years' time, have a large body of young people capable of thoroughly overhauling our state apparatus.

I said that we have done a host of foolish things, but I must also say a word or two in this respect about our enemies. If our enemies blame us and say that Lenin himself admits that the Bolsheviks have done a host of foolish things, I want to reply to this: yes, but you know, the foolish things we have done are nonetheless very different from yours. We have only just begun to learn, but are learning so methodically that we are certain to achieve good results. But since our enemies, i.e., the capitalists and the heroes of the Second International, lay stress on the foolish things we have done, I take the liberty, for the sake of comparison, to cite the words of a celebrated Russian author, which I shall amend to read as follows: if the Bolsheviks do foolish things the Bolshevik says, "Twice two are five", but when their enemies, i.e., the capitalists and the heroes of the Second International, do foolish things, they get, "Twice two make a tallow candle." That is easily proved. Take, for example, the agreement concluded by America, Great Britain, France and Japan with Kolchak. I ask you, are there any more enlightened and more powerful countries in the world? But what has happened? They promised to help Kolchak without calculation, without reflection, and without circumspection. It ended in a fiasco, which, it seems to me, is difficult for the human intellect to grasp.

Or take another example, a closer and more important one: the Treaty of Versailles. I ask you, what have the "great" powers which have "covered themselves with glory" done? How will they find a way out of this chaos and confusion? I don't think it will be an exaggeration to repeat that the foolish things we have done are nothing compared with those done in concert by the capitalist countries, the capitalist world and the Second International. That is why I think that the outlook for the world revolution—a subject which I must touch on briefly—is favourable. And given a certain definite

condition, I think it will be even better. I should like to say a few words about this.

At the Third Congress, in 1921, we adopted a resolution on the organisational structure of the Communist Parties and on the methods and content of their activities. The resolution is an excellent one, but it is almost entirely Russian, that is to say, everything in it is based on Russian conditions. This is its good point, but it is also its failing. It is its failing because I am sure that no foreigner can read it. I have read it again before saying this. In the first place, it is too long, containing fifty or more paragraphs. Foreigners are not usually able to read such things. Secondly, even if they read it, they will not understand it because it is too Russian. Not because it is written in Russian—it has been excellently translated into all languages—but because it is thoroughly imbued with the Russian spirit. And thirdly, if by way of exception some foreigner does understand it, he cannot carry it out. This is its third defect. I have talked with a few of the foreign delegates and hope to discuss matters in detail with a large number of delegates from different countries during the Congress, although I shall not take part in its proceedings, for unfortunately it is impossible for me to do that. I have the impression that we made a big mistake with this resolution, namely, that we blocked our own road to further success. As I have said already, the resolution is excellently drafted; I am prepared to subscribe to every one of its fifty or more paragraphs. But we have not learnt how to present our Russian experience to foreigners. All that was said in the resolution has remained a dead letter. If we do not realise this, we shall be unable to move ahead. I think that after five years of the Russian revolution the most important thing for all of us, Russian and foreign comrades alike, is to sit down and study. We have only now obtained the opportunity to do so. I do not know how long this opportunity will last. I do not know for how long the capitalist powers will give us the opportunity to study in peace. But we must take advantage of every moment of respite from fighting, from war, to study, and to study from scratch.

The whole Party and all strata of the population of Russia prove this by their thirst for knowledge. This striving to learn

shows that our most important task today is to study and to study hard. Our foreign comrades, too, must study. I do not mean that they have to learn to read and write and to understand what they read, as we still have to do. There is a dispute as to whether this appertains to proletarian or to bourgeois culture. I shall leave that question open. But one thing is certain: we have to begin by learning to read and write and to understand what we read. Foreigners do not need that. They need something more advanced: first of all, among other things they must learn to understand what we have written about the organisational structure of the Communist Parties, and what the foreign comrades have signed without reading and understanding. This must be their first task. That resolution must be carried out. It cannot be carried out overnight; that is absolutely impossible. The resolution is too Russian, it reflects Russian experience. That is why it is quite unintelligible to foreigners, and they cannot be content with hanging it in a corner like an icon and praying to it. Nothing will be achieved that way. They must assimilate part of the Russian experience. Just how that will be done, I do not know. The fascists in Italy may, for example, render us a great service by showing the Italians that they are not yet sufficiently enlightened and that their country is not yet ensured against the Black Hundreds. Perhaps this will be very useful. We Russians must also find ways and means of explaining the principles of this resolution to the foreigners. Unless we do that, it will be absolutely impossible for them to carry it out. I am sure that in this connection we must tell not only the Russians, but the foreign comrades as well, that the most important thing in the period we are now entering is to study. We are studying in the general sense. They, however, must study in the special sense, in order that they may really understand the organisation, structure, method and content of revolutionary work. If they do that, I am sure the prospects of the world revolution will be not only good, but excellent.

ON CO-OPERATION

I

It seems to me that not enough attention is being paid to the co-operative movement in our country. Not everyone understands that now, since the time of the October Revolution and quite apart from NEP (on the contrary, in this connection we must say—because of NEP), our co-operative movement has become one of great significance. There is a lot of fantasy in the dreams of the old co-operators. Often they are ridiculously fantastic. But why are they fantastic? Because people do not understand the fundamental, the rock-bottom significance of the working-class political struggle for the overthrow of the rule of the exploiters. We have overthrown the rule of the exploiters, and much that was fantastic, even romantic, even banal in the dreams of the old co-operators is now becoming unvarnished reality.

Indeed, since political power is in the hands of the working class, since this political power owns all the means of production, the only task, indeed, that remains for us is to organise the population in co-operative societies. With most of the population organised in co-operatives, the socialism which in the past was legitimately treated with ridicule, scorn and contempt by those who were rightly convinced that it was necessary to wage the class struggle, the struggle for political power, etc., will achieve its aim automatically. But not all comrades realise how vastly, how infinitely important it is now to organise the population of Russia in co-operative societies. By adopting NEP we made a concession to the peasant as a trader, to the principle of private trade; it is precisely for this reason (contrary to what some people think) that the co-operative movement is of such immense importance. All we actually need under NEP is to organise the population of Russia in co-operative societies on a suf-

ficiently large scale, for we have now found that degree of combination of private interest, private commercial interest, with state supervision and control of this interest, that degree of its subordination to the common interests which was formerly the stumbling-block for very many socialists. Indeed, the power of the state over all large-scale means of production, political power in the hands of the proletariat, the alliance of this proletariat with the many millions of small and very small peasants, the assured proletarian leadership of the peasantry, etc.—is this not all that is necessary to build a complete socialist society out of co-operatives, out of co-operatives alone, which we formerly ridiculed as huckstering and which from a certain aspect we have the right to treat as such now, under NEP? Is this not all that is necessary to build a complete socialist society? No, this is not the building of socialist society, but it is all that is necessary and sufficient to build it.

It is this very circumstance that is underestimated by many of our practical workers. They look down upon our co-operative societies and do not appreciate their exceptional importance, first, from the standpoint of principle (the means of production are owned by the state), and, second, from the standpoint of transition to the new order by means that are the *simplest, easiest, and most acceptable to the peasant*.

But this again is of fundamental importance. It is one thing to draw up fantastic plans for building socialism through all sorts of workers' associations, and quite another thing to learn to build socialism in practice in such a way that *every* small peasant may take part in it. That is the stage we have now reached. And there is no doubt that, having reached it, we are taking too little advantage of it.

We went too far when we introduced NEP, but not because we attached too much importance to the principle of free industry and trade—we went too far because we lost sight of the co-operatives, because we now underrate the co-operatives, because we are already beginning to forget the vast importance of the co-operatives from the above two points of view.

I now propose to discuss with the reader what can and must at once be done practically on the basis of this "co-operative" principle. By what means can we, and must we,

start at once to develop this "co-operative" principle so that its socialist meaning may be clear to all?

