

# LENIN

## On Participation of the People in Government



PROGRESS Publishers

*Workers of All Countries, Unite!*



*W. J. Wood (Kearney)*

# LENIN

## On Participation of the People in Government



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В. И. Ленин

О ПРИВЛЕЧЕНИИ МАСС К УПРАВЛЕНИЮ ГОСУДАРСТВОМ

На английском языке

PUBLISHERS' NOTE

This collection contains Lenin's articles, chapters from his books and passages from his speeches, in which he presented a programme for enlisting broad sections of the people in the running of the Soviet state. They date back to the early months and years following the socialist revolution in Russia in 1917.

The translations were taken from the English-language *Collected Works* of V. I. Lenin based on the 4th Russian-language edition, with corrections based on the 5th edition put out in Moscow by the Institute of Marxism-Leninism of the CC CPSU.

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## From THE TASKS OF THE PROLETARIAT IN THE PRESENT REVOLUTION\*

5) Not a parliamentary republic—to return to a parliamentary republic from the Soviets of Workers' Deputies would be a retrograde step—but a republic of Soviets of Workers', Agricultural Labourers' and Peasants' Deputies throughout the country, from top to bottom.

Abolition of the police, the army and the bureaucracy.\*\*

The salaries of all officials, all of whom are elective and displaceable at any time, not to exceed the average wage of a competent worker.

6) The weight of emphasis in the agrarian programme to be shifted to the Soviets of Agricultural Labourers' Deputies.

Confiscation of all landed estates.

Nationalisation of *all* lands in the country, the land to be disposed of by the local Soviets of Agricultural Labourers' and Peasants' Deputies. The organisation of separate Soviets of Deputies of Poor Peasants. The setting up of a model farm

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\* This article includes Lenin's *April Theses*, published immediately after his return to Russia from emigration at the beginning of April 1917, after the February bourgeois-democratic revolution. The theses outlined the course for the growing-over of the bourgeois-democratic into a socialist revolution. Theses 5, 6, 7 and 8 are published here.—*Ed.*

\*\* I.e., the standing army to be replaced by the arming of the whole people.

on each of the large estates (ranging in size from 100 to 300 dessiatines, according to local and other conditions, and to the decisions of the local bodies) under the control of the Soviets of Agricultural Labourers' Deputies and for the public account.

7) The immediate amalgamation of all banks in the country into a single national bank, and the institution of control over it by the Soviet of Workers' Deputies.

8) It is not our *immediate* task to "introduce" socialism, but only to bring social production and the distribution of products at once under the *control* of the Soviets of Workers' Deputies.

Written April 4-5 (17-18), 1917

*Collected Works*, Vol. 24,  
pp. 23-24

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## From THE TASKS OF THE PROLETARIAT IN OUR REVOLUTION

### A NEW TYPE OF STATE EMERGING FROM OUR REVOLUTION

11. The Soviets of Workers', Soldiers', Peasants' and other Deputies are not understood, not only in the sense that their class significance, their role in the *Russian* revolution, is not clear to the majority. They are not understood also in the sense that they constitute a new form or rather a new *type of state*.

The most perfect, the most advanced type of bourgeois state is the *parliamentary democratic republic*: power is vested in parliament; the state machine, the apparatus and organ of administration, is of the customary kind: the standing army, the police, and the bureaucracy—which in practice is undisplaceable, is privileged and stands *above* the people.

Since the end of the nineteenth century, however, revolutionary epochs have advanced a *higher* type of democratic state, a state which in certain respects, as Engels put it, ceases to be a state, is "no longer a state in the proper sense of the word".\* This is a state of the Paris Commune\*\* type, one in which a standing army and police divorced from the

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\* A quotation from Engels's letter to August Bebel of March 18-28, 1875.—*Ed.*

\*\* The *Paris Commune*—the first experience of establishing the dictatorship of the proletariat. The Paris Commune lasted from March 18 to May 28, 1871. On May 21, 1871 the troops of the counter-revolutionary Thiers government entered Paris and took brutal reprisals against the workers; some 30,000 people were killed, 50,000 arrested, and many sent to forced labour.—*Ed.*

people are *replaced* by the direct arming of the people themselves. It is *this feature* that constitutes the very essence of the Commune, which has been so misrepresented and slandered by the bourgeois writers, and to which has been erroneously ascribed, among other things, the intention of immediately "introducing" socialism.

This is the type of state which the Russian revolution *began* to create in 1905 and in 1917.\* A Republic of Soviets of Workers', Soldiers', Peasants', and other Deputies, united in an All-Russia Constituent Assembly of people's representatives or in a Council of Soviets, etc., is what is *already being realised* in our country now, at this juncture. It is being realised by the initiative of the nation's millions, who are creating a democracy on their own, *in their own way*, without waiting until the Cadet professors\*\* draft their legislative bills for a parliamentary bourgeois republic, or until the pedants and routine-worshippers of petty-bourgeois "Social-Democracy", like Mr. Plekhanov\*\*\* or Kautsky,\*\*\*\* stop distorting the Marxist teaching on the state.

Marxism differs from anarchism in that it recognises the *need* for a state and for state power in the period of revolu-

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\* The first *Soviets of Workers' Deputies* appeared in Russia during the Revolution of 1905. They ceased to exist when the revolution was defeated in 1907. After the February Revolution of 1917, Soviets of Workers' Deputies, and also Soviets of Soldiers' Deputies and Soviets of Peasants' Deputies appeared throughout the country. In October 1917 the socialist revolution gave state power to the Soviets of Workers', Soldiers' and Peasants' Deputies.—Ed.

\*\* *Cadets*—a name of the members of the Constitutional-Democratic Party, a bourgeois liberal-monarchist party which had the majority in the bourgeois Provisional Government formed after the February Revolution of 1917.—Ed.

\*\*\* *G. V. Plekhanov* (1856-1918)—a prominent figure in the Russian and international working-class movement, founder of the first Russian Marxist organisation, the Emancipation of Labour group (1883). After the Second Congress of the R.S.D.L.P. (1903) he was a Menshevik.—Ed.

\*\*\*\* *Karl Kautsky* (1854-1938)—a theoretician and leader of the German Social-Democrats and the Second International. He betrayed the socialist cause in 1914, when the First World War began. Under cover of pacifist phrases he supported the imperialist policy of the German Government.—Ed.

tion in general, and in the period of transition from capitalism to socialism in particular.

Marxism differs from the petty-bourgeois, opportunist "Social-Democratism" of Plekhanov, Kautsky and Co. in that it recognises that what is required during these two periods is *not* a state of the usual parliamentary bourgeois republican type, but a state of the Paris Commune type.

The main distinctions between a state of the latter type and the old state are as follows.

It is quite easy (as history proves) to revert from a parliamentary bourgeois republic to a monarchy, for all the machinery of oppression—the army, the police, and the bureaucracy—is left intact. The Commune and the Soviets *smash* that machinery and do away with it.

The parliamentary bourgeois republic hampers and stifles the independent political life of the *masses*, their direct participation in the *democratic* organisation of the life of the state from the bottom up. The opposite is the case with the Soviets.

The latter reproduce the type of state which was being evolved by the Paris Commune and which Marx described as "the political form at last discovered under which to work out the economic emancipation of labour".\*

We are usually told that the Russian people are not yet prepared for the "introduction" of the Commune. This was the argument of the serf-owners when they claimed that the peasants were not prepared for emancipation. The Commune, i.e., the Soviets, does not "introduce", does not intend to "introduce", and must not introduce *any* reforms which have not absolutely matured both in economic reality and in the minds of the overwhelming majority of the people. The deeper the economic collapse and the crisis produced by the war, the more urgent becomes the need for the most perfect political form, which will *facilitate* the healing of the terrible wounds inflicted on mankind by the war. The less the organisational experience of the Russian people, the more resolutely must we *proceed* to organisation development by

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\* A quotation from Marx's *The Civil War in France*, Chapter III.—Ed.

the *people themselves*, and not merely by the bourgeois politicians and "well-placed" bureaucrats.

The sooner we shed the old prejudices of pseudo-Marxism, a Marxism falsified by Plekhanov, Kautsky and Co., the more actively we set about helping the people to organise Soviets of Workers' and Peasants' Deputies everywhere and immediately, and helping the latter to take life *in its entirety* under their control, and the longer Lvov\* and Co. delay the convocation of the Constituent Assembly,\*\* the easier will it be for the people (through the medium of the Constituent Assembly, or independently of it, if Lvov delays its convocation too long) to cast their decision in favour of a republic of Soviets of Workers' and Peasants' Deputies. Errors in the new work of organisational development by the people themselves are at first inevitable; but it is better to make mistakes and go forward than to *wait* until the professors of law summoned by Mr. Lvov draft their laws for the convocation of the Constituent Assembly, for the perpetuation of the parliamentary bourgeois republic and for the strangling of the Soviets of Workers' and Peasants' Deputies.

If we organise ourselves and conduct our propaganda skilfully, not only the proletarians, but nine-tenths of the peasants will be opposed to the restoration of the police, will be opposed to an undisplaceable and privileged bureaucracy and to an army divorced from the people. And that is all the new type of state stands for.

12. The substitution of a people's militia for the police is a reform that follows from the entire course of the revolution and that is now being introduced in most parts of Russia. We must explain to the people that in most of the bourgeois revolutions of the usual type, this reform was always

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\* G. Y. Lvov, Prince (1861-1925)—a Cadet, Chairman of the Council of Ministers of the bourgeois Provisional Government from March to July 1917.—Ed.

\*\* The bourgeois Provisional Government formed in Russia after the February Revolution of 1917 announced on March 2 (15), 1917 that it intended to convene a Constituent Assembly. The Provisional Government postponed the elections several times.—Ed.

extremely short-lived, and that the bourgeoisie—even the most democratic and republican—restored the police of the old, tsarist type, a police divorced from the people, commanded by the bourgeoisie and capable of oppressing the people in every way.

There is only one way to *prevent* the restoration of the police, and that is to create a people's militia and fuse it with the army (the standing army to be replaced by the arming of the entire people). Service in this militia should extend to all citizens of both sexes between the ages of fifteen and sixty-five without exception, if these tentatively suggested age limits may be taken as indicating the participation of adolescents and old people. Capitalists must pay their workers, servants, etc., for days devoted to public service in the militia. Unless women are brought to take an independent part not only in political life generally, but also in daily and universal public service, it is no use talking about full and stable democracy, let alone socialism. And such "police" functions as care of the sick and of homeless children, food inspection, etc., will never be satisfactorily discharged until women are on an equal footing with men, not merely nominally but in reality.

The tasks which the proletariat must put before the people in order to safeguard, consolidate and develop the revolution are prevention of the restoration of the police and enlistment of the organisational forces of the entire people in forming a people's militia.

Written April 10 (23), 1917

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## From CONGRESS OF PEASANTS' DEPUTIES

Another vital and pressing issue is that of the organisation and administration of the state. It is not enough to preach democracy, not enough to proclaim it and decree it, not enough to entrust the people's "representatives" in representative institutions with its implementation. Democracy must be *built* at once, from below, through the initiative of the masses themselves, through their effective participation in *all* fields of state activity, without "supervision" from above, without the bureaucracy.

Replacement of the police, the bureaucracy, and the standing army by the universal arming of the whole people, by a universal *militia* of the entire people, women included, is a practical job that can and should be tackled immediately. The more initiative, variety, daring, and creativeness the masses contribute to this, the better. Not only the rural proletarians and semi-proletarians, but nine-tenths of the peasantry probably will follow us if we explain our proposals clearly, simply, and intelligibly by demonstrating examples and lessons from real life. Our proposals are:

- not to allow the restoration of the police;
- not to allow the restoration of the absolute powers of officials who, in effect, are undisplaceable and who belong to the landowner or capitalist class;
- not to allow the restoration of a standing army separated from the people, for such an army is the surest guarantee that

attempts of all kinds will be made to stamp out freedom and restore the monarchy;

- to teach the people, down to the very bottom, the art of government not only in theory but in practice, by beginning to make immediate use everywhere of the experience of the masses.

Democracy from below, democracy without an officialdom, without a police, without a standing army; voluntary social duty by a *militia* formed from a universally armed people—this is a guarantee of freedom which no tsars, no swashbuckling generals, and no capitalists can take away.

*Pravda*, No. 34, April 16, 1917

*Collected Works*, Vol. 24,  
pp. 169-70

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## From THE STATE AND REVOLUTION

### THE MARXIST THEORY OF THE STATE AND THE TASKS OF THE PROLETARIAT IN THE REVOLUTION

#### 2. The Transition from Capitalism to Communism

Marx continued:

"Between capitalist and communist society lies the period of the revolutionary transformation of the one into the other. Corresponding to this is also a political transition period in which the state can be nothing but *the revolutionary dictatorship of the proletariat*."\*

Marx bases this conclusion on an analysis of the role played by the proletariat in modern capitalist society, on the data 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 as follows: 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 communist society is impossible without a "political transition period", and the state in this period can only be the revolutionary dictatorship of the proletariat.

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

We have seen that the *Communist Manifesto*\*\* simply

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\* A quotation from Marx's *Critique of the Gotha Programme*.—Ed.

\*\* A reference to the *Manifesto of the Communist Party* by Marx and Engels.—Ed.

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 effect, 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", "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, because constitutional legality steadily endured there for a remarkably long time—nearly half a century (1871-1914)—and during this period the Social-Democrats were 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 recorded 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 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 "paupers"!), in the purely capitalist organisation of the daily press, etc., etc.—we 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 out of ten, if not ninety-nine out of a hundred, bourgeois publicists and politicians come under 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 splendidly when, in analysing the experience of the Commune,\* he said that the oppressed are allowed once every few years to decide which particular representative 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 through and through—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., development 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 there is no freedom and no democracy where there is suppression and where there is violence.

Engels expressed this splendidly in his letter to Bebel when he said, as the reader will remember, that "the proletariat needs 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 exceptions 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 coercion, without subordination, *without the special apparatus* for coercion called the state.

The expression "the state *withers away*" is very well chosen, for it indicates both the gradual and the spontaneous

\* A reference to the Paris Commune of 1871.—Ed.

\*\* A reference to Marx's *The Civil War in France*.—Ed.

\* A quotation from Engels's letter to August Bebel of March 18-28, 1875.—Ed.

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 arouses indignation, evokes protest and revolt, and creates the need for *suppression*.

And so 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 exploiters, of the minority. Communism alone is capable of providing really complete democracy, and the more complete it is, the sooner it will become unnecessary and wither away of its own accord.

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 matter of suppressing, it calls for seas of blood, through which mankind is actually wading its way 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. Na-

turally, the exploiters are 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 simple *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*, 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 stop *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 do know they will wither away. With their withering away the state will also *wither away*.

Without building 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

\* *Ferdinand Lassalle* (1825-1864)—a German socialist, a founder of the General Association of German Workers (1863). Lassalle's political and theoretical errors were criticised by Marx and Engels.—Ed.

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, a fund 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 administrative 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 comes."\*

It is this communist society, which has just emerged into the light of day out of the womb of capitalism and which is in every respect stamped with 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 consumer goods a corresponding quantity of products. After a deduction is made of the amount of labour which goes to the public fund, every worker, there-

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\* Here and below Lenin quotes from Marx's *Critique of the Gotha Programme*.—Ed.

fore, 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 to an equal product of labour", Lassalle is mistaken and Marx exposes the mistake.

"Hence, the equal right," says Marx, in this case *still* certainly conforms to "bourgeois law", which, like all law, *implies inequality*. All law 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 the "equal right" is a violation of equality and an injustice. In fact, everyone, 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, the right instead of being equal would have to be unequal."

The first phase of communism, therefore, cannot yet provide justice and equality: differences, and unjust differences, in wealth will still persist, 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.—and make them private property. In smashing Lassalle's petty-bourgeois, vague 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 consumer goods "according to the amount of labour performed" (and not according to needs).

The vulgar economists, including the bourgeois professors and "our" Tugan,\* 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 of society (commonly called "socialism") *does not remove* the defects of distribution and the inequality of "bourgeois law", which *continues to prevail* so 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. Law 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 law" 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 law" recognises them as the private property of individuals. Socialism converts them into *common* property. *To that extent*—and to that extent alone—"bourgeois law" disappears.

However, it persists as far as its other part is concerned; it persists 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 shall not eat", is *already* realised; the other socialist principle, "An equal amount of products for an equal amount of labour", is also *already* realised. But

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\* M. I. Tugan-Baranovsky (1865-1919)—a Russian bourgeois economist.—Ed.

this is not yet communism, and it does not yet abolish "bourgeois law", which gives 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 rules of law*. Besides, the abolition of capitalism *does not immediately create* the economic prerequisites for *such* a change.

Now, there are no other rules than those of "bourgeois law". 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 in the distribution of products.

The state withers away insofar 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 law", which sanctifies actual inequality. For the state to wither away completely, complete 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 with it also the antithesis between mental and physical labour, has vanished, after labour has become not only a livelihood but life's prime want, after the productive forces have 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 law be left behind 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 mercilessly ridiculing the absurdity of combining the words "freedom" and "state". So long as the state exists there is no freedom. When there is 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 at which the antithesis between mental and physical labour disappears, at which 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 make it *possible* for the productive forces to develop to a tremendous extent. 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 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 "life's prime want"—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.

The state will be able 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 has become so pro-

ductive that they will voluntarily work *according to their ability*. "The narrow horizon of bourgeois law", which compels one to calculate with the heartlessness 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 left behind. There will then be no need for society, in distributing the products, to regulate the quantity 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 betraying both their ignorance and their selfish 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; as for the great socialists' *forecast* that it will arrive, it presupposes not the present productivity of labour and *not the present* ordinary run of people, who, like the seminary students in Pomyalovsky's stories,\* 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* over 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 selfish defence of capitalism by the bourgeois ideologists (and their hangers-on, like the Tseretelis,\*\* Cher-

\* The coarse and cruel ways of the seminary students were described by the Russian writer N. G. Pomyalovsky in his *Sketches of Seminary Life*.—Ed.

\*\* I. G. Tsereteli (1882-1959)—a leader of the Mensheviks, an opportunist trend in Russian Social-Democracy.—Ed.

novs\* and Co.) consists in that they *substitute* arguing and talk 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 other employees of *one* huge "syndicate"—the whole state—and the complete subordination of the entire work of this syndicate to a genuinely democratic state, *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, talks of wild utopias, of the demagogic promises of the Bolsheviks, of the impossibility of "introducing" socialism, it is the higher stage, or phase, of communism he has 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 recognise this distinction now, under capitalism, and only individual anarchists, perhaps, could invest it with primary importance (if there still are people among the anarchists who have learned nothing from the "Plekhanov" conversion of the Kropotkins, of Grave, Cornelissen\*\* and other "stars" of anarchism into social-chauvinists, or into "anarcho-trenchists", as Ghe\*\*\* one of the few anarchists who have still preserved a sense of honour and a conscience, has put it).

\* V. M. Chernov (1876-1952)—a leader of the Socialist-Revolutionary Party.—Ed.

\*\* P. A. Kropotkin (1842-1921), Jean Grave (1854-1939) and Christian Cornelissen—anarchist theoreticians and leaders. In 1914 they went over to the side of their imperialist governments and supported the imperialist war.—Ed.

\*\*\* A. Y. Ghe (died in 1919)—a Russian anarchist, opposed the imperialist war. After the October Socialist Revolution, supported Soviet power.—Ed.

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. Insofar as the means of production become *common* property, the word "communism" is also applicable here, providing we do not forget that this is *not* complete 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 over 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 vestiges of capitalism. Hence the interesting phenomenon that communism in its first phase retains "the narrow horizon of *bourgeois* law". Of course, bourgeois law in regard to the distribution of *consumer* goods inevitably presupposes the existence of the *bourgeois state*, for law is nothing without an apparatus capable of *enforcing* the observance of the rules of law.

It follows that under communism there remains for a time not only bourgeois law, 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 have not taken the slightest trouble to study its extraordinarily profound content.

But in 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" law 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 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, rigid, fixed once and for all, whereas in reality *only* socialism will be the beginning of a rapid, genuine, truly mass forward movement, embracing first the *majority* and then the whole of the population, in all spheres of public and private life.

Democracy is a form of the state, one of its varieties. Consequently, like every state, it represents, on the one hand, the organised, systematic use of force 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 to substitute for them a *more* democratic state machine, but a state machine nevertheless, in the shape of armed workers who proceed to form a militia involving the entire population.

Here "quantity turns into quality": *such* a degree of democracy implies overstepping the boundaries of bourgeois

society and beginning its socialist reorganisation. If really *all* take part in the administration of the state, capitalism cannot retain its hold. The development of capitalism, in turn, creates the *preconditions* that *enable* really "all" to take part in the administration of the state. Some of these preconditions 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* preconditions, it is quite possible, after the overthrow of the capitalists and the bureaucrats, to proceed immediately, overnight, to replace them in the *control* over 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 to the wishes of the capitalists, and will work even better tomorrow in obedience to the wishes of the armed workers.)

Accounting and control—that is *mainly* what is needed for the "smooth working", for the proper functioning, of the *first phase* of communist society. *All* citizens are transformed into hired employees of the state, which consists of the armed workers. *All* citizens become employees and workers of a *single* country-wide state "syndicate". All that is required is that they should work equally, do their proper share of work, and get equal pay. The accounting and control necessary for this have been *simplified* by capitalism to the utmost 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 more important functions of the state are reduced to such accounting and control by the workers themselves, it will cease

When the *majority* of the people begin independently and everywhere to keep such accounts and exercise 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 and popular; and there will be no 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 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 only a necessary *step* for thoroughly cleansing society of all the infamies and abominations of capitalist exploitation *and for further progress.*

From the moment all members of society, or at least the vast majority, have learned to administer the state *themselves*, have taken this work into their own hands, have organised control over the insignificant capitalist minority, over the gentry who wish to preserve their capitalist habits and over the workers who have been thoroughly 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 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 accounts and exercise control over the parasites, the sons of the wealthy, the swindlers and other "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

to be a "political state" and "public functions will lose their political character and become mere administrative functions" (cf. above, Chapter IV, 2, Engels's controversy with the anarchists).

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 the community will very soon become a *habit*.

Then the door will be thrown 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.

Written in August-September 1917

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## ONE OF THE FUNDAMENTAL QUESTIONS OF THE REVOLUTION

The key question of every revolution is undoubtedly the question of state power. Which class holds power decides everything. When *Dyelo Naroda*,\* the paper of the chief governing party in Russia, recently complained (No. 147) that, owing to the controversies over power, both the question of the Constituent Assembly and that of bread are being forgotten, the Socialist-Revolutionaries\*\* should have been answered, "Blame yourselves. For it is the wavering and indecision of *your* party that are mostly to blame for 'ministerial leapfrog', the interminable postponements of the Constituent Assembly, and the undermining by the capitalists of the planned and agreed measures of a grain monopoly and of providing the country with bread."

The question of power cannot be evaded or brushed aside, because it is the key question determining *everything* in a revolution's development, and in its foreign and domestic policies. It is an undisputed fact that our revolution has "wasted" six months in wavering over the system of power; it is a fact resulting from the wavering policy of the Social-

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\* *Dyelo Naroda*—a newspaper, organ of the Socialist-Revolutionary Party, published from March 1917 to July 1918.—*Ed.*

\*\* The Socialist-Revolutionaries (S.R.s)—members of the petty-bourgeois Socialist-Revolutionary Party. After the February Revolution of 1917 they supported the policy of the bourgeois Provisional Government and advocated continuing the imperialist war. In May 1917, their representatives entered the Provisional Government.—*Ed.*

ist-Revolutionaries and Mensheviks.\* In the long run, these parties' wavering policy was determined by the class position of the petty bourgeoisie, by their economic instability in the struggle between capital and labour.

The whole issue at present is whether the petty-bourgeois democrats have learned anything during these great, exceptionally eventful six months. If not, then the revolution is lost, and only a victorious uprising of the proletariat can save it. If they have learned something, the establishment of a stable, unwavering power must be begun immediately. Only if power is based, obviously and unconditionally, *on a majority* of the population can it be stable during a popular revolution, i.e., a revolution which rouses the people, the majority of the workers and peasants, to action. Up to now state power in Russia has *virtually* remained in the hands of the *bourgeoisie*, who are compelled to make only particular concessions (only to begin withdrawing them the following day), to hand out promises (only to fail to carry them out), to search for all sorts of excuses to cover their domination (only to fool the people by a show of "honest coalition"), etc., etc. In words it claims to be a popular, democratic, revolutionary government, but in deeds it is an anti-popular, undemocratic, counter-revolutionary, bourgeois government. This is the contradiction which has existed so far and which has been a source of the complete instability and inconsistency of power, of that "ministerial leapfrog" in which the S.R.s and Mensheviks have been engaged with such unfortunate (for the people) enthusiasm.

In early June 1917 I told the All-Russia Congress of Soviets that either the Soviets would be dispersed and die an inglorious death, or all power must be transferred to them. The events of July and August\*\* very convincingly bore out these words. No matter what lies the lackeys of the bour-

\* The *Mensheviks*—an opportunist trend in Russian Social-Democracy. After the February Revolution of 1917 they supported the policy of the bourgeois Provisional Government and their representatives became its members in May 1917.—*Ed.*

\*\* On July 3-4, 1917 mass demonstrations of workers and soldiers took place in Petrograd, demanding the hand-over of state power to the Soviets of Workers' and Soldiers' Deputies.

geoisie—Potresov,\* Plekhanov and others, who designate as “broadening the base” of power its virtual transfer to a tiny minority of the people, to the bourgeoisie, the exploiters—may resort to, only the power of the Soviets can be stable, obviously based on a majority of the people.

Only Soviet power could be stable and not be overthrown even in the stormiest moments of the stormiest revolution. Only this power could assure a continuous and broad development of the revolution, a peaceful struggle of parties within the Soviets. Until this power is created, there will inevitably be indecision, instability, vacillation, endless “crises of power”, a constant farce of ministerial leapfrog, outbreaks on the Right and on the Left.

The slogan, “Power to the Soviets”, however, is very often, if not in most cases, taken quite incorrectly to mean a “Cabinet of the parties of the Soviet majority”. We would like to go into more detail on this very false notion.

A “Cabinet of the parties of the Soviet majority” means a change of individual ministers, with the entire old government apparatus left intact—a thoroughly bureaucratic and thoroughly undemocratic apparatus incapable of carrying out serious reforms, such as are contained even in the S.R. and Menshevik programmes.

“Power to the Soviets” means radically reshaping the entire old state apparatus, that bureaucratic apparatus which hampers everything democratic. It means removing this apparatus and substituting for it a new, popular one, i.e., a truly democratic apparatus of Soviets, i.e., the organised and armed majority of the people—the workers, soldiers and peasants. It means allowing the majority of the people initiative and independence not only in the election of deputies, but also in state administration, in effecting reforms and various other changes.

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On August 25, 1917 General Kornilov sent a cavalry corps to Petrograd to carry out a counter-revolutionary coup d'état, crush the Bolshevik Party, establish a military dictatorship and prepare the restoration of the monarchy in Russia. Within a few days, the Petrograd revolutionary workers, soldiers and sailors quelled the revolt.—Ed.

\* A. N. Potresov (1869-1934)—a Menshevik leader.—Ed.

To make this difference clearer and more comprehensible, it is worth recalling a valuable admission made some time ago by the paper of the governing party of the S.R.s, *Dyelo Naroda*. It wrote that *even* in those ministries which were in the hands of socialist Ministers (this was written during the notorious coalition with the Cadets, when some Mensheviks and S.R.s were ministers), the entire administrative apparatus had remained unchanged, and hampered work.

This is quite understandable. The entire history of the bourgeois-parliamentary, and also, to a considerable extent, of the bourgeois-constitutional, countries shows that a change of ministers means very little, for the real work of administration is in the hands of an enormous army of officials. This army, however, is undemocratic through and through, it is connected by thousands and millions of threads with the landowners and the bourgeoisie and is completely dependent on them. This army is surrounded by an atmosphere of bourgeois relations, and breathes nothing but this atmosphere. It is set in its ways, petrified, stagnant, and is powerless to break free of this atmosphere. It can only think, feel, or act in the old way. This army is bound by servility to rank, by certain privileges of “Civil” Service; the upper ranks of this army are, through the medium of shares and banks, entirely enslaved by finance capital, being to a certain extent its agent and a vehicle of its interests and influence.

It is the greatest delusion, the greatest self-deception, and a deception of the people, to attempt, by means of *this* state apparatus, to carry out such reforms as the abolition of landed estates without compensation, or the grain monopoly, etc. This apparatus *can* serve a republican bourgeoisie, creating a republic in the shape of a “monarchy without a monarch”, like the French Third Republic,\* but it is absolutely incapable of carrying out reforms which would even seriously curtail or limit the rights of capital, the rights of “sacred private property”, much less abolish those rights. That is why it always happens, under all sorts of “coalition” Cabi-

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\* The Third Republic was established in France in 1870.—Ed.

nets that include "socialists", that these socialists, even when individuals among them are perfectly honest, in reality turn out to be either a useless ornament of or a screen for the bourgeois government, a sort of lightning conductor to divert the people's indignation from the government, a tool for the government to deceive the people. This was the case with Louis Blanc in 1848,\* and dozens of times in Britain and France, when socialists participated in Cabinets. This is also the case with the Chernovs and Tseretelis in 1917.\*\* So it has been and so it will be as long as the bourgeois system exists and as long as the old bourgeois, bureaucratic state apparatus remains intact.

The Soviets of Workers', Soldiers' and Peasants' Deputies are particularly valuable because they represent a new type of state apparatus, which is immeasurably higher, incomparably more democratic. The S.R.s and Mensheviks have done everything, the possible and the impossible, to turn the Soviets (particularly the Petrograd Soviet and the All-Russia Soviet, i.e., the Central Executive Committee) into useless talking shops which, under the guise of "control", merely adopted useless resolutions and suggestions which the government shelved with the most polite and kindly smile. The "fresh breeze of the Kornilov affair,\*\*" however, which promised a real storm, was enough for all that was musty in the Soviet to blow away for a while, and for the initiative of the revolutionary people to begin expressing itself as something majestic, powerful and invincible.

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\* *Louis Blanc* (1811-1882)—a French petty-bourgeois socialist. During the Revolution of 1848, he became a member of the bourgeois Provisional Government, heading the commission for studying the labour question. With his conciliatory tactics he virtually helped the bourgeoisie to spread illusions among the workers and divert them from the revolutionary struggle.—*Ed.*

\*\* *Chernov*, a Socialist-Revolutionary leader, and *Tsereteli*, a Menshevik leader, became members of the bourgeois Provisional Government in 1917.—*Ed.*

\*\*\* *L. G. Kornilov* (1870-1918)—a general of the tsarist army, supreme commander-in-chief of the Russian army in the summer of 1917. In August 1917, he headed a counter-revolutionary revolt, which was quelled by the Petrograd revolutionary workers and soldiers.—*Ed.*

Let all sceptics learn from this example from history. Let those who say: "We have no apparatus to replace the old one, which inevitably gravitates towards the defence of the bourgeoisie," be ashamed of themselves. For this apparatus exists. It is the Soviets. Don't be afraid of the people's initiative and independence. Put your faith in their revolutionary organisations, and you will see in *all* realms of state affairs the same strength, majesty and invincibility of the workers and peasants as were displayed in their unity and their fury against Kornilov.

Lack of faith in the people, fear of their initiative and independence, trepidation before their revolutionary energy instead of all-round and unqualified support for it—this is where the S.R. and Menshevik leaders have sinned most of all. This is where we find one of the deepest roots of their indecision, their vacillation, their infinite and infinitely fruitless attempts to pour new wine into the old bottles of the old, bureaucratic state apparatus.

Take the history of the democratisation of the army in the 1917 Russian revolution, the history of the Chernov Ministry, of *Palchinsky's*\* "reign", and of *Peshekhonov's*\*\* resignation—you will find what we have said above strikingly borne out at every step. Because there was no full confidence in the elected soldiers' organisations and no absolute observance of the principle of soldiers electing their commanding officers, the Kornilovs, *Kaledins*\*\*\* and counter-revolutiona-

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\* *P. I. Palchinsky* (1875-1929)—Deputy Minister of Commerce and Industry in the coalition Provisional Government, organised sabotage by the industrialists who tried to strangle the revolution with "a bony hand of famine". Exposed by the press, he was expelled from the government.—*Ed.*

\*\* *A. V. Peshekhonov* (1867-1933)—a leader of the petty-bourgeois party of Popular Socialists, Minister of Food in the coalition Provisional Government in 1917. He sought to improve the supply of food to the famine-stricken urban population but failed and was obliged to resign from the government. All the measures he proposed met with fierce resistance on the part of the grain merchants and the Provisional Government.—*Ed.*

\*\*\* *A. M. Kaledin* (1861-1918)—a general of the tsarist army, a Don Cossack ataman, an active participant in the Kornilov revolt. Later he headed the counter-revolution in the Don area.—*Ed.*

ry officers came to be at the head of the army. This is a fact. Without deliberately closing one's eyes, one cannot fail to see that *after* the Kornilov affair Kerensky's\* government is *leaving everything as before*, that *in fact it is bringing back the Kornilov affair*. The appointment of Alexeyev, the "peace" with the Klembovskys, Gagarins, Bagratians\*\* and other Kornilov men, and leniency in the treatment of Kornilov and Kaledin all very clearly prove that Kerensky is in fact bringing back the Kornilov affair.

There is no middle course. This has been shown by experience. Either all power goes to the Soviets and the army is made fully democratic, or another Kornilov affair occurs.

And what about the history of the Chernov Ministry? Didn't it prove that every more or less serious step towards actually satisfying the peasants' needs, every step showing confidence in the peasants and in their mass organisations and actions, evoked very great enthusiasm among them? Chernov, however, had to spend almost four months "haggling" with the Cadets and bureaucrats, who by endless delays and intrigues finally forced him to resign without having accomplished anything. For and during these four months the landowners and capitalists "won the game"—they saved the landed estates, delayed the convocation of the Constituent Assembly, and even started a number of repressions against the land committees.

There is no middle course. This has been shown by experience. Either all power goes to the Soviets both centrally and locally, and all land is given to the peasants *immediately*, pending the Constituent Assembly's decision, or the landowners and capitalists obstruct every step, restore the landowners' power, drive the peasants into a rage and carry things to an exceedingly violent peasant revolt.

The same thing happened when the capitalists (with the

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\* A. F. Kerensky (1881-1970)—a Socialist-Revolutionary who became Prime Minister of the bourgeois Provisional Government in the summer of 1917.—Ed.

\*\* Tsarist generals who took part in or sympathised with the Kornilov revolt.—Ed.

aid of Palchinsky) crushed every more or less serious attempts to supervise production, when the merchants thwarted the grain monopoly and broke up the regulated democratic distribution of grain and other foodstuffs just *begun* by Peshekhonov.

*What is now necessary in Russia is not to invent "new reforms", not to make "plans" for "comprehensive" changes. Nothing of the kind. This is how the situation is depicted—deliberately depicted in a false light—by the capitalists, the Potresovs, the Plekhanovs,\* who shout against "introducing socialism" and against the "dictatorship of the proletariat".* The situation in Russia in fact is such that the unprecedented burdens and hardships of the war, the unparalleled and very real danger of economic dislocation and famine have of themselves suggested the way out, have of themselves not only pointed out, but advanced reforms and other changes as absolutely necessary. These changes must be the grain monopoly, control over production and distribution, restriction of the issue of paper money, a fair exchange of grain for manufactured goods, etc.

Everyone recognises measures of this kind and in this direction as inevitable, and in many places they have already been launched from the most diverse sides. *They have already been launched*, but they have been and are being obstructed everywhere by the resistance of the landowners and the capitalists, which is being put up through the Kerensky government (an utterly bourgeois and Bonapartist government *in reality*), through the old bureaucratic state apparatus, and through the direct and indirect pressure of Russian and "Allied" finance capital.

