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WORKERS OF ALL COUNTRIES, UNITE!

V.I. LENIN  
SELECTED WORKS  
IN THREE VOLUMES

2



ИНСТИТУТ МАРКСИЗМА-ЛЕНИНИЗМА при ЦК КПСС

# В.И.ЛЕНИН

ИЗБРАННЫЕ ПРОИЗВЕДЕНИЯ

В ТРЕХ ТОМАХ

ГОСУДАРСТВЕННОЕ ИЗДАТЕЛЬСТВО ПОЛИТИЧЕСКОЙ  
ЛИТЕРАТУРЫ

МОСКВА

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# V.I. LENIN

SELECTED WORKS

IN THREE VOLUMES

2

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## В. И. ЛЕНИН ИЗБРАННЫЕ ПРОИЗВЕДЕНИЯ

В трех томах

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## PREFACE

Volume Two of this edition includes works written in the period between March 1917 and June 1918, during the preparation and accomplishment of the Great October Socialist Revolution and the first few months of Soviet power.

These are outstanding examples of constructive Marxism, models of the strategy and tactics of the Communist Party as elaborated by Lenin. They formed the ideological equipment of the Bolshevik Party in a period of great historical significance, the period of struggle for the victory of the socialist revolution and the establishment and consolidation of the dictatorship of the proletariat. These works deal with the most important problems involved in setting up the new Soviet state and launching socialist construction, and with the struggle for Russia's withdrawal from the war, a struggle for peace and friendship between peoples.

An extremely involved situation arose in Russia after the February bourgeois-democratic revolution. Dual power was established—the dictatorship of the bourgeoisie through the Provisional Government, and the revolutionary-democratic dictatorship of the proletariat and the peasantry through the Soviets of Workers' and Soldiers' Deputies. The Mensheviks and Socialist-Revolutionaries, who predominated in the majority of the Soviets, betrayed the interests of the workers and peasants and placed state power in the hands of the bourgeois Provisional Government.

The Bolshevik Party was the only revolutionary party to carry on a determined struggle for the transition to the socialist revolution, for withdrawal from the imperialist war, for the transfer of land to the peasants and for the implementation of measures to meet the urgent needs of the working people of town and countryside.

As early as March 1917, when Lenin was still in political exile abroad, he outlined the tasks of the working class and its party in his "Letters from Afar"; he wrote of the need to develop work among the masses and to expose persistently the politics of the



bourgeois Provisional Government, which would not and, because of its class character, could not give the people peace, bread or freedom. Lenin proposed exposing the role of the compromising parties supporting that government; he called upon the working class to muster its forces for the victory of the proletarian revolution.

All the previous activities of the Bolshevik Party had prepared it for the fulfilment of this historic task. The Party was equipped with Lenin's theory of the socialist revolution, the theory that the victory of socialism was possible at first in one capitalist country alone.

In this volume the reader will find Lenin's famous April Theses, which were contained in the speech delivered on April 4 (17), 1917, the day after his return from abroad—"The Tasks of the Proletariat in the Present Revolution"—at a meeting of the Central Committee and the St. Petersburg Committee of the Party and of the Bolshevik delegates to the All-Russia Conference of Soviets of Workers' and Soldiers' Deputies. On April 7 (20) the Theses were published in *Pravda* and on April 10 (23) Lenin gave a detailed explanation of them in his pamphlet *The Tasks of the Proletariat in Our Revolution*.

The April Theses were an outline of Lenin's masterly plan of struggle for a transition from the bourgeois-democratic to the socialist revolution. They defined the political and economic platform of the Party in the new stage of the revolution and showed motive forces of the revolution. "The specific feature of the present situation in Russia is," he wrote, "that the country is *passing* from the first stage of the revolution—which, owing to the insufficient class-consciousness and organisation of the proletariat, placed power in the hands of the bourgeoisie—to its *second* stage, which must place power in the hands of the proletariat and the poorest sections of the peasants" (see p. 44).

Drawing on the experience of the Paris Commune and the Russian revolutions of 1905 and 1917, Lenin proposed establishing a Soviet Republic instead of a parliamentary democratic republic. Lenin's discovery of the Soviets as a political form of the dictatorship of the proletariat is a splendid example of the constructive development of Marxist doctrine. It had the greatest significance for the victory of the socialist revolution and for socialist construction in Russia and also for the elaboration of political forms for the dictatorship of the working class in the People's Democracies of Europe and Asia.

In his Theses Lenin proposed the slogan of the transfer of all state power to the Soviets. This, however, did not mean a call for the immediate overthrow of the Provisional Government, which at that time enjoyed the support of the Soviets and the confidence of

the workers. The Bolsheviks were faced with the task of explaining the conciliatory role of the Mensheviks and Socialist-Revolutionaries, of exposing them and, by isolating them from the masses, achieving a majority in the Soviets; they then had to bring about a change of government by means of a peaceful struggle carried on through the Soviets. This was a plan for the peaceful development of the revolution.

Lenin's April Theses laid down the main tasks of the Party in the sphere of economic relations. As measures for the transition to socialism he proposed: the merging of all the country's banks into a single national bank to be placed under the control of the Soviets, the introduction of workers' control over production and distribution, the confiscation of the landed estates and the nationalisation of the land, which would be placed at the disposal of the Soviets of Peasants' and Farm Labourers' Deputies.

Lenin indicated the main tasks in the field of Party organisation. He spoke in favour of the immediate convocation of a Party congress and a review of the Party Programme, which was adopted in 1903 at the Second Congress of the R.S.D.L.P., on the grounds that it had to a considerable extent become obsolete and was not in accordance with the new conditions. Lenin proposed renaming the Social-Democratic Party and calling it a Communist Party, a name, he pointed out, that was scientifically correct and accorded with the final aim of the proletarian party—the building of a communist society. Lenin proposed the founding of a Third International, the Communist International.

The April Theses provided a theoretically sound and concrete plan for the transition to the socialist revolution. They inspired the working class to struggle for the establishment of the dictatorship of the proletariat.

Held in Petrograd (April 24-29 [May 7-12], 1917), the Seventh (April) All-Russia Conference of the R.S.D.L.P. (Bolsheviks) was of great significance in consolidating the ranks of the Party and mobilising the working class for the fulfilment of the tasks outlined in the April Theses. This was the first legal conference of the Bolshevik Party and it had the significance of a Party congress.

The present volume contains reports made by Lenin to the Conference on the current situation, the agrarian question and the revision of the Party Programme, his speeches at the opening of the Conference, in defence of the resolutions on war and on the national question, and the draft resolutions he compiled. Lenin's reports and speeches at the Conference were a development of his April Theses.

Lenin exposed the defeatist attitude of Kamenev, Rykov and their few supporters, who denied the possibility of the victory of socialism in Russia and declared, following in the footsteps of the

Mensheviks, that the objective conditions for the socialist revolution did not exist in Russia, that socialism must come from other countries with a more developed industry. Lenin pointed out that such views were "a breakaway from Marxism", "a parody on Marxism". He also severely criticised the national-chauvinist views of Pyatakov, who at the Conference spoke against the Party policy on the national question and denied the right of nations to self-determination. Such a position actually amounted to a refusal to use the non-Russian reserves of the revolution, and doomed the revolution to failure.

The Seventh (April) All-Russia Conference adopted Lenin's line unanimously, and armed the Party and the working class with a plan of struggle by which the bourgeois-democratic revolution would grow into a socialist revolution. Following the Seventh (April) Conference, the Bolshevik Party developed tremendous activity to implement its decisions, to mobilise the masses for the revolution and to educate them politically. Under Lenin's leadership the Party was fulfilling the important and difficult task of gaining a majority among the working class and of swinging the millions of working peasantry over to the side of the socialist revolution.

Lenin's "Speech on the Attitude Towards the Provisional Government" delivered on June 4 (17), 1917, at the First All-Russia Congress of Soviets of Workers' and Soldiers' Deputies revealed the counter-revolutionary nature of the Provisional Government and showed that nothing had been changed by the inclusion, from May 5 (18), of "near-socialist" ministers and the formation of the so-called coalition government; the same capitalist class was in power. Lenin unfolded the Bolshevik programme before the Congress delegates and called for the transfer of all power to the Soviets.

In his articles "What Could the Cadets Have Counted on When They Withdrew from the Cabinet?", "Where Is State Power and Where Is Counter-Revolution?", "Three Crises", "The Question of the Bolshevik Leaders Appearing in Court", and "The Political Situation", Lenin provided a picture of the political situation in the country following the events of July 3, 4, and 5, 1917.

With the knowledge and consent of the Central Executive Committee of Soviets, which was composed of Mensheviks and Socialist-Revolutionaries, the Provisional Government, on July 4 (17), ordered troops to fire on a peaceful demonstration of workers and soldiers in Petrograd, which carried on its banners the slogan "All Power to the Soviets!" On July 6 (19) the *Trud* print-shop was raided and the newspaper *Pravda* was suppressed. On July 7 (20) the Provisional Government ordered Lenin's arrest and arraignment. The Party kept its leader hidden in the underground. Lenin.



went into hiding at first in Petrograd and then in the environs of the city, near Lake Razliv. At the end of August the Central Committee organised the transfer of Lenin to Finland.

After the July events, state power in Russia passed completely into the hands of the counter-revolutionary Provisional Government. The Soviets, under the leadership of the Mensheviks and Socialist-Revolutionaries, became a weak and powerless appendage to the Provisional Government. The peaceful period of the revolution had come to an end. The Bolshevik Party began to prepare the masses for insurrection.

The new political situation made it necessary for the Party to change its tactics and to issue new tactical slogans. In his article "On Slogans" Lenin showed why it was necessary temporarily to withdraw the slogan "All Power to the Soviets!" The slogan had been the correct one up to the July events, during the peaceful development of the revolution which then was possible and the most desirable form of development. After state power had passed entirely into the hands of the counter-revolutionaries, the working class could take power only through an armed uprising. The temporary withdrawal of the slogan "All Power to the Soviets!" was not a rejection of the Soviet Republic as a new type of state. The Soviets, as constituted at that time and led by the Socialist-Revolutionaries and Mensheviks, who had disgraced themselves by their complicity in the acts of butchery, could not become organs of state power of the people. "The slogan calling for the transfer of power to the Soviets might be construed as a 'simple' appeal for the transfer of power to the present Soviets, and to say that, to appeal for it, would now mean deceiving the people" (see p. 205). Lenin pointed out that the Soviets could and must reappear at a new stage in the revolution, but they would not be Soviets under the leadership of Mensheviks and Socialist-Revolutionaries, they would not be organs of conciliation with the bourgeoisie, but organs of revolutionary struggle against the bourgeoisie.

The Sixth Congress of the Bolshevik Party met in Petrograd on July 26 (August 8) to elaborate new tactics in accordance with the changed situation in the country. Lenin guided the work of the Congress from his hiding-place through members of the Central Committee who visited him at Lake Razliv. Lenin's articles "The Political Situation", "On Slogans", "Lessons of the Revolution", and others provided a basis for the Congress resolutions. The Congress decisions demonstrated that power could pass into the hands of the proletariat and the poor peasants only by way of an armed uprising, only by overthrowing the dictatorship of the bourgeoisie. The Congress directed the Party to struggle for the victory of the socialist revolution.

Although Lenin remained underground, he continued his

extensive theoretical and organisational work. He described the historic role of the Party in the inspired words—the Party “is the mind, honour and conscience of our epoch”. The prestige of the Bolshevik Party and its influence among the working class and all working people increased day by day. This was most clearly demonstrated by the defeat of the Kornilov revolt, which had constituted a grave danger to the revolution.

In his pamphlet *The Impending Catastrophe and How to Combat It*, written between September 10 and September 14 (23-27), 1917 and included in this volume, Lenin outlined a scientifically based programme for the Bolshevik Party to transform the country economically.

Lenin showed that in the six months of the revolution the Provisional Government, the Mensheviks and the Socialist-Revolutionaries, had done nothing to combat economic ruin. The capitalists were closing their factories and discharging tens of thousands of workers. They hoped that ruin and hunger would enable them to put a speedy end to the Republic and the Soviets and restore the monarchy. The country was faced with an inevitable catastrophe and bondage to foreign capital. Lenin put forward the revolutionary measures that could save the country from ruin and hunger and would make for progress towards socialism. The measures were the following: workers’ control over production, nationalisation of the banks and syndicates, the organisation of effective control over distribution, the confiscation of the landed estates and the nationalisation of all land in the country. Lenin showed that these measures would lead to the economic revival, to the rebirth of Russia. He furthermore presented the task of immediately putting an end to the imperialist war of plunder. Lenin wrote that only the proletariat could put this revolutionary programme into effect, because the proletariat was the most revolutionary, the most organised and most advanced class in the society of the day.

*The Impending Catastrophe and How to Combat It* developed Lenin’s earlier thesis that the victory of socialism was possible in one individual country. Lenin showed that in Russia like in other capitalist countries the imperialist war had greatly accelerated the conversion of capitalism into state-monopoly capitalism. The material conditions for the transition to socialism had, *ipso facto*, been created. “The objective process of development is such that it is *impossible* to advance from *monopolies* (and the war has magnified their number, role and importance tenfold) without advancing towards socialism” (see p. 269).

In this pamphlet Lenin formulated his famous thesis: “The revolution has resulted in Russia catching up with the advanced countries in a few months, as far as her *political* system is concerned.

“But that is not enough. The war is inexorable; it puts the alternative with ruthless severity: either perish or overtake and outstrip the advanced countries *economically as well*” (see p. 274).

Another outstanding work of Lenin's in this volume is *The State and Revolution. The Marxist Theory of the State and the Tasks of the Proletariat in the Revolution*, written in August and September 1917, on the eve of the proletariat taking power. In this work Lenin stressed that the question of the role of the state was acquiring particular importance in the sphere of theory and in that of practical politics. Its correct solution was of tremendous importance in the struggle for the victory of the socialist revolution.

Lenin regarded the main purpose of his book to be the defence and restoration of Marx's theory of the state, its purging from opportunist distortions that had for decades been implanted in it by the opportunists of the Second International. Lenin developed Marx's theory of the state on the basis of new revolutionary experience.

In *The State and Revolution* Lenin elaborated the problem of the dictatorship of the proletariat in detail. He showed that this dictatorship would cover the entire epoch of transition from capitalism to communism. Lenin taught that the proletariat must take state power into its own hands, must smash the old bourgeois state machinery and create its own new proletarian state, suppress the resistance of the deposed exploiting classes and begin building a new socialist society. For this task to be fulfilled, the dictatorship of the proletariat, a new and higher type of democracy, would be needed.

Lenin was sharp in his criticism of the false, curtailed democracy of capitalist society, which was democracy for an insignificant minority, for the rich. The proletarian state would be “democratic *in a new way*”. Proletarian democracy would ensure that the vast majority of the working people were actually drawn into the government of the state.

The Communist Party, Lenin stressed, would be the guiding and directing force in establishing and carrying out the dictatorship of the proletariat.

In dealing with the role of the Soviets as a new political form of state power, Lenin emphasised that, in the period of transition from capitalism to communism, the revolutionary creative abilities of the masses could bring to the fore other forms of proletarian dictatorship. “The transition from capitalism to communism is certainly bound to yield a tremendous abundance and variety of political forms, but the essence will inevitably be the same: *the dictatorship of the proletariat*” (see p. 311). This thesis of Lenin's has been fully confirmed by the experience of those countries in



which the political form of the dictatorship of the proletariat is the people's democracy type of state structure.

In *The State and Revolution* Lenin developed and gave greater detail to Marx's theory of the two phases in the development of communist society—the first or lower phase of socialism and the higher phase of communism. Lenin showed that mankind can go forward from capitalism only to socialism, that is, to common ownership of the means of production, and distribution according to the principle: "From each according to his ability, to each according to his work." Socialism would gradually grow into communism, on whose banner is inscribed: "From each according to his ability, to each according to his needs."

Socialism will arouse the masses to a new way of life, Lenin stressed, and only in the epoch of socialism will progress be made in all spheres of social and personal life, a rapid progress that is truly mass in character, with at first the majority of the people and then the entire population participating. Lenin's scholarly forecast has been splendidly confirmed in the U.S.S.R., where tens of millions of people have been aroused to a new way of life and are performing miracles of heroism in the field of labour and where socialism has brought about real progress in the economy, the sciences and culture.

*The State and Revolution* is a tremendous contribution to the treasure-house of Marxism. In the struggle for the victory of the October Socialist Revolution, in the struggle for the building of socialism, our Party was guided by Lenin's genius, by the ideas developed in that book; and our Party is guided by those ideas today when the Soviet Union is laying the road to communism for all mankind.

A large number of works in this volume deal with questions of the Bolshevik Party's preparations for and conduct of the October insurrection.

After the defeat of the Kornilov revolt, the Bolshevisation of the Soviets began. By the beginning of September the Bolsheviks had gained a majority in the Petrograd and Moscow Soviets. Local Soviets also went over to the side of the Bolsheviks. The masses followed the Bolsheviks. In his letter to the Central, Petrograd and Moscow Committees of the R.S.D.L.P., "The Bolsheviks Must Assume Power", and his letter to the Central Committee, "Marxism and Insurrection", written between September 12 and September 14 (25-27), 1917, Lenin analysed the international and internal situation of the country from all angles and called on the Party to organise an uprising. Lenin wrote that the Bolsheviks, having obtained a majority in the two metropolitan Soviets, could and must take state power into their own hands. He gave warning that the Russian bourgeoisie were preparing to hand

Petrograd over to the Germans; they were betraying the interests of their own country to retain state power. At the same time the British and French imperialists were plotting to conclude a separate peace with Germany at the expense of Russia. The Bolsheviks could frustrate these criminal plans and save the country and the revolution only by taking over state power. "History will not forgive us," wrote Lenin, "if we do not assume power now" (see p. 378).

In the letter "Marxism and Insurrection" and the article "Advice of an Onlooker", Lenin summed up and developed the views of Marx and Engels on insurrection as an art. He showed that the situation in Russia had developed in such a way that conditions favoured the success of an uprising. In these works he elaborated an approximate plan for the uprising.

At its meeting on September 15 (28) the Central Committee of the Bolshevik Party discussed Lenin's letters and started preparations for the uprising. The leaders of the bigger Party organisations were given warning of this. In the article "The Crisis Has Matured" Lenin defined the task of the day: "The whole future of the Russian revolution is at stake. The honour of the Bolshevik Party is in question. The whole future of the international workers' revolution for socialism is at stake" (see p. 390).

Lenin prepared the Party and the working class for the insurrection, instilling into them profound faith in the victory of the socialist revolution. In his article "Can the Bolsheviks Retain State Power?" Lenin showed that the Bolshevik Party, the advanced workers, had every opportunity of taking state power into their own hands, of retaining that power, and using it to emancipate the working people from every kind of oppression and exploitation.

By a decision of the Central Committee Lenin travelled illegally from Vyborg to Petrograd on October 7 (20) to take over the direct leadership of the insurrection.

Included in this volume are the documents of the historic meetings of the Central Committee on October 10 and 16 (23 and 29), 1917. At the first meeting Lenin spoke on the current situation. The resolution adopted after his report was the one he had written containing a directive to the Party on the immediate preparation of an armed uprising.

At the meeting of the extended Central Committee on October 16 (29), where Lenin again spoke, the resolution on the armed uprising was confirmed. The Party Revolutionary Military Centre, to be included in the composition of the Revolutionary Military Committee, was set up to lead the insurrection.

At both meetings Zinoviev and Kamenev spoke against the Central Committee's decision on the insurrection. Trotsky also tried to prevent its taking place. He proposed postponing the

insurrection until the Second Congress of Soviets, which was tantamount to sabotaging it. In this volume the reader will find Lenin's wrathful letters to members of the Bolshevik Party and to the Central Committee on the treacherous act of Zinoviev and Kamenev, who published a statement in the semi-Menshevik *Novaya Zhizn* announcing their disagreement with the decision on the insurrection taken by the Central Committee and thus betraying a secret decision of the Party to the enemy. Lenin branded them as strike-breakers of the revolution and demanded that they be expelled from the Party.

Lenin insisted on launching the insurrection before the Second Congress of Soviets in order to get ahead of the enemy, who had been warned by the traitors and were expecting the uprising to begin on the opening day of the Congress. In his letter to Central Committee members dated October 24 (November 6) Lenin proposed launching the uprising immediately: "History will not forgive revolutionaries for procrastinating when they could be victorious today (and they certainly will be victorious today), while they risk losing much tomorrow, in fact, they risk losing everything" (see p. 460).

Lenin arrived at the Smolny Institute late in the evening of October 24 (November 6) and took the leadership of the insurrection in his own hands. His plan for the uprising was successfully carried out by the insurgent workers and soldiers. In this volume the reader will also find the historic appeal "To the Citizens of Russia!", written by Lenin and issued by the Revolutionary Military Committee on the morning of October 25 (November 7). The appeal told the peoples of Russia that the Provisional Government had been overthrown and state power transferred to the Soviets.

The Communist Party led the working class to victory in the socialist revolution under Lenin's leadership. The Party equipped the working class with a scientifically substantiated programme of struggle and correct strategy and tactics. The Party proved able to implement Lenin's ideas because it was supported by the revolutionary activity of the millions. The Great October Socialist Revolution ushered in a new era in world history, the era of the triumph of socialism and communism.

Of the documents of the Second All-Russia Congress of Soviets of Workers' and Soldiers' Deputies, that opened on the evening of October 25 (November 7), this volume contains Lenin's manifesto "To Workers, Soldiers and Peasants!", his reports on peace and on land, and the decision on the formation of a workers' and peasants' Soviet government. His reports outlined and gave reasons for the first decrees of the October Revolution. The Decree on Peace proposed to the peoples and governments of the belligerent



countries that they begin immediate negotiations for the conclusion of a general, just and democratic peace. This Decree opened the road for a revolutionary way out of the imperialist war and laid the foundations of the peace policy of the Soviet state. It proclaimed the idea of the possibility of the peaceful coexistence of states with different social and economic systems. In their foreign policy the Communist Party and the Soviet state are applying Lenin's principles firmly and unswervingly and are conducting a struggle for the peace and security of the peoples.

The Decree on Land announced the confiscation of all landed estates without compensation and their transfer to the people. Private ownership of land was abolished and the land was placed at the disposal of the working people without payment. Thus were the age-old aspirations and hopes of the peasants fulfilled.

The Congress unanimously adopted Lenin's Decrees on Peace and on Land. These decrees played an important part in consolidating the dictatorship of the proletariat and in building socialism in the Soviet Union. The Congress set up the Soviet Government—the Council of People's Commissars—under the chairmanship of Lenin.

The writings and speeches included in the present volume reflect Lenin's gigantic work in organising the Soviet Republic, the world's first socialist state, in strengthening the dictatorship of the proletariat and in consolidating the ranks of the Communist Party. Among them are "Speeches at a Meeting of the Central Committee of the R.S.D.L.P.(B.), November 1 (14), 1917", "Resolution of the Central Committee of the R.S.D.L.P.(B.) on the Opposition Within the Central Committee, November 2 (15), 1917", "Ultimatum from the Majority on the Central Committee of the R.S.D.L.P.(B.) to the Minority", all of which were directed against the treacherous line adopted by Kamenev, Zinoviev, Rykov and their supporters, who tried to undermine the dictatorship of the proletariat and disrupt the Party ranks. They demanded the formation of a government with the participation of the defeated counter-revolutionary parties of Mensheviks and Socialist-Revolutionaries. Such a demand was tantamount to a rejection of Soviet power, a return to bourgeois parliamentarism and the re-establishment of capitalism. On Lenin's proposal, the Central Committee roundly condemned the capitulators. The appeal of the Central Committee to all Party members and all working people of Russia, drawn up by Lenin, stated: "There must be no government in Russia other than the *Soviet Government*" (see p. 492).

The Communist Party was confronted with tasks of the greatest importance. The old, bourgeois state machinery had to be smashed and a new, Soviet state apparatus set up in its place. Lenin analysed and found solutions to the main problems of the political, economic and cultural development of the young Soviet

Republic. Among the documents published here are "Draft Regulations on Workers' Control", "Draft Decree on the Nationalisation of the Banks and on Measures Necessary for Its Implementation" and Lenin's speeches at meetings of the All-Russia Central Executive Committee on the nationalisation of the banks and the creation of the Supreme Economic Council.

To counter the furious resistance of the landowners and capitalists and the sabotage of civil servants and high-placed managerial staff Lenin called on the working people to take power into their own hands and defend and strengthen Soviet power. He wrote in his appeal "To the Population": "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" (see p. 489).

The Soviet Government dissolved the Constituent Assembly, which opened on January 5 (18), 1918, and had been elected according to election lists drawn up before the October Revolution. The Constituent Assembly refused to recognise Soviet power and confirm its decrees, thus opposing itself to the will of the majority of the people. In his "Theses on the Constituent Assembly", his article "People from Another World" and his "Draft Decree on the Dissolution of the Constituent Assembly", Lenin revealed the counter-revolutionary nature of the Assembly. He showed that only the Soviets were capable of overcoming the resistance of the propertied classes and laying the foundations of socialist society.

In his "Reply to Questions from Peasants", his letter to *Pravda*, "Alliance Between the Workers and the Working and Exploited Peasants", and in his draft resolution and concluding speech at the Extraordinary All-Russia Congress of Soviets of Peasants' Deputies, Lenin explained the policy of Soviet power in the agrarian question. These and other of Lenin's works show what great significance he attached to consolidating the alliance of the working class and the masses of working peasants as the basis of Soviet power.

A historic document in this volume is the "Declaration of Rights of the Working and Exploited People". The Declaration says that Russia is proclaimed a Republic of Soviets of Workers', Soldiers' and Peasants' Deputies; it endorsed the Decrees on Peace, on Land and others and approved the foreign policy of the Soviet Government, stressing that the Soviet Republic was founded on the basis of a voluntary union of free nations as a federation of Soviet national republics. The implementation of the national programme of the Bolshevik Party, the abolition of national oppression and the securing of equal rights for all the peoples of



Russia in all spheres of economic, political and cultural life, was one of the great gains of the October Revolution.

The Declaration was approved on January 12 (25), 1918 by the Third All-Russia Congress of Soviets of Workers', Soldiers' and Peasants' Deputies. It formed the basis of the first Soviet Constitution.

In the "Report on the Activities of the Council of People's Commissars" which Lenin delivered at the Third Congress of Soviets, he summed up the work of the Soviet Government for the first two and a half months of Soviet power. Dealing with the gains achieved by the October Revolution Lenin emphasised its great international significance: "Our socialist Republic of Soviets will stand secure, as a torch of international socialism and as an example to all the working people" (see p. 554).

The young Soviet Republic could not consider its position sound as long as it remained in a state of war. Britain, France and the U.S.A. had rejected peace negotiations, so the Soviet Government decided to start negotiations with Germany and Austria.

"On the History of the Question of the Unfortunate Peace", "Draft Wireless Message to the Government of the German Reich", "Position of the Central Committee of the R.S.D.L.P. (Bolsheviks) on the Question of the Separate and Annexationist Peace", "A Painful but Necessary Lesson", "Strange and Monstrous"—all reflect the intense struggle of the Communist Party, headed by Lenin, to withdraw Russia from the war and conclude peace. Lenin demanded the immediate conclusion of peace with Germany. A respite was essential to strengthen Soviet power, and build up a Red Army capable of defending the country from imperialist aggressors.

The documents here published reflect the consistent and implacable struggle conducted by Lenin against Trotsky and against the anti-Party group of Left Communists headed by Bukharin, who joined the bourgeoisie, the Socialist-Revolutionaries and Mensheviks in opposing the conclusion of peace, thereby placing the young Soviet Republic in jeopardy. Trotsky, who was chairman of the Soviet peace delegation at Brest, violated the direct instructions from the Party and refused to conclude peace with Germany. Simultaneously he announced that the Soviet Republic was putting an end to the war with Germany and demobilising its army. Taking advantage of this announcement the German Government launched an offensive along the whole front. The Soviet Republic was in grave danger.

On February 21, 1918, Lenin addressed an appeal to the people in the name of the Council of People's Commissars, "The Socialist Fatherland Is in Danger!" The Soviet Government called on workers and peasants to defend the Republic to the last breath

against the hordes of bourgeois-imperialist Germany. The people arose in defence of their socialist fatherland. The young Red Army fought heroically and beat back the attacks of the German army.

Trotsky and the Left Communists continued their struggle against the Party and the Soviet Government in order to sabotage the peace treaty even after the resolution on the conclusion of the Brest Treaty had been passed on February 23, 1918, by the Central Committee after Lenin's report. The Left Communists demanded the continuation of the war and declared that in the interests of the world revolution the possibility must be faced of even losing Soviet power which, they said, was becoming purely formal. Lenin exposed the Left Communists and called their declaration "strange and monstrous". "Perhaps the authors believe that the interests of the world revolution require that it should be *given a push*, and that such a push can be given only by war, never by peace, which might give the people the impression that imperialism was being 'legitimised'? Such a 'theory' would be completely at variance with Marxism, for Marxism has always been opposed to 'pushing' revolutions, which develop with the growing acuteness of the class antagonisms that engender revolutions" (see p. 570). Lenin emphasised that the preservation of Soviet power, the strengthening of the dictatorship of the proletariat, would be the best support for the world emancipation movement of the working people.

The Seventh Congress of the Russian Communist Party (Bolsheviks) was called for the final solution of the question of peace. The Congress was held from March 6 to March 8 in Petrograd; there developed a fierce struggle against Trotsky and the Left Communists, who tried to split the Party and undermined the dictatorship of the proletariat. In this volume are Lenin's report and his concluding speech on the question of war and peace. Lenin pointed out that through the fault of those who had sabotaged the timely conclusion of a peace treaty the Soviet Republic had had to sign a treaty that was much more humiliating and whose terms were extremely harsh. He presented the task of strengthening the Soviet Republic's defence potential, carrying out the most decisive measures to establish revolutionary law and order, establish iron discipline and organise and strengthen the Red Army. The Congress confirmed the correctness of Lenin's line on the question of peace and recognised the need to endorse the peace treaty with Germany that the Soviet Government had signed. The Left Communists and Trotsky suffered a defeat.

Having heard Lenin's report on the review of the Programme and on changing the name of the Party, the Congress adopted a resolution renaming the Party the Russian Communist Party

(Bolsheviks). A commission headed by Lenin was elected to draw up the new Party Programme.

The Extraordinary Fourth All-Russia Congress of Soviets, which met in Moscow on March 14, 1918, approved the Brest Peace Treaty. In this volume we print Lenin's report to the Congress on the ratification of the treaty and the resolution written by him, which the Congress adopted.

Under the difficult and involved conditions obtaining in the international sphere and at home, the Communist Party, under the leadership of Lenin, succeeded in withdrawing Russia from the war and gaining a breathing-space that made it possible to introduce order into the country's economy, create the Red Army and preserve and consolidate the Soviet state.

Lenin's articles on questions of rehabilitating the country's economy and reorganising it on socialist lines and on the development of socialist construction are published in the volume. They are: "How to Organise Competition?", "The Chief Task of Our Day", "The Immediate Tasks of the Soviet Government", "'Left-Wing' Childishness and the Petty-Bourgeois Mentality", and also his speeches at the Congress of Commissars for Labour and at the First Congress of Economic Councils.

Lenin taught that the main task of the socialist revolution, as distinct from the bourgeois revolution, is creative work to build a new socialist society. Such work can be successfully accomplished provided the working people in their entirety actively participate in it. He showed that the people themselves are the creators of socialism; they thirst for great, vital and creative work and independently undertake the building of socialist society.

He wrote of the sharp turn in history, when, out of the depths of suffering, torment, hunger and barbarity, the road had opened up towards "the bright future of communist society, universal prosperity and enduring peace" (see p. 618). Lenin stressed the point that the country possessed the resources, both natural and in manpower, which, with the scope given to the creative urge of the people by the revolution, are sufficient to build up a truly mighty and abundant Russia.

Lenin wrote his work "The Immediate Tasks of the Soviet Government" in the spring of 1918; in it he outlined the fundamentals of the economic policy of proletarian dictatorship and sketched concrete paths and concrete methods for the socialist transformation of the country.

When the transition from capitalism to socialism in Soviet Russia was under way, there existed elements of five socio-economic systems. Petty production predominated at that time. The Party had to overcome the strong petty-bourgeois elements, strengthen the socialist sector until it became at first the dominant and then



the only and all-embracing element. Lenin placed in the forefront of economic organisation the task of establishing strict and nationwide accounting for and control over production and distribution. He stressed that only in this way would the struggle against the bourgeoisie be successful and socialism firmly established.

The achievement of a labour productivity greater than that under capitalism was, in Lenin's opinion, one of the basic tasks of the socialist revolution. He said that first of all heavy industry was to be developed for the fulfilment of this task. Other important conditions were the improvement of the people's cultural level, better labour discipline, the development of a new conscientious discipline on the part of the working people, better organisation of labour, and technical progress. He called for a ruthless struggle against petty-bourgeois lack of discipline, against idlers, self-seekers and speculators.

Lenin dealt with questions of the guidance of economy by the proletarian state, formulated the principle of democratic centralism, the sound, planned organisation of the guidance of production and the introduction of one-man management. Lenin considered socialist emulation to be one of the most important methods of communist education. This was a question he had raised and had answered in the article "How to Organise Competition?", which he wrote in December 1917. He showed that emulation could be developed on a mass scale only under socialism, that the majority of the working people could be drawn into it and would be able to display those abilities and talents that are so abundant among the people.

"The Immediate Tasks of the Soviet Government" is an article of great historical importance and an outstanding Marxist work.

The "Left Communists" were opposing Lenin's programme; the position they adopted was actually a vindication of petty-bourgeois elements and anarchist lack of discipline. In his "Left-Wing" Childishness and the Petty-Bourgeois Mentality" Lenin sharply criticised the "Left Communists" and showed that they expressed the interests of the "frenzied petty bourgeois" (see p. 686).

This volume also includes "Theses on the Present Political Situation", written in May 1918. In this article Lenin deals with the state of affairs in the country at that time. The food situation was extremely grave. The kulaks and speculators were violating the grain monopoly and hiding the grain in an attempt to crush the revolution by bringing about famine. The battle for bread merged with the battle for socialism. In his letter to the Petrograd workers, "On the Famine", Lenin proposed the organisation of a mass campaign of advanced workers to go to the countryside to help the poor peasants in their struggle against the kulaks. Many thousands of workers answered the Party's call. Groups of workers

headed by Communists were formed and sent to the villages; they rallied the poor peasants, helped them crush the resistance of the kulaks and find the surplus grain the kulaks had hidden.

Committees of the Poor Peasants were formed in June 1918 as outposts of proletarian dictatorship in the villages. They conducted a struggle against the kulaks and did much to supply the urban population and the army with bread. This organisation had great significance for the development of the socialist revolution and the strengthening of Soviet power in the countryside.

At the Seventh Congress of the R.C.P.(B.), Lenin said: "... as we begin socialist reforms we must have a clear conception of the goal towards which these reforms are in the final analysis directed, that is, the creation of a communist society..." (see p. 605). Taking its inspiration from Lenin's ideas, the Communist Party of the Soviet Union is directing the mighty forces of the Soviet people towards accomplishing the great task of building communism in the U.S.S.R.

Lenin's ideas are the lodestar for the working people of the People's Democracies on their path of struggle to build socialism and communism under the leadership of Communist and Workers' Parties. They guide the peoples of the whole world in their struggle for peace, democracy and socialism.

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# LETTERS FROM AFAR<sup>1</sup>

## FIRST LETTER

### THE FIRST STAGE OF THE FIRST REVOLUTION

The first revolution engendered by the imperialist world war has broken out. The first revolution but certainly not the last.

Judging by the scanty information available in Switzerland, the first stage of this first revolution, namely, of the *Russian* revolution of March 1, 1917, has ended. This first stage of our revolution will certainly not be the last.

How could such a "miracle" have happened, that in only eight days—the period indicated by Mr. Milyukov in his boastful telegram to all Russia's representatives abroad—a monarchy collapsed that had maintained itself for centuries, and that in spite of everything had managed to maintain itself throughout the three years of the tremendous, nation-wide class battles of 1905-07?

There are no miracles in nature or history, but every abrupt turn in history, and this applies to every revolution, presents such a wealth of content, unfolds such unexpected and specific combinations of forms of struggle and alignment of forces of the contestants, that to the lay mind there is much that must appear miraculous.

The combination of a number of factors of world-historic importance was required for the tsarist monarchy to have collapsed in a few days. We shall mention the chief of them.

Without the tremendous class battles and the revolutionary energy displayed by the Russian proletariat during the three years 1905-07, the second revolution could not possibly have been so rapid in the sense that its *initial stage* was completed in a few days. The first revolution (1905) deeply ploughed the soil, uprooted age-old prejudices, awakened millions of workers and tens of millions of peasants to political life and political struggle and revealed to each other—and to the world—*all* classes (and all the principal parties) of Russian society in their true character and in the true alignment of their interests, their forces, their modes of action, and their immediate and ultimate aims. This first revolution, and the succeeding period of counter-revolution (1907-14), laid

bare the very essence of the tsarist monarchy, brought it to the "utmost limit", exposed all the rottenness and infamy, the cynicism and corruption of the tsar's clique, dominated by that monster, Rasputin. It exposed all the bestiality of the Romanov family—those pogrom-mongers who drenched Russia in the blood of Jews, workers and revolutionaries, those *landlords*, "first among peers", *who own millions* of dessiatines of land and are prepared to stoop to any brutality, to any crime, to ruin and strangle any number of citizens in order to preserve the "sacred right of property" for themselves *and their class*.

Without the Revolution of 1905-07 and the counter-revolution of 1907-14, there could not have been that clear "self-determination" of all classes of the Russian people and of the nations inhabiting Russia, that determination of the relation of these classes to each other and to the tsarist monarchy, which manifested itself during the eight days of the February-March Revolution of 1917. This eight-day revolution was "performed", if we may use a metaphorical expression, as though after a dozen major and minor rehearsals; the "actors" knew each other, their parts, their places and their setting in every detail, through and through, down to every more or less important shade of political trend and mode of action.

For the first great Revolution of 1905, which the Guchkovs and Milyukovs and their hangers-on denounced as a "great rebellion", led, after the lapse of twelve years, to the "brilliant", the "glorious" Revolution of 1917—the Guchkovs and Milyukovs have proclaimed it "glorious" because it has put them in power (*for the time being*). But this required a great, mighty and all-powerful "stage manager", capable, on the one hand, of vastly accelerating the course of world history, and, on the other, of engendering world-wide crises of unparalleled intensity—economic, political, national and international. Apart from an extraordinary acceleration of world history, it was also necessary that history make particularly abrupt turns, in order that at one such turn the filthy and blood-stained cart of the Romanov monarchy should be overturned at *one stroke*.

This all-powerful "stage manager", this mighty accelerator was the imperialist world war.

That it is a world war is now indisputable, for the United States and China are already half-involved today, and will be fully involved tomorrow.

That it is an imperialist war on *both* sides is now likewise indisputable. Only the capitalists and their hangers-on, the social-patriots and social-chauvinists, or—if instead of general critical definitions we use political names familiar in Russia—only the Guchkovs and Lvovs, Milyukovs and Shingaryovs on the one hand,

and only the Gvozdyovs, Potresovs, Chkhenkelis, Kerenskys and Chkheidzes on the other, can deny or gloss over this fact. *Both* the German and the Anglo-French bourgeoisie are waging the war for the plunder of foreign countries and the strangling of small nations, for financial world supremacy and the division and redivision of colonies, and in order to save the tottering capitalist regime by misleading and dividing the workers of the various countries.

The imperialist war was bound, with objective inevitability, immensely to accelerate and intensify to an unprecedented degree the class struggle of the proletariat against the bourgeoisie; it was bound to turn into a civil war between the hostile classes.

This *transformation has been started* by the February-March Revolution of 1917, the first stage of which has been marked, firstly, by a joint blow at tsarism struck by two forces: one, the whole of bourgeois and landlord Russia, with all her unconscious hangers-on and all her conscious leaders, the British and French ambassadors and capitalists, and the other, *the Soviet of Workers' Deputies*, which has begun to win over the soldiers' and peasants' deputies.