Co-operation must be politically so organised that it will not only generally and always enjoy certain privileges, but that these privileges should be of a purely material nature (a favourable bank-rate, etc.). The co-operatives must be granted state loans that are greater, if only by a little, than the loans we grant to private enterprises, even to heavy industry, etc.

Every social system arises only if it has the financial backing of a definite class. There is no need to mention the hundreds of millions of rubles that the birth of "free" capitalism cost. At present we must realise that the social system we must now give more than ordinary assistance to is the co-operative system, and we must actually give that assistance. But it must be assisted in the real sense of the word, i.e., it will not be enough to interpret it to mean assistance for any kind of co-operative trade; by assistance we must mean aid to co-operative trade in which *really large masses of the population really take part*. It is certainly a correct form of assistance to give a bonus to peasants who take part in co-operative trade; but the whole point is to verify the nature of this participation, to verify the awareness behind it, and to verify its quality. Strictly speaking, when a co-operator goes to a village and opens a co-operative store, the people take no part in this whatever; but at the same time, guided by their own interests, the people will hasten to try to take part in it.

There is another aspect to this question. From the point of view of the "civilised" (primarily, literate) European there is not much left for us to do to induce absolutely everyone to take not a passive, but an active part in co-operative operations. Strictly speaking, there is "only" one thing we have left to do, and that is, to make our people so "civilised" that they understand all the advantages of everybody participating in the work of the co-operatives, and organising this participation. "Only" that. There are now no other devices needed to advance to socialism. But to achieve this "only", there must be a veritable revolution—the entire people must go through a period of cultural development. Therefore, our rule must be: as little philosophising and as few acrobatics as possible,

In this respect NEP is an advance, because it is adjustable to the level of the most ordinary peasant and does not demand anything higher of him. But it will take a whole historical epoch to get the entire population into the work of the co-operatives through NEP. At best we can achieve this in one or two decades. Nevertheless it will be a distinct historical epoch, and without this historical epoch, without universal literacy, without a proper degree of efficiency, without training the population sufficiently to acquire the habit of book-reading, and without the material basis for this, without a certain sufficiency to safeguard against, say, bad harvests, famine, etc.—without this we shall not achieve our object. The thing now is to learn to combine the wide revolutionary range of action, the revolutionary enthusiasm which we have displayed, and displayed sufficiently, and crowned with complete success—to learn to combine this with (I am almost inclined to say) the ability to be an efficient and capable trader, which is fully sufficient to be a good co-operator. By ability to be a trader I mean the ability to be a cultured trader. Let those Russians, or plain peasants, who imagine that since they trade they are good traders, get that well into their heads. This does not follow at all. They do trade, but that is far from being cultured traders. They now trade in an Asiatic manner, but to be a trader one must trade in the European manner. They are a whole epoch behind in that.

In conclusion: a number of economic, financial and banking privileges must be granted to the co-operatives—this is the way our socialist state must promote the new principle on which the population must be organised. But this is only the general outline of the task; it does not define and depict in detail the entire content of the practical task, i.e., we must find what form of “bonus” to give for joining the co-operatives (and the terms on which we should give it), the form of bonus by which we shall assist the co-operatives sufficiently, the form of bonus that will produce the civilised co-operator. And given social ownership of the means of production, given the class victory of the proletariat over the bourgeoisie, the system of civilised co-operators is the system of socialism.

January 4, 1923

II

Whenever I wrote about the New Economic Policy I always quoted the article on state capitalism which I wrote in 1918.⁴⁷ This has more than once aroused doubts in the minds of certain young comrades. But their doubts were mainly on abstract political points.

It seemed to them that the term state capitalism could not be applied to a system under which the means of production were owned by the working class, a working class that held political power. They did not notice, however, that I used the term “state capitalism”, *firstly*, to connect historically our present position with the position adopted in my controversy with the so-called Left Communists; also, I argued at that time that state capitalism would be superior to our existing economy. It was important for me to show the continuity between ordinary state capitalism and the unusual, even very unusual, state capitalism to which I referred in introducing the reader to the New Economic Policy. *Secondly*, the practical purpose of our New Economic Policy was to lease out concessions. In the prevailing circumstances, concessions in our country would unquestionably have been a pure type of state capitalism. That is how I argued about state capitalism.

But there is another aspect of the matter for which we may need state capitalism, or at least a comparison with it. That is the question of co-operatives.

In the capitalist state, co-operatives are no doubt collective capitalist institutions. Nor is there any doubt that under our present economic conditions, when we combine private capitalist enterprises—but in no other way than on nationalised land and in no other way than under the control of the work-

ing-class state—with enterprises of a consistently socialist type (the means of production, the land on which the enterprises are situated, and the enterprises as a whole belonging to the state), the question arises about a third type of enterprise, the co-operatives, which were not formerly regarded as an independent type differing in principle from the others. Under private capitalism, co-operative enterprises differ from capitalist enterprises as collective enterprises differ from private enterprises. Under state capitalism, co-operative enterprises differ from state-capitalist enterprises, firstly, because they are private enterprises, and, secondly, because they are collective enterprises. Under our present system, co-operative enterprises differ from private capitalist enterprises because they are collective enterprises, but do not differ from socialist enterprises if the land on which they are situated and the means of production belong to the state, i.e., the working class.

This circumstance is not considered sufficiently when co-operatives are discussed. It is forgotten that owing to the special features of our political system, our co-operatives acquire an altogether exceptional significance. If we exclude concessions, which, incidentally, have not developed on any considerable scale, co-operation under our conditions nearly always coincides fully with socialism.

Let me explain what I mean. Why were the plans of the old co-operators, from Robert Owen onwards, fantastic? Because they dreamed of peacefully remodelling contemporary society into socialism without taking account of such fundamental questions as the class struggle, the capture of political power by the working class, the overthrow of the rule of the exploiting class. That is why we are right in regarding as entirely fantastic this "co-operative" socialism, and as romantic, and even banal, the dream of transforming class enemies into class collaborators and class war into class peace (so-called civil peace) by merely organising the population in co-operative societies.

Undoubtedly we were right from the point of view of the fundamental task of the present day, for socialism cannot be established without a class struggle for political power in the state.

But see how things have changed now that political power is in the hands of the working class, now that the political power of the exploiters is overthrown and all the means of production (except those which the workers' state voluntarily abandons conditionally and for a certain time to the exploiters in the form of concessions) are owned by the working class.

Now we are entitled to say that for us the mere growth of co-operation (with the "slight" exception mentioned above) is identical with the growth of socialism, and at the same time we have to admit that there has been a radical modification in our whole outlook on socialism. The radical modification is this; formerly we placed, and had to place, the main emphasis on the political struggle, on revolution, on winning power, etc. Now the emphasis is changing, and shifting to peaceful, organisational, "cultural" work. I should say that emphasis was shifting to educational work, were it not for our international relations, were it not for the fact that we have to fight for our position on a world scale. If we leave that aside, however, and confine ourselves to internal economic relations, the emphasis in our work is certainly shifting to education.

Two main tasks confront us, which constitute the epoch—to reorganise our machinery of state, which is utterly useless, and which we took over in its entirety from the preceding epoch; during the past five years of struggle we did not, and could not, drastically reorganise it. Our second task is educational work among the peasants. And the economic object of this educational work among the peasants is to organise the latter in co-operative societies. If the whole of the peasantry had been organised in co-operatives, we would by now have been standing with both feet on the soil of socialism. But the organisation of the entire peasantry in co-operative societies presupposes a standard of culture among the peasants (precisely among the peasants as the overwhelming mass) that cannot, in fact, be achieved without a cultural revolution.

Our opponents told us repeatedly that we were rash in undertaking to implant socialism in an insufficiently cultured country. But they were misled by our having started from the end opposite to that prescribed by theory (the theory of pedants of all kinds), because in our country the political

and social revolution preceded the cultural revolution, that very cultural revolution which nevertheless now confronts us.

This cultural revolution would now suffice to make our country a completely socialist country; but it presents immense difficulties of a purely cultural (for we are illiterate) and material character (for to be cultured we must achieve a certain development of the material means of production, must have a certain material base).