Not so long ago I. Prilezhayev,\*\* lamenting the resignation of Peshekhonov and the collapse of the fixed prices and the grain monopoly, wrote in *Dyelo Naroda* (No. 147):

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"Courage and resolve are what our governments of all compositions have lacked. . . . The revolutionary democrats must not wait; they must

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\* Concerning Plekhanov see a footnote on p. 12.—Ed.

\*\* I. A. Prilezhayev—a Socialist-Revolutionary leader.—Ed.

themselves show initiative, and intervene in the economic chaos in a planned way. . . . If anywhere, it is here that a firm course and a determined government are necessary."

That goes without saying. Words of gold. The only trouble is that the author forgot that the question of the firm course to take, of courage and resolve, is not a personal matter, but a question of which *class* is capable of manifesting courage and resolve. The only class capable of this is the proletariat. A courageous and resolute government steering a firm course is nothing but the dictatorship of the proletariat and the poor peasants. I. Prilezhayev unwittingly longs for *this dictatorship*.

What would such a dictatorship mean in practice? It would mean nothing but the fact that the resistance of the Kornilov men would be broken and the democratisation of the army restored and completed. Two days after its creation ninety-nine per cent of the army would be enthusiastic supporters of this dictatorship. This dictatorship would give land to the peasants and full power to the local peasant committees. How can anyone in his right senses doubt that the peasants would support this dictatorship? What Peshekhonov only *promised* ("the resistance of the capitalists has been broken" was what Peshekhonov actually said in his famous speech before the Congress of Soviets), this dictatorship would put into effect, would translate into reality. At the same time the democratic organisations of food supply, control, etc., that have already begun to form would in no way be eliminated. They would, on the contrary, be supported and developed, and all obstacles in the way of their work would be removed.

Only the dictatorship of the proletariat and the poor peasants is capable of smashing the resistance of the capitalists, of displaying truly supreme courage and determination in the exercise of power, and of securing the enthusiastic, selfless and truly heroic support of the masses both in the army and among the peasants.

*Power to the Soviets—this is the only way to make further progress gradual, peaceful and smooth, keeping perfect pace with the political awareness and resolve of the majori-*

ty of the people and with their own experience. Power to the Soviets means the complete transfer of the country's administration and economic control into the hands of the workers and peasants, to whom *nobody* would dare offer resistance and who, through practice, through their own experience, *would soon learn* how to distribute the land, products and grain properly.

*Rabochy Put* No. 10,  
September 14 (27), 1917

*Collected Works*, Vol. 25,  
pp. 370-77

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## CAN THE BOLSHEVIKS RETAIN STATE POWER?

The third plea, that the proletariat "will not be able technically to lay hold of the state apparatus", is, perhaps, the most common and most frequent. It deserves most attention for this reason, and also because it indicates one of the most *serious* and *difficult* tasks that will confront the victorious proletariat. There is no doubt that these tasks will be very difficult, but if we, who call ourselves socialists, indicate this difficulty only to *shirk* these tasks, in practice the distinction between us and the lackeys of the bourgeoisie will be reduced to nought. The difficulty of the tasks of the proletarian revolution should prompt the proletariat's supporters to make a closer and more definite study of the means of carrying out these tasks.

The state apparatus is primarily the standing army, the police and the bureaucracy. By saying that the proletariat will not be able technically to lay hold of this apparatus, the writers of *Novaya Zhizn*\* reveal their utter ignorance and their reluctance to take into account either facts or the arguments long ago cited in Bolshevik literature.

All the *Novaya Zhizn* writers regard themselves, if not as Marxists, then at least as being familiar with Marxism, as educated socialists. But Marx, basing himself on the experience of the Paris Commune,\*\* taught that the proletariat

\* *Novaya Zhizn*—a newspaper, which grouped around itself Social-Democratic intellectuals of Menshevik tendencies. It was published in Petrograd from April 1917 to July 1918.—Ed.

\*\* Concerning the Paris Commune see a footnote on p. 11.—Ed.

cannot simply lay hold of the ready-made state machine and use it for its own purposes, that the proletariat must *smash* this machine and substitute a new one for it (I deal with this in greater detail in a pamphlet, the first part of which is now finished and will soon appear under the title *The State and Revolution. A Marxist Theory of the State and the Tasks of the Proletariat in the Revolution*). This new type of state machinery was created by the Paris Commune, and the Russian Soviets of Workers', Soldiers' and Peasants' Deputies are a "state apparatus" of the *same type*. I have indicated this many times since April 4, 1917; it is dealt with in the resolutions of Bolshevik conferences and also in Bolshevik literature. *Novaya Zhizn* could, of course, have expressed its utter disagreement with Marx and with the Bolsheviks, but for a paper that has so often, and so haughtily, scolded the Bolsheviks for their allegedly frivolous attitude to difficult problems to evade this question completely is tantamount to issuing itself a certificate of mental poverty.

The proletariat *cannot* "lay hold of" the "state apparatus" and "set it in motion". But it can *smash* everything that is oppressive, routine, incorrigibly bourgeois in the old state apparatus and substitute its *own*, new apparatus. The Soviets of Workers', Soldiers' and Peasants' Deputies are exactly this apparatus.

That *Novaya Zhizn* has completely forgotten about this "state apparatus" can be called nothing but monstrous. Behaving in this way in their theoretical reasoning, the *Novaya Zhizn* people are, in essence, doing in the sphere of political theory what the Cadets are doing in political practice. Because, if the proletariat and the revolutionary democrats *do not* in fact *need* a new state apparatus, then the Soviets lose their *raison d'être*, lose their right to existence, and the Kornilovite Cadets are *right* in trying to reduce the Soviets to nought!

This monstrous theoretical blunder and political blindness of *Novaya Zhizn* is all the more monstrous because even the internationalist Mensheviks\* (with whom *Novaya Zhizn*

\* *Internationalist Mensheviks*—the Left wing of the Menshevik Party.—Ed.

formed a bloc during the last City Council elections in Petrograd) have on this question shown some proximity to the Bolsheviks. So, in the declaration of the Soviet majority made by Comrade Martov\* at the Democratic Conference,\*\* we read:

"The Soviets of Workers', Soldiers' and Peasants' Deputies, set up in the first days of the revolution by a mighty burst of creative enthusiasm that stems from the people themselves, constitute the new fabric of the revolutionary state that has replaced the outworn state fabric of the old regime...."

This is a little too flowery; that is to say, rhetoric here covers up lack of clear political thinking. The Soviets have *not yet* replaced the old "fabric", and this old "fabric" is *not* the state fabric of the old regime, but the state fabric of *both* tsarism *and* of the bourgeois republic. But at any rate, Martov here stands head and shoulders above *Novaya Zhizn*.

The Soviets are a new state apparatus which, in the first place, provides an armed force of workers and peasants; and this force is not divorced from the people, as was the old standing army, but is very closely bound up with the people. From the military point of view this force is incomparably more powerful than previous forces; from the revolutionary point of view, it cannot be replaced by anything else. Secondly, this apparatus provides a bond with the people, with the majority of the people, so intimate, so indissoluble, so easily verifiable and renewable, that nothing even remotely like it existed in the previous state apparatus. Thirdly, this apparatus, by virtue of the fact that its personnel is elected and subject to recall at the people's will without any bureaucratic formalities, is far more democratic than any previous apparatus. Fourthly, it provides a close contact with the most varied professions, thereby facilitating the adoption of the most varied and most radical reforms without red tape. Fifth-

\* L. Martov (Y. O. Tserdbaum) (1873-1923)—a Menshevik leader, internationalist Menshevik.—Ed.

\*\* The *All-Russia Democratic Conference*, convened by the Mensheviks and S.R.s, was held in Petrograd from September 14 to 22, 1917. It was attended by representatives of petty-bourgeois parties, trade unions, co-operatives and other organisations.—Ed.

ly, it provides an organisational form for the vanguard, i.e., for the most class-conscious, most energetic and most progressive section of the *oppressed* classes, the workers and peasants, and so constitutes an apparatus by means of which the vanguard of the oppressed classes can elevate, train, educate, and lead *the entire vast mass* of these classes, which has up to now stood completely outside of political life and history. Sixthly, it makes it possible to combine the advantages of the parliamentary system with those of immediate and direct democracy, i.e., to vest in the people's elected representatives both legislative *and executive* functions. Compared with the bourgeois parliamentary system, this is an advance in democracy's development which is of world-wide, historic significance.

In 1905, our Soviets existed only in embryo, so to speak, as they lived altogether only a few weeks. Clearly, under the conditions of that time, their comprehensive development was out of the question. It is still out of the question in the 1917 Revolution, for a few months is an extremely short period and—this is most important—the Socialist-Revolutionary and Menshevik leaders have *prostituted* the Soviets, have reduced their role to that of a talking-shop, of an accomplice in the compromising policy of the leaders. The Soviets have been rotting and decaying alive under the leadership of the Liebers, Dans, Tseretelis and Chernovs. The Soviets will be able to develop properly, to display their potentialities and capabilities to the full only by taking over *full* state power; for otherwise they have *nothing to do*, otherwise they are either simply embryos (and to remain an embryo too long is fatal), or playthings. "Dual power" means paralysis for the Soviets.

If the creative enthusiasm of the revolutionary classes had not given rise to the Soviets, the proletarian revolution in Russia would have been a hopeless cause, for the proletariat could certainly not retain power with the old state apparatus, and it is impossible to create a new apparatus immediately. The sad history of the prostitution of the Soviets by the Tseretelis and Chernovs, the history of the "coalition", is also the history of the liberation of the Soviets from petty-bourgeois

illusions, of their passage through the "purgatory" of the practical experience of the utter abomination and filth of *all* and *sundry* bourgeois coalitions. Let us hope that this "purgatory" has steeled rather than weakened the Soviets. . . .

The proletariat, we are told, will not be able to set the state apparatus in motion.

Since the 1905 revolution, Russia has been governed by 130,000 landowners, who have perpetrated endless violence against 150,000,000 people, heaped unconstrained abuse upon them, and condemned the vast majority to inhuman toil and semi-starvation.

Yet we are told that the 240,000 members of the Bolshevik Party will not be able to govern Russia, govern her in the interests of the poor and against the rich. These 240,000 are already backed by no less than a million votes of the adult population, for this is precisely the proportion between the number of Party members and the number of votes cast for the Party that has been established by the experience of Europe and the experience of Russia as shown, for example, by the elections to the Petrograd City Council last August. We therefore already have a "state apparatus" of *one million* people devoted to the socialist state for the sake of high ideals and not for the sake of a fat sum received on the 20th of every month.

In addition to that we have a "magic way" to enlarge our state apparatus *tenfold* at once, at one stroke, a way which no capitalist state ever possessed or could possess. This magic way is to draw the working people, to draw the poor, into the daily work of state administration.

To explain how easy it will be to employ this magic way and how faultlessly it will operate, let us take the simplest and most striking example possible.

The state is to forcibly evict a certain family from a flat and move another in. This often happens in the capitalist state, and it will also happen in our proletarian or socialist state.

The capitalist state evicts a working-class family which has lost its breadwinner and cannot pay the rent. The bailiff appears with police, or militia, a whole squad of them. To effect

an eviction in a working-class district a whole detachment of Cossacks is required. Why? Because the bailiff and the militiaman refuse to go without a very strong military guard. They know that the scene of an eviction arouses such fury among the neighbours, among thousands and thousands of people who have been driven to the verge of desperation, arouses such hatred towards the capitalists and the capitalist state, that the bailiff and the squad of militiamen run the risk of being torn to pieces at any minute. Large military forces are required, several regiments must be brought into a big city, and the troops must come from some distant, outlying region so that the soldiers will not be familiar with the life of the urban poor, so that the soldiers will not be "infected" with socialism.

The proletarian state has to forcibly move a very poor family into a rich man's flat. Let us suppose that our squad of workers' militia is fifteen strong; two sailors, two soldiers, two class-conscious workers (of whom, let us suppose, only one is a member of our Party, or a sympathiser), one intellectual, and eight from the poor working people, of whom at least five must be women, domestic servants, unskilled labourers, and so forth. The squad arrives at the rich man's flat, inspects it and finds that it consists of five rooms occupied by two men and two women—"You must squeeze up a bit into two rooms this winter, citizens, and prepare two rooms for two families now living in cellars. Until the time, with the aid of engineers (you are an engineer, aren't you?), we have built good dwellings for everybody, you will have to squeeze up a little. Your telephone will serve ten families. This will save a hundred hours of work wasted on shopping, and so forth. Now in your family there are two unemployed persons who can perform light work: a citizeness fifty-five years of age and a citizen fourteen years of age. They will be on duty for three hours a day supervising the proper distribution of provisions for ten families and keeping the necessary account of this. The student citizen in our squad will now write out this state order in two copies and you will be kind enough to give us a signed declaration that you will faithfully carry it out."

This, in my opinion, can illustrate how the distinction between the old bourgeois and the new socialist state apparatus and state administration could be illustrated.

We are not utopians. We know that an unskilled labourer or a cook cannot immediately get on with the job of state administration. In this we agree with the Cadets, with Breshkovskaya,\* and with Tsereteli. We differ, however, from these citizens in that we demand an immediate break with the prejudiced view that only the rich, or officials chosen from rich families, are capable of *administering* the state, of performing the ordinary, everyday work of administration. We demand that *training* in the work of state administration be conducted by class-conscious workers and soldiers and that this training be begun at once, i.e., that a *beginning* be made at once in training all the working people, all the poor, for this work.

We know that the Cadets are also willing to teach the people democracy. Cadet ladies are willing to deliver lectures to domestic servants on equal rights for women in accordance with the best English and French sources. And also, at the very next concert-meeting, before an audience of thousands, an exchange of kisses will be arranged on the platform: the Cadet lady lecturer will kiss Breshkovskaya, Breshkovskaya will kiss ex-Minister Tsereteli, and the grateful people will therefore receive an object-lesson in republican equality, liberty and fraternity. . . .

Yes, we agree that the Cadets, Breshkovskaya and Tsereteli are in their own way devoted to democracy and are propagating it among the people. But what is to be done if our conception of democracy is somewhat different from theirs?

In our opinion, to ease the incredible burdens and miseries of the war and also to heal the terrible wounds the war has inflicted on the people, *revolutionary* democracy is needed, *revolutionary* measures of the kind described in the example of the distribution of housing accommodation in the

interests of the poor. *Exactly the same* procedure must be adopted in both town and country for the distribution of provisions, clothing, footwear, etc., in respect of the land in the rural districts, and so forth. For the administration of the state in *this* spirit we can *at once set in motion a state* apparatus consisting of ten if not twenty million people, an apparatus such as no capitalist state has ever known. We alone can create such an apparatus, for we are sure of the fullest and devoted sympathy of the vast majority of the population. We alone can create such an apparatus, because we have class-conscious workers disciplined by long capitalist "schooling" (it was not for nothing that we went to learn in the school of capitalism), workers who are *capable* of forming a workers' militia and of *gradually* expanding it (beginning to expand it at once) into a militia *embracing the whole people*. The class-conscious workers must lead, but for the work of administration they can enlist the vast mass of the working and oppressed people.

It goes without saying that this new apparatus is bound to make mistakes in taking its first steps. But did not the peasants make mistakes when they emerged from serfdom and began to manage their own affairs? Is there any way other than practice by which the people can learn to govern themselves and to avoid mistakes? Is there any way other than by proceeding immediately to genuine self-government by the people? The chief thing now is to abandon the prejudiced bourgeois-intellectualist view that only special officials, who by their very social position are entirely dependent upon capital, can administer the state. The chief thing is to put an end to the state of affairs in which bourgeois officials and "socialist" ministers are trying to govern in the old way, but are incapable of doing so and, after seven months, are faced with a peasant revolt in a peasant country! The chief thing is to imbue the oppressed and the working people with confidence in their own strength, to prove to them in practice that they can and must themselves ensure the *proper*, most strictly regulated and organised distribution of bread, all kinds of food, milk, clothing, housing, etc., *in the interests of the poor*. Unless this is done, Russia *cannot* be saved

\* Y. K. Breshko-Breshkovskaya (1844-1934)—a figure in the extreme Right wing of the Socialist-Revolutionary Party.—Ed.

from collapse and ruin. The conscientious, bold, universal move to hand over administrative work to proletarians and semi-proletarians, will, however, rouse such unprecedented revolutionary enthusiasm among the people, will so multiply the people's forces in combating distress, that much that seemed impossible to our narrow, old, bureaucratic forces will become possible for the millions, who will *begin to work for themselves* and not for the capitalists, the gentry, the bureaucrats, and not out of fear of punishment.

Written at the end of  
September-October 1 (14), 1917

*Collected Works*, Vol. 26,  
pp. 101-04, 111-15

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**REPORT ON THE TASKS OF THE SOVIET POWER  
AT THE MEETING OF THE PETROGRAD SOVIET  
OF WORKERS' AND SOLDIERS' DEPUTIES  
OCTOBER 25 (NOVEMBER 7), 1917\***

**Newspaper Report**

Comrades, the workers' and peasants' revolution, about the necessity of which the Bolsheviks have always spoken, has been accomplished.

What is the significance of this workers' and peasants' revolution? Its significance is, first of all, that we shall have a Soviet government, our own organ of power, in which the bourgeoisie will have no share whatsoever. The oppressed masses will themselves create a power. The old state apparatus will be shattered to its foundations and a new administrative apparatus set up in the form of the Soviet organisations.

From now on, a new phase in the history of Russia begins, and this, the third Russian revolution, should in the end lead to the victory of socialism.

One of our urgent tasks is to put an immediate end to the war. It is clear to everybody that in order to end this war, which is closely bound up with the present capitalist system, capital itself must be fought.

We shall be helped in this by the world working-class movement, which is already beginning to develop in Italy, Britain and Germany.

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\* The meeting also heard a report of the Revolutionary Military Committee on the overthrow of the Provisional Government, the victory of the socialist revolution and the transfer of state power to the Soviets of Workers', Soldiers' and Peasants' Deputies.—*Ed.*

The proposal we make to international democracy for a just and immediate peace will everywhere awaken an ardent response among the international proletarian masses. All the secret treaties\* must be immediately published in order to strengthen the confidence of the proletariat.

Within Russia a huge section of the peasantry have said that they have played long enough with the capitalists, and will now march with the workers. A single decree putting an end to landed proprietorship will win us the confidence of the peasants. The peasants will understand that the salvation of the peasantry lies only in an alliance with the workers. We shall institute genuine workers' control over production.

We have now learned to make a concerted effort. The revolution that has just been accomplished is evidence of this. We possess the strength of mass organisation, which will overcome everything and lead the proletariat to the world revolution.

We must now set about building a proletarian socialist state in Russia.

Long live the world socialist revolution! (*Stormy applause.*)

*Collected Works, Vol. 26,  
pp. 239-40*

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\* A reference to the secret treaties concluded by the tsarist government and later the Provisional Government of Russia with the governments of Britain, France, Germany and other imperialist states. The Soviet Government began to publish all the secret treaties in November 1917.—*Ed.*

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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 office 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 office 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 office employees, the suspension of work of an enterprise or an industrial establishment of state importance (see Clause 7), or any change in its operation is strictly prohibited.

4. The elected representatives shall be given access to *all*

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\* Immediately after the victory of the October Revolution in 1917, workers' control was introduced at industrial enterprises and on railways. The draft written by Lenin served as a basis for the Decree on Workers' Control adopted by the All-Russia Central Executive Committee on November 14 (27), 1917.—*Ed.*

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 office 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 office 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 dereliction 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 committees, and also by committees of office employees at general meetings of their representatives.

Written October 26 or 27  
(November 8 or 9), 1917

*Collected Works*, Vol. 26,  
pp. 264-65

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## TO THE POPULATION

Comrades—workers, soldiers, peasants and all working people!

The workers' and peasants' revolution\* has definitely triumphed in Petrograd, having dispersed or arrested the last remnants of the small number of Cossacks deceived by Kerensky. The revolution has triumphed in Moscow too. Even before the arrival of a number of troop trains dispatched from Petrograd, the officer cadets\*\* and other Kornilovites\*\*\* in Moscow signed peace terms—the disarming of the cadets and the dissolution of the Committee of Salvation\*\*\*\*.

Daily and hourly reports are coming in from the front and from the villages announcing the support of the overwhelming majority of the soldiers in the trenches and the peasants in the uyezds for the new government and its decrees on peace and the immediate transfer of the land to the peasants. The victory of the workers' and peasants' revolu-

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\* A reference to the victory of the October Revolution of 1917.—*Ed.*

\*\* A reference to students of military colleges who fought the revolutionary workers in October 1917.—*Ed.*

\*\*\* *Kornilovites*—supporters of and participants in the Kornilov counter-revolutionary revolt. See also a footnote on p. 40.—*Ed.*

\*\*\*\* The *Committee of Salvation*—the name given by counter-revolutionaries to the centre set up by them at the Moscow City Council on October 25 (November 7), 1917 to fight the socialist revolution which had just begun.—*Ed.*

tion is assured because the majority of the people have already sided with it.

It is perfectly understandable that the landowners and capitalists, and the *top groups* of office employees and civil servants closely linked with the bourgeoisie, in a word, all the wealthy and those supporting them, react to the new revolution with hostility, resist its victory, threaten to close the banks, disrupt or bring to a standstill the work of the different establishments, and hamper the revolution in every way, openly or covertly. Every politically-conscious worker was well aware that we would inevitably encounter resistance of this kind. The entire Party press of the Bolsheviks has written about this on numerous occasions. Not for a single minute will the working classes be intimidated by this resistance; they will not falter in any way before the threats and strikes of the supporters of the bourgeoisie.

The majority of the people are with us. The majority of the working and oppressed people all over the world are with us. Ours is the cause of justice. Our victory is assured.

The resistance of the capitalists and the high-ranking employees will be smashed. Not a single person will be deprived of his property except under the special state law proclaiming nationalisation of the banks and syndicates. This law is being drafted. Not one of the working people will suffer the loss of a kopek; on the contrary, he will be helped. Apart from the strictest accounting and control, apart from levying the set taxes in full the government has no intention of introducing any other measure.

In support of these just demands the vast majority of the people have rallied round the Provisional Workers' and Peasants' Government.

Comrades, working people! Remember that now *you yourselves* are at the helm of state. No one will help you if you yourselves do not unite and take into *your hands all affairs* of the state. *Your Soviets* are from now on the organs of state authority, legislative bodies with full powers.

Rally around your Soviets. Strengthen them. Get on with the job yourselves; begin right at the bottom, do not wait for anyone. Establish the strictest revolutionary law and or-

der, mercilessly suppress any attempts to create anarchy by drunkards, hooligans, counter-revolutionary officer cadets, Kornilovites and their like.

Ensure the strictest control over production and accounting of products. Arrest and hand over to the revolutionary courts all who dare to injure the people's cause, irrespective of whether the injury is manifested in sabotaging production (damage, delay and subversion), or in hoarding grain and products or holding up shipments of grain, disorganising the railways and the postal, telegraph and telephone services, or any resistance whatever to the great cause of peace, the cause of transferring the land to the peasants, of ensuring workers' control over the production and distribution of products.

Comrades, workers, soldiers, peasants and all working people! Take *all* power into the hands of *your* Soviets. Be watchful and guard like the apple of your eye your land, grain, factories, equipment, products, transport—all that from now onwards will be *entirely* your property, public property. Gradually, with the consent and approval of the majority of the peasants, in keeping with their *practical* experience and that of the workers, we shall go forward firmly and unswervingly to the victory of socialism—a victory that will be sealed by the advanced workers of the most civilised countries, bring the peoples lasting peace and liberate them from all oppression and exploitation.

V. Ulyanov (*Lenin*),  
Chairman of the Council of People's Commissars

November 5, 1917, Petrograd

Collected Works, Vol. 26,  
pp. 297-99

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**REPORT ON THE RIGHT OF RECALL  
AT A MEETING OF THE ALL-RUSSIA  
CENTRAL EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE  
NOVEMBER 21 (DECEMBER 4), 1917**

The question of re-election is one of actually implementing the democratic principle. It is the accepted practice in all leading countries that only the elected are entitled to speak in the language of state legislation. But having allowed the right of summons for the conduct of affairs of state, the bourgeoisie intentionally withheld the right of recall—the right of actual control.

In all revolutionary periods in history, a prominent feature in the struggle for constitutional changes has been the fight for the right of recall.

Democratic representation exists and is accepted under all parliamentary systems, but this right of representation is curtailed by the fact that the people have the right to cast their votes once in every two years, and while it often turns out that their votes have installed those who help to oppress them, they are deprived of the democratic right to put a stop to that by removing these men.

But this democratic right of recall has survived in countries with old democratic traditions, for instance, in some cantons of Switzerland and some states of America.

Any great revolution clearly confronts the people not only with the use of existing statutes but also with the framing of appropriate new statutes. It is necessary, therefore, in view of the impending convocation of the Constituent Assembly,\* to review the new electoral statutes.

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\* The convocation of the Constituent Assembly was scheduled by the Soviet Government for January 5, 1918.—*Ed.*

The Soviets have been created by the working people themselves, by their revolutionary energy and initiative, and that is the only guarantee of their working entirely to promote the interests of the masses. The truly popular nature of the Soviets is evident in the fact that every peasant sends his representatives to the Soviet and is also entitled to recall them.

Various parties in this country have been in power. The last time power passed from one party to another there was a revolution, a rather stormy revolution, but if we had had the right of recall, a simple vote would have sufficed.

There is this word freedom. In the old days it meant freedom for the bourgeoisie to manipulate its millions for swindling, freedom to use its forces through such swindling. We have done with the bourgeoisie and that kind of freedom. The state is an institution for coercion. In the old days, it was the coercion of the whole people by a handful of moneybags. We want to turn the state into an institution enforcing the will of the people. We want to institute coercion in the working people's interests.

Failure to grant the right of recall from the Constituent Assembly is failure to elicit the revolutionary will of the people, it is usurpation of the people's rights. We do have proportional representation, which is indeed the most democratic. Under this system it may be somewhat difficult to introduce the right of recall but the difficulties entailed are purely technical and are fairly easy to overcome. In any case there is no contradiction between proportional representation and the right of recall.

The people do not cast their votes for individuals but for parties. The party spirit is rather strong in Russia, and as far as the people are concerned each party has a definite political character. That is why any party split must bring confusion unless the right of recall is provided for. The Socialist-Revolutionary Party enjoyed great influence. But a split\* occurred after the election lists had been put out.

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\* A reference to the split in the Socialist-Revolutionary Party which occurred in the autumn of 1917. The Left S.R.s. broke away from the party, concluded an agreement with the Bolsheviki and supported the

The lists cannot be altered, nor can the convocation of the Constituent Assembly be postponed. As a result, the people actually voted for a party which had ceased to exist. This was proved by the Left-wing Second Peasant Congress. It turned out that the peasants were not misled by individuals but by the party split. This state of things needs to be set right. The direct, consistent and immediate democratic principle, namely, the right of recall, must be introduced.

One thing we should be wary of is being faced with an unrepresentative election. Given a high level of mass consciousness—compare the revolutions of 1905 and 1917—there is nothing to fear from introducing the right of re-election.

The people were told that the Soviet is a plenipotentiary organ: they believed it and acted upon that belief. The process of democratisation must be carried forward and the right of recall introduced.

The right of recall should be given to the Soviets, as the best embodiment of the idea of state power, of coercion. The transfer of power from one party to another may then take place peacefully, by mere re-election.

*Collected Works, Vol. 26,  
pp. 338-40*

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Bolshevik Decree on Land giving the landowners' land to the peasants, and other decrees. But the S.R. list for the elections to the Constituent Assembly had been drawn up before the split, and Right S.R.s predominated in it. In voting for this S.R. list, the broad masses of the peasantry had in mind the Left S.R.s, but those elected were mainly from the Right. This led to a profound discrepancy between the will of the people and the composition of the Constituent Assembly.—  
*Ed.*

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**REPORT ON THE ECONOMIC CONDITION  
OF PETROGRAD WORKERS AND THE TASKS  
OF THE WORKING CLASS, DELIVERED AT A  
MEETING OF THE WORKERS' SECTION OF THE  
PETROGRAD SOVIET OF WORKERS' AND  
SOLDIERS' DEPUTIES  
DECEMBER 4 (17), 1917**

**Newspaper Report**

The Revolution of October 25 had shown the exceptional political maturity of the proletariat and its ability to stand firm in opposition to the bourgeoisie, said the speaker. The complete victory of socialism, however, would require a tremendous organisational effort filled with the knowledge that the proletariat must become the ruling class.

The proletariat was faced with the tasks of transforming the state system on socialist lines, for no matter how easy it would be to cite arguments in favour of a middle course such a course would be insignificant, the country's economic situation having reached a state that would rule out any middle course. There was no place left for half-measures in the gigantic struggle against imperialism and capitalism.

The point at issue was—win or lose.

The workers should and did understand this; this was obvious because they had rejected half-way, compromise decisions. The more profound the revolution, the greater the number of active workers required to accomplish the replacement of capitalism by a socialist machinery. Even if there were no sabotage, the forces of the petty bourgeoisie would be inadequate. The task was one that could be accomplished only by drawing on the masses, only by the independent activity of the masses. The proletariat, therefore, should not think of improving its position at the moment, but should think of becoming the ruling class. It could not be expected that the rural proletariat would be clearly and

firmly conscious of its own interests. Only the working class could be, and every proletarian, conscious of the great prospects, should feel himself to be a leader and carry the masses with him.

The proletariat should become the ruling class in the sense of being the leader of all who work; it should be the ruling class politically.

The illusion that only the bourgeoisie could run the state must be fought against. The proletariat must take the rule of the state upon itself.

The capitalists were doing everything they could to complicate the tasks of the working class. And all working-class organisations—trade unions, factory committees and others—would have to conduct a determined struggle in the economic sphere. The bourgeoisie was spoiling everything, sabotaging everything, in order to wreck the working-class revolution. And the tasks of organising production devolved entirely on the working class. They should do away, once and for all, with the illusion that state affairs or the management of banks and factories were beyond the power of the workers. All this could be solved only by tremendous day-to-day organisational work.

It was essential to organise the exchange of products and introduce regular accounting and control—these were tasks for the working class, and the knowledge necessary for their accomplishment had been provided by factory life.

Every factory committee should concern itself not only with the affairs of its own factory, but should also be an organisation nucleus helping arrange the life of the state as a whole.

It was easy to issue a decree on the abolition of private property, but it must and could be implemented only by the workers themselves. Let there be mistakes—they would be the mistakes of a new class creating a new way of life.

There was not and could not be a definite plan for the organisation of economic life.

Nobody could provide one. But it could be done from below, by the masses, through their experience. Instructions would, of course, be given and ways would be indicated,

but it was necessary to begin simultaneously from above and from below.

The Soviets would have to become bodies regulating all production in Russia, but in order that they should not become staff headquarters without troops, work in the lower echelons was needed. . . .\*

The working-class masses must set about the organisation of control and production on a country-wide scale. Not the organisation of individuals, but the organisation of all the working people, would be a guarantee of success; if they achieved that, if they organised economic life, everything opposing them would disappear of its own accord.

*Collected Works, Vol. 26,*  
pp. 364-66

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\* Several illegible words have been omitted.—Ed.

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## HOW TO ORGANISE COMPETITION?

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 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, by large- and very large-scale factory production, joint-stock companies, syndicates 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, nepotism, servility on the upper rungs of the social ladder.

Far from extinguishing competition, 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 working people into a field of labour in which they can display their abilities, develop the capacities, and reveal those talents, so abundant among the people whom capitalism crushed, suppressed and strangled in thousands and millions.

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

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 the penal servitude and the barrack-like discipline of 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, the compulsory organisation of the whole population in consumers' 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, competition 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 landowning exploiter has been smoked out and his land confiscated has only now become a field in which the working man can reveal his talents, unbend his back a little, rise to his full height, and feel that he is a human being. For the first time after centuries of working for others, of forced labour for the exploiter, it has become possible to *work for oneself* and moreover to employ all the achievements of modern technology and culture in one's work.

Of course, this greatest change in human history from working under compulsion 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. The workers and poor peasants, hardened by dire want and by many long years of slave labour for the exploiters, by their countless insults and acts of violence, realise that it will take time to *break* the resistance of those exploiters. The workers and peasants are not in the least infected with the sentimental

illusions of the intellectual gentlemen, of the *Novaya Zhizn* crowd\* and other slush, who "shouted" themselves hoarse "denouncing" the capitalists and "gesticulated" against 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 under compulsion 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 exploiters' resistance—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 "intellectual" stooges 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 landowners, the priests, the scribes, the bureaucrats as Gogol depicted them,\*\* and the "intellectuals" who hated Belinsky\*\*\* also found it "hard"

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\* A reference to the Social-Democrats of Menshevik tendencies hostile to the October Revolution, grouped around the newspaper *Novaya Zhizn*.—Ed.

\*\* Characters in the works of the Russian satirist Nikolai Gogol (1809-1852).—Ed.

\*\*\* V. G. Belinsky (1811-1848)—a Russian revolutionary democrat, literary critic and journalist. He opposed the autocracy and serfdom in Russia. Belinsky's ideas exerted great influence on several generations of Russian revolutionaries.—Ed.

to part with serfdom. But the cause of the exploiters and of their "intellectual" menials is hopeless. The workers and peasants are beginning to break down their resistance—unfortunately, not yet firmly, resolutely and ruthlessly enough—and *break it down they will*.

"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 assumption has no truth in it; educated men are already making their appearance on the side of the people, on 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 great, vital, 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, is to develop this independent initiative of the workers, and of all the working and exploited people generally, develop it 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 development of socialist society.

This is a prejudice 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. 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 prole-

tariat. 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 are *many* such men and women. This sort of talent among the working class and the peasants is a rich and still untapped source.

The workers and peasants are still "timid", they have not yet become accustomed to the idea that *they* are now the *ruling* class; they are not yet resolute enough. The revolution could not *at one stroke* instil these qualities into 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 Revolution of October 1917 is strong, viable and invincible because it *awakens* these qualities, breaks down the old impediments, removes the worn-out shackles, and leads the working people on to the road of the *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 and the means of production from the point of view of the slave whose sole aim is to lighten the burden of labour or to obtain at least some little bit *from the bourgeoisie*. The advanced, class-conscious workers have already started this fight, and they are offering determined resistance to the newcomers who flocked to the factory world in particularly large numbers 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 of "snatching the biggest possible piece of the pie 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 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 exercised only 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 the rowdies*, a co-operation marked by revolutionary enthusiasm, can conquer these survivals of accursed capitalist society, these dregs 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 and the factories 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, if only labour and its products are properly distributed, if only a *business-like, 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 rowdies, *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 the rowdies! 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 rowdyism, corruption and ro-

guery, and caused them to lose all human semblance; the society which inevitably cultivated in the working man 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 work done and of production and distribution by the entire people, by millions and millions of workers and peasants, participating 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 organising talent, the talent that is to be found in their midst; we must rouse among them—and organise on a national scale—*competition* in the sphere of organisational achievement; 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, are 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 peasants. 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 organisers from among the “people”, from among the factory workers and working 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, 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”,\* become particularly true—every step in really curbing in practice, restricting, fully registering the rich and the rogues and keeping them under control is worth more than a dozen excellent arguments

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\* A quotation from Marx's letter to Wilhelm Bracke of May 5, 1875.—Ed.

about socialism. For, "theory, my friend, is grey, but green is the eternal tree of life".\*

Competition must be arranged between practical organisers from among 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. All "communes"—factories, villages, consumers' societies, and committees of supplies—must *compete* with each other as practical organisers of accounting and control of labour and distribution of products. The programme of this accounting and control is simple, clear and intelligible to all—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) to 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 to 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 or-

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\* Mephistopheles's words from Goethe's *Faust*.—Ed.

ganised *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 must 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 manner of rowdies, the manner in which many composers 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 rowdies 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 *competition* 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 *talented organisers* should come to the fore *in practice* and be promoted to work in state administration. There is a great deal of 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 December 24-27, 1917  
(January 6-9, 1918)

*Collected Works*, Vol. 26,  
pp. 404-15

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## DECLARATION OF RIGHTS OF THE WORKING AND EXPLOITED PEOPLE\*

- I. The Constituent Assembly resolves:
- 1) Russia is hereby proclaimed a Republic of Soviets of Workers', Soldiers' and Peasants' Deputies. All power, centrally and locally, is vested in these Soviets.
  - 2) The Russian Soviet Republic is established on the principle of a free union of free nations, as a federation of Soviet national republics.
- II. Its fundamental aim being to abolish all exploitation of man by man, to completely eliminate the division of society into classes, to mercilessly crush the resistance of the exploiters, to establish a socialist organisation of society and to achieve the victory of socialism in all countries, the Constituent Assembly further resolves:
- 1) Private ownership of land is hereby abolished. All land together with all buildings, farm implements and other appurtenances of agricultural production, is proclaimed the property of the entire working people.
  - 2) The Soviet laws on workers' control and on the Supreme

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\* The *Declaration of Rights of the Working and Exploited People* was approved by the All-Russia Central Executive Committee on January 4 (17), 1918. At the first session of the Constituent Assembly, which opened on January 5 (18), Y. M. Sverdlov, on behalf of the All-Russia Central Executive Committee, proposed that the Declaration should be adopted, but the counter-revolutionary majority of the Assembly refused to discuss it.—Ed.