These three political camps, these three fundamental political forces—(1) the tsarist monarchy, the head of the feudal landlords, of the old bureaucracy and the military caste; (2) bourgeois and landlord-Octoberist-Cadet<sup>2</sup> Russia, behind which trailed the petty bourgeoisie (of which Kerensky and Chkheidze are the principal representatives); (3) the Soviet of Workers' Deputies, which is seeking to make the entire proletariat and the entire mass of the poorest part of the population its allies—these three *fundamental* political forces fully and clearly revealed themselves even in the eight days of the “first stage” and even to an observer so remote from the scene of events as the present writer, who is obliged to content himself with the meagre foreign press dispatches.

But before dealing with this in greater detail, I must return to the part of my letter devoted to a factor of prime importance, namely, the imperialist world war.

The war shackled the belligerent powers, the belligerent groups of capitalists, the “bosses” of the capitalist system, the slave-owners of the capitalist slave system, to each other with *chains of iron*. *One bloody clot*—such is the social and political life of the present moment in history.

The socialists who deserted to the bourgeoisie on the outbreak of the war—all these Davids and Scheidemanns in Germany and the Plekhanovs, Potresovs, Gvozdyovs and Co. in Russia—clamoured loud and long against the “illusions” of the revolutionaries, against the “illusions” of the Basle Manifesto,<sup>3</sup> against the “farcical dream” of turning the imperialist war into a civil



war. They sang praises in every key to the strength, tenacity and adaptability allegedly revealed by capitalism—*they*, who had aided the capitalists to “adapt”, tame, mislead and divide the working classes of the various countries!

But “he who laughs last laughs best”. The bourgeoisie has been unable to delay for long the revolutionary crisis engendered by the war. That crisis is growing with irresistible force in all countries, beginning with Germany, which, according to an observer who recently visited that country, is suffering “brilliantly organised famine”, and ending with England and France, where *famine is also* looming, but where organisation is far less “brilliant”.

It was natural that the revolutionary crisis should have broken out *first of all* in tsarist Russia, where the disorganisation was most appalling and the proletariat most revolutionary (not by virtue of any special qualities, but because of the living traditions of 1905). This crisis was precipitated by the series of extremely severe defeats sustained by Russia and her allies. They shook up the old machinery of government and the old order and roused the anger of *all* classes of the population against them; they embittered the army, wiped out a very large part of the old commanding personnel, composed of die-hard aristocrats and exceptionally corrupt bureaucratic elements, and replaced it by a young, fresh, mainly bourgeois, commoner, petty-bourgeois personnel. Those who, grovelling to the bourgeoisie or simply lacking backbone, howled and wailed about “defeatism”, are now faced by the fact of the historical connection between the defeat of the most backward and barbarous tsarist monarchy and the *beginning* of the revolutionary conflagration.

But while the defeats early in the war were a negative factor that precipitated the upheaval, the *connection* between Anglo-French finance capital, Anglo-French imperialism, and Russian Octobrist-Cadet capital was a factor that hastened this crisis by the direct *organisation of a plot* against Nicholas Romanov.

This highly important aspect of the situation is, for obvious reasons, hushed up by the Anglo-French press and maliciously emphasised by the German. We Marxists must soberly face the truth and not allow ourselves to be confused either by the lies, the official sugary diplomatic and ministerial lies, of the first group of imperialist belligerents, or by the sniggering and smirking of their financial and military rivals of the other belligerent group. The whole course of events in the February-March Revolution clearly shows that the British and French embassies, with their agents and “connections”, who had long been making the most desperate efforts to prevent “separate” agreements and a separate peace between Nicholas II (and last, we hope, and we will

endeavour to make him that) and Wilhelm II, directly organised a plot in conjunction with the Octobrists and Cadets, in conjunction with a section of the generals and army and St. Petersburg garrison officers, with the express object of *deposing* Nicholas Romanov.

Let us not harbour any illusions. Let us not make the mistake of those who—like certain O.C.<sup>4</sup> supporters or Mensheviks<sup>5</sup> who are oscillating between Gvozdyov-Potresov policy and internationalism and only too often slip into petty-bourgeois pacifism—are now ready to extol “agreement” between the workers’ party and the Cadets, “support” of the latter by the former, etc. In conformity with the old (and by no means Marxist) doctrine that they have learned by rote, they are trying to veil the plot of the Anglo-French imperialists and the Guchkovs and Milyukovs aimed at deposing the “chief warrior”, Nicholas Romanov, and putting more energetic, fresh and more capable *warriors* in his place.

That the revolution succeeded so quickly and—seemingly, at the first superficial glance—so radically, is only due to the fact that, as a result of an extremely unique historical situation, *absolutely dissimilar currents, absolutely heterogeneous* class interests, *absolutely contrary* political and social strivings have *merged*, and in a strikingly “harmonious” manner. Namely, the conspiracy of the Anglo-French imperialists, who impelled Milyukov, Guchkov and Co. to seize power *for the purpose of continuing the imperialist war*, for the purpose of conducting the war still more ferociously and obstinately, for the purpose of *slaughtering fresh millions* of Russian workers and peasants in order that the Guchkovs might obtain Constantinople, the French capitalists Syria, the British capitalists Mesopotamia, and so on. This on the one hand. On the other, there was a profound proletarian and mass popular movement of a revolutionary character (a movement of the entire poorest section of the population of town and country) for *bread, for peace, for real freedom*.

It would simply be foolish to speak of the revolutionary proletariat of Russia “supporting” the Cadet-Octobrist imperialism, which has been “patched up” with English money and is as abominable as tsarist imperialism. The revolutionary workers were destroying, have already destroyed to a considerable degree and will destroy to its foundations the infamous tsarist *monarchy*. They are neither elated nor dismayed by the fact that at certain brief and exceptional historical conjunctures *they were aided* by the struggle of Buchanan, Guchkov, Milyukov and Co. to *replace* one monarch by *another monarch*, also preferably a Romanov!

Such, and only such, is the way the situation developed. Such, and only such, is the view that can be taken by a politician who does not fear the truth, who soberly weighs the balance of social

forces in the revolution, who appraises every "current situation" not only from the standpoint of all its present, current peculiarities, but also from the standpoint of the more fundamental motivations, the deeper interest-relationship of the proletariat and the bourgeoisie, both in Russia and throughout the world.

The workers of Petrograd, like the workers of the whole of Russia, self-sacrificingly fought the tsarist monarchy—fought for freedom, land for the peasants, and *for peace*, against the imperialist slaughter. To continue and intensify that slaughter, Anglo-French imperialist capital hatched Court intrigues, conspired with the officers of the Guards, incited and encouraged the Guchkovs and Milyukovs, and fixed up a *complete new government*, which in fact *did seize power* immediately the proletarian struggle had struck the first blows at tsarism.

This new government, in which Lvov and Guchkov of the Octobrists and Peaceful Renovation Party,<sup>6</sup> yesterday's abettors of Stolypin the Hangman, control *really important* posts, vital posts, decisive posts, the army and the bureaucracy—this government, in which Milyukov and the other Cadets are more than anything decorations, a signboard—they are there to deliver sentimental professorial speeches—and in which the Trudovik<sup>7</sup> Kerensky is a balalaika on which they play to deceive the workers and peasants—this government is not a fortuitous assemblage of persons.

They are representatives of the new class that has risen to political power in Russia, the class of capitalist landlords and bourgeoisie which has long been *ruling* our country economically, and which during the Revolution of 1905-07, the counter-revolutionary period of 1907-14, and finally—and with especial rapidity—the war period of 1914-17, was quick to organise itself politically, taking over control of the local government bodies, public education, congresses of various types, the Duma,<sup>8</sup> the war industries committees,<sup>9</sup> etc. This new class was already "almost completely" *in power* by 1917, and therefore it needed only the first blows to bring tsarism to the ground and clear the way for the bourgeoisie. The imperialist war, which required an incredible exertion of effort, so accelerated the course of backward Russia's development that we have "at one blow" (*seemingly* at one blow) *caught up* with Italy, England, and almost with France. We have obtained a "coalition", a "national" (i.e., adapted for carrying on the imperialist slaughter and for fooling the people) "parliamentary" government.

Side by side with this government—which as regards the *present* war is but the agent of the billion-dollar "firm" "England and France"—there has arisen the chief, unofficial, as yet undeveloped and comparatively weak *workers' government*, which expresses the interests of the proletariat and of the entire poor



section of the urban and rural population. This is the *Soviet of Workers' Deputies* in Petrograd, which is seeking connections with the soldiers and peasants, and also with the agricultural workers, with the latter particularly and primarily, of course, more than with the peasants.

Such is the *actual* political situation, which we must first endeavour to define with the greatest possible objective precision, in order that Marxist tactics may be based upon the only possible solid foundation—the foundation of *facts*.

The tsarist monarchy has been smashed, but not finally destroyed.

The Octobrist-Cadet bourgeois government, which wants to fight the imperialist war “to a finish”, and which in reality is the agent of the financial firm “England and France”, is *obliged to promise* the people the maximum of liberties and sops compatible with the maintenance of its power over the people and the possibility of continuing the imperialist slaughter.

The Soviet of Workers' Deputies is an organisation of the workers, the embryo of a workers' government, the representative of the interests of the entire mass of the *poor* section of the population, i.e., of nine-tenths of the population, which is striving for *peace, bread and freedom*.

The conflict of these three forces determines the situation that has now arisen, a situation that is *transitional* from the first stage of the revolution to the second.

The antagonism between the first and second force is *not* profound, it is temporary, the result *solely* of the present conjuncture of circumstances, of the abrupt turn of events in the imperialist war. The *whole* of the new government is monarchist, for Kerensky's *verbal* republicanism simply cannot be taken seriously, is not worthy of a statesman and, *objectively*, is political chicanery. The new government, which has not dealt the tsarist monarchy the final blow, has already *begun to strike a bargain* with the landlord Romanov dynasty. The bourgeoisie of the Octobrist-Cadet type *needs* a monarchy to serve as the head of the bureaucracy and the army in order to protect the privileges of capital against the working people.

He who says that the workers must *support* the new government in the interests of the struggle against tsarist reaction (and apparently this is being said by the Potresovs, Gvozdyovs, Chkhenskis and also, all *evasiveness* notwithstanding, by Chkheidze) is a traitor to the workers, a traitor to the cause of the proletariat, to the cause of peace and freedom. For actually, *precisely* this new government is *already* bound hand and foot by imperialist capital, by the imperialist policy of *war* and plunder, has *already* begun to strike a bargain (without consulting the people!) with the dynasty,

is already working to restore the tsarist monarchy, is already soliciting the candidature of Mikhail Romanov as the new kinglet, is already taking measures to prop up the throne, to substitute for the legitimate (lawful, ruling by virtue of the old law) monarchy a Bonapartist, plebiscite monarchy (ruling by virtue of a fraudulent plebiscite).

No, if there is to be a real struggle against the tsarist monarchy, if freedom is to be guaranteed in fact and not merely in words, in the glib promises of Milyukov and Kerensky, the workers must *not* support the new government; the government must "support" the workers! For the only *guarantee* of freedom and of the complete destruction of tsarism lies in *arming the proletariat*, in strengthening, extending and developing the role, significance and power of the Soviet of Workers' Deputies.

All the rest is mere phrase-mongering and lies, self-deception on the part of the politicians of the liberal and radical camp, fraudulent trickery.

Help, or at least do not hinder, the arming of the workers, and freedom in Russia will be invincible, the monarchy irrestorable, the republic secure.

Otherwise the Guchkovs and Milyukovs will restore the monarchy and grant *none*, absolutely none of the "liberties" they promised. All bourgeois politicians in *all* bourgeois revolutions "fed" the people and fooled the workers with promises.

Ours is a bourgeois revolution, *therefore*, the workers must support the bourgeoisie, say the Potresovs, Gvozdyovs and Chkheidzes, as Plekhanov said yesterday.

Ours is a bourgeois revolution, we Marxists say, *therefore* the workers must open the eyes of the people to the deception practised by the bourgeois politicians, teach them to put no faith in words, to depend entirely on their *own* strength, their *own* organisation, their *own* unity, and their *own* weapons.

The government of the Octobrists and Cadets, of the Guchkovs and Milyukovs, *cannot*, even if it sincerely wanted to (only infants can think that Guchkov and Lvov are sincere), *cannot* give the people *either peace, bread, or freedom*.

It cannot give peace because it is a war government, a government for the continuation of the imperialist slaughter, a government of *plunder*, out to plunder Armenia, Galicia and Turkey, annex Constantinople, reconquer Poland, Courland, Lithuania, etc. It is a government bound hand and foot by Anglo-French imperialist capital. Russian capital is merely a branch of the world-wide "firm" which manipulates *hundreds of billions* of rubles and is called "England and France".

It cannot give bread because it is a bourgeois government. *At best*, it can give the people "brilliantly organised famine", as

Germany has done. But the people will not accept famine. They will learn, and probably very soon, that there is bread and that it can be obtained, but only by methods that *do not respect the sanctity of capital and landownership*.

It cannot give freedom because it is a landlord and capitalist government which *fears* the people and has already begun to strike a bargain with the Romanov dynasty.

The tactical problems of our immediate attitude towards this government will be dealt with in another article. In it, we shall explain the peculiarity of the present situation, which is a *transition* from the first stage of the revolution to the second, and why the slogan, the "task of the day", at *this* moment must be: *Workers, you have performed miracles of proletarian heroism, the heroism of the people, in the civil war against tsarism. You must perform miracles of organisation, organisation of the proletariat and of the whole people, to prepare the way for your victory in the second stage of the revolution.*

Confining ourselves for the *present* to an analysis of the class struggle and the alignment of class forces at this stage of the revolution, we have still to put the question: who are the proletariat's *allies* in *this* revolution?

It has *two* allies: first, the broad mass of the semi-proletarian and partly also of the small-peasant population, who number scores of millions and constitute the overwhelming majority of the population of Russia. For this mass peace, bread, freedom and land are *essential*. It is inevitable that to a certain extent this mass will be under the influence of the bourgeoisie, particularly of the petty bourgeoisie, to which it is most akin in its conditions of life, vacillating between the bourgeoisie and the proletariat. The cruel lessons of war, and they will be *the more* cruel the more vigorously the war is prosecuted by Guchkov, Lvov, Milyukov and Co., will *inevitably* push this mass towards the proletariat, compel it to follow the proletariat. We must now take advantage of the relative freedom of the new order and of the Soviets of Workers' Deputies to *enlighten* and *organise* this mass first of all and above all. Soviets of Peasants' Deputies and Soviets of Agricultural Workers—that is one of our most urgent tasks. In this connection we shall strive not only for the agricultural workers to establish their own separate Soviets, but also for the propertyless and poorest peasants to organise *separately* from the well-to-do peasants. The special tasks and special forms of organisation urgently needed at the present time will be dealt with in the next letter.

Second, the ally of the Russian proletariat is the proletariat of all the belligerent countries and of all countries in general. At present this ally is to a large degree repressed by the war, and all too often the European social-chauvinists speak in its name—men

who, like Plekhanov, Gvozdyov and Potresov in Russia, have deserted to the bourgeoisie. But the liberation of the proletariat from their influence has progressed with every month of the imperialist war, and the Russian revolution will *inevitably* immensely hasten this process.

With these two allies, the proletariat, *utilising the peculiarities* of the present transition situation, can and will proceed, first, to the achievement of a democratic republic and complete victory of the peasantry over the landlords, instead of the Guchkov-Milyukov semi-monarchy, and then to *socialism*, which alone can give the war-weary people *peace, bread and freedom*.

*N. Lenin*

Written on March 7 (20), 1917

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## **THE TASKS OF THE PROLETARIAT IN THE PRESENT REVOLUTION<sup>10</sup>**

Published April 7, 1917  
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Signed: *N. Lenin*

*Collected Works, Vol. 24*





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I did not arrive in Petrograd until the night of April 3, and therefore at the meeting on April 4 I could, of course, deliver the report on the tasks of the revolutionary proletariat only on my own behalf, and with reservations as to insufficient preparation.

The only thing I could do to make things easier for myself—and for *honest* opponents—was to prepare the theses *in writing*. I read them out, and gave the text to Comrade Tsereteli. I read them *twice* very slowly: first at a meeting of Bolsheviks and then at a meeting of both Bolsheviks and Mensheviks.

I publish these personal theses of mine with only the briefest explanatory notes, which were developed in far greater detail in the report.

## THESES

1) In our attitude towards the war, which under the new government of Lvov and Co. unquestionably remains on Russia's part a predatory imperialist war owing to the capitalist nature of that government, not the slightest concession to "revolutionary defencism" is permissible.

The class-conscious proletariat can give its consent to a revolutionary war, which would really justify revolutionary defencism, only on condition: (a) that the power pass to the proletariat and the poorest sections of the peasants aligned with the proletariat; (b) that all annexations be renounced in deed and not in word; (c) that a complete break be effected in actual fact with all capitalist interests.

In view of the undoubted honesty of those broad sections of the mass believers in revolutionary defencism who accept the war only as a necessity, and not as a means of conquest, in view of the fact that they are being deceived by the bourgeoisie, it is necessary with particular thoroughness, persistence and patience to explain their error to them, to explain the inseparable connection existing

between capital and the imperialist war, and to prove that without overthrowing capital *it is impossible* to end the war by a truly democratic peace, a peace not imposed by violence.

The most widespread campaign for this view must be organised in the army at the front.

Fraternisation.

2) The specific feature of the present situation in Russia is that the country is *passing* from the first stage of the revolution—which, owing to the insufficient class-consciousness and organisation of the proletariat, placed power in the hands of the bourgeoisie—to its *second* stage, which must place power in the hands of the proletariat and the poorest sections of the peasants.

This transition is characterised, on the one hand, by a maximum of legally recognised rights (Russia is *now* the freest of all the belligerent countries in the world); on the other, by the absence of violence towards the masses, and, finally, by their unreasoning trust in the government of capitalists, those worst enemies of peace and socialism.

This peculiar situation demands of us an ability to adapt ourselves to the *special* conditions of Party work among unprecedentedly large masses of proletarians who have just awakened to political life.

3) No support for the Provisional Government; the utter falsity of all its promises should be made clear, particularly of those relating to the renunciation of annexations. Exposure in place of the impermissible, illusion-breeding “demand” that *this* government, a government of capitalists, should *cease* to be an imperialist government.

4) Recognition of the fact that in most of the Soviets of Workers’ Deputies our Party is in a minority, so far a small minority, as against *a bloc of all* the petty-bourgeois opportunist elements, from the Popular Socialists<sup>11</sup> and the Socialist-Revolutionaries<sup>12</sup> down to the Organising Committee (Chkheidze, Tsereteli, etc.), Steklov, etc., etc., who have yielded to the influence of the bourgeoisie and spread that influence among the proletariat.

The masses must be made to see that the Soviets of Workers’ Deputies are the *only possible* form of revolutionary government, and that therefore our task is, as long as *this* government yields to the influence of the bourgeoisie, to present a patient, systematic, and persistent *explanation* of the errors of their tactics, an explanation especially adapted to the practical needs of the masses.

As long as we are in the minority we carry on the work of criticising and exposing errors and at the same time we preach the necessity of transferring the entire state power to the Soviets of Workers’ Deputies, so that the people may overcome their mistakes by experience.

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 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.

9) Party tasks:

(a) Immediate convocation of a Party congress;

(b) Alteration of the Party Programme, mainly:

(1) On the question of imperialism and the imperialist war;

(2) On our attitude towards the state and *our* demand for a "commune state"\*\*\*;

(3) Amendment of our out-of-date minimum programme.

(c) Change of the Party's name.\*\*\*

10) A new International.

We must take the initiative in creating a revolutionary International, an International against the *social-chauvinists* and against the "Centre".\*\*\*

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

\*\* i. e., a state of which the Paris Commune was the prototype.

\*\*\* Instead of "Social-Democracy", whose official leaders *throughout* the world have betrayed socialism and deserted to the bourgeoisie (the "defencists" and the vacillating "Kautskyites"), we must call ourselves the *Communist Party*.

\*\*\*\* The "Centre" in the international Social-Democratic movement is the trend which vacillates between the chauvinists (= "defencists") and interna-

In order that the reader may understand why I had especially to emphasise as a rare exception the "case" of honest opponents, I invite him to compare the above theses with the following objection by Mr. Goldenberg: Lenin, he said, "has planted the banner of civil war in the midst of revolutionary democracy" (quoted in No. 5 of Mr. Plekhanov's *Yedinstvo*<sup>13</sup>).

Isn't it a gem?

I write, announce and elaborately explain: "In view of the undoubted honesty of those *broad* sections of the *mass* believers in revolutionary defencism . . . in view of the fact that they are being deceived by the bourgeoisie, it is necessary with *particular* thoroughness, persistence and *patience* to explain their error to them. . . ."

Yet the bourgeois gentlemen who call themselves Social-Democrats, who *do not* belong either to the *broad* sections or to the *mass* believers in defencism, with serene brow present my views thus: "The banner (!)\* of civil war" (of which there is not a word in the theses and not a word in my speech!) has been planted (!) "in the midst (!!) of revolutionary democracy. . . ."

What does this mean? In what way does this differ from riot-inciting agitation, from *Russkaya Volya*<sup>14</sup>?

I write, announce and elaborately explain: "The Soviets of Workers' Deputies are the *only possible* form of revolutionary government, and therefore our task is to present a patient, systematic, and persistent *explanation* of the errors of their tactics, an explanation especially adapted to the practical needs of the masses."

Yet opponents of a certain brand present my views as a call to "civil war in the midst of revolutionary democracy"!

I attacked the Provisional Government for *not* having appointed an early date, or any date at all, for the convocation of the Constituent Assembly, and for confining itself to promises. I argued that *without* the Soviets of Workers' and Soldiers' Deputies the convocation of the Constituent Assembly is not guaranteed and its success is impossible.

And the view is attributed to me that I am opposed to the speedy convocation of the Constituent Assembly!

I would call this "raving", had not decades of political struggle taught me to regard honesty in opponents as a rare exception.

Mr. Plekhanov in his paper called my speech "raving". Very good, Mr. Plekhanov! But look how awkward, uncouth, and slow-

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tionalists, i.e., Kautsky and Co. in Germany, Longuet and Co. in France, Chkheidze and Co. in Russia, Turati and Co. in Italy, MacDonald and Co. in Britain, etc.

\* Interpolations in square brackets (within passages quoted by Lenin) have been introduced by Lenin, unless otherwise indicated.—Ed.



witted you are in your polemics. If I delivered a raving speech for two hours, how is it that an audience of hundreds tolerated this "raving"? Further, why does your paper devote a whole column to an account of the "raving"? Inconsistent, highly inconsistent!

It is, of course, much easier to shout, abuse, and howl than to attempt to relate, to explain, to recall *what* Marx and Engels said in 1871, 1872 and 1875 about the experience of the Paris Commune<sup>15</sup> and about the *kind* of state the proletariat needs.

Ex-Marxist Mr. Plekhanov evidently does not care to recall Marxism.

I quoted the words of Rosa Luxemburg, who on August 4, 1914,<sup>16</sup> called *German* Social-Democracy a "stinking corpse". And the Plekhanovs, Goldenbergs and Co. feel "offended". On whose behalf? On behalf of the *German* chauvinists, because they were called chauvinists!

They have got themselves in a mess, these poor Russian social-chauvinists—socialists in word and chauvinists in deed.

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## THE DUAL POWER

The basic question of every revolution is that of state power. Unless this question is understood, there can be no intelligent participation in the revolution, not to speak of guidance of the revolution.

The highly remarkable feature of our revolution is that it has brought about a *dual power*. This fact must be grasped first and foremost: unless it is understood, we cannot advance. We must know how to supplement and amend old "formulas", for example, those of Bolshevism, for while they have been found to be correct on the whole, their concrete realisation *has turned out to be* different. *Nobody* previously thought, or could have thought, of a dual power.

What is this dual power? Alongside the Provisional Government, the government of the *bourgeoisie*, another government has arisen, so far weak and incipient, but undoubtedly a government that actually exists and is growing—the Soviets of Workers' and Soldiers' Deputies.

What is the class composition of this other government? It consists of the proletariat and the peasants (in soldiers' uniforms). What is the political nature of this government? It is a revolutionary dictatorship, i.e., a power directly based on revolutionary seizure, on the direct initiative of the people from below, and *not on a law* enacted by a centralised state power. It is an entirely different kind of power from the one that generally exists in the parliamentary bourgeois-democratic republics of the usual type still prevailing in the advanced countries of Europe and America. This circumstance is often overlooked, often not given enough thought, yet it is the crux of the matter. *This* power is of *the same type* as the Paris Commune of 1871. The fundamental characteristics of this type are: (1) the source of power is not a law previously discussed and enacted by parliament, but the direct initiative of the people from below, in their local areas—direct "seizure", to use a current expression; (2) the replacement of the

police and the army, which are institutions divorced from the people and set against the people, by the direct arming of the whole people; order in the state under such a power is maintained by the armed workers and peasants *themselves*, by the armed people *themselves*; (3) officialdom, the bureaucracy, is either similarly replaced by the direct rule of the people themselves or at least placed under special control; they not only become elected officials, but are also *subject to recall* at the people's first demand; they are reduced to the position of simple agents; from a privileged group holding "jobs" remunerated on a high, bourgeois scale, they become workers of a special "arm of the service", whose remuneration *does not exceed* the ordinary pay of a competent worker.

This, and this *alone*, constitutes the *essence* of the Paris Commune as a special type of state. This essence has been forgotten or perverted by the Plekhanovs (downright chauvinists who have betrayed Marxism), the Kautskys (the men of the "Centre", i.e., those who vacillate between chauvinism and Marxism), and generally by all those Social-Democrats, Socialist-Revolutionaries, etc., etc., who now rule the roost.

They are trying to get away with empty phrases, evasions, subterfuges; they congratulate each other a thousand times upon the revolution, but refuse to *consider what* the Soviets of Workers' and Soldiers' Deputies *are*. They refuse to recognise the obvious truth that inasmuch as these Soviets exist, *inasmuch as* they are a power, we have in Russia a state of the *type* of the Paris Commune.

I have emphasised the words "inasmuch as", for it is only an incipient power. By direct agreement with the bourgeois Provisional Government and by a series of actual concessions, it has itself *surrendered and is surrendering* its positions to the bourgeoisie.

Why? Is it because Chkheidze, Tsereteli, Steklov and Co. are making a "mistake"? Nonsense. Only a philistine can think so—not a Marxist. The reason is *insufficient class-consciousness* and organisation of the proletarians and peasants. The "mistake" of the leaders I have named lies in their petty-bourgeois position, in the fact that instead of clarifying the minds of the workers, they are *befogging* them; instead of dispelling petty-bourgeois illusions, they are *instilling* them; instead of freeing the people from bourgeois influence, they are *strengthening* that influence.

It should be clear from this why our comrades, too, make so many mistakes when putting the question "simply": Should the Provisional Government be overthrown immediately?

My answer is: (1) it should be overthrown, for it is an oligarchic, bourgeois, and not a people's government, and *is unable* to provide peace, bread, or full freedom; (2) it cannot be overthrown just now, for it is being kept in power by a direct and indirect, a formal and

actual *agreement* with the Soviets of Workers' Deputies, and primarily with the chief Soviet, the Petrograd Soviet; (3) generally, it cannot be "overthrown" in the ordinary way, for it rests on the "*support*" given to the bourgeoisie by the *second* government—the Soviet of Workers' Deputies, and that government is the only possible revolutionary government, which directly expresses the mind and will of the majority of the workers and peasants. Humanity has not yet evolved and we do not as yet know a type of government superior to and better than the Soviets of Workers', Agricultural Labourers', Peasants', and Soldiers' Deputies.

To become a power the class-conscious workers must win the majority to their side. *As long as* no violence is used against the people there is no other road to power. We are not Blanquists,<sup>17</sup> we do not stand for the seizure of power by a minority. We are Marxists, we stand for proletarian class struggle against petty-bourgeois intoxication, against chauvinism-defencism, phrase-mongering and dependence on the bourgeoisie.

Let us create a proletarian Communist Party; its elements have already been created by the best adherents of Bolshevism; let us rally our ranks for proletarian class work; and larger and larger numbers from among the proletarians, from among the *poorest* peasants will range themselves on our side. For *actual experience* will from day to day shatter the petty-bourgeois illusions of those "Social-Democrats", the Chkheidzes, Tseretelis, Steklovs and others, the "Socialist-Revolutionaries", the petty bourgeois of an even purer water, and so on and so forth.

The bourgeoisie stands for the undivided power of the bourgeoisie.

The class-conscious workers stand for the undivided power of the Soviets of Workers', Agricultural Labourers', Peasants', and Soldiers' Deputies—for undivided power made possible not by adventurist acts, but by *clarifying* proletarian minds, by *emancipating* them from the influence of the bourgeoisie.

The petty bourgeoisie—"Social-Democrats", Socialist-Revolutionaries, etc., etc.—vacillate and, thereby, *hinder* this clarification and emancipation.

This is the actual, the *class* alignment of forces that determines our tasks.

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# **THE TASKS OF THE PROLETARIAT IN OUR REVOLUTION**

**DRAFT PLATFORM FOR THE PROLETARIAN PARTY**

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Signed: *N. Lenin*

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The moment of history through which Russia is now passing is marked by the following main characteristics:

### THE CLASS CHARACTER OF THE REVOLUTION THAT HAS TAKEN PLACE

1. The old tsarist power, which represented only a handful of feudalist landowners who commanded the entire state machinery (the army, the police, and the bureaucracy), has been overthrown and removed, but not completely destroyed. The monarchy has not been formally abolished; the Romanov gang continues to hatch monarchist intrigues. The vast landed possessions of the feudalist squirearchy have not been abolished.

2. State power in Russia has passed into the hands of a new *class*, namely, the bourgeoisie and landowners who had become bourgeois. *To this extent* the bourgeois-democratic revolution in Russia is completed.

Having come to power, the bourgeoisie has formed a bloc (an alliance) with the overt monarchists, who are notorious for their exceptionally ardent support of Nicholas the Bloody and Stolypin the Hangman in 1906-14 (Guchkov and other politicians to the right of the Cadets). The new bourgeois government of Lvov and Co. has attempted and has begun to negotiate with the Romanovs for the restoration of the monarchy in Russia. Behind a screen of revolutionary phrases, this government is appointing partisans of the old regime to key positions. It is striving to reform the whole machinery of state (the army, the police, and the bureaucracy) as little as possible, and has turned it over to the bourgeoisie. The new government has already begun to hinder in every way the revolutionary initiative of mass action and the seizure of power by the people *from below*, which is the *sole* guarantee of the real success of the revolution.

Up to now this government has not even fixed a date for the convocation of the Constituent Assembly. It is not laying a finger on the landed estates, which form the material foundation of feudal tsarism. This government does not even contemplate starting an investigation into, and making public, the activities of the monopolist financial organisations, the big banks, the syndicates and cartels of the capitalists, etc., or instituting control over them.

The key positions, the decisive ministerial posts in the new government (the Ministry of the Interior and the War Ministry, i.e., the command over the army, the police, the bureaucracy—the entire apparatus for oppressing the people) are held by outright monarchists and supporters of the system of big landed estates. The Cadets, those day-old republicans, republicans against their own will, have been assigned minor posts, having no direct relation to the *command* over the people or to the apparatus of state power. A. Kerensky, a Trudovik and “would-be socialist”, has no function whatsoever, except to lull the vigilance and attention of the people with sonorous phrases.

For all these reasons, the new bourgeois government does not deserve the confidence of the proletariat even in the sphere of internal policy, and no support of this government by the proletariat is admissible.

### THE FOREIGN POLICY OF THE NEW GOVERNMENT

3. In the field of foreign policy, which has now been brought to the forefront by objective circumstances, the new government is a government for the continuation of the imperialist war, a war that is being waged in alliance with the imperialist powers—Britain, France, and others—for division of the capitalist spoils and for subjugating small and weak nations.

Subordinated to the interests of Russian capitalism and its powerful protector and master—Anglo-French imperialist capitalism, the wealthiest in the world, the new government, notwithstanding the wishes expressed in no uncertain fashion on behalf of the obvious majority of the peoples of Russia through the Soviet of Soldiers’ and Workers’ Deputies, has taken no real steps to put an end to the slaughter of peoples for the interests of the capitalists. It has not even published the secret treaties of an obviously predatory character (for the partition of Persia, the plunder of China, the plunder of Turkey, the partition of Austria, the annexation of Eastern Prussia, the annexation of the German colonies, etc.), which, as everybody knows, bind Russia to Anglo-French predatory imperialist capital. It has *confirmed* these treaties concluded by tsarism, which for centuries robbed and oppressed more nations than other tyrants and despots, and which not only oppressed, but

also disgraced and demoralised the Great-Russian nation by making it an executioner of other nations.

The new government has confirmed these shameful depredatory treaties and has not proposed an immediate armistice to all the belligerent nations, in spite of the clearly expressed demand of the majority of the peoples of Russia, voiced through the Soviets of Workers' and Soldiers' Deputies. It has evaded the issue with the help of solemn, sonorous, bombastic, but absolutely empty declarations and phrases, which, in the mouths of bourgeois diplomats, have always served, and still serve, to deceive the trustful and naïve masses of the oppressed people.

4. Not only, therefore, is the new government unworthy of the slightest confidence in the field of foreign policy, but to go on demanding that it should proclaim the will of the peoples of Russia for peace, that it should renounce annexations, and so on and so forth, is in practice merely to deceive the people, to inspire them with false hopes and to retard the clarification of their minds. It is indirectly to reconcile them to the continuation of a war the true social character of which is determined not by pious wishes, but by the class character of the government that wages the war, by the connection between the class represented by this government and the imperialist finance capital of Russia, Britain, France, etc., by *the real and actual policy* which that class is pursuing.

## THE PECULIAR NATURE OF THE DUAL POWER AND ITS CLASS SIGNIFICANCE

5. The main feature of our revolution, a feature that most imperatively demands thoughtful consideration, is the *dual power* which arose in the very first days after the triumph of the revolution.

This dual power is evident in the existence of *two* governments: one is the main, the real, the actual government of the bourgeoisie, the "Provisional Government" of Lvov and Co., which holds in its hands all the organs of power; the other is a supplementary and parallel government, a "controlling" government in the shape of the Petrograd Soviet of Workers' and Soldiers' Deputies, which holds no organs of state power, but directly rests on the support of an obvious and indisputable majority of the people, on the armed workers and soldiers.

The class origin and the class significance of this dual power is the following: the Russian revolution of March 1917 not only swept away the whole tsarist monarchy, not only transferred the entire power to the bourgeoisie, but also *moved close towards* a revolutionary-democratic dictatorship of the proletariat and the



peasantry. The Petrograd and the other, the local, Soviets constitute precisely such a dictatorship (that is, a power resting not on the law but directly on the force of armed masses of the population), a dictatorship precisely of the above-mentioned classes.

6. The second highly important feature of the Russian revolution is the fact that the Petrograd Soviet of Soldiers' and Workers' Deputies, which, as everything goes to show, enjoys the confidence of most of the local Soviets, is *voluntarily* transferring state power to the bourgeoisie and *its* Provisional Government, is voluntarily *ceding* supremacy to the latter, having entered into an agreement to support it, and is limiting its own role to that of an observer, a supervisor of the convocation of the Constituent Assembly (the date for which has not even been announced as yet by the Provisional Government).

This remarkable feature, unparalleled in history in such a form, has led to the *interlocking of two* dictatorships: the dictatorship of the bourgeoisie (for the government of Lvov and Co. is a dictatorship, i.e., a power based not on the law, not on the previously expressed will of the people, but on seizure by force, accomplished by a definite class, namely, the bourgeoisie) and the dictatorship of the proletariat and the peasantry (the Soviet of Workers' and Soldiers' Deputies).

There is not the slightest doubt that such an "interlocking" *cannot* last long. Two powers *cannot exist* in a state. One of them is bound to pass away; and the entire Russian bourgeoisie is already trying its hardest everywhere and in every way to keep out and weaken the Soviets, to reduce them to nought, and to establish the undivided power of the bourgeoisie.

The dual power merely expresses a *transitional* phase in the revolution's development, when it has gone farther than the ordinary bourgeois-democratic revolution, *but has not yet reached* a "pure" dictatorship of the proletariat and the peasantry.

The class significance (and the class explanation) of this transitional and unstable situation is this: like all revolutions, our revolution required the greatest heroism and self-sacrifice on the part of the people for the struggle against tsarism; it also immediately *drew* unprecedentedly vast numbers of ordinary citizens *into the movement*.

From the point of view of science and practical politics, one of the chief symptoms of *every* real revolution is the unusually rapid, sudden, and abrupt increase in the number of "ordinary citizens" who begin to participate actively, independently and effectively in political life and in the *organisation of the state*.

Such is the case in Russia. Russia at present is seething. Millions and tens of millions of people, who had been politically dormant for ten years and politically crushed by the terrible oppression of



tsarism and by inhuman toil for the landowners and capitalists, *have awakened and taken eagerly* to politics. And who are these millions and tens of millions? For the most part small proprietors, petty bourgeois, people standing midway between the capitalists and the wage-workers. Russia is the most petty-bourgeois of all European countries.

A gigantic petty-bourgeois wave has swept over everything and overwhelmed the class-conscious proletariat, not only by force of numbers but also ideologically; that is, it has infected and imbued very wide circles of workers with the petty-bourgeois political outlook.

The petty bourgeoisie are in real life dependent upon the bourgeoisie, for they live like masters and not like proletarians (from the point of view of their *place* in social *production*) and follow the bourgeoisie in their outlook.

An attitude of unreasoning trust in the capitalists—the worst foes of peace and socialism—characterises the politics of the *popular masses* in Russia at the present moment; this is the fruit that has *grown* with revolutionary rapidity on the social and economic soil of the most petty-bourgeois of all European countries. This is the *class* basis for the “*agreement*” between the Provisional Government and the Soviet of Workers’ and Soldiers’ Deputies (I emphasise that I am referring not so much to the formal agreement as to *actual* support, a tacit agreement, the surrender of power inspired by unreasoning trust), an agreement which has given the Guchkovs a fat piece—real power—and the Soviet merely promises and honours (for the time being), flattery, phrases, assurances, and the bowings and scrapings of the Kerenskys.

On the other side we have the inadequate numerical strength of the proletariat in Russia and its insufficient class-consciousness and organisation.

All the Narodnik parties, including the Socialist-Revolutionaries, have always been petty-bourgeois. This is also true of the party of the Organising Committee (Chkheidze, Tsereteli, etc.). The non-party revolutionaries (Steklov and others) have similarly yielded to the tide, or have not been able to stand up to it, have not had the time to do it.

## THE PECULIAR NATURE OF THE TACTICS WHICH FOLLOW FROM THE ABOVE

7. For the Marxist, who must reckon with objective facts, with the masses and classes, and not with individuals and so on, the peculiar nature of the actual situation as described above must determine the peculiar nature of the tactics for the *present* moment.

This peculiarity of the situation calls, in the first place, for the "pouring of vinegar and bile into the sweet water of revolutionary-democratic phraseology" (as my fellow-member on the Central Committee of our Party, Teodorovich, so aptly put it at yesterday's session of the All-Russia Congress of Railwaymen in Petrograd). Our work must be one of criticism, of *explaining* the mistakes of the petty-bourgeois Socialist-Revolutionary and Social-Democratic parties, of preparing and welding the elements of a *consciously* proletarian, Communist Party, and of *curing* the proletariat of the "general" petty-bourgeois intoxication.

This *seems* to be "nothing more" than propaganda work, but in reality it is most *practical revolutionary* work; for there is no advancing a revolution that has come to a standstill, that has choked itself with phrases, and that keeps "marking time", *not because* of external obstacles, *not because of the violence* of the bourgeoisie (Guchkov is still only threatening to employ violence against the soldier mass), but *because* of the unreasoning trust of the people.

Only by overcoming this unreasoning trust (and we can and should overcome it only ideologically, by comradely persuasion, by pointing to the *lessons of experience*) can we set ourselves free from the prevailing *orgy of revolutionary phrase-mongering* and really stimulate the consciousness both of the proletariat and of the mass in general, as well as their bold and determined initiative *in the localities*—the independent realisation, development and consolidation of liberties, democracy, and the principle of people's ownership of all the land.