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Collected Works, Vol. 33

HOW WE SHOULD REORGANISE THE WORKERS' AND PEASANTS' INSPECTION

RECOMMENDATION TO THE TWELFTH PARTY CONGRESS

It is beyond question that the Workers' and Peasants' Inspection is an enormous difficulty for us, and that so far this difficulty has not been overcome. I think that the comrades who try to overcome the difficulty by denying that the Workers' and Peasants' Inspection is useful and necessary, are wrong. But I do not deny that the problem presented by our state apparatus and the task of improving it is very difficult, that it is far from being solved, but is an extremely urgent one.

With the exception of the People's Commissariat for Foreign Affairs, our state apparatus is to a considerable extent a survival of the past, and has undergone hardly any serious change. It has only been slightly touched up on the surface, but in all other respects it is a most typical relic of our old state machine. And so, to find a method of really renovating it, I think we ought to turn for experience to our Civil War.

How did we act in the more critical moments of the Civil War?

We concentrated our best Party forces in the Red Army; we mobilised the best of our workers; we looked for new forces at the deepest roots of our dictatorship.

I am convinced that we must go to the same source to find the means of reorganising the Workers' and Peasants' Inspection. I recommend that our Twelfth Party Congress adopt the following plan of reorganisation, based on a special kind of enlargement of our Central Control Commission.

The plenary meetings of the Central Committee of our Party are already revealing a tendency to develop into a kind of supreme Party conference. They take place, on the average,

not more than once in two months, while the routine work is, as we know, conducted on behalf of the Central Committee by our Political Bureau, by our Organising Bureau, our Secretariat, and so forth. I think we ought to follow the road we have thus taken to the end and definitely transform the plenary meetings of the Central Committee into supreme Party conferences convened once in two months jointly with the Central Control Commission. The Central Control Commission should be amalgamated with the main body of the reorganised Workers' and Peasants' Inspection on the following lines.

I propose that the Congress should elect 75 to 100 new members to the Central Control Commission. They should be workers and peasants, and should go through the same Party screening as ordinary members of the Central Committee, because they are to enjoy the same rights as the members of the Central Committee.

On the other hand, the staff of the Workers' and Peasants' Inspection should be reduced to three or four hundred persons, specially screened for reliability and knowledge of our state apparatus. They must also undergo a special test as regards their knowledge of the principles of scientific organisation of labour in general, and of administrative work, office work, and so forth, in particular.

In my opinion, such an amalgamation of the Workers' and Peasants' Inspection with the Central Control Commission will be beneficial to both these institutions. On the one hand, the Workers' and Peasants' Inspection will thus obtain such high authority that it will certainly not be inferior to the People's Commissariat for Foreign Affairs. On the other hand, our Central Committee, together with the Central Control Commission, will definitely take the road of becoming a supreme Party conference, which in fact it has already taken, and along which it should proceed to the end so as to be able to fulfil its functions properly in two respects: in respect to *its own* methodical, expedient and systematic organisation and work, and in respect to maintaining contacts with the broad masses through the medium of the best of our workers and peasants.

I foresee an objection that, directly or indirectly, may come from those spheres which make our state apparatus antiquated, i.e., from those who urge that its present utterly impossible, indecently pre-revolutionary form be preserved (incidentally, we now have an opportunity which rarely occurs in history of ascertaining the period necessary for bringing about radical social changes; we now see clearly *what* can be done in five years, and what requires much more time).

The objection I foresee is that the change I propose will lead to nothing but chaos. The members of the Central Control Commission will wander around all the institutions, not knowing where, why or to whom to apply, causing disorganisation everywhere and distracting employees from their routine work, etc., etc.

I think that the malicious source of this objection is so obvious that it need not even be replied to. It goes without saying that the Presidium of the Central Control Commission, the People's Commissar of the Workers' and Peasants' Inspection and his collegium (and also, in the proper cases, the Secretariat of our Central Committee), will have to put in years of persistent effort to get the Commissariat properly organised, and to get it to function properly in conjunction with the Central Control Commission. In my opinion, the People's Commissar of the Workers' and Peasants' Inspection, as well as the whole collegium, can (and should) remain and guide the work of the entire Workers' and Peasants' Inspection, including the work of all the members of the Central Control Commission who will be "placed under his command". The three or four hundred employees of the Workers' and Peasants' Inspection that are to remain, according to my plan, should, on the one hand, perform purely secretarial functions for the other members of the Workers' and Peasants' Inspection and for the supplementary members of the Central Control Commission; and, on the other hand, they should be highly skilled, specially screened, particularly reliable, and highly paid, so that they may be relieved of their present truly unhappy (to say the least) position of Workers' and Peasants' Inspection officials.

I am sure that the reduction of the staff to the number I

have indicated will greatly improve the quality of the Workers' and Peasants' Inspection personnel and the quality of all its work, enabling the People's Commissar and the members of the collegium to concentrate their efforts entirely on organising work and on systematically and steadily improving its efficiency, which is so absolutely necessary for our workers' and peasants' government, and for our Soviet system.

On the other hand, I also think that the People's Commissar of the Workers' and Peasants' Inspection should work on partly amalgamating and partly co-ordinating those higher institutes for the organisation of labour (the Central Institute of Labour, the Institute for the Scientific Organisation of Labour, etc.), of which there are now no less than twelve in our Republic. Excessive uniformity and a consequent desire to amalgamate will be harmful. On the contrary, what is needed here is a reasonable and expedient mean between amalgamating all these institutions and drawing the proper line between them, allowing for a certain independence for each of them.

Our own Central Committee will undoubtedly gain no less from this reorganisation than the Workers' and Peasants' Inspection. It will gain because of extended contacts with the masses and because the regularity and effectiveness of its work will improve. It will then be possible (and necessary) to institute a stricter and more responsible procedure of preparing for the meetings of the Political Bureau, which should be attended by a definite number of members of the Central Control Commission determined either for a definite period or by some organisational plan.

In distributing work to the members of the Central Control Commission, the People's Commissar of the Workers' and Peasants' Inspection, in conjunction with the Presidium of the Central Control Commission, should impose on them the duty either of attending the meetings of the Political Bureau for the purpose of examining all the documents appertaining to matters that come before it in one way or another; or of devoting their working time to theoretical study, to the study of scientific methods of organising labour; or of taking a practical part in the work of supervising and improving our

machinery of state, from the higher state institutions to the lower local bodies, etc.

I also think that in addition to the political advantages accruing from the fact that the members of the Central Committee and the Central Control Commission will, as a consequence of this reform, be much better informed and better prepared for the meetings of the Political Bureau (all the documents relevant to the business to be discussed at these meetings should be sent to all the members of the Central Committee and the Central Control Commission not later than the day before the meeting of the Political Bureau, except in absolutely urgent cases, for which special methods of informing the members of the Central Committee and the Central Control Commission and of settling these matters must be devised), there will also be the advantage that the influence of purely personal and incidental factors in our Central Committee will diminish, and this will reduce the danger of a split.

Our Central Committee has grown into a strictly centralised and highly authoritative group, but the conditions under which this group is working are not commensurate with its authority. The reform I recommend should help to remove this defect, and the members of the Central Control Commission, whose duty it will be to attend all meetings of the Political Bureau in a definite number, will have to form a compact group which should not allow anybody's authority, "regardless of person", to prevent them from putting questions, verifying documents, and, in general, from keeping themselves fully informed of all things and from exercising the strictest control over the proper conduct of affairs.

Of course, in our Soviet Republic, the social order is based on the collaboration of two classes: the workers and peasants, in which the "Nepmen", i.e., the bourgeoisie, are now permitted to participate on certain terms. If serious class disagreements arise between these classes, a split will be inevitable. But the grounds for such a split are not necessarily present in our social system, and it is the principal task of our Central Committee and Central Control Commission, as well as of our Party as a whole, to watch very closely over such circumstances as may cause a split, and to forestall them.

for in the final analysis the fate of our Republic will depend on whether the peasant masses will stand by the working class, loyal to their alliance, or whether they will permit the "Nepmen", i.e., the new bourgeoisie, to drive a wedge between them and the working class, to split them off from the working class. The more clearly we see this alternative, the more clearly all our workers and peasants understand it, the greater are the chances that we shall avoid a split, which would be fatal for the Soviet Republic.