Economic Council are hereby confirmed for the purpose of guaranteeing the power of the working people over the exploiters and as a first step towards the complete conversion of the factories, mines, railways, and other means of production and transport into the property of the workers' and peasants' state.

3) The conversion of all banks into the property of the workers' and peasants' state is hereby confirmed as one of the conditions for the emancipation of the working people from the yoke of capital.

4) For the purpose of abolishing the parasitic sections of society, universal labour conscription is hereby instituted.

5) To ensure the sovereign power of the working people, and to eliminate all possibility of the restoration of the power of the exploiters, the arming of the working people, the creation of a socialist Red Army of workers and peasants and the complete disarming of the propertied classes are hereby decreed.

III. 1) Expressing its firm determination to wrest mankind from the clutches of finance capital and imperialism, which have in this most criminal of wars drenched the world in blood, the Constituent Assembly whole-heartedly endorses the policy pursued by Soviet power of denouncing the secret treaties, organising most extensive fraternisation with the workers and peasants of the armies in the war, and achieving at all costs, by revolutionary means, a democratic peace between the nations, without annexations and indemnities and on the basis of the free self-determination of nations.

2) With the same end in view, the Constituent Assembly insists on a complete break with the barbarous policy of bourgeois civilisation, which has built the prosperity of the exploiters belonging to a few chosen nations on the enslavement of hundreds of millions of working people in Asia, in the colonies in general, and in the small countries.

The Constituent Assembly welcomes the policy of the Council of People's Commissars in proclaiming the complete independence of Finland, commencing the evacuation of troops from Persia, and proclaiming freedom of self-determination for Armenia.

3) The Constituent Assembly regards the Soviet law on the

cancellation of the loans contracted by the governments of the tsar, the landowners and the bourgeoisie as a first blow struck at international banking, finance capital, and expresses the conviction that Soviet power will firmly pursue this path until the international workers' uprising against the yoke of capital has completely triumphed.

IV. Having been elected on the basis of party lists drawn up prior to the October Revolution, when the people were not yet in a position to rise *en masse* against the exploiters, had not yet experienced the full strength of resistance of the latter in defence of their class privileges, and had not yet applied themselves in practice to the task of building socialist society, the Constituent Assembly considers that it would be fundamentally wrong, even formally, to put itself in opposition to Soviet power.

In essence the Constituent Assembly considers that now, when the people are waging the last fight against their exploiters, there can be no place for exploiters in any government body. Power must be vested wholly and entirely in the working people and their authorised representatives—the Soviets of Workers', Soldiers' and Peasants' Deputies.

Supporting Soviet power and the decrees of the Council of People's Commissars, the Constituent Assembly considers that its own task is confined to establishing the fundamental principles of the socialist reconstruction of society.

At the same time, endeavouring to create a really free and voluntary, and therefore all the more firm and stable, union of the working classes of all the nations of Russia, the Constituent Assembly confines its own task to setting up the fundamental principles of a federation of Soviet Republics of Russia, while leaving it to the workers and peasants of each nation to decide independently at their own authoritative Congress of Soviets whether they wish to participate in the federal government and in the other federal Soviet institutions, and on what terms.

Written not later than  
January 3 (16), 1918

Collected Works, Vol. 26,  
pp. 423-25

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**From REPORT ON THE ACTIVITIES  
OF THE COUNCIL OF PEOPLE'S COMMISSARS  
AT THE THIRD ALL-RUSSIA CONGRESS  
OF SOVIETS OF WORKERS', SOLDIERS'  
AND PEASANTS' DEPUTIES  
JANUARY 11 (24), 1918**

Now I shall deal briefly with the measures which the socialist Soviet Government of Russia has begun to realise. The nationalisation of the banks was one of the first measures adopted for the purpose, not only of wiping the landowners from the face of Russian earth, but also of eradicating the rule of the bourgeoisie and the possibility of capital oppressing millions and tens of millions of the working people. The banks are important centres of modern capitalist economy. They collect fantastic wealth and distribute it over this vast country; they are the nerve centres of capitalist life. They are subtle and intricate organisations, which grew up in the course of centuries; and against them were hurled the first blows of Soviet power which at first encountered desperate resistance in the State Bank. But this resistance did not deter Soviet power. We succeeded in the main thing in organising the State Bank; this main thing is in the hands of the workers and peasants. After these basic measures, which still require a lot of working out in detail, we proceeded to lay our hands on the private banks.

We did not act in the way the compromisers would probably have recommended us to do, i.e., first wait until the Constituent Assembly is convened, then perhaps draft a bill and introduce it in the Constituent Assembly and by that inform the bourgeoisie of our intentions and enable them to find a loophole through which to extricate themselves from this

unpleasant thing; perhaps draw them into our company, and then make state laws—that would be a "state act".

That would be the rejection of socialism. We acted quite simply; not fearing to call forth the reproaches of the "educated" people, or rather of the uneducated supporters of the bourgeoisie who were trading in the remnants of their knowledge, we said we had at our disposal armed workers and peasants. This morning they must occupy all the private banks. (*Applause.*) After they have done that, after power is in our hands, only after this, we shall discuss what measures to adopt. In the morning the banks were occupied and in the evening the Central Executive Committee issued a decree: "The banks are declared national property"—state control, the socialisation of banking, its transfer to Soviet power, took place.

There was not a man among us who could imagine that an intricate and subtle apparatus like banking, which grew out of the capitalist system of economy in the course of centuries, could be broken or transformed in a few days. We never said that. And when scientists, or pseudo-scientists, shook their heads and prophesied, we said: you can prophesy what you like. We know only one way for the proletarian revolution, namely, to occupy the enemy's positions—to learn to rule by experience, from our mistakes. We do not in the least belittle the difficulties in our path, but we have done the main thing. The source of capitalist wealth has been undermined in the place of its distribution. After all this, the repudiation of the state loans, the overthrow of the financial yoke, was a very easy step. The transition to confiscation of the factories, after workers' control had been introduced, was also very easy. When we were accused of breaking up production into separate departments by introducing workers' control, we brushed aside this nonsense. In introducing workers' control, we knew that it would take much time before it spread to the whole of Russia, but we wanted to show that we recognise only one road—changes from below; we wanted the workers themselves, from below, to draw up the new, basic economic principles. Much time will be required for this.

From workers' control we passed on to the creation of a Supreme Economic Council. Only this measure, together with the nationalisation of the banks and railways which will be carried out within the next few days, will make it possible for us to begin work to build up a new socialist economy. We know perfectly well the difficulties that confront us in this work; but we assert that only those who set to work to carry out this task relying on the experience and the instinct of the working people are socialists in deed. The people will commit many mistakes, but the main thing has been done. They know that when they appeal to Soviet power they will get whole-hearted support against the exploiters. There is not a single measure intended to ease their work that was not entirely supported by Soviet power. Soviet power does not know everything and cannot handle everything in time, and very often it is confronted with difficult tasks. Very often delegations of workers and peasants come to the government and ask, for example, what to do with such-and-such a piece of land. And frequently I myself have felt embarrassed when I saw that they had no very definite views. And I said to them: you are the power, do all you want to do, take all you want, we shall support you, but take care of production, see that production is useful. Take up useful work, you will make mistakes, but you will learn. And the workers have already begun to learn; they have already begun to fight against the saboteurs. Education has been turned into a fence which hinders the advance of the working classes; it will be pulled down.

Undoubtedly, the war is corrupting people both in the rear and at the front; people who are working on war supplies are paid far above the rates, and this attracts all those who hid themselves to keep out of the war, the vagabond and semi-vagabond elements who are imbued with one desire, to "grab" something and clear out. But these elements are the worst that has remained of the old capitalist system and are the vehicles of all the old evils; these we must kick out, remove, and we must put in the factories all the best proletarian elements and form them into nuclei of future socialist Russia. This is not an easy task, it will give rise to

many conflicts, to much friction and many clashes. We, the Council of People's Commissars, and I personally, have heard complaints and threats from them, but we have remained calm, knowing that now we have a judge to whom we can appeal. That judge is the Soviets of Workers' and Soldiers' Deputies. (*Applause.*) The word of this judge is indisputable, and we shall always rely upon it.

Capitalism deliberately differentiates the workers in order to rally an insignificant handful of the upper section of the working class around the bourgeoisie. Conflicts with this section are inevitable. We shall not achieve socialism without a struggle. But we are ready to fight, we have started it and we shall finish it with the aid of the apparatus called the Soviets. The Soviet of Workers' and Soldiers' Deputies will easily solve any problem we bring before it. For however strong the group of privileged workers may be, when they are brought before the representative body of all the workers, then this court, I repeat, will be indisputable for them. This sort of adjustment is only just beginning. The workers and peasants have not yet sufficient confidence in their own strength; age-old tradition has made them far too used to waiting for orders from above. They have not yet fully appreciated the fact that the proletariat is the ruling class; there are still elements among them who are frightened and downtrodden and who imagine that they must pass through the despicable school of the bourgeoisie. This most despicable of bourgeois notions has remained alive longer than all the rest, but it is dying and will die out completely. And we are convinced that with every step Soviet power takes the number of people will constantly grow who have completely thrown off the old bourgeois notion that a simple worker and peasant cannot administer the state. Well, if he sets to doing it, he can and will learn! (*Applause.*)

And it will be our organisational task to select leaders and organisers from among the people. This enormous, gigantic work is now on the agenda. There could even be no thought of carrying it out if it were not for Soviet power, a filtering apparatus which can promote people.

Not only have we a state law on control, we have some-

thing even far more valuable—attempts on the part of the proletariat to enter into agreements with the manufacturers' associations in order to guarantee the workers' management over whole branches of industry. Such an agreement has begun to be drawn up, and is almost completed, between the leather workers and the all-Russia leather manufacturers' society. I attach very special importance to these agreements, they show that the workers are becoming aware of their strength.

*Collected Works*, Vol. 26,  
pp. 466-70

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**From REPORT  
ON THE REVIEW OF THE PROGRAMME  
AND ON CHANGING THE NAME OF THE PARTY  
DELIVERED AT THE EXTRAORDINARY SEVENTH  
CONGRESS OF THE R.C.P. (B.)  
MARCH 8, 1918**

Following this, our task is to define the Soviet type of state. I have tried to outline theoretical views on this question in my book *The State and Revolution*. It seems to me that the Marxist view on the state has been distorted in the highest degree by the official socialism that is dominant in Western Europe, and that this has been splendidly confirmed by the experience of the Soviet revolution and the establishment of the Soviets in Russia. There is much that is crude and unfinished in our Soviets, there is no doubt about that, it is obvious to everyone who examines their work; but what is important, has historical value and is a step forward in the world development of socialism, is that they are a new type of state. The Paris Commune\* was a matter of a few weeks, in one city, without the people being conscious of what they were doing. The Commune was not understood by those who created it; they established the Commune by following the unfailing instinct of the awakened people, and neither of the groups of French socialists was conscious of what it was doing. Because we are standing on the shoulders of the Paris Commune and the many years of development of German Social-Democracy, we have conditions that enable us to see clearly what we are doing in creating Soviet power. Despite all the crudity and lack of discipline that exist in the Soviets—this is a survival of the petty-bourgeois nature of

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\* Concerning the Paris Commune see a footnote on p. 11.—Ed.

our country—despite all that the new type of state has been created by the masses of the people. It has been functioning for months and not weeks, and not in one city, but throughout a tremendous country, populated by several nations. This type of Soviet power has shown its value since it has spread to Finland, a country that is different in every respect, where there are no Soviets but where there is, at any rate, a new type of power, proletarian power.\* This is, therefore, proof of what is theoretically regarded as indisputable—that Soviet power is a new type of state without a bureaucracy, without police, without a regular army, a state in which bourgeois democracy has been replaced by a new democracy, a democracy that brings to the fore the vanguard of the working people, gives them legislative and executive authority, makes them responsible for military defence and creates state machinery that can re-educate the masses.

In Russia this has scarcely begun and has begun badly. If we are conscious of what is bad in what we have begun we shall overcome it, provided history gives anything like a decent time to work on that Soviet power. I am therefore of the opinion that a definition of the new type of state should occupy an outstanding place in our Programme. Unfortunately we had to work on our Programme in the midst of governmental work and under conditions of such great haste that we were not even able to convene our commission, to elaborate an official draft programme. What has been distributed among the delegates is only a rough sketch, and this will be obvious to everyone. A fairly large amount of space has been allotted in it to the question of Soviet power, and I think that it is here that the international significance of our Programme will make itself felt. I think it would be very wrong of us to confine the international significance of our revolution to slo-

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\* A revolutionary government—the Council of People's Representatives—was formed in Finland on January 29, 1918, during the proletarian revolution there. The Main Council of Workers' Organisations was also set up and became the supreme organ of power. Following the defeat of the revolution in May 1918, both councils ceased to exist.—Ed.

gans, appeals, demonstrations, manifestos, etc. That is not enough. We must show the European workers exactly what we have set about, how we have set about it, how it is to be understood; that will bring them face to face with the question of how socialism is to be achieved. They must see for themselves—the Russians have started on something worth doing; if they are setting about it badly we must do it better. For that purpose we must provide as much concrete material as possible and say what we have tried to create that is new. We have a new type of state in Soviet power; we shall try to outline its purpose and structure, we shall try to explain why this new type of democracy in which there is so much that is chaotic and irrational, to explain what makes up its living spirit—the transfer of power to the working people, the elimination of exploitation and the machinery of suppression. The state is the machinery of suppression. The exploiters must be suppressed, but they cannot be suppressed by police, they must be suppressed by the masses themselves, the machinery must be linked with the masses, must represent them as the Soviets do. They are much closer to the masses, they provide an opportunity to keep closer to the masses, they provide greater opportunities for the education of those masses. We know very well that the Russian peasant is anxious to learn; and we want him to learn, not from books, but from his own experience. Soviet power is machinery, machinery that will enable the masses to begin right away learning to govern the state and organise production on a nation-wide scale. It is a task of tremendous difficulty. It is, however, historically important that we are setting about its fulfilment, and not only from the point of view of our one country; we are calling upon European workers to help. We must give a concrete explanation of our Programme from precisely that common point of view. That is why we consider it a continuation of the road taken by the Paris Commune. That is why we are confident that the European workers will be able to help once they have entered on that path. They will do what we are doing, but do it better, and the centre of gravity will shift from the formal point of view to the concrete conditions. In the old days the demand for freedom of assembly was a

particularly important one, whereas our point of view on freedom of assembly is that nobody can now prevent meetings, and Soviet power has only to provide premises for meetings. General proclamations of broad principles are important to the bourgeoisie: "All citizens have freedom to assemble, but they must assemble in the open, we shall not give them premises." But we say: "Fewer empty phrases, and more substance." The palaces must be expropriated—not only the Taurida Palace,\* but many others as well—and we say nothing about freedom of assembly. That must be extended to all other points in the democratic programme. We must be our own judges. All citizens must take part in the work of the courts and in the government of the country. It is important for us to draw literally all working people into the government of the state. It is a task of tremendous difficulty. But socialism cannot be implemented by a minority, by the Party. It can be implemented only by tens of millions when they have learned to do it themselves. We regard it as a point in our favour that we are trying to help the masses themselves set about it immediately, and not to learn to do it from books and lectures. If we state these tasks of ours clearly and definitely we shall thereby give an impetus to the discussion of the question and its practical presentation by the European masses. We are perhaps making a bad job of what has to be done, but we are urging the masses to do what they have to. If what our revolution is doing is not accidental (and we are firmly convinced that it is not), if it is not the product of a Party decision but the inevitable product of any revolution that Marx called "popular", i.e., a revolution that the masses themselves create by their slogans, their efforts and not by a repetition of the programme of the old bourgeois republic—if we present matters in this way, we shall have achieved the most important thing. And here we come to the question of whether we should abolish the difference between the maximum and minimum programmes. Yes and no. I do not fear this abolition, because the viewpoint we held in summer

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\* The *Taurida Palace*—a palace in Leningrad where the Duma sat in 1906-17.—*Ed.*

should no longer exist. I said then, when we still had not taken power, that it was "too soon", but now that we have taken power and tested it, it is not too soon. In place of the old Programme we must now write a new Programme of Soviet power and not in any way reject the use of bourgeois parliamentarism. It is a utopia to think that we shall not be thrown back.

It cannot be denied historically that Russia has created a Soviet Republic. We say that if ever we are thrown back, while not rejecting the use of bourgeois parliamentarism—if hostile class forces drive us to that old position—we shall aim at what has been gained by experience, at Soviet power, at the Soviet type of state, at the Paris Commune type of state. That must be expressed in the Programme. In place of the minimum programme, we shall introduce the Programme of Soviet power. A definition of the new type of state must occupy an important place in our Programme.

*Collected Works, Vol. 27,*  
pp. 132-36

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From **ROUGH OUTLINE**  
**OF THE DRAFT PROGRAMME OF THE R.C.P.(B.)\***

**TEN THESES ON SOVIET POWER**

*Consolidation and Development of Soviet Power*

The consolidation and development of Soviet power as the form of the dictatorship of the proletariat and poor peasantry (semi-proletarians), a form already tested by experience and brought to the fore by the mass movement and the revolutionary struggle.

The consolidation and development must consist in the accomplishment (a broader, more general and planned accomplishment) of those tasks which historically devolve on this form of state power, on this new type of state, namely:

(1) union and organisation of the working and exploited masses oppressed by capitalism, and only them, i.e., only the workers and poor peasantry, semi-proletarians, with automatic exclusion of the exploiting classes and rich representatives of the petty bourgeoisie;

(2) union of the most vigorous, active, class-conscious part of the oppressed classes, their vanguard, which must educate every member of the working population for independent participation in the management of the state, not theoretically but practically;

(4) (3) abolition of parliamentarism (as the separation of legislative from executive activity); union of legislative

and executive state activity. Fusion of administration with legislation;

(3) (4) closer connection of the whole apparatus of state power and state administration with the masses than under previous forms of democracy;

(5) creation of an armed force of workers and peasants, one least divorced from the people (Soviets=armed workers and peasants). Organised character of nation-wide arming of the people, as one of the first steps towards arming the whole people;

(6) more complete democracy, through less formality and making election and recall easier;

(7) close (and direct) connection with occupations and with productive-economic units (elections based on factories, and on local peasant and handicraft areas). This close connection makes it possible to carry out profound socialist changes;

(8) (partly, if not wholly, covered by the preceding)—the possibility of getting rid of bureaucracy, of doing without it, the beginning of the realisation of this possibility;

(9) transfer of the focus of attention in questions of democracy from formal recognition of a formal equality of the bourgeoisie and the proletariat, of poor and rich, to the practical feasibility of the enjoyment of freedom (democracy) by the working and exploited mass of the population;

(10) the further development of the Soviet organisation of the state must consist in every member of a Soviet being obliged to carry out constant work in administering the state, alongside participation in meetings of the Soviet;—and furthermore in each and every member of the population being drawn gradually both into taking part in Soviet organisation (on the condition of subordination to organisations of the working people) and into serving in state administration.

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\* *The Rough Outline of the Draft Programme of the R.C.P.(B.)* was written by Lenin shortly before the opening of the Seventh Congress of the R.C.P.(B.) (March 1918), which decided to change the Party Programme.—Ed.

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**From ORIGINAL VERSION OF THE ARTICLE  
"THE IMMEDIATE TASKS  
OF THE SOVIET GOVERNMENT"**

The democratic principle of organisation—in its highest form, in which the Soviets put into effect proposals and demands for the active participation of the masses not only in discussing general rules, decisions and laws, and in controlling their fulfilment, but also directly in their implementation—implies that every representative of the masses, every citizen, must be put in such conditions that he can participate in the discussion of state laws, in the choice of his representatives and in the implementation of state laws. But it does not at all follow from this that we shall permit the slightest chaos or disorder as regards who is responsible in each individual case for definite executive functions, for carrying out definite orders, for controlling a definite joint labour process during a certain period of time. The masses must have the right to choose responsible leaders for themselves. They must have the right to replace them, the right to know and check each smallest step of their activity. They must have the right to put forward any worker without exception for administrative functions. But this does not at all mean that the process of collective labour can remain without definite leadership, without precisely establishing the responsibility of the person in charge, without the strictest order created by the single will of that person. Neither railways nor transport, nor large-scale machinery and enterprises in gen-

eral can function correctly without a single will linking the entire working personnel into an economic organ operating with the precision of clockwork. Socialism owes its origin to large-scale machine industry. If the masses of the working people in introducing socialism prove incapable of adapting their institutions in the way that large-scale machine industry should work, then there can be no question of introducing socialism. That is why in the period we are now passing through, when the Soviet government and the dictatorship of the proletariat have grown sufficiently strong, when the main lines of the enemy opposing us, i.e., of the exploiters opposing us, have been sufficiently destroyed or rendered harmless, when the functioning of Soviet institutions has adequately prepared the mass of the population for independent participation in all spheres of social life—at the present moment we are immediately confronted by the tasks of strictly separating discussion and airing questions at meetings from unflinching execution of all instructions of the person in charge. This means separating the necessary, useful preparation of the masses for executing a certain measure and checking up on its execution, which is fully recognised by every Soviet, from the actual execution itself. The masses can now—this is guaranteed them by the Soviets—take all power into their hands and consolidate this power. But to prevent this resulting in the overlapping of authority and irresponsibility from which we are suffering incredibly at the present time, it is necessary that for each executive function we should know precisely what persons, having been chosen to act as responsible leaders, bear responsibility for the functioning of the economic organism as a whole. This requires that as often as possible, when there is the slightest opportunity for it, responsible persons should be elected for one-man management in all sections of the economic organism as a whole. There must be voluntary fulfilment of the instructions of this individual leader, there must be a transition from the mixed form of discussions, public meetings, fulfilment—and at the same time criticism, checking and correction—to the strict regularity of a machine enterprise. The great majority of the labour communes of Russia, the mass of the workers and peasants,

are already approaching this task or have already arrived at it. The Soviet government's task is to undertake the role of interpreting the fundamental change that is now beginning and of giving this necessity legal form.

Dictated between  
March 23 and 28, 1918

*Collected Works*, Vol. 27,  
pp. 212-13

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## From 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 achieved\*—despite its extremely onerous character and extreme instability—the Russian Soviet Republic has gained an opportunity to concentrate its efforts for a while on the most important and most difficult aspect of the socialist revolution, namely, the task of organization.

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 disorganization.

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

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\* A reference to the Peace Treaty concluded by Soviet Russia with Germany and its allies in March 1918 at Brest-Litovsk. By the Brest Peace Russia withdrew from the imperialist world war and received the breathing space it needed to start the restoration of its war-devastated economy, the socialist reconstruction and the formation of the Red Army.—*Ed.*

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 an economic revival, without which a real increase in our country's defence potential is inconceivable.

It also goes without saying that we shall be able to render effective assistance to 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 radical 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 abolishing 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 principle, 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 practice*. . . .

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

The state, which for centuries has been an organ for 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 enor-

mous 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 feel free for the first time now that the landowners and the bourgeoisie have been overthrown, will understand—not from books, but from their own, *Soviet* experience—will understand and *feel* that without comprehensive state accounting and control of the production and distribution of goods, the power of the working people, the freedom of the working people, *cannot* be maintained, 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, and buying and selling as a transaction "which concerns only myself"—is a great fight of world-historic 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 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 Constitutional-Democrats, 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, and steadily raise the productivity of labour, thus making it possible to reduce the working day to seven, six and even fewer hours. 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 essential goods) 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 significant phenomenon, which strikingly illustrates the peculiar position and the specific tasks of the Soviet Socialist Republic at the present moment.

The decree is an agreement with the bourgeois co-operative societies and the workers' co-operative societies which still adhere to the bourgeois point of view. It is an agreement, or compromise, firstly because the representatives of the above-mentioned institutions not only took part in discussing the decree, but actually had a decisive say in the matter, for the

parts of the decree which were strongly opposed by these institutions were dropped. Secondly, the essence of the compromise is 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); it has also abandoned the idea of uniting the whole population of a given locality in a *single* co-operative society. Contrary to this principle, which is the only socialist principle and which corresponds to the task of abolishing classes, 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) 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 should have organised the population into a single co-operative society under proletarian management. We should 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 aims 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 take over 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 provide 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, a fact 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, the effectiveness, the intensity of labour and its better organisation.

In this respect the situation is particularly bad and even hopeless if we are to believe those who have 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 seething 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 landowners and the bourgeoisie.

We, however, without in the least yielding to the despair (it is often false despair) 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 of 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 Metalworkers' 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 persistence of the hangover from 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

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\* The organisation of social production on socialist lines posed the task of strengthening labour discipline. On April 3, 1918, the All-Russia Central Council of Trade Unions adopted the Statute on Labour Discipline. At all the state enterprises strict internal regulations, output quotas and labour productivity accounting were introduced, piece-rate payment and a system of bonuses for overfulfilling quotas were adopted and violators of labour discipline were severely punished. The Statute played an important role in organising socialist production.—Ed.

\*\* The principle of piece-rate payment was finally approved in the Soviet *Labour Code*, published in December 1918.—Ed.

\*\*\* The *Taylor system*—a system of organisation of labour aimed at the maximum use of work time and rational utilisation of the means of production and instruments of labour. It was elaborated by the American engineer F. W. Taylor (1856-1915).—Ed.

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 competition, and, on the other hand, require 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 COMPETITION

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, by ensuring transition from the formal democracy of the bourgeois republic to 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, it is the economic field that matters.

Take, for example, a means of organising competition such as publicity. The bourgeois republic ensures publicity only formally; in practice, it subordinates the press to capital, entertains the "mob" with sensationalist political trash and conceals what takes place in the workshops, in commer-

cial 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 taken a new path; but we have done hardly anything to utilise publicity for the purpose of encouraging economic competition. 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 submit the questions of everyday economic life to the people's judgement 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 problem of accounting in the production and distribution of goods. Under capitalism, this was the "private affair" of the individual capitalist, landowner or kulak. Under the Soviet system, it is not a private affair, but a most important affair of state.

We have scarcely yet started on the enormous, difficult but rewarding task of organising competition 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 a co-operative workshop, was inevitably very much restricted, and only those imbued with petty-bourgeois illusions could dream of "correcting" capitalism through the example of virtuous institutions. After political power has passed to the proletariat, after the expropriators

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\* This refers to the right of private capitalist enterprises to keep secret all production, commercial and financial operations and documents concerning them. In Soviet Russia the trade secrets right was abolished by the Statute on Workers' Control adopted by the All-Russia Central Executive Committee of the Council of People's Commissars on November 14 (27), 1917.—Ed.

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 “government servants”, 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, 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 violent “rocking”, shocks, struggle and storm, on the one hand, and a period of uncertain steps, experiments, wavering, hesitation in regard to the selection of new methods corresponding to new objective circumstances, on the other, are 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 over the “sacred helm” of state without the centuries of training which the princes, barons, nobles and dignitaries had had; in exactly the same way the Kornilovs and Kerenskys, the Gotzes and Martovs, 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 for a new social class, especially a class which up to now has been oppressed and crushed by poverty and ignorance, to get used to its new position, look around, organise its work and promote its *own* organisers. It is understandable that the Party which leads the revolutionary proletariat has not been able to 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 their talent 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-out 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 ranters attaching themselves to the inexperienced innovators, without absurd muddle and fuss, without individual “leaders” trying to deal with twenty matters at once and not finishing any 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?\*

\* A paraphrase of the following lines from the fable “Elephant and Pug” by I. A. Krylov (1769-1844):

“Our doughty pug there’s nothing daunts,  
He barks at elephants!”—Ed.

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 muddle and fuss) to get a large number of people working together steadily and concertedly within the framework of Soviet organisation. *Only* such people, after they have been tested a dozen times, by being transferred 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. . . .

### THE DEVELOPMENT OF SOVIET ORGANISATION

The socialist character of Soviet, i.e., *proletarian*, democracy, as concretely applied today, lies first in the fact that the electors are the working and exploited people; the bourgeoisie is excluded. Secondly, it lies 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 lies in the creation of the best mass organisation of the vanguard of the working people, i.e., the proletariat engaged in large-scale industry, 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, 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 merging with the Commissariats. Our aim is to draw *the whole of the poor* into the practical work of administration, and all steps that are 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, 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 lead to an abundance of steps being taken, as it were, gropingly, to 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 with 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"<sup>\*</sup>). 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 consider that by "leap" the teachers of socialism meant turning-points on a world-historical scale, and that leaps of this kind extend over decades and even longer periods. Naturally, in such times, the notorious "intelligentsia" provides an infinite number of mourners of the dead. Some mourn over the Constituent Assembly, others mourn

\* A quotation from Engels's *Anti-Dühring*.—Ed.

over bourgeois discipline, others again mourn over the capitalist system, still others mourn over the cultured landowner, and still others again mourn over imperialist Great Power policy, etc., etc.

The real interest of the epoch of great leaps lies in the fact 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, the way they differ from each other in the historical chain of events, are not as simple and not as meaningless 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" institution. But the Soviets are "theirs" 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 Constituent Assembly, in the same way as Turgenev,\*\* sixty years ago, was drawn towards a moderate monarchist and noblemen's Constitution and was repelled by the peasant democracy of Dobrolyubov\*\*\* and Chernyshevsky.\*\*\*\*

It is 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 this field, deserve full sympathy and support. Nothing could 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.

Written between  
April 13  
and 26, 1918

*Collected Works*, Vol. 27,  
pp. 237-41, 253-63, 272-75

\* *Philipp Scheidemann* (1865-1939)—leader of the extreme Right wing of the German Social-Democratic Party, and organiser of the brutal suppression of the German workers' revolutionary movement in 1918-21.—*Ed.*

\*\* *I. S. Turgenev* (1818-1883)—a Russian novelist. He was an ardent opponent of serfdom and a moderate liberal. In 1859, he withdrew from the editorial board of the journal *Sovremennik* because he disagreed with its revolutionary-democratic trend.—*Ed.*

\*\*\* *N. A. Dobrolyubov* (1836-1861)—a Russian revolutionary democrat, literary critic and materialist philosopher.—*Ed.*

\*\*\*\* *N. G. Chernyshevsky* (1828-1889)—a Russian revolutionary democrat, materialist philosopher, economist and literary critic. Editor-in-chief of the journal *Sovremennik* in the late 1850s and the early 1860s.—*Ed.*

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THE DEMOCRATISM AND SOCIALIST NATURE  
OF SOVIET POWER

The democratism of Soviet power and its socialist nature are expressed in the fact

that the supreme state authority is vested in the Soviets, which are made up of representatives of the working people (workers, soldiers and peasants), freely elected and removable at any time by the masses hitherto oppressed by capital;

that the local Soviets freely amalgamate on a basis of democratic centralism into a single federal union as represented by the Soviet state power of the Russian Soviet Republic;

that the Soviets concentrate in their hands not only the legislative power and supervision of law enforcement, but direct enforcement of the laws through all the members of the Soviets with a view to a gradual transition to the performance of legislative functions and state administration by the whole working population.

Taking, further, into consideration

that any direct or indirect legalisation of the rights of ownership of the workers of any given factory or any given trade on their particular production, or of their right to weaken or impede the orders of the state authority, is a flagrant distortion of the basic principles of Soviet power and a complete rejection of socialism. . . .\*

Written in the first half of 1918

*Collected Works*, Vol. 42,  
pp. 100-01

\* Here the manuscript ends.—Ed.

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SPEECH AT A CONGRESS OF CHAIRMEN  
OF GUBERNIA SOVIETS

JULY 30, 1918

Newsaper Report

Comrades, your job is one of administration, which plays a dominant part in the affairs of the Council of People's Commissars. Quite naturally, many difficulties lie ahead of you. In the majority of gubernia Executive Committees it is evident that the masses are at last beginning to tackle the work of administration themselves. There are certainly bound to be difficulties. One of our greatest shortcomings has been that we still draw too little on the workers for our staffs. But it was never our intention to adapt the old apparatus to the new system of administration, and we do not regret that with the abolition of the old apparatus everything has to be built anew with so much difficulty. The workers and peasants possess greater constructive abilities than might have been expected. It is to the revolution's credit that it swept away the old administrative apparatus. Yet at the same time we must admit that the people's chief shortcoming is their timidity and reluctance to take things into their own hands.

Some of our gubernia Soviets have been inefficient, but now the work is steadily improving. Information has been coming in from many parts of the country stating that the work is progressing without any misunderstandings or conflicts. Although only eight months have elapsed, the Russian revolution has proved that the new class which has taken administration into its own hands is capable of coping with the task. Although it is short-staffed, the administrative apparatus is running more smoothly every day. Our apparatus is

still at a stage where no definite results are visible, a fact which the enemy keeps harping on. Nevertheless, quite a lot has already been done. The transfer of land and industry to the working people, the exchange of goods and the organisation of food supply are being carried into effect in face of fantastic difficulties. The working people must be promoted to independent work in building up and running the socialist state. Only practice will teach them that the old exploiting class is finished and done with.

Our chief and most urgent task is administration, organisation and control. This is a thankless and inconspicuous job; but it is in doing this job that the managerial and administrative talents of the workers and peasants will develop more and more effectively.

Now to the new Constitution.\* It embodies what experience has already given, and will be corrected and supplemented as it is being put into effect. The main thing about the Constitution is that the Soviet government is completely dissociating itself from the bourgeoisie, preventing them from participating in building up the state.

The workers and peasants, upon whom the government has called to run the country, and who have remained remote from such affairs for so long, were bound to want to build the state by their own experience. The effect of the slogan "All Power to the Soviets!" was that the people in the localities wanted to gain experience in building the state by learning from their own mistakes. Such a transitional period was unavoidable, and it has proved beneficial. In this ten-

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\* The *Constitution of the Russian Socialist Federative Soviet Republic* was adopted unanimously by the Fifth All-Russia Congress of Soviets on July 10, 1918 and published on July 19, 1918 as the Fundamental Law, in force from the moment of its publication.

The Constitution of the R.S.F.S.R.—the first Soviet Constitution—legalised the great achievements of the October Revolution: the new, Soviet state system, the abolition of private capitalist and landed property, the equality of all peoples inhabiting Russia, etc. It also legalised the dictatorship of the proletariat in the form of the Soviets, guaranteed the right of all the working people of Russia to participate in administering the state and deprived the exploiters of electoral rights.—*Ed.*

gency towards separatism, there was much that was healthy and wholesome in the sense that it displayed a creative spirit. The Soviet Constitution has defined the relations between the volost authority and the uyezd authority, between the uyezd authority and the gubernia authority, and between the latter and the centre.

Only large-scale, planned construction, which aims at evenly utilising economic and business values, deserves to be called socialist. The Soviet government certainly does not intend to belittle the importance of the local authorities or kill their autonomy and initiative. Even the peasants realise through their own experience the need for centralism.

Now that the Constitution has been endorsed and is being put into effect, an easier period in our state affairs is beginning. But, unfortunately, it is hard for us just now to devote ourselves to an economic, business and agricultural policy. We have to divert all our attention to more elementary things—the food question. The condition of the working class in the hungry provinces is really drastic. Until the new harvest is brought in, every effort must be made to overcome somehow the food difficulties and other troubles.