8. The world-wide experience of bourgeois and landowner governments has evolved *two* methods of keeping the people in subjection. The first is violence. Nicholas Romanov I, nicknamed Nicholas of the Big Stick, and Nicholas II, the Bloody, demonstrated to the Russian people the maximum of what can and cannot be done in the way of these hangmen's practices. But there is another method, best developed by the British and French bourgeoisie, who "learned their lesson" in a series of great revolutions and revolutionary movements of the masses. It is the method of deception, flattery, fine phrases, promises by the million, petty sops, and concessions of the unessential while retaining the essential.

The peculiar feature of the present situation in Russia is the transition at a dizzy speed from the first method to the second, from violent oppression of the people to *flattering* and deceiving the people by promises. Vaska the Cat listens, but goes on eating.<sup>18</sup> Milyukov and Guchkov are holding power, they are protecting the profits of the capitalists, conducting an imperialist war in the interests of Russian and Anglo-French capital, and trying to get away with promises, declamation and bombastic statements in

reply to the speeches of "cooks" like Chkheidze, Tsereteli and Steklov, who threaten, exhort, conjure, beseech, demand and proclaim. . . . Vaska the Cat listens, but goes on eating.

But from day to day trustful lack of reasoning and unreasoning trust will be falling away, especially among the proletarians and *poor* peasants, who are being taught by experience (by their social and economic position) to distrust the capitalists.

The leaders of the petty bourgeoisie "must" teach the people to trust the bourgeoisie. The proletarians must teach the people to distrust the bourgeoisie.

## REVOLUTIONARY DEFENCISM AND ITS CLASS SIGNIFICANCE

9. *Revolutionary defencism* must be regarded as the most important, the most striking manifestation of the petty-bourgeois wave that has swept over "nearly everything". It is the worst enemy of the further progress and success of the Russian revolution.

Those who have yielded on this point and have been unable to extricate themselves are lost to the revolution. But the masses yield in a different way from the leaders, and they extricate themselves *differently*, by a different course of development, by different means.

Revolutionary defencism is, on the one hand, a result of the deception of the masses by the bourgeoisie, a result of the trustful lack of reasoning on the part of the peasants and a section of the workers; it is, on the other, an expression of the interests and point of view of the small proprietor, who is to some extent interested in annexations and bank profits, and who "sacredly" guards the traditions of tsarism, which demoralised the Great Russians by making them do a hangman's work against the other peoples.

The bourgeoisie deceives the people by working on their noble pride in the revolution and by pretending that the *social and political* character of the war, as far as Russia is concerned, underwent a change because of this stage of the revolution, because of the substitution of the near-republic of Guchkov and Milyukov for the tsarist monarchy. And the people believed it—for a time—largely owing to age-old prejudices, which made them look upon the other peoples of Russia, i.e., the non-Great Russians, as something in the nature of a property and private estate of the Great Russians. This vile demoralisation of the Great-Russian people by tsarism which taught them to regard the other peoples as something inferior, something belonging "by right" to Great Russia, could not disappear *instantly*.



What is required of us is the *ability* to explain to the masses that the social and political character of the war is determined not by the "good will" of individuals or groups, or even of nations, but by the position of the *class* which conducts the war, by the class *policy* of which the war is a continuation, by the *ties* of capital, which is the dominant economic force in modern society, by the *imperialist character* of international capital, by Russia's dependence in finance, banking and diplomacy upon Britain, France, and so on. To explain this skilfully in a way the people would understand *is not easy*; none of us would be able to do it at once without committing errors.

But this, and only this, must be the aim or, rather, the message of our propaganda. The slightest concession to revolutionary defencism is a *betrayal of socialism*, a complete renunciation of *internationalism*, no matter by what fine phrases and "practical" considerations it may be justified.

The slogan "Down with the War!" is, of course, correct. But it fails to take into account the specific nature of the tasks of the present moment and the necessity of *approaching* the broad mass of the people *in a different way*. It reminds me of the slogan "Down with the Tsar!" with which the inexperienced agitator of the "good old days" went simply and directly to the countryside—and got a beating for his pains. The mass believers in revolutionary defencism are *honest*, not in the personal, but in the class sense, i.e., they belong to *classes* (workers and the peasant poor) which *in actual fact* have nothing to gain from annexations and the subjugation of other peoples. This is nothing like the bourgeois and the "intellectual" fraternity, who know very well that you *cannot* renounce annexations without renouncing the rule of capital, and who unscrupulously deceive the people with fine phrases, with unlimited promises and endless assurances.

The rank-and-file believer in defencism regards the matter in the simple way of the man in the street: "I don't want annexations, but the Germans are 'going for' *me*, therefore I'm defending a just cause and not any kind of imperialist interests at all." To a man like this it must be explained again and again that it is not a question of his personal wishes, but of mass, *class*, political relations and conditions, of the connection between the war and the interests of capital and the international network of banks, and so forth. Only such a struggle against defencism will be serious and will promise success—perhaps not a very rapid success, but one that will be real and enduring.

## HOW CAN THE WAR BE ENDED?

10. The war cannot be ended "at will". It cannot be ended by the decision of one of the belligerents. It cannot be ended by "sticking your bayonet into the ground", as one soldier, a defencist, expressed it.

The war cannot be ended by an "agreement" among the socialists of the various countries, by the "action" of the proletarians of all countries, by the "will" of the peoples, and so forth. All the phrases of this kind, which fill the articles of the defencist, semi-defencist, and semi-internationalist papers as well as innumerable resolutions, appeals, manifestos, and the resolutions of the Soviet of Soldiers' and Workers' Deputies—all such phrases are nothing but idle, innocent and pious wishes of the petty bourgeois. There is nothing more harmful than phrases like "ascertaining the will of the peoples for peace", like the *sequence* of revolutionary actions of the proletariat (after the Russian proletariat comes the turn of the German), etc. All this is Blancism, fond dreams, a playing at "political campaigning", and in reality just a repetition of the fable of Vaska the Cat.

The war is not a product of the evil will of rapacious capitalists, although it is undoubtedly being fought *only* in their interests and they alone are being enriched by it. The war is a product of half a century of development of world capitalism and of its billions of threads and connections. It is *impossible* to slip out of the imperialist war and achieve a democratic, non-coercive peace without overthrowing the power of capital and transferring state power to *another* class, the proletariat.

The Russian revolution of February-March 1917 was the beginning of the transformation of the imperialist war into a civil war. This revolution took the *first* step towards ending the war; but it requires a *second* step, namely, the transfer of state power to the proletariat, to make the end of the war a *certainty*. This will be the beginning of a "break-through" on a world-wide scale, a break-through in the front of capitalist interests; and only by breaking through *this* front *can* the proletariat save mankind from the horrors of war and endow it with the blessings of peace.

It is directly to such a "break-through" in the front of capitalism that the Russian revolution has *already* brought the Russian proletariat by creating the Soviets of Workers' Deputies.



## 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".<sup>49</sup> This is a state of the Paris Commune type, one in which a standing army and police divorced from the 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 revolution 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”.<sup>20</sup>

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 organisational development by 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 parlia-

mentary 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 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 to 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.

## THE AGRARIAN AND NATIONAL PROGRAMMES

13. At the present moment we cannot say for certain whether a mighty agrarian revolution will develop in the Russian countryside in the near future. We cannot say exactly how profound the class cleavage is among the peasants, which has undoubtedly grown more profound of late as a division into agricultural



labourers, wage-workers and poor peasants ("semi-proletarians"), on the one hand, and wealthy and middle peasants (capitalists and petty capitalists), on the other. Such questions will be, and can be, decided only by experience.

Being the party of the proletariat, however, we are unquestionably in duty bound not only immediately to advance an agrarian (land) programme but also to advocate practical measures which can be immediately realised *in the interests* of the peasant agrarian revolution in Russia.

We must demand the nationalisation of *all* the land, i.e., that all the land in the state should become the property of the central state power. This power must fix the size, etc., of the resettlement land fund, pass legislation for the conservation of forests, for land improvement, etc., and absolutely prohibit any middlemen to interpose themselves between the owner of the land, i.e., the state, and the tenant, i.e., the tiller (prohibit all subletting of land). However, the *disposal* of the land, the determination of the *local regulations* governing ownership and tenure of land, must in no case be placed in the hands of bureaucrats and officials, but wholly and exclusively in the hands of the regional and local *Soviets of Peasants' Deputies*.

In order to improve grain production techniques and increase output, and in order to develop rational cultivation on a large scale under public control, we must strive within the peasants' committees to secure the transformation of every confiscated landed estate into a large model farm controlled by the *Soviets of Agricultural Labourers' Deputies*.

In order to counteract the petty-bourgeois phrase-mongering and the policy prevailing among the Socialist-Revolutionaries, particularly the idle talk about "subsistence" standards or "labour" standards, "socialisation of the land", etc., the party of the proletariat must make it clear that small-scale farming under commodity production *cannot* save mankind from poverty and oppression.

Without necessarily splitting the Soviets of Peasants' Deputies at once, the party of the proletariat must explain the need for organising separate Soviets of Agricultural Labourers' Deputies and separate Soviets of deputies from the poor (semi-proletarian) peasants, or, at least, for holding regular separate conferences of deputies of *this class status* in the shape of separate groups or parties within the general Soviets of Peasants' Deputies. Otherwise all the honeyed petty-bourgeois talk of the Narodniks regarding the peasants in general will serve as a shield for the deception of the propertyless mass by the wealthy peasants, who are merely a variety of *capitalists*.

To counteract the bourgeois-liberal or purely bureaucratic ser-

mons preached by many Socialist-Revolutionaries and Soviets of Workers' and Soldiers' Deputies, who advise the peasants not to seize the landed estates and not to start the agrarian reform pending the convocation of the Constituent Assembly, the party of the proletariat must urge the peasants to carry out the agrarian reform at once on their own, and to confiscate the landed estates immediately, upon the decisions of the peasants' deputies in the localities.

At the same time, it is most important to insist on the necessity of *increasing* food production for the soldiers at the front and for the towns, and on the absolute inadmissibility of causing any damage or injury to livestock, implements, machinery, buildings, etc.

14. As regards the national question, the proletarian party first of all must advocate the proclamation and immediate realisation of complete freedom of secession from Russia for all the nations and peoples who were oppressed by tsarism, or who were forcibly joined to, or forcibly kept within the boundaries of, the state, i.e., annexed.

All statements, declarations and manifestos concerning renunciation of annexations that are not accompanied by the realisation of the right of secession in practice, are nothing but bourgeois deception of the people, or else pious petty-bourgeois wishes.

The proletarian party strives to create as large a state as possible, for this is to the advantage of the working people; it strives to *draw* nations *closer together*, and bring about their *further fusion*; but it desires to achieve this aim not by violence, but exclusively through a free fraternal union of the workers and the working people of all nations.

The more democratic the Russian republic, and the more successfully it organises itself into a Republic of Soviets of Workers' and Peasants' Deputies, the more powerful will be the force of *voluntary* attraction to such a republic on the part of the working people of *all* nations.

Complete freedom of secession, the broadest local (and national) autonomy, and elaborate guarantees of the rights of national minorities—this is the programme of the revolutionary proletariat.

## NATIONALISATION OF THE BANKS AND CAPITALIST SYNDICATES

15. Under no circumstances can the party of the proletariat set itself the aim of "introducing" socialism in a country of small peasants so long as the overwhelming majority of the population has not come to realise the need for a socialist revolution.



But only bourgeois sophists, hiding behind “near-Marxist” catchwords, can deduce from this truth a justification of the policy of postponing immediate revolutionary measures, the time for which is fully ripe; measures which *have been* frequently resorted to during the war by a number of bourgeois states, and which are absolutely indispensable in order to combat impending total economic disorganisation and famine.

Such measures as the nationalisation of the land, of all the banks and capitalist syndicates, or, at least, the *immediate* establishment of the *control* of the Soviets of Workers’ Deputies, etc., over them—measures which do not in any way constitute the “introduction” of socialism—must be absolutely insisted on, and, whenever possible, carried out in a revolutionary way. Without such measures, which are only steps towards socialism, and which are perfectly feasible economically, it will be impossible to heal the wounds caused by the war and to avert the impending collapse; and the party of the revolutionary proletariat will never hesitate to lay hands on the fabulous profits of the capitalists and bankers, who are enriching themselves on the war in a particularly scandalous manner.

## THE SITUATION WITHIN THE SOCIALIST INTERNATIONAL

16. The international obligations of the working class of Russia are precisely now coming to the forefront with particular force.

Only lazy people do not swear by internationalism these days. Even the chauvinist defencists, even Plekhanov and Potresov, even Kerensky, call themselves internationalists. It becomes the duty of the proletarian party all the more urgently, therefore, to clearly, precisely and definitely counterpose internationalism in deed to internationalism in word.

Mere appeals to the workers of all countries, empty assurances of devotion to internationalism, direct or indirect attempts to fix a “sequence” of action by the revolutionary proletariat in the various belligerent countries, laborious efforts to conclude “agreements” between the socialists of the belligerent countries *on the question* of the revolutionary struggle, all the fuss over the summoning of socialist congresses *for the purpose* of a peace campaign, etc., etc.—no matter how sincere the authors of such ideas, attempts, and plans may be—amount, as far as their *objective* significance is concerned, to mere phrase-mongering, and *at best* are innocent and pious wishes, fit only to conceal the *deception* of the people by the chauvinists. The *French* social-chauvinists, who are the most adroit and accomplished in methods of parlia-

mentary hocus-pocus, have long since broken the record for ranting and resonant pacifist and internationalist phrases *coupled with* the incredibly brazen betrayal of socialism and the International, the acceptance of posts in governments which conduct the imperialist war, the voting of credits *or loans* (as Chkhaidze, Skobelev, Tsereteli and Steklov have been doing recently in Russia), opposition to the revolutionary struggle in *their own country*, etc., etc.

Good people often forget the brutal and savage setting of the imperialist world war. This setting does not tolerate phrases, and mocks at innocent and pious wishes.

There is one, and only one, kind of real internationalism, and that is—working whole-heartedly for the development of the revolutionary movement and the revolutionary struggle in *one's own country*, and supporting (by propaganda, sympathy, and material aid) *this struggle*, this, *and only this*, line, in *every country* without exception.

Everything else is deception and Manilovism.<sup>21</sup>

During the two odd years of the war the international socialist and working-class movement in *every country* has evolved three trends. Whoever ignores *reality* and refuses to recognise the existence of these three trends, to analyse them, to fight consistently for the trend that is really internationalist, is doomed to impotence, helplessness and errors.

The three trends are:

1) The social-chauvinists, i.e., socialists in word and chauvinists in deed, people who recognise “defence of the fatherland” in an imperialist war (and above all in the present imperialist war).

These people are our *class* enemies. They have gone over to the bourgeoisie.

They are the majority of the official leaders of the official Social-Democratic parties in *all countries*—Plekhanov and Co. in Russia, the Scheidemanns in Germany, Renaudel, Guesde and Sembat in France, Bissolati and Co. in Italy, Hyndman, the Fabians<sup>22</sup> and the Labourites (the leaders of the “Labour Party”<sup>23</sup>) in Britain, Branting and Co. in Sweden, Troelstra and his party in Holland, Stauning and his party in Denmark, Victor Berger and the other “defenders of the fatherland” in America, and so forth.

2) The second trend, known as the “Centre”, consists of people who vacillate between the social-chauvinists and the true internationalists.

The “Centre” all vow and declare that they are Marxists and internationalists, that they are for peace, for bringing every kind of “pressure” to bear upon the governments, for “demanding” in every way that their own government should “ascertain the

will of the people for peace", that they are for all sorts of peace campaigns, for peace without annexations, etc., etc.—*and for peace with the social-chauvinists*. The "Centre" is for "unity", the "Centre" is opposed to a split.

The "Centre" is a realm of honeyed petty-bourgeois phrases, of internationalism in word and cowardly opportunism and fawning on the social-chauvinists in deed.

The crux of the matter is that the "Centre" is not convinced of the necessity for a revolution against one's own government; it does not preach revolution; it does not carry on a whole-hearted revolutionary struggle; and in order to evade such a struggle it resorts to the tritest ultra- "Marxist"-sounding *excuses*.

The social-chauvinists are our *class enemies*, they are *bourgeois* within the working-class movement. They represent a stratum, or groups, or sections of the working class which *objectively* have been bribed by the bourgeoisie (by better wages, positions of honour, etc.), and which help *their own* bourgeoisie to plunder and oppress small and weak peoples and to fight *for* the division of the capitalist spoils.

The "Centre" consists of routine-worshippers, eroded by the canker of legality, corrupted by the parliamentary atmosphere, etc., bureaucrats accustomed to snug positions and soft jobs. Historically and economically speaking, they are not a *separate* stratum but represent only a *transition* from a past phase of the working-class movement—the phase between 1871 and 1914, which gave much that is valuable to the proletariat, particularly in the indispensable art of slow, sustained and systematic organisational work on a large and very large scale—to a new *phase* that became *objectively* essential with the outbreak of the first imperialist world war, which inaugurated *the era of social revolution*.

The chief leader and spokesman of the "Centre" is Karl Kautsky, the most outstanding authority in the Second International (1889-1914), since August 1914 a model of utter bankruptcy as a Marxist, the embodiment of unheard-of spinelessness, and the most wretched vacillations and betrayals. This "Centrist" trend includes Kautsky, Haase, Ledebour and the so-called workers' or labour group<sup>24</sup> in the Reichstag; in France it includes Longuet, Pressemane and the so-called minoritaires<sup>25</sup> (Mensheviks) in general; in Britain, Philip Snowden, Ramsay MacDonald and many other leaders of the Independent Labour Party,<sup>26</sup> and some leaders of the British Socialist Party<sup>27</sup>; Morris Hillquit and many others in the United States; Turati, Trèves, Modigliani and others in Italy; Robert Grimm and others in Switzerland; Victor Adler and Co. in Austria; the party of the Organising Committee, Axelrod, Martov, Chkheidze, Tsereteli and others in Russia, and so forth.



Naturally, at times individuals unconsciously drift from the social-chauvinist to the "Centrist" position, and vice versa. Every Marxist knows that classes are distinct, even though individuals may move freely from one class to another; similarly, *trends* in political life are distinct in spite of the fact that individuals may change freely from one trend to another, and in spite of all attempts and efforts to *amalgamate* trends.

3) The third trend, that of the true internationalists, is best represented by the "Zimmerwald Left".<sup>28</sup> (We reprint as a supplement its manifesto of September 1915, to enable the reader to learn of the inception of this trend at first hand.)

Its distinctive feature is its complete break with both social-chauvinism and "Centrism", and its gallant revolutionary struggle against *its own* imperialist government and *its own* imperialist bourgeoisie. Its principle is: "Our chief enemy is at home." It wages a ruthless struggle against honeyed social-pacifist phrases (a social-pacifist is a socialist in word and a bourgeois pacifist in deed; bourgeois pacifists dream of an everlasting peace *without* the overthrow of the yoke and domination of capital) and against all *subterfuges* employed to deny the possibility, or the appropriateness, or the timeliness of a proletarian revolutionary struggle and of a proletarian socialist revolution *in connection* with the present war.

The most outstanding representative of this trend in Germany is the Spartacus group or the *Internationale* group,<sup>29</sup> to which Karl Liebknecht belongs. Karl Liebknecht is a most celebrated representative of this trend and of the *new*, and genuine, proletarian International.

Karl Liebknecht called upon the workers and soldiers of Germany to *turn their guns* against *their own* government. Karl Liebknecht did that openly from the rostrum of parliament (the Reichstag). He then went to a demonstration in Potsdamer Platz, one of the largest public squares in Berlin, with illegally printed leaflets proclaiming the slogan "Down with the Government!" He was arrested and sentenced to *hard labour*. He is now serving his term in a German convict prison, like *hundreds*, if not thousands, of other *true* German socialists who have been imprisoned for their anti-war activities.

Karl Liebknecht in his speeches and letters mercilessly attacked not only *his own* Plekhanovs and Potresovs (Scheidemanns, Legiens, Davids and Co.), *but also his own* Centrists, his own Chkheidzes and Tseretelis (Kautsky, Haase, Ledebour and Co.).

Karl Liebknecht and his friend Otto Rühle, two out of one hundred and ten deputies, violated discipline, destroyed the "unity" with the "Centre" and the chauvinists, and *went against*

*all of them.* Liebknecht *alone* represents socialism, the proletarian cause, the proletarian revolution. *All* the rest of German Social-Democracy, to quote the apt words of Rosa Luxemburg (also a member and one of the leaders of the Spartacus group), is a “*stinking corpse*”.

Another group of true internationalists in Germany is that of the Bremen paper *Arbeiterpolitik*.<sup>30</sup>

Closest to the internationalists in deed are: in France, Lorient and his friends (Bourderon and Merrheim have slid down to social-pacifism), as well as the Frenchman Henri Guilbeaux, who publishes in Geneva the journal *Demain*; in Britain, the newspaper *The Trade Unionist*, and *some* of the members of the British Socialist Party and of the Independent Labour Party (for instance, Russel Williams, who openly called for a break with the leaders who have *betrayed* socialism), the Scottish socialist school-teacher *MacLean*, who was sentenced to *hard labour* by the bourgeois government of Britain for his revolutionary fight against the war, and hundreds of British socialists who are in jail for the same offence. They, and they alone, are internationalists *in deed*. In the United States, the Socialist Labour Party<sup>31</sup> and those within the opportunist Socialist Party<sup>32</sup> who in January 1917 began publication of the paper, *The Internationalist*; in Holland, the Party of the “Tribunists”<sup>33</sup> which publishes the paper *De Tribune* (Pannekoek, Herman Gorter, Wijnkoop, and Henriette Roland-Holst, who, although Centrist at Zimmerwald, has now joined our ranks); in Sweden, the Party of the Young, or the Left,<sup>34</sup> led by Lindhagen, Ture Nerman, Carleson, Ström and Z. Höglund, who at Zimmerwald was personally active in the organisation of the “Zimmerwald Left”, and who is now in prison for his revolutionary fight against the war; in Denmark, Trier and his friends who have left the now purely *bourgeois* “Social-Democratic” Party of Denmark, headed by the *Minister* Stauning; in Bulgaria, the “Tessnyaki”<sup>35</sup>; in Italy, the nearest are Constantino Lazzari, secretary of the party, and Serrati, editor of the central organ, *Avanti!*<sup>36</sup>; in Poland, Radek, Hanecki and other leaders of the Social-Democrats united under the “Regional Executive”, and Rosa Luxemburg, Tyszka and other leaders of the Social-Democrats united under the “Chief Executive”; in Switzerland, those of the Left who drew up the argument for the “referendum” (January 1917) in order to fight the social-chauvinists and the “Centre” in *their own* country and who at the Zurich Cantonal Socialist Convention, held at Töss on February 11, 1917, moved a consistently revolutionary resolution against the war<sup>37</sup>; in Austria, the young Left-wing friends of Friedrich Adler, who acted partly through the Karl Marx Club in Vienna, now closed by the arch-reactionary



Austrian Government, which is ruining Adler's life for his heroic though ill-considered shooting at a minister, and so on.

It is not a question of shades of opinion, which certainly exist even among the Lefts. It is a question of *trend*. The thing is that it is not easy to be an internationalist in deed during a terrible imperialist war. Such people are few: but it is on such people *alone* that the future of socialism depends; they *alone* are the *leaders of the people*, and not their corrupters.

The distinction between the reformists and the revolutionaries, among the Social-Democrats, and socialists generally, was objectively bound to undergo a change under the conditions of the imperialist war. Those who confine themselves to "demanding" that the bourgeois governments should conclude peace or "ascertain the will of the peoples for peace", etc., are *actually* slipping into reforms. For, objectively, *the problem of the war* can be solved only in a *revolutionary way*.

There is no possibility of this war ending in a democratic, non-coercive peace or of the people being relieved of the burden of *billions* paid in interest to the capitalists, who have made fortunes out of the war, except through a revolution of the proletariat.

The most varied reforms can and must be demanded of the bourgeois governments, but one cannot, without sinking to Manilovism and reformism, demand that people and classes entangled by the thousands of threads of imperialist capital should *tear* those threads. And unless they are torn, all talk of a war against war is idle and deceitful prattle.

The "Kautskyites", the "Centre", are revolutionaries in word and reformists in deed, they are internationalists in word and accomplices of the social-chauvinists in deed.

## THE COLLAPSE OF THE ZIMMERWALD INTERNATIONAL.— THE NEED FOR FOUNDING A THIRD INTERNATIONAL

17. From the very outset, the Zimmerwald International adopted a vacillating, "Kautskyite", "Centrist" position, which immediately compelled the *Zimmerwald Left* to dissociate itself, to separate itself from the rest, and to issue *its own* manifesto (published in Switzerland in Russian, German and French).

The chief shortcoming of the Zimmerwald International, and the cause of its *collapse* (for politically and ideologically it has already collapsed), was its vacillation and indecision on such a momentous issue of *crucial* practical significance as that of breaking completely with social-chauvinism and the old social-

chauvinist International, headed by Vandervelde and Huysmans at The Hague (Holland), etc.

It is not as yet known in Russia that the Zimmerwald majority are *nothing but Kautskyites*. Yet this is the fundamental fact, one which cannot be ignored, and which is now generally known in Western Europe. Even that chauvinist, that extreme German chauvinist, Heilmann, editor of the ultra-chauvinistic *Chemnitzer Volksstimme* and contributor to Parvus's ultra-chauvinistic *Glocke*<sup>38</sup> (a "Social-Democrat", of course, and an ardent partisan of Social-Democratic "unity"), was compelled to acknowledge in the press that the Centre, or "Kautskyism", and the *Zimmerwald majority* were one and the same thing.

This fact was definitely established at the end of 1916 and the beginning of 1917. Although social-pacifism was condemned by the Kienthal Manifesto,<sup>39</sup> the *whole* Zimmerwald Right, the *entire* Zimmerwald majority, sank to social-pacifism: Kautsky and Co. in a series of utterances in January and February 1917; Bourderon and Merrheim in France, who cast their votes *in unanimity* with the social-chauvinists for the pacifist resolutions of the Socialist Party (December 1916) and of the Confédération Générale du Travail (the national organisation of the French trade unions, also in December 1916); Turati and Co. in Italy, where the entire party took up a social-pacifist position, while Turati himself, in a speech delivered on December 17, 1916, "slipped" (not by accident, of course) into *nationalist* phrases whitewashing the imperialist war.

In January 1917, the chairman of the Zimmerwald and Kienthal conferences, Robert Grimm, joined the social-chauvinists in *his own* party (Greulich, Pflüger, Gustav Müller and others) *against* the internationalists in deed.

At two conferences of *Zimmerwaldists* from various countries in January and February 1917, this equivocal, double-faced behaviour of the Zimmerwald majority was formally stigmatised by the Left internationalists of several countries: by Münzenberg, secretary of the international youth organisation and editor of the excellent internationalist publication *Die Jugendinternationale*<sup>40</sup>; by Zinoviev, representative of the Central Committee of our Party; by K. Radek of the Polish Social-Democratic Party (the "Regional Executive"), and by Hartstein, a German Social-Democrat and member of the Spartacus group.

Much is given to the Russian proletariat; nowhere in the world has the working class yet succeeded in developing so much revolutionary energy as in Russia. But to whom much is given, of him much is required.

The Zimmerwald bog can no longer be tolerated. We must not, for the sake of the Zimmerwald "Kautskyites", continue the

semi-alliance with the chauvinist International of the Plekhanovs and Scheidemanns. We must break with this International immediately. We must remain in Zimmerwald *only* for purposes of information.

It is we who must found, and right now, without delay, a *new*, revolutionary, proletarian International, or rather, we must not fear to acknowledge publicly that this new International is *already established* and operating.

This is the International of those "internationalists in deed" whom I precisely listed above. They and they alone are representatives of the revolutionary, internationalist mass, and not their corrupters.

And if socialists *of that type* are few, let every Russian worker ask himself whether there were many really class-conscious revolutionaries in Russia *on the eve* of the February-March revolution of 1917.

It is not a question of numbers, but of giving correct expression to the ideas and policies of the truly revolutionary proletariat. The thing is not to "proclaim" internationalism, but to be able to be an internationalist in deed, even when times are most trying.

Let us not deceive ourselves with hopes of agreements and international congresses. As long as the imperialist war is on, international intercourse is held in the iron vise of the military dictatorship of the imperialist bourgeoisie. If even the "republican" Milyukov, who is obliged to tolerate the parallel government of the Soviet of Workers' Deputies, *did not allow Fritz Platten*, the Swiss socialist, secretary of the party, an internationalist and participant in the Zimmerwald and Kienthal conferences, to enter Russia in April 1917, in spite of the fact that Platten has a Russian wife and was on his way to visit his wife's relatives, and in spite of the fact that he had taken part in the revolution of 1905 in Riga, for which he had been confined in a Russian prison, had given bail to the tsarist government for his release and wished to recover that bail—if the "republican" Milyukov could *do* such a thing in April 1917 in Russia, one can judge what value can be put on the promises and assurances, the phrases and declarations of the bourgeoisie on the subject of peace without annexations, and so on.

And the arrest of Trotsky by the British Government? And the refusal to allow Martov to leave Switzerland, and the attempt to lure him to Britain, where Trotsky's fate awaits him?

Let us harbour no illusions. We must not deceive ourselves.

To "wait" for international congresses or conferences is simply to *betray* internationalism, since it has been shown that even from Stockholm neither socialists loyal to internationalism *nor*

*even their letters* are allowed to come here, although this is quite possible and although a ferocious military censorship exists.

Our Party must not "wait", but must immediately *found* a Third International. Hundreds of socialists imprisoned in Germany and Britain will then heave a sigh of relief, thousands and thousands of German workers who are now holding strikes and demonstrations that are frightening that scoundrel and brigand, Wilhelm, will learn from *illegal* leaflets of our decision, of our fraternal confidence in Karl Liebknecht, and in him alone, of *our* decision to fight "revolutionary defencism" *even now*; they will read this and be strengthened in their revolutionary internationalism.

To whom much is given, of him much is required. No other country in the world is as free as Russia is *now*. Let us make use of this freedom, not to advocate support for the bourgeoisie, or bourgeois "revolutionary defencism", but in a bold, honest, proletarian, Liebknecht way to *found the Third International*, an International uncompromisingly hostile both to the social-chauvinist traitors and to the vacillating "Centrists".

18. After what has been said, there is no need to waste many words explaining that the amalgamation of Social-Democrats in Russia is out of the question.

It is better to remain with one friend only, like Liebknecht, and *that means remaining with the revolutionary proletariat*, than to entertain even for a moment any thought of amalgamation with the party of the Organising Committee, with Chkheidze and Tsereteli, who can tolerate a bloc with Potresov in *Rabochaya Gazeta*,<sup>41</sup> who voted for the loan in the Executive Committee of the Soviet of Workers' Deputies,<sup>42</sup> and who have sunk to "defencism".

Let the dead bury their dead.

Whoever wants to *help* the waverers must first stop wavering himself.

### WHAT SHOULD BE THE NAME OF OUR PARTY— ONE THAT WILL BE CORRECT SCIENTIFICALLY AND HELP TO CLARIFY THE MIND OF THE PROLETARIAT POLITICALLY?

19. I now come to the final point, the name of our Party. We must call ourselves the *Communist Party*—just as Marx and Engels called themselves.

We must repeat that we are Marxists and that we take as our basis the *Communist Manifesto*, which has been distorted and betrayed by the Social-Democrats on two main points: (1) the



working men have no country: "defence of the fatherland" in an imperialist war is a betrayal of socialism; and (2) the Marxist doctrine of the state has been distorted by the Second International.

The name "Social-Democracy" is *scientifically* incorrect, as Marx frequently pointed out, in particular, in the *Critique of the Gotha Programme* in 1875, and as Engels reaffirmed in a more popular form in 1894.<sup>43</sup> From capitalism mankind can pass directly only to socialism, i.e., to the social ownership of the means of production and the distribution of products according to the amount of work performed by each individual. Our Party looks farther ahead: socialism must inevitably evolve gradually into communism, upon the banner of which is inscribed the motto, "From each according to his ability, to each according to his needs".

That is my first argument.

Here is the second: the second part of the name of our Party (Social-Democrats) is also scientifically incorrect. Democracy is a form of *state*, whereas we Marxists are opposed to *every kind* of state.

The leaders of the Second International (1889-1914), Plekhanov, Kautsky and their like, have vulgarised and distorted Marxism.

Marxism differs from anarchism in that it recognises *the need for a state* for the purpose of the transition to socialism; but (and here is where we differ from Kautsky and Co.) *not a state of the type* of the usual parliamentary bourgeois-democratic republic, but a state like the Paris Commune of 1871 and the Soviets of Workers' Deputies of 1905 and 1917.

My third argument: *living reality*, the revolution, *has already actually* established in our country, albeit in a weak and embryonic form, precisely this new type of "state", which is not a state in the proper sense of the word.

This is *already* a matter of the practical action of the people, and not merely a theory of the leaders.

The state in the proper sense of the term is domination over the people by contingents of armed men divorced from the people.

Our *emergent* new state is also a state, for we too need contingents of armed men, we too need the *strictest* order, and must *ruthlessly* crush by force all attempts at either a tsarist or a Guchkov-bourgeois counter-revolution.

But our *emergent* new state is *no longer* a state in the proper sense of the term, for in some parts of Russia these contingents of armed men are *the masses themselves*, the entire people, and not certain privileged persons placed over the people, and divorced from the people, and for all practical purposes undisplaceable.



We must look forward, and not backward to the usual bourgeois type of democracy, which consolidated the rule of the bourgeoisie with the aid of the old, *monarchist* organs of administration, the police, the army and the bureaucracy.

We must look forward to the emergent new democracy, which is already ceasing to be a democracy, for democracy means the domination of the people, and the armed people cannot dominate themselves.

The term democracy is not only scientifically incorrect when applied to a Communist Party; it has now, since March 1917, simply become *blinkers* put on the eyes of the revolutionary people and *preventing* them from boldly and freely, on their own initiative, building up the new: the Soviets of Workers', Peasants', and all other Deputies, as *the sole power* in the "state" and as the harbinger of the "withering away" of the state *in every form*.

My fourth argument: we must reckon with the actual situation in which socialism finds itself internationally.

It is not what it was during the years 1871 to 1914, when Marx and Engels knowingly put up with the inaccurate, opportunist term "Social-Democracy". For *in those days*, after the defeat of the Paris Commune, history made slow organisational and educational work the task of the day. Nothing else was possible. The anarchists were then (as they are now) fundamentally wrong not only theoretically, but also economically and politically. The anarchists misjudged the character of the times, for they failed to understand the world situation: the worker of Britain corrupted by imperialist profits, the Commune defeated in Paris, the recent (1871) triumph of the bourgeois national movement in Germany, the age-long sleep of semi-feudal Russia.

Marx and Engels gauged the times accurately; they understood the international situation; they understood that the approach to the beginning of the social revolution must be *slow*.

We, in our turn, must also understand the specific features and tasks of the new era. Let us not imitate those sorry Marxists of whom Marx said: "I have sown dragon's teeth and harvested fleas."<sup>44</sup>

The objective inevitability of capitalism which grew into imperialism brought about the imperialist war. The war has brought mankind to the *brink of a precipice*, to the brink of the destruction of civilisation, of the brutalisation and destruction of more millions, countless millions, of human beings.

The *only* way out is through a proletarian revolution.

At the very moment when such a revolution is beginning, when it is taking its first hesitant, groping steps, steps betraying too great a confidence in the bourgeoisie, at such a moment

the majority (that is the truth, that is a fact) of the "Social-Democratic" leaders, of the "Social-Democratic" parliamentarians, of the "Social-Democratic" newspapers—and these are precisely the *organs* that influence the people—have *deserted* socialism, have *betrayed* socialism and have gone over to the side of "their own" national bourgeoisie.

The people have been confused, led astray and deceived by *these* leaders.

And we shall aid and abet that deception if we retain the old and out-of-date Party name, which is as decayed as the Second International!

Granted that "many" workers *understand* Social-Democracy in an honest way; but it is time to learn how to distinguish the subjective from the objective.

Subjectively, such Social-Democratic workers are most loyal leaders of the proletarians.

Objectively, however, the world situation is such that the old name of our Party *makes it easier* to fool the people and *impedes* the onward march; for at every step, in every paper, in every parliamentary group, the masses see *leaders*, i.e., people whose voices carry farthest and whose actions are most conspicuous; yet they are all "would-be Social-Democrats", they are all "for unity" with the betrayers of socialism, with the social-chauvinists; and they are all presenting for payment the old bills issued by "Social-Democracy". . . .

And what are the arguments against? . . . We'll be confused with the Anarchist-Communists, they say. . . .

Why are we not afraid of being confused with the Social-Nationalists, the Social-Liberals, or the Radical-Socialists, the foremost bourgeois party in the French Republic and the most adroit in the bourgeois deception of the people? . . . We are told: The people are used to it, the workers have come to "love" *their* Social-Democratic Party.

That is the only argument. But it is an argument that dismisses the science of Marxism, the tasks of the morrow in the revolution, the objective position of world socialism, the shameful collapse of the Second International, and the harm done to the practical cause by the packs of "would-be Social-Democrats" who surround the proletarians.

It is an argument of routinism, an argument of inertia, an argument of stagnation.

But we are out to rebuild the world. We are out to put an end to the imperialist world war into which hundreds of millions of people have been drawn and in which the interests of billions and billions of capital are involved, a war which cannot end in a truly

democratic peace without the greatest proletarian revolution in the history of mankind.

Yet we are afraid of our own selves. We are loth to cast off the "dear old" soiled shirt. . . .

But it is time to cast off the soiled shirt and to put on clean linen.

Petrograd, April 10, 1917

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## POSTSCRIPT

My pamphlet has become out of date owing to the general economic disorganisation and the inefficiency of the St. Petersburg presses. The pamphlet was written on April 10, 1917, today is May 28, and it has not come out yet!

It was written as a *draft* platform to propagandise my views *before* the All-Russia Conference of our Party, the Russian Social-Democratic Labour Party of Bolsheviks.<sup>45</sup> The pamphlet was typed in several copies and handed out to Party members before and during the Conference so that it did its job in part. But the Conference took place from April 24 to April 29, 1917, its resolutions have long since been published (see supplement to *Soldat-skaya Pravda* No. 13<sup>46</sup>) and the attentive reader will have noticed that my pamphlet often served as the original draft of those resolutions.

It is left for me to express the hope that the pamphlet will still be of some value because of its connection with those resolutions and because it explains them, and to deal here with two points.

I suggested on page 27 that we remain in Zimmerwald only for purposes of information.\* The Conference did not agree with me on this point, and I had to vote against the resolution on the International. It is now becoming obvious that the Conference made a mistake and that the course taken by events will soon correct it. By remaining in Zimmerwald we (even against our will) are helping delay the creation of the Third International; we are indirectly hampering its foundation, being burdened with the dead ballast of the ideologically and politically dead Zimmerwald.

In the eyes of the working-class parties of the whole world, our Party's position is now such that it is our *duty* to *found* a Third International without delay. *Today* there is nobody but us to do it, and procrastination can only do harm. If we remain

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\* See p. 74 of the present volume.—*Ed.*

in Zimmerwald for information only, we shall have our hands freed to establish the new International (and at the same time be able to *use* Zimmerwald should circumstances make it possible).

Because of the mistake made by the Conference, we must now wait passively, at least until July 5, 1917 (the date set for the Zimmerwald Conference, provided it is not postponed *again*! It has already been postponed once. . .).

The decision unanimously adopted by the Central Committee of our Party after the Conference and published in *Pravda* No. 55,<sup>47</sup> on May 12, has, however, gone half-way towards correcting the mistake; it has been resolved that we shall walk out of Zimmerwald if they decide to confer with ministers.\* I express the hope that the other half of the mistake will be speedily remedied, as soon as we convene the first international conference of Lefts (the "third trend", the "internationalists in deed", see above, pp. 23-25\*\*).

The second point I must deal with is the formation of the "coalition cabinet" on May 6, 1917.<sup>48</sup> On this point the pamphlet may *seem* to be particularly out of date.