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Collected Works, Vol. 33

BETTER FEWER, BUT BETTER

In the matter of improving our state apparatus, the Workers' and Peasants' Inspection should not, in my opinion, either strive after quantity or hurry. We have so far been able to devote so little thought and attention to the quality of our state apparatus that it would now be quite legitimate if we took special care to secure its thorough organisation, and concentrated in the Workers' and Peasants' Inspection a staff of workers really abreast of the times, i.e., not inferior to the best West-European standards. For a socialist republic this condition is, of course, too modest. But our experience of the first five years has fairly crammed our heads with mistrust and scepticism. These qualities assert themselves involuntarily when, for example, we hear people dilating at too great length and too flippantly on "proletarian culture". For a start, we should be satisfied with real bourgeois culture, for a start, we should be glad to dispense with the cruder types of pre-bourgeois culture, i.e., bureaucratic culture or serf culture, etc. In matters of culture, haste and sweeping measures are most harmful. Many of our young writers and Communists should get this well into their heads.

Thus, in the matter of our state apparatus we should now draw the conclusion from our past experience that it would be better to proceed more slowly.

Our state apparatus is so deplorable, not to say disgusting, that we must first think very carefully how to combat its defects, bearing in mind that these defects are rooted in the past, which, although it has been overthrown, has not yet been overcome, has not yet reached the stage of a culture that has receded into the distant past. I say culture deliberately, because in these matters we can only regard as achieved

what has become part and parcel of our culture, of our social life, our habits. We might say that the good in our social system has not been properly studied, understood, and taken to heart; it has been hastily grasped at; it has not been verified or tested, tried by experience, and not made durable, etc. Of course, it could not be otherwise in a revolutionary epoch, when development proceeded at such breakneck speed that in a matter of five years we passed from tsarism to the Soviet system.

It is time we did something about it. We must show sound scepticism for too rapid progress, for boastfulness, etc. We must give thought to testing the steps forward we proclaim every hour, take every minute and then prove every second that they are flimsy, superficial and misunderstood. The most harmful thing here would be haste. The most harmful thing would be to rely on the assumption that we know at least something, or that we have any considerable number of elements necessary for the building of a really new state apparatus, one really worthy to be called socialist, Soviet, etc.

No, we are ridiculously deficient of such an apparatus, and even of the elements of it, and we must remember that we should not stint time on building it, and that it will take many, many years.

What elements have we for building this apparatus? Only two. First, the workers who are absorbed in the struggle for socialism. These elements are not sufficiently educated. They would like to build a better apparatus for us, but they do not know how. They cannot build one. They have not yet developed the culture required for this; and it is culture that is required. Nothing will be achieved in this by doing things in a rush, by assault, by vim and vigour, or in general, by any other of the best human qualities. Secondly, we have elements of knowledge, education and training, but they are ridiculously little compared with all other countries.

Here we must not forget that we are too prone to compensate (or imagine that we can compensate) our lack of knowledge by zeal, haste, etc.

To renovate our state apparatus we must at all costs set out, first, to learn, secondly, to learn, and thirdly, to learn, and

then to see to it that learning shall not remain a dead letter, or a fashionable catch-phrase (and we should admit in all frankness that this happens very often with us), that learning shall really become part of our very being, that it shall actually and fully become a constituent element of our social life. In short, we must not make the demands that are made by the bourgeoisie of Western Europe, but demands that are fit and proper for a country which has set out to develop into a socialist country.

The conclusions to be drawn from the above are the following: we must make the Workers' and Peasants' Inspection a really exemplary institution as the instrument to improve our state apparatus.

In order that it may attain the desired high level, we must follow the rule: "Measure your cloth seven times before you cut."

For this purpose, we must utilise the very best of what there is in our social system, and utilise it with the greatest caution, thoughtfulness and knowledge to build up the new People's Commissariat.

For this purpose, the best elements that we have in our social system—such as, first, the advanced workers, and, secondly, the really enlightened elements for whom we can vouch that they will not take the word for the deed, and will not utter a single word that goes against their conscience—should not shrink from admitting difficulties and should not shrink from any struggle in order to achieve the object they have seriously set themselves.

We have been bustling for five years trying to improve our state apparatus, but it has been mere bustle, which has proved useless in these five years, or even futile, or even harmful. This bustle created the impression that we were doing something, but in effect it was only clogging up our institutions and our brains.

It is high time things were changed.

We must follow the rule: Better fewer, but better. We must follow the rule: Better get good human material in two or even three years than work in haste without hope of getting any at all.

I know that it will be hard to keep to this rule and apply it under our conditions. I know that the opposite rule will force its way through a thousand loopholes. I know that enormous resistance will have to be put up, that devilish persistence will be required, that in the first few years at least, work in this field will be hellishly hard. Nevertheless, I am convinced that only by such effort shall we be able to achieve our aim; and that only by achieving this aim shall we create a republic that is really worthy of the name of Soviet, socialist, and so on, and so forth.

Many readers probably thought that the figures I quoted by way of illustration in my first article were too small. I am sure that many calculations may be made to prove that they are. But I think that we must put one thing above all such and other calculations, i.e., our desire to obtain really exemplary quality.

I think that the time has at last come when we must work in real earnest to improve our state apparatus and in this there can scarcely be anything more harmful than haste. That is why I would utter a strong warning against inflating the figures. In my opinion, we should, on the contrary, be especially sparing with figures in this matter. Let us say frankly that the People's Commissariat of the Workers' and Peasants' Inspection does not at present enjoy the slightest authority. Everybody knows that no other institutions are worse organised than those of our Workers' and Peasants' Inspection, and that under present conditions nothing can be expected from this People's Commissariat. We must have this firmly fixed in our minds if we really want to create within a few years an institution that will, first, be an exemplary institution, secondly, win everybody's absolute confidence, and, thirdly, prove to all and sundry that we have really justified the work of such a highly-placed institution as the Central Control Commission. In my opinion, we must immediately and irrevocably reject all general figures for the size of office staffs. We must select employees for the Workers' and Peasants' Inspection with particular care and only on the basis of the strictest test. Indeed, what is the use of establishing a People's Commissariat which carries on anyhow, which does not enjoy the slightest confidence, and whose word

carries scarcely any weight? I think that our main object in launching the work of reconstruction that we now have in mind is to avoid all this.

The workers whom we are enlisting as members of the Central Control Commission must be irreproachable Communists, and I think that a great deal has yet to be done to teach them the methods and objects of their work. Furthermore, there must be a definite number of secretaries to assist in this work, who must be put to a triple test before they are appointed to their posts. Lastly, the officials whom in exceptional cases we shall accept directly as employees of the Workers' and Peasants' Inspection must conform to the following requirements:

First, they must be recommended by several Communists.

Second, they must pass a test for knowledge of our state apparatus.

Third, they must pass a test in the fundamentals of the theory of our state apparatus, in the fundamentals of management, office routine, etc.

Fourth, they must work in such close harmony with the members of the Central Control Commission and with their own secretariat that we could vouch for the work of the whole apparatus.

I know that these requirements envisage extraordinarily big conditions, and I am very much afraid that the majority of the "practical" workers in the Workers' and Peasants' Inspection will say that these conditions are impracticable, or will scoff at them. But I ask any of the present chiefs of the Workers' and Peasants' Inspection, or anyone associated with that body, whether they can honestly tell me the practical purpose of a People's Commissariat like the Workers' and Peasants' Inspection. I think this question will help them recover their sense of proportion. Either it is not worth while having another of the numerous reorganisations that we have had of this hopeless affair, the Workers' and Peasants' Inspection, or we must really set to work, by slow, difficult and unusual methods, and by testing these methods over and over again, to create something really exemplary, something that will win the respect of all and sundry for its merits, and not only because of its rank and title.