Besides this, there are military tasks. You know that the Czech movement,\* financed and instigated by the British and French imperialists, has caught Russia in a semicircle. You also know that the counter-revolutionary bourgeoisie

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\* A reference to the counter-revolutionary revolt of the Czechoslovak Army Corps, organised by the Anglo-French imperialists in the spring of 1918 with active participation of Mensheviks and S.R.s.

The Czechoslovak Corps was formed in Russia after the February Revolution out of Czech and Slovak prisoners of war, former soldiers of the Austro-Hungarian army, to take part in the war against Germany.

After the October Revolution, under an agreement with the Soviet Government, the Czechoslovak Corps was to leave for France via Vladivostok. But the counter-revolutionary command of the Corps, acting on instructions from the Entente, raised an armed revolt in May 1918. The Corps helped the counter-revolutionaries to capture Penza, Samara, Chelyabinsk, Omsk and other cities.

The revolt of the Czechoslovak Corps was finally suppressed late in 1919, when Kolchak's whiteguard armies were also routed.—*Ed.*

and the kulak peasants\* are joining this movement. We have received news from the localities that Soviet Russia's recent reverses have convinced the workers and the revolutionary peasants by their own experience that control is needed in the military sphere as well as in state development.

I am convinced that things will get better in future. I am convinced that the gubernia Executive Committees will create a strong socialist army by organising control over the commanding staff with the help of the peasants. The lessons of the revolution have at last taught the classes of the workers and exploited peasants the need to take up arms. The peasants and workers, besides having won the land, control, etc., have learnt to understand the need to control the army. By carrying their efforts into the sphere of military affairs, they will make the army of their creation fully worthy of the title of a socialist army, an army which will successfully fight the counter-revolutionary bourgeoisie and the imperialists until the international revolutionary proletariat comes to our aid. (*Comrade Lenin's speech is greeted with stormy applause from all delegates.*)

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pp. 35-37*

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\* *Kulaks*—rich peasants in Russia, who brutally exploited the rural poor. After the October Revolution, the kulaks took part in the counter-revolutionary struggle against Soviet power.—*Ed.*

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## From LETTER TO AMERICAN WORKERS

Let the corrupt bourgeois press shout to the whole world about every mistake our revolution makes. We are not daunted by our mistakes. People have not become saints because the revolution has begun. The toiling classes who for centuries have been oppressed, downtrodden and forcibly held in the vice of poverty, brutality and ignorance cannot avoid mistakes when making a revolution. And, as I pointed out once before, the corpse of bourgeois society cannot be nailed in a coffin and buried. The corpse of capitalism is decaying and disintegrating in our midst, polluting the air and poisoning our lives, enmeshing that which is new, fresh, young and virile in thousands of threads and bonds of that which is old, moribund and decaying.

For every hundred mistakes we commit, and which the bourgeoisie and their lackeys (including our own Mensheviks and Right Socialist-Revolutionaries) shout about to the whole world, 10,000 great and heroic deeds are performed, greater and more heroic because they are simple and inconspicuous amidst the everyday life of a factory district or a remote village, performed by people who are not accustomed (and have no opportunity) to shout to the whole world about their successes.

But even if the contrary were true—although I know such an assumption is wrong—even if we committed 10,000 mistakes for every 100 correct actions we performed, even in that case our revolution would be great and invincible, and *so it*

will be in the eyes of world history, because, for the first time, not the minority, not the rich alone, not the educated alone, but the real people, the vast majority of the working people, are *themselves* building a new life, are *by their own experience* solving the most difficult problems of socialist organisation.

Every mistake committed in the course of such work, in the course of this most conscientious and earnest work of tens of millions of simple workers and peasants in reorganising their whole life, every such mistake is worth thousands and millions of "flawless" successes achieved by the exploiting minority—successes in swindling and duping the working people. For only *through* such mistakes will the workers and peasants *learn* to build the new life, learn to do *without* capitalists; only in this way will they hack a path for themselves—through thousands of obstacles—to victorious socialism.

Mistakes are being committed in the course of their revolutionary work by our peasants, who at one stroke, in one night, October 25-26 (old style), 1917, entirely abolished the private ownership of land, and are now, month after month, overcoming tremendous difficulties and correcting their mistakes themselves, solving in a practical way the most difficult tasks of organising new conditions of economic life, of fighting the kulaks, providing land for the *working people* (and not for the rich), and of changing to *communist* large-scale agriculture.

Mistakes are being committed in the course of their revolutionary work by our workers, who have already, after a few months, nationalised almost all the biggest factories and plants, and are learning by hard, everyday work the new task of managing whole branches of industry, are setting the nationalised enterprises going, overcoming the powerful resistance of inertia, petty-bourgeois mentality and selfishness, and, brick by brick, are laying the foundation of *new* social ties, of a *new* labour discipline, of a *new* influence of the workers' trade unions over their members.

Mistakes are committed in the course of their revolutionary work by our Soviets, which were created as far back as 1905 by a mighty upsurge of the people. The Soviets of Work-

ers and Peasants are a new *type* of state, a new and higher *type* of democracy, a form of the proletarian dictatorship, a means of administering the state *without* the bourgeoisie and *against* the bourgeoisie. For the first time democracy is here serving the people, the working people, and has ceased to be democracy for the rich as it still is in all bourgeois republics, even the most democratic. For the first time, the people are grappling, on a scale involving one hundred million, with the problem of implementing the dictatorship of the proletariat and semi-proletariat—a problem which, if not solved, makes socialism *out of the question*.

Let the pedants, or the people whose minds are incurably stuffed with bourgeois-democratic or parliamentary prejudices, shake their heads in perplexity about our Soviets, about the absence of direct elections, for example. These people have forgotten nothing and have learned nothing during the period of the great upheavals of 1914-18. The combination of the proletarian dictatorship with the new democracy for the working people—of civil war with the widest participation of the people in politics—such a combination cannot be brought about at one stroke, nor does it fit in with the outworn modes of routine parliamentary democracy. The contours of a new world, the world of socialism, are rising before us in the shape of the Soviet Republic. It is not surprising that this world does not come into being ready-made, does not spring forth like Minerva from the head of Jupiter.

The old bourgeois-democratic constitutions waxed eloquent about formal equality and right of assembly; but our proletarian and peasant Soviet Constitution casts aside the hypocrisy of formal equality. When the bourgeois republicans overturned thrones they did not worry about formal equality between monarchists and republicans. When it is a matter of overthrowing the bourgeoisie, only traitors or idiots can demand formal equality of rights for the bourgeoisie. "Freedom of assembly" for workers and peasants is not worth a farthing when the best buildings belong to the bourgeoisie. Our Soviets have *confiscated* all the good buildings in town and country from the rich and have *transferred* all of them to the workers and peasants for *their* unions

and meetings. This is *our* freedom of assembly—for the working people! This is the meaning and content of our Soviet, our socialist Constitution!

That is why we are all so firmly convinced that no matter what misfortunes may still be in store for it, our Republic of Soviets is *invincible*.

It is invincible because every blow struck by frenzied imperialism, every defeat the international bourgeoisie inflict on us, rouses more and more sections of the workers and peasants to the struggle, teaches them at the cost of enormous sacrifice, steels them and engenders new heroism on a mass scale.

We know that help from you will probably not come soon, comrade American workers, for the revolution is developing in different countries in different forms and at different tempos (and it cannot be otherwise). We know that although the European proletarian revolution has been maturing very rapidly lately, it may, after all, not flare up within the next few weeks. We are banking on the inevitability of the world revolution, but this does not mean that we are such fools as to bank on the revolution inevitably coming on a *definite* and early date. We have seen two great revolutions in our country, 1905 and 1917, and we know revolutions are not made to order, or by agreement. We know that circumstances brought *our* Russian detachment of the socialist proletariat to the fore not because of our merits, but because of the exceptional backwardness of Russia, and that *before* the world revolution breaks out a number of separate revolutions may be defeated.

In spite of this, we are firmly convinced that we are invincible, because the spirit of mankind will not be broken by the imperialist slaughter. Mankind will vanquish it. And the first country to *break* the convict chains of the imperialist war was *our* country. We sustained enormously heavy casualties in the struggle to break these chains, but we *broke* them. We are *free from* imperialist dependence, we have raised the banner of struggle for the complete overthrow of imperialism for the whole world to see.

We are now, as it were, in a besieged fortress, waiting

for the other detachments of the world socialist revolution to come to our relief. These detachments *exist*, they are *more numerous* than ours, they are maturing, growing, gaining more strength the longer the brutalities of imperialism continue. The workers are breaking away from their social-traitors—the Gomperses,\* Hendersons,\*\* Renaudels,\*\*\* Scheidemanns and Renners.\*\*\*\* Slowly but surely the workers are adopting communist, Bolshevik tactics and are marching towards the proletarian revolution, which alone is capable of saving dying culture and dying mankind.

In short, we are invincible, because the world proletarian revolution is invincible.

N. Lenin

August 20, 1918

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pp. 71-75

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\* *Samuel Gompers* (1850-1924)—President of the American Federation of Labour (AFL). He opposed the revolutionary struggle of the working class and supported capitalism.—*Ed.*

\*\* *Arthur Henderson* (1863-1935)—an opportunist leader of the British Labour Party and the Trades Union Congress. He was several times a member of the British Government.—*Ed.*

\*\*\* *Pierre Renaudel* (1871-1935)—a leader of the French Socialist Party, an opportunist.—*Ed.*

\*\*\*\* *Karl Renner* (1870-1950)—an opportunist Austrian Social-Democratic leader.—*Ed.*

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**DECISION  
OF THE COUNCIL OF PEOPLE'S COMMISSARS  
ON REPORTS BY THE PEOPLE'S COMMISSARIATS**

That all Commissariats be instructed to draw up within one week a brief report, from two to five printed pages, on their work from Oct. 25, 1917.

That these reports be drawn up in the most popular language, with special attention to facts on the role of workers' organisations and representatives of the proletariat in government, to large-scale measures of a socialist nature and the struggle to break the resistance of the bourgeoisie.

That the same instruction be given to the All-Russia Extraordinary Commission.

That the Presidium of the Central Executive Committee be requested to take the same decision as regards its activity (with special emphasis on the Constitution and the results of the congresses of Soviets).

Written August 29, 1918

*Collected Works*, Vol. 36,  
p. 493

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**TO PEOPLE'S COMMISSARS**

August 29, 1918

I allow myself to express the following wishes on the question of fulfilment of the Council of People's Commissars' resolution of August 29, on the submission of *reports* within *one week*:

In the reports, which must be *as popular as possible*, it is particularly necessary to note

(a) improvement in the position of the masses (raising of wages for the *workers*, school-teachers, etc.),

(b) participation of the workers in administration (personally outstanding workers, workers' organisations likewise, etc.),

(c) participation of the poor peasants and their help to Soviet power in the struggle against the kulaks,

(d) expropriation of the landowners, capitalists, traders, financiers, etc.

The main task is to demonstrate *concretely*, with facts, *exactly how* Soviet power has made definite steps (*the first*) towards socialism.

*Lenin*

*Collected Works*, Vol. 35,  
p. 357

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LETTER TO THE PRESIDIUM OF THE CONFERENCE  
OF PROLETARIAN CULTURAL  
AND EDUCATIONAL ORGANISATIONS

17.9.18

Dear Comrades,

Many thanks for your good wishes, and the very best of luck in your work.

One of the chief conditions for the socialist revolution's victory is that the working class must realise it has to *rule* and that its rule should be carried through during the transition period from capitalism to socialism. The *rule* of the proletariat, the vanguard of all the working and exploited people, is essential in this transition period if classes are to be completely abolished, if the resistance of the exploiters is to be suppressed, and if the entire mass of the working and exploited people—crushed, downtrodden and disunited by capitalism—are to be *united* around the urban workers and brought in close alliance with them.

All our successes have been due to the workers grasping this and *governing* the state through their Soviets.

But the workers have *not* yet grasped this *sufficiently* and are often too *timid* in promoting *workers to governing* the state.

Fight for this, comrades! Let the proletarian cultural and educational organisations help in this. That will be a pledge of further success and the final victory of the socialist revolution.

Greetings,

V. Ulyanov (*Lenin*)

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From SPEECH ON THE ANNIVERSARY  
OF THE REVOLUTION AT THE EXTRAORDINARY  
SIXTH ALL-RUSSIA CONGRESS OF SOVIETS  
OF WORKERS', PEASANTS', COSSACKS'  
AND RED ARMY DEPUTIES  
NOVEMBER 6, 1918

At first our slogan was workers' control. We said that despite all the promises of the Kerensky government, the capitalists were continuing to sabotage production and increase dislocation. We can now see that this would have ended in complete collapse. So the first fundamental step that every socialist, workers' government has to take is workers' control. We did not decree socialism immediately throughout industry, because socialism can only take shape and be consolidated when the working class has learnt how to run the economy and when the authority of the working people has been firmly established. Socialism is mere wishful thinking without that. That is why we introduced workers' control, appreciating that it was a contradictory and incomplete measure, but an essential one so that the workers themselves might tackle the momentous tasks of building up industry in a vast country without and opposed to exploiters. Everyone who took a direct, or even indirect, part in this work, everyone who lived through all the oppression and brutality of the old capitalist regime, learned a great deal. We know that little has been accomplished. We know that in this extremely backward and impoverished country where innumerable obstacles and barriers were put in the workers' way, it will take them a long time to learn to run industry. But we consider it most important and valuable that the workers have themselves tackled the job, and that we have passed from workers' control, which in all the main branches of industry was bound

to be chaotic, disorganised, primitive and incomplete, to workers' industrial administration on a national scale.

The trade unions' position has altered. Their main function now is to send their representatives to all management boards and central bodies, to all the new organisations which have taken over a ruined and deliberately sabotaged industry from capitalism. They have coped with industry without the assistance of those intellectuals who from the very outset deliberately used their knowledge and education—the result of mankind's store of knowledge—to frustrate the cause of socialism, rather than assist the people in building up a socially-owned economy without exploiters. These men wanted to use their knowledge to put a spoke in the wheel, to hamper the workers who were least trained for tackling the job of administration. We can now say that the main hindrance has been removed. It was extremely difficult, but the sabotage of all people gravitating towards the bourgeoisie has been checked. The workers have succeeded in taking this basic step, in laying the foundations of socialism, despite tremendous handicaps. We are not exaggerating and are not afraid to tell the truth. It is true that in terms of our ultimate goal, little has been accomplished.

But a great deal, a very great deal, has been done to strengthen the foundations. When speaking of socialism, we cannot say that great sections of workers have laid the foundations in a politically-conscious way in the sense that they have taken to reading books and pamphlets. By political consciousness we mean that they have tackled this formidable task with their own hands and by their own efforts. And they have committed thousands of blunders from each of which they have themselves suffered. But every blunder trained and steeled them in organising industrial administration, which has now been established and put upon a firm foundation. They saw their work through. From now on the work will be different, for now all workers, not just the leaders and advanced workers, but great sections of workers, know that they themselves, with their own hands, are building socialism and have already laid its foundations, and no force in the country can prevent them from seeing the job through.

We may have had great difficulties in industry, where we had to cover a road which to many seemed long, but which was actually short and led from workers' control to workers' administration, yet far greater preparatory work had to be done in the more backward countryside. Anyone who has studied rural life and come into contact with the peasants would say that it was only in the summer and autumn of 1918 that the urban October Revolution became a real rural October Revolution. And the Petrograd workers and the Petrograd garrison soldiers fully realised when they took power that great difficulties would crop up in rural organisational work, and our progress there would have to be more gradual and that it would be the greatest folly to try to introduce socialised farming by decree, for only an insignificant number of enlightened peasants might support us, while the vast majority had no such object in view. We therefore confined ourselves to what was absolutely essential in the interests of promoting the revolution—in no case to endeavour to outrun the people's development, but to wait until a movement forward occurred as a result of their own experience and their own struggle. In October we confined ourselves to sweeping away 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 peasants were not yet divided into proletarians, semi-proletarians, poor peasants and bourgeoisie. We socialists knew there would be no socialism without such a struggle, but we also realised that knowing it was not enough—it had to be brought home to the millions, and through their own experience, not through propaganda. And for that reason, since the peasants as a whole could only conceive of the revolution on the basis of equal land tenure, we openly declared in our decree of October 26, 1917, that we would take the Peasant Mandate on the Land as our starting-point.\*

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\* A reference to the Decree on Land, written by Lenin and adopted by the Second All-Russia Congress of Soviets on October 26, 1917, the day after the establishment of Soviet power. The decree abolished landed proprietorship and transferred the whole land to the people. The decree included the Peasant Mandate on the Land, based on 242 local peasant

We said frankly that it did not accord with our views, that it was not communism, but we were not imposing on the peasants something that was merely in accord with our programme and not with their views. We said we were marching alongside 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. We knew that the idea of equal and tenure had the support of the vast majority, and we had no desire to force anything upon them. We were prepared to wait until the peasants themselves abandoned the idea and advanced further. So we waited and we have been able to prepare our forces.

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mandates. The Peasant Mandate contained a clause introducing land tenure on an equality basis. In some of his works Lenin showed the erroneous nature of the slogan of egalitarian land tenure. From the viewpoint of the Narodniks supporting this slogan, the transfer of the land, on an equality basis, to the peasants tilling it was to lead to the "socialisation of the land". But in fact, the introduction of egalitarian land tenure, which presupposed the preservation of individual peasant farms, could not lead the countryside to socialism, but to the more rapid development of capitalist relations in agriculture.—*Ed.*

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## From THE PROLETARIAN REVOLUTION AND THE RENEGADE KAUTSKY

Proletarian democracy, of which Soviet government is one of the forms, has brought a development and expansion of democracy unprecedented in the world, for the vast majority of the population, for the exploited and working people. To write a whole pamphlet about democracy, as Kautsky\* did, in which two pages are devoted to dictatorship and dozens to "pure democracy", and *fail to notice* this fact, means completely distorting the subject in liberal fashion.

Take foreign policy. In no bourgeois state, not even in the most democratic, is it conducted openly. The people are deceived everywhere, and in democratic France, Switzerland, America and Britain this is done on an incomparably wider scale and in an incomparably subtler manner than in other countries. The Soviet government has torn the veil of mystery from foreign policy in a revolutionary manner. Kautsky has not noticed this, he keeps silent about it, although in the era of predatory wars and secret treaties for the "division of spheres of influence" (i.e., for the partition of the world among the capitalist bandits) this is of *cardinal* importance, for on it depends the question of peace, the life and death of tens of millions of people.

Take the structure of the state. Kautsky picks at all manner of "trifles", down to the argument that under the Soviet Constitution elections are "indirect", but he misses the point. He fails to see the *class* nature of the state apparatus, of the

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\* Concerning Karl Kautsky see a footnote on p. 12.—*Ed.*

machinery of state. Under bourgeois democracy the capitalists, by thousands of tricks—which are the more artful and effective the more “pure” democracy is developed—drive the people away from administrative work, from freedom of the press, freedom of assembly, etc. The Soviet government is the *first* in the world (or strictly speaking, the second, because the Paris Commune began to do the same thing) to enlist the people, specifically the *exploited* people, in the work of administration. The working people are *barred* from participation in bourgeois parliaments (they *never decide* important questions under bourgeois democracy, which are decided by the stock exchange and the banks) by thousands of obstacles, and the workers know and feel, see and realise perfectly well that the bourgeois parliaments are institutions *alien* to them, *instruments for the oppression* of the workers by the bourgeoisie, institutions of a hostile class, of the exploiting minority.

The Soviets are the direct organisation of the working and exploited people themselves, which *helps* them to organise and administer their own state in every possible way. And in this it is the vanguard of the working and exploited people, the urban proletariat, that enjoys the advantage of being best united by the large enterprises; it is easier for it than for all others to elect and exercise control over those elected. The Soviet form of organisation automatically *helps* to unite all the working and exploited people around their vanguard, the proletariat. The old bourgeois apparatus—the bureaucracy, the privileges of wealth, of bourgeois education, of social connections, etc. (these real privileges are the more varied the more highly bourgeois democracy is developed)—all this disappears under the Soviet form of organisation. Freedom of the press ceases to be hypocrisy, because the printing-plants and stocks of paper are taken away from the bourgeoisie. The same thing applies to the best buildings, the palaces, the mansions and manor-houses. Soviet power took thousands upon thousands of these best buildings from the exploiters at one stroke, and in this way made the right of assembly—without which democracy is a fraud—a *million times* more democratic for the people. Indirect elections to

non-local Soviets make it easier to hold congresses of Soviets, they make the *entire* apparatus less costly, more flexible, more accessible to the workers and peasants at a time when life is seething and it is necessary to be able very quickly to recall one’s local deputy or to delegate him to a general congress of Soviets.

Proletarian democracy is *a million times* more democratic than any bourgeois democracy; Soviet power is a million times more democratic than the most democratic bourgeois republic.

To fail to see this one must either deliberately serve the bourgeoisie, or be politically as dead as a doornail, unable to see real life from behind the dusty pages of bourgeois books, be thoroughly imbued with bourgeois-democratic prejudices, and thereby objectively convert oneself into a lackey of the bourgeoisie.

To fail to see this one must be incapable of *presenting the question* from the point of view of the *oppressed* classes:

Is there a single country in the world, even among the most democratic bourgeois countries, in which the *average rank-and-file* worker, the average rank-and-file *farm labourer*, or village semi-proletarian generally (i.e., the representative of the oppressed, of the overwhelming majority of the population), enjoys anything approaching such *liberty* of holding meetings in the best buildings, such *liberty* of using the largest printing-plants and biggest stocks of paper to express his ideas and to defend his interests, such *liberty* of promoting men and women of his own class to administer and to “knock into shape” the state, as in Soviet Russia?

It is ridiculous to think that Mr. Kautsky could find in any country even one out of a thousand of well-informed workers or farm labourers who would have any doubts as to the reply. Instinctively, from hearing fragments of admissions of the truth in the bourgeois press, the workers of the whole world sympathise with the Soviet Republic precisely because they regard it as a *proletarian* democracy, *a democracy for the poor*, and not a democracy for the rich that every bourgeois democracy, even the best, actually is.

We are governed (and our state is "knocked into shape") by bourgeois bureaucrats, by bourgeois members of parliament, by bourgeois judges—such is the simple, obvious and indisputable truth which tens and hundreds of millions of people belonging to the oppressed classes in all bourgeois countries, including the most democratic, know from their own experience, feel and realise every day.

In Russia, however, the bureaucratic machine has been completely smashed, razed to the ground; the old judges have all been sent packing, the bourgeois parliament has been dispersed—and *far more accessible* representation has been given to the workers and peasants; *their* Soviets have replaced the bureaucrats, or *their* Soviets have been put in control of the bureaucrats, and *their* Soviets have been authorised to elect the judges. This fact alone is enough for all the oppressed classes to recognise that Soviet power, i.e., the present form of the dictatorship of the proletariat, is a million times more democratic than the most democratic bourgeois republic.

Kautsky does not understand this truth, which is so clear and obvious to every worker, because he has "forgotten", "unlearned" to put the question: democracy *for which class?* He argues from the point of view of "pure" (i.e., non-class? or above-class?) democracy. He argues like Shylock: my "pound of flesh" and nothing else. Equality for all citizens—otherwise there is no democracy.

We must ask the learned Kautsky, the "Marxist" and "socialist" Kautsky:

Can there be equality between the exploited and the exploiters?

It is dreadful, it is incredible that such a question should have to be put in discussing a book written by the ideological leader of the Second International. But "having put your hand to the plough, don't look back", and having undertaken to write about Kautsky, I must explain to the learned man why there can be no equality between the exploiter and the exploited.

Written in October—not later  
than November 10, 1918

*Collected Works*, Vol. 28,  
pp. 246-50

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**SPEECH TO THE FIRST ALL-RUSSIA CONGRESS  
OF LAND DEPARTMENTS,  
POOR PEASANTS' COMMITTEES AND COMMUNES  
DECEMBER 11, 1918**

(*Loud applause passing into ovation.*) 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 building socialism, in particular in agricultural relations, which are of the utmost importance to our country. This Congress consists of 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 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 in the development of our revolution since October was mainly devoted to defeating the common enemy of all the peasants, the landowners.

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\* The *Poor Peasants' Committees* were set up in the countryside in the summer of 1918. Their tasks included organising poor peasants, keeping account of foodstuffs at peasant farms, and helping the food authorities in requisitioning surplus grain from kulaks to feed the famine-stricken urban population. In the autumn of 1918 the Poor Peasants' Committees merged with the Soviets of Peasants' Deputies.—Ed.

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 urban working class, only the Soviet government could relieve the whole of Russia, from end to end, of the ulcer of the old feudal heritage, the old feudal exploitation, landed estates and the landowners' oppression of the peasants 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 peasants, who do not live by exploiting the labour of others. But it also united the most prosperous and even wealthy peasants, who 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 peasant revolution 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 ran the risk of ending halfway, like the majority of the revolutions in Western Europe, in which a temporary alliance of the urban workers and all the peasants succeeded in sweeping away the monarchy and the survivals of medievalism, in more or less thoroughly sweeping away the landed estates or 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 this summer and autumn. The wave of counter-revolutionary uprisings which arose this summer—when the attack of the West-European imperialists and their Czech hirelings on Russia was joined by all the exploiting and oppressing elements in Russian life— injected a new spirit and fresh life in the countryside.

In practice, all these revolts united the European imperialists, their Czech 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 prosperous peasants and the camp of the poor peasants who, side by side with the workers, continued their steadfast advance towards socialism and changed from fighting the landowners to fighting capital, the power of money, and 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 definitely put our revolution on the socialist road which the urban working class had tried so hard and vigorously to put it on in October, but along which it will not be able to direct the revolution successfully unless it finds firm, deliberate and solid support in the countryside.

There 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 October Revolution of last year, but whose significance 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 all the peasants 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 noble and truly socialist task—that of carrying the enlightening socialist struggle into the rural districts, and reaching the minds of the peasants as well. The great agrarian revolution—proclamation in October of the abolition of private ownership of land, proclamation of the socialisation of the land—would have inevitably remained a paper revolution if the urban workers had not stirred into action the

rural proletariat, the poor peasants, the working peasants, who constitute the vast majority. Like the middle peasants, they do not exploit the labour of others and are not interested in exploitation. They 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 rule of the exploiters, who rely on the power of money and property. They have progressed from sweeping Russia clean of landowners to establishing a socialist system.

This, comrades, was an extremely difficult step to take. Those who doubted the socialist character of our revolution prophesied that this is where we were bound to slip up. Today, however, socialist construction in the countryside depends entirely on this step. The formation of the Poor Peasants' Committees, their wide network throughout Russia, their coming conversion, which in part has already begun, into fully competent rural Soviets 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 gone further than 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 we are now getting down to the real work of building socialism. This is the most difficult but at the same time the most important and very rewarding work in the countryside. We have got through to the working peasants right in the villages; the wave of capitalist revolts has completely turned them against the capitalist class; the peasants in the Poor Peasants' Committees and in the Soviets which are now undergoing changes are more and more joining forces 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 mass of the agricultural population.

There is no doubt that building socialism is a very difficult job 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. At the centre the job could be done in a few days; throughout the country it could be done in a few weeks. But, by its very nature, the task we are now tackling can be accomplished only by extremely persistent and sustained effort. Here we shall have to fight our way step by step, inch by inch. We shall have to fight for every achievement to win a new, socialist Russia; we shall have to fight for collective farming.

It goes without saying that a revolution of this kind, the transition from small individual peasant farms to collective farming, will take some time and can certainly not 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 landowners' power. The February fundamental law on the socialisation of the land, which, as you know, was passed unanimously both by Communists and the non-Communist partners of the Soviet government, 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 peasants, and forging ahead only in step with that awakening, only insofar as the peasants are 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 collective farming, affecting as they do the most deep-going roots of the peasants' way of life and their mores, can only be accomplished by long effort, and only when necessity compels people to reshape their lives.

After the long and desperate world war, we can clearly discern the beginnings of a socialist revolution all over the

world. This has become a necessity for even the more backward countries and—irrespective of any theoretical views or socialist doctrines—is emphatically bringing it home to everybody that it is impossible to live in the old way.

The country has suffered tremendous ruin and disruption, and we see this disruption spreading all over the world, we see many centuries of man's cultural, scientific and technological achievements swept away in these four years of criminal, destructive and predatory war, and the whole of Europe, not merely Russia alone, returning to a state of barbarism. Now, all common people, particularly the peasants, who have probably suffered most from the war, are coming to realise clearly enough that tremendous efforts are required, that every ounce of energy must be exerted 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 scattered small-scale farming to collective farming.

The ruination left 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 people's extermination, but it has also given rise to the idea that these technical marvels must be used primarily to reshape agriculture, the most common form of production in the country, in which the greatest number of people are engaged, but which at the same time is the 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 awful 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 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 farming methods can be resumed, are mistaken and are coming to realise their mistake more and more every day. The war has resulted in such terrible ruin that some small farms now possess no draught animals or implements. We cannot allow the waste of people's labour to continue. The poor peasants, who have borne the greatest sacrifices for the revolution and suffered most from the war, did not take the land from the landowners for it to fall into the hands of new kulaks. The latest developments are now confronting these peasants with the question of turning to collective farming as the only means of restoring the agriculture that has been ruined and destroyed by the war. This is the only means of escaping from ignorance and oppression to which capitalism doomed the entire rural population, due to which the capitalists were able for four years to burden mankind with war and from which the working people of all countries are now striving with revolutionary energy and fervour to rid themselves at all costs.

These, comrades, are the conditions that were required on a world scale for this most difficult and at the same time most important socialist reform, this crucial and fundamental socialist measure, to come to the forefront, and it has come to the forefront in Russia. 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 this summer and autumn, go to show that very many peasants have been awakened, and that the peasants themselves, the majority of the working peasants, are striving toward collective farming. 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, whose adoption 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, did more than abolish private ownership of land for ever and do away with landed estates. It also stipulated, among other things, that farm property, draught animals and farm implements which passed into the possession of the nation and the working peasants should 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 want from the supporters of the Soviet government, the working peasants, 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 form of farming from the point of view of economy of labour and products. This will be at the expense of individual farming and with the aim of passing over to socialist farming.

Comrades, when we passed this law, complete agreement did not exist between the Communists and the other parties. On the contrary, we passed this law when the Soviet Government united the Communists and the Left S. R. Party members, 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 collective farming cannot be effected at one stroke, and that the struggle which developed in the towns was resolved more easily. In the towns thousands of workers had one capitalist to deal with, and it did not take much trouble to remove him. The struggle which developed in the rural districts, however, was much more complex. At first there was the general drive of the peasants against the landowners; at first the power of the landowners was utterly destroyed so 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 this summer it led to 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 do say is that we must break the kulak's resistance to indispensable measures, such as the grain monopoly, which he is violating to enrich himself by selling his grain surplus at exorbitant prices, while the workers and peasants in the non-agricultural areas are suffering pangs of hunger. Our policy here has been 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 peasants to the middle peasants. 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 or socialism. He will, of course, hesitate and only consent to socialism 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 agitation. And we do not count on that. But he can be convinced by the example and the solid front of the poor peasants. He can be convinced by an alliance of the poor peasants with the proletariat. And here we are counting on a prolonged and gradual process of persuasion and on a number of transitional measures which will bring about agreement between the proletarian, socialist section of the population, agreement between the Communists who are conducting a resolute fight against capital in all its forms, and the middle peasants.

Appreciating this state of affairs and that our task 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 the law proclaimed abolition of private ownership of land and equal land tenure, 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 farming. As we proceed with our construction, both the peasants who have already settled on the land and the prisoners of war who are now returning from captivity in thousands and millions, ragged and exhausted, are coming to realise more and more clearly the vast scope of the work that must be done to restore agriculture and free the peasant for ever from his old, neglected, downtrodden and ignorant state. It is becoming clearer to them that the only sure way of escape, one that will bring the mass of peasants nearer to a civilised life and put them on a par with other citizens, is collective farming, which the Soviet government is now systematically striving to put into effect by gradual measures. It is for this purpose, for collective farming, 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 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, second to public organisations, third to agricultural communes, and fourth to agricultural co-operative societies. I again draw your attention to the fact that these fundamental principles of the law on the socialisation of the land were laid down when the Communist Party was carrying out not only its own will, but when it made deliberate concessions to those who in one way or another expressed the ideas and will of the middle peasants. We made such concessions, and are still making them. We concluded and are concluding agreements of this kind because the transition to the collective form of landownership, to collective farming, to state farms, to communes, cannot be effected at one stroke. It requires the determined and persistent action of the Soviet government, which has assigned one thousand million rubles for the improvement of agriculture on condition that collective farming is adopted.

This law shows that we want to influence the mass of middle peasants mainly by force of example, by inviting them to improve farming, and that we count only on the gradual effect of such measures to bring about this profound and crucial 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 by this transition to collective farming we have 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 farm specialists of Russia so that we may be able to put the best organised farms at our service, which hitherto served as a source of enrichment for individuals, as the source of capitalist revival, as the source of a new bondage and a new enslavement of wage-labourers, but which now, under the socialisation of land law and the complete abolition of private ownership of land, must serve as a source of agricultural knowledge and culture and of higher productivity for the millions of working people. This alliance between the urban workers and the working peasants, the formation of the Poor Peasants' Committees and their merger with the Soviets 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, as you know, 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 has begun to move. And we are firmly convinced, and the course of the German revolution has shown it in practice, that the transition to socialist farming there, the use of more advanced agricultural techniques and the union of the agricultural population will proceed more rapidly and easily than in our country.

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

*Collected Works, Vol. 28,*  
pp. 338-48

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## TASKS OF THE TRADE UNIONS

### I

The theses by Tomsky, Radus-Zenkovich and Nogin each express the viewpoint of the particular job they represent: trade unions, commissariat and co-operatives with mutual benefit societies.

Each group of theses therefore suffers from a lopsided emphasis of only one side of the picture and an overshadowing and suppression of the fundamental points at issue.

A correct picture of these fundamental issues concerning the trade union movement today and its attitude towards the Soviet government requires above all proper consideration for the specific features of the *present, given* situation in the transition from capitalism to socialism.

All three gave insufficient attention or virtually no attention at all to this vital aspect of the matter.

### II

The chief feature of the present situation in this respect is as follows.

The Soviet government as the dictatorship of the proletariat is victorious both among the urban proletariat and among the poor peasants but has far from won over by communist propaganda and strong organisation all trades and the whole mass of semi-proletarians.

Hence the special importance, particularly at the moment, of stepping up our propaganda and organisational work so

that, on the one hand, we extend our influence over those workers and employees who are the *least Soviet* (that is, the furthest from fully accepting Soviet policy), and subordinate them to the general proletarian movement. And so that, on the other hand, we shake up and rouse ideologically, and rally organisationally, the most backward sections and individuals among the proletariat and semi-proletariat, such as the unskilled workers, the town servants, rural semi-proletariat, and so on.

Then, the second principal feature of the present situation is that the construction of socialist society is based on a solid foundation, that is, we have not only done more than map it out and set it as our immediate practical goal; we have formed several highly important bodies of this construction (the Economic Councils, for example), had certain experience of their relationship with mass organisations (trade unions, co-operatives), and obtained certain practical results. All the same, however, our construction is not yet finished by any means, we still have very many flaws to iron out, the very essentials are not yet guaranteed (for instance, proper collection and distribution of grain, production and distribution of fuel), and the main body of working people are still not playing a big enough part in the construction.

### III

With this in view, the trade unions have the following tasks at present.

There can be no talk of any sort of trade union "neutrality". Any campaign for neutrality is either a hypocritical screen for counter-revolution or a complete lack of class-consciousness.

We are now strong enough in the basic core of the trade union movement to be able to bring under our influence and proletarian discipline both the backward and the passive non-Communists inside the unions, and those workers who are still in some respects petty-bourgeois.