But actually on this of all points it is not out of date at all. It is based *wholly* on the *class* analysis, a thing that the Mensheviks and Narodniks, who have provided six ministers as hostages to the ten capitalist ministers, stand in deadly fear of. And it is because the pamphlet is based wholly on a class analysis that it is not out of date—the only change made by Tsereteli, Chernov and Co. joining the cabinet was an *insignificant* one in the *form* of the agreement between the Petrograd Soviet and the capitalist government, and I deliberately stressed in my pamphlet (on page 8) that "I am referring not so much to the formal agreement as to actual support."\*\*\*

With each passing day it is becoming clearer that Tsereteli, Chernov and Co. are nothing more than hostages to the capitalists, that the "renewed" government is neither willing nor able to carry out any of its abundant promises either in foreign or domestic policies. Chernov, Tsereteli and Co. have committed political suicide by turning into assistants of the capitalists, into people who are actually strangling the revolution; Kerensky has come so low as to use force against the masses (cf. p. 9 of the pamphlet: "Guchkov is still only threatening to employ violence against the mass"\*\*\*\* but Kerensky *had to* carry out those threats).

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\* See *Collected Works*, Vol. 24, p. 388.—*Ed.*

\*\* See pp. 70-72 of the present volume.—*Ed.*

\*\*\* See p. 57 of the present volume.—*Ed.*

\*\*\*\* See p. 58 of the present volume.—*Ed.*



Chernov, Tsereteli and Co. have killed themselves and their parties—the Mensheviks and Socialist-Revolutionaries—politically. The people will realise this more and more clearly as the days go by.

The coalition cabinet is only a passing moment in the development of the fundamental class contradictions of our revolution briefly analysed in the pamphlet. This situation cannot last long—we must either go backward to counter-revolution all along the line or forward to the transfer of state power to other classes. At a time of revolution, when the imperialist world war is in progress, we cannot stand still.

*N. Lenin*

St. Petersburg, May 28, 1917

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## LESSONS OF THE CRISIS

Petrograd and the whole of Russia have passed through a serious political crisis, the first political crisis since the revolution.

On April 18 the Provisional Government issued its unhappily notorious Note, which confirmed the predatory aims of the war clearly enough to arouse the indignation of the masses, who had honestly believed in the desire (and ability) of the capitalists to "renounce annexations". On April 20-21 Petrograd was in a turmoil. The streets were crowded; day and night knots and groups of people stood about, and meetings of various sizes sprang up everywhere; big street processions and demonstrations went on without a break. Yesterday evening, April 21, the crisis, or, at any rate, the first stage of the crisis, apparently came to an end with the Executive Committee of the Soviet of Workers' and Soldiers' Deputies, and later the Soviet itself, declaring themselves satisfied with the "explanations", the amendments to the Note and the "elucidations" made by the government (which in fact boil down to empty phrases, saying absolutely nothing, changing nothing and committing the government to nothing). They considered the "incident settled".

Whether the masses consider the "incident settled", the future will show. Our task now is to make a careful study of the *forces*, the classes, that revealed themselves in the crisis, and to draw the relevant lessons for our proletarian party. For it is the great significance of all crises that they make manifest what has been hidden; they cast aside all that is relative, superficial, and trivial; they sweep away the political litter and reveal the real mainsprings of the *class struggle*.

Strictly speaking, the capitalist government on April 18 merely reiterated its previous notes, in which the imperialist war was invested with diplomatic equivocations. The soldiers were angry because they had honestly believed in the sincerity and peaceful intentions of the capitalists. The demonstrations began

as *soldiers'* demonstrations, under the contradictory, misguided and ineffectual slogan: "Down with Milyukov" (as though a change of persons or groups could change the *substance* of policy!).

This means that the broad, unstable, and vacillating mass, which is closest to the peasantry and which by its scientific class definition is petty-bourgeois, swung *away from* the capitalists *towards* the revolutionary workers. It was the swing or movement of this mass, strong enough to be a *decisive* factor, that caused the crisis.

It was at this point that other sections began to stir: *not* the middle but the extreme elements, *not* the intermediary petty bourgeoisie but the bourgeoisie and the proletariat, started to come out on to the streets and organise.

The bourgeoisie seized Nevsky Prospekt—or "Milyukov" Prospekt as one paper called it—and the adjacent quarters of prosperous Petrograd, the Petrograd of the capitalists and the government officials. Officers, students, and "the middle classes" demonstrated *in favour* of the Provisional Government. Among the slogans, "Down with Lenin" frequently appeared on the banners.

The proletariat rallied in *its own* centres, the working-class suburbs, around the slogans and appeals of our Party's Central Committee. On April 20-21 the Central Committee adopted resolutions, which were immediately passed on to the proletariat through the Party organisations. The workers poured through the *poor*, less central districts, and then in groups got through to Nevsky. By their mass character and solidarity, these demonstrations were very different from those of the bourgeoisie. Many banners carried the inscription "All Power to the Soviet of Workers' and Soldiers' Deputies".

On Nevsky there were clashes. The "hostile" demonstrations tore down each other's banners. The Executive Committee received news by telephone from various places that there was shooting on both sides, that there were killed and wounded; but the information was extremely contradictory and unconfirmed.

The bourgeoisie shouted about the "spectre of civil war", thus expressing its fear that the real masses, the actual majority of the nation, might seize power. The petty-bourgeois leaders of the Soviet, the Mensheviks and Narodniks—who since the revolution in general, and during the crisis in particular, have had no definite party policy—allowed themselves to be intimidated. In the Executive Committee almost half the votes were cast against the Provisional Government on the eve of the crisis, but now thirty-four votes (with nineteen against) are cast *in favour* of returning to a policy of confidence in and agreement with the capitalists.

And the "incident" was considered "settled".

What is the *essence* of the class struggle? The capitalists are *for* dragging out the war under cover of empty phrases and false promises. They are caught in the meshes of Russian, Anglo-French and *American* banking capital. The proletariat, as represented by its class-conscious vanguard, stands *for* the transfer of power to the revolutionary class, the working class and the semi-proletarians, *for* the development of a world workers' revolution, a revolution which is clearly developing also in Germany, and *for* terminating the war by means of *such* a revolution.

The vast mass of people, chiefly the petty bourgeoisie, who still believe the Menshevik and Narodnik leaders and who have been absolutely intimidated by the bourgeoisie and are carrying out *its* policy, although with reservations, are swinging now to the right, now to the left.

The war is terrible; it has hit the vast mass of the people hardest of all; it is these people who are becoming aware, albeit still very vaguely, that the war is criminal, that it is being carried on through the rivalry and scramble of the capitalists, for the division of *their* spoils. The world situation is growing more and more involved. *The only way out* is a world workers' revolution, a revolution which is *now* more advanced in Russia than in any other country, but which is clearly mounting (strikes, fraternisation) in Germany too. And the people are wavering: wavering between confidence in their old masters, the capitalists, and bitterness towards them; between confidence in the new class, the only consistently revolutionary class, which opens up the prospect of a bright future for all the working people—the proletariat—and a vague awareness of its role in world history.

This is not the first time the petty bourgeoisie and semi-proletarians have wavered *and it will not be the last!*

The lesson is clear, comrade workers! There is no time to be lost. The first crisis will be followed by others. You must devote *all* your efforts to enlightening the backward, to making extensive, comradely and direct contact (not only by meetings) with every regiment and with every group of working people who have not had their eyes opened yet! *All* your efforts must be devoted to consolidating your own ranks, to organising the workers from the bottom upwards, including every district, every factory, every quarter of the capital and its suburbs! Do *not* be misled by those of the petty bourgeoisie who "compromise" with the capitalists, by the defencists and by the "supporters", nor by individuals who are inclined to be in a hurry and to shout "Down with the Provisional Government!" before the majority of the people are solidly united. The crisis cannot be overcome by violence practised by individuals against individuals, by the local



action of small groups of armed people, by Blanquist attempts to "seize power", to "arrest" the Provisional Government, etc.

Today's task is to explain more precisely, more clearly, more widely the proletariat's policy, *its* way of terminating the war. Rally more resolutely, more widely, wherever you can, to the ranks and columns of the proletariat! Rally round your Soviets; and within them endeavour to rally behind you a majority by comradely persuasion and by re-election of individual members!

Written April 22 (May 5), 1917  
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*THE SEVENTH (APRIL)  
ALL-RUSSIA CONFERENCE  
OF THE R.S.D.L.P.(B.)*

*APRIL 24-29 (MAY 7-12), 1917*



**SPEECH DELIVERED AT THE OPENING  
OF THE CONFERENCE  
APRIL 24 (MAY 7)**

Comrades, we are assembled here as the first conference of the proletarian party, in conditions of the Russian revolution and a developing world revolution as well. The time is approaching when the assertion of the founders of scientific socialism, and the unanimous forecast of the socialists who gathered at the Basle Congress, that world war would inevitably lead to revolution, is being everywhere proved correct.

In the nineteenth century Marx and Engels, following the proletarian movements in various countries and analysing the possible prospects for a social revolution, repeatedly stated that the roles would, in general, be distributed among these countries in proportion to, and in accordance with, their historically conditioned national features. They expressed their idea briefly as: The French worker will begin, the German will finish it.

The great honour of beginning the revolution has fallen to the Russian proletariat. But the Russian proletariat must not forget that its movement and revolution are only part of a world revolutionary proletarian movement, which in Germany, for example, is gaining momentum with every passing day. Only from this angle can we define our tasks.

I declare the All-Russia Conference open. Please nominate your candidates for election to the Presiding Committee.

A brief report published  
May 12 (April 29), 1917  
in *Sotsial-Demokrat* No. 43  
First published in full in 1921  
in N. Lenin (V. Ulyanov), *Works*,  
Vol. XIV, Part 2

*Collected Works*, Vol. 24



## 2

**REPORT ON THE CURRENT SITUATION  
APRIL 24 (MAY 7)**

Comrades, in evaluating the current situation I have to deal with an exceedingly broad subject, which, to my mind, falls into three parts. First, the estimate of the political situation proper here in Russia, our attitude towards the government and the dual power that has come into existence; second, our attitude towards the war; third, the international background to the working-class movement, a situation which has brought the workers of the world face to face with a socialist revolution.

I think, I shall have to deal only in brief with some of the points. Furthermore, I am going to submit to you a draft resolution on all these questions with this reservation, however, that, owing to the extreme lack of facilities and to the political crisis that has been created here in Petrograd, we were unable to have discussions of the resolution, or to communicate it in good time to the local comrades. I repeat, then, that these are only preliminary drafts, designed to make work easier in the committee and concentrate it on a few of the most essential questions.

I begin with the first question. If I am not mistaken, the Moscow Conference adopted the same resolution as the Petrograd City Conference. (*Interruption*: "With amendments.") I have not seen the amendments, and I cannot pass an opinion. But since the Petrograd resolution was published in *Pravda*, I shall take it for granted, if no one objects, that it is known to everybody here. I submit this as a draft resolution to the present All-Russia Conference.

Most of the parties in the petty-bourgeois bloc controlling the Petrograd Soviet represent our policy, in contrast to their own, as a rash policy. What distinguishes our policy is our demand above all for a precise class analysis of current events. The chief sin of the petty-bourgeois bloc is that it resorts to empty phrases to conceal from the people the truth about the government's class character.

If the Moscow comrades have any amendments, they may present them now.

*(Reads the resolution of the Petrograd City Conference on the attitude towards the Provisional Government.)*

“Considering:

“(1) that the Provisional Government, by its class character, is the organ of landowner and bourgeois domination;

“(2) that the Provisional Government and the classes it represents are bound with indissoluble economic and political ties to Russian and Anglo-French imperialism;

“(3) that the Provisional Government is carrying out its proclaimed programme only partially, and only under pressure of the revolutionary proletariat and, to some extent, of the petty bourgeoisie;

“(4) that the forces of bourgeois and landowner counter-revolution, now being organised, have already, under cover of the Provisional Government and with the latter’s obvious connivance, launched an attack on revolutionary democracy;

“(5) that the Provisional Government is avoiding fixing the date for the elections to the Constituent Assembly, preventing the arming of the people as a whole, opposing the transfer of all the land to the people, foisting upon it the landowners’ way of settling the agrarian question, obstructing the introduction of an eight-hour workday, condoning counter-revolutionary propaganda in the army (by Guchkov and Co.), rallying the high-ranking officers against the soldiers, etc. . . .”

I have read the first part of the resolution giving a class definition of the Provisional Government. There are scarcely any essential differences between this resolution and that of the Moscow comrades, as far as it is possible to judge from the latter’s text alone. But the general definition of the government as counter-revolutionary is, in my opinion, incorrect. If we speak in general terms, we must specify which revolution we mean. As far as the bourgeois revolution is concerned, this cannot be said, because that revolution is already completed. As far as the proletarian and peasant revolution is concerned, such a statement is premature, for we cannot be sure that the peasants will necessarily go farther than the bourgeoisie. To express our confidence in the peasants, particularly now that they have turned to imperialism and defencism, i.e., to supporting the war, is, in my opinion, unsound. At the present moment the peasants have entered into a number of agreements with the Cadets. That is why I regard this clause in the Moscow resolution as politically incorrect. We want the peasants to go farther than the bourgeoisie, we want them to take the land from the landowners, but so far we can say nothing definite about their future conduct.

We studiously avoid the words "revolutionary democracy". We may use them when there is a question of an attack by the government, but at the present moment they are highly deceptive, for it is very difficult to distinguish the classes which have mingled in this chaos. Our task is to free those who are trailing behind. The Soviets are important to us not as a form; to us it is important what classes they represent. We must, therefore, do a great deal of work to develop the class-consciousness of the proletariat. . . .

*(Resumes reading the resolution.)*

"(6) that this government, at the same time, is relying at present on the confidence of, and, to a certain extent, on an actual agreement with, the Petrograd Soviet of Workers' and Soldiers' Deputies, which now unites an obvious majority of workers and soldiers, i.e., peasants;

"(7) that every step of the Provisional Government, in both its domestic and foreign policies, is bound to open the eyes, not only of the proletarians in town and country and the semi-proletarians, but also of the broad sections of the petty bourgeoisie, to the real nature of this government,

*"the Conference resolves that:*

"(1) in order to ensure all the state power passing into the hands of the Soviets of Workers' and Soldiers' Deputies or other bodies directly expressing the will of the people, prolonged work is necessary to develop proletarian class-consciousness and to unite the urban and rural proletarians against the vacillations of the petty bourgeoisie, for only work of this nature can guarantee real advance on the part of the whole revolutionary people;

"(2) this calls for many-sided activity within the Soviets of Workers' and Soldiers' Deputies, for work aimed at increasing the number of these Soviets, consolidating their power, and welding together our Party's proletarian internationalist groups in the Soviets;

"(3) we must organise our Social-Democratic forces more effectively, so as to be able to direct the new wave of the revolutionary movement under the banner of revolutionary Social-Democracy."

This is the sum and substance of our policy. The whole petty bourgeoisie is now wavering and trying to conceal this wavering behind the empty phrase about revolutionary democracy. We must contrapose these waverings with a proletarian line. The counter-revolutionaries wish to frustrate it by premature action. Our task is to increase the number of Soviets, to reinforce them and to consolidate the unity of our Party.

The Moscow comrades have added to Point 3 the demand for control. This control is represented by Chkheidze, Steklov, Tsereteli, and other leaders of the petty-bourgeois bloc. Control without power is an empty phrase. How can I control Britain? To control her, you would have to seize her fleet. I can understand the uneducated mass of workers and soldiers naïvely and unconsciously believing in control. You only have to think about the fundamental aspects of control, however, to realise that such a belief is a departure from the basic principles of the class struggle. What is control? If I write a paper, or a resolution, they will write a counter-resolution. To control, you must have power. If the broad mass of the petty-bourgeois bloc do not understand this, we must have the patience to explain it to them, but under no circumstances must we tell them a lie. If, however, I obscure this fundamental condition by speaking of control, then I am guilty of telling a lie and am playing into the hands of the capitalists and the imperialists. "You're welcome to your control, but we'll have the guns. Enjoy your control," they say. They know that at the moment the people cannot be denied their demand. Control without power is an empty petty-bourgeois phrase that hampers the progress of the Russian revolution. That is why I object to the Moscow comrades' third point.

As for this peculiar interlocking of two powers, in which the Provisional Government, lacking power, guns, soldiers, and the armed mass of people, leans on the Soviets that are relying so far on promises and are carrying out a policy of upholding those promises, if you want to play this game, you are doomed to failure. Our task is to keep out of this game. We shall carry on our work of explaining to the proletariat the unsoundness of this policy, and events, at every turn, will prove the correctness of our position. So far we are in the minority; the masses still do not believe us. We can wait; they will side with us when the government shows its face. The government's vacillations may repel them and they will swing over to our side; and then, taking into consideration the balance of forces, we shall say: Our time has come.

I now pass on to the question of the war. This question actually united us when we came out against the loan, the attitude towards which showed immediately and clearly the alignment of political forces. As *Rech*<sup>49</sup> has stated, everybody, except *Yedinstvo*, is wavering; the entire petty bourgeoisie is for the loan—with reservations. The capitalists make a wry face and pocket the resolution with a smile, saying: "You may do the talking, but we shall do the acting." All those now voting for the loan are known as social-chauvinists the world over.

I shall now proceed to read the resolution on the war. It is



in three parts: (1) a characterisation of the war from the point of view of its class significance; (2) the revolutionary defensism of the masses, something that cannot be found in any other country; (3) how to end the war.

Many of us, myself included, have had occasion to address the people, particularly the soldiers, and it seems to me that when everything is explained to them from the class point of view, there is one thing in our stand on which they are most unclear, namely, in what way we intend to end the war, in what way we think it possible to stop it. The masses are in a maze of misunderstanding, there is complete ignorance about our stand; that is why we must express ourselves most clearly on this.

*(Reads the draft resolution on the war.)*

"The present war is, on the part of both groups of the belligerent powers, an imperialist war, i.e., one waged by the capitalists for world domination, for division of the capitalists' spoils, for profitable markets for finance and banking capital, and for the subjugation of the weaker nationalities.

"The transfer of state power in Russia from Nicholas II to the government of Guchkov, Lvov, and others, to the government of the landowners and capitalists, did not and could not alter the class character and meaning of the war as far as Russia is concerned.

"The fact that the new government is carrying on the same imperialist war, i.e., an aggressive war of conquest, became glaringly apparent when the government not only failed to publish the secret treaties between ex-Tsar Nicholas II and the capitalist governments of Britain, France, etc., but even formally confirmed these treaties. This was done without consulting the will of the people and with the express purpose of deceiving them, for it is well known that the secret treaties concluded by the ex-tsar are outrageously predatory treaties that give the Russian capitalists a free hand to rob China, Persia, Turkey, Austria, etc.

"For this reason no proletarian party that does not wish to break completely with internationalism, i.e., with the fraternal solidarity of the workers of all countries in their struggle against the yoke of Capital, can support the present war, or the present government, or its loans, no matter in what glowing terms these loans may be described.

"Nor can any trust be placed in the present government's promise to renounce annexations, i.e., the conquest of foreign countries or the forcible retention of any nationality within the confines of Russia. For, in the first place, the capitalists, bound together by the thousand threads of Russian and Anglo-French banking capital, and intent on protecting the interests

of capital, cannot renounce annexations in this war without at the same time ceasing to be capitalists, without renouncing the profits from the thousands of millions invested in loans, concessions, war industries, etc. And secondly, the new government, after renouncing annexations to mislead the people, declared through Milyukov (Moscow, April 9, 1917) that it had no intention of renouncing them. Finally, as revealed by *Dyelo Naroda*,<sup>50</sup> a newspaper in which Minister Kerensky co-operates, Milyukov has not even sent his statement on the renunciation of annexations to other countries.

“Therefore, in warning the people against the capitalists’ empty promises, the Conference declares that it is necessary to make a clear distinction between a renunciation of annexations in word and a renunciation of annexations in deed, i.e., the immediate publication of all the secret predatory treaties, of all acts of foreign policy, and the taking of immediate steps to fully liberate all peoples who are being oppressed, kept bound to Russia by force or kept in a state of subjection by the capitalist class, which is continuing the policy of ex-Tsar Nicholas II, a policy that is a disgrace to our nation.”

The second half of this part of the resolution deals with the promises made by the government. For a Marxist, perhaps, this part is superfluous; for the people, however, it is important. That is why we must add the reasons why we do not believe those promises, why we must not trust the government. The present government’s promises to abandon its imperialist policy are not to be trusted. Our policy in this respect should not be in saying that we demand that the government publish the treaties. This would be a vain hope. To demand this of a capitalist government would be like demanding an exposure of commercial swindling. When we say that it is necessary to renounce annexations and indemnities, we should indicate how this can be done; and if we are asked who can do it, our answer will be that this step is by its very nature a revolutionary one, a step which only the revolutionary proletariat can make. Otherwise these promises will remain empty pledges and wishes used by the capitalists to keep the people in leading-strings.

*(Continues reading the draft resolution.)*

“The ‘revolutionary defencism’, which in Russia has now permeated almost all the Narodnik parties (the Popular Socialists, Trudoviks, Socialist-Revolutionaries), the opportunist party of the Menshevik Social-Democrats (the Organising Committee, Chkheidze, Tsereteli, etc.), and the majority of the non-party revolutionaries, reflects, in point of class significance, the interests and point of view of the petty bourgeoisie, the small

proprietors, and the well-to-do peasants, who, like the capitalists, profit by oppressing weak peoples. On the other hand, it is a result of the deception of the masses by the capitalists, who instead of publishing the secret treaties confine themselves to promises and glib talk.

"It must be admitted that the great mass of 'revolutionary defencists' are honest, i.e., they are *really* opposed to annexations, to conquests, to oppressing weak peoples; they are *really* working for a democratic, non-coercive peace among *all* the belligerents. This must be admitted for the reason that the class position of the urban and rural proletarians and semi-proletarians (i.e., of the people who earn their living, wholly or partly, by selling their labour-power to the capitalists) makes these classes uninterested in capitalist profits.

"Therefore, while recognising that any concessions to 'revolutionary defencism' are absolutely impermissible and virtually signify a complete break with internationalism and socialism, the Conference declares that our Party will preach abstention from violence as long as the Russian capitalists and their Provisional Government confine themselves to threats of violence against the people (for example, Guchkov's unhappily notorious decree threatening the soldiers with punishment for arbitrary displacement of superiors), as long as the capitalists have *not* started using violence against the Soviets of Workers', Soldiers', Peasants', Agricultural Labourers', and other Deputies, which organise themselves freely, and freely elect and dismiss *all* public officers. Our Party will fight against the profound and fatal error of 'revolutionary defencism' solely by means of comradely persuasion, bringing home the truth that the attitude of unreasoning trust of the broad masses in the government of the capitalists, who are the worst enemies of peace and socialism, is, in present-day Russia, the chief obstacle to a speedy termination of the war."

Some of the petty bourgeoisie have an interest in this policy of the capitalists—of that there can be no doubt. That is why it would be wrong for the proletarian party at present to place any hopes in the community of interests of the proletariat and the peasantry. We are fighting to win the peasants over to our side, but they are, to a certain extent, consciously on the side of the capitalists.

There is not the slightest doubt that, as a class, the proletariat and semi-proletariat are not interested in the war. They are influenced by tradition and deception. They still lack political experience. Therefore, our task is one of patient explanation. We make no concessions to them on matters of principle; yet we cannot look upon them as social-chauvinists. This section



of the population has never been socialist, nor has it the slightest idea about socialism, it is only just awakening to political life. Nevertheless, its class-consciousness is growing and broadening with extraordinary rapidity. We must be able to bring our views home to it, and this is now the most difficult task of all, particularly for a party that only yesterday worked underground.

Some may ask: Have we not gone back on our own principles? We were advocating the conversion of the imperialist war into a civil war, and now we are contradicting ourselves. But the first civil war in Russia has come to an end; we are now advancing towards the second war—the war between imperialism and the armed people. In this transitional period, as long as the armed force is in the hands of the soldiers, as long as Milyukov and Guchkov have not yet resorted to violence, this civil war, so far as we are concerned, turns into peaceful, prolonged, and patient class propaganda. To speak of civil war before people have come to realise the need for it is undoubtedly to lapse into Blanquism. We are for civil war, but only for civil war waged by a politically conscious class. He can be overthrown who is known to the people as an oppressor. There are no oppressors in Russia at present; it is the soldiers and not the capitalists who now have the guns and rifles; the capitalists are getting what they want now not by force but by deception, and to shout about violence now is senseless. One must be able to uphold the Marxist point of view, which says that this conversion of imperialist war into a civil war should be based on objective, and not subjective, conditions. For the time being we withdraw that slogan, but only for the time being. It is the soldiers and the workers who possess the arms now, not the capitalists. So long as the government has not started war, our propaganda remains peaceful.

The government would like to see us make the first imprudent move towards revolutionary action, as this would be to its advantage. It is exasperated because our Party has put forward the slogan of peaceful demonstrations. We must not cede one iota of our principles to the petty bourgeoisie, which is now marking time. The proletarian party would be making a dangerous mistake if it based its tactics on subjective desires where organisation is required. We cannot say that the majority is with us; what we need in the present situation is caution, caution, caution. To base proletarian tactics on subjective desires means to condemn it to failure.

The third point deals with the question of how to end the war. The Marxist point of view is well known, but the difficulty is how to bring it home to the masses in the clearest form possible. We are not pacifists, and we cannot repudiate a revolution-



ary war. In what way does a revolutionary war differ from a capitalist war? The difference is, above all, a class difference: which class is interested in the war? What policy does the interested class pursue in that war?... In addressing the people we must give concrete answers to their questions. And so the first question is how to distinguish a revolutionary war from a capitalist war. The ordinary man in the street does not grasp the distinction, he does not understand that it is a matter of class distinction. We must not confine ourselves to theory alone, we must demonstrate in practice that we shall wage a really revolutionary war only when the proletariat is in power. I think that by presenting the question this way we are giving the clearest possible answer to the question as to what this war is about and who is waging it.

*Pravda* has published the draft of an appeal to the soldiers of all the belligerent countries.\* We have received information that fraternisation is taking place at the front, but this fraternisation is as yet politically semi-conscious. What it lacks is a clear political idea. The soldiers have come to feel instinctively that action must come from below. The class instinct of these revolutionary-minded people has suggested this path to them as being the only correct path. For a revolution, however, this is insufficient. We want to give a clear-cut political answer. In order to put an end to this war, state power must pass to the revolutionary class. I suggest that an appeal to the soldiers of all the belligerent countries be drawn up in the name of the Conference and published in all the appropriate languages. If, instead of all these hard-worked phrases about peace conferences, half of whose members are secret or open agents of the imperialist governments, we send out this appeal, we shall achieve our purpose a thousand times quicker than we would by all those peace conferences. We refuse to have any dealings with the German Plekhanovs. When we were passing through Germany, those gentlemen, the social-chauvinists, the German Plekhanovs, tried to get into our carriage, but we told them that we would not allow a single one of them in and that if any of them did get in they would not get out again without our having a big row. Had a man like Karl Liebknecht been permitted to come to see us, we would certainly have talked matters over with him. When we issue our appeal to the working people of all countries, giving an answer to the question of how to end the war, and when the soldiers read our answer showing a political way out of the war, then fraternisation will make tremendous strides. This must be done in order to raise fraternisation from the level of an in-

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\* See *Collected Works*, Vol. 24, pp. 186-88.-Ed.

instinctive revulsion against war to a clear political understanding of how to get out of it.

I now pass on to the third question, namely, the analysis of the current situation with reference to the position of the international working-class movement and that of international capitalism. From the point of view of Marxism, in discussing imperialism it is absurd to restrict oneself to conditions in one country alone, since all capitalist countries are closely bound together. Now, in time of war, this bond has grown immeasurably stronger. All humanity is thrown into a tangled bloody heap from which no nation can extricate itself on its own. Though there are more and less advanced countries, this war has bound them all together by so many threads that escape from this tangle for any single country acting on its own is inconceivable.

We are all agreed that power must be wielded by the Soviets of Workers' and Soldiers' Deputies. But what can and should they do if power passes to them, i.e., if power is in the hands of the proletarians and semi-proletarians? This is an involved and difficult situation. Speaking of the transfer of power, there is a danger—one that played a big part in previous revolutions, too—namely, the danger that the revolutionary class will not know what to do with state power when it has won it. The history of revolutions gives us examples of revolutions that failed for this very reason. The Soviets of Workers' and Soldiers' Deputies, which cover the whole of Russia with their network, now stand at the centre of the revolution; it seems to me, however, that we have not sufficiently studied or understood them. Should they take over the power, it will no longer be a state in the ordinary sense of the word. The world has seen no such state power functioning for any considerable length of time, but the whole world's labour movement has been approaching it. This would be a state of the Paris Commune type. Such power is a dictatorship, i.e., it rests not on law, not on the formal will of the majority, but on direct, open force. Force is the instrument of power. How, then, will the Soviets apply this power? Will they return to the old way of governing by means of the police? Will they govern by means of the old organs of power? In my opinion they cannot do this. At any rate, they will be faced with the immediate task of creating a state that is not bourgeois. Among Bolsheviks, I have compared this state to the Paris Commune in the sense that the latter destroyed the old administrative organs and replaced them by absolutely new ones that were the direct organs of the workers. I am accused of having now used a word which the capitalists fear most of all, as they have begun to interpret it as a desire for the immediate introduction of socialism. I have used it, however, only in the sense of replacing the old

organs by new, proletarian ones. Marx saw in this the greatest advance of the entire world proletarian movement.<sup>51</sup> The question of the social tasks of the proletariat is of the greatest practical significance to us, first, because we are now tied up with all the other countries, and are unable to disentangle ourselves—the proletariat will either break free as a whole or it will be crushed; secondly, the existence of Soviets of Workers' and Soldiers' Deputies is a fact. No one doubts that they cover the whole of Russia, that they are a state power and that there can be no other power. If that is so, we should form a clear idea as to what use they can make of that power. Some people say that it is the same type of power as in France or America, but they have nothing of the kind there; such a direct power does not exist there.

The resolution on the current situation is in three parts. The first defines the objective situation created by the imperialist war, the position in which world capitalism finds itself; the second deals with the state of the international proletarian movement; the third deals with the tasks of the Russian working class when power passes into its hands. In the first part I formulate the conclusion that during the war capitalism has developed even more than before the war. It has already taken over entire fields of production. Twenty-seven years ago, in 1891, when the Germans adopted their Erfurt Programme,<sup>52</sup> Engels said that one could not continue to define capitalism as a system of production lacking planning.<sup>53</sup> This is now out of date; once there are trusts there can no longer be lack of planning. Capitalism has made gigantic strides, particularly in the twentieth century, and the war has done more than was done for twenty-five years. State control of industry has made progress in Britain as well as in Germany. Monopoly, in general, has evolved into state monopoly. The objective state of affairs has shown that the war has stepped up capitalist development, which has moved forward from capitalism to imperialism, from monopoly to state control. All this has brought the socialist revolution nearer and has created the objective conditions for it. Thus the socialist revolution has been brought closer as a result of the war.

Before the war Britain enjoyed a greater degree of freedom than any other country in the world, a point which politicians of the Cadet type have always stressed. There was freedom there because there was no revolutionary movement there. The war wrought an instant change. In a country where for decades no attempt was ever made to encroach upon the freedom of the socialist press, a typically tsarist censorship was immediately established, and all the prisons were filled with socialists. For centuries the capitalists there had learned to rule the people



without the use of force, and if they have resorted to force, it means that they feel that the revolutionary movement is growing, that they cannot act otherwise. When we said that Liebknecht represented the masses, although he was one against a hundred German Plekhanovs, we were told that that was a utopian idea, an illusion. Yet, anyone who has, if only once, attended workers' meetings abroad knows that the sympathy of the masses for Liebknecht is an undeniable fact. His bitterest opponents had to manoeuvre when facing the public, and if they did not pretend to be his supporters, neither did they dare to come out against him. Now things have gone still farther. We now have mass strikes, we have fraternisation at the front. To attempt prophecy in this respect would be a great mistake, but we cannot get away from the fact that sympathy for the International is growing, that revolutionary unrest is beginning in the German army. This is a fact which shows that the revolution in Germany is mounting.

What, then, are the tasks of the revolutionary proletariat? The main flaw, the main error, in all the socialists' arguments is that this question is put in too general a form, as the question of the transition to socialism. What we should talk about, however, are concrete steps and measures. Some of them are ripe, and some are not. We are now at a transition stage. Clearly, we have brought to the fore new forms, unlike those in bourgeois states. The Soviets of Workers' and Soldiers' Deputies are a form of state which does not exist and never did exist in any country. This form represents the first steps towards socialism and is inevitable at the beginning of a socialist society. This is a fact of decisive importance. The Russian revolution has created the Soviets. No bourgeois country in the world has or can have such state institutions. No socialist revolution can be operative with any other state power than this. The Soviets must take power not for the purpose of building an ordinary bourgeois republic, nor for the purpose of making a direct transition to socialism. This cannot be. What, then, is the purpose? The Soviets must take power in order to make the first concrete steps towards this transition, steps that can and should be made. In this respect fear is the worst enemy. The masses must be urged to take these steps immediately, otherwise the power of the Soviets will have no meaning and will give the people nothing.

I shall now attempt to answer the question as to what concrete measures we can suggest to the people without running counter to our Marxist convictions.

Why do we want the power to pass to the Soviets of Workers' and Soldiers' Deputies?

The first measure the Soviets must carry out is the nation-



alisation of the land. All the peoples are talking about nationalisation. Some say it is a most utopian measure; nevertheless, everybody comes to accept it, because landownership in Russia is so complicated that the only way out is to remove all boundary lines dividing the land and make it the property of the state. Private ownership of land must be abolished. That is the task confronting us, because the majority of the people are in favour of it. To accomplish it we need the Soviets. This measure cannot be carried out with the help of the old government officials.

The second measure. We cannot be for "introducing" socialism—this would be the height of absurdity. We must preach socialism. The majority of the population in Russia are peasants, small farmers who can have no idea of socialism. But what objections can they have to a bank being set up in each village to enable them to improve their farming? They can say nothing against it. We must put over these practical measures to the peasants in our propaganda, and make the peasants realise that they are necessary.

Quite another thing is the Sugar Syndicate. This is a clear fact. Here our proposal must be direct and practical: these already fully developed syndicates must be taken over by the state. If the Soviets intend to assume power, it is only for such ends. There is no other reason why they should do so. The alternative is: either the Soviets develop further, or they die an ignominious death as in the case of the Paris Commune. If it is a bourgeois republic that is needed, this can very well be left to the Cadets.

I shall conclude by referring to a speech which impressed me most. I heard a coal miner deliver a remarkable speech. Without using a single bookish word, he told us how they had made the revolution. Those miners were not concerned with the question as to whether or not they should have a president. They seized the mine, and the important question to them was how to keep the cables intact so that production might not be interrupted. Then came the question of bread, which was scarce, and the miners also agreed on the method of obtaining it. Now that is a real programme of the revolution, not derived from books. That is what I call really winning power locally.

Nowhere is the bourgeoisie so well established as in Petrograd. Here the capitalists have the power in their hands. But throughout the country the peasants, without pursuing any socialist tasks, are carrying out purely practical measures. I think that only this programme of the revolutionary movement indicates the true path of the revolution. We are for these measures being started on with the greatest caution and circumspection. But it is only these measures that must be carried out; we should go ahead in this direction only. There is no other way out. Unless this is done

the Soviets will be broken up and will die an ignominious death. But if the revolutionary proletariat should actually win power, it will only be for the sake of going forward. And to go forward means to take definite steps to get us out of the war—words alone won't do it. The complete success of these steps is only possible by world revolution, if the revolution kills the war, if the workers of the whole world support the revolution. Taking power is, therefore, the only practical measure and the only way out.

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## 3

**SPEECH WINDING UP THE DEBATE  
ON THE REPORT ON THE CURRENT SITUATION  
APRIL 24 (MAY 7)**

Comrade Kamenev was quick to seize on the talk of adventurism. I shall have to dwell on this. Comrade Kamenev is convinced and asserts that in opposing the slogan "Down with the Provisional Government", we showed vacillation. I agree with him; there certainly has been vacillation away from revolutionary policy, and this vacillation must be avoided. I think that our differences with Comrade Kamenev are not very great, because by agreeing with us he has changed his position. In what did our adventurism consist? It was the attempt to resort to forcible measures. We did not know to what extent the masses had swung to our side during that anxious moment. If it had been a strong swing things would have been different. We advanced the slogan for peaceful demonstrations, but several comrades from the Petrograd Committee issued a different slogan. We cancelled it, but were too late to prevent the masses from following the slogan of the Petrograd Committee. We say that the slogan "Down with the Provisional Government" is an adventurist slogan, that the government cannot be overthrown now. That is why we have advanced the slogan for peaceful demonstrations. All we wanted was a peaceful reconnoitring of the enemy's forces; we did not want to give battle. But the Petrograd Committee turned a trifle more to the left, which in this case is certainly a very grave crime.<sup>54</sup> Our organisational apparatus proved weak—our decisions are not being carried out by everyone. Together with the correct slogan "Long Live the Soviets of Workers' and Soldiers' Deputies!" stood the incorrect slogan "Down with the Provisional Government". At the time of action, to go a "trifle more to the left" was wrong. We regard this as a very serious crime, as disorganisation. Had we deliberately allowed such an act, we would not have remained in the Central Committee for one moment. It happened because of the weakness of our organisational apparatus. Yes, there were shortcomings

in our organisation. We have raised the question of improving our organisation.

The Mensheviks and Co. are working the word "adventurism" as hard as they can. But it is they, of all people, who had neither an organisation nor a policy. We have both an organisation and a policy.

At that moment the bourgeoisie mobilised all its forces; the centre hid itself, and we organised a peaceful demonstration. We were the only ones who had a political line. Did we make mistakes? We did. Only he who does nothing never errs. Perfect organisation is a difficult thing.

Now about control.

We are at one with Comrade Kamenev, except on the question of control. He views control as a political act. Subjectively, however, he understands this word better than Chkheidze and others. We will not accept control. People tell us that we have isolated ourselves, that, by uttering a lot of terrible words about communism, we have frightened the bourgeoisie into fits. . . . Maybe! But it was not this that isolated us. It was the question of the loan that caused our isolation. It was on this question that we found ourselves in the minority. Yes, we are in the minority. Well, what of it? To be a socialist while chauvinism is the craze means to be in the minority. To be in the majority means to be a chauvinist. At the moment the peasant, together with Milyukov, is hitting socialism by means of the loan. The peasant follows Milyukov and Guchkov. This is a fact. The bourgeois-democratic dictatorship of the peasantry is an old formula.

If we want to draw the peasantry into the revolution we must keep the proletariat apart from it in a separate proletarian party, because the peasantry is chauvinistic. To attract the peasant now means to surrender to the mercies of Milyukov.

The Provisional Government must be overthrown, but not now, and not in the usual way. We agree with Comrade Kamenev. But we must explain. It is this word that Comrade Kamenev has been harping on. Nevertheless, this is the only thing we can do.

Comrade Rykov says that socialism must come from other countries with a more developed industry. But that is not so. Nobody can say who will begin it and who will end it. That is not Marxism; it is a parody of Marxism.

Marx said that France would begin it and Germany would finish it. But the Russian proletariat has achieved more than anybody else.

If we had said, "No tsar, but a dictatorship of the proletariat", well, this would have meant skipping over the petty bourgeoisie. But what we are saying is—help the revolution through the



Soviets. We must not lapse into reformism. We are fighting to win, not to lose. At the worst we count on partial success. Even if we suffer defeat we shall achieve partial success. We shall get reforms. Reforms are an auxiliary instrument of the class struggle.

Further, Comrade Rykov says that there is no period of transition from capitalism to socialism. That is not so. It is a break with Marxism.

The line we have marked out is correct, and in future we shall make every effort to achieve an organisation in which there will be no Petrograd Committee-men to disobey the Central Committee. We are growing, and that is as it should be with a real party.

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## 4

**SPEECH IN FAVOUR OF THE RESOLUTION ON THE WAR  
APRIL 27 (MAY 10)**

Comrades, the original draft resolution on the war was read by me at the City Conference. Because of the crisis that absorbed the attention and energy of all our comrades in Petrograd, we were unable to amend the draft. Since yesterday, however, the committee working on it has made satisfactory progress: the draft has been changed, considerably shortened and, in our opinion, improved.