If we do not arm ourselves with patience, if we do not devote several years to this task, we had better not tackle it at all.

In my opinion we ought to select a minimum number of the highest labour research institutes, etc., which we have baked so hastily, see whether they are organised properly, and allow them to continue working, but only in a way that conforms to the high standards of modern science and gives us all its benefits. If we do that it will not be utopian to hope that within a few years we shall have an institution that will be able to perform its functions correctly, to work systematically and steadily on improving our state apparatus, an institution backed by the trust of the working class, of the Russian Communist Party, and the whole population of our republic.

The spade-work for this could be begun at once. If the People's Commissariat of the Workers' and Peasants' Inspection accepted the present plan of reorganisation, it could now take preparatory steps and work methodically until the task is completed, without haste, and not hesitating to alter what has already been done.

Any half-hearted solution would be extremely harmful in this matter. A measure for the size of staff of the Workers' and Peasants' Inspection based on any other consideration would, in fact, be based on the old bureaucratic considerations, on old prejudices, on what has already been condemned, universally ridiculed, etc.

In substance, the matter is as follows:

Either we prove now that we have really learned something about state organisation (we ought to have learned something in five years), or we prove that we are not sufficiently mature for it. If the latter is the case, we had better not tackle the task.

I think that with the available human material it will not be immodest to assume that we have learned enough to be able systematically to rebuild at least one People's Commissariat. True, this one People's Commissariat will have to be the model for our entire state apparatus.

We ought at once to announce a contest in the compilation of two or more textbooks on the organisation of labour in

general, and on management in particular. We can take as a basis the book already published by Yermansky, although it should be said in parenthesis that the latter obviously sympathises with Menshevism and is unfit to compile textbooks for the Soviet system. We can also take as a basis the recent book by Kerzhentsev, and some of the other specific textbooks available may be useful too.

We ought to send several qualified and conscientious people to Germany, or to England, to collect literature and to study this question. I mention England in case it is found impossible to send people to America or Canada.

We ought to appoint a commission to draw up the preliminary programme of examinations for prospective employees of the Workers' and Peasants' Inspection; ditto for candidates to the Central Control Commission.

These and similar measures will not, of course, cause any difficulties for the People's Commissar or the collegium of the Workers' and Peasants' Inspection, or for the presidium of the Central Control Commission.

Simultaneously, a preparatory commission should be appointed to select candidates for membership of the Central Control Commission. I hope that we shall now be able to find more than enough candidates for this post among the experienced workers in all departments, as well as among the students of our Soviet higher schools. It would hardly be right to exclude any category beforehand. Probably preference will have to be given to a mixed composition for this institution, which should combine many qualities, and dissimilar merits. Consequently, the task of drawing up the list of candidates will entail a considerable amount of work. For example, it would be least desirable for the staff of the new People's Commissariat to consist of people of one type, only of officials, say, or for it to exclude people of the propagandist type, or people whose principal quality is sociability or the ability to penetrate into circles that are not altogether customary for officials in this field, etc.

* * *

I think I shall be able to express my idea best if I compare my plan with that of academic institutions. Under the guidance of their presidium, the members of the Central Control Commission should systematically examine all the papers and documents of the Political Bureau. At the same time they should divide their time correctly between various jobs in investigating the routine in our institutions, from the very small and privately-owned offices to the highest state institutions. And lastly, their functions should include the study of theory, i.e., the theory of organisation of the work they intend to devote themselves to, and practical work under the guidance either of older comrades or of teachers in the higher institutes for the organisation of labour.

I do not think, however, that they will be able to confine themselves to this sort of academic work. In addition, they will have to prepare themselves for work which I would not hesitate to call training to catch—I will not say rogues, but something like that—and working out special ruses to screen their movements, their approach, etc.

If such proposals were made in West-European government institutions they would rouse frightful resentment, a feeling of moral indignation, etc.; but I trust that we have not become so bureaucratic as to be capable of that. NEP has not yet succeeded in gaining such respect as to cause any of us to be shocked at the idea that somebody may be caught. Our Soviet Republic is of such recent construction, and there are such heaps of the old lumber still lying around that it would hardly occur to anyone to be shocked at the idea that we should delve into them by means of ruses, by means of investigations sometimes directed to rather remote sources or in a roundabout way. And even if it did occur to anyone to be shocked by this, we may be sure that such a person would make himself a laughing-stock.

Let us hope that our new Workers' and Peasants' Inspection will abandon what the French call *pruderie*, which we may call ridiculous primness, or ridiculous swank, and which plays entirely into the hands of our Soviet and Party bureaucracy. Let it be said in parentheses that we have bureaucrats in our Party offices as well as in Soviet offices.

When I said above that we must study and study hard in

institutes for the higher organisation of labour, etc., I did not by any means imply "studying" in the schoolroom way, nor did I confine myself to the idea of studying only in the schoolroom way. I hope that not a single genuine revolutionary will suspect me of refusing, in this case, to understand "studies" to include resorting to some semi-humorous trick, cunning device, piece of trickery, or something of that sort. I know that in the staid and earnest states of Western Europe such an idea would horrify people and that not a single decent official would even entertain it. I hope, however, that we have not yet become as bureaucratic as all that and that in our midst the discussion of this idea will give rise to nothing more than amusement.

Indeed, why not combine pleasure with utility? Why not resort to some humorous, or semi-humorous trick to expose something ridiculous, something harmful, something semi-ridiculous, semi-harmful, etc.?

It seems to me that our Workers' and Peasants' Inspection will gain a great deal if it examines these ideas, and that the list of cases in which our Central Control Commission and its colleagues in the Workers' and Peasants' Inspection achieved a few of their most brilliant victories will be enriched by not a few exploits of our future Workers' and Peasants' Inspection and Central Control Commission members in places not quite mentionable in prim and staid textbooks.

* * *

How can a Party institution be amalgamated with a Soviet institution? Is there not something improper in this suggestion?

I do not ask these questions on my own behalf, but on behalf of those I hinted at above when I said that we have bureaucrats in our Party institutions as well as in the Soviet institutions.

But why, indeed, should we not amalgamate the two if this is in the interests of our work? Do we not all see that such an amalgamation has been very beneficial in the case of the People's Commissariat for Foreign Affairs, where it was brought about at the very beginning? Does not the Political

Bureau discuss from the Party point of view many questions, both minor and important, concerning the "moves" we should make in reply to the "moves" of foreign powers in order to forestall their, say, cunning, if we are not to use a less respectable term? Is not this flexible amalgamation of a Soviet institution with a Party institution a source of great strength in our politics? I think that what has proved its usefulness, what has been definitely adopted in our foreign politics and has become so customary that it no longer calls forth any doubt in this field, will be at least as appropriate (in fact I think it will be much more appropriate) for our state apparatus as a whole. The functions of the Workers' and Peasants' Inspection cover our state apparatus as a whole, and its activities should affect all and every state institution without exception: local, central, commercial, purely administrative, educational, archive, theatrical, etc.—in short, all without the slightest exception.

Why then should not an institution whose activities have such wide scope, and which moreover require such extraordinary flexibility of forms, be permitted to adopt this peculiar amalgamation of a Party control institution with a Soviet control institution?

I see no obstacles to this. What is more, I think that such an amalgamation is the only guarantee of success in our work. I think that all doubts on this score arise in the dustiest corners of our government offices, and that they deserve to be treated with nothing but ridicule.

* * *

Another doubt: is it expedient to combine educational activities with official activities? I think that it is not only expedient, but necessary. Generally speaking, in spite of our revolutionary attitude towards the West-European form of state, we have allowed ourselves to become infected with a number of its most harmful and ridiculous prejudices; to some extent we have been deliberately infected with them by our dear bureaucrats, who counted on being able again and again to fish in the muddy waters of these prejudices. And they did fish in these muddy waters to so great an extent

that only the blind among us failed to see how extensively this fishing was practised.