So the chief aim now is, not to break the resistance of a strong enemy, for Soviet Russia no longer has such an

enemy among the proletarians and semi-proletarians, but to overcome by stubborn, persistent, more extensive educational and organisational work the prejudices of certain petty-bourgeois sections of the proletariat and semi-proletariat. The unions must steadily extend the insufficiently wide base of the Soviet government (that is, increase the number of workers and poor peasants directly taking part in state administration), educate the backward working people (by practical experience in management as well as by books, lectures and newspapers), and discover *new organisational forms* both for these new tasks of the trade union movement in general, and for attracting a far more numerous mass of semi-proletarians, like the poor peasants, for example.

Thus, they must attract *all* trade union members into state administration—through the system of commissars, through participation in lightning control groups, and so on and so forth. They must attract the housemaid, first into co-operative work, in supplying the population with provisions, supervising their production, etc., and then into more responsible and less "narrow" work—but of course with the necessary gradualness.

They must get the specialists into state work together with the workers and keep an eye on them.

Transitional forms demand new bounds of organisation. Thus, for instance, the Poor Peasants' Committees are playing a tremendous role. There may be a danger that their merging with the Soviets would somewhere end up by leaving the *mass* of semi-proletarians *outside* of the bounds of permanent organisation. But we cannot forgo the task of organising the poor peasants under the pretext that they are not hired hands. It is possible and even necessary to search, search and search again for new forms, if only, for example, by forming unions of poor peasants (perhaps the very same Poor Peasants' Committees) as unions of *the very poor* (a) uninterested in grain profiteering and high grain prices, (b) interested in improving their lot by common measures for everyone, (c) interested in strengthening socialised farming, (d) interested in a permanent alliance with the urban workers, etc.

Such a poor peasant union could make up a *special section* of the All-Russia Trade Union Council to prevent it overwhelming the completely proletarian elements. The form can be modified and must be sought through applying it to practice, to the new task of embracing the new, transitional social types (the village poor are not the proletariat, and now not even semi-proletariat, but *those who* stand closest to the semi-proletariat since capitalism is not yet dead, and at the same time *those who* are most sympathetic to the transition to socialism). . . .\*

Written in December 1918-  
the first half of January 1919

*Collected Works*, Vol. 28,  
pp. 382-85

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**From REPORT AT THE SECOND ALL-RUSSIA  
TRADE UNION CONGRESS  
JANUARY 20, 1919**

We know that the proletariat has promoted several thousands, perhaps several tens of thousands of workers to state administration. We know that the new class—the proletariat—now has its representatives in every branch of state administration, in every section of the enterprises already socialised or about to be socialised, and in every branch of the economy. The proletariat knows this. It has set about the job practically. It can now see that we must continue along the same lines, that we shall have to take quite a number of steps more before we are in a position to say that the trade union organisations of the working people have definitely merged with the entire state apparatus. That will be so when the workers completely take over the organs of suppression of one class over the other. And we are quite certain that will be so.

I now want to focus your attention on the next practical job. We must go on extending the participation of the working people in economic administration and in building a new economy. We shall never bring the work of communist construction to its completion unless we cope with this task, unless we convert the trade unions into organs for training ten times as many people as at present for direct participation in state administration. That we realise quite clearly. It is dealt with in our resolution, and it is a matter I want to direct your attention to particularly.

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\* Here the manuscript ends.—Ed.

In this greatest revolution in history, when the proletariat has taken state power into its own hands, all the functions of the trade unions are undergoing a profound change. The trade unions are becoming the chief builders of the new society, for only the millions can build this society. In the era of serfdom these builders numbered hundreds; in the capitalist era the builders of the state numbered thousands and tens of thousands. The socialist revolution can be made only with the active and direct practical participation of tens of millions in state administration. That is our goal but we are not there yet.

The trade unions should know that there is a higher and more important task than those tasks which are partly still in force and partly have already lapsed, and which, at any rate, even if they are still in force, can only be minor ones in our eyes: registration, establishing work standards, amalgamation of organisations. This task is to teach the people the art of administration, not from books, not from lectures or meetings, but from practical experience, so that instead of just the vanguard of the proletariat which has been set to command and organise, more and more fresh blood may enter the departments, and this new section may be reinforced by ten others like it. This may seem an immense and difficult task. But it will not seem so overpowering if we stop to think how rapidly the experience of the revolution has enabled us to cope with the immense tasks that have cropped up since the October Revolution, and how the working people who had had no access to and no use for knowledge are now thirsting for it.

We shall find that we can cope with this task and teach vast numbers of working people how to run the state and industry. We shall discover we can develop practical activity, and shatter that pernicious prejudice which for decades and centuries has been implanted among the working people, namely, that state administration is the preserve of the privileged few, that it is a special art. That is not true. We shall inevitably make mistakes; but now every mistake will serve to teach, not handfuls of students taking some course of theory in state administration, but millions of working people

who will personally suffer the consequences of every mistake. They will themselves see that they are faced with the urgent task of registering and distributing products, of increasing labour productivity, and will see from experience that power is in their own hands and that nobody will help them if they do not help themselves. That is the new mentality which is awakening in the working class. That is the new task of tremendous historical importance which faces the proletariat and which must, more than any other, strike root in the minds of trade unionists and the leaders of the trade union movement. They are not only trade unions. Today they are trade unions only to the extent that they are constituted within the only possible framework linked with the old capitalist system, and embrace the largest number of working people. But their task is to advance these millions and tens of millions of working people from simple to higher forms of activity, untiringly drawing new forces from the reserve of working people and advancing them to the most difficult tasks. In this way they will teach more and more people the art of state administration. It is their job to identify themselves with the struggle of the proletariat, which has established the dictatorship and is retaining it in the face of the whole world, every day winning over more industrial workers and socialists everywhere who only yesterday tolerated the orders of the social-traitors and social-defence advocates, but who are today coming more and more to accept the banner of communism and the Communist International.

Hold on to this banner, and at the same time steadily enlarge the ranks of the builders of socialism. Remember that the tasks of the trade unions are to build the new life and train millions and tens of millions, who will learn by experience not to make mistakes and will discard the old prejudices, who will learn by their own experience how to run the state and industry. That is the only sure guarantee that the cause of socialism will completely triumph, precluding any chance of a reversion to the past.

*Collected Works, Vol. 28,  
pp. 425-28*

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**From THESES AND REPORT  
ON BOURGEOIS DEMOCRACY  
AND THE DICTATORSHIP OF THE PROLETARIAT  
AT THE FIRST CONGRESS  
OF THE COMMUNIST INTERNATIONAL  
MARCH 4, 1919**

14. Proletarian dictatorship is similar to the dictatorship of other classes in that it arises out of the need, as every other dictatorship does, to forcibly suppress the resistance of the class that is losing its political sway. The fundamental distinction between the dictatorship of the proletariat and the dictatorship of other classes—landlord dictatorship in the Middle Ages and bourgeois dictatorship in all the civilised capitalist countries—consists in the fact that the dictatorship of the landowners and bourgeoisie was the forcible suppression of the resistance offered by the vast majority of the population, namely, the working people. In contrast proletarian dictatorship is the forcible suppression of the resistance of the exploiters, i.e., an insignificant minority of the population, the landowners and capitalists.

It follows that proletarian dictatorship must inevitably entail not only a change in democratic forms and institutions, generally speaking, but precisely such a change as provides an unparalleled extension of the actual enjoyment of democracy by those oppressed by capitalism—the toiling classes.

And indeed, the form of proletarian dictatorship that has already taken shape, i.e., Soviet power in Russia, the Räte-System\* in Germany, the Shop Stewards Commit-

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\* The *Räte-System*—the system of Councils. During the Revolution of November 1918 in Germany Councils of Workers' Deputies emerged

tees\* in Britain and similar Soviet institutions in other countries, all this implies and presents to the toiling classes, i.e., the vast majority of the population, greater practical opportunities for enjoying democratic rights and liberties than ever existed before, even approximately, in the best and the most democratic bourgeois republics.

The substance of Soviet government is that the permanent and only foundation of state power, the entire machinery of state, is the mass-scale organisation of the classes oppressed by capitalism, i.e., the workers and the semi-proletarians (peasants who do not exploit the labour of others and regularly resort to the sale of at least a part of their own labour-power). It is the people, who even in the most democratic bourgeois republics, while possessing equal rights by law, have in fact been debarred by thousands of devices and subterfuges from participation in political life and enjoyment of democratic rights and liberties, that are now drawn into constant and unfailing, moreover, decisive, participation in the democratic administration of the state.

15. The equality of citizens, irrespective of sex, religion, race, or nationality, which bourgeois democracy everywhere has always promised but never effected, and never could effect because of the domination of capital, is given immediate and full effect by the Soviet system, or dictatorship of the proletariat. The fact is that this can only be done by a government of the workers, who are not interested in the

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at many enterprises, and Councils of Soldiers' Deputies in the army. The German Communists fought for the transfer of state power to the Councils. But at the First All-German Congress of Councils (December 1918), the Social-Democrats, who formed the majority in the Councils, carried a resolution to vest state power in the bourgeois government. The Councils of Workers' and Soldiers' Deputies were soon abolished.—*Ed.*

\* The *Shop Stewards Committees* were set up at British industrial enterprises during the First World War. They headed some large-scale manifestations of the British workers against the imperialist war, and after the October Revolution of 1917, they supported Soviet Russia and demanded a stop to the British imperialist intervention against it.—*Ed.*

means of production being privately owned and in the fight for their division and redivision.

16. The old, i.e., bourgeois, democracy and the parliamentary system were so organised that it was the mass of working people who were kept farthest away from the machinery of government. Soviet power, i.e., the dictatorship of the proletariat, on the other hand, is so organised as to bring the working people close to the machinery of government. That, too, is the purpose of combining the legislative and executive authority under the Soviet organisation of the state and of replacing territorial constituencies by production units—the factory.

17. The army was a machine of oppression not only under the monarchy. It remains as such in all bourgeois republics, even the most democratic ones. Only the Soviets, the permanent organisations of government authority of the classes that were oppressed by capitalism, are in a position to destroy the army's subordination to bourgeois commanders and really merge the proletariat with the army; only the Soviets can effectively arm the proletariat and disarm the bourgeoisie. Unless this is done, the victory of socialism is impossible.

18. The Soviet organisation of the state is suited to the leading role of the proletariat as a class most concentrated and enlightened by capitalism. The experience of all revolutions and all movements of the oppressed classes, the experience of the world socialist movement teaches us that only the proletariat is in a position to unite and lead the scattered and backward sections of the working and exploited population.

19. Only the Soviet organisation of the state can really effect the immediate break-up and total destruction of the old, i.e., bourgeois, bureaucratic and judicial machinery, which has been, and has inevitably had to be, retained under capitalism even in the most democratic republics, and which is, in actual fact, the greatest obstacle to the practical implementation of democracy for the workers and working people generally. The Paris Commune took the first epoch-making step along this path. The Soviet system has taken the second.

20. Destruction of state power is the aim set by all socialists, including Marx above all. Genuine democracy, i.e., liberty and equality, is unrealisable unless this aim is achieved. But its practical achievement is possible only through Soviet, or proletarian, democracy, for by enlisting the mass organisations of the working people in constant and unflinching participation in the administration of the state, it immediately begins to prepare the complete withering away of any state.

21. The complete bankruptcy of the socialists who assembled in Berne,\* their complete failure to understand the new, i.e., proletarian, democracy, is especially apparent from the following. On February 10, 1919, Branting\*\* delivered the concluding speech at the international Conference of the yellow International in Berne. In Berlin, on February 11, 1919, *Die Freiheit*, the paper of the International's affiliates, published an appeal from the Party of "Independents"\*\*\* to the proletariat. The appeal acknowledged the bourgeois character of the Scheidemann government, rebuked it for wanting to abolish the Soviets, which it described as *Träger und Schützer der Revolution*—vehicles and guardians of the revolution—and proposed that the Soviets be legalised, invested with government authority and given the right to suspend the operation of National Assembly decisions pending a popular referendum.

That proposal indicates the complete ideological bankruptcy of the theorists who defended democracy and failed to see its bourgeois character. This ludicrous attempt to combine the Soviet system, i.e., proletarian dictatorship, with

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\* An international conference of opportunist socialist parties took place in Berne in February 1919. Its aim was to restore the Second International, which had disintegrated in 1914, when the imperialist world war began.—*Ed.*

\*\* *Carl Hjalmar Branting* (1860-1925)—a Swedish Social-Democratic Party leader, an opportunist.—*Ed.*

\*\*\* A reference to the Independent Social-Democratic Party of Germany, which was formed by the Centrists who had separated from the German Social-Democrats in April 1917. The Left wing of the Independents merged with the Communist Party of Germany in 1920, and the Right wing returned to the Social-Democratic Party in 1922.—*Ed.*

the National Assembly, i.e., bourgeois dictatorship, utterly exposes the paucity of thought of the yellow socialists and Social-Democrats, their reactionary petty-bourgeois political outlook, and their cowardly concessions to the irresistibly growing strength of the new, proletarian democracy.

*Collected Works*, Vol. 28,  
pp. 464-67

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## RE DRAFT DECREE ON REORGANISATION OF STATE CONTROL

### I

#### NOTES ON THE QUESTION\* OF REORGANISING STATE CONTROL

- 1) A workers' organ, or an organ enlisting workers' participation, at the centre and in the localities.
- 2) Voluntary inspectors as a system.  
2 bis: Two-thirds women mandatory.
- 3) Immediate practical tasks:
  - (α) inspection raids, on citizens' complaints
  - (β) fight against red tape
  - (γ) revolutionary measures of struggle against abuses and red tape
  - (δ) transport
  - (ε) raising labour productivity
  - (ζ) increasing food output

Written March 8, 1919

*Collected Works*, Vol. 36,  
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#### NOTE TO STALIN ON REORGANISATION OF STATE CONTROL

I think the following should be added to the decree on control:

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\* These notes and the note to Stalin were written by Lenin, apparently at the session of the Council of People's Commissars on March 8, 1919, during the discussion on the question of state control. Lenin's instructions served as a basis for the decision of the Council of People's Commissars to reorganise state control.—*Ed.*

1) formation of central (and local) bodies with workers' participation;

2) introduction by law of the systematic participation of witnesses from among the workers, with compulsory participation of up to two-thirds women;

3) giving immediate priority to the following as our urgent tasks:

- (a) lightning inquiries into citizens' complaints
- (b) combating red tape
- (c) revolutionary measures to combat abuses and red tape
- (d) special attention to boosting labour productivity, and
- (e) to increasing the quantity of products, etc.

Written March 8, 1919

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## From DRAFT PROGRAMME OF THE R.C.P.(B.)\*

### THE BASIC TASKS OF THE DICTATORSHIP OF THE PROLETARIAT IN RUSSIA\*\*

In Russia today the basic tasks of the dictatorship of the proletariat are to carry through to the end, to complete, the expropriation of the landowners and bourgeoisie that has already begun, and the transfer of all factories, railways, banks, the merchant fleet and other means of production and exchange to ownership by the Soviet Republic;

to employ the alliance of urban workers and poor peasants, which has already led to the abolition of private ownership of land, and the law on the transitional form between small-peasant farming and socialism, which modern ideologists of the peasantry that has put itself on the side of the proletarians have called socialisation of the land,\*\*\* for a gradual but steady transition to joint tillage and large-scale socialist agriculture;

to strengthen and further develop the Federative Republic of Soviets as an immeasurably higher and more progressive form of democracy than bourgeois parliamentarism, and as the sole type of state corresponding, on the basis of the experience of the Paris Commune of 1871 and equally of the experience of the Russian revolutions of 1905 and 1917-18,

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\* The new Party Programme was adopted at the Eighth Congress of the R.C.P.(B.), which took place on March 18-23, 1919.—*Ed.*

\*\* An extract from the Draft Programme of the R.C.P.(B.).—*Ed.*

\*\*\* A reference to the Left Socialist-Revolutionaries, who called the introduction of the land tenure on an equality basis the "socialisation of the land" (for details, see a footnote on pp. 129-30).—*Ed.*

to the transitional period between capitalism and socialism, i.e., to the period of the dictatorship of the proletariat;

by employing in every way the torch of world socialist revolution lit in Russia to paralyse the attempts of the imperialist bourgeois states to intervene in the internal affairs of Russia or to unite for direct struggle and war against the socialist Soviet Republic and to carry the revolution into the most advanced countries and in general into all countries;

by a number of gradual but undeviating measures to abolish private trading completely and to organise the regular, planned exchange of products between producers' and consumers' communes to form the single economic entity the Soviet Republic must become.

The Russian Communist Party, developing the general tasks of the Soviet government in greater detail, at present formulates them as follows.

#### *In the Political Sphere*

Prior to the capture of political power by the proletariat it was (obligatory) necessary to make use of bourgeois democracy, parliamentarism in particular, for the political education and organisation of the working masses; now that the proletariat has won political power and a higher type of democracy is being put into effect in the Soviet Republic, any step backward to bourgeois parliamentarism and bourgeois democracy would undoubtedly be reactionary service to the interests of the exploiters, the landowners and capitalists. Such catchwords as supposedly popular, national, general, extra-class but actually bourgeois democracy serve the interests of the exploiters alone, and as long as the land and other means of production remain private property the most democratic republic must inevitably remain a bourgeois dictatorship, a machine for the suppression of the overwhelming majority of working people by a handful of capitalists.

The historical task that has fallen to the lot of the Soviet Republic, a new type of state that is transitional until the state disappears altogether, is the following.

(1) The creation and development of universal mass organisations of precisely those classes that are oppressed under

capitalism—the proletariat and semi-proletariat. A bourgeois-democratic republic at best permits the organisation of the exploited masses, by declaring them free to organise, but actually has always placed countless obstacles in the way of their organisation, obstacles that were connected with the private ownership of the means of production in a way that made them irremovable. For the first time in history, Soviet power has not only greatly facilitated the organisation of the masses who were oppressed under capitalism, but has made that organisation the essential permanent basis of the entire state apparatus, local and central, from top to bottom. Only in this way is it possible to ensure democracy for the great majority of the population (the working people), i.e., actual participation in state administration, in contrast to the actual administration of the state mainly by members of the bourgeois classes as is the case in the most democratic bourgeois republics.

(2) The Soviet system of state administration gives a certain actual advantage to that section of the working people that all the capitalist development that preceded socialism has made the most concentrated, united, educated and steeled in the struggle, i.e., to the urban industrial proletariat. This advantage must be used systematically and unswervingly to counteract the narrow guild and narrow trade interests that capitalism fostered among the workers and which split them into competitive groups, by uniting the most backward and disunited masses of rural proletarians and semi-proletarians more closely with the advanced workers, by snatching them away from the influence of the village kulaks and village bourgeoisie, and organising and educating them for communist development.

(3) Bourgeois democracy that solemnly announced the equality of all citizens, in actual fact hypocritically concealed the domination of the capitalist exploiters and deceived the masses with the idea that the equality of exploiters and exploited is possible. The Soviet organisation of the state destroys this deception and this hypocrisy by the implementation of real democracy, i.e., the real equality of all working people, and by excluding the exploiters from the cate-

gory of members of society possessing full rights. The experience of world history, the experience of all revolts of the exploited classes against their exploiters shows the inevitability of long and desperate resistance of the exploiters in their struggle to retain their privileges. Soviet state organisation is adapted to the suppression of that resistance for unless it is suppressed there can be no question of a victorious communist revolution.

(4) The more direct influence of the working masses on state structure and administration—i.e., a higher form of democracy—is also effected under the Soviet type of state, first, by the electoral procedure and the possibility of holding elections more frequently, and also by conditions for re-election and for the recall of deputies which are simpler and more comprehensible to the urban and rural workers than is the case under the best forms of bourgeois democracy;

(5) secondly, by making the economic, industrial unit (factory) and not a territorial division the primary electoral unit and the nucleus of the state structure under Soviet power. This closer contact between the state apparatus and the masses of advanced proletarians that capitalism has united, in addition to effecting a higher level of democracy, also makes it possible to effect profound socialist reforms.

(6) Soviet organisation has made possible the creation of armed forces of workers and peasants which are much more closely connected with the working and exploited people than before. If this had not been done it would have been impossible to achieve one of the basic conditions for the victory of socialism—the arming of the workers and the disarming of the bourgeoisie.

(7) Soviet organisation has developed incomparably farther and deeper that feature of bourgeois democracy which marks historically its great progressive nature as compared with medieval times, i.e., the participation of the people in the election of individuals to office. In none of the most democratic bourgeois states have the working masses ever been able to enjoy the electoral rights formally granted them by the bourgeoisie (who actually hinder their enjoyment) anywhere near as extensively, frequently, universally, easily

and simply as they are enjoyed under Soviet power. Soviet power has, at the same time, swept away those negative aspects of bourgeois democracy that the Paris Commune began to abolish, i.e., parliamentarism, or the separation of legislative and executive powers, the narrow, limited nature of which Marxism has long since indicated. By merging the two aspects of government the Soviets bring the state apparatus closer to the working people and remove the fence of the bourgeois parliament that fooled the masses with hypocritical signboards concealing the financial and stock-exchange deals of parliamentary businessmen and ensured the inviolability of the bourgeois apparatus of state administration.

(8) Soviet state organisation alone has enabled the proletarian revolution to smash the old bourgeois state apparatus at one blow and destroy it to the very foundations; had this not been done no start could have been made on socialist development. Those strongholds of the bureaucracy which everywhere, both under monarchies and in the most democratic bourgeois republics, has always kept the state bound to the interests of the landowners and capitalists, have been destroyed in present-day Russia. The struggle against the bureaucracy, however, is certainly not over in our country. The bureaucracy is trying to regain some of its positions and is taking advantage, on the one hand, of the unsatisfactory cultural level of the masses of the people and, on the other, of the tremendous, almost superhuman war efforts of the most developed section of the urban workers. The continuation of the struggle against the bureaucracy, therefore, is absolutely necessary, is imperative, to ensure the success of future socialist development.

(9) Work in this field is closely connected with the implementation of the chief historical purpose of Soviet power, i.e., to advance towards the final abolition of the state, and should consist of the following. First, every member of a Soviet must, without fail, do a certain job of state administration; secondly, these jobs must be consistently changed so that they embrace all aspects of government, all its branches; and, thirdly, literally all the working population

must be drawn into independent participation in state administration by means of a series of gradual measures that are carefully selected and unfailingly implemented.

(10) By and large, the difference between bourgeois democracy and parliamentarism on the one hand, and Soviet or proletarian democracy on the other, boils down to this: the centre of gravity of the former is in its solemn and pompous declarations of numerous liberties and rights which the majority of the population, the workers and peasants, cannot enjoy to the full. Proletarian, or Soviet, democracy, on the contrary, has transferred the centre of gravity away from the declaration of rights and liberties for the entire people to the actual participation of none but the working people, who were oppressed and exploited by capital, in the administration of the state, the actual use of the best buildings and other premises for meetings and congresses, the best printing-works and the biggest warehouses (stocks) of paper for the education of those who were stultified and downtrodden under capitalism, and to providing a real (actual) opportunity for those masses gradually to free themselves from the burden of religious prejudices, etc., etc. It is precisely in making the benefits of culture, civilisation and democracy really available to the working and exploited people that Soviet power sees its most important work, work which it must continue unswervingly in the future.

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pp. 105-10

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## FRAGMENT OF THE POLITICAL SECTION OF THE PROGRAMME\*

The Soviet Constitution ensures the working people immeasurably larger opportunities than are provided by bourgeois democracy and parliamentarism to *elect and recall* deputies in a way that is most easy and accessible for workers and peasants; it also eliminates the negative aspects of parliamentarism which have been evident since the Paris Commune, particularly the division of *legislative and executive* power, the alienation of parliament from the masses, and so forth.

The Soviet Constitution also brings the machinery of state closer to the masses by making the electoral constituency and the basic unit of the state not territorial but industrial units (the factory, etc.).

The closer contact between the machinery of state and the masses under the Soviet system makes it possible to create. . .\*\*

*Collected Works, Vol. 29,*  
p. 126

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\* This text, slightly changed, was included in the Programme of the R.C.P.(B.), adopted at the Eighth Congress (March 1919).—*Ed.*

\*\* Here the manuscript breaks off.—*Ed.*

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**From REPORT ON THE PARTY PROGRAMME  
AT THE EIGHTH CONGRESS OF THE R.C.P.(B.)  
MARCH 19, 1919**

The next question which, according to the division of subjects, falls to my share is the *question of bureaucracy and of enlisting the broad mass of the people in Soviet work*. We have been hearing complaints about bureaucracy for a long time; the complaints are undoubtedly well founded. We have done what no other state in the world has done in the fight against bureaucracy. The apparatus which was a thoroughly bureaucratic and bourgeois apparatus of oppression, and which remains such even in the freest of bourgeois republics, we have destroyed to its very foundations. Take, for example, the courts. Here, it is true, the task was easier; we did not have to create a new apparatus, because anybody can act as a judge basing himself on the revolutionary sense of justice of the working classes. We have still by no means completed the work in this field but in a number of respects we have made the courts what they should be. We have created bodies on which not only men, but also women, the most backward and conservative section of the population, can be made to serve without exception.

The employees in the other spheres of government are more hardened bureaucrats. The task here is more difficult. We cannot live without this apparatus; every branch of government creates a demand for such an apparatus. Here we are suffering from the fact that Russia was not sufficiently developed as a capitalist country. Germany, apparently, will suffer less from this, because her bureaucratic apparatus

passed through an extensive school, which sucks people dry but compels them to work and not just wear out armchairs, as happens in our offices. We dispersed these old bureaucrats, shuffled them and then began to place them in new posts. The tsarist bureaucrats began to join the Soviet institutions and practise their bureaucratic methods, they began to assume the colouring of Communists and, to succeed better in their careers, to procure membership cards of the Russian Communist Party. And so, they have been thrown out of the door but they creep back in through the window. What makes itself felt here most is the lack of cultured forces. These bureaucrats may be dismissed, but they cannot be re-educated all at once. Here we are confronted chiefly with organisational, cultural and educational problems.

We can fight bureaucracy to the bitter end, to a complete victory, only when the whole population participates in the work of government. In the bourgeois republics not only is this impossible, *but the law itself prevents it*. The best of the bourgeois republics, no matter how democratic they may be, have thousands of legal hindrances which prevent the working people from participating in the work of government. What we have done, was to remove these hindrances, but so far we have not reached the stage at which the working people could participate in government. Apart from the law, there is still the level of culture, which you cannot subject to any law. The result of this low cultural level is that the Soviets, which by virtue of their programme are organs of government *by the working people*, are in fact organs of government *for the working people* by the advanced section of the proletariat, but not by the working people as a whole.

Here we are confronted by a problem which cannot be solved except by prolonged education. At present this task is an inordinately difficult one for us, because, as I have had frequent occasion to say, the section of workers who are governing is inordinately, incredibly *small*. We must secure help. According to all indications, such a reserve is growing up within the country. There cannot be the slightest doubt of the existence of a tremendous thirst for knowledge and of tremendous progress in education—mostly attained outside

the schools—of tremendous progress in educating the working people. This progress cannot be confined within any school framework, but it is tremendous. All indications go to show that we shall obtain a vast reserve in the near future, which will replace the representatives of the small section of proletarians who have overstrained themselves in the work. But, in any case, our present situation in this respect is extremely difficult. Bureaucracy has been defeated. The exploiters have been eliminated. But the cultural level has not been raised, and therefore the bureaucrats are occupying their old positions. They can be forced to retreat only if the proletariat and the peasants are organised far more extensively than has been the case up to now, and only if real measures are taken to enlist the workers in government. You are all aware of such measures in the case of every People's Commissariat, and I shall not dwell on them.

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## WHAT IS SOVIET POWER? Speech on Gramophone Record

What is Soviet power? What is the essence of this new power, which people in most countries still will not, or cannot, understand? The nature of this power, which is attracting larger and larger numbers of workers in every country, is the following: in the past the country was, in one way or another, governed by the rich, or by the capitalists, but now, for the first time, the country is being governed by the classes, and moreover, by the masses of those classes, which capitalism formerly oppressed. Even in the most democratic and freest republics, as long as capital rules and the land remains private property, the government will always be in the hands of a small minority, nine-tenths of which consist of capitalists, or rich men.

In this country, in Russia, for the first time in the world history, the government of the country is so organised that only the workers and the working peasants, to the exclusion of the exploiters, constitute those mass organisations known as Soviets, and these Soviets wield all state power. That is why, in spite of the slander that the representatives of the bourgeoisie in all countries spread about Russia, the word "Soviet" has now become not only intelligible but popular all over the world, has become the favourite word of the workers, and of all working people. And that is why, notwithstanding all the persecution to which the adherents of communism in the different countries are subjected, Soviet

power must necessarily, inevitably, and in the not distant future, triumph all over the world.

We know very well that there are still many defects in the organisation of Soviet power in this country. Soviet power is not a miracle-working talisman. It does not, overnight, heal all the evils of the past—illiteracy, lack of culture, the consequences of a barbarous war, the aftermath of predatory capitalism. But it does pave the way to socialism. It gives those who were formerly oppressed the chance to straighten their backs and to an ever-increasing degree to take the whole government of the country, the whole administration of the economy, the whole management of production, into their own hands.

Soviet power is the road to socialism that was discovered by the masses of the working people, and that is why it is the true road, that is why it is invincible.

Recording made at the end  
of March 1919

*Collected Works*, Vol. 29,  
pp. 248-49

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## HOW THE WORKING PEOPLE CAN BE SAVED FROM THE OPPRESSION OF THE LANDOWNERS AND CAPITALISTS FOR EVER

### Speech on Gramophone Record

The enemies of the working people, the landowners and capitalists, say that the workers and peasants cannot live without them. "If it were not for us," they say, "there would be nobody to maintain order, to give out work, and to compel people to work. If it were not for us everything would collapse, and the state would fall to pieces. We have been driven away, but chaos will bring us back again." But this sort of talk by the landowners and capitalists will not confuse, intimidate, or deceive the workers and peasants. An army needs the strictest discipline; nevertheless the class-conscious workers succeeded in uniting the peasants, succeeded in taking the old tsarist officers into their service, succeeded in building a victorious army.

The Red Army established unprecedentedly firm discipline—not by means of the lash, but based on the intelligence, loyalty and devotion of the workers and peasants themselves.

And so, to save the working people from the yoke of the landowners and capitalists for ever, to save them from the restoration of their power, it is necessary to build up a great Red Army of Labour. That army will be invincible if it is cemented by labour discipline. The workers and peasants must and will prove that they can properly distribute labour, establish devoted discipline and ensure loyalty in working for the common good, and can do it themselves, without the landowners and in spite of them, without the capitalists and in spite of them.

Labour discipline, enthusiasm for work, readiness for self-sacrifice, close alliance between the peasants and the workers—this is what will save the working people from the oppression of the landowners and capitalists for ever.

Recording made at the end  
of March 1919

*Collected Works*, Vol. 29,  
pp. 250-51

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## TO G. Y. ZINOVIEV

April 30, 1919

Comrade Zinoviev,

Talking with Comrade Yemelyanov, I was particularly struck by the fact that such best and most reliable Petrograd workers are *wasting* themselves on technical work like road transport.

This is unforgivable! For technical work we can hire and take ninth-rate men and strangers, i.e., those whose honesty is not known. But men like Yemelyanov should be sent *into the countryside, into the administration*, into management, into the uyezd executive committees, where honest men are few and far between, where the need for honest men is desperate.

Could we form a *sponsoring group* of workers in Petrograd, consisting of Comrade Yemelyanov and 5 or 10 of his friends, to select 300-600 Petrograd workers, with the most solid references from the Party and the trade unions, for dispatch, singly or in pairs, to uyezd executive committees throughout Russia?

I should support this plan in every possible way. All such men (too old to go to the front) should be taken off technical work and posts *where they can be replaced*, and transferred to *administrative* work in the countryside. Without a group of such absolutely reliable and experienced Petrograd workers we shall not be able to bring about any big improvement in the villages.

Greetings,  
*Lenin*

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p. 507

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## From A GREAT BEGINNING

### Heroism of the Workers in the Rear. "Communist Subbotniks"

I have given the fullest and most detailed information about the communist subbotniks\* 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.

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\* *Communist subbotniks* or *communist voskresniks*—voluntary unpaid work on days off, mainly on Saturdays (Russ. *subbota*) or Sundays (Russ. *voskresenye*). The first communist subbotnik, about which Lenin writes in his pamphlet *A Great Beginning*, was held by the workers of the Moscow-Kazan Railway in Moscow on May 10, 1919.—Ed.

As I have had occasion to point out more than once, among other occasions in the speech I delivered at a session of the Petrograd Soviet 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 what is important, this is the source of the strength and the guarantee that the final triumph of communism is inevitable.

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 to throw off the yoke of capital, in actually carrying it out, in the struggle to maintain and consolidate the victory, in the work of creating the new, socialist social system and in the entire 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 International\* 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 give thought to 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 of the share of social wealth of which they dispose and the mode of acquiring it.

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\* The *Berne yellow International* was the name Lenin gave to the Second International, restored at the conference of opportunist socialist parties in Berne in February 1919.—Ed.

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-scale 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 labour 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 of capital, the plunder and every sort of tyranny it perpetrates. 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, has greatly intensified these ordeals, has increased and deepened them, and has 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 throwing off 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 vacillations and their tendency to go back to 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, who are not only overthrowing the exploiters and suppressing their resistance, but are 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 development, towards the creation of a new social bond, 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 industry.

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 these victories can only be a new and higher mode of social production, the substitution of large-scale socialist production for capitalist and petty-bourgeois production.

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"Communist subbotniks" are of such enormous historical significance precisely because they demonstrate the conscious and voluntary initiative of the workers in developing the productivity of labour, in adopting a new labour discipline, in creating socialist conditions of economy and life.

J. Jacoby, 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.\* This is true.

\* The *battle of Sadowa* (Czechoslovakia) on July 3, 1866 ended in the victory of Prussia and the defeat of Austria, and decided the outcome of the Austro-Prussian war.—Ed.

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 multimillionaires, they are the atrocities of doomed capitalism, bloated with over-eating 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", naturally jeer at the hopes of the Communists, call those hopes "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, lower productivity, spoilage of raw materials and finished goods, etc. Our reply to these gentlemen is that 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 bourgeois intellectuals. The proletariat will not allow itself to be deceived by them.

If we get down to brass tacks, however, has it ever happened in history that a new mode of production has taken 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 absolutely 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 bourgeois class struggle against the proletariat, a defence of capitalism against socialism. We must carefully study the feeble new shoots, we must devote the greatest attention to them, do everything to promote their growth and "nurse" them. 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 viable. 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 temper of the people, by the heroic initiative of the individual groups which often plays a decisive role against the background of such a radical change. 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 by

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 socialism creating 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* display an enthusiastic concern that is undaunted by arduous toil to increase the productivity of labour, husband *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 presented by the proletariat—the 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 through these pompous phrases of the bourgeois intellectual and discern the trickery 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 about providing this pood of grain and pood of coal needed by the hungry workers and ragged and barefoot peasants *not* by *haggling*, not in a capitalist manner, but by 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 vestiges 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 little to fight these rotten survivals of the rotten, bourgeois-democratic past; it does little to foster the simple, modest, ordinary but viable shoots of genuine communism.

Take the position of women. In this field, not a single democratic party in the world, not even in the most advanced bourgeois republic, has done in decades so much as a hundredth part of what we did in our very first year in power. We really razed to the ground the infamous laws placing

women in a position of inequality, restricting divorce and surrounding it with disgusting formalities, denying recognition to children born out of wedlock, enforcing a search for their fathers, etc., laws numerous survivals 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 field. 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 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 an all-out struggle begins (led by the proletariat wielding the state power) against this petty housekeeping, or rather when its *wholesale transformation* into a large-scale socialist economy begins.

Do we in practice pay sufficient attention to this question, which in theory every Communist considers indisputable? Of course not. Do we take proper care of the *shoots* of communism which already exist in this sphere? Again the answer is *no*. Public catering establishments, nurseries, kindergartens—here we have examples of these shoots, here we have the simple, everyday means, involving nothing pompous, grandiloquent or ceremonial, which can *really emancipate women*, really 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 charity", which the best workers rightly hated 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 we have far more *organising talent* among the working and peasant women than we are aware of, that we have far more people than we know of who can organise practical work, with the co-operation 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., with which our big-headed "intellectuals" or half-baked "Communists" are "affected". But we *do not nurse* these shoots of the new as we should.