I wish to say a few words about the construction of this resolution. It consists of three parts. The first is devoted to a class analysis of the war; it also contains our statement of principles explaining why our Party warns against placing any trust in promises made by the Provisional Government, as well as against any support for that government. The second part of the resolution deals with the question of revolutionary defencism as an extremely broad mass movement which has now united against us the overwhelming majority of the nation. Our task is to define the class significance of this revolutionary defencism, its essence, and the real balance of forces, and find a way to fight this trend. The third part of the resolution deals with the question of how to end the war. This practical question, which is of supreme importance to our Party, required a detailed answer. We think that we have succeeded in meeting this requirement satisfactorily. The articles in *Pravda* and numerous articles on the war published in provincial newspapers (the latter reach us very irregularly, because the postal service is disorganised, and we have to take every convenient opportunity of getting them for the Central Committee) reveal a negative attitude towards the war and the loan. I think that the vote against the loan settled the question as to our opposition to revolutionary defencism. I do not think it is possible to go into greater detail on this.

"The present war is, on the part of both groups of the belligerent powers, an imperialist war, i.e., one waged by the capitalists

for the division of the profits obtained from world domination, for markets for finance (banking) capital, for the subjugation of the weaker nationalities, etc.”

The primary and basic issue is the meaning of the war, a question of a general and political character, a moot question which the capitalists and the social-chauvinists carefully evade. This is why we must put this question first, with this addition to it:

“Each day of war enriches the financial and industrial bourgeoisie and impoverishes and saps the strength of the proletariat and the peasantry of all the belligerents, as well as of the neutral countries. In Russia, moreover, prolongation of the war involves a grave danger to the revolution’s gains and its further development.

“The passing of state power in Russia to the Provisional Government, a government of the landowners and capitalists, did not and could not alter the character and meaning of the war as far as Russia is concerned.”

The words I have just read to you are of great importance in all our propaganda and agitation. Has the class character of the war changed now? Can it change? Our reply is based on the fact that power has passed to the landowners and capitalists, the same government that had engineered this war. We then pass on to one of the facts that reveal most clearly the character of the war. Class character as expressed by the entire policy carried on for decades by definite classes is one thing, the obvious class character of the war is another.

“This fact was most strikingly demonstrated when the new government not only failed to publish the secret treaties between Tsar Nicholas II and the capitalist governments of Britain, France, etc., but even formally and without consulting the nation confirmed these secret treaties, which promise the Russian capitalists a free hand to rob China, Persia, Turkey, Austria, etc. By concealing these treaties from the people of Russia the latter are being deceived as to the true character of the war.”

And so, I emphasise again, we are pointing out one particularly striking confirmation of the character of the war. Even if there were no treaties at all, the character of the war would be the same because groups of capitalists can very often come to an agreement without any treaties. But the treaties exist and their implications are apparent. For the purpose of co-ordinating the work of our agitators and propagandists, we think this fact should be especially emphasised, and so we have made a special point of it. The people’s attention is and should be called to this fact, all the more so as the treaties were concluded by the tsar, who has been overthrown. The people ought to be made aware that the present governments are carrying on the war on the basis

of treaties concluded between the old governments. This, I feel, makes the contradictions between the capitalist interests and the will of the people stand out most strikingly, and it is for the propagandists to expose these contradictions, to draw the people's attention to them, to strive to explain them to the masses by appealing to their class-consciousness. The contents of these treaties leave no room for doubt that they promise enormous profits to the capitalists to be derived from robbing other countries. That is why they are always kept secret. There is not a republic in the world whose foreign policy is conducted in the open. It is fatuous, while the capitalist system exists, to expect the capitalists to open up their ledgers. While there is private ownership of the means of production, there is bound to be private ownership of shares and financial operations. The corner-stone of contemporary diplomacy is financial operations, which amount to robbing and strangling the weak nationalities. These, we believe, are the fundamental premises upon which the evaluation of the war rests. Proceeding from these premises we conclude that: "For this reason, no proletarian party that does not wish to break completely with internationalism, i.e., with the fraternal solidarity of the workers of all countries in their struggle against the yoke of capital, can support the present war, or the present government, or its loans."

This is our chief and basic conclusion. It determines our whole tactics and sets us apart from all the other parties, no matter how socialistic they claim to be. This proposition, which is irrefutable to all of us, predetermines our attitude towards all the other political parties.

The next point concerns the wide use which our government is making of promises. These promises are the object of a prolonged campaign by the Soviets, which have become muddled by these promises, and which are trying the people's patience. We, therefore, consider it necessary to add to our purely objective analysis of the class relations an analysis of those promises, promises which in themselves have, of course, no significance to a Marxist, but which mean a great deal to the people, and mean even more in politics. The Petrograd Soviet has become muddled by these promises, has given weight to them by promising its support. This is the reason why we add the following statement to this point:

"No trust can be placed in the present government's promises to renounce annexations, i.e., conquests of foreign countries or retention by force of any nationality within the confines of Russia."

"Annexation" being a foreign word, we give it an exact political definition, such as neither the Cadets nor the petty-bourgeois



democratic parties (the Narodniks and Mensheviks) can give. Few words have been used so meaninglessly and slovenly.

"For, in the first place, the capitalists, bound together by the thousand threads of banking capital, cannot renounce annexations in this war without renouncing the profits from the thousands of millions invested in loans, concessions, war industries, etc. And secondly, the new government, after renouncing annexations to mislead the people, declared through Milyukov (Moscow, April 9, 1917) that it had no intention of renouncing them, and, in the Note of April 18 and its elucidation of April 22, confirmed the expansionist character of its policy.

"Therefore, in warning the people against the capitalists' empty promises, the Conference declares that it is necessary to make a clear distinction between a renunciation of annexations in word and a renunciation of annexations in deed, i.e., the immediate publication and abrogation of all the secret, predatory treaties and the immediate granting to all nationalities of the right to determine by free voting whether they wish to be independent states or to be part of another state."

We have found it necessary to mention this, because the question of peace without annexations is the basic issue in all these discussions of peace terms. All parties recognise that peace will become the alternative, and that peace with annexations will be an unheard-of catastrophe for all countries. In a country where there is political liberty, the question of peace cannot be placed before the people otherwise than in terms of peace without annexations. It is therefore necessary to declare for peace without annexations, and so the only thing to do is to lie by wrapping up the meaning of annexations or evading the question altogether. *Rech*, for instance, cries that the return of Courland<sup>55</sup> means renunciation of annexations. When I was addressing the Soviet of Workers' and Soldiers' Deputies, a soldier handed me a slip of paper with the following question: "We have to fight to win back Courland. Does winning back Courland mean that you stand for annexations?" I had to reply in the affirmative. We are against Germany annexing Courland, but we are also against Russia holding Courland by force. For example, our government has issued a manifesto proclaiming the independence of Poland. This manifesto, chock-full of meaningless phrases, states that Poland must form a free military alliance with Russia. These three words contain the whole truth. A free military alliance of little Poland with huge Russia is, in point of fact, complete military subjection of Poland. Poland may be granted political freedom but her boundaries will be determined by the military alliance.

If we fight for the Russian capitalists keeping possession of

the former annexed territories of Courland and Poland, then the German capitalists have the right to rob Courland. They may argue this way: we looted Poland together. At the end of the eighteenth century, when we began to tear Poland to pieces, Prussia was a very small and weak country while Russia was a giant, and therefore she grabbed more. Now we have grown and it is our intention, if you please, to snatch a larger share. You can say nothing against this capitalist logic. In 1863 Japan was a mere nothing in comparison with Russia, but in 1905 Japan thrashed Russia. From 1863 to 1873 Germany was a mere nothing in comparison with Britain, but now Germany is stronger than Britain. The Germans may argue: we were weak when Courland was taken from us, but we have now grown stronger than you, and we wish to take it back. Not to renounce annexations means to justify endless wars over the conquest of weaker nationalities. To renounce annexations means to let each nation determine freely whether it wants to live separately or together with others. Of course, for this purpose, armies must be withdrawn. To show the slightest hesitation on the question of annexations means to justify endless wars. It follows that we could allow no hesitation on this question. With regard to annexations, our answer is that nations must be free to make their own decisions. How can we secure economic freedom alongside this political freedom? To accomplish this, power must pass into the hands of the proletariat and the yoke of capital must be overthrown.

I now pass on to the second part of the resolution.

"The 'revolutionary defencism', which in Russia has now permeated all the Narodnik parties (the Popular Socialists, Trudoviks, and Socialist-Revolutionaries), the opportunist party of the Menshevik Social-Democrats (the Organising Committee, Chkhaidze, Tsereteli, etc.), and the majority of the non-party revolutionaries, reflects, in point of class significance, the interests and point of view of the well-to-do peasants and a part of the small proprietors, who, like the capitalists, profit by oppressing weak peoples. On the other hand, revolutionary defencism is a result of the deception by the capitalists of a part of the urban and rural proletariat and semi-proletariat, who, by their class position, have no interest in the profits of the capitalists and in the imperialist war."

Consequently, our task here is to determine from what sections of society this defencist tendency could emerge. Russia is the most petty-bourgeois country in the world, and the upper sections of the petty bourgeoisie are directly interested in continuing the war. The well-to-do peasants, like the capitalists, are profiting by the war. On the other hand, the mass of proletarians and semi-proletarians have no interest in annexations because

they make no profit on banking capital. How, then, have these classes come to adopt the position of revolutionary defencism? Their attitude towards revolutionary defencism is due to the influence of capitalist ideology, which the resolution designates by the word "deception". They are unable to differentiate between the interests of the capitalists and the interests of the country. Hence we conclude:

"The Conference recognises that any concessions to revolutionary defencism are absolutely impermissible and virtually signify a complete break with internationalism and socialism. As for the defencist tendencies among the broad masses, our Party will fight against these tendencies by ceaselessly explaining the truth that the attitude of unreasoning trust in the government of the capitalists, at the moment, is one of the chief obstacles to a speedy termination of the war."

The last words express the specific feature that sharply distinguishes Russia from the other Western capitalist countries and from all capitalist democratic republics. For it cannot be said of those countries that the trustfulness of the unenlightened masses there is the chief cause of the prolongation of the war. The masses there are now in the iron grip of military discipline. The more democratic the republic, the stronger discipline is, since law in a republic rests on "the will of the people". Owing to the revolution there is no such discipline in Russia. The masses freely elect representatives to the Soviets, which is something that does not exist now anywhere else in the world. But the masses have unreasoning trust, and are therefore used for the purposes of the struggle. So far we can do nothing but explain. Our explanations must deal with the immediate revolutionary tasks and methods of action. When the masses are free, any attempts to act in the name of a minority, without explaining things to the masses, would be senseless Blanquism, mere adventurism. Only by winning over the masses, if they can be won, can we lay a solid foundation for the victory of the proletarian class struggle.

I now pass on to the third part of the resolution:

"In regard to the most important question of all, namely, how to end the present capitalist war as soon as possible, not by a coercive peace, but by a truly democratic peace, the Conference recognises and declares the following:

"This war cannot be ended by a refusal of the soldiers of one side only to continue the war, by a simple cessation of hostilities by one of the belligerents."

The idea of terminating the war in this way has been attributed to us over and over again by persons who wish to win an easy victory over their opponents by distorting the latter's views—a typical method used by the capitalists, who ascribe to us the ab-



surd idea of wishing to end the war by a one-sided refusal to fight. They say "the war cannot be ended by sticking your bayonet in the ground", to quote a soldier, a typical revolutionary defencist. This is no argument, I say. The idea that the war can be terminated without changing the classes in power is an anarchist idea. Either this idea is anarchistic, in which case it has no meaning, no state significance, or it is a hazy pacifist idea that fails completely to appreciate the connection between politics and the oppressing class. War is an evil, peace is a blessing. . . . Certainly this idea must be made clear to the people, must be popularised. Incidentally, all our resolutions are being written for leading Party members, for Marxists, and do not make reading matter for the masses. But they must serve as unifying and guiding political principles for every propagandist and agitator. To meet this requirement, one more paragraph was added to the resolution:

"The Conference reiterates its protest against the base slander spread by the capitalists against our Party to the effect that we are in favour of a separate peace with Germany. We consider the German capitalists to be as predatory as the Russian, British, French, and other capitalists, and Emperor Wilhelm as bad a crowned brigand as Nicholas II or the British, Italian, Rumanian, and all other monarchs."

On this point there was some disagreement in the committee, some maintaining that in this passage our language became too popular, others, that the British, Italian, and Rumanian monarchs did not deserve the honour of being mentioned. After a detailed discussion, however, we all agreed that, since our present aim is to refute all the slanders which *Birzhevka*<sup>56</sup> has tried to spread against us rather crudely, *Rech* more subtly, *Yedinstvo* by direct implication, we must, on a question of this nature, come out with a most sharp and trenchant criticism of these ideas, having in mind the broadest masses of the people. Asked why we do not help to overthrow Wilhelm if we consider him a brigand, we can say that the others, too, are brigands, that we ought to fight against them as well, that one must not forget the kings of Italy and Rumania, that brigands can also be found among our Allies. These two paragraphs are intended to combat the slander, which is meant to lead to riot-mongering and squabbling. This is the reason why we must now pass on to the serious practical question of how to terminate the war.

"Our Party will patiently but persistently explain to the people the truth that wars are waged by *governments*, that wars are always indissolubly bound up with the policies of definite *classes*, that this war can be terminated by a democratic peace *only* if the entire state power, in at least several of the belligerent coun-



tries, has passed to the class of the proletarians and semi-proletarians which is really capable of putting an end to the oppressive rule of capital."

To a Marxist these truths—that wars are waged by the capitalists and are bound up with the capitalists' class interests—are absolute truths. A Marxist need not dwell on that. But as far as the masses are concerned, skilful agitators and propagandists should be able to explain this truth simply, without using foreign words, for with us discussions usually degenerate into empty and futile squabbling. The explaining of this truth is what we have been trying to do in every part of the resolution. We say that in order to understand what the war is about, you must ask who gains by it; in order to understand how to put an end to the war, you must ask which classes do not gain by it. The connection here is clear, hence we conclude:

"In Russia, the revolutionary class, having taken state power, would adopt a series of measures that would lead to the destruction of the economic rule of the capitalists, as well as measures that would render them completely harmless politically, and would immediately and frankly offer to all nations a democratic peace on the basis of a complete renunciation of every possible form of annexation."

Once we speak in the name of the revolutionary class, the people have the right to ask: and what about you, what would you do in their place to end the war? This is an inevitable question. The people are electing us now as their representatives, and we must give a very precise answer. The revolutionary class, having taken power, would set out to undermine the rule of the capitalists, and would then offer to all nations well-defined peace terms, because, unless the economic rule of the capitalists is undermined, all we can have are scraps of paper. Only a victorious class can accomplish this, can bring about a change in policy.

I repeat: to bring this truth home to the uneducated mass, we need intermediate links that would help to introduce this question to them. The mistake and falsehood of popular literature on the war is the evasion of this question; it ignores this question and presents the matter as if there had been no class struggle, as if two countries had lived amicably until one attacked the other, and the attacked has been defending itself. This is vulgar reasoning in which there is not a shadow of objective truth, and which is a deliberate deception of the people by educated persons. If we approach this question properly, anyone would be able to grasp the essential point; for the interests of the ruling classes are one thing, and the interests of the oppressed classes are another.

What would happen if the revolutionary class took power?

"Such measures and such a frank offer of peace would bring about complete confidence of the workers of the belligerent countries in each other. . . ."

Such confidence is impossible now, and the words of manifestos will not create it. Where the philosopher once said that speech has been given to man to enable him to conceal his thoughts, the diplomats always say: "Conferences are held to deceive the people." Not only the capitalists, but the socialists too reason this way. This particularly applies to the conference which Borgbjerg<sup>57</sup> is calling.

"...and would inevitably lead to uprisings of the proletariat against those imperialist governments as might resist the offered peace."

Nobody now believes the capitalist government when it says: "We are for peace without annexations." The masses have the instinct of oppressed classes which tells them that nothing has changed. Only if the policy were actually changed in one country, confidence would appear and attempts at uprisings would be made. We speak of "uprisings" because we are now discussing all countries. To say "a revolution has taken place in one country, so now it must take place in Germany"—is false reasoning. There is a tendency to form an order of sequence, but this cannot be done. We all went through the revolution of 1905. We all heard or witnessed how that revolution gave birth to revolutionary ideas throughout the world, a fact which Marx constantly referred to. Revolutions cannot be made, they cannot be taken in turns. A revolution cannot be made to order—it develops. This form of charlatanism is now frequently being practised in Russia. The people are told: You in Russia have made a revolution, now it is the Germans' turn. If the objective conditions change, then an uprising is inevitable, but we do not know whose turn it will be, when it will take place, and with what degree of success. We are asked: If the revolutionary class takes power in Russia, and if no uprisings break out in other countries, what will the revolutionary party do? What will happen then? This question is answered in the last paragraph of our resolution.

"Until the revolutionary class in Russia takes the entire state power, our Party will do all it can to support those proletarian parties and groups abroad that are in fact, already during the war, conducting a revolutionary struggle against their imperialist governments and their bourgeoisie."

This is all that we can promise and must do now. The revolution is mounting in every country, but no one knows to what extent it is mounting and when it will break out. In every country there are people who are carrying on a revolutionary struggle against their governments. They are the people, the only

people, we must support. This is the real thing—all else is falsehood. And so we add:

“Our Party will particularly support the mass fraternisation of the soldiers of all the belligerent countries that has already begun at the front. . . .”

This is to meet Plekhanov’s argument: “What will come of it? Suppose you do fraternise, then what? Does this not suggest the possibility of a separate peace at the front?” This is jiggery-pokery, not a serious argument. We want fraternisation on all fronts, and we are taking pains to encourage it. When we worked in Switzerland, we published an appeal in two languages, with French on one side and German on the other, urging those soldiers to do the same thing we are now urging the Russian soldiers to do. We do not confine ourselves to fraternisation between German and Russian soldiers, we call upon all to fraternise. This, then, is what we mean by fraternisation:

“... endeavouring to turn this instinctive expression of solidarity of the oppressed into a politically-conscious movement as well organised as possible for the transfer of all state power in all the belligerent countries to the revolutionary proletariat.”

Fraternisation, so far, is instinctive, and we must not deceive ourselves on this score. We must admit this in order not to delude the people. The fraternising soldiers are actuated not by a clear-cut political idea but by the instinct of oppressed people, who are tired, exhausted and begin to lose confidence in capitalist promises. They say: “While you keep on talking about peace—we have been hearing it now for two and a half years—we shall start things moving ourselves.” This is a true class instinct. Without this instinct the cause of the revolution would be hopeless. As you know, nobody would free the workers if they did not free themselves. But is instinct alone sufficient? You would not get far if you rely on instinct alone. This instinct must be transformed into political awareness.

In our “Appeal to the Soldiers of All the Belligerent Countries” we explain into what this fraternisation should develop—into the passing of political power to the Soviets of Workers’ and Soldiers’ Deputies.\* Naturally, the German workers will call their Soviets by a different name, but this does not matter. The point is that we undoubtedly recognise as correct that fraternisation is instinctive, that we do not simply confine ourselves to encouraging fraternisation, but set ourselves the task of turning this instinctive fraternisation of workers and peasants in soldiers’ uniforms into a politically-conscious movement, whose aim is the transfer of power in all the belligerent countries into the hands of

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\* See *Collected Works*, Vol. 24, p. 188.—Ed.

the revolutionary proletariat. This is a very difficult task, but the position in which humanity finds itself under capitalist rule is tremendously difficult, too, and leads to destruction. This is why it will call forth that explosion of discontent which is the guarantee of proletarian revolution.

This is our resolution, which we submit for consideration to the Conference.

A brief report published  
May 12 (April 29), 1917  
in *Pravda* No. 44

*Collected Works*, Vol. 24

First published in full in 1921  
in N. Lenin (V. Ulyanov), *Works*,  
Vol. XIV, Part 2



## 5

**RESOLUTION ON THE WAR****I**

The present war is, on the part of both groups of the belligerent powers, an imperialist war, i.e., one waged by the capitalists for the division of the profits obtained from world domination, for markets for finance (banking) capital, for the subjugation of the weaker nationalities, etc. Each day of war enriches the financial and industrial bourgeoisie and impoverishes and saps the strength of the proletariat and the peasantry of all the belligerents, as well as of the neutral countries. In Russia, moreover, prolongation of the war involves a grave danger to the revolution's gains and its further development.

The passing of state power in Russia to the Provisional Government, a government of the landowners and capitalists, did not and could not alter the character and meaning of the war as far as Russia is concerned.

This fact was most strikingly demonstrated when the new government not only failed to publish the secret treaties between Tsar Nicholas II and the capitalist governments of Britain, France, etc., but even formally and without consulting the nation confirmed these secret treaties, which promise the Russian capitalists a free hand to rob China, Persia, Turkey, Austria, etc. By concealing these treaties from the people of Russia the latter are being deceived as to the true character of the war.

For this reason, no proletarian party that does not wish to break completely with internationalism, i.e., with the fraternal solidarity of the workers of all countries in their struggle against the yoke of capital, can support the present war, or the present government, or its loans.

No trust can be placed in the present government's promises to renounce annexations, i.e., conquests of foreign countries or retention by force of any nationality within the confines of Russia. For, in the first place, the capitalists, bound together by the thousand threads of banking capital, cannot renounce annexations in

this war without renouncing the profits from the thousands of millions invested in loans, concessions, war industries, etc. And secondly, the new government, after renouncing annexations to mislead the people, declared through Milyukov (Moscow, April 9, 1917) that it had no intention of renouncing them, and, in the Note of April 18 and its elucidation of April 22, confirmed the expansionist character of its policy. Therefore, in warning the people against the capitalists' empty promises, the Conference declares that it is necessary to make a clear distinction between a renunciation of annexations in word and a renunciation of annexations in deed, i.e., the immediate publication and abrogation of all the secret, predatory treaties and the immediate granting to all nationalities of the right to determine by free voting whether they wish to be independent states or to be part of another state.

## II

The "revolutionary defencism", which in Russia has now permeated all the Narodnik parties (the Popular Socialists, Trudoviks, and Socialist-Revolutionaries), the opportunist party of the Menshevik Social-Democrats (the Organising Committee, Chkhedze, Tsereteli, etc.), and the majority of the non-party revolutionaries, reflects, in point of class significance, the interests and point of view of the well-to-do peasants and a part of the small proprietors, who, like the capitalists, profit by oppressing weak peoples. On the other hand, "revolutionary defencism" is a result of the deception by the capitalists of a part of the urban and rural proletariat and semi-proletariat, who, by their class position, have no interest in the profits of the capitalists and in the imperialist war.

The Conference recognises that any concessions to "revolutionary defencism" are absolutely impermissible and virtually signify a complete break with internationalism and socialism. As for the defencist tendencies among the broad masses, our Party will fight against these tendencies by ceaselessly explaining the truth that the attitude of unreasoning trust in the government of the capitalists, at the moment, is one of the chief obstacles to a speedy termination of the war.

## III

In regard to the most important question of all, namely, how to end the present capitalist war as soon as possible, not by a coercive peace, but by a truly democratic peace, the Conference recognises and declares the following:

This war cannot be ended by a refusal of the soldiers of one side only to continue the war, by a simple cessation of hostilities by one of the belligerents.

The Conference reiterates its protest against the base slander spread by the capitalists against our Party to the effect that we are in favour of a separate peace with Germany. We consider the German capitalists to be as predatory as the Russian, British, French, and other capitalists, and Emperor Wilhelm as bad a crowned brigand as Nicholas II or the British, Italian, Rumanian, and all other monarchs.

Our Party will patiently but persistently explain to the people the truth that wars are waged by *governments*, that wars are always indissolubly bound up with the policies of definite *classes*, that this war can be terminated by a democratic peace *only* if the entire state power, in at least several of the belligerent countries, has passed to the class of the proletarians and semi-proletarians which is really capable of putting an end to the oppressive rule of capital.

In Russia, the revolutionary class, having taken state power, would adopt a series of measures that would undermine the economic rule of the capitalists, as well as measures that would render them completely harmless politically, and would immediately and frankly offer to all nations a democratic peace on the basis of a complete renunciation of every possible form of annexation and indemnity. Such measures and such a frank offer of peace would bring about complete confidence of the workers of the belligerent countries in each other and would inevitably lead to uprisings of the proletariat against those imperialist governments as might resist the offered peace. Until the revolutionary class in Russia takes the entire state power, our Party will do all it can to support those proletarian parties and groups abroad that are in fact, already during the war, conducting a revolutionary struggle against their imperialist governments and their bourgeoisie. Our Party will particularly support the mass fraternisation of the soldiers of all the belligerent countries that has already begun at the front, endeavouring to turn this instinctive expression of solidarity of the oppressed into a politically-conscious movement as well organised as possible for the transfer of all state power in all the belligerent countries to the revolutionary proletariat.

## 6

**RESOLUTION ON THE ATTITUDE  
TOWARDS THE PROVISIONAL GOVERNMENT**

The All-Russia Conference of the R.S.D.L.P. recognises that:

1. The Provisional Government, by its class character, is the organ of landowner and bourgeois domination;

2. The Provisional Government and the classes it represents are bound with indissoluble economic and political ties to Russian and Anglo-French imperialism;

3. The Provisional Government is carrying out its proclaimed programme only partially, and only under pressure of the revolutionary proletariat and, to some extent, of the petty bourgeoisie;

4. The forces of bourgeois and landowner counter-revolution, now being organised, have already, under cover of the Provisional Government and with the latter's obvious connivance, launched an attack on revolutionary democracy: thus the Provisional Government is avoiding fixing the date for the elections to the Constituent Assembly, preventing the arming of the people as a whole, opposing the transfer of all the land to the people, foisting upon it the landowners' way of settling the agrarian question, obstructing the introduction of an eight-hour workday, condoning counter-revolutionary propaganda in the army (by Guchkov and Co.), rallying the high-ranking officers against the soldiers, etc.;

5. The Provisional Government, protecting the profits of the capitalists and landowners, is incapable of taking a number of revolutionary economic measures (food supply, etc.) which are absolutely and urgently necessary in view of the impending economic catastrophe;

6. This government, at the same time, is relying at present on the confidence of, and on an actual agreement with, the Petrograd Soviet of Workers' and Soldiers' Deputies, which is still the leading organisation for the majority of workers and soldiers, i.e., peasants;

7. Every step of the Provisional Government, in both its domestic and foreign policies, is bound to open the eyes of the urban and rural proletarians and semi-proletarians and force various



sections of the petty bourgeoisie to choose between one and the other political line.

Considering the above, the Conference resolves that:

1. Extensive work has to be done to develop proletarian class-consciousness and to unite the urban and rural proletarians against the vacillations of the petty bourgeoisie, for only work of this nature can serve as a sure guarantee of the successful transfer of the entire state power into the hands of the Soviets of Workers' and Soldiers' Deputies or other organs directly expressing the will of the majority of the people (organs of local self-government, the Constituent Assembly, etc.);

2. This calls for many-sided activity within the Soviets of Workers' and Soldiers' Deputies, for work aimed at increasing the number of these Soviets, consolidating their power, and welding together our Party's proletarian internationalist groups in the Soviets;

3. In order immediately to consolidate and widen the gains of the revolution in the local areas, it is necessary, with the backing of a solid majority of the local population, in every way to develop, organise, and strengthen its independent actions aimed at implementing liberties, dismissing the counter-revolutionary authorities, introducing economic measures, such as control over production and distribution, etc.;

4. The political crisis of April 19-21 precipitated by the Note of the Provisional Government has shown that the government party of the Constitutional-Democrats, which is organising counter-revolutionary elements both in the army and in the streets, is now making attempts to shoot down the workers. In view of the unstable situation arising from the dual power, the repetition of such attempts is inevitable, and it is the duty of the party of the proletariat to tell the people as forcibly as possible that, in order to avert the seriously threatening danger of such mass shootings of the proletariat as took place in Paris in the June days of 1848, it is necessary to organise and arm the proletariat, to establish the closest alliance between the proletariat and the revolutionary army, to break with the policy of confidence in the Provisional Government.

## 7

## RESOLUTION ON THE QUESTION OF REVISING THE PARTY PROGRAMME<sup>58</sup>

The Conference considers it necessary to revise the Party Programme along the following lines:

1. Evaluating imperialism and the epoch of imperialist wars in connection with the approaching socialist revolution; fighting against the distortion of Marxism by the "defencists", who have forgotten Marx's slogan—"The working men have no country"<sup>59</sup>;

2. Amending the theses and clauses dealing with the state; such amendment is to be in the nature of a demand for a democratic proletarian-peasant republic (i.e., a type of state functioning without police, without a standing army, and without a privileged bureaucracy), and not for a bourgeois parliamentary republic;

3. Eliminating or amending what is out of date in the political programme;

4. Altering a number of points in the political minimum programme, so as to state more consistent democratic demands with greater precision;

5. Completely changing the economic part of the minimum programme, which in very many places is out of date, and points relating to public education;

6. Revising the agrarian programme in accordance with the adopted resolution on the agrarian question;

7. Inserting a demand for nationalisation of a number of syndicates, etc., now ripe for such a step;

8. Adding an analysis of the main trends in modern socialism.

The Conference instructs the Central Committee to work out, within two months, on the basis of the above suggestions, a draft for the Party Programme which is to be submitted for approval to the Party congress. The Conference calls upon all organisations and all Party members to consider drafts of the programme, to correct them, and to work out counterdrafts.

## 8

**REPORT ON THE AGRARIAN QUESTION  
APRIL 28 (MAY 11)**

Comrades, the agrarian question was threshed out so thoroughly by our Party during the first revolution that by this time, I think, our ideas on the subject are pretty well defined. Indirect proof of this is to be found in the fact that the committee of the Conference composed of comrades interested and fully versed in this subject have agreed on the proposed draft resolution without making any substantial corrections. I shall therefore confine myself to very brief remarks. And since all members have proof-sheets of the draft, there is no need to read it in full.

The present growth of the agrarian movement throughout Russia is perfectly obvious and undeniable. Our Party Programme, proposed by the Mensheviks and adopted by the Stockholm Congress in 1906, was refuted even in the course of the first Russian revolution. At that Congress the Mensheviks succeeded in getting their programme of municipalisation adopted. The essence of their programme was as follows: the peasant lands, communal and homestead, were to remain the property of the peasants while the landed estates were to be taken over by local self-government bodies. One of the Mensheviks' chief arguments in favour of such a programme was that the peasants would never understand the transfer of peasant land to anyone but themselves. Anyone acquainted with the Minutes of the Stockholm Congress will recollect that this argument was particularly stressed both by Maslov, who made the report, and by Kostrov. We should not forget, as is often done nowadays, that this happened before the First Duma, when there was no objective information about the character of the peasant movement and its strength. Everyone knew that Russia was aflame with the agrarian revolution, but no one knew how the agrarian movement would be organised, or in what direction the peasant revolution would develop. It was impossible to check whether the opinions expressed by the Congress were the real and practical views held by the peasants themselves. This was why the Mensheviks' argument had carried such weight. Soon after the

Stockholm Congress, we received the first serious indication of how the peasants viewed this question. In both the First and the Second Dumas, the peasants themselves put forward the Trudovik "Bill of the 104".<sup>60</sup> I made a special study of the signatures to this bill, carefully studied the views of the various deputies, their class affiliations, and the extent to which they may be called peasants. I stated categorically in my book, which was burned by the tsarist censor but which I will republish,<sup>61</sup> that the overwhelming majority of these 104 signatories were peasants. That bill called for the nationalisation of the land. The peasants said that the entire land would become the property of the state.

How, then, are we to account for the fact that in both Dumas the deputies representing the peasants of all Russia preferred nationalisation to the measure proposed in both Dumas by the Mensheviks from the point of view of the peasants' interests? The Mensheviks proposed that the peasants retain the ownership of their own lands, and that only the landed estates should be given to the people; the peasants, however, maintained that the entire land should be given to the people. How are we to account for this? The Socialist-Revolutionaries say that owing to their commune organisation the Russian peasants favour socialisation, the labour principle. All this phraseology is absolutely devoid of common sense, it is nothing but words. But how are we to account for this? I think the peasants came to this conclusion because all land-ownership in Russia, both peasants' and landowners', communal and homestead, is permeated with old, semi-feudal relationships, and the peasants, considering market conditions, had to demand the transfer of the land to all the people. The peasants say that the tangle of old agrarian life can only be unraveled by nationalisation. Their point of view is bourgeois; by equalitarian land tenure they mean the confiscation of the landed estates, but not the equalisation of individual proprietors. By nationalisation they mean an actual reallocation of all the land among the peasants. This is a grand bourgeois project. No peasant spoke about equalisation or socialisation; but they all said it was impossible to wait any longer, that all the land had to be cleared, in other words, that farming could not be carried on in the old way under twentieth-century conditions. The Stolypin Reform has since then confused the land question still more.<sup>62</sup> That is what the peasants have in mind when they demand nationalisation. It means a reallocation of all the land. There are to be no varied forms of landownership. There is not the slightest suggestion of socialisation. This demand by the peasants is called equalitarian because, as a brief summary of the statistics relating to land holdings in 1905 shows, 300 peasant families held as much land (2,000 dessiatines) as one landowner's family. In this sense it is, of course, equalitarian, but



it does not imply that all small farms are to be equalised. The Bill of the 104 shows the opposite.

These are the essential points that have to be made in order to give scientific support to the view that nationalisation in Russia, as far as bourgeois democracy is concerned, is necessary. But it is also necessary for another reason—it deals a mighty blow at private ownership of the means of production. It is simply absurd to imagine that after the abolition of private property in land everything in Russia will remain as before.

Then follow some practical conclusions and demands. Of the minor amendments in the draft I shall call attention to the following. The first point reads: "The party of the proletariat will support with all its might the immediate and complete confiscation of all landed estates...." Instead of "will support" we ought to say "will fight for".... Our point of view is not that the peasants have not enough land and that they need more. That is the current opinion. We say that the landed estates are the basis of oppression that crushes the peasants and keeps them backward. The question is not whether the peasants have or have not enough land. Down with serfdom!—this is the way the issue should be stated from the point of view of the revolutionary class struggle, and not from the point of view of those officials who try to figure out how much land they have and by what norms it should be allotted. I suggest that the order of points 2 and 3 should be reversed, because, to us, the thing that matters is revolutionary initiative, and the law must be the result of it. *If you wait until the law is written, and yourselves do not develop revolutionary initiative, you will have neither the law nor the land.*

People very often object to nationalisation because, they say, it requires a colossal bureaucratic apparatus. That is true, but state landownership implies that every peasant is leasing the land from the state. The subletting of leaseholds is prohibited. But the question of how much and what kind of land the peasant shall lease must be entirely settled by the proper democratic, not bureaucratic, organ of authority.

For "farm-hands" we substitute "agricultural labourers". Several comrades declared that the word "farm-hand" was offensive; objections were raised to this word. It should be deleted.

We should not speak now of proletarian-peasant committees or Soviets in connection with the settlement of the land question, for, as we see, the peasants have set up Soviets of Soldiers' Deputies, thus creating a division between the proletariat and the peasantry.

The petty-bourgeois defencist parties, as we know, stand for the land question being put off until the Constituent Assembly meets. We are for the immediate transfer of the land to the peas-

ants in a highly organised manner. We are emphatically against anarchic seizing of land. You propose that the peasants enter into agreements with the landowners. We say that the land should be taken over and cultivated right now if we wish to avert famine, to save the country from the debacle which is advancing upon it with incredible speed. One cannot now accept the prescriptions offered by Shingaryov and the Cadets, who suggest waiting for the convocation of the Constituent Assembly, the date of which has not been fixed yet, or making arrangements with the landowners for renting land. The peasants are already seizing the land without paying for it, or paying only a quarter of the rent.

One comrade has brought a local resolution, from Penza Gubernia, saying that the peasants are seizing the landowners' agricultural implements, which however they do not divide among the households, but convert into common property. They are establishing a definite order of sequence, a rule, for using these implements to cultivate all the land. In resorting to such measures, they are guided by the desire to increase agricultural production. This is a matter of principle of tremendous significance, for all that the landowners and capitalists shout about it being anarchy. But if you are going to chatter and shout about this being anarchy, while the peasants sit back and wait, then you will indeed have anarchy. The peasants have shown that they understand farming conditions and social control better than the government officials, and apply such control a hundred times more efficiently. Such a measure, which is doubtless quite practicable in a small village, inevitably leads to more sweeping measures. When the peasant comes to learn this—and he has already begun to learn it—the knowledge of bourgeois professors will not be needed; he will himself come to the conclusion that it is essential to utilise the agricultural implements, not only in the small farms, but for the cultivation of all the land. How they do this is unimportant. We do not know whether they combine their individual plots for common ploughing and sowing or not, and it does not matter if they do it differently. What does matter is that the peasants are fortunate in not having to face a large number of petty-bourgeois intellectuals, who style themselves Marxists and Social-Democrats, and with a grave mien lecture the people about the time not yet being ripe for a socialist revolution and that therefore the peasants must not take the land immediately. Fortunately there are few such gentlemen in the Russian countryside. If the peasants contented themselves merely with taking the land by arrangement with the landowners, and failed to apply their experience collectively, failure would be inevitable, and the peasant committees would become a mere toy, a mean-

ingless game. This is why we propose to add Point 8\* to the draft resolution.

Once we know that the local peasants have themselves taken this initiative, it is our duty to say that we approve and recommend this initiative. Only this can serve as a guarantee that the revolution will not be limited to formal measures, that the struggle against the crisis will not remain a mere subject for departmental discussion and Shingaryov's epistles, but that the peasants will actually go ahead in an organised way to combat famine and to increase production.

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\* See p. 131 of the present volume.—*Ed.*

## 9

**RESOLUTION ON THE AGRARIAN QUESTION**

The existence of landed estates in Russia is the material mainstay of the power of the feudalist landowners and a guarantee of the possible restoration of the monarchy. This system of landownership necessarily condemns the great mass of Russia's population, the peasantry, to pauperism, bondage, and a down-trodden existence, and the entire country to backwardness in every sphere of life.

Peasant landownership in Russia, both of allotment land<sup>63</sup> (communal and homestead) and private land (leased or purchased), is fettered all round, from top to bottom, by old semi-feudal ties and relationships, by the division of the peasants into categories inherited from the time of serfdom, by the open field system, and so on, and so forth. The need for breaking down all these antiquated and harmful restrictions, for "clearing" the land, and reconstructing and readjusting all the relations of landownership and agriculture to the new conditions of Russian and world economy, forms the material foundation of the peasants' urge towards the nationalisation of *all* the land in the state.

Whatever the petty-bourgeois utopias in which all Narodnik parties and groups array the struggle of the peasant masses against feudalist big landownership and all the feudal fetters of the entire system of landownership and land tenure in Russia, that struggle is itself an expression of a thoroughly bourgeois-democratic, undoubtedly progressive, and economically essential striving resolutely to break all those fetters.

Nationalisation of the land, though being a bourgeois measure, implies freedom for the class struggle and freedom of land tenure from all non-bourgeois adjuncts to the greatest possible degree conceivable in a capitalist society. Moreover, nationalisation of the land, representing as it does the abolition of private ownership of land, would, in effect, deal such a powerful blow to private ownership of all the means of production in



general that the party of the proletariat must facilitate such a reform in every possible way.

On the other hand, the well-to-do peasants of Russia long ago evolved the elements of a peasant bourgeoisie, and the Stolypin agrarian reform has undoubtedly strengthened, augmented, and reinforced these elements. At the other pole of the rural population, the agricultural wage-workers, the proletarians, and the mass of semi-proletarian peasantry, who stand close to the proletarians, have likewise gained in strength and numbers.

The more determined and consistent the break-up and elimination of the landed estates and the more determined and consistent the bourgeois-democratic agrarian reform in Russia in general, the more vigorous and speedy will be the development of the class struggle of the agricultural proletariat against the well-to-do peasants (the peasant bourgeoisie).

The fate and the outcome of the Russian revolution—unless the incipient proletarian revolution in Europe exercises a direct and powerful influence on our country—will depend on whether the urban proletariat succeeds in rallying the rural proletariat together with the mass of rural semi-proletarians behind it, or whether this mass follows the lead of the peasant bourgeoisie, which is gravitating towards an alliance with Guchkov and Milyukov, with the capitalists and landowners, and towards the counter-revolution in general.