In all spheres of social, economic and political relationships we are "frightfully" revolutionary. But as regards precedence, the observance of the forms and rites of office management, our "revolutionariness" often gives way to the mustiest routine. On more than one occasion, we have witnessed the very interesting phenomenon of a great leap forward in social life being accompanied by amazing timidity whenever the slightest changes are proposed.

This is natural, for the boldest steps forward were taken in a field which was long reserved for theoretical study, which was cultivated mainly, and even almost exclusively, in theory. The Russian, when away from work, found solace from the bleak bureaucratic realities in unusually bold theoretical constructions, and that is why in our country these unusually bold theoretical constructions assumed an unusually lopsided character. Theoretical audacity in general constructions went hand in hand with amazing timidity as regards certain very minor reforms in office routine. Some great universal agrarian revolution was worked out with an audacity unexampled in any other country, and at the same time the imagination failed when it came to working out a tenth-rate reform in office routine; the imagination, or patience, was lacking to apply to this reform the general propositions that produced such "brilliant" results when applied to general problems.

That is why in our present life an astonishing degree of reckless audacity goes hand in hand with timidity of thought even when it comes to very minor changes.

I think that this has happened in all really great revolutions, for really great revolutions grow out of the contradictions between the old, between what is directed towards developing the old, and the very abstract striving for the new, which must be so new as not to contain the tiniest particle of the old.

And the more abrupt the revolution, the longer will many of these contradictions last.

* * *

The general feature of our present life is the following: we have destroyed capitalist industry and have done our best to raze to the ground the medieval institutions and landed proprietorship, and thus created a small and very small peasantry, which is following the lead of the proletariat because it believes in the results of its revolutionary work. It is not easy for us, however, to keep going until the socialist revolution is victorious in more developed countries merely with the aid of this confidence, because economic necessity, especially under NEP, keeps the productivity of labour of the small and very small peasants at an extremely low level. Moreover, the international situation, too, threw Russia back and, by and large, reduced the labour productivity of the people to a level considerably below pre-war. The West-European capitalist powers, partly deliberately and partly unconsciously, did everything they could to throw us back, to utilise the elements of civil war in Russia in order to spread as much ruin in the country as possible. It was precisely this way out of the imperialist war that seemed to have many advantages. They argued somewhat as follows: "If we fail to overthrow the revolutionary system in Russia, we shall, at all events, hinder her progress towards socialism." And from their point of view they could argue in no other way. In the end, their problem was half-solved. They failed to overthrow the new system created by the revolution, but they did prevent it from at once taking the step forward that would have justified the forecasts of the socialists, that would have enabled the latter to develop the productive forces with enormous speed, to develop all the potentialities which, taken together, would have produced socialism; socialists would thus have proved to all and sundry that socialism contains within itself gigantic forces and that mankind had now entered into a new stage of development of extraordinarily brilliant prospects.

The system of international relationships which has now taken shape is one in which a European state, Germany, is enslaved by the victor countries. Furthermore, owing to their victory, a number of states, the oldest states in the West, are in a position to make some insignificant concessions to their oppressed classes—concessions which, insignificant though

they are, nevertheless retard the revolutionary movement in those countries and create some semblance of "social peace".

At the same time, as a result of the last imperialist war, a number of countries of the East, India, China, etc., have been completely jolted out of the rut. Their development has definitely shifted to general European capitalist lines. The general European ferment has begun to affect them, and it is now clear to the whole world that they have been drawn into a process of development that must lead to a crisis in the whole of world capitalism.

Thus, at the present time we are confronted with the question—shall we be able to hold on with our small and very small peasant production, and in our present state of ruin, until the West-European capitalist countries consummate their development towards socialism? But they are consummating it not as we formerly expected. They are not consummating it through the gradual "maturing" of socialism, but through the exploitation of some countries by others, through the exploitation of the first of the countries vanquished in the imperialist war combined with the exploitation of the whole of the East. On the other hand, precisely as a result of the first imperialist war, the East has been definitely drawn into the revolutionary movement, has been definitely drawn into the general maelstrom of the world revolutionary movement.

What tactics does this situation prescribe for our country? Obviously the following. We must display extreme caution so as to preserve our workers' government and to retain our small and very small peasantry under its leadership and authority. We have the advantage that the whole world is now passing to a movement that must give rise to a world socialist revolution. But we are labouring under the disadvantage that the imperialists have succeeded in splitting the world into two camps; and this split is made more complicated by the fact that it is extremely difficult for Germany, which is really a land of advanced, cultured, capitalist development, to rise to her feet. All the capitalist powers of what is called the West are pecking at her and preventing her from rising. On the other hand, the entire East, with its

hundreds of millions of exploited working people reduced to the last degree of human suffering, has been forced into a position where its physical and material strength cannot possibly be compared with the physical, material and military strength of any of the much smaller West-European states.

Can we save ourselves from the impending conflict with these imperialist countries? May we hope that the internal antagonisms and conflicts between the thriving imperialist countries of the West and the thriving imperialist countries of the East will give us a second respite as they did the first time, when the campaign of the West-European counter-revolution in support of the Russian counter-revolution broke down owing to the antagonisms in the camp of the counter-revolutionaries of the West and the East, in the camp of the Eastern and Western exploiters, in the camp of Japan and America?

I think the reply to this question should be that the issue depends upon too many factors, and that the outcome of the struggle as a whole can be forecast only because in the long run capitalism itself is educating and training the vast majority of the population of the globe for the struggle.

In the last analysis, the outcome of the struggle will be determined by the fact that Russia, India, China, etc., account for the overwhelming majority of the population of the globe. And it is this majority that, during the past few years, has been drawn into the struggle for emancipation with extraordinary rapidity, so that in this respect there cannot be the slightest doubt what the final outcome of the world struggle will be. In this sense, the complete victory of socialism is fully and absolutely assured.

But what interests us is not the inevitability of this complete victory of socialism, but the tactics which we, the Russian Communist Party, we, the Russian Soviet government, should pursue to prevent the West-European counter-revolutionary states from crushing us. To ensure our existence until the next military conflict between the counter-revolutionary imperialist West and the revolutionary and nationalist East, between the most civilised countries of the world and the Orientally backward countries which, however, comprise the

majority, this majority must become civilised. We, too, lack enough civilisation to enable us to pass straight on to socialism, although we do have the political requisites for it. We should adopt the following tactics, or pursue the following policy to save ourselves.

We must strive to build up a state in which the workers retain the leadership of the peasants, in which they retain the confidence of the peasants, and by exercising the greatest economy remove every trace of extravagance from our social relations.

We must reduce our state apparatus to the utmost degree of economy. We must banish from it all traces of extravagance, of which so much has been left over from tsarist Russia, from its bureaucratic capitalist state machine.

Will not this be a reign of peasant limitations?

No. If we see to it that the working class retains its leadership over the peasantry, we shall be able, by exercising the greatest possible economy in the economic life of our state, to use every saving we make to develop our large-scale machine industry, to develop electrification, the hydraulic extraction of peat, to complete the Volkhov power project,⁴⁸ etc.

In this, and in this alone, lies our hope. Only when we have done this will we, speaking figuratively, be able to change horses, to change from the peasant, muzhik horse of poverty, from the horse of an economy designed for a ruined peasant country, to the horse which the proletariat is seeking and must seek—the horse of large-scale machine industry, of electrification, of the Volkhov power station, etc.

That is how I link up in my mind the general plan of our work, of our policy, of our tactics, of our strategy, with the functions of the reorganised Workers' and Peasants' Inspection. This is what, in my opinion, justifies the exceptional care, the exceptional attention that we must devote to the Workers' and Peasants' Inspection in raising it to an exceptionally high place, in giving it a leadership with Central Committee rights, etc., etc.

And this justification is that only by thoroughly purging our government offices, by reducing to the utmost everything that is not absolutely essential in them, shall we be certain

of being able to keep going. Moreover, we shall be able to keep going not on the level of a small-peasant country, not on the level of universal limitation, but on a level steadily advancing to large-scale machine industry.