Look at the bourgeoisie. How very well they know how to advertise what *they* need! See how millions of copies of *their* newspapers extol what the capitalists regard as "model" enterprises, and how "model" bourgeois institutions are made an object of national pride! Our press does not take the trouble, or hardly ever, to describe the best catering establishments 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 the saving in human labour, the conveniences for the consumer, the economy of products, the emancipation of women from domestic slavery, the improvement in sanitary conditions, that can be achieved with *exemplary communist work* and extended to the whole of society, to all working people.

Exemplary production, exemplary communist subbotniks, exemplary care and conscientiousness in procuring and distributing every pood of grain, exemplary catering establishments, exemplary cleanliness in such-and-such a workers' house, in such-and-such a block, should all 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 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 *all along the line*: grain procurements have increased from 30 million poods (from August 1, 1917 to August 1, 1918) to 100 mil-

lion 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 shoots of communism will not wither; they will grow and blossom into complete communism.

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## THE TASKS OF THE WORKING WOMEN'S MOVEMENT IN THE SOVIET REPUBLIC

Speech Delivered at the Fourth Moscow City Conference  
of Non-Party Working Women

September 23, 1919

Comrades, it gives me pleasure to greet a conference of working women. I will allow myself to pass over those subjects and questions that, of course, at the moment are the cause of the greatest concern to every working woman and to every politically-conscious individual from among the working people; these are the most urgent questions—that of bread and that of the war situation. I know from the newspaper reports of your meetings that these questions have been dealt with exhaustively by Comrade Trotsky as far as war questions are concerned and by Comrades Yakovleva and Svidersky as far as the bread question is concerned; please, therefore, allow me to pass over those questions.

I should like to say a few words about the general tasks facing the working women's movement in the Soviet Republic, those that are, in general, connected with the transition to socialism, and those that are of particular urgency at the present time. Comrades, the question of the position of women was raised by Soviet power from the very beginning. It seems to me that any workers' state in the course of transition to socialism is faced with a double task. The first part of that task is relatively simple and easy. It concerns those old laws that kept women in a position of inequality as compared to men.

Participants in all emancipation movements in Western Europe have long since, not for decades but for centuries, put forward the demand that obsolete laws be annulled and

women and men be made equal by law, but none of the democratic European states, none of the most advanced republics have succeeded in putting it into effect, because wherever there is capitalism, wherever there is private property in land and factories, wherever the power of capital is preserved, the men retain their privileges. It was possible to put it into effect in Russia only because the power of the workers has been established here since October 25, 1917. From its very inception Soviet power set out to be the power of the working people, hostile to all forms of exploitation. It set itself the task of doing away with the possibility of the exploitation of the working people by the landowners and capitalists, of doing away with the rule of capital. Soviet power has been trying to make it possible for the working people to organise their lives without private property in land, without privately-owned factories, without that private property that everywhere, throughout the world, even where there is complete political liberty, even in the most democratic republics, keeps the working people in a state of what is actually poverty and wage-slavery, and women in a state of double slavery.

Soviet power, the power of the working people, in the first months of its existence effected a very definite revolution in legislation that concerns women. Nothing whatever is left in the Soviet Republic of those laws that put women in a subordinate position. I am speaking specifically of those laws that took advantage of the weaker position of women and put them in a position of inequality and often, even, in a humiliating position, i.e., the laws on divorce and on children born out of wedlock and on the right of a woman to summon the father of a child for maintenance.

It is particularly in this sphere that bourgeois legislation, even, it must be said, in the most advanced countries, takes advantage of the weaker position of women to humiliate them and give them a status of inequality. It is particularly in this sphere that Soviet power has left nothing whatever of the old, unjust laws that were intolerable for working people. We may now say proudly and without any exaggeration that apart from Soviet Russia there is not a country in the

world where women enjoy full equality and where women are not placed in the humiliating position felt particularly in day-to-day family life. This was one of our first and most important tasks.

If you have occasion to come into contact with parties that are hostile to the Bolsheviks, if there should come into your hands newspapers published in Russian in the regions occupied by Kolchak or Denikin,\* or if you happen to talk to people who share the views of those newspapers, you may often hear from them the accusation that Soviet power has violated democracy.

We, the representatives of Soviet power, Bolshevik Communists and supporters of Soviet power are often accused of violating democracy and proof of this is given by citing the fact that Soviet power dispersed the Constituent Assembly. We usually answer this accusation as follows; that democracy and that Constituent Assembly which came into being when private property still existed on earth, when there was no equality between people, when the one who possessed his own capital was the boss and the others worked for him and were his wage-slaves—that was a democracy on which we place no value. Such democracy concealed slavery even in the most advanced countries. We socialists are supporters of democracy only insofar as it eases the position of the working and oppressed people. Throughout the world socialism has set itself the task of combating every kind of exploitation of man by man. That democracy has real value for us which serves the exploited, the underprivileged. If those who do not work are disfranchised that would be real equality between people. Those who do not work should not eat.

In reply to these accusations we say that the question

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\* By the autumn of 1919 part of the territory of Soviet Russia was captured by the counter-revolutionary forces of Kolchak and Denikin operating in Siberia and the south of Russia. The governments of France, Britain, the United States and Japan, which had organised the armed intervention against the land of Soviets, rendered military aid to the counter-revolutionaries. The armies of the counter-revolutionary generals together with the foreign interventionist forces were defeated by the Red Army and driven out of Russian territory in 1920.—Ed.

must be presented in this way—how is democracy implemented in various countries? We see that equality is proclaimed in all democratic republics but in the civil laws and in laws on the rights of women—those that concern their position in the family and divorce—we see inequality and the humiliation of women at every step, and we say that this is a violation of democracy specifically in respect of the oppressed. Soviet power has implemented democracy to a greater degree than any of the other, most advanced countries because it has not left in its laws any trace of the inequality of women. Again I say that no other state and no other democratic legislation has ever done for women a half of what Soviet power did in the first months of its existence.

Laws alone, of course, are not enough, and we are by no means content with mere decrees. In the sphere of legislation, however, we have done everything required of us to put women in a position of equality and we have every right to be proud of it. The position of women in Soviet Russia is now ideal as compared with their position in the most advanced states. We tell ourselves, however, that this is, of course, only the beginning.

Owing to her work in the house, the woman is still in a difficult position. To effect her complete emancipation and make her the equal of the man it is necessary for the national economy to be socialised and for women to participate in common productive labour. Then women will occupy the same position as men.

Here we are not, of course, speaking of making women the equal of men as far as productivity of labour, the quantity of labour, the length of the working day, labour conditions, etc., are concerned; we mean that the woman should not, unlike the man, be oppressed because of her position in the family. You all know that even when women have full rights, they still remain factually downtrodden because all housework is left to them. In most cases housework is the most unproductive, the most barbarous and the most arduous work a woman can do. It is exceptionally petty and does not include anything that would in any way promote the development of the woman.

In pursuance of the socialist ideal we want to struggle for the full implementation of socialism, and here an extensive field of labour opens up before women. We are now making serious preparations to clear the ground for the building of socialism, but the building of socialism will begin only when we have achieved the complete equality of women and when we undertake the new work together with women who have been emancipated from that petty, stultifying, unproductive work. This is a job that will take us many, many years.

This work cannot show any rapid results and will not produce a scintillating effect.

We are setting up model institutions, dining-rooms and nurseries, that will emancipate women from housework. And the work of organising all these institutions will fall mainly to women. It has to be admitted that in Russia today there are very few institutions that would help woman out of her state of household slavery. There is an insignificant number of them, and the conditions now obtaining in the Soviet Republic—the war and food situation about which comrades have already given you the details—hinder us in this work. Still, it must be said that these institutions that liberate women from their position as household slaves are springing up wherever it is in any way possible.

We say that the emancipation of the workers must be effected by the workers themselves, and in exactly the same way the emancipation of working women is a matter for the working women themselves. The working women must themselves see to it that such institutions are developed, and this activity will bring about a complete change in their position as compared with what it was under the old, capitalist society.

In order to be active in politics under the old, capitalist regime special training was required, so that women played an insignificant part in politics, even in the most advanced and free capitalist countries. Our task is to make politics available to every working woman. Ever since private property in land and factories has been abolished and the power of the landowners and capitalists overthrown, the tasks of

politics have become simple, clear and comprehensible to the working people as a whole, including working women. In capitalist society the woman's position is marked by such inequality that the extent of her participation in politics is only an insignificant fraction of that of the man. The power of the working people is necessary for a change to be wrought in this situation, for then the main tasks of politics will consist of matters directly affecting the fate of the working people themselves.

Here, too, the participation of working women is essential—not only of party members and politically-conscious women, but also of the non-party women and those who are least politically conscious. Here Soviet power opens up a wide field of activity to working women.

We have had a difficult time in the struggle against the forces hostile to Soviet Russia that have attacked her. It was difficult for us to fight on the battlefield against the forces who went to war against the power of the working people and in the field of food supplies against the profiteers, because of the too small number of people, working people, who came whole-heartedly to our aid with their own labour. Here, too, there is nothing Soviet power can appreciate as much as the help given by masses of non-party working women. They may know that in the old, bourgeois society, perhaps, a comprehensive training was necessary for participation in politics and that this was not available to women. The political activity of the Soviet Republic is mainly the struggle against the landowners and capitalists, the struggle for the elimination of exploitation; political activity, therefore, is made available to the working woman in the Soviet Republic and it will consist in the working woman using her organisational ability to help the working man.

What we need is not only organisational work on a scale involving millions; we need organisational work on the smallest scale and this makes it possible for women to work as well. Women can work under war conditions when it is a question of helping the army or carrying on agitation in the army. Women should take an active part in all this so that the Red Army sees that it is being looked after, that

solicitude is being displayed. Women can also work in the sphere of food distribution, on the improvement of public catering and everywhere opening dining-rooms like those that are so numerous in Petrograd.

It is in these fields that the activities of working women acquire the greatest organisational significance. The participation of working women is also essential in the organisation and running of big experimental farms and should not take place only in isolated cases. This is something that cannot be carried out without the participation of a large number of working women. Working women will be very useful in this field in supervising the distribution of food and in making food products more easily obtainable. This work can well be done by non-party working women and its accomplishment will do more than anything else to strengthen socialist society.

We have abolished private property in land and almost completely abolished the private ownership of factories; Soviet power is now trying to ensure that all working people, non-party as well as Party members, women as well as men, should take part in this economic development. The work that Soviet power has begun can only make progress when, instead of a few hundreds, millions and millions of women throughout Russia take part in it. We are sure that the cause of socialist development will then become sound. Then the working people will show that they can live and run their country without the aid of the landowners and capitalists. Then socialist construction will be so soundly based in Russia that no external enemies in other countries and none inside Russia will be any danger to the Soviet Republic.

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## THE WORKERS' STATE AND PARTY WEEK

Moscow Party Week\* comes at a time of difficulty for the Soviet government. Denikin's successes have given rise to a frenzied increase in plots by the landowners, capitalists and their friends, and increased efforts on the part of the bourgeoisie to sow panic and undermine the strength of the Soviet rule by every means in their power. The vacillating, wavering, politically backward petty bourgeois, and with them the intelligentsia, the Socialist-Revolutionaries and Mensheviks, have, as usual, become more shaky than ever and were the first to allow themselves to be intimidated by the capitalists.

Moscow Party Week at such a difficult time is, I think, something of an advantage to us, for it is much better for the cause. We do not need a Party Week for show purposes. We do not need fictitious Party members even as a gift. Our Party, the party of the revolutionary working class, is the only government party in the world which is concerned not with increasing its membership but with improving its quality, and purging itself of "self-seekers". We have more than once carried out the re-registration of Party members in order to get rid of these "self-seekers" and to leave in the Party

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\* The *Party Week*, held in the second half of 1919, was aimed at drawing more workers and peasants into the Party. During the Party Week more than 200,000 people joined the Party in the centre of the country alone.—Ed.

only politically-conscious elements who are sincerely devoted to communism. We have further taken advantage of the mobilisations for the front and of the subbotniks to purge the Party of those who are only "out for" the benefits accruing to membership of a government party and do not want to bear the burden of devoted work on behalf of communism.

And at this juncture, when intensified mobilisation for the front is in progress, Party Week is a good thing because it offers no temptation to the self-seekers. We extend a broad invitation into the Party only to rank-and-file workers and poor peasants, to labouring peasants, *but not* to the peasant profiteers. We do not promise and do not give these rank-and-file members any advantages from joining the Party. On the contrary, just now harder and more dangerous work than usual falls to the lot of Party members.

So much the better. Only sincere supporters of communism, only persons who are conscientiously devoted to the workers' state, only honest working people, only genuine representatives of the masses that were oppressed under capitalism will join the Party.

And it is only such members that we need in the Party.

We need new Party members not for advertising purposes but for serious work. These are the people we invite into the Party. To the working people we throw the doors of the Party wide open.

Soviet power is the power of the working people that is fighting for the complete overthrow of the yoke of capital. The first to engage in this fight were the working class of the towns and the factory centres. They won the first victory and conquered state power.

The working class is winning to their side the majority of the peasants. For it is only the peasant huckster, the peasant profiteer, and not the labouring peasant who is drawn to the side of capital, to the side of the bourgeoisie.

The workers of Petrograd, the most advanced, the most politically-conscious workers, have been contributing most of all to the administration of Russia. But we know that among the rank-and-file workers and peasants there are very many people devoted to the interests of the working masses

and capable of undertaking the work of leadership. Among them there are many with a talent for organisation and administration to whom capitalism gave no opportunity and whom we are helping and must help in every way to come to the fore and take up the work of building socialism. To discover these new, modest and unperceived talents is no easy matter. It is no easy matter to enlist for state administrative work rank-and-file workers and peasants who for centuries had been downtrodden and intimidated by the landowners and capitalists.

But this difficult work has to be done, it must be done, so as to draw more deeply on the working class and the labouring peasantry for new forces.

Comrades, non-party workers and labouring peasants, join the Party! We promise you no advantages from joining; it is hard work we are calling you to, the work of organising the state. If you are sincere supporters of communism, set about this work boldly, do not fear its novelty and the difficulty it entails, do not be put off by the old prejudice that only those who have received formal training are capable of this work. That is not true. The work of building socialism can and must be directed by rank-and-file workers and labouring peasants in ever-growing numbers.

The mass of the working people are with us. That is where our strength lies. That is the source of the invincibility of world communism. More new workers from among the masses for the ranks of the Party to take an independent part in building the new life—that is our method of combating all difficulties, that is our path to victory.

October 11, 1919

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**From SPEECH AT A JOINT SESSION  
OF THE ALL-RUSSIA  
CENTRAL EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE,  
THE MOSCOW SOVIET  
OF WORKERS' AND RED ARMY DEPUTIES,  
THE ALL-RUSSIA CENTRAL COUNCIL  
OF TRADE UNIONS, AND FACTORY COMMITTEES,  
ON THE OCCASION OF THE SECOND  
ANNIVERSARY OF THE OCTOBER REVOLUTION  
NOVEMBER 7, 1919**

Comrades, two years ago, when the imperialist war was still raging, it seemed to all the supporters of the bourgeoisie in Russia, to the masses of the people and, I dare say, to most of the workers in other countries, that the uprising of the Russian proletariat and their conquest of political power was a bold but hopeless enterprise. At that time world imperialism appeared such a tremendous and invincible force that it seemed stupid of the workers of a backward country to attempt to revolt against it. Now, however, as we glance back over the past two years, we see that even our opponents are increasingly admitting that we were right. We see that imperialism, which seemed such an insuperable colossus, has proved before the whole world to be a colossus with feet of clay, and the two years through which we have passed and during which we have had to fight, mark with ever-growing clarity the victory not only of the Russian, but also of the international proletariat.

Comrades, during the first year of the existence of Soviet power we had to experience the might of German imperialism, to suffer the coercive and predatory peace that was forced on us; we were alone in issuing our call to revolution, and met with no support or response. The first year of our rule was also the first year of our struggle against imperialism, and we soon became convinced that the struggle of the

different parts of this gigantic international imperialism was nothing but its death throes, and that both German imperialism and the imperialism of the Anglo-French bourgeoisie had an interest in this struggle. During that year we established that this struggle only strengthened, only increased and restored our forces and enabled us to direct them against imperialism as a whole. We created such a situation during the first year but, during the whole of the second year, we stood face to face with our enemy. There were pessimists who even last year severely attacked us; even last year they said that Britain, France and America were such a huge, such a colossal force that they would crush our country. The year has passed, and as you see, while the first year may be called that of the might of international imperialism, the second year will be called that of the onslaught of Anglo-American imperialism and of victory over that onslaught, of victory over Kolchak and Yudenich, and the beginning of victory over Denikin.

Now we know perfectly well that all the military forces sent against us have been directed from a definite source. We know that the imperialists have given them all the military supplies, all the arms needed; we know that they have handed over their global navies in part to our enemies, and now are doing all they can to help and build up forces both in the South of Russia and in Archangel. But we know perfectly well that all these seemingly huge and invincible forces of international imperialism are unreliable, and hold no terrors for us, that at the core they are rotten, that they are making us stronger and stronger, and that this added strength will enable us to win victory on the external front and to make it a thorough-going one. I shall not dwell on this point as it will be dealt with by Comrade Trotsky.

It seems to me that we must now try to draw general lessons from the two years of heroic constructive work.

What, in my opinion, is the most important conclusion to be drawn from the two years of developing the Soviet Republic, what, in my view, is most important for us, is the lesson we have had in organising working-class power. It seems to me that in this we must not confine ourselves to

the various concrete facts that concern the work of some commissariat and which most of you know of from your own experience. It seems to me that, in glancing back over what we have gone through, we must draw a general lesson from this work of construction, a lesson that we shall learn and carry further afield among working people. The lesson is that only workers' participation in the general administration of the state has enabled us to hold out amidst such incredible difficulties, and that only by following this path shall we achieve complete victory. Another lesson to be drawn is that we must maintain the right attitude to the peasantry, to the many millions of peasants, for that attitude alone has made it possible for us to carry on successfully amid all our difficulties, and it alone shows us the path along which we are achieving one success after another.

If you recall the past, if you recall the first steps of Soviet power, if you recall the entire work of developing all branches of the administration of the Republic, not excluding the military branch, you will see that the establishment of working-class rule two years ago, in October, was only the beginning. Actually, at that time, the machinery of state power was not yet in our hands, and if you glance back over the two years that have since elapsed you will agree with me that in each sphere—military, political and economic—we have had to win every position inch by inch, in order to establish real machinery of state power, sweeping aside those who before us had been at the head of the industrial workers and working people in general.

It is particularly important for us to understand the development that has taken place in this period, because there is development along the same lines all over the world. The industrial workers and other working people do not take their first steps with their real leaders; the proletariat themselves are now taking over the administration of state, political power, and at their head we see everywhere leaders who are destroying the old prejudices of petty-bourgeois democracy, old prejudices the vehicles of which in our country are the Mensheviks and Socialist-Revolutionaries, and throughout Europe are the representatives of bourgeois governments.

Previously this was an exception, now it has become the general rule. Two years ago, in October, the bourgeois government in Russia—their alliance or coalition with the Mensheviks and Socialist-Revolutionaries—was smashed, but we know how, in carrying on our work, we had subsequently to reorganise every branch of administration in such a way that genuine representatives, revolutionary workers, the vanguard of the proletariat, really took in hand the organisation of state power. That was in October, two years ago, when the work went on at terrific pressure; nevertheless we know, and we must say it, that this work is not finished even now. We know how those who formerly ran the state resisted us, how officials at first tried refusing to administrate, but this gross sabotage was stopped in a few weeks by the proletarian government. It showed that not the slightest impression could be made on it by such refusal; and after we had put an end to this gross sabotage this same enemy tried other methods.

Time and again it has happened that supporters of the bourgeoisie have been found even at the head of workers' organisations; we had to get down to the business of making the fullest use of the workers' strength. Take, for example, what we experienced when the railway administration, the railway proletariat were headed by people who led them along the bourgeois, and not the proletarian path. We know that in all spheres wherever we could get rid of the bourgeoisie, we did so, but at what a price! In each sphere we gained ground inch by inch, and promoted the best of our workers, those who had gone through the hard school of organising the administration. Viewed from the side, all this is, perhaps, not very difficult, but actually, if you go into the matter, you will see with what difficulty the workers, who had been through all the stages of the struggle, asserted their rights, how they set things going—from workers' control to workers' management of industry, or how on the railways, beginning from the notorious Vikzhel,\* they got

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\* *Vikzhel*—abbreviation for the All-Russia Executive Committee of the Railwaymen's Trade Union. It existed from August 1917 to January

an efficient organisation working; you will see how representatives of the working class are gradually making their way into all our organisations and strengthening them by their activity. Take the co-operatives, for example, where we see huge numbers of workers' representatives. We know that formerly they consisted almost entirely of non-working-class people. Furthermore, in the old co-operatives, there were people steeped in the views and interests of the old bourgeois society. In this respect the workers had to wage a long struggle before they could take power into their own hands and subordinate the co-operatives to their interests, before they could carry on more fruitful work.

But our most important work has been the reorganisation of the old machinery of state, and although this has been a difficult job, over the last two years we have seen the results of the efforts of the working class and we can say that in this sphere we have thousands of working-class representatives who have been all through the fire of the struggle, forcing out the representatives of bourgeois rule step by step. We see workers not only in state bodies; we see them in the food supply services, in the sphere that was controlled almost exclusively by representatives of the old bourgeois government, of the old bourgeois state. The workers have created a food supply apparatus, and although a year ago we could not yet fully cope with the work, although a year ago workers made up only 30 per cent of it, we now have as many as 80 per cent workers in the food supply organisations. These simple and striking figures express the step taken by our country, and for us the important thing is that we have achieved great results in organising proletarian power after the political revolution.

Furthermore, the workers have done and are continuing to do the important job of producing proletarian leaders. Tens and hundreds of thousands of valiant workers are emerging from our midst and are going into battle against the whiteguard generals. Step by step we are gaining power

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1918. It was under Menshevik and S.R. influence and pursued counter-revolutionary policies.—Ed.

from our enemy; formerly workers were not very skilful in this field, but we are now gradually winning area after area from our enemy, and there are no difficulties that can stop the proletariat. The proletariat is gaining in every sphere, gradually, one after another, despite all difficulties, and is attracting representatives of the proletarian masses so that in every branch of administration, in every little unit, from top to bottom, representatives of the proletariat themselves go through the school of administration, and then train tens and hundreds of thousands of people capable of independently conducting all the affairs of state administration, of building the state by their own efforts.

Comrades! Lately we have witnessed a particularly brilliant example of success in our work. We know how widespread subbotniks have become among class-conscious workers. We know those representatives of communism who most of all have suffered the torments of famine and bitter cold, but whose contribution in the rear is no smaller than that of the Red Army at the front; we know how, at the critical moment when the enemy was advancing on Petrograd, and Denikin took Orel, when the bourgeoisie were in high spirits and resorted to their last and favourite weapon, the spreading of panic, we announced a Party Week. At that moment the worker Communists went to the industrial workers and other working people, to those who most of all had endured the burden of the imperialist war and were starving and freezing, to those on whom the bourgeois panic-mongers counted most of all, to those who bore most of the burden on their backs; it was to them that we addressed ourselves during the Party Week and said: "You are scared by the burdens of working-class rule, by the threats of the imperialists and capitalists; you see our work and our difficulties; we appeal to you, and we open wide the doors of our Party only to you, only to the representatives of the working people. At this difficult moment we count on you and call you into our ranks there to undertake the whole burden of building the state." You know that it was a terribly difficult moment, both materially and because of the enemy's successes in foreign policy and in the military sphere. And you know

what unparalleled, unexpected and unbelievable success marked the end of this Party Week in Moscow alone, where we got over 14 thousand new Party members. There you have the result of the Party Week that is totally transforming, that is remaking the working class, and by the experience of work is turning those who were the passive, inert instruments of the bourgeois government, the exploiters, and the bourgeois state into real creators of the future communist society. We know that we have a reserve of tens and hundreds of thousands of working-class and peasant youths, those who saw and know to the full the old oppression of landowner and bourgeois society, who have seen the unparalleled difficulties of our constructive work, who saw what heroes the first contingent of Party functionaries proved to be in 1917 and 1918, who have been coming to us in bigger numbers and whose devotion is the greater the severer our difficulties. These reserves give us confidence that in these two years we have achieved a firm and sound cohesion and now possess a source from which we shall for a long time be able to draw still more extensively, and so ensure that the working people themselves undertake to develop the state. In this respect we have had such experience during these two years in applying working-class administration in all spheres, that we can say boldly and without any exaggeration that now all that remains is to continue what has been begun, and things will proceed as they have done these two years, but at an ever faster pace.

*Collected Works, Vol. 30,*  
pp. 127-33

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**RE DRAFT RESOLUTION  
FOR THE C.C. R.C.P.(B.) PLENUM  
ON THE COMPOSITION OF THE ALL-RUSSIA  
CENTRAL EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE\***

- 1) Do not include all the People's Commissars (as well as the Chairman of the C.P.C.) and deputy commissars.
- 2) Reduce the number of intellectuals and Soviet officials of the centre.
- 3) Considerably increase the number of workers and working peasants who are definitely in close touch with the non-Party mass of workers and peasants.
- 6) Keep strictly in line with the decision of the Party congress.\*\*

Written November 29, 1919

*Collected Works, Vol. 42,*  
p. 151

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\* This document served as a basis for the decision on the composition of the All-Russia Central Executive Committee, adopted by the plenary meeting of the C.C., R.C.P.(B.) on November 29, 1919. The All-Russia Central Executive Committee was to be elected at the Seventh All-Russia Congress of Soviets.—*Ed.*

\*\* A reference to the decision of the Eighth Congress of the R.C.P.(B.) (March 1919) on the organisational question, which ruled that the composition of the All-Russia Central Executive Committee was to be changed and that its members must mainly be local workers, conducting constant work among the workers and peasants.—*Ed.*

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From SPEECH  
DELIVERED AT THE THIRD ALL-RUSSIA CONGRESS  
OF ECONOMIC COUNCILS  
JANUARY 27, 1920

Newspaper Report

Our fault is that we imagine we can do everything ourselves. Our most acute shortcoming is a lack of executives, yet we do not know how to draw them from the rank-and-file workers and peasants, among whom there is an abundance of talented administrators and organisers. It would be much better if we abandoned general, and in most cases absolutely sterile, controversy for business-like methods, and that as soon as possible. We would then really be carrying out the duties of organisers of the advanced class, and would pick out hundreds and thousands of new talented organisers. We must promote them, test them, assign them tasks, tasks of greater and greater complexity. I hope that after the Congress of the Economic Councils, after having reviewed the work done, we shall take this path and increase and multiply the number of organisers, so as to reinforce and enlarge that exceedingly thin layer which has been worn to shreds during the past two years. For in order to accomplish the task we are setting ourselves, that of saving Russia from poverty, hunger and cold, we need ten times more organisers, who would be answerable to tens of millions of people.

*Collected Works, Vol. 30,  
p. 311*

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From SPEECH  
DELIVERED AT A NON-PARTY CONFERENCE  
IN BLAGUSHA-LEFORTOVO DISTRICT  
FEBRUARY 9, 1920

Newspaper Report

Comrades, before concluding my speech I would like to say a few words about the measures decided on at the last session of the All-Russia Central Executive Committee. The session decided on a number of measures which will shortly be published in the newspapers, and which should be read and discussed at all meetings of workers, in clubs, factories and Red Army units. One of the most important decisions of the All-Russia Central Executive Committee, one to which in my opinion the most profound attention should be directed, concerns the fight against red tape in our institutions. One of the measures is the decision of the All-Russia Central Executive Committee to transform our state control into a workers' and peasants' control, or a workers' inspection.\* We shall not drive out the old officials—just as we did not drive the experts out of the army, but attached worker commissars to them—we must attach groups of workers to these bourgeois experts, to look on, to learn and to take this work into their own hands. Workers must enter all the government

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\* The question of transforming State Control into a Workers' and Peasants' Inspection was raised in late 1919 and was discussed at the Seventh All-Russia Congress of Soviets. On February 7, 1920 the session of the All-Russia Central Executive Committee approved the Rules for the Workers' and Peasants' Inspection, according to which the state control bodies were to be reorganised into "a single organ of socialist control on the basis of drawing workers and peasants into the organs of the former state control".—*Ed.*

establishments so as to supervise the entire government apparatus. And this should be done by the non-party workers, who should elect their representatives at non-party conferences of workers and peasants. They must come to the assistance of the Communists who are being overtaxed by the tremendous burden they have to bear. We must pour as many workers and peasants as possible into this apparatus. We shall tackle this job and accomplish it, and thus drive red tape out of our institutions. The broad non-party masses must keep a check on all government affairs, and must themselves learn to govern.

*Collected Works, Vol. 30,*  
p. 351

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## A LETTER TO R.C.P. ORGANISATIONS ON PREPARATIONS FOR THE PARTY CONGRESS

Dear Comrades,

The Party Congress has been appointed for March 27. The agenda of the Congress has been published, and no doubt all Party organisations have already begun to prepare for the Congress. The Central Committee of the Party deems it its duty to express certain views in connection with this work.

Our Party, which by its persistent struggle over a period of fifteen years (1903-17) had proved its bonds with the working class of Russia, its ability to combat bourgeois influences within the working class and to lead the revolutionary struggle of the proletariat in the most diverse and most difficult circumstances, naturally had to take upon itself the direct implementation of the tasks of the dictatorship of the proletariat after the October Revolution. The Congress of our Party is therefore of the utmost importance not only for the entire working-class movement, but also for the entire development of Soviet power and for the guidance of the Russian—and to a certain extent the international—communist movement.

The importance of our Party Congress in this respect is still further enhanced by the specific features of the present moment, when the Soviet government has to accomplish a most difficult transition from the military tasks that formerly absorbed its entire attention to the tasks of peaceful economic development.

The membership of our Party has greatly increased, chiefly owing to the immense influx of workers and peasants during the Party Weeks that were organised at the most difficult period of our revolution, when Yudenich and Denikin were closest to Petrograd and Moscow. The workers and peasants who joined the Party at such a critical moment constitute a fine and reliable body of leaders of the revolutionary proletariat and of the non-exploiting section of the peasantry. We are confronted with the task of helping, as rapidly, successfully and efficiently as possible, to complete the training of these new members of the Party, of helping to mould them into a body of builders of communism, people who are the most politically conscious and capable of filling the most responsible posts, and at the same time most closely connected with the masses, i.e., with the majority of the workers and of the peasants who do not exploit the labour of others.

Relevant to the specific nature of the present moment, the chief item on the agenda of the forthcoming Congress will be the question of economic development and, in particular, of the measures, ways and means, and results of having a greater proportion of workers in our chief administrations, central boards and Soviet government apparatus in general.

This must be the principal question at the Party Congress, for the principal question in the entire Soviet development in Russia (and—inasmuch as she has become the centre of the world revolution—to a large extent in international communism as well) is the transition from the fight on the bloody front to the fight on the bloodless front, the front of labour, the front of the war against economic chaos, the war for the restoration, improvement, reorganisation and development of Russia's entire economy.

The procurement and transportation of large state supplies of foodstuffs, the restoration of the ruined transport system, the implementation of these measures with military speed, energy and discipline; side by side with this and indivisibly from it, the greater proportion of workers employed in the Soviet government apparatus, the elimination of sabotage and red tape from this apparatus, the achieve-

ment of the maximum productivity of labour, the utmost exertion of all the forces of the country for the restoration of the economy—such is the task imperatively dictated by circumstances, an urgent task demanding methods involving the supreme revolutionary energy of millions and millions of workers and peasants.

The Party Congress must take into account the experience of the labour armies, that young and new institution; it must take into account the experience gained by the entire apparatus of Soviet government over a period of more than two years, and adopt a number of decisions permitting the whole of our Socialist Republic to concentrate all the forces of the working people with redoubled firmness, determination, energy and efficiency on achieving the best possible solution of the urgent problem of rapidly and thoroughly overcoming economic chaos.

We invite all Party members and all Party organisations to concentrate the maximum effort on this problem, both in the practical work of all Soviet institutions and in the work of preparation for the Congress. For these tasks merge into one indivisible whole.

Happily, the time for purely theoretical discussions, disputes over general questions and the adoption of resolutions on principles has passed. That stage is over; it was dealt with and settled yesterday and the day before yesterday. We must march ahead, and we must realise that we are now confronted by a *practical* task, the *business* task of rapidly overcoming economic chaos, and we must do it with all our strength, with truly revolutionary energy, and with the same devotion with which our finest worker and peasant comrades, the Red Army men, defeated Kolchak, Yudenich and Denikin.

We must march ahead, we must look ahead, and we must bring to the Congress the *practical experience* of economic development to which thought has been given and which has been carefully *analysed* by the common labour and common effort of all members of the Party.

We have learned something, and in order to march ahead and to overcome economic chaos, what we have to do is not

to start anew, not to reconstruct everything right and left, but to *utilise* to the utmost what has already been created. There must be as little general reconstruction as possible and as many as possible business-like measures, ways, means and directions for the attainment of our chief aim which have been tested in practice and verified by results—we must have more workers in our apparatus, and see that it is done still more widely, still more rapidly and still better, we must enlist an even greater number of workers and labouring peasants in the work of administering industry and the national economy generally; not only must we enlist individual workers and peasants who have best proved themselves on the job, but we must enlist to a larger extent the *trade unions* and conferences of non-party workers and peasants; we must enlist literally all bourgeois specialists (because there are incredibly few of them)—i.e., specialists who have been trained under bourgeois conditions and who have reaped the fruits of bourgeois culture. We must organise things so that, in conformity with the demands of our Party Programme, our working masses may really *learn from these bourgeois specialists* and at the same time place them “in a comradely environment of common labour hand in hand with the masses of rank-and-file workers led by class-conscious Communists” (as our Party Programme puts it); such are our chief aims.

Comrades, we have hitherto been able to surmount the untold difficulties which history has placed in the way of the first socialist republic because the proletariat has properly understood its tasks as dictator, i.e., as the leader, organiser and teacher of all the working people. We won because we have always correctly defined the most urgent, insistent and pressing task and have really concentrated on this task the forces of all the working people, of the whole nation.

Military victories are easier to win than economic victory. It was much easier to defeat Kolchak, Yudenich and Denikin than to defeat the old petty-bourgeois customs, relations, habits and economic conditions upheld and reproduced by millions and millions of small owners, alongside of the workers, together with them, and in the midst of them.

Victory in this field requires greater endurance, greater patience, greater persistence, greater steadfastness, greater system in work, greater organisational and administrative skill on the grand scale. This is what we, a backward nation, lack most of all.

Let all members of the Party exert their efforts to bring to the Party Congress *practical* experience, tested, analysed and summarised. If we bend all our efforts and succeed in pooling, testing and analysing in a careful, thoroughgoing and business-like way this *practical* experience, exactly what each of us has attempted and completed, or has seen others attempt and complete, then, and only then, will our Party Congress, and, following it, all our Soviet institutions, accomplish the *practical* task of overcoming economic chaos as rapidly and surely as possible.

From congresses and meetings to discuss general questions to congresses and meetings to summarise *practical experience*—that is the slogan of our times. The task of the moment and the task of the Party Congress, as we conceive it, is to learn from practical experience, to discard what is harmful, to combine all that is valuable, in order to determine precisely a number of immediate practical measures, and to carry out these measures at all costs, not hesitating at any sacrifices.

Written between  
February 17  
and 26, 1920

*Collected Works*, Vol. 30,  
pp. 403-07

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## TO THE WORKING WOMEN

Comrades, the elections to the Moscow Soviet show that the Communist Party is gaining ground among the working class.

Working women must take a bigger part in the elections. The Soviet government is the first and only government in the world to have completely abolished all the old, despicable bourgeois laws which placed women in a position of inferiority to men, which placed men in a privileged position, for example, in respect of marital rights and of children. The Soviet government, the government of the working people, is the first and only government in the world to have abolished all the privileges of men in property questions, privileges which the marriage laws of all bourgeois republics, even the most democratic, still preserve.