In view of this class situation and balance of forces the Conference resolves that:

- 1) The Party of the proletariat will fight with all its might for the immediate and complete confiscation of all landed estates in Russia (and also crown lands, church lands, etc., etc.);

- 2) The Party will vigorously advocate the immediate transfer of all lands to the peasantry organised in Soviets of Peasants' Deputies, or in other organs of local self-government elected in a really democratic way and entirely independent of the landowners and officials;

- 3) The Party of the proletariat demands the nationalisation of all the land in the country; nationalisation, which signifies the transfer of the right of ownership of all land to the state, vests the right of administering the land in local democratic institutions;

- 4) The Party must wage a determined struggle, on the one hand, against the Provisional Government, which, both through the mouth of Shingaryov and by its collective utterances, is trying to force the peasants to come to a "voluntary agreement with the landowners", i.e., is trying virtually to impose upon them a reform which suits the interests of the landowners, and is threatening the peasants with punishment for "arbitrary

action", that is, with the use of violence by a minority of the population (the landowners and capitalists) against the majority; on the other hand, against the petty-bourgeois vacillations of the majority of the Narodniks and the Menshevik Social-Democrats, who are advising the peasants not to take all the land pending the convocation of the Constituent Assembly;

5) The Party advises the peasants to take the land in an organised way, not allowing the slightest damage to property, and taking measures to increase production;

6) Agrarian reforms, by and large, can be successful and durable only provided the whole state is democratised, i.e., provided, on the one hand, the police, the standing army, and the privileged bureaucracy are abolished, and provided, on the other, there exists a system of broad local self-government completely free from supervision and tutelage from above;

7) The separate and independent organisation of the agricultural proletariat must be undertaken immediately and everywhere, both in the form of Soviets of Agricultural Labourers' Deputies (as well as of separate Soviets of deputies of the semi-proletarian peasantry) and in the form of proletarian groups or factions within the general Soviets of Peasants' Deputies, in all local and municipal government bodies, etc.;

8) The Party must support the initiative of those peasant committees which in a number of localities in Russia are handing over the livestock and agricultural implements of the landowners to the peasants organised in those committees, to be used in a socially regulated manner for the cultivation of all the land;

9) The Party of the proletariat must advise the rural proletarians and semi-proletarians to strive to convert every landed estate into a fair-sized model farm to be run on public lines by the Soviets of Agricultural Labourers' Deputies under the direction of agricultural experts and with the application of the best technique.

## 10

**RESOLUTION ON THE SOVIETS  
OF WORKERS' AND SOLDIERS' DEPUTIES**

The Conference has discussed the reports and communications of comrades working in the Soviets of Workers' and Soldiers' Deputies in different parts of Russia and states that:

In many provincial areas the revolution is progressing in the following way: the proletariat and the peasantry, on their own initiative, are organising Soviets and dismissing the old authorities; a proletarian and peasant militia is being set up; all lands are being transferred to the peasants; workers' control over the factories and the eight-hour day have been introduced and wages have been increased; production is being maintained, and workers control the distribution of food, etc.

This growth of the revolution in the provinces in depth and scope is, on the one hand, the growth of a movement for transferring all power to the Soviets and putting the workers and peasants themselves in control of production. On the other hand, it serves as a guarantee for the build-up of forces, on a national scale, for the second stage of the revolution, which must transfer all state power to the Soviets or to other organs directly expressing the will of the majority of the nation (organs of local self-government, the Constituent Assembly, etc.).

In the capitals and in a few other large cities the task of transferring state power to the Soviets is particularly difficult and requires an especially long period of preparation of the proletariat's forces. This is where the largest forces of the bourgeoisie are concentrated, where a policy of compromise with the bourgeoisie is most strongly in evidence, a policy which often holds back the revolutionary initiative of the masses and weakens their independence; this is particularly dangerous in view of the leading role of these Soviets for the provinces.

It is, therefore, the task of the proletarian party, on the one hand, to support in every possible way the indicated development of the revolution locally, and, on the other, to conduct a systematic struggle within the Soviets (by means of propaganda

and new elections) for the triumph of the proletarian line. The party must concentrate all its efforts and all its attention on winning over the mass of workers and soldiers, and must draw a line between the policy of the proletariat and that of the petty bourgeoisie, between the internationalist policy and the defencist policy, between the revolutionary and the opportunist policy. The party must organise and arm the workers and build up their forces for the next stage of the revolution.

The Conference repeats that it is necessary to carry out many-sided activity within the Soviets of Workers' and Soldiers' Deputies, to increase the number of Soviets, to consolidate their power, and to weld together our Party's proletarian internationalist groups within the Soviets.

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May 15 (2), 1917

*Collected Works*, Vol. 24



## 11

**SPEECH ON THE NATIONAL QUESTION  
APRIL 29 (MAY 12)**

Beginning from 1903, when our Party adopted its programme, we have been encountering violent opposition on the part of the Polish comrades. If you study the Minutes of the Second Congress you will see that they were using the same arguments then that they are using now, and that the Polish Social-Democrats walked out from that Congress because they held that recognition of the right of nations to self-determination was unacceptable to them. Ever since then we have been coming up against the same question. Though imperialism already existed in 1903, the Polish Social-Democrats made no mention of it in their arguments. They are making the same strange and monstrous error now as they were then. These people want to put our Party's stand on a par with that of the chauvinists.

Owing to long oppression by Russia Poland's policy is a wholly nationalist one, and the whole Polish nation is obsessed with one idea—revenge on the Muscovites. No one has oppressed the Poles more than the Russian people, who served in the hands of the tsars as the executioner of Polish freedom. In no nation does hatred of Russia sit so deep as with the Poles; no nation dislikes Russia so intensely as the Poles. As a result we have a strange thing. Because of the Polish bourgeoisie, Poland has become an obstacle to the socialist movement. The whole world could go to the devil so long as Poland was free. Of course, this way of putting the question is a mockery of internationalism. Of course, Poland is now a victim of violence, but for the Polish nationalists to count on Russia liberating Poland—that would be treason to the International. The Polish nationalists have so imbued the Polish people with their views that this is how the situation is regarded in Poland.

The Polish Social-Democratic comrades have rendered a great historic service by advancing the slogan of internationalism and declaring that the fraternal union of the proletariat of all countries is of supreme importance to them and that they will

never go to war for the liberation of Poland. This is to their credit, and this is why we have always regarded only these Polish Social-Democrats as socialists. The others are patriots, Polish Plekhanovs. But this peculiar position, when, in order to safeguard socialism, people were forced to struggle against a rabid and morbid nationalism, has produced a strange state of affairs: comrades come to us saying that we must give up the idea of Poland's freedom, her right to secession.

Why should we Great Russians, who have been oppressing more nations than any other people, deny the right to secession for Poland, Ukraine, or Finland? We are asked to become chauvinists, because by doing so we would make the position of Social-Democrats in Poland less difficult. We do not pretend to seek to liberate Poland, because the Polish people live between two states that are capable of fighting. Instead of telling the Polish workers that only those Social-Democrats are real democrats who maintain that the Polish people ought to be free, since there is no place for chauvinists in a socialist party, the Polish Social-Democrats argue that, just because they find the union with Russian workers advantageous, they are opposed to Poland's secession. They have a perfect right to do so. But people don't want to understand that to strengthen internationalism you do not have to repeat the same words. What you have to do is to stress, in Russia, the freedom of secession for oppressed nations and, in Poland, their freedom to unite. Freedom to unite implies freedom to secede. We Russians must emphasise freedom to secede, while the Poles must emphasise freedom to unite.

We notice here a number of sophisms involving a complete renunciation of Marxism. Comrade Pyatakov's stand repeats that of Rosa Luxemburg ... (Holland is an example)....\* This is how Comrade Pyatakov reasons, and this is how he refutes himself, for in theory he denies freedom of secession, but to the people he says that anyone opposing freedom of secession is not a socialist. Comrade Pyatakov has been saying things here that are hopelessly muddled. In Western Europe most countries settled their national questions long ago. It is Western Europe that is referred to when it is said that the national question has been settled. Comrade Pyatakov, however, puts this where it does not belong—to Eastern Europe, and we find ourselves in a ridiculous position.

Just think of the dreadful mess that results! Finland is right next door to us. Comrade Pyatakov has no definite answer for Finland and gets all mixed up. In yesterday's *Rabochaya Gazeta*

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\* A gap in the Minutes.—Ed.

you read that the movement for separation is growing in Finland. Finns arriving here tell us that separatism is growing there because the Cadets refuse to grant the country complete autonomy. A crisis is approaching there, dissatisfaction with Governor-General Rodichev is rife, but *Rabochaya Gazeta* writes that the Finns should wait for the Constituent Assembly, because an agreement will there be reached between Finland and Russia. What do they mean by agreement? The Finns must declare that they are entitled to decide their destiny in their own way, and any Great Russian who denies this right is a chauvinist. It would be another thing if we said to the Finnish worker: Decide what is best for yourself....\*

Comrade Pyatakov simply rejects our slogan, saying that it means giving no slogan for the socialist revolution, but he himself gives no appropriate slogan. The method of socialist revolution under the slogan "Down with frontiers" is all muddled up. We have not succeeded in publishing the article in which I called this view "imperialist Economism".\*\* What does the "method" of socialist revolution under the slogan "Down with frontiers" mean? We maintain that the state is necessary, and a state presupposes frontiers. The state, of course, may hold a bourgeois government, but we need the Soviets. But even Soviets are confronted with the question of frontiers. What does "Down with frontiers" mean? It is the beginning of anarchy.... The "method" of socialist revolution under the slogan "Down with frontiers" is simply a mess. When the time is ripe for socialist revolution, when it finally occurs, it will spread to other countries. We shall help it along, but in what manner, we do not know. "The method of socialist revolution" is just a meaningless phrase. We stand for the settlement of problems which the bourgeois revolution has left unsolved. Our attitude to the separatist movement is indifferent, neutral. If Finland, Poland or the Ukraine secede from Russia, there is nothing bad in that. What is wrong with it? Anyone who says that is a chauvinist. One must be mad to continue Tsar Nicholas's policy. Didn't Norway secede from Sweden? Alexander I and Napoleon once bartered nations, the tsars once traded Poland. Are we to continue this policy of the tsars? This is repudiation of the tactics of internationalism, this is chauvinism at its worst. What is wrong with Finland seceding? After the secession of Norway from Sweden mutual trust increased between the two peoples, between the proletariat of these countries. The Swedish landowners want-

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\* A gap in the Minutes.—*Ed.*

\*\* See *Collected Works*, Vol. 23, pp. 28-76.—*Ed.*

ed to start a war, but the Swedish workers refused to be drawn into such a war.

All the Finns want now is autonomy. We are for Finland receiving complete freedom, because then there will be greater trust in Russian democracy and the Finns will not separate. While Mr. Rodichev goes to Finland to haggle over autonomy, our Finnish comrades come here and say, "We want autonomy." But what they get is a broadside, and the answer: "Wait for the Constituent Assembly." But we say: "Any Russian socialist who denies Finland freedom is a chauvinist."

We say that frontiers are determined by the will of the population. Russia, don't you dare fight over Courland! Germany, get your armies out of Courland! That is how we solve the secession problem. The proletariat cannot use force, because it must not prevent the peoples from obtaining their freedom. Only when the socialist revolution has become a reality, and not a method, will the slogan "Down with frontiers" be a correct slogan. Then we shall say: Comrades, come to us....

War is a different matter entirely. If need be, we shall not draw the line at a revolutionary war. We are not pacifists.... When we have Milyukov sitting here and sending Rodichev to Finland to shamefully haggle with the Finnish people, we say to the Russian people: Don't you dare coerce Finland; no nation can be free that oppresses other nations. In the resolution concerning Borghjerg<sup>64</sup> we say: Withdraw your troops and let the nation settle the question itself. But, if the Soviet takes over power tomorrow, that will not be a "method of socialist revolution", and we shall then say: Germany, get your troops out of Poland, and Russia, get your troops out of Armenia. If we did otherwise we should be deceiving people.

Comrade Dzerzhinsky tells us that in his oppressed Poland everybody is a chauvinist. But not a single Pole has said a word about Finland or the Ukraine. We have been arguing over this so much since 1903 that it is becoming difficult to talk about it. Do as you please.... Anyone who does not accept this point of view is an annexationist and a chauvinist. We are for a fraternal union of all nations. If there is a Ukrainian republic and a Russian republic, there will be closer contact and greater trust between the two. If the Ukrainians see that we have a Soviet republic, they will not secede, but if we have a Milyukov republic, they will. When Comrade Pyatakov said in self-contradiction that he is against the forcible retention of nations within the frontiers, he actually recognised the right of nations to self-determination. We certainly do not want the peasant in Khiva to live under the Khan of Khiva. By developing our revolution we



shall influence the oppressed people. Propaganda among the oppressed mass must follow only this line.

Any Russian socialist who does not recognise Finland's and the Ukraine's right to freedom will degenerate into a chauvinist. And no sophisms or references to his "method" will ever help him to justify himself.

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## 12

**RESOLUTION ON THE NATIONAL QUESTION**

The policy of national oppression, inherited from the autocracy and monarchy, is maintained by the landowners, capitalists, and petty bourgeoisie in order to protect their class privileges and to cause disunity among the workers of the various nationalities. Modern imperialism, which increases the tendency to subjugate weaker nations, is a new factor intensifying national oppression.

The elimination of national oppression, if at all achievable in capitalist society, is possible only under a consistently democratic republican system and state administration that guarantee complete equality for all nations and languages.

The right of all the nations forming part of Russia freely to secede and form independent states must be recognised. To deny them this right, or to fail to take measures guaranteeing its practical realisation, is equivalent to supporting a policy of seizure or annexation. Only the recognition by the proletariat of the right of nations to secede can ensure complete solidarity among the workers of the various nations and help to bring the nations closer together on truly democratic lines.

The conflict which has arisen at the present time between Finland and the Russian Provisional Government strikingly demonstrates that denial of the right to free secession leads to a direct continuation of the policy of tsarism.

The right of nations freely to secede must not be confused with the advisability of secession by a given nation at a given moment. The party of the proletariat must decide the latter question quite independently in each particular case, having regard to the interests of social development as a whole and the interests of the class struggle of the proletariat for socialism.

The party demands broad regional autonomy, the abolition of supervision from above, the abolition of a compulsory official language, and the fixing of the boundaries of the self-

governing and autonomous regions in accordance with the economic and social conditions, the national composition of the population, and so forth, as assessed by the local population itself.

The party of the proletariat emphatically rejects what is known as "national cultural autonomy", under which education, etc., is removed from the control of the state and put in the control of some kind of national diets. National cultural autonomy artificially divides the workers living in one locality, and even working in the same industrial enterprise, according to their various "national cultures"; in other words, it strengthens the ties between the workers and the bourgeois culture of their nations, whereas the aim of the Social-Democrats is to develop the international culture of the world proletariat.

The party demands that a fundamental law be embodied in the constitution annulling all privileges enjoyed by any one nation and all infringements of the rights of national minorities.

The interests of the working class demand that the workers of all nationalities in Russia should have common proletarian organisations: political, trade union, co-operative educational institutions, and so forth. Only the merging of the workers of the various nationalities into such common organisations will make it possible for the proletariat to wage a successful struggle against international Capital and bourgeois nationalism.

## 13

**RESOLUTION ON THE CURRENT SITUATION**

The world war, brought about by the struggle of world trusts and banking capital for domination over the world market, has already led to the mass destruction of material values, to exhaustion of productive forces, and to such a growth in the war industry that it is impossible to produce even the absolutely necessary minimum of consumer goods and means of production.

The present war, therefore, has brought humanity to an impasse and placed it on the brink of ruin.

The objective conditions for a socialist revolution, which undoubtedly existed even before the war in the more developed and advanced countries, have been ripening with tremendous rapidity as a result of the war. Small and middle enterprises are being squeezed out and ruined at a faster rate than ever. The concentration and internationalisation of capital are making gigantic strides; monopoly capitalism is developing into state monopoly capitalism. In a number of countries regulation of production and distribution by society is being introduced by force of circumstances. Some countries are introducing universal labour conscription.

Under private ownership of the means of production, all these steps towards greater monopolisation and control of production by the state are inevitably accompanied by intensified exploitation of the working people, by an increase in oppression; it becomes more difficult to resist the exploiters, and reaction and military despotism grow. At the same time these steps inevitably lead to a tremendous growth in the profits of the big capitalists at the expense of all other sections of the population. The working people for decades to come are forced to pay tribute to the capitalists in the form of interest payments on war loans running into thousands of millions. But with private ownership of the means of production abolished and state power passing completely to the proletariat, these very conditions are a pledge of success



for society's transformation that will do away with the exploitation of man by man and ensure the well-being of everyone.

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On the other hand, the course of events is clearly confirming the forecast of the socialists of the whole world who, precisely in connection with the imperialist war, then impending and now raging, unanimously declared in the 1912 Basle Manifesto that a *proletarian revolution* was inevitable.

The Russian revolution is only the first stage of the first of the proletarian revolutions which are the inevitable result of war.

In all countries a spirit of rebellion against the capitalist class is growing among the masses, and the proletariat is becoming aware that only the transfer of power to the proletariat and the abolition of private ownership of the means of production can save humanity from ruin.

In all countries, especially in the most advanced, Britain and Germany, hundreds of socialists who have not gone over to the side of "their own" national bourgeoisie have been thrown into prison by the capitalist governments. By this action the latter have clearly demonstrated their fear of the mounting proletarian revolution. In Germany the impending revolution is apparent both in the mass strikes, which have assumed particularly large proportions in recent weeks, and in the growth of fraternisation between the German and Russian soldiers at the front.

Fraternal trust and unity are gradually being restored among the workers of different countries, the very workers who are now killing each other in the interests of the capitalists. This, in turn, will create conditions for united revolutionary action by the workers of different countries. Only such action can guarantee the most systematic development and the most likely success of the world socialist revolution.

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Operating as it does in one of the most backward countries of Europe amidst a vast population of small peasants, the proletariat of Russia cannot aim at immediately putting into effect socialist changes.

But it would be a grave error, and in effect even a complete desertion to the bourgeoisie, to infer from this that the working class must support the bourgeoisie, or that it must keep its activities within limits acceptable to the petty bourgeoisie, or that the proletariat must renounce its leading role in the matter of explaining to the people the urgency of taking a number of

practical steps towards socialism for which the time is now ripe.

These steps are: first, nationalisation of the land. This measure, which does not directly go beyond the framework of the bourgeois system, would, at the same time, be a heavy blow at private ownership of the means of production, and as such would strengthen the influence of the socialist proletariat over the semi-proletariat in the countryside.

The next steps are the establishment of state control over all banks, and their amalgamation into a single central bank; also control over the insurance agencies and big capitalist syndicates (for example, the Sugar Syndicate, the Coal Syndicate, the Metal Syndicate, etc.), and the gradual introduction of a more just progressive tax on incomes and properties. Economically, these measures are timely; technically, they can be carried out immediately; politically, they are *likely* to receive the support of the overwhelming majority of the peasants, who have everything to gain by these reforms.

The Soviets of Workers', Soldiers', Peasants', and other Deputies, which now cover Russia with a dense and growing network, could also introduce, parallel with the above measures, universal labour conscription, for on the one hand the character of the Soviets guarantees that all these new reforms will be introduced only when an overwhelming majority of the people has clearly and firmly realised the practical need for them; on the other hand their character guarantees that the reforms will not be sponsored by the police and officials, but will be carried out by way of voluntary participation of the organised and armed masses of the proletariat and peasantry in the management of their own affairs.

All these and other similar measures can and should be not only discussed and prepared for enforcement on a national scale in the event of all power passing to the proletarians and semi-proletarians, but also implemented by the local revolutionary organs of power of the whole people when the opportunity arises.

Great care and discretion should be exercised in carrying out the above measures; a solid majority of the population must be won over and this majority must be clearly convinced of the country's practical preparedness for any particular measure. This is the direction in which the class-conscious vanguard of the workers must focus its attention and efforts, because it is the bounden duty of these workers to help the peasants find a way out of the present debacle.

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## INTRODUCTION TO THE RESOLUTIONS OF THE SEVENTH (APRIL) ALL-RUSSIA CONFERENCE OF THE R.S.D.L.P.(B.)

Workers, comrades!

The All-Russia Conference of the Russian Social-Democratic Labour Party, united by its Central Committee and known simply as the Bolshevik Party, is over.

The Conference has adopted very important resolutions on all the fundamental issues of the revolution and the full text of them is published below.

The revolution is passing through a crisis. This could be seen in the streets of Petrograd and Moscow between April 19 and April 21. This has been admitted by the Provisional Government. It has been admitted by the Executive Committee of the Petrograd Soviet of Workers' and Soldiers' Deputies. Still further confirmation of it has been given, as I pen these lines, by the resignation of Guchkov.

This crisis of state power, this crisis of the revolution, is no accident. The Provisional Government is a government of land-owners and capitalists who are tied up with Russian and Anglo-French capital and compelled to continue the imperialist war. But the soldiers are worn out by the war, they are becoming more and more aware that the war is being fought in the interests of the capitalists; the soldiers do not want war. Furthermore, the grim spectre of an appalling debacle, of famine and complete economic ruin is advancing upon Russia and other countries.

The Petrograd Soviet has also got into a blind alley by entering into an agreement with the Provisional Government, by supporting it, by supporting the loan, and, consequently, supporting the war. The Soviet is responsible for the Provisional Government, and, seeing no way out of the situation, has also got itself into a muddle through this agreement with the capitalist government.

At this great historic moment, when the future of the revolution is at stake, when the capitalists are torn between despair

and the thought of shooting down workers, our Party appeals to the people, saying in its Conference resolutions:

We must understand which *classes* are the motive force of the revolution. Their various aspirations must be soberly assessed. The capitalist cannot travel the same road as the worker. Petty proprietors can neither fully trust the capitalists nor all immediately agree on a close fraternal alliance with the workers. Only when we understand the difference between these classes shall we be able to find the correct road for the revolution.

The decisions of our Conference on all the basic issues of the people's life draw a clear line between the interests of the different classes and show that it is absolutely impossible to find a way out of the deadlock unless the policy of trust in and support of the capitalist government is abandoned.

The situation is one of unparalleled difficulty. There is one way out and only one—the transfer of all state power to the Soviets of Workers', Soldiers', Peasants', and other Deputies throughout Russia, from the bottom up. Only if state power passes to the working class supported by most of the peasantry, will it be possible to count on speedily regaining the confidence of the workers of other countries, to count on a mighty European revolution that will throw off the yoke of Capital and put an end to the criminal bloodshed in which the peoples are embroiled. Only if the power passes to the working class supported by most of the peasants shall we be able to cherish the firm hope that the working people will show complete confidence in that power and all, without exception, work selflessly to bring about a transformation of the entire way of life of the people in the interests of those who labour and not in the interests of the capitalists and landowners. Without such selfless work, without a gigantic effort on the part of each and every individual, without firmness and the determination to rebuild life in a new way, without the strict organisation and comradely discipline of all workers and all poor peasants—*without all this there is no way out.*

The war has brought all mankind to the brink of destruction. The capitalists have become deeply involved in the war and are unable to extricate themselves. The whole world faces disaster.

Workers, comrades! The time is drawing near when events will demand new and still greater heroism—the heroism of millions and tens of millions—than you displayed in the glorious days of the revolution of February and March. Prepare yourselves.

Prepare yourselves and remember that if, together with the capitalists, you were able to achieve victory in a few days by a simple outburst of popular wrath, you will need more than



that for victory against the capitalists, for victory over the capitalists. To achieve such a victory, to have the workers and poor peasants take the power, keep that power and make proper use of it, you will need organisation, organisation, and organisation.

Our Party is helping you as much as it can, primarily by bringing home to you the different positions of the different classes and their different strength. The decisions of our Conference are devoted to this, and unless you realise this clearly, organisation does not mean anything. And without organisation action by the millions is impossible, success is impossible.

Don't put your trust in words. Don't be misled by promises. Don't overestimate your strength. Organise at every factory, in every regiment and every company, in every residential block. Work at your organising every day, every hour; do that work yourselves, for this is something you cannot entrust to anybody else. Work to steadily, soundly and indestructibly build up full confidence in the advanced workers on the part of the masses. Such is the main content of all the decisions of our Conference. Such is the main lesson taught by the entire development of the revolution. Such is the one guarantee of success.

Workers, comrades! We call upon you to carry out the hard, serious, untiring work of consolidating the class-conscious, revolutionary proletariat of all countries. This is the one and only way out, the only way to save mankind from the horrors of war and the yoke of Capital.

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*FIRST ALL-RUSSIA CONGRESS  
OF PEASANTS' DEPUTIES<sup>65</sup>*

*MAY 4-28 (MAY 17-JUNE 10), 1917*



## DRAFT RESOLUTION ON THE AGRARIAN QUESTION

1) All landed estates and privately-owned lands, as well as crown and church lands, etc., are to be turned over immediately to the people without any compensation.

2) The peasantry must in an organised manner, through their Soviets of Peasants' Deputies, immediately take over all the land in their localities for the purpose of its economic exploitation, without however in any way prejudicing thereby the final establishment of land regulations by the Constituent Assembly or by the All-Russia Council of Soviets, should the people decide to vest the central power of the state in such a Council of Soviets.

3) Private property in land must be abolished altogether, i.e., all the land shall belong only to the nation as a whole, and its disposal shall be placed in the hands of the local democratic institutions.

4) The peasants must reject the advice of the capitalists and landowners and their Provisional Government to come to "an agreement" with the local landowners on the immediate disposal of the land; the disposal of all the land must be governed by the organised decision of the majority of the local peasants, and not by an agreement between the majority, i.e., the peasants, and the minority, and an insignificant minority at that, i.e., the landowners.

5) Not only the landowners are fighting and will continue to fight as hard as they can against the transfer of all landed estates to the peasants without compensation, but also the capitalists, who wield great power both because of their money and because of their influence on the as yet unenlightened masses through the newspapers and the numerous officials, employees, etc., who are accustomed to the domination of capital. Hence, the transfer of all the landed estates to the peasantry without compensation cannot be carried through on a complete and secure basis unless the confidence of the peasant masses in the



capitalists is destroyed, unless a close alliance is established between the peasantry and the urban workers, and unless state power is taken over completely by the Soviets of Workers', Soldiers', Peasants', and other Deputies. Only state power wielded by such Soviets and administering the state not through a police, or a bureaucracy, or a standing army isolated from the people, but through a nation-wide, universal and armed militia of the workers and peasants, can guarantee the realisation of the above-mentioned agrarian reforms, which are being demanded by the entire peasantry.

6) Agricultural labourers and poor peasants, i.e., those who, because of the lack of sufficient land, cattle, and implements, earn a living partly by working for hire, must strive their hardest to organise themselves independently into separate Soviets, or into separate groups within the general peasants' Soviets, in order to protect their interests against the rich peasants, who inevitably strive towards an alliance with the capitalists and landowners.

7) As a result of the war, Russia, like all other belligerent and many neutral (non-belligerent) countries, is facing an economic debacle, disaster and famine owing to the shortage of workers, coal, iron, etc. The only way to save the country is by the workers' and peasants' deputies assuming control and management of the entire production and distribution of goods. It is therefore necessary to proceed immediately to arrange agreements between Soviets of Peasants' Deputies and Soviets of Workers' Deputies on the exchange of grain and other rural products for implements, footwear, clothing, etc., without the medium of the capitalists, who must be removed from the management of the factories. With the same purpose in view, the peasant committees must be encouraged to take over the livestock and implements of the landowners, such livestock and implements to be used in common. Similarly, the conversion of all large landed estates into model farms must be encouraged, the land to be cultivated collectively with the aid of the best implements under the direction of agricultural experts and in accordance with the decision of the local Soviets of Agricultural Labourers' Deputies.

Written before May 17 (30), 1917

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## 2

**SPEECH ON THE AGRARIAN QUESTION  
MAY 22 (JUNE 4), 1917**

Comrades, the resolution that I am privileged to present to you in the name of the Social-Democratic group of the Peasants' Soviet has been printed and distributed to the delegates. If any delegates have not received it we shall have more copies printed tomorrow for distribution to all who wish to have them.

In a short report I can, of course, deal only with the main, basic questions, those that are of greatest interest to the peasantry and the working class. To those interested in the question in greater detail, I can recommend the resolution of our Party, the Russian Social-Democratic Labour Party (Bolsheviks), published as a Supplement to *Soldatskaya Pravda* No. 13, and repeatedly dealt with in our newspaper *Pravda*.<sup>\*</sup> At the moment I shall have to confine myself to elucidating the more important points of my resolution and of our Party Programme on the agrarian question that are most controversial or give rise to misunderstanding. One of the first of these moot points is that touched upon yesterday or the day before in the Chief Land Committee<sup>66</sup> at the session you have probably heard about or read about in the newspapers of yesterday or the day before. That session of the Chief Land Committee was attended by a representative of our Party, Comrade Smilga, a colleague of mine on the Central Committee. He proposed to the session that the Chief Land Committee should express itself in favour of the immediate organised seizure by the peasants of the landed estates, but a number of violent objections were raised to Comrade Smilga's proposal. (*Voices*: "Here, too.") I am now told that a number of comrades here will also speak against that proposal. All the more reason for my clarifying that point in our programme, because I believe that most of the objections against our programme are based on a misunderstanding or misrepresentation of our views.

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<sup>\*</sup> See pp. 129-31 of the present volume.—*Ed.*

What do all our Party resolutions, all the articles in our newspaper *Pravda* say? We say that all the land, without exception, must become the property of the whole nation. We have come to this conclusion after having studied, in particular, the peasant movement of 1905 and the statements made by peasant deputies to the First and Second Dumas, where many peasant deputies from all over Russia were able to speak with relative—*relative*, of course—freedom.

All the land must be the property of the whole nation. From this it follows that in advocating the immediate transfer, without payment, of the landed estates to the local peasants we do not by any means advocate the seizure of those estates as private property, we do not by any means advocate the division of those estates. We believe the land should be taken by the local peasantry for one sowing in accordance with a decision adopted by the majority of local peasant deputies. We do not by any means advocate the transfer of this land as private property to those peasants who are now taking it for one sowing. All objections of this kind to our proposal that I am constantly hearing and reading in the columns of the capitalist newspapers are based on a sheer misinterpretation of our views. Since we have said—and I repeat: we have said that in all our resolutions—that the land must be the property of the whole nation and must be taken over by it without payment—it is obvious that arrangements for the final disposal of the land, the final establishment of land regulations must be made only by a central state power, that is, by a Constituent Assembly or an All-Russia Council of Soviets, should the masses of peasants and workers establish such state power as a Council of Soviets. On this score there are no differences of opinion.

The differences begin after this, when we are told: "If that is so, then any immediate uncompensated transfer of the landed estates to the peasantry would be an unauthorised act." That is the view that was expressed most exactly, most authoritatively and most weightily by Minister of Agriculture Shingaryov in his well-known telegram; we consider this view to be fallacious, unfair, most prejudicial to the peasantry, prejudicial to the farmers, and the least likely to ensure the country a supply of grain. Allow me to read that telegram to show you what we mostly object to.

"An independent solution of the land question in the absence of a general state law is inadmissible. Arbitrary action will lead to a national calamity... the lawful solution of the land question is the business of the Constituent Assembly. At the present time agricultural conciliation chambers have been set up by the tillers of the land and the landowners in each local area under the rural supply committees."



This is the chief passage from the government's statement on this question. If you acquaint yourselves with the resolution of the Chief Land Committee on this question adopted yesterday or the day before, and the resolution adopted, also the other day, at a private meeting of Duma deputies, you will see that the two resolutions proceed from the same viewpoint. The peasants who want land handed over immediately to the peasants without payment and distributed by local peasant committees are accused of unauthorised acts on the assumption that only a voluntary agreement between peasants and landowners, between the tillers and the owners of the land, would be in accordance with the needs and interests of the state. That is what we deny, that is what we dispute.

Let us examine the objections raised to our proposal. The usual objections are that the land in Russia is distributed very unevenly, both between individual small units such as villages and volosts and between the bigger units such as gubernias and regions. It is said that if the local population were to take over the land by a majority decision against the will of the landowners and without payment at that, the unevenness would remain and there would even be a danger of it becoming perpetuated. We say in reply that this argument is based on a misunderstanding. The uneven distribution will remain in any case until the Constituent Assembly or some other central state power finally establishes a new system. Until such a system is established the uneven distribution will remain whether the question is settled in the peasant's or in the landowner's way, whether in our way, with the immediate transfer of the land to the peasants, or in the way of the landowners, who are prepared to lease their land out at a high rent provided the tenant farmer and the landowner each retains his own rights. This objection is obviously incorrect and unjust. We say that a central state power must be established as quickly as possible, one that not only relies on the will and the decision of the peasant majority, but also directly expresses the opinion of that majority. There are no differences on this score. When we hear objections to the Bolsheviks, attacks levelled against us in the capitalist newspapers accusing us of being anarchists, we repudiate such accusations most emphatically and regard them as an attempt to spread malicious lies and slander.

Anarchists are those who deny the need for a state power, whereas we say that a state power is absolutely necessary, not only for Russia today but for any state, even one that goes over directly to socialism. Without doubt the firmest possible authority is necessary. All we want is for that power to be wholly and exclusively in the hands of the majority of workers', soldiers', and peasants' deputies. That is where we differ from other



parties. By no means do we deny the need for a firm state power; we only say that all landed estates must pass into the hands of the peasants without payment, in accordance with a decision of the local peasant committee adopted by the majority, and on the condition that no damage is done to property. This is stated most explicitly in our resolution. We emphatically reject any allegation that our view implies an arbitrary act.

In our opinion, on the contrary, if the landowners keep back the land for their own use or charge money for it, that is an arbitrary act, but if the majority of peasants say that the landed estates must not remain in the hands of their owners, and that the peasantry has known nothing but oppression by those landowners for decades, for centuries; that is not arbitrary, that is the *restitution of justice*, and we cannot put off that restitution. If the land is transferred to the peasants immediately the unevenness among the regions cannot be eliminated, that is indisputable; but nobody can eliminate that unevenness until the Constituent Assembly meets. If you were to ask Shingaryov today—that same Shingaryov who raises objections to us and reviles the champions of our views in official papers for “arbitrary action”—if you were to ask him what he proposes to do about that unevenness, he would be unable to answer you. He does not and cannot propose anything.

He speaks about “voluntary agreement between peasants and landowners”. What does that mean? I will cite two basic figures on landownership in European Russia. These figures show that at one end of the Russian village there are the most wealthy landowners, among them the Romanovs, the richest and the worst of landowners, and at the other end are the extremely poor peasants. I am citing two figures to show you the significance of the sermon preached by Shingaryov and all landowners and capitalists. These are the two figures: if we take the richest landowners of European Russia, we shall see that the biggest of them, numbering less than 30,000, own about 70,000,000 dessiatines of land. That works out at over 2,000 dessiatines each. If you take the upper crust of rich Russian landowners, irrespective of what social estate they belong to (most of them are nobles, but there are other landowners as well), you find that there are 30,000 of them and they own 70,000,000 dessiatines! And if you take the poor peasants according to the same 1905 Census, which is the latest available information gathered uniformly throughout Russia—information, which, like all statistics gathered in tsarist times by tsarist civil servants, is none too trustworthy, although it does give some approximation of the truth, some data can be compared—if you take the poor peasantry you get 10,000,000 households owning from 70,000,000 to

75,000,000 dessiatines of land. This means that one person has over 2,000 dessiatines and the other seven and a half dessiatines per household! And they say the peasants are guilty of arbitrary acts if they do not enter into a voluntary agreement. What is meant by "voluntary agreement"? It means that the landowners may perhaps let you have land for a good rent but will not give it up to anybody without payment. Is that just? Of course it is not. Is that profitable to the peasant population? Of course it is not. The form in which landed property will ultimately be established is for the future central state authority to decide, but at the present time the landed estates must be immediately transferred to the peasantry without compensation, provided the seizure is organised. Minister Chernov, opposing my colleague Smilga in the Chief Land Committee, said that the two words "organised seizure" are a contradiction in terms; if it's a seizure, then it is unorganised, and if it's organised, then it is not a seizure. I do not think this criticism is correct. I think that if the peasantry make a majority decision in any village or volost, any uyezd or gubernia<sup>67</sup>—in some gubernias, if not all, the peasant congresses have set up local authorities representing the interests and will of the majority, the will of the population, i.e., of the majority of the tillers of the soil—once these authorities are set up in the localities the decision they make will be the decision of authorities recognised by the peasants. The local peasantry are certain to respect these authorities, for there is no doubt that these freely elected authorities will decide that the landed estates must immediately pass into the hands of the peasants. Let the peasant know that he is taking the estate of the landowner, and if he pays anything, let him pay it into a local peasant fund, and let him know that the money will go towards farm improvements, paving and road building, etc. Let him know that the land he is taking is not his land, *nor is it the landowner's*, but the common property of the people, which the Constituent Assembly will, in the end, dispose of. For this reason the landowners must have no right to the land from the very beginning of the revolution, from the moment the first land committee was set up, and no payment should be required for it.

The basic difference between ourselves and our opponents is in our respective understanding of what order is and what law is. Up to now law and order have been regarded as things that suited the landowners and bureaucrats, but we maintain that law and order are things that suit the majority of the peasantry. Until there is an All-Russia Council of Soviets, until there is a Constituent Assembly, local authority—uyezd and gubernia committees—constitutes the supreme law and order! We call

it lawlessness when one landowner, on the basis of ancient rights, demands a "voluntary" agreement with three hundred peasant families who have an average of seven and a half dessiatines of land each! We say: "Let a decision be taken by the majority; we want the peasants to obtain the landed estates now, without losing a single month, a single week or even a single day."

We are told: "If the peasants seize the land now, it is the richer peasants who will get it, those who have animals, implements, etc.; would this, therefore, not be dangerous from the point of view of the poor peasants?" Comrades, I must dwell on this argument, because our Party, in all our decisions, programmes and appeals to the people, declares: "We are the party of wage-workers and poor peasants; it is their interests we are out to protect; it is through them, and through them alone, through those classes, that mankind can escape the horrors into which the capitalists' war has plunged it."

To objections like these, claiming that our decisions are contrary to the interests of the poor peasants, we pay careful attention and invite a most careful study of them because they touch the very heart of the matter, the very root of the problem. And the heart of the matter is this: how can the interests of the wage-workers, both urban and rural, and the interests of the poor peasants be protected in the revolution, in the transformation of the political system, that is now taking place in Russia, how can and should their interests be protected against those of the landowners or rich peasants who are also capitalists? That, of course, is the crux of the matter, the nub of the whole problem. But we are told that if we advise the peasants to seize the land immediately, it is those who have implements and animals who will mostly do the seizing and the poor will be left out of the picture. And now I ask you—will a voluntary agreement with the landowners help?

You know very well that the landowners are not anxious to rent out land to those peasants who have not got a kopek in their pockets, but, on the contrary, resort to "voluntary" agreements where they are promised substantial payment. Up to now the landowners do not seem to have been giving their land away for nothing—at least nobody in Russia ever noticed it.

To speak of voluntary agreements with the landowners means greatly increasing and consolidating the privileged, preferential position and the advantages enjoyed by the rich peasant, because the rich peasant can certainly pay the landowner and every landowner regards him as a person who is good for his money. The landowner knows that the rich peasant can pay and that he can be sued for the money, so that the rich peasant has more to gain by such "voluntary" deals with the landowners than



the poor peasant. If there is any possibility of helping the poor peasant straight away, it is by a measure such as I propose—the land must go to the peasants immediately and without payment.

Landed estates always have been and continue to be a flagrant injustice. The free tenure of that land by the peasants, if the tenure is in accordance with the will of the majority, will not be an arbitrary act but a restitution of justice. That is our point of view, and that is why we consider the argument that the poor peasantry would lose by it to be a great injustice. The agreement is called “voluntary”—only Shingaryov could call it that—when one landowner has 2,000 dessiatines and 300 peasants have an average of seven and a half per family. To call such an agreement voluntary is sheer mockery of the peasants. For the peasant it is not a voluntary agreement, but a compulsory one, and will be such until every volost, gubernia or uyezd peasant Soviet or the All-Russia Council of Soviets declares that the landed estates are a gross injustice and that they must be abolished without losing a single hour, a single minute.