These are the lofty tasks that I dream of for our Workers' and Peasants' Inspection. That is why I am planning for it the amalgamation of the most authoritative Party body with an "ordinary" People's Commissariat.

March 2, 1923

Pravda No. 49,
March 4, 1923

Signed: *N. Lenin*

Collected Works, Vol. 33

NOTES

- ¹ *Mensheviks*. A petty-bourgeois opportunist party in Russia; joined the bourgeois Provisional Government after the February bourgeois-democratic Revolution (1917) and supported its imperialist policy; became a counter-revolutionary party after the October Socialist Revolution and participated in the armed struggle of the Russian landowners and capitalists against the Soviet Republic. p. 13
- ² *Socialist-Revolutionaries*. A petty-bourgeois party founded in Russia by the fusion of several Narodnik groups (1901-02); joined the bourgeois Provisional Government together with the Mensheviks after the February Revolution and supported its imperialist policy; after the socialist revolution (October 1917) they participated in the armed struggle of the counter-revolution against the Soviet Republic. p. 13
- ³ The first coalition government was formed on May 5 (18), 1917; it included Cadet Party (see Note 6) members, the Socialist-Revolutionaries Kerensky and Chernov and the Mensheviks Skobcelev and Tsereteli. The second coalition government was formed in July with Kerensky as Premier; this government included the sugar-mill owner Tereshchenko and other capitalists, the Mensheviks Skobelev and Nikitin and the Socialist-Revolutionaries Chernov and Avksentyev. p. 14
- ⁴ At the behest of British and French imperialists the Provisional Government launched an offensive on the German front on June 18 (July 1), 1917 which ended in a crushing defeat. The offensive was begun against the will of the people of Russia who demanded a cessation of the imperialist war, and its failure was the failure of the imperialist policy of the Provisional Government and of the Mensheviks and Socialist-Revolutionaries that supported it. p. 15
- ⁵ This Conference was called by the Mensheviks and Socialist-Revolutionaries for the purpose of weakening the growing revolutionary mood in the country and was held in Petrograd from September 14 (27) to September 22 (October 5), 1917. It was attended by representatives of the petty-bourgeois parties, the Soviets, the trade unions, Zemstvos, commercial and industrial circles and army units; the Bolsheviks took part in

order to expose the Mensheviks and Socialist-Revolutionaries. The Conference elected a Pre-Parliament (the Provisional Council of the Republic) by means of which the Mensheviks and Socialist-Revolutionaries hoped to call a halt to the revolution and divert the country to the bourgeois-parliamentary path of development. p. 15

⁶ The *Cadets* were members of the Constitutional Democratic Party formed in October 1905; it was the biggest party representing the liberal monarchist trend among the bourgeoisie of Russia, its membership including capitalists, landowners active in the Zemstvos and bourgeois intellectuals. The Cadets called themselves the "party of people's freedom" but their policy actually amounted to an agreement with the autocracy aimed at the retention of tsarism in the form of a constitutional monarchy. After the February Revolution, with the consent of the Menshevik and Socialist-Revolutionary leaders of the Petrograd Soviet, the Cadets obtained the leading posts in the Provisional Government and pursued an anti-popular counter-revolutionary policy advantageous to the imperialists of the U.S.A., Britain and France. After the October Revolution the Cadets took a prominent part in all counter-revolutionary acts and in the campaigns of the interventionists against Soviet Russia. p. 15

⁷ *Kit Kitych* was the nickname of a rich merchant in one of Ostrovsky's plays whose real name was Tit Titych (Titus, son of Titus); the Russian word *kit* means *whale*, hence the pun. Lenin used the name in the meaning of *tycoon*. p. 15

⁸ *Kornilov*, Lavr, a tsarist general who headed the counter-revolutionary revolt of August 1917, the object of which was to seize revolutionary Petrograd, crush the Bolshevik Party, dissolve the Soviets and establish a military dictatorship. Workers, soldiers and sailors, in response to the appeal of the Bolshevik Party, arose in defence of Petrograd and defeated the revolt. p. 22

⁹ *Pravda*, a daily newspaper, official organ of the Central Committee of the C.P.S.U., was founded by Lenin on May 5, 1912. It was the first mass workers' daily paper published legally in tsarist Russia; it was printed in St. Petersburg on funds collected by the workers themselves. A large group of worker correspondents and worker journalists contributed to the paper.

Pravda was constantly persecuted by the police; its publication was stopped eight times by the tsarist government in the course of 27 months but it appeared again and again under new names. On July 21, 1914, on the eve of the First World War, it was suppressed by order of the government.

After the February Revolution (from March 18, 1917) *Pravda* began to appear as the official organ of the R.S.D.L.P. On July 18, 1917, the *Pravda* editorial offices were raided by officer cadets and Cossacks. Between July and October 1917, *Pravda* was persecuted by the counter-revolutionary Provisional Government and had to change its name time and again, appearing as *Listok Pravdy* (*Pravda* Sheet), *Proletary* (The

Proletarian), *Rabochy* (The Worker) and *Rabochy Put* (Workers' Path). Since the October Revolution *Pravda* has been issued under its own name; its editorial offices have been in Moscow since March 1918. p.26

¹⁰ By the beginning of September 1917, most of the deputies to the Soviets of Workers' and Soldiers' Deputies in Petrograd and Moscow supported the Bolsheviks and opposed the Mensheviks and Socialist-Revolutionaries. p. 53

¹¹ This refers to the Paris Commune of 1871, the first attempt in history to establish the dictatorship of the proletariat. The Commune existed from March 18 to May 28, 1871; it passed laws separating the church from the state and the school from the church, replaced the regular army by the armed people, made the posts of judges and civil servants elective and fixed the salaries of civil servants at rates not exceeding workers' wages, introduced a number of measures to improve the economic condition of factory workers and urban poor, etc. p. 56

¹² This is quoted from Marx's *Critique of the Gotha Programme*. p. 57

¹³ For Engels's letter to August Bebel of March 28, 1875 see Marx-Engels, *Selected Correspondence*, Moscow, 1955, pp. 352-59. p. 59

¹⁴ *Nikolai Pomyalovsky* was the author of *Sketches of Seminary Life* describing the over-strict regime and coarse morals of the theological seminaries in tsarist Russia. p. 67

¹⁵ *Possessional lands* were those granted to industrialists by the tsarist government together with the serfs occupying them; this was done to provide labour for the factories, the serfs receiving no wages apart from the plot of land. This survival of serfdom was long-lived in the Urals and other industrial areas. p. 74

¹⁶ *Novaya Zhizn* (New Life) was a newspaper issued by a group of Social-Democrats who called themselves "internationalists"; the group was made up of Left Mensheviks and individual intellectuals holding semi-Menshevik views. It appeared in Petrograd from April 1917 and until the October Revolution wavered between opposition to the Provisional Government and opposition to the Bolsheviks. After the October Revolution it pursued a policy hostile to the Soviet government and was suppressed in July 1918. p. 85

¹⁷ Serfdom was abolished in Russia in February 1861. p. 86

¹⁸ Quoted from Marx's letter to Bracke, May 5, 1875. See *Selected Correspondence*, Moscow, pp. 360-61. p. 91

¹⁹ Quoted from Goethe's *Faust*. p. 91

²⁰ This refers to the First Russian Revolution (1905-07) when Soviets of Workers' Deputies were first instituted. p. 94