Wherever there are landowners, capitalists and merchants, women cannot be the equal of men even before the law.

Where there are no landowners, capitalists or merchants, and where the government of the working people is building a new life without these exploiters, men and women are equal before the law.

But that is not enough.

Equality before the law is not necessarily equality in fact.

We want the working woman to be the equal of the working man not only before the law but in actual fact. For this working women must take an increasing part in the adminis-

tration of socialised enterprises and in the administration of the state.

By taking part in administration, women will learn quickly and will catch up with the men.

Elect more working women to the Soviet, both Communist women and non-party women. As long as they are honest working women capable of performing their work sensibly and conscientiously, even if they are not members of the Party—elect them to the Moscow Soviet!

Send more working women to the Moscow Soviet! Let the Moscow proletariat show that it is prepared to do everything, and is doing everything, to fight for victory, to fight the old inequality, the old bourgeois humiliation of women!

The proletariat cannot achieve complete liberty until it has won complete liberty for women.

*N. Lenin*

February 21, 1920

*Collected Works, Vol. 30,  
pp. 371-72*

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**From SPEECH DELIVERED AT A MEETING  
OF THE MOSCOW SOVIET OF WORKERS'  
AND RED ARMY DEPUTIES  
MARCH 6, 1920**

We know that the proletariat is not very large numerically; but we also know that the Petrograd workers, who were in the front ranks of the Red Army, gave us their best forces whenever we needed them, gave them for the fight against the enemy in greater numbers than we thought possible. We have said that Petrograd, Moscow and Ivanovo-Voznesensk have given us a vast number of people. But that is not enough; they must give us all we need. We have to utilise all the bourgeois specialists who accumulated knowledge in the past and who must pay with this knowledge now. It is with the help of these people that we must do our work; it is with their help that we must conquer all we need—conquer, and create our own militant contingents of workers who will learn from them and direct them, and who will always turn to the broad masses of the workers to explain this experience. That is what the Moscow Soviet, as one of the most important and one of the biggest of the proletarian Soviets, must accomplish at all costs. The fifteen hundred members of the Moscow Soviet, plus the alternate members, constitute an apparatus through which you can draw upon the masses and constantly enlist them, inexperienced though they are, in the work of administering the state.

The worker and peasant masses who have to build up our entire state must start by organising state control. You will obtain this apparatus from among the worker and peasant masses, from among 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. We have learned from the experiences of the war and shall promote thousands of people who have passed through the school of the Soviets and are capable of governing the state. You must recruit the most diffident and undeveloped, the most timid of the workers for the workers' inspection and promote them. Let them progress in this work. When they have seen how the workers' inspection participates in state affairs, let them gradually proceed from the simple duties they are able to carry out—at first only as onlookers—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 cling 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 grant the right to enlist non-party workers and peasants and their conferences in the work of government. This apparatus 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 a few years. For a long time this victory will not be as simply, decisively and clearly apparent as the victory on the war front. This victory demands vigilance and effort, and you can ensure it by carrying out the job of development of Moscow and its environs and helping in the general work of restoring the transport system, of restoring that general economic organisation which will help us to get rid of the direct and indirect influence of the profiteers and to vanquish the old traditions of capitalism. We should not grudge a few years for this. Even if we had these conditions, such social reforms as these would be without parallel, 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 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, and so gain victories which, if not as brilliant, will be more solid and substantial.

*Collected Works*, Vol. 30,  
pp. 414-16

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## From "LEFT-WING" COMMUNISM— AN INFANTILE DISORDER

### SHOULD REVOLUTIONARIES WORK IN REACTIONARY TRADE UNIONS?

The German "Lefts"\* consider that, as far as they are concerned, the reply to this question is an unqualified negative. In their opinion, declamations and angry outcries (such as uttered by K. Horner in a particularly "solid" and particularly stupid manner) against "reactionary" and "counter-revolutionary" trade unions are sufficient "proof" that it is unnecessary and even inexcusable for revolutionaries and Communists to work in yellow, social-chauvinist, compromising and counter-revolutionary trade unions of the Legien type.\*\*

However firmly the German "Lefts" may be convinced of the revolutionism of such tactics, the latter are in fact fundamentally wrong, and contain nothing but empty phrases.

To make this clear, I shall begin with our own experience, in keeping with the general plan of the present pamphlet, which is aimed at applying to Western Europe whatever is universally practicable, significant and relevant in the history and the present-day tactics of Bolshevism.

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\* A reference to a group of ultra-Left German Communists who held anarcho-syndicalist views. Expelled from the Communist Party of Germany in October 1919, they formed (in April 1920) the so-called Communist Workers' Party of Germany, which later degenerated into a sectarian group having no working-class backing.—*Ed.*

\*\* *Karl Legien* (1861-1920)—a German trade union leader, an opportunist.—*Ed.*

In Russia today, the connection between leaders, party, class and masses, as well as the attitude of the dictatorship of the proletariat and its party to the trade unions, are concretely as follows: the dictatorship is exercised by the proletariat organised in the Soviets; the proletariat is guided by the Communist Party of Bolsheviks, which, according to the figures of the latest Party Congress (April 1920), has a membership of 611,000. The membership varied greatly both before and after the October Revolution, and used to be much smaller, even in 1918 and 1919. We are apprehensive of an excessive growth of the Party, because careerists and charlatans, who deserve only to be shot, inevitably do all they can to insinuate themselves into the ranks of the ruling party. The last time we opened wide the doors of the Party—to workers and peasants only—was when (in the winter of 1919) Yudenich\* was within a few versts of Petrograd, and Denikin\*\* was in Orel (about 350 versts from Moscow), i.e., when the Soviet Republic was in mortal danger, and when adventurers, careerists, charlatans and unreliable persons generally could not possibly count on making a profitable career (and had more reason to expect the gallows and torture) by joining the Communists. The Party, which holds annual congresses (the most recent on the basis of one delegate per 1,000 members), is directed by a Central Committee of nineteen elected at the Congress, while the current work in Moscow has to be carried on by still smaller bodies, known as the Organising Bureau and the Political Bureau, which are elected at plenary meetings of the Central Committee, five members of the Central Committee to each bureau. This, it would appear, is a full-fledged "oligarchy". No important political or organisational question is decided by any state institution in our republic without the guidance of the Party's Central Committee.

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\* N. N. Yudenich (1862-1933)—a general of the tsarist army. Headed the counter-revolution in North-Western Russia during the Civil War.—Ed.

\*\* A. I. Denikin (1872-1947)—a general of the tsarist army. Headed the counter-revolution in the south of Russia during the Civil War.—Ed.

In its work, the Party relies directly on the *trade unions*, which, according to the data of the last congress (April 1920), now have a membership of over four million and are formally *non-Party*. Actually, all the directing bodies of the vast majority of the unions, and primarily, of course, of the all-Russia general trade union centre or bureau (the All-Russia Central Council of Trade Unions), are made up of Communists and carry out all the directives of the Party. Thus, on the whole, we have a formally non-communist, flexible and relatively wide and very powerful proletarian apparatus, by means of which the Party is closely linked up with the *class* and the *masses*, and by means of which, under the leadership of the Party, the *class dictatorship* is exercised. Without close contacts with the trade unions, and without their energetic support and devoted efforts, not only in economic, *but also in military* affairs, it would of course have been impossible for us to govern the country and to maintain the dictatorship for two and a half months, let alone two and a half years. In practice, these very close contacts naturally call for highly complex and diversified work in the form of propaganda, agitation, timely and frequent conferences, not only with the leading trade union workers, but with influential trade union workers generally; they call for a determined struggle against the Mensheviks, who still have a certain though very small following to whom they teach all kinds of counter-revolutionary machinations, ranging from an ideological defence of (*bourgeois*) democracy and the preaching that the trade unions should be "independent" (independent of proletarian state power!) to sabotage of proletarian discipline, etc., etc.

We consider that contacts with the "masses" through the trade unions are not enough. In the course of our revolution, practical activities have given rise to such institutions as *non-Party workers' and peasants' conferences*, and we strive by every means to support, develop and extend this institution in order to be able to observe the temper of the masses, come closer to them, meet their requirements, promote the best among them to state posts, etc. Under a recent decree on the transformation of the People's Commissariat of State

Control into the Workers' and Peasants' Inspection, non-Party conferences of this kind have been empowered to select members of the State Control to carry out various kinds of investigations, etc.

Then, of course, all the work of the Party is carried on through the Soviets, which embrace the working masses, irrespective of occupation. The district congresses of Soviets are *democratic* institutions, the like of which even the best of the democratic republics of the bourgeois world have never known; through these congresses (whose proceedings the Party endeavours to follow with the closest attention), as well as by continually appointing class-conscious workers to various posts in the rural districts, the proletariat exercises its role of leader of the peasantry, gives effect to the dictatorship of the urban proletariat, wages a systematic struggle against the rich, bourgeois, exploiting and profiteering peasantry, etc.

Such is the general mechanism of the proletarian state power viewed "from above", from the standpoint of the practical implementation of the dictatorship. We hope that the reader will understand why the Russian Bolshevik, who has known this mechanism for twenty-five years and has seen it develop out of small, illegal and underground circles, cannot help regarding all this talk about "from above" or "from below", about the dictatorship of leaders or the dictatorship of the masses, etc., as ridiculous and childish nonsense, something like discussing whether a man's left leg or right arm is of greater use to him.

We cannot but regard as equally ridiculous and childish nonsense the pompous, very learned, and frightfully revolutionary disquisitions of the German Lefts to the effect that Communists cannot and should not work in reactionary trade unions, that it is permissible to turn down such work, that it is necessary to withdraw from the trade unions and create a brand-new and immaculate "Workers' Union" invented by very pleasant (and, probably, for the most part very youthful) Communists, etc., etc.

Capitalism inevitably leaves socialism the legacy, on the one hand, of the old trade and craft distinctions among the

workers, distinctions evolved in the course of centuries; on the other hand, trade unions, which only very slowly, in the course of years and years, can and will develop into broader industrial unions with less of the craft union about them (embracing entire industries, and not only crafts, trades and occupations), and later proceed, through these industrial unions, to eliminate the division of labour among people, to educate and school people, give them *all-round development and an all-round training*, so that they *are able to do everything*. Communism is advancing and must advance towards that goal, and *will reach* it, but only after very many years. To attempt in practice, today, to anticipate this future result of a fully developed, fully stabilised and constituted, fully comprehensive and mature communism would be like trying to teach higher mathematics to a child of four.

We can (and must) begin to build socialism, not with abstract human material, or with human material specially prepared by us, but with the human material bequeathed to us by capitalism. True, that is no easy matter, but no other approach to this task is serious enough to warrant discussion.

The trade unions were a tremendous step forward for the working class in the early days of capitalist development, inasmuch as they marked a transition from the workers' disunity and helplessness to the *rudiments* of class organisation. When the *revolutionary party of the proletariat*, the *highest* form of proletarian class organisation, began to take shape (and the Party will not merit the name until it learns to weld the leaders into one indivisible whole with the class and the masses) the trade unions inevitably began to reveal *certain* reactionary features, a certain craft narrow-mindedness, a certain tendency to be non-political, a certain inertness, etc. However, the development of the proletariat did not, and could not, proceed anywhere in the world otherwise than through the trade unions, through reciprocal action between them and the party of the working class. The proletariat's conquest of political power is a gigantic step forward for the proletariat as a class, and the Party must more than ever and in a new way, not only in the old, educate and guide the trade unions, at the same time bearing in mind that they are and

will long remain an indispensable "school of communism" and a preparatory school that trains proletarians to exercise their dictatorship, an indispensable organisation of the workers for the gradual transfer of the management of the whole economic life of the country to the working *class* (and not to the separate trades), and later to all the working people.

Written in April-May 1920

*Collected Works*, Vol. 31,  
pp. 46-51

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## From THE TASKS OF THE YOUTH LEAGUES

Speech Delivered at the Third All-Russia Congress  
of the Russian Young Communist League

October 2, 1920

It was the task of the older generation to overthrow the bourgeoisie. The main task then was to criticise the bourgeoisie, arouse hatred of the bourgeoisie among the masses, and foster class-consciousness and the ability to unite their forces. The new generation is confronted with a far more complex task. Your duty does not lie only in assembling your forces so as to uphold the workers' and peasants' government against an invasion instigated by the capitalists. Of course, you must do that; that is something you clearly realise, and is distinctly seen by the Communist. However, that is not enough. You have to build up a communist society. In many respects half of the work has been done. The old order has been destroyed, just as it deserved, it has been turned into a heap of ruins, just as it deserved. The ground has been cleared, and on this ground the younger communist generation must build a communist society. You are faced with the task of construction, and you can accomplish that task only by assimilating all modern knowledge, only if you are able to transform communism from cut-and-dried and memorised formulas, counsels, recipes, prescriptions and programmes into that living reality which gives unity to your immediate work, and only if you are able to make communism a guide in all your practical work.

That is the task you should pursue in educating, training and rousing the entire younger generation. You must be foremost among the millions of builders of a communist society

in whose ranks every young man and young woman should be. You will not build a communist society unless you enlist the mass of young workers and peasants in the work of building communism. . . .

The Young Communist League must be a shock force, helping in every job and displaying initiative and enterprise. The League should be an organisation enabling any worker to see that it consists of people whose teachings he perhaps does not understand, and whose teachings he may not immediately believe, but from whose practical work and activity he can see that they are really people who are showing him the right road.

If the Young Communist League fails to organise its work in this way in all fields, it will mean that it is reverting to the old bourgeois path. We must combine our education with the struggle of the working people against the exploiters, so as to help the former accomplish the tasks set by the teachings of communism.

The members of the League should use every spare hour to improve the vegetable gardens, or to organise the education of young people at some factory, and so on. We want to transform Russia from a poverty-stricken and wretched country into one that is wealthy. The Young Communist League must combine its education, learning and training with the labour of the workers and peasants, so as not to confine itself to schools or to reading communist books and pamphlets. Only by working side by side with the workers and peasants can one become a genuine Communist. It has to be generally realised that all members of the Youth League are literate people and at the same time are keen at their jobs. When everyone sees that we have ousted the old drill-ground methods from the old schools and have replaced them with conscious discipline, that all young men and women take part in subbotniks, and utilise every suburban farm to help the population—people will cease to regard labour in the old way.

It is the task of the Young Communist League to organise assistance everywhere, in village or city block, in such matters as—and I shall take a small example—public hygiene or

the distribution of food. How was this done in the old, capitalist society? Everybody worked only for himself and nobody cared a straw for the aged and the sick, or whether housework was the concern only of the women, who, in consequence, were in a condition of oppression and servitude. Whose business is it to combat this? It is the business of the Youth Leagues, which must say: we shall change all this; we shall organise detachments of young people who will help to assure public hygiene or distribute food, who will conduct systematic house-to-house inspections, and work in an organised way for the benefit of the whole of society, distributing their forces properly and demonstrating that labour must be organised.

The generation of people who are now at the age of fifty cannot expect to see a communist society. This generation will be gone before then. But the generation of those who are now fifteen will see a communist society, and will itself build this society. This generation should know that the entire purpose of their lives is to build a communist society. In the old society, each family worked separately and labour was not organised by anybody except the landowners and capitalists, who oppressed the masses of the people. We must organise all labour, no matter how toilsome or messy it may be, in such a way that every worker and peasant will be able to say: I am part of the great army of free labour, and shall be able to build up my life without the landowners and capitalists, able to help establish a communist system. The Young Communist League should teach all young people to engage in conscious and disciplined labour from an early age. In this way we can be confident that the problems now confronting us will be solved. We must assume that no less than ten years will be required for the electrification of the country, so that our impoverished land may profit from the latest achievements of technology. And so, the generation of those who are now fifteen years old, and will be living in a communist society in ten or twenty years' time, should tackle all its educational tasks in such a way that every day, in every village and city, the young people shall engage in the practical solution of some problem of labour in common, even

though the smallest or the simplest. The success of communist construction will be assured when this is done in every village, as communist emulation develops, and the youth prove that they can unite their labour. Only by regarding your every step from the standpoint of the success of that construction, and only by asking ourselves whether we have done all we can to be united and politically-conscious working people, will the Young Communist League succeed in uniting its half a million members into a single army of labour and win universal respect. (*Stormy applause.*)

*Collected Works, Vol. 31,  
pp. 290, 297-99*

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**From REPORT  
ON THE WORK OF THE COUNCIL  
OF PEOPLE'S COMMISSARS  
AT THE EIGHTH ALL-RUSSIA  
CONGRESS OF SOVIETS  
DECEMBER 22, 1920**

If we ask ourselves what the results of our experience in these three years have been (for it is difficult, on certain fundamental points, to sum up the results of a single year), if we ask ourselves how, after all, our victory over an enemy much stronger than ourselves is to be explained, it must be said that it was because the organisation of the Red Army splendidly embodied the consistency and firmness of proletarian leadership in the alliance of the workers and the working peasantry against all exploiters. What was the reason? Why did the vast masses of the peasantry willingly consent to this? Because they were convinced, though their vast majority were not Party members, that there was no way of salvation except by supporting the Soviet government. It was, of course, not books that convinced them of this, nor was it propaganda. It was all through experience. They were convinced by the experience of the Civil War, in particular by the alliance between our Mensheviks and Socialist-Revolutionaries, which is more closely akin to certain fundamental features of small-scale peasant economy. Their experience of the alliance between these parties of the small property-owners and the landowners and the capitalists, and their experience of Kolchak\* and Denikin, convinced the peasant masses that no middle course was possible, that the plain

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\* A. V. Kolchak (1873-1920)—an admiral of the tsarist navy. Headed the counter-revolution in Siberia during the Civil War.—Ed.

and straightforward Soviet policy was the right one, and that the iron leadership of the proletariat was their only means of salvation from exploitation and violence. It has been only because of our ability to convince the peasants of this that our policy of coercion, which is based on this firm and absolute conviction, has met with such tremendous success.

We must now bear in mind that, in going over to the labour front, we are faced with the same problem, under new conditions and on a much wider scale, that confronted us when we were fighting the whiteguards and witnessed a degree of enthusiasm and concentration of energy on the part of the worker and peasant masses such as has never been, and never could have been, displayed in any war in any other state. From their own observations and their knowledge of life, the non-Party peasants, like the Arzamas peasant whose words I have just quoted, did really come to the conclusion that the exploiters are ruthless enemies and that a ruthless state power is required to crush them. We succeeded in rousing unprecedented numbers of people to display an intelligent attitude towards the war, and to support it actively. Never before, under any political regime, has there been even one-tenth of the sympathy with a war and an understanding of it as that unanimously displayed by our Party and non-Party workers and non-Party peasants (and the mass of the peasants are non-Party) under Soviet power. That is the main reason for our having ultimately defeated a powerful enemy. That is corroboration of one of the most profound and at the same time most simple and comprehensible precepts of Marxism. The greater the scope and extent of historical events, the greater is the number of people participating in them, and, contrariwise, the more profound the change we wish to bring about, the more must we rouse an interest and an intelligent attitude towards it, and convince more millions and tens of millions of people that it is necessary. In the final analysis, the reason our revolution has left all other revolutions far behind is that, through the Soviet form of government, it has aroused tens of millions of people, formerly uninterested in state development, to take an active part in the work of building up the state. Let us now consid-

er, from this aspect, the new tasks which confronted us and were expressed in tens and hundreds of decisions passed by the Soviet government during this period; they accounted for nine-tenths of the work of the Council of Labour and Defence (we shall speak of this later), and probably more than half of the work of the Council of People's Commissars, namely, the economic tasks, the elaboration of a single economic plan, the reorganisation of the very foundations of the economy of Russia, the very foundations of small-scale peasant economy. These tasks require that all members of trade unions, without exception, should be drawn into this absolutely new work, something that was alien to them under capitalism. Now ask yourselves whether we at present have the condition for the rapid and unequivocal success that we had during the war, the condition of the masses being drawn into the work. Are the members of the trade unions and the majority of the non-Party people convinced that our new methods and our great tasks of economic development are necessary? Are they as convinced of this as they were of the necessity of devoting everything to the war, of sacrificing everything for the sake of victory on the war front? If the question is presented in that way, you will be compelled to answer that they are certainly not. They are far from being as fully convinced of this as they should be.

War was a matter which people understood and were used to for hundreds and thousands of years. The acts of violence and brutality formerly committed by the landowners were so obvious that it was easy to convince the people; it was not difficult to convince even the peasants of the richer grain regions, who are least connected with industry, that we were waging war in the interests of the working people, and it was therefore possible to arouse almost universal enthusiasm. It will be more difficult to get the peasant masses and the members of the trade unions to understand these tasks now, to get them to understand that we cannot go on living in the old way, that however firmly capitalist exploitation has been implanted in the course of decades, it must be overcome. We must get everybody to understand that Russia belongs to us, and that only we, the masses of workers and peasants,

can by our activities and our strict labour discipline remould the old economic conditions of existence and put a great economic plan into practice. There can be no salvation apart from this. We are lagging behind the capitalist powers and shall continue to lag behind them; we shall be defeated if we do not succeed in restoring our economy. That is why we must repeat the old truths I have just reminded you of, the old truths regarding the importance of organisational problems, of labour discipline, regarding the immense role of the trade unions—an absolutely exclusive role in this sphere, because there is no other organisation which unites the broad masses; that is why we must not only repeat these old truths, but must with every fibre of our being realise that the transition from military tasks to economic tasks has begun.

We have been completely successful in the military sphere, and we must now prepare to achieve similar successes in tasks which are more difficult and which demand enthusiasm and self-sacrifice from the vast majority of workers and peasants. The conviction that the new tasks are necessary must be instilled in hundreds of millions of people who from generation to generation have lived in a state of slavery and oppression and whose every initiative has been suppressed. We must convince the millions of workers who belong to trade unions but who are still not politically conscious and are unaccustomed to regarding themselves as masters. They must be organised, not to resist the government but to support and develop the measures of their workers' government and to carry them out to the full. This transition will be accompanied by difficulties. Regarded merely as a formulation, it is not a new task; it is a new task insofar as the economic problem is being raised on such a vast scale for the first time; we must realise and remember that the war on the economic front will be more difficult and prolonged. To achieve success on this front, a larger number of workers and peasants must be educated to be self-reliant, active and devoted. This can be done, as is borne out by the experience we have gained in economic development, because the masses fully realise that the misfortunes, cold, hunger and privation have

been caused by the inadequacy of our productive forces. We must now transfer all our agitation and propaganda from political and military interests to economic development. We have proclaimed this many times, but insufficiently; it seems to me that the most outstanding measures adopted by the Soviet government during the past year are the creation of the Central Bureau for Production Propaganda of the All-Russia Central Council of Trade Unions, the amalgamation of its work with that of the Chief Committee for Political Education, and the publication of additional newspapers for the respective industries, which are to devote attention, not only to production propaganda but also to its organisation on a country-wide scale.

The necessity of organising production propaganda on a nation-wide scale follows from the special features of the political situation. It is equally necessary to the working class, the trade unions, and the peasantry. It is absolutely essential to our state apparatus, which we have used far from enough for this purpose. We have a thousand times more knowledge, book knowledge, of how to run industry and how to interest the masses than is being applied in practice. We must see to it that literally every member of the trade unions becomes interested in production, and remembers that only by increasing production and raising labour productivity will Soviet Russia be in a state to win. Only in this way will Soviet Russia be able to shorten by about ten years the period of the frightful conditions she is now experiencing, the hunger and cold she is now suffering. If we do not understand this task, we may all perish, because we shall have to retreat owing to the weakness of our apparatus, since, after a short respite, the capitalists may at any moment renew the war, while we shall not be in a state to continue it.

*Collected Works, Vol. 31,  
pp. 497-501*

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**From THE TRADE UNIONS, THE PRESENT  
SITUATION AND TROTSKY'S MISTAKES**

**Speech Delivered at a Joint Meeting  
of Communist Delegates to the Eighth Congress  
of Soviets, Communist Members of the All-Russia  
Central Council of Trade Unions and Communist Members  
of the Moscow City Council of Trade Unions  
December 30, 1920**

Comrades, I must first of all apologise for departing from the rules of procedure, for anyone wishing to take part in the debate should have heard the report, the second report and the speeches. I am so unwell, unfortunately, that I have been unable to do this. But I was able yesterday to read the principal printed documents and to prepare my remarks. This departure from the rules will naturally cause you some inconvenience; not having heard the other speeches, I may go over old ground and leave out what should be dealt with. But I had no choice.

My principal material is Comrade Trotsky's pamphlet, *The Role and Tasks of the Trade Unions*. When I compare it with the theses he submitted to the Central Committee, and go over it very carefully, I am amazed at the number of theoretical mistakes and glaring blunders it contains. How could anyone starting a big Party discussion on this question produce such a sorry excuse for a carefully thought out statement? Let me go over the main points which, I think, contain the original fundamental theoretical errors.

Trade unions are not just historically necessary; they are historically inevitable as an organisation of the industrial proletariat, and, under the dictatorship of the proletariat, embrace nearly the whole of it. This is basic, but Comrade Trotsky keeps forgetting it; he neither appreciates it nor

makes it his point of departure, all this while dealing with "The Role and Tasks of the Trade Unions", a subject of infinite compass.

It follows from what I have said that the trade unions have an extremely important part to play at every step of the dictatorship of the proletariat. But what is their part? I find that it is a most unusual one, as soon as I delve into this question, which is one of the most fundamental theoretically. On the one hand, the trade unions, which take in all industrial workers, are an organisation of the ruling, dominant, governing class, which has now set up a dictatorship and is exercising coercion through the state. But it is not a state organisation; nor is it one designed for coercion, but for education. It is an organisation designed to draw in and to train; it is, in fact, a school: a school of administration, a school of economic management, a school of communism. It is a very unusual type of school, because there are no teachers or pupils; this is an extremely unusual combination of what has necessarily come down to us from capitalism, and what comes from the ranks of the advanced revolutionary detachments, which you might call the revolutionary vanguard of the proletariat. To talk about the role of the trade unions without taking these truths into account is to fall straight into a number of errors.

Within the system of the dictatorship of the proletariat, the trade unions stand, if I may say so, between the Party and the government. In the transition to socialism the dictatorship of the proletariat is inevitable, but it is not exercised by an organisation which takes in all industrial workers. Why not? The answer is given in the theses of the Second Congress of the Communist International on the role of political parties in general. I will not go into this here. What happens is that the Party, shall we say, absorbs the vanguard of the proletariat, and this vanguard exercises the dictatorship of the proletariat. The dictatorship cannot be exercised or the functions of government performed without a foundation such as the trade unions. These functions, however, have to be performed through the medium of special institutions which are also of a new type, namely, the Soviets. What are

the practical conclusions to be drawn from this peculiar situation? They are, on the one hand, that the trade unions are a *link* between the vanguard and the masses, and by their daily work bring conviction to the masses, the masses of the class which alone is capable of taking us from capitalism to communism. On the other hand, the trade unions are a "reservoir" of the state power. This is what the trade unions are in the period of transition from capitalism to communism. In general, this transition cannot be achieved without the leadership of that class which is the only class capitalism has trained for large-scale production and which alone is divorced from the interests of the petty proprietor. But the dictatorship of the proletariat cannot be exercised through an organisation embracing the whole of that class, because in all capitalist countries (and not only over here, in one of the most backward) the proletariat is still so divided, so degraded, and so corrupted in parts (by imperialism in some countries) that an organisation taking in the whole proletariat cannot directly exercise proletarian dictatorship. It can be exercised only by a vanguard that has absorbed the revolutionary energy of the class. The whole is like an arrangement of cogwheels. Such is the basic mechanism of the dictatorship of the proletariat, and of the essentials of transition from capitalism to communism. From this alone it is evident that there is something fundamentally wrong in principle when Comrade Trotsky points, in his first thesis, to "ideological confusion", and speaks of a crisis as existing specifically and particularly in the trade unions. If we are to speak of a crisis, we can do so only after analysing the political situation. It is Trotsky who is in "ideological confusion", because in this key question of the trade unions' role, from the standpoint of transition from capitalism to communism, he has lost sight of the fact that we have here a complex arrangement of cogwheels which cannot be a simple one; for the dictatorship of the proletariat cannot be exercised by a mass proletarian organisation. It cannot work without a number of "transmission belts" running from the vanguard to the mass of the advanced class, and from the latter to the mass of the working people. In Russia, this

mass is a peasant one. There is no such mass anywhere else, but even in the most advanced countries there is a non-proletarian, or a not entirely proletarian, mass. That is in itself enough to produce ideological confusion. But it's no use Trotsky's pinning it on others.

*Collected Works*, Vol. 32,  
pp. 19-21

**SPEECH CLOSING THE DISCUSSION  
DELIVERED AT A MEETING  
OF THE COMMUNIST GROUP  
OF THE SECOND ALL-RUSSIA CONGRESS  
OF MINERS  
JANUARY 24, 1921**

Comrades, I should like to begin by speaking about who is trying to intimidate whom, and about Comrade Shlyapnikov,\* who has tried hard to scare us. Everyone here said Lenin was trying to raise the bogey of syndicalism.\*\* This is ridiculous because the very idea of using syndicalism as a bogey is ridiculous. I think we ought to start with our programmes, by reading the Programme of the Communist Party to see what it says. Comrades Trotsky\*\*\* and Shlyapnikov

\* *A. G. Shlyapnikov* (1885-1937)—in 1920-22, leader of the anti-Party Workers' Opposition group, which denied the guiding role of the Communist Party and the Soviet state in administering the national economy and proposed that each branch of the economy be managed by the corresponding trade union.—*Ed.*

\*\* *Syndicalism*—a petty-bourgeois semi-anarchist trend, which arose in the working-class movement of France and some other countries in the late nineteenth century. The syndicalists denied the necessity for the workers' political struggle and the Party's leading role. They held that the trade unions (syndicates), by organising a general strike, could do away with capitalism without a revolution and take the administration of production into their own hands.—*Ed.*

\*\*\* *L. D. Trotsky* (1879-1940)—a Menshevik. Joined the Bolshevik Party in 1917. During the discussion on the role and tasks of the trade unions in socialist construction (1920-21), he opposed the Party's course for developing democracy in the trade unions, proposed that the trade unions be "shaken up" and turned into state organs, and insisted that military methods be used to administer them. In 1923 Trotsky headed the opposition, which fiercely fought against the Party's general line. He was expelled from the Party (1927), and deported from the U.S.S.R. for his anti-Soviet activities (1929).—*Ed.*

referred to the same passage which happens to be its Paragraph 5. Let me read it to you in full:

"5. The organisational apparatus of socialised industry should rely chiefly on the trade unions, which must to an ever increasing degree divest themselves of the narrow craft-union spirit and become large industrial associations, embracing the majority, and eventually all of the workers in the given branch of industry."

Comrade Shlyapnikov quoted this passage in his speech. But, if the figures were correct, those who were managing the organisations constituted 60 per cent, and these consisted of workers. Furthermore, when reference is made to the Programme, this should be done properly, bearing in mind that Party members know it thoroughly, and do not confine themselves to reading one extract, as Trotsky and Shlyapnikov have done. Comrades, there is much history to show that the workers cannot organise otherwise than by industries. That is why the idea of industrial unionism has been adopted all over the world. That is for the time being, of course. There is talk about the need to cast off the narrow craft-union spirit. I ask you, has this been done to, say, a tenth? Of course, not, is the sincere answer. Why forget this?

Who is it who says to the unions: "You have not yet divested yourselves of the narrow craft-union spirit, and must get on with it"? It is the R.C.P. which does this in its Programme. Read it. To depart from this is to abandon the Programme for syndicalism. Despite the hints at Lenin's "intimidation", the Programme is still there. You depart from it by quoting the first part and forgetting the second. In which direction? Towards syndicalism. Let me read further:

"The trade unions being, on the strength of the laws of the Soviet Republic and established practice, participants in all the local and central organs of industrial management, should eventually arrive at a *de facto* concentration in their hands of the whole administration of the whole national economy, as a single economic entity."

Everyone makes references to this paragraph. What does it say? Something that is absolutely indisputable: "should eventually arrive". It does not say that they are arriving. It

does not contain the exaggeration which, once made, reduces the whole to an absurdity. It says, "should eventually arrive". Arrive where? At a *de facto* concentration and administration. When are you due to arrive at this point? This calls for education, and it must be so organised as to teach everyone the art of administration. Now can you say, with a clear conscience, that the trade unions are able to fill any number of executive posts with suitable men at any time? After all, it is not six million, but sixty thousand or, say, a hundred thousand men that you need to fill all the executive posts. Can they nominate this number? No, they cannot—not yet—as anyone will say who is not chasing after formulas and theses and is not misled by the loudest voices. Years of educational work lie ahead for the Party, ranging from the abolition of illiteracy to the whole round of Party work in the trade unions. An enormous amount of work must be done in the trade unions to achieve this properly. This is exactly what it says: "should eventually arrive at a *de facto* concentration in their hands of the whole administration of the whole national economy". It does not say branches of industry, as Trotsky does in his theses. One of his first theses quotes the Programme correctly, but another one says: organisation of industry. I'm afraid that is no way to quote. When you are writing some theses and you want to quote the Programme, you must read it to the end. Anyone who takes the trouble to read this Paragraph 5 right through and give it ten minutes' thought will see that Shlyapnikov has departed from the Programme, and that Trotsky has leaped over it. Let's read Paragraph 5 to the end:

"The trade unions, ensuring in this way indissoluble ties between the central state administration, the national economy and the broad masses of working people, should draw the latter into direct economic management on the widest possible scale. At the same time, the participation of the trade unions in economic management and their activity in drawing the broad masses into this work are the principal means of combating the bureaucratisation of the economic apparatus of the Soviet

power and making possible the establishment of truly popular control over the results of production."

You find that you must first achieve *de facto* concentration. But what are you ensuring now? First, there are the ties within the central state administration. This is a huge machine. You have not yet taught us to master it. And so, you must ensure ties between the central state administration—that's one; national economy—that's two; and the masses—that's three. Have we got those ties? Are the trade unions capable of administration? Anybody over thirty years of age with some little practical experience of Soviet organisation will laugh at this. Read the following:

"At the same time, the participation of the trade unions in economic management and their activity in drawing the broad masses into this work are the principal means of combating the bureaucratisation of the economic apparatus of the Soviet power and making possible the establishment of truly popular control over the results of production."

First, there is need to create ties between the central state organisations. We have no intention of concealing this malaise, and our Programme says: ensure ties with the masses, and ensure the participation of the trade unions in economic management. There are no loud words in this. When you have done that in such a way as to reduce absenteeism by, say, 3 per cent—let alone 30—we shall say: you have done a fine job. Our present Programme says: "...the participation of the trade unions in economic management and their activity in drawing the broad masses into this work..." It does not contain a single promise or a single loud word; nor does it say anything about your doing the electing. It does not resort to demagoguery, but says that there is an ignorant, backward mass, that there are trade unions, which are so strong that they are leading the whole of the peasantry, and which themselves follow the lead of the Party, with a twenty-year schooling in the fight against tsarism. No country has gone through what Russia has, and that is the secret of our strength. Why is this regarded as a miracle? Because in a

peasant country, only the trade unions can provide the economic bonds to unite millions of scattered farms, if this mass of six million has faith in its Party, and continues to follow it as it had hitherto. That is the secret of our strength, and the way it works is a political question. How can a minority govern a huge peasant country, and why are we so composed? After our three years' experience, there is no external or internal force that can break us. Provided we do not make any extra-stupid mistakes leading to splits, we shall retain our positions; otherwise everything will go to the dogs. That is why, when Comrade Shlyapnikov says in his platform:

"The All-Russia Congress of Producers shall elect a body to administer the whole national economy",

I say: read the whole of Paragraph 5 of our Programme, which I have read out to you, and you will see that there is no attempt at intimidation either on Lenin's or anyone else's part.