The land must be the property of the entire people, and must be declared such by a central state power. Until that power is established, the local authorities, I again repeat, should take over the landed estates and should do so in an organised manner according to the will of the majority. It is not true, as the newspapers assert, that disorder reigns in Russia! It isn't true—there is greater order in the countryside than ever before, because majority decisions are being made; there have been scarcely any acts of violence against the landowners; unfair treatment of the landowners has occurred only in isolated cases; they are insignificant and in Russia as a whole are not more in number than those which formerly occurred.

Now I want to mention another argument that I have heard and had occasion to deal with in our newspaper *Pravda* in connection with the immediate transfer of the land to the peasantry.\*

The argument is this: if we advise the peasants to take over the landed estates immediately and without payment, this will cause discontent, annoyance and anxiety and perhaps even indignation among the soldiers at the front who may say, “If the peasants take the land now and we have to stay at the front, we shall be left without land.” Perhaps the soldiers would all leave the front and chaos and anarchy would result. But in answer to this we say that this objection has nothing to do with the real issue; whether the land is taken for payment, by agreement with the landowners, or by a decision of the majority of

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\* See *Collected Works*, Vol. 24, pp. 449-53.—Ed.



the peasantry, in either case the soldiers will remain at the front and will certainly remain there as long as the war lasts and will not be able to return to their villages. Why should the soldiers at the front not be anxious about the landowners imposing unfavourable terms in the form of a voluntary agreement, why should they be anxious about the peasants making a majority decision against the landowners? It is incomprehensible! Why should the soldier at the front place his trust in the landowner, in a "voluntary" agreement with the landowner? I can understand the political parties of the landowners and capitalists talking like this, but I do not believe that the Russian soldier at the front sees it that way. If there is a "voluntary" agreement with the landowner, the soldier will not call it good order, will not place his trust in it, he is more likely to see in it a continuation of the old disorder that existed under the landowners.

If the soldier is told that the land is being taken over by the people, that the local peasants are renting land and paying rent, not to the landowner but to their own committee for the common good, for those very soldiers at the front, and not for the landowner, he is more likely to have faith in this. If this is a majority decision, the soldier at the front will know that there cannot be any "voluntary" agreements with landowners, that the landowners are also citizens with equal rights whom nobody wishes to wrong; the land belongs to the entire nation, consequently it belongs also to the landowner, not as a privilege of the nobility, but in the same way as it belongs to any other citizen. From the day the power of the tsar was overthrown—a tsar who was the biggest landowner and oppressor of the masses—there must be no privileges for the landowners. With the establishment of liberty, the power of the landowners must be considered overthrown once and for all. The soldier at the front does not stand to lose anything from this point of view; on the contrary, he will have much greater faith in the state authorities, he will not worry about his household or about his family being treated unjustly or being neglected.

There remains one other objection that has been raised to our proposal. This argument is that if the peasants were to seize the landed estates immediately, such immediate, poorly prepared seizure might lead to a deterioration in the tilling and sowing of the land. I must say that a government of the majority, a central state power, has not yet been established, the peasants have not yet acquired sufficient confidence in themselves and have not lost their trust in the landowners and capitalists; I believe that we are drawing closer to this day by day, that the peasantry are day by day losing their confidence in the old state power and realising that only the peasants', soldiers', workers'

and other elected deputies and nobody else can constitute the government in Russia; I believe that every passing day brings us closer to this, not because any political party has advised it—millions of people will never listen to the advice of parties if that advice does not fall in with their own experience. We are rapidly approaching the time when there will be no other state power in Russia except the power of the representatives of the peasants and workers. When I am told that the immediate seizure of the land is likely to lead to its being poorly cultivated, that the sowing will be poor, I must say that our peasants cultivate the land very poorly because of their downtrodden condition, because of centuries of oppression by the landowners. There is, of course, a fearful crisis in Russia, a crisis that has hit her as it has other belligerent countries, and Russia can only weather it by better cultivation of the land and the greatest economy of man-power. But today, at the time of the first sowing of crops, can anything be changed by "voluntary" agreements with the landowners? Are we to understand that the landowners will better look after the cultivation of the soil, that the peasants will sow worse if they know they are sowing land which is the property of the whole people and not of the landowner? If they pay rent into their own peasant funds and not to the landowner? This is such nonsense that I am astonished to hear such arguments; it is absolutely unbelievable and is nothing but a ruse on the part of the landowners.

The landowners realise that they can no longer rule by means of the big stick; they realise that very well, and are adopting a form of rule that is new to Russia but which has existed for a long time in Western Europe, in the West-European countries. Two revolutions in Russia have shown that the rule of the stick is no longer possible, and in the West-European countries dozens of revolutions have demonstrated it. Those revolutions have taught the landowners and capitalists a lesson; they have taught them that they have to rule the people by deception, by flattery; that they have to adapt themselves, wear a red badge on their jackets, and, sharks though they are, declare: "We are revolutionary democrats, please wait a bit and we'll do everything for you." The argument that the peasants will make a worse job of the sowing now if they sow land which no longer belongs to the landowners but is national property, is simply making fun of the peasants, it is an attempt to maintain rule over them by means of deception.

I repeat—there must be no landed proprietorship at all; tenure is not proprietorship, tenure is a temporary measure and it changes from year to year. The peasant who rents a plot of land does not dare regard the land as his own. The land is not his

nor the landowner's, it belongs to the people. I repeat that this cannot make the sowing of crops this year, this spring, any worse. That assumption is so monstrous and improbable that there is only one thing for me to say—beware of the landowners, do not trust them, do not be taken in by fair words and promises. It must be remembered that a decision made by a majority of peasants, who are careful enough in making decisions, is a lawful decision of state significance. In this respect the peasants are to be relied upon. I have, for example, a decision passed by Penza peasants which is worded throughout with extraordinary caution; the peasants are not planning any immediate changes for the whole of Russia, but they do not want to place themselves in intolerable bondage, and in this they are right. The greatest bondage was that of the peasant to the landowner, and such it remains, bondage to the landowners and oppressors. The abolition of that bondage, therefore, must not be put off for a single week, even a single hour, but every seizure must be an organised seizure, not to make property of the seized land, not to divide it up, but to use it in common, as the property of the whole people.

I could finish with this question of the seizure of land by answering that the objections against our proposal are based on deception when they come from the landowners and capitalists, and on misunderstanding, on a too credulous belief in what the landowners and capitalists say untruthfully against us when they come from those who are neither landowners nor capitalists but people who have the interests of the working people at heart. If you examine our arguments you will see that the just demand that the landed estates be abolished immediately and similarly that property in land belong to the people cannot be put into effect until a central government is established, but what we do advise, and urge most insistently, is that the peasants themselves, right on the spot, in the localities, take over the land so as to avoid any breach of good order. We offer this advice in our resolutions, but perhaps it is superfluous, since the peasants are doing this without our advice.

I shall pass to the second question, the one to which the greatest attention should be drawn, the question of what we think should be done with the land in the best interests of the masses when it becomes the property of the whole people, when private property is abolished. That time is close at hand in Russia. In fact, the landowners' power, if not destroyed, has been undermined. When all the peasants are in possession of the land, when there are no landowners, how are we to distribute the land? It seems to me that we must have some sort of common, basic view on this question, because, obviously, local arrangements



will always be made by the peasantry. It cannot be otherwise in a democratic state; this is so obvious that there is no need even to talk about it. But in answer to the question of what must be done to secure the land for the working people, we say: "We want to protect the interests of the wage-workers and poor peasants." Our Russian Social-Democratic Party of Bolsheviks regards this as its duty. We ask ourselves: If we say that the land will belong to the nation is that the same as saying the land will belong to the working people? Our answer is: No, it is not the same thing! By saying that the land will belong to the nation, we mean that landed property will be abolished; we mean that all the land will belong to the whole people; we mean that anyone who uses land will rent it from the nation. If such an arrangement is made no differences in land tenure will remain, all the land will be alike, and, as the peasants often say, "All the old bounds and barriers will fall away, the land will be unfenced—there will be free soil, and free labour."

Does that mean that the land will be handed over to all the working people? No, it does not. Free labour on free soil means that all the old forms of land tenure will be abolished and there will be no other form of ownership than national ownership; everyone rents land from the state; there is a single state authority, that of all the workers and peasants; a peasant can rent land from it as a leaseholder; between the peasant and the state there are no middlemen; the terms on which land is rented are equal for all; that is free labour on free soil.

Does that mean that the land will be handed over to all the working people? No, it does not. You cannot eat land, and to farm it you need implements, animals, equipment, and money; without money, without implements, you cannot farm. And so, when you set up a system of free labour on free soil, there will be no landed estates, no categories on the land. There will be only land which is national property and free tenants renting land from the state. When you set up this system it will not mean the transfer of the land to all the working people, it will merely mean that every farmer will freely dispose of his land; anybody who wants land will be free to rent it from the state. That will be a big step forward compared with the Russia of the tsars and landowners. It will be a big step forward because Russia of the tsars and landowners was a country in which 70,000,000 dessiatines were given over to 30,000 Markovs, Romanovs and other such landowners; it will be a Russia in which there will be free labour on free soil. This has already been done in many places. Already now Russia is ahead of the Russia of the tsars and landowners, but this is not a transfer of land to the working people, it is the transfer of land to the farmer, be-



cause if the land belongs to the state, and those people take it who want to farm it, that is not enough; it is not enough to want to farm, the ability to farm is also needed, and even ability is not enough. Any farm labourer or day-labourer has that ability, but he does not have sufficient animals, implements, and capital, so that no matter how many decisions are taken, no matter how much we talk about it, we shall not establish free labour on free soil in that way. Even if we were to hang up notices about free soil in every volost administration, it would not improve matters as far as the working people are concerned, any more than the prisons in West-European republics would cease to be prisons because they had the words "Liberty, Equality and Fraternity" inscribed on them. If the words "Liberty, Equality and Fraternity" are written on a factory, as in America, the factory does not thereby cease to be a hell for the workers and a paradise for the capitalists.

And so we have to think of what to do further, how to ensure that there should not be merely free labour—that is a step forward, but it is still not a step towards protecting the interests of the working people; it is a step towards liberation from the landowner sharks, from exploitation by the landowners, liberation from the Markovs, from the police, etc., but it is not a step towards protecting the interests of the working people, because the poor, propertyless peasant cannot do anything with the land without animals, implements, and capital. That is why I am very sceptical about the two so-called norms or standards of land tenure, the labour standard and the subsistence standard. I know that arguments about these two norms and explanations of them are always to be met with in the Narodnik parties. I know that those parties hold the view that these two norms, these two standards, must be established—the labour standard is the largest amount of land a family can till; the subsistence standard is one just sufficient to feed the family, less would mean hunger. I have said that I am very sceptical about this question of standards or norms and I believe it is a bureaucrat's plan that will not do any good; it can't be put into practice even if it were decided upon here. That is the crux of the whole matter! That plan cannot relieve the position of the hired labourers and poor peasants to any appreciable extent, and even if you accept it, it will remain on paper so long as capitalism dominates. That plan does not help us find the true road for the transition from capitalism to socialism.

When people speak of these two norms, these two standards, they imagine that only two things exist—the land and the citizen, as if there had never been anything else in the world. If that were so, the plan would be a good one. But that is not

so—there exists the power of capital, the power of money; without money there cannot be any farming on the freest land, no matter what “standards” of it you have, because as long as money remains wage-labour will remain. And this means that the rich peasants—and there are no less than a million families of them in Russia—are oppressing and exploiting hired labourers, and will continue to oppress them on the “free” soil. Those rich peasants constantly, not by way of exception but as a general rule, resort to the hiring of workers by the year, by the season and by the day, that is, they resort to the exploitation of the poor peasants, the proletarians. Alongside this you have millions and millions of peasants who have no horses and cannot exist without selling their labour-power, without doing seasonal work for somebody else, etc. As long as the power of money, the power of capital, remains, no matter what “standards” of land tenure you establish, they will at best be useless in practice because they do not take into consideration the chief factor—that property in implements, animals, and money is distributed unevenly; they do not take into consideration the existence of the hired labour that is exploited. That is a basic fact in the present-day life of Russia, and there is no getting away from it; but if we establish any kind of “standards”, life will bypass them and they will remain on paper. To protect the interests of the propertyless, poor peasants in this great transformation of Russia in which you are now engaged and which you will undoubtedly carry through, when private property in land will be abolished and a step forward will have been made towards the better, socialist future; to protect the interests of the workers and poor peasants in this great work of transformation that you are only just beginning, which will go a long way forward and which, it may be said without exaggeration, will undoubtedly be brought to completion in Russia because there is no power that can stop it, we must not take the road of establishing norms or standards, but must find some other way.

I and my Party comrades, in whose name I have the honour to speak, know of only two ways of protecting the interests of agricultural labourers and poor peasants, and we recommend these two ways to the Peasants' Soviet for its attention.

The first way is to organise the agricultural labourers and poor peasants. We should like, and we advise it, to have in each peasant committee, in each volost, uyezd and gubernia, a separate group of agricultural labourers and poor peasants who will have to ask themselves: “If the land becomes the property of the whole people tomorrow—and it certainly will, because the people want it to—then where do we come in? Where shall we, who have no animals or implements, get them from? How are

we to farm the land? How must we protect our interests? How are we to make sure that the land, which will belong to the whole people, which will really be the property of the nation, should not fall *only* into the hands of *proprietors*? If it falls into the hands of those who own enough animals and implements, shall we gain anything by it? Is that what we made this great revolution for? Is that what we wanted?"

The "people" will have the land, but that is *not enough* to protect the interests of agricultural labourers. It is not a matter of us here, from above, or the peasant committee, establishing a "standard" of land to be held by individuals. Such measures will not help as long as capital is dominant, and they will not offer deliverance from the domination of capitalism. There is only one way to escape the yoke of capitalism and ensure that the people's land goes to the *working people*, and that is by organising the agricultural labourers, who will be guided by their experience, their observations and their distrust of what the village sharks tell them, even though these sharks wear red rosettes in their buttonholes and call themselves "revolutionary democrats."

The poor peasants can only be taught by independent organisation in the localities, they can only learn from their own experience. That experience will not be easy, we cannot and do not promise them a land flowing with milk and honey. The landowners will be thrown out because the people wish it, but *capitalism* will remain. It is much more difficult to do away with capitalism, and the road to its overthrow is a different one. It is the road of independent, separate organisation of the agricultural labourers and the poor peasants. And that is what our Party proposes in the first instance.

Only this road promises a gradual, difficult, but real and certain transfer of the land to the working people.

The second step which our Party recommends is that every big economy, for example, every big landed estate, of which there are 30,000 in Russia, should be organised as soon as possible into a model farm for the *common* cultivation of the land jointly by agricultural labourers and scientifically trained agronomists, using the animals, implements, etc., of the landowner for that purpose. Without this *common* cultivation under the direction of the Soviets of Agricultural Labourers the land will not go entirely to the *working people*. To be sure, joint cultivation is a difficult business and it would be madness of course for anybody to imagine that joint cultivation of the land can be decreed from above and imposed on people, because the centuries-old habit of farming on one's own cannot suddenly disappear, and because money will be needed for it and adaptation



to the new mode of life. If this advice, this view, on the common cultivation of the land with commonly owned animals and implements to be used to the best purpose jointly with agronomists—if this advice were the invention of individual political parties, the case would be a bad one, because changes are not made in the life of a people on the advice of a party, because tens of millions of people do not make a revolution on the advice of a party, and such a change would be much more of a revolution than the overthrow of the weak-minded Nicholas Romanov. I repeat, tens of millions of people will not make a revolution to order, but will do so when driven to it by dire need, when their position is an impossible one, when the joint pressure and determination of tens of millions of people break down the old barriers and are actually capable of creating a new way of life. When we advise such a measure, and advise caution in the handling of it, saying that it is becoming necessary, we are not drawing that conclusion from our programme, from our socialist doctrine alone, but because we, as socialists, have come to this conclusion by studying the life of the West-European nations. We know that there have been many revolutions over there and that they have established democratic republics; we know that in America in 1865 the slave-owners were defeated and hundreds of millions of dessiatines of land were distributed among the peasantry for nothing or next to nothing, and nevertheless capitalism dominates there more than anywhere else and oppresses the mass of the working people as badly as, if not worse than, in other countries. This is the socialist teaching, this is our study of other nations that firmly convinces us that without the common cultivation of the land by agricultural labourers using the best machinery and guided by scientifically trained agronomists there is no escape from the yoke of capitalism. But if we were to be guided only by the experience of the West-European countries it would be very bad for Russia, because the Russian people in the mass are only capable of taking a serious step along that new path when the direst need arises. And we say to you: the time has now come when that dire need for the entire Russian people is knocking at the door. The dire need I speak of is precisely this—we cannot continue farming in the old way. If we continue as before on our small isolated farms, albeit as free citizens on free soil, we are still faced with imminent ruin, for the debacle is drawing nearer day by day, hour by hour. Everyone is talking about it; it is a grim fact, due not to the malice of individuals but to the world war of conquest, to capitalism.

The war has exterminated millions of people, has drenched the world in blood, brought it to the brink of disaster. This is no exaggeration, nobody can vouch for what will happen



tomorrow; everyone is talking about it. Take the newspaper *Izvestia*<sup>68</sup> of the Soviet of Workers' and Soldiers' Deputies—everybody there is saying that the capitalists are resorting to slow-down tactics and lockouts. That means there is no work and the capitalists are laying off large numbers of workers. That is what this criminal war has brought all countries to, and not Russia alone.

That is why we say that farming on individual plots, even if it is "free labour on free soil", is no way out of the dreadful crisis, it offers no deliverance from the general ruin. A *universal labour service* is necessary, the greatest economy of man-power is necessary, an exceptionally strong and firm authority is necessary, an authority capable of effecting that universal labour service; it cannot be done by officials, it can be done only by the Soviets of Workers', Soldiers', and Peasants' Deputies, because they are the people, they are the masses, because they are not a government of officials, because they, knowing the life of the peasant from top to bottom, can organise labour conscription, can organise that protection of human labour that would not permit the squandering of the peasant's labour, and the transition to common cultivation would, under these circumstances, be carried out gradually and with circumspection. It is a difficult business, but it is necessary to go over to common cultivation on big model farms; if that is not done it will be impossible for Russia to find a way out of the debacle, out of the truly desperate situation in which she finds herself, and it would be the greatest mistake to think that such a gigantic transformation in the life of the people can be made at a single stroke. That cannot be done, it requires the greatest labour effort, it requires concentration, determination and energy on the part of each peasant and worker at his own place, at his own particular job, which he knows and has been working at for years. It is not a thing that can be done by any sort of decree, but it is a thing that must be done, because this war of conquest has brought all mankind to the brink of destruction; tens of millions of lives have been lost, and still more will be lost in this terrible war unless we strain our efforts, unless all organisations of the Soviets of Workers' and Peasants' Deputies take joint and determined action towards the common cultivation of the soil without the capitalists and without the landowners. That path is the only one that will lead to the real transfer of the land to the working people.

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**FIRST ALL-RUSSIA CONGRESS  
OF SOVIETS OF WORKERS'  
AND SOLDIERS' DEPUTIES<sup>69</sup>**

**JUNE 3-24 (JUNE 16-JULY 7), 1917**

**SPEECH ON THE ATTITUDE  
TOWARDS THE PROVISIONAL GOVERNMENT  
JUNE 4 (17)**

Comrades, in the brief time at my disposal, I can dwell—and I think this best—only on the main questions of principle raised by the Executive Committee rapporteur and by subsequent speakers.

The first and fundamental issue before us was: *what is this assembly* we are attending, what are these Soviets now gathered at the All-Russia Congress, and what is this revolutionary democracy that people here speak so much about to conceal their utter misunderstanding and complete repudiation of it? To talk about revolutionary democracy at the All-Russia Congress of Soviets and obscure this institution's character, its class composition and its role in the revolution—not to say a word about this and yet lay claim to the title of democrats really is peculiar. They map out a programme to us for a bourgeois parliamentary republic, the sort of programme that has existed all over Western Europe; they map out a programme to us for reforms which are now recognised by all bourgeois governments, including our own, and yet they talk to us about revolutionary democracy. Whom are they talking to? To the Soviets. But I ask you, is there a country in Europe, a bourgeois, democratic, republican country, where anything like these Soviets exists? You have to admit there isn't. Nowhere is there, nor can there be, a similar institution because you must have one or the other: *either* a bourgeois government with "plans" for reforms like those just mapped out to us and proposed dozens of times in every country but remaining on paper, *or* the institution to which they are now referring, the new type of "government" created by the revolution, examples of which can be found only at a time of greatest revolutionary upsurge, as in France, 1792 and 1871, or in Russia, 1905. The Soviets are an institution which does not exist in any ordinary bourgeois-parliamentary state and cannot exist

side by side with a bourgeois government. They are the new, more democratic type of state which we in our Party resolutions call a peasant-proletarian democratic republic, with power belonging solely to the Soviets of Workers' and Soldiers' Deputies. People are wrong in thinking that this is a theoretical issue. They are wrong in pretending that it can be evaded and in protesting that at present certain institutions exist side by side with the Soviets of Workers' and Soldiers' Deputies. Yes, they do exist side by side. But this is what breeds countless misunderstandings, conflicts and friction. And this is why the original upswing, the original advance, of the Russian revolution is giving way to stagnation and to those steps backwards which we can now see in our coalition government, in its entire home and foreign policy, in connection with preparations for an imperialist offensive.

One or the other: either the usual bourgeois government, in which case the peasants', workers', soldiers' and other Soviets are useless and will either be broken up by the generals, the counter-revolutionary generals, who keep a hold on the armed forces and pay no heed to Minister Kerensky's fancy speeches, or they will die an inglorious death. They have no other choice. They can neither retreat nor stand still. They can exist only by advancing. This is a type of state not invented by the Russians but advanced by the revolution because the revolution can win in no other way. Within the All-Russia Congress, friction and the struggle of parties for power are inevitable. But this will be the elimination of possible mistakes and illusions through the political experience of the masses themselves (*commotion*), and not through the reports of Ministers who refer to what they said yesterday, what they will write tomorrow and what they will promise the day after tomorrow. This, comrades, is ridiculous from the point of view of the institution created by the Russian revolution and now faced with the question: to be or not to be? The Soviets cannot continue to exist as they do now. Grown people, workers and peasants, are made to meet, adopt resolutions and listen to reports that cannot be subjected to any documentary verification! This kind of institution is a transition to a republic which will establish a stable power without a police and a standing army, not in words alone but in action, a power which cannot yet exist in Western Europe and without which the Russian revolution cannot win in the sense of victory over the landowners and over imperialism.

Without this power there can be no question of our gaining such a victory by ourselves. And the deeper we go into the programme recommended to us here, and into the facts with which we are confronted, the more glaringly the fundamental contra-



diction stands out. We are told by the rapporteur and by other speakers that the first Provisional Government was a bad one! But when the Bolsheviks, those wretched Bolsheviks, said, "No support for and no confidence in this government", how often we were accused of "anarchism"! Now everybody says that the previous government was a bad one. But how does the coalition government with its near-socialist Ministers differ from the previous one? Haven't we had enough talk about programmes and drafts? Haven't we had enough of them? Isn't it time to get down to business? A month has passed since May 6 when the coalition government was formed. Look at the facts, look at the ruin prevailing in Russia and other countries involved in the imperialist war. What is the reason for the ruin? The predatory nature of the capitalists. There's your real anarchy. And this is admitted in statements published, not in our newspaper, not in any Bolshevik newspaper—Heaven forbid!—but in the ministerial *Rabochaya Gazeta*, which has reported that industrial coal prices were *raised* by the "revolutionary" government!! The coalition government hasn't changed a thing in this respect. We are asked whether socialism can be introduced in Russia, and whether, generally speaking, radical changes can be made at once. That is all empty talk, comrades. The doctrine of Marx and Engels, as they always explained, says: "Our doctrine is not a dogma, but a guide to action."<sup>70</sup> Nowhere in the world is there pure capitalism developing into pure socialism, nor can there be in war-time. But there is something in between, something new and unprecedented, because hundreds of millions of people who have been involved in the criminal war among the capitalists are losing their lives. It is not a question of promising reforms—that is mere talk. It is a question of taking the step we now need.

If you want to talk of "revolutionary" democracy, then you must distinguish this concept from *reformist* democracy under a capitalist Ministry, because it is high time to stop talking about "revolutionary democracy", handing out mutual congratulations on "revolutionary democracy", and get on with a *class* definition, as we have been taught by Marxism, and by scientific socialism generally. It is being proposed that we should pass to reformist democracy under a capitalist Ministry. That may be all well and good from the standpoint of the usual West-European models. A number of countries, however, are today on the brink of destruction, and we can clearly see the practical measures said to be too complicated to carry out easily, and in need of special elaboration, according to the previous speaker, the Minister of Posts and Telegraphs. He said there was no political party in Russia expressing its readiness to assume full power.



I reply: "Yes, there is. No party can refuse this, and our Party certainly doesn't. It is ready to take over full power at any moment." (*Applause and laughter.*) You can laugh as much as you please, but if the Minister confronts us with this question side by side with a party of the Right, he will receive a suitable reply. No party can refuse this. And at a time when liberty still prevails, when threats of arrest and exile to Siberia—threats from the counter-revolutionaries with whom our near-socialist Ministers are sharing government—are still no more than threats, every party says: give us your confidence and we shall give you our programme.

This programme was given by our conference on April 29.<sup>71</sup> Unfortunately, it is being ignored and not taken as a guide. It seems to need a popular exposition. I shall try to give the Minister of Posts and Telegraphs a popular exposition of our resolution and our programme. With regard to the economic crisis, our programme is immediately—it need not be put off—to demand the publication of all the fabulous profits—running as high as 500 and 800 per cent—which the capitalists are making on war supplies, and not as capitalists in the open market under "pure" capitalism. This is where workers' control really is necessary and possible. This is a measure which, if you call yourselves "revolutionary" democrats, you should carry out in the name of the Congress, a measure which can be carried out overnight. It is not socialism. It is opening the people's eyes to the real anarchy and the real playing with imperialism, the playing with the property of the people, with the hundreds of thousands of lives that tomorrow will be lost because we continue to throttle Greece. Make the profits of the capitalists public, arrest fifty or a hundred of the biggest millionaires. Just keep them in custody for a few weeks, if only in the same privileged conditions in which Nicholas Romanov is being held, for the simple purpose of making them reveal the hidden springs, the fraudulent practices, the filth and greed which even under the new government are costing our country thousands and millions every day. That is the chief cause of anarchy and ruin. That is why we say that everything remains as of old, that the coalition government hasn't changed a thing and has only added a heap of declarations, of pompous statements. However sincere people may be, however sincerely they may wish the working people well, things have not changed—*the same class* remains in power. The policy they are pursuing is not a democratic policy.

You talk to us about "democratisation of the central and local power". Don't you know that these words are a novelty only in Russia, and that elsewhere dozens of near-socialist Ministers have given their countries similar promises? What are they

worth when we are faced by the real, concrete fact that while the population elects the authorities locally, the elementary principles of democracy are violated by the centre claiming the right to appoint or confirm the local authorities? The capitalists continue to plunder the people's property. The imperialist war continues. And yet we are promised reforms, reforms and more reforms, which cannot be accomplished at all under these circumstances, because the war crushes and determines everything. Why do you disagree with those who say the war is *not* being waged over capitalist profits? What is the criterion? It is, first of all, which class is in power, which class continues to be the master, which class continues to make hundreds of thousands of millions from banking and financial operations. It is the same capitalist class and the war therefore continues to be imperialist. Neither the first Provisional Government nor the government with the near-socialist Ministers has changed anything. The secret treaties remain secret. Russia is fighting for the Straits, fighting to continue Lyakhov's policy in Persia, and so on.

I know you don't want this, that most of you don't want it, and that the Ministers don't want it, because no one can want it, for it means the slaughter of hundreds of millions of people. But take the offensive which the Milyukovs and Maklakovs are now talking about so much. They know full well what that means. They know it is linked with the question of power, with the question of revolution. We are told we must distinguish between political and strategic issues. It is ridiculous to raise this question at all. The Cadets perfectly understand that the point at issue is a political one.

It is slander to say the revolutionary struggle for peace that has begun from below might lead to a separate peace treaty. The first step we should take if we had power would be to arrest the biggest capitalists and cut all the threads of their intrigues. Without this, all talk about peace without annexations and indemnities is utterly meaningless. Our second step would be to declare to all people over the head of their governments that we regard all capitalists as robbers—Tereshchenko, who is not a bit better than Milyukov, just a little less stupid, the French capitalists, the British capitalists, and all the rest.

Your own *Izvestia* has got into a muddle and proposes to keep the status quo instead of peace without annexations and indemnities. Our idea of peace "without annexations" is different. Even the Peasant Congress comes nearer the truth when it speaks of a "federal" republic, thereby expressing the idea that the Russian republic does not want to oppress any nation, either in the new or in the old way, and does not want to force any nation, either Finland or the Ukraine, with both of whom the War

Minister is trying so hard to find fault and with whom impermissible and intolerable conflicts are being created. We want a single and undivided republic of Russia with a firm government. But a firm government can be secured only by the voluntary agreement of all people concerned. "Revolutionary democracy" are big words, but they are being applied to a government that by its petty fault-finding is complicating the problem of the Ukraine and Finland, which do not even want to secede. They only say, "Don't postpone the application of the elementary principles of democracy until the Constituent Assembly!"

A peace treaty without annexations and indemnities cannot be concluded until you have renounced your own annexations. It is ridiculous, a comedy, every worker in Europe is laughing at us, saying: You talk very eloquently and call on the people to overthrow the bankers, but you send your own bankers into the Ministry. Arrest them, expose their tricks, get to know the hidden springs! But that you don't do although you have powerful organisations which cannot be resisted. You have gone through 1905 and 1917. You know that revolution is not made to order, that revolutions in other countries were made by the hard and bloody method of insurrection, and in Russia there is no group, no class, that would resist the power of the Soviets. In Russia, this revolution can, by way of exception, be a peaceful one. Were this revolution to propose peace to all peoples today or tomorrow, by breaking with all the capitalist classes, both France and Germany, their people, that is, would accept very soon, because these countries are perishing, because Germany's position is hopeless, because she cannot save herself, and because France—(*Chairman*: "Your time is up.")

I shall finish in half a minute. (*Commotion; requests from the audience that the speaker continue; protests and applause.*)

(*Chairman*: "I inform the Congress that the Steering Committee proposes the speaker's time be extended. Any objections? The majority are in favour of an extension.")

I stopped at the point that if the revolutionary democrats in Russia were democrats in fact and not merely in words, they would further the revolution and not compromise with the capitalists, not talk about peace without annexations and indemnities but abolish annexations by Russia, and declare in so many words that they consider all annexations criminal and predatory. It would then be possible to avert the imperialist offensive which is threatening death to thousands and millions of people over the partitioning of Persia and the Balkans. The way to peace would then be open, not an easy way—we do not say it is easy—and one which does not preclude a truly revolutionary war.



We do not put this question as Bazarov does in today's *Novaya Zhizn*.<sup>72</sup> All we say is that Russia has been placed in such a position that at the end of the imperialist war her tasks are easier than might have been expected. And her geographical position is such that any power would have a hard job on its hands if it risked using capital and its predatory interests and risked rising against the Russian working class and the semi-proletariat associated with it, i.e., the poor peasants. Germany is on the brink of defeat, and since the war was joined by the United States, which wants to swallow up Mexico and which tomorrow will probably start fighting Japan, Germany's position has become hopeless, and she will be destroyed. France, who suffers more than the others because of her geographical position and whose state of exhaustion is reaching the limit—this country, while not starving as much as Germany, has lost infinitely more people than Germany. Now if the first step were to restrict the profits of the Russian capitalists and deprive them of all possibility of raking in hundreds of millions in profits, if you were to propose to *all* nations a peace treaty directed against the capitalists of *all* countries and openly declare that you will not enter into any negotiations or relations with the German capitalists and with those who abet them directly or indirectly or are involved with them, and that you refuse to speak with the French and British capitalists, then you would be acting to condemn them in the eyes of the workers. You would not regard it as a victory that a passport has been issued to MacDonald,<sup>73</sup> a man who has never waged a revolutionary struggle against capital and who is being allowed to come because he has never expressed the ideas, principles, practice or experience of the revolutionary struggle against the British capitalists, a struggle for which our Comrade MacLean and hundreds of other British socialists are in prison, and for which our Comrade Liebknecht is confined to a convict prison because he said, "German soldiers, fire on your Kaiser!"

Wouldn't it be more proper to consign the imperialist capitalists to that penal servitude which most of the Provisional Government members in an expressly reconstituted Third Duma—I don't know, incidentally, whether it is the Third or the Fourth Duma—are daily preparing for us and promising us and about which the Ministry of Justice is already drafting new Bills? MacLean and Liebknecht—those are the names of socialists who are putting the idea of a revolutionary struggle against imperialism into practice. That is what we must say to all governments if we want to fight for peace. We must condemn them before their people. You will then put all the imperialist governments in a difficult position. But now you have complicated your own



position by addressing your Peace Manifesto of March 14<sup>74</sup> to the people and saying, "Overthrow your tsars, your kings and your bankers!" while we who possess an organisation unprecedentedly rich in number, experience and material strength, the Soviet of Workers' and Soldiers' Deputies, join a bloc with our bankers, institute a coalition, near-socialist government, and draft the kind of reforms that have been drafted in Europe for decades. People there in Europe laugh at this kind of peace struggle. There they will understand it only when the Soviets take power and act in a revolutionary way.

Only one country in the world can at the moment take steps to stop the imperialist war on a class scale, in the face of the capitalists and without a bloody revolution. Only one country can do it, and that country is Russia. And she will remain the only one as long as the Soviet of Workers' and Soldiers' Deputies exists. The Soviet cannot exist long side by side with the ordinary type of Provisional Government, and will remain what it is only until the offensive is taken. The offensive will be a turning-point in the whole policy of the Russian revolution, that is, it will be a transition from waiting, from paving the way for peace by means of a revolutionary uprising from below, to the resumption of the war. The path that opened up was transition from fraternisation on one front to fraternisation on every front, from spontaneous fraternisation, such as the exchange of a crust of bread with a hungry German worker for a penknife—which is punishable by penal servitude—to conscious fraternisation.

When we take power into our own hands, we shall curb the capitalists, and then the war will *not be the kind* of war that is being waged now, because the nature of a war is determined by what class wages it, not by what is written on paper. You can write on paper anything you like. But as long as the capitalist class has a majority in the government the war will remain an imperialist war no matter what you write, no matter how eloquent you are, no matter how many near-socialist Ministers you have. Everyone knows that, and everyone can see it. And the cases of Albania, Greece and Persia<sup>75</sup> have shown this so clearly and graphically that I am surprised everyone is attacking our written declaration about the offensive,<sup>76</sup> and no one says a word about specific cases! It is easy to promise Bills, but specific measures are being postponed time and again. It is easy to write a declaration about peace without annexations, but the Albanian, Greek and Persian events took place *after* the coalition Ministry was formed. After all, it was *Dyelo Naroda*, not an organ of our Party, but a government organ, a ministerial organ, which said that it is Russian democracy that is being subjected to this humiliation, and that Greece is being strangled.

And this very same Milyukov, whom you imagine to be heaven knows who, although he is just an ordinary member of his party—Tereshchenko in no way differs from him—wrote that the pressure exerted on Greece came from Allied diplomats. The war remains an imperialist war, and however much you may desire peace, however sincere your sympathy for the working people and your desire for peace—I am fully convinced that by and large it must be sincere—you are powerless, because the war can only be ended by taking the revolution further. When the revolution began in Russia, a revolutionary struggle for peace from below also began. If you were to take power into your hands, if power were to pass to the revolutionary organisations to be used for combating the Russian capitalists, then the working people of some countries would believe you and you could propose peace. Then our peace would be ensured at least from two sides, by the two nations who are being bled white and whose cause is hopeless—Germany and France. And if circumstances then obliged us to wage a revolutionary war—no one knows, and we do not rule out the possibility—we should say: “We are not pacifists, we do not renounce war when the revolutionary class is in power and has actually deprived the capitalists of the opportunity to influence things in any way, to exacerbate the economic dislocation which enables them to make hundreds of millions.” The revolutionary government would explain to absolutely every nation that every nation must be free, and that just as the German nation must not fight to retain Alsace and Lorraine, so the French nation must not fight for its colonies. For, while France is fighting for her colonies, Russia has Khiva and Bokhara, which are also something like colonies. Then the division of colonies will begin. And how are they to be divided? On what basis? According to strength. But strength has changed. The capitalists are in a situation where their only way out is war. When you take over revolutionary power, you will have a revolutionary way of securing peace, namely, by addressing a revolutionary appeal to all nations and explaining your tactics by your own example. Then the way to peace secured by revolutionary means will be open to you, and you will most probably be able to avert the deaths of hundreds of thousands of people. Then you may be certain that the German and French people will declare in your favour. As for the British, American and Japanese capitalists, even if they wanted a war against the revolutionary working class—whose strength will grow tenfold once the capitalists have been curbed and put down and control has passed into the hands of the working class—even if the American, British and Japanese capitalists wanted a war, the chances would be a hundred to one against them being able to wage it. For peace

to be ensured, you will only have to declare that you are not pacifists, that you will defend your republic, your workers', proletarian democracy, against the German, French and other capitalists.

That is why we attached such fundamental importance to our declaration about the offensive. The time has come for a radical turn in the whole history of the Russian revolution. When the Russian revolution began it was assisted by the imperialist bourgeoisie of Britain who imagined Russia to be something like China or India. Yet, side by side with a government in which the landowners and capitalists now have a majority, the Soviets arose, a representative institution unparalleled and unprecedented anywhere in the world in strength, an institution which you are killing by taking part in a coalition Ministry of the bourgeoisie. In reality, the Russian revolution has made the revolutionary struggle from below against the capitalist governments welcome everywhere, in all countries, with three times as much sympathy as before. The question is one of advance or retreat. No one can stand still during a revolution. That is why the offensive is a turn in the Russian revolution, in the political and economic rather than the strategic sense. An offensive now means the continuation of the imperialist slaughter and the death of more hundreds of thousands, of millions of people—objectively, irrespective of the will or awareness of this or that Minister, with the aim of strangling Persia and other weak nations. Power transferred to the revolutionary proletariat, supported by the poor peasants, means a transition to revolutionary struggle for peace in the surest and most painless forms ever known to mankind, a transition to a state of affairs under which the power and victory of the revolutionary workers will be ensured in Russia and throughout the world. (*Applause from part of the audience.*)

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## THE EIGHTEENTH OF JUNE

In one way or another, June 18 will go down as a turning-point in the history of the Russian revolution.

The mutual position of the classes, their correlation in the struggle against each other, their strength, particularly in comparison with the strength of the parties, were all revealed so distinctly, so strikingly, so impressively by last Sunday's demonstration<sup>77</sup> that, whatever the course and pace of further development, the gain in political awareness and clarity has been tremendous.

The demonstration in a few hours scattered to the winds, like a handful of dust, the empty talk about Bolshevik conspirators and showed with the utmost clarity that the vanguard of the working people of Russia, the industrial proletariat of the capital, and the overwhelming majority of the troops support slogans that our Party has always advocated.

The measured step of the battalions of workers and soldiers. Nearly half a million demonstrators. A concerted onslaught. Unity around the slogans, among which overwhelmingly predominated: "All power to the Soviets", "Down with the ten capitalist Ministers", "Neither a separate peace treaty with the Germans nor secret treaties with the Anglo-French capitalists", etc. No one who saw the demonstration has any doubt left about the victory of these slogans among the organised vanguard of Russia's workers and soldiers.

The demonstration of June 18 was a demonstration of the strength and policy of the revolutionary proletariat, which is showing the direction for the revolution and indicating the way out of the impasse. This is the tremendous historical significance of last Sunday's demonstration, and its essential difference from the demonstrations during the funeral of the victims of the revolution and on May Day. Then it was a universal *tribute* to the revolution's first victory and to its heroes. The people looked back over the first stage of the road to freedom, which they had



passed very rapidly and very successfully. May Day was a *holiday* of hopes and aspirations linked with the history of the world labour movement and with its ideal of peace and socialism.