- ²¹ General Kaledin was one of the leaders of the monarchist counter-revolution, an organiser of civil war in the Don area against the Soviet government (1917-18). p. 95
- ²² This refers to the Peace of Brest-Litovsk concluded in March 1918 between the Soviet government on the one hand and Germany and her Allies on the other. p. 97
- ²³ This refers to the period between the February and October revolutions when power was in the hands of the bourgeois Provisional Government. Chernov, Tsereteli, Kerensky and Kishkin were ministers of that government. p. 99
- ²⁴ *Vperyod* (Forward) was a Menshevik daily newspaper published in 1917 and 1918; in April 1918 it was suppressed for counter-revolutionary activity. p. 127
- ²⁵ *Dyelo Naroda* (People's Cause) was a Socialist-Revolutionary daily newspaper published at intervals and under different names from March 1917 to March 1919. It was suppressed for its counter-revolutionary activity. p. 127
- ²⁶ *Nash Vek* (Our Age) was one of the names under which the newspaper *Rech* (Speech), organ of the counter-revolutionary Cadet Party, continued to appear after its suppression on October 26 (November 8), 1917 until August 1918. p. 127
- ²⁷ Quoted from Engels's *Anti-Dühring*. p. 131
- ²⁸ *The Constituent Assembly* was convened on January 5, 1918, by elections based on election lists drawn up before the October Socialist Revolution so that the composition of the Assembly reflected the political relations existing at the time the bourgeoisie were still in power. This resulted in a great contradiction between the will of the majority of the Soviet people, who stood for Soviet power, and the policy that favoured the interests of the bourgeoisie and landowners pursued by the Assembly in which the Socialist-Revolutionaries, Mensheviks and Cadets had a majority of seats. The Constituent Assembly refused to discuss the Declaration of the Rights of the Working and Oppressed People and to approve the decrees passed by the Second All-Russia Congress of Soviets on peace, the land and the transfer of state power to the Soviets; it was dissolved by a resolution of the All-Russia Central Executive Committee on January 6 (19), 1918. p. 131
- ²⁹ Engels, *The Peasant Question in France and Germany* (Marx and Engels, *Selected Works*, Vol. II, Moscow, 1958, p. 438). p. 147
- ³⁰ *The man in a muffler*, a character from Chekhov's story of the same name; he was a man of extremely limited outlook who feared everything new, feared all initiative. p. 150
- ³¹ Quoted from one of Pushkin's epigrams. p. 155

- ³² 1861 was the year in which serfdom was abolished in Russia. p. 168
- ³³ This refers to the Decree on the Land, written by Lenin and adopted by the Second All-Russia Congress of Soviets on October 26, 1917, the day following the establishment of Soviet power.
The Decree on the Land abolished the landed estates and all private ownership of land, and gave all the land to the people.
The Decree on the Land included the Peasants' Mandate compiled on the basis of 242 local mandates given by peasants. One of the points in the Mandate was on the introduction of equalitarian land tenure. In a number of writings even before the October Revolution Lenin had pointed out the error of the slogan of equalitarian land tenure. The Socialist-Revolutionaries and other Narodniks who supported this slogan held the view that the transfer of the land on terms of equality to those who tilled it employing only their own labour would lead to the socialisation of the land. Equalitarian land tenure, which presupposed the retention of individual peasant farms, far from leading to socialism in the countryside would only have accelerated the development of capitalist relations in agriculture. The only true path to socialism for the peasantry, wrote Lenin, was that of uniting individual peasant farms, i.e., the collectivisation of agriculture.
Nevertheless, Lenin and his Party comrades agreed to include the point of equalitarian land tenure on the grounds that the peasants should learn by experience that it was incorrect. Lenin's prediction proved to be correct and the course of development in the countryside convinced the peasants of the need for collectivisation. p. 175
- ³⁴ Poor Peasants' Committees were set up in the rural areas during the spring and summer of 1918; the poor peasants united to support Soviet power and to fight against the kulaks who were organising counter-revolutionary acts and attempting to prevent the supply of grain to the starving towns. According to the decree of the All-Russia Central Executive Committee (June 11, 1918) the competency of the Poor Peasants' Committees included the distribution of grain, other items of primary necessity and farm implements and also assistance to the local food committees in requisitioning grain surpluses in the hands of the kulaks and rich people.
The Poor Peasants' Committees were the bulwark of the dictatorship of the proletariat in the rural areas, they helped consolidate Soviet power in the countryside and played an important part in winning the middle peasants over to the side of the Soviets.
The Poor Peasants' Committees, having accomplished their task, merged with the Soviets of Peasants' and Farm-labourers' Deputies by a decision of the Extraordinary Sixth All-Russia Congress of Soviets (November 1918). p. 177
- ³⁵ The counter-revolutionary revolt of the Czechoslovak Corps was organised by British and French imperialists with the active help of the Socialist-Revolutionaries and Mensheviks. The Corps had been formed before the October Revolution by Czech and Slovak soldiers from the

Austrian army who were prisoners of war in Russia; the Corps was to have fought against Germany on the side of the Allies. After the establishment of Soviet power, the Corps, by agreement with the Soviet Government, should have been dispatched to France via Vladivostok. The counter-revolutionary officers of the Corps, however, acting on the instructions of the Entente, rebelled against this agreement and in May 1918 launched an offensive against the Soviets; with the help of the Corps, counter-revolutionaries seized Penza, Samara, Chelyabinsk, Omsk and a number of other towns.

The Volga area was liberated by the Red Army in October 1918 and the revolt of the Czechoslovak Corps was finally suppressed at the end of 1919 when Kolchak's army was crushed. p. 180

- ³⁶ By a decree of the Council of People's Commissars (November 2, 1918) a fund of 1,000 million rubles was founded "to improve, develop and speedily reorganise agriculture on socialist lines". Grants and loans from this fund were given to agricultural communes, labour co-operatives and village communities or groups on the condition that they tilled the soil collectively. p. 193
- ³⁷ *Bednota* (The Poor) was a daily newspaper published in Moscow by the Central Committee of the Communist Party from March 27, 1918 to January 31, 1931. p. 195
- ³⁸ *Kolupayev* and *Razumayev* were capitalist kulaks in the writings of the Russian satirist Mikhail Saltykov-Shchedrin. p. 198
- ³⁹ The *Berne Yellow International* was Lenin's name for the Second International that ceased to exist in 1914 when the First World War broke out and was re-established by a conference of social-chauvinist and Centrist parties at Bern in February 1919. p. 214
- ⁴⁰ The battle referred to was that at Königgrätz on July 3, 1866 in which the Austrian army was completely routed by the Prussians; this battle decided the outcome of the Austro-Prussian war. p. 217
- ⁴¹ This article was never completed. p. 239
- ⁴² This refers to the newspaper *Communist Subbotnik* issued on one occasion only; it was prepared by the editors and contributors of Moscow newspapers and the ROSTA telegraph agency during the Subbotnik of April 10, 1920. p. 269
- ⁴³ *Ekonomicheskaya Zhizn* (Economic Life) was a daily newspaper published from 1918 to 1937. p. 279
- ⁴⁴ The Draft Instructions of the Council of Labour and Defence addressed to local Soviet institutions are to be found on pp. 300-322 of this volume. p. 323
- ⁴⁵ The Two-and-a-Half International was founded in Vienna in February 1921 at a conference of Centrist parties and groups that had temporarily

left the Second International under pressure of the revolutionary temper of the workers. It was re-united with the Second International in 1923. p. 332

- ⁴⁶ The Article referred to was Lenin's " 'Left-Wing' Childishness and Petty-Bourgeois Mentality". p. 345
- ⁴⁷ See Note 46. p. 363
- ⁴⁸ The Volkhov Power Station was the first big hydroelectric power station built in the Soviet Union. The work began in 1918 but construction was not fully developed until 1921 when the Civil War ended. The station went into operation in 1926. p. 387

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period of reaction (1907-10) took up a conciliatory attitude towards Liquidators, Otzovists and Trotskyists; in October 1917 together with Kamenev he disclosed the Party's decision to launch an armed uprising; in 1925 he was one of the organisers of the "New Opposition" and in 1926 one of the leaders of the anti-Party Trotsky-Zinoviev bloc; in 1934 was expelled from the Party for his anti-Party activity—177

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ВОПРОСЫ СОЦИАЛИСТИЧЕСКОЙ ОРГАНИЗАЦИИ
НАРОДНОГО ХОЗЯЙСТВА

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20

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