Shlyapnikov concluded his speech by saying: "We must eliminate bureaucratic methods in government and the national economy." I say this is demagoguery. We have had this question of bureaucratic practices on the agenda since last July. After the Ninth Congress of the R.C.P. last July, Preobrazhensky also asked: Are we not suffering from bureaucratic excesses? Watch out! In August, the Central Committee endorsed Zinoviev's letter: Combat the evils of bureaucracy. The Party Conference met in September, and endorsed it. So, after all, it was not Lenin who invented some new path, as Trotsky says, but the Party which said: "Watch out: there's a new malaise." Preobrazhensky raised this question in July; we had Zinoviev's letter in August; there was the Party Conference in September and we had a long report on bureaucratic practices at the Congress of Soviets in December. The malaise is there. In our 1919 Programme\* we wrote

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\* A reference to the Programme of the R.C.P.(B.) adopted by the Eighth Congress of the R.C.P.(B.) in March 1919.—Ed.

that bureaucratic practices existed. Whoever comes out and demands a stop to bureaucratic practices is a demagogue. When you are called upon to "put a stop to bureaucratic practices", it is demagoguery. It is nonsense. We shall be fighting the evils of bureaucracy for many years to come, and whoever thinks otherwise is playing demagogue and cheating, because overcoming the evils of bureaucracy requires hundreds of measures, wholesale literacy, culture and participation in the activity of the Workers' and Peasants' Inspection.\* Shlyapnikov has been People's Commissar for Labour and People's Commissar for Trade and Industry. Has *he* put a stop to bureaucratic practices? Kiselyov has been on the Central Board of the Textile Industry. Has *he* put a stop to the evils of bureaucracy?

Let me say this once again: We shall have grown up when all our congresses resolve themselves into sections and marshal the facts about coalescence among the millers and the Donbas miners.\*\* But writing a string of useless platforms shows up our poor economic leadership. I repeat that nothing can break us, neither external nor internal forces, if we do not lead things up to a split. I say that Tsektran\*\*\* is more than a bludgeon, but exaggerating this has led up to a split. Anyone can be guilty of an excess of bureaucratic practices, and the Central Committee is aware of it, and is responsible for it. In this respect, Comrade Trotsky's mistake lies in that he drew up his theses in the wrong spirit. They

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\* The *Workers' and Peasants' Inspection* was set up in February 1920 on the basis of the reorganised People's Commissariat of State Control.—Ed.

\*\* Lenin polemises against the idea of merging the trade unions with economic bodies which Trotsky advanced in his pamphlet on the trade unions. Trotsky insisted, to use Lenin's words, on a "bureaucratic scheming" solution of the question, namely: on placing an arbitrarily determined number of trade union representatives in economic bodies without any account of the actual relations between the trade unions and the economic bodies.—Ed.

\*\*\* *Tsektran*—abbreviation for the Central Committee of the General Transport Workers' Union. Trotsky's supporters in the *Tsektran* leadership introduced methods of pure administration, of appointment, and suppressed democracy, which led to a split in the *Tsektran*.—Ed.

are all couched in terms of a shake-up,\* and they have all led to a split in the union. It is not a matter of giving Trotsky bad marks—we are not schoolchildren and have no use for marks—but we must say that his theses are wrong in content and must therefore be rejected.

*Collected Works, Vol. 32,*  
pp. 64-68

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\* The "shake-up of the trade unions"—a slogan advanced by Trotsky during the discussion on the trade unions in 1920-21. The "shake-up" meant changing the composition of the trade union bodies by the discharge of some trade union workers and the appointment of others from above, administratively, ignoring the will of the working masses, and grossly violating trade union democracy and the elementary rights of union members. Lenin sharply criticised Trotsky's slogan of the "shake-up".—*Ed.*

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## From THE INTERNATIONAL WORKING WOMEN'S DAY

The gist of Bolshevism and the Russian October Revolution is getting into politics the very people who were most oppressed under capitalism. They were downtrodden, cheated and robbed by the capitalists, both under the monarchy and in the bourgeois-democratic republics. So long as the land and the factories were privately owned this oppression and deceit and the plunder of the people's labour by the capitalists were inevitable.

The essence of Bolshevism and the Soviet power is to expose the falsehood and mummery of bourgeois democracy, to abolish the private ownership of land and the factories and concentrate all state power in the hands of the working and exploited masses. They, these masses, get hold of politics, that is, of the business of building the new society. This is no easy task: the masses are downtrodden and oppressed by capitalism, but there is no other way—and there can be no other way—out of the wage-slavery and bondage of capitalism.

But you cannot draw the masses into politics without drawing in the women as well. For under capitalism the female half of the human race is doubly oppressed. The working woman and the peasant woman are oppressed by capital, but over and above that, even in the most democratic of the bourgeois republics, they remain, firstly, deprived of some rights because the law does not give them equality with men; and secondly—and this is the main thing—they remain in

"household bondage", they continue to be "household slaves", for they are overburdened with the drudgery of the most squalid, backbreaking and stultifying toil in the kitchen and the family household.

No party or revolution in the world has ever dreamed of striking so deep at the roots of the oppression and inequality of women as the Soviet, Bolshevik revolution is doing. Over here, in Soviet Russia, no trace is left of any inequality between men and women under the law. The Soviet power has eliminated all there was of the especially disgusting, base and hypocritical inequality in the laws on marriage and the family and inequality in respect of children.

This is only the first step in the liberation of woman. But none of the bourgeois republics, including the most democratic, has dared to take even this first step. The reason is awe of "sacrosanct private property".

The second and most important step is the abolition of the private ownership of land and the factories. This and this alone opens up the way towards a complete and actual emancipation of woman, her liberation from "household bondage" through transition from petty individual housekeeping to large-scale socialised domestic services.

This transition is a difficult one, because it involves the remoulding of the most deep-rooted, inveterate, hidebound and rigid "order" (indecent and barbarity would be nearer the truth). But the transition has been started, the thing has been set in motion, we have taken the new path.

Written March 4, 1921

*Collected Works*, Vol. 32,  
pp. 161-62

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**PRELIMINARY DRAFT RESOLUTION OF THE  
TENTH CONGRESS OF THE R.C.P.\*  
ON THE SYNDICALIST  
AND ANARCHIST DEVIATION IN OUR PARTY**

1. A syndicalist and anarchist deviation has been definitely revealed in our Party in the past few months. It calls for the most resolute measures of ideological struggle and also for purging the Party and restoring its health.

2. The said deviation is due partly to the influx into the Party of former Mensheviks, and also of workers and peasants who have not yet fully assimilated the communist world outlook. Mainly, however, this deviation is due to the influence exercised upon the proletariat and on the Russian Communist Party by the petty-bourgeois element, which is exceptionally strong in our country, and which inevitably engenders vacillation towards anarchism, particularly at a time when the condition of the masses has greatly deteriorated as a consequence of the crop failure and the devastating effects of war, and when the demobilisation of the army numbering millions sets loose hundreds and hundreds of thousands of peasants and workers unable immediately to find regular means of livelihood.

3. The most theoretically complete and clearly defined expression of this deviation (*or*: one of the most complete, etc., expressions of this deviation) is the theses and other

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\* The Tenth Congress of the R.C.P.(B.) was held from March 8 to 16, 1921.—*Ed.*

literary productions of the so-called Workers' Opposition group. Sufficiently illustrative of this is, for example, the following thesis propounded by this group: "The organisation of the management of the national economy is the function of an All-Russia Congress of Producers organised in industrial unions which shall elect a central body to run the whole of the national economy of the Republic."

The ideas at the bottom of this and numerous similar statements are radically wrong in theory, and represent a complete break with Marxism and communism, with the practical experience of all semi-proletarian revolutions and of the present proletarian revolution.

First, the concept "producer" combines proletarians with semi-proletarians and small commodity producers, thus radically departing from the fundamental concept of the class struggle and from the fundamental demand that a precise distinction be drawn between classes.

Secondly, the bidding for or flirtation with the non-Party masses, which is expressed in the above-quoted thesis, is an equally radical departure from Marxism.

Marxism teaches—and this tenet has not only been formally endorsed by the whole of the Communist International in the decisions of the Second (1920) Congress of the Comintern on the role of the political party of the proletariat, but has also been confirmed in practice by our revolution—that only the political party of the working class, i.e., the Communist Party, is capable of uniting, training and organising a vanguard of the proletariat and of the whole mass of the working people that alone will be capable of withstanding the inevitable petty-bourgeois vacillations of this mass and the inevitable traditions and relapses of narrow craft unionism or craft prejudices among the proletariat, and of guiding all the united activities of the whole of the proletariat, i.e., of leading it politically, and through it, the whole mass of the working people. Without this the dictatorship of the proletariat is impossible.

The wrong understanding of the role of the Communist Party in its relation to the non-Party proletariat, and in the relation of the first and second factors to the whole mass

of working people, is a radical theoretical departure from communism and a deviation towards syndicalism and anarchism, and this deviation permeates all the views of the Workers' Opposition group.

4. The Tenth Congress of the Russian Communist Party declares that it also regards as radically wrong all attempts on the part of the said group and of other persons to defend their fallacious views by referring to Paragraph 5 of the economic section of the Programme of the Russian Communist Party, which deals with the role of the trade unions. This paragraph says that "the trade unions should eventually arrive at a *de facto* concentration in their hands of the whole administration of the whole national economy, as a single economic entity" and that they will "ensure in this way indissoluble ties between the central state administration, the national economy and the broad masses of working people", "drawing" these masses "into direct economic management".

This paragraph in the Programme of the Russian Communist Party also says that a prerequisite for the state at which the trade unions "should eventually arrive" is the process whereby they increasingly "divest themselves of the narrow craft-union spirit" and embrace the majority "and eventually all" of the working people.

Lastly, this paragraph in the Programme of the Russian Communist Party emphasises that "on the strength of the laws of the R.S.F.S.R., and established practice, the trade unions participate in all the local and central organs of industrial management".

Instead of studying the practical experience of participation in administration, and instead of developing this experience further, strictly in conformity with successes achieved and mistakes rectified, the syndicalists and anarchists advance as an immediate slogan "congresses or a congress of producers" "to elect" the organs of economic management. Thus, the leading, educational and organising role of the Party in relation to the trade unions of the proletariat, and of the latter to the semi-petty-bourgeois and even wholly petty-bourgeois masses of working people, is completely evaded and eliminated, and instead of continuing and correcting the

practical work of building new forms of economy already begun by the Soviet state, we get petty-bourgeois-anarchist disruption of this work, which can only lead to the triumph of the bourgeois counter-revolution.

5. In addition to the theoretical fallacies and a radically wrong attitude towards the practical experience of economic organisation already begun by the Soviet government, the Congress of the Russian Communist Party discerns in the views of this and similar groups and persons a gross political mistake and a direct political danger to the very existence of the dictatorship of the proletariat.

In a country like Russia, the overwhelming preponderance of the petty-bourgeois element and the devastation, impoverishment, epidemics, crop failures, extreme want and hardship inevitably resulting from the war, engender particularly sharp vacillations in the temper of the petty-bourgeois and semi-proletarian masses. First they incline towards a strengthening of the alliance between these masses and the proletariat, and then towards bourgeois restoration. The experience of all revolutions in the eighteenth, nineteenth, and twentieth centuries shows most clearly and convincingly that the only possible result of these vacillations—if the unity, strength and influence of the revolutionary vanguard of the proletariat is weakened in the slightest degree—will be the restoration of the power and property of the capitalists and landowners.

Hence, the views of the Workers' Opposition and of like-minded elements are not only wrong in theory, but are an expression of petty-bourgeois and anarchist wavering in practice, and actually weaken the consistency of the leading line of the Communist Party and help the class enemies of the proletarian revolution.

6. In view of all this, the Congress of the R.C.P., emphatically rejecting the said ideas, as being expressive of a syndicalist and anarchist deviation, deems it necessary:

First, to wage an unswerving and systematic struggle against these ideas;

Secondly, to recognise the propaganda of these ideas as being incompatible with membership of the R.C.P.

Instructing the C.C. of the Party strictly to enforce these decisions, the Congress at the same time points out that special publications, symposiums, etc., can and should provide space for a most comprehensive exchange of opinion between Party members on all the questions herein indicated.

*Collected Works, Vol. 32,*  
pp. 245-48

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**TO THE PETROGRAD CITY CONFERENCE  
OF NON-PARTY WORKERS**

Comrades, I very much regret that I have been unable to go to Petrograd at your invitation. I send heartfelt greetings to the non-Party conference, and I welcome your work. The assistance of the non-Party masses and co-operation with them is of especial importance today, when the bourgeoisie of the world is conducting an incredible campaign of lies against Soviet Russia, in an effort to prevent us from concluding any trade agreements with foreign countries. The Kronstadt events\* have brought home to the workers and peasants the fact that any shift of power in Russia tends to favour the whiteguards; no wonder Milyukov\*\* and all intelligent leaders of the bourgeoisie welcomed the Kronstadt "Soviets without the Bolsheviks" slogan.

In conveying my greetings to the non-Party conference, I should like to wish you every success in your work, and ask you to pay special attention to the present need—in fact a constant need—of drawing more non-Party workers and peasants into economic construction. A regional economic centre has been set up in Petrograd. Let us intensify our

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\* A reference to the counter-revolutionary revolt in Kronstadt, which began on February 28, 1921. On March 18, 1921 the revolt was quelled.  
—Ed.

\*\* *P. N. Milyukov* (1859-1943)—leader of the counter-revolutionary Constitutional-Democratic Party. He emigrated from Russia after the October Revolution of 1917.—Ed.

effort. Local functionaries are being vested with broader powers and should show more initiative. The non-Party people should set to work, and let us have more and more men.

Greetings,  
*Lenin*

Written April 14, 1921

*Collected Works, Vol. 32,*  
p. 319

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**From INSTRUCTIONS  
OF THE COUNCIL OF LABOUR  
AND DEFENCE TO LOCAL SOVIET BODIES**

**Draft**

**7. Increasing the Number of Government Officials  
in Economic Development**

It is extremely important for us to enlarge this group of workers, but very little systematic effort is being made to do so. Under capitalism, the individual proprietors strove to obtain—secretly from one another, and tripping each other up—the services of good salesmen, managers and directors. It took them decades to do 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 men for economic development; it must select the best administrators and organisers on the special and general, local and national scale, doing this *publicly*, in a methodical and systematic manner and on a broad scale. Now and again we still see traces of the initial period of the Soviet power—the period of fierce civil war and intense sabotage, traces of Communists isolating themselves in a narrow circle of rulers, being fearful or incapable of enlisting the services of sufficient numbers of non-Party people.

We must set to work quickly and energetically to correct this. A number of capable and honest non-Party people are coming to the fore from the ranks of the workers, peasants and intellectuals, and they should be promoted to more important positions in economic work, with the Communists continuing to exercise the necessary control and guidance. Conversely, we must have non-Party people controlling the Communists. For this purpose, groups of non-Party workers and peasants, whose honesty has been tested, should be invit-

ed to take part, on the one hand, in the Workers' and Peasants' Inspection, and on the other, in the informal verification and appraisal of work, quite apart from any official appointment.

In their reports to the C.L.D., the local bodies, particularly in the volosts, uyezds and districts, which have the best knowledge of the worker and peasant masses, 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 command universal respect in their factory, village, volost, etc., and should indicate their assignments in economic construction. By work is meant official position as well as *unofficial participation in control and verification*, regular attendance at informal conferences, etc.

There must be regular replies to these questions, for otherwise the socialist state will be unable to organise correctly the enlistment of the masses in the work of economic development. There are any number of honest and loyal workers. There are many of them among the non-Party people, but we do not know them. Only local reports can help us to find them and try them out in wider and gradually expanding fields of work, and cure the evil of isolation of Communist Party cells from the masses, an evil that is in evidence in many places.

**8. Methods and Results of Combating Bureaucratic  
Practices and Red Tape**

At first, most answers 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 in this field is deplorable, we shall certainly not imitate those who give way to despair. We know that in Russia bureaucratic routine and red tape are mostly due to the low standard of culture and the consequences of the extreme ruin and impoverishment resulting from the war. This evil can be overcome only by strenuous and persistent effort over a long period of years. Therefore, we

must not give way to despair, but make a new start every time, pick it up where it was abandoned, and try diverse ways of achieving our goal.

The reorganisation of the Workers' and Peasants' Inspection; enlistment of the services of non-Party people with and without this inspection; 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 systematically, steadily and repeatedly tried out, compared and studied.

The gubernia economic councils, and all the other bodies co-ordinating and directing 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. Answers to this question must be sent in to the C.L.D., regardless of how hard it may be at first to teach people to give exact, full and timely answers. The C.L.D. will see to it that this is done. It will undoubtedly produce good results, even if not as quickly as is expected by those who tend to reduce the "combating of red tape" to a mere phrase (or to a repetition of whiteguard, Socialist-Revolutionary and also Menshevik, gossip) instead of working hard to take definite steps.

Written May 21, 1921

*Collected Works, Vol. 32,*  
pp. 388-90

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## ADDITIONS AND AMENDMENTS TO THE DRAFT OF THE C.C. R.C.P.(B.) LETTER ON RELATIONS WITH NON-PARTY WORKERS\*

To All Gubernia and Uyezd Party Committees,  
All Communist Groups, and Trade Unions

Relations between our Party and the broad mass of workers is now a question of relations between Communists and people with no party affiliations.

Whenever the Socialist-Revolutionaries and Mensheviks, parties which are hostile to us, come into the open they do not have any significant success. The broad mass of workers remain politically uncommitted. This is why, ever more frequently, the Socialist-Revolutionaries and Mensheviks try to give the impression of being independents.

Our task is to strengthen the ties between Communists and honest non-Party workers at all costs. This is the only way our sometimes languishing Party cells can be revived. Where a wall has risen between Communists and non-Party workers, the alienation must be overcome at all costs. A Communist is not worthy of the name if he fails to win over to his side several honest non-Party workers, to establish daily contact with them, to visit their homes, to help them in their daily life, to supply them with newspapers, to promote ordinary workers to positions in trade unions or Soviet government bodies, and the like.

Communists who work in trade unions can and must do the most in this respect. The broad sections of honest non-Party workers can best be attracted through the trade unions. But that is not the only way. Local Party branches must be able to ensure that a substantial percentage of non-Party workers are enlisted for work in the Soviets. Communists working in government bodies must go to the factories, while part of the new, non-Party proletarian forces must go to the Soviet government bodies and trade union committees. This is the order of the day. All Party organisations must examine this question in earnest, and respond as promptly as possible to this Central Committee's call in accordance with local conditions.

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\* © Translation into English. Progress Publishers 1979.

[The activity of non-Party workers has grown. They want to participate in government. They]\* *Non-Party workers* want to take responsible posts in the Soviets and trade unions. The Party must meet them half-way on this. Through its own cells and through the trade unions, the Party must select the more useful and staunch non-Party workers (and peasants), men and women, and give them the right jobs (for example, in the Workers' and Peasants' Inspection). This is our guarantee of success in the fight against bureaucratic ways.

Conferences of non-Party workers can help bring Communists closer to the non-Party workers, help fight bureaucratic ways, and provide opportunities to promote new people. But only on certain conditions, the main one being serious and careful preparation of these conferences.

Past experience shows that such conferences are being made an arena for agitation and organisation by Socialist-Revolutionaries and Mensheviks. Both these parties have worked out special directives on how to use these conferences for their counter-revolutionary S.-R. and Menshevik ends. Our Party organisations must take this into account.

To that end local branches convening non-Party conferences must be able: 1) themselves to [develop] *select* the most opportune time, and not allow anyone to impose such conferences on us at times [unfavourable for our opponents] *favourable for the enemies of the working class*; 2) to unmask the Socialist-Revolutionaries and Mensheviks posing as non-Party people during the preparations for these conferences; and 3) the main thing is to secure success in elections at every factory.

In Petrograd four preliminary meetings were held at every factory in connection with the latest conference of non-Party workers: 1) personnel, plus sympathisers, 2) factory delegates, 3) delegates plus personnel, and 4) a general factory meeting, at which the list of candidates to this conference and the mandate already prepared at the preceding meetings were submitted for approval.

Uyezd committees must report to gubernia committees, and the latter to the Central Committee on the preparations for, proceedings and outcome of every such conference. The preparations must be most thorough. If there is a lack of competent people, help should be asked from the centre in advance.

To establish contact with non-Party people it is essential not only regularly to call general meetings for the mass of workers and peasants, but also to have all officials report to the mass of workers and peasants on their activity. Such reports must be made at least once a month, so that the mass of non-Party workers and peasants should have an opportunity to criticise the Soviet government bodies and their work. The reports must be made not only by Communists, but also by all officials in all responsible posts, and first of all by officials of food administrations and agencies of economic councils.

\* Here and elsewhere the text in square brackets was crossed out and corrected by V. I. Lenin; the corrections are given in italics  
-Ed.

Every gubernia committee must send monthly reports to the Central Committee containing accurate information on the number and progress of such reports, including the demands voiced at such meetings by non-Party people.

Comrades in the localities must find dozens of other ways of tightening contacts with non-Party people and of promoting new people from among them. Closer to the masses. More practical links with the non-Party workers. More systematic *selection* of new, non-Party workers. More attention by officials to the shortages in everyday life that can be eliminated even given our poverty. More systematic struggle against bureaucratic ways and red tape. Communists—into the thick of the working class and the people.

*Central Committee, R.C.P.*

May 1, 1921

The Central Committee attaches tremendous importance to this matter and categorically demands strict and energetic implementation of this directive. For non-compliance or failure to act on it the C.C. will take harsh disciplinary action, up to and including expulsion from the Party.

Monthly progress reports on the implementation of this directive must be sent by uyezd and gubernia committees in the following form:

- 1) How many Communists have been transferred from posts in Soviet government bodies to factories?
- 2) The same, to the country for agricultural work?
- 3) How many non-Party workers have been selected as the most honest and capable for jobs in Soviet government bodies?
- 4) A list of their names.
- 5) How many of them have been enlisted for work in Soviet government bodies, by department?
- 6) Length and progress of their work?
- 7-10) The same (§§ 3, 4, 5, 6) in regard to peasants.
- 11) The main demands and grievances of non-Party workers?
- 12) The same—of peasants?
- 13) Cases where workers have been enlisted in the Workers' and Peasants' Inspection, and the results?
- 14) The same—for peasants?
- 15) Report briefly the main points about each conference of non-Party workers in accordance with this letter from the C.C.

Written not later  
than May 4, 1921

*Collected Works, fifth Russ.  
ed., Vol. 43, pp. 390-92*

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TO V. A. AVANESOV\*

June 1

Comrade Avanesov,

You should draw up a circular to all local bodies of the Workers' and Peasants' Inspection on the subject of local economic conferences.

(1) You should require a *personal* list of all representatives of the Workers' and Peasants' Inspection in all economic conferences.

(2) You should be immediately informed of every change in the list.

(3) You should demand that, whether they are Communists or non-Party people, they should be *especially and personally* recommended for their reliability and honesty.

(4) You should demand that they be strictly accountable, *particularly* as regards drawing non-Party people into the work and as regards reports to *them*, the non-Party people, on the work of the economic councils.

All this should be brought before the Presidium of the All-Russia Central Executive Committee and adopted, so that the local bodies conform to it.

*Lenin*

Written June 1, 1921

*Collected Works*, Vol. 35,  
p. 504

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\* V. A. Avanesov (1884-1930)—Deputy People's Commissar of the Workers' and Peasants' Inspection between 1920 and 1924.—*Ed.*

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TO A. A. KOROSTELEV\*

Comrade Korostelev,

The work of your commission\*\* is exceptionally important, responsible and difficult.

You must strain all your energies to see that you have fewer reverses; and not lose heart because of the reverses, but insistently and patiently resume the work, again and again. In Moscow it is much more difficult to work than in the provinces—there is more bureaucracy, there are more corrupted and spoiled "top" people, etc.

But, in return, the work in Moscow will have tremendous demonstrative and *political* importance.

In my belief, your commission should try and adapt its work to the "Instructions of the Council of Labour and Defence".

The main thing is not to scatter your forces. It is better to take *a few establishments*, not very big tasks, set yourselves, at first, modest aims—but pursue them stubbornly, not forgetting what you have begun, not dropping the work half-way, but going on with it to the end.

Gradually, but without fail, draw in *non-Party* people

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\* A. A. Korostelev (1887-1937)—member of the Collegium of the People's Commissariat of the Workers' and Peasants' Inspection (1921-22).—*Ed.*

\*\* A reference to the commission for assisting economic bodies, set up at the People's Commissariat of the Workers' and Peasants' Inspection and headed by A. A. Korostelev.—*Ed.*

from amongst *workers* well known for their honesty, and respected in every district. Time and effort should not be spared in discovering them and getting to know them.

They should little by little, and carefully, be *introduced* to the work, and you must try to find an occupation *entirely suited* to each one, and appropriate to his capacities.

The main thing is to get the workers and the population used to the commission, in the sense that they should *see help* coming from it; the main thing is to *win the confidence* of the masses, the non-Party people, the rank-and-file workers, the ordinary men in the street.

For you of all people, as chairman of the commission and as a man from the centre, a member of the collegium of the *unpopular Workers' and Peasants' Inspection*, this will not be easy. But this is the whole essence of the thing.

You must in every possible way, and in all possible respects, show that you are able to give, and actually give, *help*, real help, even if on a small scale. Only on this basis can you go on further.

Please write to me or, if you don't like writing, ring me up on the telephone—I can talk to you from my study, where it is quieter, so that we can exchange ideas on the work of your commission.

Show this letter to the other members of the commission, if you think it timely.

July 26

With communist greetings,

*Lenin*

P. S. The main task of the commission is to improve our economy, improve management, secure *real personal* responsibility. For this purpose a few more institutions should be selected: a canteen, baths, a laundry, a hostel, etc.

Written July 26, 1921

*Collected Works*, Vol. 35,  
pp. 511-12

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INSTRUCTIONS BY THE NINTH ALL-RUSSIA  
CONGRESS OF SOVIETS ON QUESTIONS  
OF ECONOMIC ACTIVITIES  
DECEMBER 28, 1921

The Ninth All-Russia Congress of Soviets, having examined the reports of the People's Commissariats on their economic activities during the year under review, supplements and summarises the decisions of the Congress of Soviets on individual economic questions with the following guiding points, which must be strictly adhered to by all Soviet bodies at the centre and in the localities.

1. The Congress of Soviets orders that the main and immediate task of all the economic bodies must be to effect, speedily and at all costs, stable practical improvements in supplying the peasantry with large quantities of the goods that are needed to raise the level of agriculture and improve the living conditions of the working peasantry.

2. This being the main object, it must be kept in mind by all industrial administrative bodies, allowing of course no relaxation in the supply of the Red Army with everything it needs, a task which must remain primary in order to maintain the Soviet Republic's defence potential.

3. The improvement of the conditions of the workers should also depend on the achievement of this object, which means that it is the duty of all workers' organisations (primarily the trade unions) to see to it that industry is so organised as to be able speedily and fully to satisfy the requirements of the peasantry; wage increases and improvement in the conditions of industrial workers should be directly

determined by the degree to which success is achieved in this field.

4. This object must also be pursued by the People's Commissariat of Finance; and the Ninth Congress of Soviets instructs it to make every effort to secure the speediest reduction of the issue of paper money, eventually put a stop to it and establish a sound currency backed by gold. The substitution of taxes for the issue of paper money must be pursued undeviatingly without any red tape.

5. The same object must be given priority by all bodies and organisations engaged in home and foreign trade, i.e., the Central Council of Co-operative Societies, the People's Commissariat of Foreign Trade, etc. The Congress of Soviets will judge—and instructs the leading bodies of the Soviet government to judge—the success of these organisations only by the rapid and practical results they achieve in developing exchange between agriculture and industry. In particular, the Congress instructs the various organisations to use private enterprises more widely for supplying raw materials, transporting these materials and for promoting trade in every way, while the function of state bodies is to control and direct this exchange, and sternly punish all deadening red tape and bureaucracy.

6. The Ninth Congress of Soviets calls upon all organisations and departments engaged in economic activities to devote infinitely more attention and energy than hitherto to the task of enlisting the services of all capable non-Party workers and peasants in this field of state activity.

The Congress declares that in this respect we are a long way behind requirements, that not enough method and perseverance are being displayed in this matter, that it is absolutely and urgently necessary to recruit business and government officials from a wider circle than hitherto, and, in particular, that every success achieved in rebuilding industry and agriculture should be more regularly encouraged by awards of the Order of the Red Banner of Labour, as well as by cash bonuses.

The Congress of Soviets draws the attention of all economic bodies and all mass organisations of a non-governmental,

class character to the fact that it is absolutely essential still more perseveringly to enlist the services of specialists in economic organisation, to employ scientists and technicians, and men who by their practical activities have acquired experience and knowledge of trade, of organising large enterprises, of supervising business transactions, etc. The improvement of the material position of specialists and the training under their direction of a large number of workers and peasants must receive unflagging attention from the central and local government bodies of the R.S.F.S.R.

7. The Ninth Congress of Soviets calls upon the People's Commissariat of Justice to display far more energy than hitherto in two matters:

first, that the People's Courts of the Republic should keep close watch over the activities of private traders and manufacturers, and, while prohibiting the slightest restriction of their activities, should sternly punish the slightest attempt on their part to evade rigid compliance with the laws of the Republic. The People's Courts should encourage the masses of workers and peasants to take an independent, speedy and practical part in ensuring enforcement of the laws;

second, that the People's Courts should take more vigorous action against bureaucracy, red tape and mismanagement. Trials of such cases should be held not only for the purpose of increasing responsibility for the evil which it is so difficult to combat under present circumstances, but also for the purpose of focussing the attention of the masses of workers and peasants on this extremely important matter, and of securing a practical object, viz., greater success in the economic field.

The Ninth Congress is of the opinion that the task of the People's Commissariat of Education in this new period is to train, in the shortest possible period, specialists in all fields from among the peasants and workers; and it orders that school and extra-mural education should be more closely connected with the current economic tasks of the Republic as a whole, as well as of the given region and locality. In particular, the Ninth Congress of Soviets declares that far from enough has been done to fulfil the decision of the Eighth

Congress of Soviets on the popularisation of the plan for the electrification of Russia, and requires that every electric power station mobilise all competent forces and arrange regular talks, lectures and practical studies to acquaint the workers and peasants with the importance of electricity and with the plan for electrification. In those uyezds where no power stations yet exist, at least small power stations should be built as speedily as possible and used as local centres for propaganda, education and the encouragement of every initiative in this field.

*Collected Works, Vol. 33,*  
pp. 178-81

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**From THE ROLE AND FUNCTIONS  
OF THE TRADE UNIONS  
UNDER THE NEW ECONOMIC POLICY**

**6. THE TRADE UNIONS  
AND THE MANAGEMENT OF INDUSTRY**

Following its seizure 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, famine and dislocation. 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 and pay out wages, and also distribute 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 accomplishing the transition from capitalism to socialism. In a country where the small peasantry is overwhelmingly predominant the proletariat can successfully fulfil this function only if it very skilfully, cautiously and gradually establishes an alliance with the vast 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 immediate period, take the following main forms:

1. The trade unions should help to staff all the state business and administrative bodies connected with economics; nominate their candidates for them, stating 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 consid-

eration 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 among the workers and 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, efficiently 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 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 People's Courts in general or with the functions of factory managements.

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 resulted 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 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 tested 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, and 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 confront 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 motors 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.

Written December 30, 1921-  
January 4, 1922

*Collected Works*, Vol. 33,  
pp. 188-92

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## From LETTER TO THE CONGRESS

Continuation of the notes.  
December 26, 1922

The increase in the number of C.C. members to 50 or even 100 must, in my opinion, serve a double or even a treble purpose: the more members there are in the C.C., the more men will be trained in C.C. work and the less danger there will be of a split due to some indiscretion. The enlistment of many workers to the C.C. will help the workers to improve our administrative machinery, which is pretty bad. We inherited it, in effect, from the old regime, for it was absolutely impossible to reorganise it in such a short time, especially in conditions of war, famine, etc. That is why those "critics" who point to the defects of our administrative machinery out of mockery or malice may be calmly answered that they do not in the least understand the conditions of the revolution today. It is altogether impossible in five years to reorganise the machinery adequately, especially in the conditions in which our revolution took place. It is enough that in five years we have created a new type of state in which the workers are leading the peasants against the bourgeoisie; and in a hostile international environment this in itself is a gigantic achievement. But knowledge of this must on no account blind us to the fact that, in effect, we took over the old machinery of state from the tsar and the bourgeoisie and that now, with the onset of peace and the satisfaction of the

minimum requirements against famine, all our work must be directed towards improving the administrative machinery.

I think that a few dozen workers, being members of the C.C., can deal better than anybody else with checking, improving and remodelling our state apparatus. The Workers' and Peasants' Inspection on whom this function devolved at the beginning proved unable to cope with it and can be used only as an "appendage" or, on certain conditions, as an assistant to these members of the C.C. In my opinion, the workers admitted to the Central Committee should come preferably not from among those who have had long service in Soviet bodies (in this part of my letter the term workers everywhere includes peasants), because those workers have already acquired the very traditions and the very prejudices which it is desirable to combat.

The working-class members of the C.C. must be mainly workers of a lower stratum than those promoted in the last five years to work in Soviet bodies; they must be people closer to being rank-and-file workers and peasants, who, however, do not fall into the category of direct or indirect exploiters. I think that by attending all sittings of the C.C. and all sittings of the Political Bureau, and by reading all the documents of the C.C., such workers can form a staff of devoted supporters of the Soviet system, able, first, to give stability to the C.C. itself, and second, to work effectively on the renewal and improvement of the state apparatus.

Taken down by L.F.  
December 26, 1922

*Lenin*

*Collected Works, Vol. 36,  
pp. 596-97*

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## From 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 sufficiently large scale, for we have now found that degree of combination of private interest, of 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? It is still not the building of socialist society, but it is all that is necessary and sufficient for it.

It is this very circumstance that is underestimated by many of our practical workers. They look down upon our co-operative societies, failing to 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 system 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 to learn to build socialism in practice in such a way that *every* small peasant could take part in it. That is the very 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 enterprise 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.

A social system emerges 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 have to realise that the co-operative system is the social system we must now give more than ordinary assistance, and we must actually give that assistance. But it must be assistance 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 actually 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 open a co-operative store, the people take no part in this whatever; but at the same time guided by their own interests they will hasten to try to take part in it.

There is another aspect to this question. From the point of view of the "enlightened" (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 "enlightened" that they understand all the advantages of everybody participating in the work of the co-operatives, and organise 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 abundantly, 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 quite enough 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 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 good 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

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pp. 467-71

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## 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, and is an extremely urgent one.

With the exception of the People's Commissariat of 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 some 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 conducted, as we know, on behalf of the Central Committee by our Political Bureau, 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 conscientiousness 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 of 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 organi-

sation 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 does not warrant a reply. 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 smoothly 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 enhance the efficiency 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 essential 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 institutions 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 fewer 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 properly delimiting 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 its contacts with the masses will be greater 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 ap-

pertaining 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 without exception, neither that of the General Secretary nor of any other member of the Central Committee, 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 inevitable 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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## From **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 efficiency 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 wretched, 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, corroborated by experience, and not made durable, etc. Of course, it could not be otherwise in a revolutionary epoch, when development proceeded at such break-neck 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 or vigour, or in general, by any of the best human qualities. Secondly, we have elements of knowledge, education and training, but they are ridiculously inadequate compared with all other countries.

Here we must not forget that we are too prone to compen-

sate (or imagine that we can compensate) our lack of knowledge by zeal, haste, etc.

In order to renovate our state apparatus we must at all costs set out, first, to learn, secondly, to learn, and thirdly, to learn, and then 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 bourgeois 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, an 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, second, 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 any difficulty 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 sound 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 organized 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

\* See present edition, pp. 28-86.—Ed.

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 are extraordinarily strict, and I am very much afraid that the majority of the "practical" workers in the Workers' and Peasants' Inspection will say that these requirements 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 higher 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, 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 the 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 suf-

ficiently 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 parentheses that he 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 partial textbooks available may be useful too.

We ought to send several qualified and conscientious people to Germany, or to Britain, to collect literature and to study this question. I mention Britain in case it is found impossible to send people to the U.S.A. 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 one or another 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.

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