Neither of the two demonstrations was intended to point the *direction* for the revolution's further development, nor could it do so. Neither demonstration put before the people, or raised in the name of the people, specific, definite and urgent questions as to how and in what direction the revolution should proceed.

In this sense, June 18 was the first political demonstration of *action*, an explanation of how the various classes act, how they want to and will act, in order to further the revolution—an explanation not given in a book or newspaper, but on the streets, not through leaders, but through the people.

The bourgeoisie kept out of the way. They refused to participate in that peaceful demonstration of a clear majority of the people, in which there was freedom of party slogans, and the chief aim of which was to protest against counter-revolution. That is natural. The bourgeoisie are the counter-revolution. They hide from the people. They organise real counter-revolutionary conspiracies against the people. The parties now ruling Russia, the Socialist-Revolutionaries and Mensheviks, clearly showed themselves on that historic day, June 18, as waverers. Their slogans spoke of wavering, and it was obvious to all that the supporters of their slogans were in a minority. By their slogans and wavering *they* advised the people to remain where they were, to leave everything unchanged for the time being. And the people felt, and they themselves felt, that that was impossible.

Enough of wavering, said the vanguard of the proletariat, the vanguard of Russia's workers and soldiers. Enough of wavering. The policy of trust in the capitalists, in *their* government, in *their* vain attempts at reform, in *their* war, in *their* policy of an offensive, is a hopeless policy. Its collapse is imminent. Its collapse is inevitable. And that collapse will also be the collapse of the ruling parties, the Socialist-Revolutionaries and the Mensheviks. Economic disruption is coming nearer. There is *no* escaping it except by the revolutionary measures of the revolutionary class which has taken power.

Let the people break with the policy of trust in the capitalists. Let them put their trust in the revolutionary class—the proletariat. The source of power lies in it and only in it. It alone is the pledge that the interests of the *majority* will be served, the interests of the working and exploited people, who, though held down by war and capital, are capable of defeating war and capital!

A crisis of unprecedented scale has descended upon Russia

and the whole of humanity. The only way out is to put trust in the most organised and advanced contingent of the working and exploited people, and support its policy.

We do not know whether the people will grasp this lesson soon or how they will put it into effect. But we do know for certain that apart from this lesson there is no way out of the impasse, that possible waverings or brutalities on the part of the counter-revolutionaries will lead nowhere.

There is no way out unless the masses put complete confidence in their leader, the proletariat.

*Pravda* No. 86,  
July 3 (June 20), 1917

*Collected Works*, Vol. 25

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## WHAT COULD THE CADETS HAVE COUNTED ON WHEN THEY WITHDREW FROM THE CABINET?<sup>78</sup>

The question arises quite naturally. To correctly meet events with definite tactics, we must understand them correctly. How, then, are we to understand the Cadet withdrawal?

Spite? Disagreement in principle over the Ukraine? Of course not. It would be ridiculous to suspect the Cadets of loyalty to principles, or the bourgeoisie of the ability to do something out of spite.

The Cadet withdrawal can only be understood as a calculated move. What are their calculations?

To govern a country which has carried out a major revolution and is still in a state of unrest, and to govern it during a world-wide imperialist war, you need the initiative and scope of a truly revolutionary class—massively courageous, historically great, wholeheartedly enthusiastic. Either you suppress this class by force, as the Cadets have been preaching for some time, since May 6 in fact, or you entrust yourself to its leadership. Either you are in alliance with imperialist capital, then you must take the offensive, you must be an obedient servant of capital, you must sell yourself to it, you must throw overboard the utopian ideas of abolishing landed property without compensation (see *Birzhevka* for Lvov's speeches against Chernov's programme); or you are against imperialist capital, then you must immediately propose precise peace terms to all nations, because they have all been exhausted by the war, you must dare to raise, and be able to raise, the banner of world proletarian revolution against capital, and to do so not in words but in deeds, to further the revolution with the greatest determination in Russia herself.

The Cadets are wily businessmen in trade, in finance, in safeguarding capital, as well as in politics. They have correctly taken into account the fact that the situation is *objectively* a revolutionary one. They agree to reforms and enjoy sharing power with the reformists, the Tseretelis and Chernovs. But reforms will not

help. There is *no* way out of the crisis, the war and economic disruption, through reforms.

From their class point of view, from the imperialist exploiters' point of view, the Cadets have calculated correctly. They seem to say: "By withdrawing, we present an ultimatum. We know that at present the Tseretelis and Chernovs do not trust the truly revolutionary class, that at present they do not want to conduct a truly revolutionary policy. Let's frighten them. To be without the Cadets means being without the 'aid' of world-wide Anglo-American capital, means raising the banner of revolution against the latter *as well*. The Tseretelis and Chernovs wouldn't do that, they wouldn't dare! They will give in to us!

"If not, then even if a revolution against capital starts, it will fail and we shall come back."

That is how the Cadets calculate. We repeat: from the point of view of the exploiting class, their calculations are correct.

Were the Tseretelis and Chernovs to take the point of view of the exploited class and not that of the vacillating petty bourgeoisie, they would reply to the Cadets' correct calculations by correct adherence to the revolutionary proletariat's policy.

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## WHERE IS STATE POWER AND WHERE IS COUNTER-REVOLUTION?<sup>79</sup>

This question is usually answered quite simply: there is no counter-revolution at all or we do not know where it is. But we know full well where power is. It is in the hands of the Provisional Government, which is controlled by the Central Executive Committee (C.E.C.) of the All-Russia Congress of Soviets of Soldiers' and Workers' Deputies. This is the usual answer.

Yesterday's political crisis,<sup>80</sup> like most types of crises, which tear down everything conventional and shatter all illusions, left in its wake the ruins of the illusions expressed in the usual answers—cited above—to the basic questions of any revolution.

There is a former member of the Second Duma, Alexinsky, whom the *Socialist-Revolutionaries* and *Mensheviks*, the ruling parties in the Soviets of Workers', Soldiers' and Peasants' Deputies, *refused* to admit on to the Executive Committee of the Soviet of Workers' and Soldiers' Deputies *until he rehabilitated himself*, i.e., until he redeemed his honour.

What was the trouble? Why did the Executive Committee publicly and formally deny Alexinsky its confidence, demanding that he redeem his honour, i.e., declaring him dishonest?

It was because Alexinsky had made himself so notorious by libellous statements that he had been branded a slanderer in Paris by journalists of the most diverse parties. Alexinsky did not bother to redeem his honour before the Executive Committee. He preferred to hide himself in Plekhanov's newspaper *Yedinstvo*, appearing first under initials, and then, after he had plucked up courage, under his full name.

On July 4, yesterday afternoon, a few Bolsheviks were warned by friends that Alexinsky had laid before the Petrograd journalists' committee some new malicious libel. Most of those who received the warning ignored it completely, treating Alexinsky and his "work" with disdainful contempt. But one Bolshevik,

Jugashvili (Stalin), a member of the Central Executive Committee, who as a Georgian Social-Democrat had known Comrade Chkheidze for a long time, spoke to the latter at a meeting of the C.E.C. about Alexinsky's new infamous slander campaign.

This happened late at night, but Chkheidze declared that the C.E.C. could not be indifferent to the spreading of libel by people who are afraid of open court and an investigation by the C.E.C. In his own name, as Chairman of the C.E.C., and in the name of Tsereteli, a member of the Provisional Government, Chkheidze immediately *telephoned* all newspaper offices, suggesting that they *refrain from publishing Alexinsky's libel*. Chkheidze told Stalin that most papers had expressed readiness to comply with his request, and that only *Yedinstvo* and *Rech* had "kept silent" for a time (we have not seen *Yedinstvo*, but *Rech* has *not* printed the libel). As a result, the libel appeared only on the pages of a petty, yellow, and to most intelligent people completely unknown paper, *Zhivoye Slovo*<sup>81</sup> No. 51 (404), whose editor and publisher signs himself A. M. Umansky.

The slanderers will now answer before the court. In this respect things are quite simple.

The absurdity of the libel is striking: a certain ensign of the Sixteenth Siberian Rifle Regiment by the name of Yermolenko was "dispatched" (?) "on April 25 to us behind the front lines of the Sixth Army to agitate for the speediest conclusion of a separate peace treaty with Germany". Apparently, he is the escaped prisoner of whom the "document" published in *Zhivoye Slovo* says: "This commission was accepted by Yermolenko on the insistence of the comrades"!!

From this alone you can judge how little faith can be put in an individual who is dishonourable enough to accept such a "commission"!... The witness has no sense of honour. This is a fact.

And what was the witness's testimony?

He testified the following: "Officers of the German General Staff, Schiditzki and Lübers, had told him that propaganda of a similar kind was being carried on in Russia by A. Skoropis-Yoltukhovsky, chairman of the Ukrainian section of the Union for the Liberation of the Ukraine,<sup>82</sup> and an agent of the German General Staff, and by Lenin. Lenin was commissioned to do all he could to undermine the confidence of the Russian people in the Provisional Government."

Thus the German officers, in order to induce Yermolenko to commit this dishonourable act, shamelessly lied to him about Lenin who, as everybody knows and as is officially stated by the *entire Bolshevik Party*, has always *rejected* most emphatically, consistently, and unconditionally a separate peace treaty with

Germany!! The lie of the German officers is so obvious, crude and preposterous that no literate person would even for a moment take it for anything but a lie. And a politically literate person would be even more certain that to associate Lenin with an individual like Yoltukhovsky (?) and with the Union for the Liberation of the Ukraine is particularly preposterous, for both Lenin and all other internationalists have repeatedly *dissociated themselves publicly* from this dubious social-patriotic "Union" during the war!

The crude lie told by Yermolenko, whom the Germans had bribed, or by German officers, would not deserve the slightest attention, were it not that the "document" has added what it calls "fresh information"—it is not known by whom, from whom, how, or when received—according to which "money for propaganda is being received" (by whom? the "document" *is afraid* to say plainly that the accused or suspected is Lenin!! The document says nothing about *who* "is receiving it") "through trusted people": the "Bolsheviks" Fürstenberg (Hanecki) and Kozlovsky. It is alleged that there is information proving the transfer of money through banks, and that "the military censorship has discovered a continuous (!) exchange of telegrams of a political and financial nature between German agents and Bolshevik leaders"!!

Again such a crude lie that it sticks out like a sore thumb. If there were even a word of truth in that, then how could it happen (1) that Hanecki had *quite recently* been allowed freely to enter Russia and permitted to leave her just as freely? (2) that *neither* Hanecki *nor* Kozlovsky had been arrested *before* the appearance in the press of information concerning their crimes? Is it really possible that the General Staff, had it actually been in possession of even remotely trustworthy information about the sending of money, telegrams, etc., would have permitted the publication of rumours about this through the Alexinskys and the yellow press, without arresting Hanecki and Kozlovsky? Isn't it clear this is nothing but the cheap work of newspaper slanderers of the lowest order?

We may add that Hanecki and Kozlovsky are not Bolsheviks, but members of the Polish Social-Democratic Party; that we have known Hanecki, a member of its Central Committee, since the 1903 London Congress<sup>83</sup> from which the Polish delegates withdrew, and so on. The Bolsheviks *never* received *any* money from either Hanecki or Kozlovsky. All that is a lie, a complete, vulgar lie.

What is its political significance? First, it indicates that the Bolsheviks' political opponents are so low and contemptible that they cannot get along without lies and libel.

Secondly, it provides us with an answer to the title question of this article.

The report about the "documents" was sent to Kerensky as early as *May 16*. Kerensky is a member of the Provisional Government and the Soviet, i.e., of both "powers". *May 16* to *July 5* is a long time. The power, if it really were a power, could and should *itself* have investigated those "documents", interrogated the witnesses, and arrested the suspects. The power, *both* "powers"—the Provisional Government and the C.E.C.—could and should have done this.

Yet both powers are inactive, while the General Staff is found to have some sort of relations with Alexinsky, who was not admitted to the Soviet's Executive Committee owing to his libellous activities! The General Staff, at the very moment of the Cadets' withdrawal, permits—probably by accident—the handing over of its official documents to Alexinsky for publication!

The power is inactive. Neither Kerensky, nor the Provisional Government, nor the C.E.C. so much as think of arresting Lenin, Hanecki, or Kozlovsky, if they are under suspicion. Last night, *July 4*, both Chkheidze and Tsereteli asked the newspapers not to print the obvious libel. But just a little later, late at night, Polovtsev sent military cadets and Cossacks to wreck *Pravda's* offices, stop the paper's publication, arrest its publishers, seize its ledgers (on the pretext of investigating whether or not suspicious funds were involved). At the same time that yellow, base, filthy little rag, *Zhivoye Slovo*, printed foul libel to arouse passions, revile the Bolsheviks, create an atmosphere of mob violence, and afford a plausible justification for the behaviour of Polovtsev, the military cadets and the Cossacks who had wrecked *Pravda's* offices.

Whoever does not close his eyes *to the truth* cannot remain deluded. When it is *necessary* to act, *both* powers remain inactive—the C.E.C., because it "trusts" the Cadets and is afraid of irritating them, and the Cadets, who do not act as a power because they prefer to act *behind the scenes*.

Counter-revolution behind the scenes—this is it, as clear as day: the Cadets, certain quarters of the General Staff ("high-ranking officers", as our Party's resolution calls them), and the shady, semi-Black Hundred press. These are *not* inactive, these "work" together hand in glove; this is the soil in which pogroms, attempted pogroms, the shooting of demonstrators, etc., etc., are nurtured.

Whoever does not deliberately shut his eyes to the truth cannot remain deluded any longer.

There is no power, and there will be none until the transfer of power to the Soviets lays the foundation for creating power.



Counter-revolution thrives on the absence of authority by uniting the Cadets with certain high-ranking officers and with the Black Hundred press. This is a sad reality, but a reality nevertheless.

Workers and soldiers! You must show firmness, determination and vigilance!

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## THREE CRISES

The more violent the slander and lies against the Bolsheviks these days, the more calmly must we, while refuting the lies and slander, reflect upon the historical interrelation of events and the political, i.e., *class*, significance of the revolution's present course.

To refute the lies and slander, we only have to refer again to *Listok "Pravdy"* of July 6, and to call the reader's attention especially to the article printed below which gives documentary evidence that on July 2 the Bolsheviks campaigned *against* the demonstration (as admitted by the Socialist-Revolutionaries' paper). The article indicates that on July 3 the popular mood exploded into action and the demonstration started against our advice. It shows that on July 4, in a leaflet (reprinted by the Socialist-Revolutionary paper *Dyelo Naroda*), we called for a *peaceful* and *organised* demonstration, that on the night of July 4 we passed a decision to call off the demonstration. Slanderers, continue your slander! You can never refute these facts and their decisive significance in every connection!

Let us turn to the question of the historical interrelation of the events. When, as early as the beginning of April, we opposed support for the Provisional Government, we were attacked by both the S.R.s and the Mensheviks. But what has reality proved?

What have the three political crises proved—April 20 and 21, June 10 and 18, July 3 and 4?

They have proved, in the first place, that the masses are becoming increasingly dissatisfied with the bourgeois policy of the Provisional Government's bourgeois majority.

It is rather interesting to note that the ruling Socialist-Revolutionaries' newspaper, *Dyelo Naroda*, despite its marked hostility to the Bolsheviks, is compelled to admit, in its July 6 issue, the deep economic and political causes of the action of July 3 and 4. The stupid, crude, infamous lie that this action was

artificially created, that the Bolsheviks campaigned *in favour* of action, will daily be more and more exposed.

The common cause, the common origin, the deep common root of the three above-mentioned political crises is clear, especially if we look at them in their interrelation, as science demands that politics be looked at. It is absurd even to think that three such crises could be produced artificially.

In the second place, it is instructive to grasp what each one of them had in common with the others, and what was its specific features.

What is common to all three is a mass dissatisfaction overflowing all bounds, a mass resentment with the bourgeoisie and *their* government. Whoever forgets, ignores or underestimates *this essence of the matter*, renounces the ABC of socialism concerning the class struggle.

Let those who call themselves socialists, who know something about the character of the class struggle in European revolutions, think about the class struggle in the Russian revolution.

These crises are peculiar in the ways they manifested themselves. The first (April 20-21) was stormy and spontaneous, and completely unorganised. It led to Black Hundreds<sup>84</sup> firing on the demonstrators and to unprecedentedly savage and lying accusations against the Bolsheviks. After the outburst came a political crisis.

In the second case, the demonstration was called by the Bolsheviks, and was cancelled after a stern ultimatum and direct ban by the Congress of Soviets; then, on June 18, came a general demonstration in which the Bolshevik slogans clearly predominated. As the Socialist-Revolutionaries and Mensheviks themselves admitted on the evening of June 18, a political crisis would certainly have broken out had it not been for the offensive at the front.

The third crisis broke out spontaneously on July 3 despite the Bolsheviks' efforts on July 2 to check it. Reaching its climax on July 4, it led to a furious outburst of counter-revolution on July 5 and 6. The vacillation of the S.R.s and Mensheviks expressed itself in Spiridonova and a number of other S.R.s declaring for the transfer of power to the Soviets, and in the Menshevik internationalists, previously opposed to it, voicing the same idea.

The last, and perhaps the most instructive, conclusion to be drawn from considering the events in their interconnection is that *all* three crises manifested some form of demonstration that is new in the history of our revolution, a demonstration of a more complicated type in which the movement proceeds in waves,

a sudden drop following a rapid rise, revolution and counter-revolution becoming more acute, and the middle elements being eliminated for a more or less extensive period.

In all three crises, the movement took the form of a *demonstration*. An anti-government demonstration—that would be the most exact, formal description of events. But the fact of the matter is that it was not an ordinary demonstration; it was something considerably more than a demonstration, but less than a revolution. It was an outburst of revolution and counter-revolution *together*, a sharp, sometimes almost sudden elimination of the middle elements, while the proletarian and bourgeois elements made a stormy appearance.

In this respect it is extremely typical that, for *each* of these movements, the middle elements blame *both* of the specific class forces—the proletariat as well as the bourgeoisie. Look at the S.R.s and Mensheviks. They lean over backwards to frantically shout that, by their extremes, the Bolsheviks are helping the counter-revolution. At the same time, however, they admit again and again that the Cadets (with whom they form a bloc in the government) are counter-revolutionary. “Our urgent task is to draw a line,” wrote *Dyelo Naroda* yesterday, “to dig a deep moat between ourselves and all the Right elements, including *Yedinstvo*, which has gone militant” (with which, we may add, the S.R.s formed a bloc during the elections).

Compare that with today’s (July 7) issue of *Yedinstvo*, in which Plekhanov’s editorial is compelled to state the indisputable fact that the Soviets (i.e., the S.R.s and Mensheviks) will “think over the matter for a fortnight” and that, if power were to pass to the Soviets, “it would be tantamount to victory for Lenin’s supporters”. “If the Cadets don’t stick to the rule—the worse, the better...,” says Plekhanov, “they themselves will have to admit that they have made a big mistake [by withdrawing from the Cabinet], making the work of Lenin’s supporters easier.”

Isn’t that typical? The middle elements blame the Cadets for making the Bolsheviks’ work easier, and the Bolsheviks for making the Cadets’ work easier! Is it so hard to guess that if we substitute class names for political ones we have before us the dreams of the petty bourgeoisie about the disappearance of the class struggle between the proletariat and the bourgeoisie? Isn’t the petty bourgeoisie complaining about the class struggle between the proletariat and the bourgeoisie? Is it really so hard to guess that no Bolsheviks in the world could have “created” even a single “popular movement”, let alone three movements, if the deepest economic and political causes had not set the proletariat into action? Is it so difficult to guess that no Cadets



and monarchists combined could have called forth any movement "from the Right" if it had not been for the equally deep causes that make the bourgeoisie as a class counter-revolutionary?

Both we and the Cadets were blamed for the April 20-21 movement—for intransigence, extremes, and for aggravating the situation. The Bolsheviks were even accused (absurd as it may be) of the firing on Nevsky. When the movement was over, however, those same S.R.s and Mensheviks, in their joint, official organ, *Izvestia*, wrote that the "popular movement" had "swept away the imperialists, Milyukov, etc.", i.e., they *praised* the movement!! Isn't that typical? Doesn't it show very clearly that the petty bourgeoisie do not understand the workings, the meaning, of the class struggle between the proletariat and the bourgeoisie?

The objective situation is this. The vast majority of the country's population is petty-bourgeois by its living conditions and more so by its ideas. But big capital rules the country, primarily through banks and syndicates. There is an urban proletariat in this country, mature enough to go its own way, but not yet able to draw at once the majority of the semi-proletarians to its side. From this fundamental, class, fact follows the inevitability of such crises as the three we are now examining, as well as their forms.

In future the forms of crises may, of course, change, but the substance of the issue will remain the same even if, for instance, the S.R. Constituent Assembly meets in October. The S.R.s have promised the peasants: (1) to abolish private landownership; (2) to transfer the land to the working people; (3) to confiscate the landed estates and transfer them to the peasants without compensation. These great reforms can never be realised without the most decisive revolutionary measures against the bourgeoisie, measures that can *only* be taken when the poor peasants join the proletariat, *only* when the banks and syndicates are nationalised.

The credulous peasants, believing for a time that these beautiful things can be achieved by compromising with the bourgeoisie, will inevitably be disappointed and... "dissatisfied" (mildly speaking) with the sharp class struggle of the proletariat against the bourgeoisie for the implementation of the promises of the S.R.s. So it was, and so it will be.

Written on July 7 (20), 1917

Published in the magazine *Rabotnitsa*<sup>85</sup> No. 7,  
July 19, 1917

*Collected Works*, Vol. 25

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## THE QUESTION OF THE BOLSHEVIK LEADERS APPEARING IN COURT<sup>86</sup>

Judging by private conversations, there are two opinions on this question.

Comrades succumbing to the "Soviet atmosphere" often incline towards appearing in court.

Those closer to the workers apparently incline towards not appearing.

In principle, the question chiefly boils down to an estimation of what is usually called constitutional illusions.

Anyone who thinks that a regular government and a regular court exist or can exist in Russia, that a Constituent Assembly is likely to be called, may arrive at a conclusion in favour of appearing.

That idea is completely erroneous, however. It is the latest events, after July 4, that have most vividly shown that a Constituent Assembly is unlikely to be called (without a new revolution), that neither a regular government nor a regular court exists or can exist in Russia (at present).

The court is an organ of power. The liberals sometimes forget this, but it is a sin for a Marxist to do so.

Where, then, is the power? Who constitutes the power?

There is no government. It changes daily. It is inactive.

The power that *is* active is the military dictatorship. Under these conditions, it is ridiculous even to speak of "the courts". It is not a question of "courts", but of *an episode in the civil war*. This is what those in favour of appearing in court unfortunately do not want to understand.

Pereverzev and Alexinsky as initiators of the "case"!! Isn't it ridiculous to speak of courts in such circumstances? Isn't it naïve to think that, in such conditions, any court can examine, investigate and establish anything??

Power is in the hands of a military dictatorship. Without a new revolution, this power can only become stronger for a certain time, primarily for the duration of the war.

"I've done nothing against the law. The courts are just. They will sort things out. The trial will be public. The people will understand. I shall appear."

This reasoning is childishly naïve. *The authorities need* not a trial but a persecution campaign against the internationalists. What Kerensky and Co. need is to put them in gaol and keep them there. So it was (in Britain and France), and so it will be (in Russia).

Let the internationalists work illegally as much as they can, but let them not commit the folly of appearing in court of their own free will!

Written on July 8 (21), 1917

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*Collected Works*, Vol. 25

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## THE POLITICAL SITUATION<sup>87</sup>

The counter-revolution has become organised and consolidated, and has actually taken state power into its hands.

The complete organisation and consolidation of the counter-revolution consists in a combination of its three main forces, a combination excellently conceived and already put into practice:

1. The Constitutional-Democratic Party, i.e., the real leader of the organised bourgeoisie, has, by withdrawing from the Cabinet, confronted it with an ultimatum, thus clearing the way for the Cabinet's overthrow by the counter-revolution.

2. The General Staff and the military leaders, with the deliberate or semi-deliberate assistance of Kerensky whom even the most prominent Socialist-Revolutionaries now call a Cavaignac, have seized actual state power and have proceeded to shoot down revolutionary units at the front, disarm the revolutionary troops and workers in Petrograd and Moscow, suppress unrest in Nizhni-Novgorod, arrest Bolsheviks and ban their papers, not only without trial, but even without a government order. At present, basic state power in Russia is virtually a military dictatorship. This fact is still obscured by a number of institutions that are revolutionary in words but powerless in deeds. Yet it is so obvious and fundamental a fact that without understanding it, one cannot understand anything about the political situation.

3. The Black Hundred-monarchist and bourgeois press, which has switched from hounding Bolsheviks to hounding the Soviets, the "incendiary" Chernov, etc., has indicated with the utmost clarity that the true meaning of the policy of military dictatorship, which now reigns supreme and is supported by the Cadets and monarchists, is preparations for disbanding the Soviets. Many of the leaders of the S.R.s and Mensheviks, i.e., the present majority in the Soviets, have admitted and expressed this during the past few days, but, true to their petty-bourgeois nature,



they shrug off this formidable reality with meaningless high-sounding phrases.

The leaders of the Soviets and of the Socialist-Revolutionary and Menshevik parties, headed by Tsereteli and Chernov, have completely betrayed the cause of the revolution by putting it in the hands of the counter-revolutionaries and by turning themselves, their parties and the Soviets into mere fig-leaves of the counter-revolution.

Proof of this is that the Socialist-Revolutionaries and Mensheviks have betrayed the Bolsheviks and have tacitly agreed to close down their papers without daring to tell the people plainly and openly that they are doing so and why. By sanctioning the disarming of the workers and the revolutionary regiments, they have deprived themselves of all real power. They have turned into the most loud-mouthed ranters who help the reaction to "divert" the people's attention until it is finally ready to disband the Soviets. It is impossible to understand anything at all about the present political situation without realising this complete and final bankruptcy of the S.R.s and Mensheviks and the present majority in the Soviets and without realising that their "Directory" and other masquerades are an absolute sham.

All hopes for a peaceful development of the Russian revolution have vanished for good. This is the objective situation: either complete victory for the military dictatorship, or victory for the workers' armed uprising; the latter victory is only possible when the insurrection coincides with a deep, mass upheaval against the government and the bourgeoisie caused by economic disruption and the prolongation of the war.

The slogan "All Power to the Soviets!" was a slogan for peaceful development of the revolution which was possible in April, May, June, and up to July 5-9, i.e., up to the time when actual power passed into the hands of the military dictatorship. This slogan is no longer correct, for it does not take into account that power has changed hands and that the revolution has in fact been completely betrayed by the S.R.s and Mensheviks. Reckless actions, revolts, partial resistance, or hopeless hit-and-run attempts to oppose reaction will not help. What will help is a clear understanding of the situation, endurance and determination of the workers' vanguard, preparation of forces for the armed uprising, for the victory of which conditions at present are extremely difficult, but still possible if the facts and trends mentioned above coincide. Let us have no constitutional or republican illusions of any kind, no more illusions about a peaceful path, no sporadic actions, no yielding *now* to provocation from the Black Hundreds and Cossacks. Let us gather forces, reorganise them, and resolutely prepare for the armed uprising, if the course of the crisis

permits it on a really mass, country-wide scale. The transfer of land to the peasants is impossible at present without armed uprising, since the counter-revolutionaries, having taken power, have completely united with the landowners as a class.

The aim of the insurrection can only be to transfer power to the proletariat, supported by the poor peasants, with a view to putting our Party programme into effect.

The party of the working class, without abandoning legal activity, but never for a moment overrating it, must *combine* legal with illegal work, as it did in 1912-14.

Don't let slip a single hour of legal work. But don't cherish any constitutional or "peaceful" illusions. Form illegal organisations or cells everywhere and at once for the publication of leaflets, etc. Reorganise immediately, consistently, resolutely, all along the line.

Act as we did in 1912-14, when we could speak about overthrowing tsarism by a revolution and an armed uprising, without at the same time losing our legal base in the Duma, the insurance societies, the trade unions, etc.

Written on July 10 (23), 1917

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in *Proletarskoye Dyelo* No. 6  
Signed: *U.*

*Collected Works*, Vol. 25

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## LETTER TO THE EDITORS OF *NOVAYA ZHIZN*

Permit us, comrades, to turn to your hospitality on account of the forced suspension of our Party paper. Certain papers have begun a furious baiting campaign against us, accusing us of espionage or of communicating with an enemy government.

The extraordinary thoughtlessness (an inappropriate and much too weak a word) with which this baiting is conducted may be seen from the following plain facts. *Zhivoye Slovo* first published a statement that Lenin was a spy. Then, in a "correction" which is supposed not to change anything, it declared that he was not accused of spying! First the paper came out with Yermolenko's testimony, then it was compelled to admit that it is downright awkward and shameful to see such a person's testimony as evidence.

The name of Parvus is dragged in, without mentioning, however, that no one denounced Parvus as sharply and mercilessly, as far back as 1915, as the Geneva *Sotsial-Demokrat*,<sup>88</sup> which we edited and which, in an article entitled "The Uttermost Limit", branded Parvus as "a renegade" "licking Hindenburg's boots",\* etc. Every literate person knows, or can easily find out, that all political or other relations between ourselves and Parvus are completely out of the question.

The name of one Sumenson is trotted out, a woman with whom we have never even met, let alone had anything to do. Business enterprises of Hanecki and Kozlovsky are also dragged in, but not a single fact is mentioned as to where, how and when the business was a screen for espionage. Not only have we never participated directly or indirectly in business enterprises, but we have never received from any of the above comrades a single kopek either for ourselves personally or for the Party.

They go so far as to blame us for *Pravda* dispatches being reprinted in a distorted fashion by German newspapers, but they

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\* See *Collected Works*, Vol. 21, pp. 421-22.—Ed.

“forget” to mention that *Pravda* issues German and French bulletins abroad and that the reprinting of material from these bulletins is entirely free.<sup>89</sup>

And all this is done with the participation and even on the initiative of Alexinsky, who has not been admitted to the Soviet, who, in other words, has been recognised as an obvious slanderer!! Is it really impossible to understand that *such* methods against us are tantamount to *legal assassination*? The Central Executive Committee’s discussion of the conditions on which the Committee’s members could be brought to court undoubtedly introduces an element of orderliness.<sup>90</sup> Will the Socialist-Revolutionary and Menshevik parties want to participate in an attempt at legal assassination? Will they want to take part in an attempt to put us on trial without even indicating whether we are accused of espionage or mutiny, in an attempt to put us on trial without any precise indictment at all? Will they want to take part in an attempt to stage an obviously unfair trial which may handicap their own candidates in the Constituent Assembly elections? Will those parties want to make the eve of the convocation of a Constituent Assembly in Russia the beginning of a Dreyfusiad<sup>91</sup> on Russian soil?

The near future will give an answer to these questions which we deem it the duty of the free press to raise openly.

We are not talking about the bourgeois press. Of course, Milyukov believes in our espionage or in our acceptance of German money about as much as Markov and Zamyslovsky believed that Jews drink children’s blood.

But Milyukov and Co. know what they are doing.



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## LETTER TO THE EDITORS OF *PROLETARSKOYE DYELO*

Comrades,

We have changed our minds about submitting to the Provisional Government's decree ordering our arrests, for the following reasons.

From the letter of Pereverzev, the former Minister of Justice, published on Sunday in *Novoye Uremya*,<sup>92</sup> it became perfectly clear that the "espionage" "case" of Lenin and others was quite deliberately framed by the party of the counter-revolution.

Pereverzev has openly admitted that he took advantage of unconfirmed accusations to work up (his actual expression) the soldiers against our Party. This is admitted by the former Minister of Justice, a man who only yesterday called himself a socialist! Pereverzev is gone, but whether the new Minister of Justice will hesitate to adopt Pereverzev's and Alexinsky's methods, nobody can venture to say.

The counter-revolutionary bourgeoisie are trying to create a new Dreyfus case. They believe in our "espionage" as much as the leaders of Russian reaction, who framed the Beilis case,<sup>93</sup> believed that Jews drink children's blood. There are no guarantees of justice in Russia at present.

The Central Executive Committee, which considers itself the plenipotentiary organ of the Russian democrats, appointed a commission to investigate the espionage charges, but under pressure from the counter-revolutionary forces dismissed it. The Central Executive Committee refused to either directly confirm or to revoke the warrant for our arrest. It washed its hands of the case, virtually delivering us to the counter-revolution.

The charges of "conspiracy" and "moral incitement" to revolt preferred against us are of a very definite nature, but no precise indictment of our alleged crime is brought either by the Provisional Government or by the Soviet, both of which know full well that it is sheer nonsense to speak of "conspiracy" in referring to a movement like that of July 3-5. The Menshevik and

S.R. leaders are simply trying to appease the counter-revolution that is already bearing down on them too, by delivering a number of our Party members to the counter-revolutionaries in compliance with their demand. At present there can be no legal basis in Russia, not even such constitutional guarantees as exist in the orderly bourgeois countries. To give ourselves up at present to the authorities would mean putting ourselves into the hands of the Milyukovs, Alexinskys, Pereverzevs, of rampant counter-revolutionaries who look upon all the charges against us as a simple civil war episode.

After what happened on July 6-8, not a single Russian revolutionary can harbour constitutional illusions any longer. Revolution and counter-revolution are coming to grips in a decisive fashion. We shall continue to fight on the side of the former.

We shall continue to aid the proletariat's revolutionary struggle as far as we can. The Constituent Assembly alone, if it meets, and if its convocation is not the handiwork of the bourgeoisie, will have full authority to pass judgement upon the Provisional Government's decree ordering our arrest.

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## ON SLOGANS

Too often has it happened that, when history has taken a sharp turn, even progressive parties have for some time been unable to adapt themselves to the new situation and have repeated slogans which had formerly been correct but had now lost all meaning—lost it as “suddenly” as the sharp turn in history was “sudden”.

Something of the sort seems likely to recur in connection with the slogan calling for the transfer of all state power to the Soviets. That slogan was correct during a period of our revolution—say, from February 27 to July 4—that has now passed irrevocably. It has patently ceased to be correct now. Unless this is understood, it is impossible to understand anything of the urgent questions of the day. Every particular slogan must be deduced from the totality of specific features of a definite political situation. And the political situation in Russia now, after July 4, differs radically from the situation between February 27 and July 4.

During that period of the revolution now past, the so-called “dual power” existed in the country, which both materially and formally expressed the indefinite and transitional condition of state power. Let us not forget that the issue of power is the fundamental issue of every revolution.

At that time state power was unstable. It was shared, by voluntary agreement, between the Provisional Government and the Soviets. The Soviets were delegations from the mass of free—i.e., not subject to external coercion—and armed workers and soldiers. What *really mattered* was that arms were in the hands of the people and that there was no coercion of the people from without. That is what opened up and ensured a peaceful path for the progress of the revolution. The slogan “All Power Must Be Transferred to the Soviets” was a slogan for the next step, the immediately feasible step, on that peaceful path of development. It was a slogan for the peaceful development of the revolu-

tion, which was possible and, of course, most desirable between February 27 and July 4 but which is now absolutely impossible.

Apparently, not all the supporters of the slogan "All Power Must Be Transferred to the Soviets" have given adequate thought to the fact that it was a slogan for peaceful progress of the revolution—peaceful not only in the sense that nobody, no class, no force of any importance, would then (between February 27 and July 4) have been able to resist and prevent the transfer of power to the Soviets. That is not all. Peaceful development would then have been possible, even in the sense that the struggle of classes and parties *within* the Soviets could have assumed a most peaceful and painless form, provided full state power had passed to the Soviets in good time.

The latter aspect of the matter has similarly not yet received adequate attention. In their class composition, the Soviets were organs of the movement of the workers and peasants, a ready-made form of their dictatorship. Had they possessed full state power, the main shortcoming of the petty-bourgeois groups, their chief sin, that of trusting the capitalists, really would have been overcome, would have been criticised by the experience of their own measures. The change of classes and parties in power could have proceeded peacefully within the Soviets, provided the latter wielded exclusive and undivided power. The contact between all the Soviet parties and the people could have remained stable and unimpaired. One must not forget for a single moment that only such a close contact between the Soviet parties and the people, freely growing in extent and depth, could have helped peacefully to get rid of the illusion of petty-bourgeois compromise with the bourgeoisie. The transfer of power to the Soviets would not, and could not, in itself have changed the correlation of classes; it would in no way have changed the petty-bourgeois nature of the peasants. But it would have taken a big and timely step towards separating the peasants from the bourgeoisie, towards bringing them closer to, and then uniting them with, the workers.

This is what might have happened had power passed to the Soviets at the proper time. That would have been the easiest and the most advantageous course for the people. This course would have been the least painful, and it was therefore necessary to fight for it most energetically. Now, however, this struggle, the struggle for the timely transfer of power to the Soviets, has ended. A peaceful course of development has become impossible. A non-peaceful and most painful course has begun.

The turning-point of July 4 was precisely a drastic change in the objective situation. The unstable condition of state power has come to an end. At the decisive point, power has passed into the hands of the counter-revolution. The development of the par-



ties on the basis of the collaboration of the petty-bourgeois Socialist-Revolutionary and Menshevik parties and the counter-revolutionary Cadets has brought about a situation in which both these petty-bourgeois parties have virtually become participants in and abettors of counter-revolutionary butchery. As the struggle between parties developed, the unreasoning trust which the petty bourgeoisie put in the capitalists led to their deliberate support of the counter-revolutionaries. The development of party relations has completed its cycle. On February 27, all classes found themselves united against the monarchy. After July 4, the counter-revolutionary bourgeoisie, working hand in glove with the monarchists and the Black Hundreds, secured the support of the petty-bourgeois Socialist-Revolutionaries and Mensheviks, partly by intimidating them, and handed over real state power to the Cavaignacs, the military gang, who are shooting insubordinate soldiers at the front and smashing the Bolsheviks in Petrograd.

The slogan calling for the transfer of state power to the Soviets would now sound quixotic or mocking. Objectively it would be deceiving the people; it would be fostering in them the delusion that even *now* it is enough for the Soviets to want to take power, or to pass such a decision, for power to be theirs, that there are still parties in the Soviets which have not been tainted by abetting the butchers, that it is possible to undo what has been done.

It would be a profound error to think that the revolutionary proletariat is capable of "refusing" to support the Socialist-Revolutionaries and Mensheviks against the counter-revolution by way of "revenge", so to speak, for the support they gave in smashing the Bolsheviks, in shooting down soldiers at the front and in disarming the workers. First, this would be applying philistine conceptions of morality to the proletariat (since, *for the good of the cause*, the proletariat will always support not only the vacillating petty bourgeoisie but even the big bourgeoisie); secondly—and that is the important thing—it would be a philistine attempt to obscure the political substance of the situation by "moralising".

And the political substance is that power can no longer be taken peacefully. It can be obtained only by winning a decisive struggle against those actually in power at the moment, namely, the military gang, the Cavaignacs, who are relying for support on the reactionary troops brought to Petrograd and on the Cadets and monarchists.

The substance of the situation is that these new holders of state power can be defeated only by the revolutionary masses, who, to be brought into motion, must not only be led by the proletariat, but must also turn their backs on the Socialist-Revolutionary

and Menshevik parties, which have betrayed the cause of the revolution.

Those who introduce philistine morals into politics reason as follows: let us assume that the Socialist-Revolutionaries and Mensheviks did commit an "error" in supporting the Cavaignacs, who are disarming the proletariat and the revolutionary regiments; still, they must be given a chance to "rectify" their "error"; the rectification of the "error" "should not be made difficult" for them; the swing of the petty bourgeoisie towards the workers should be facilitated. Such reasoning would be childishly naïve or simply stupid, if not a new deception of the workers. For the swing of the petty-bourgeois masses towards the workers would mean, and could only mean, that these masses had turned their backs upon the Socialist-Revolutionaries and Mensheviks. The Socialist-Revolutionary and Menshevik parties could now rectify their "error" only by denouncing Tsereteli, Chernov, Dan and Rakitnikov as the butchers' aides. We are wholly and unconditionally in favour of their "error" being "rectified" in this way. . . .

We said that the fundamental issue of revolution is the issue of power. We must add that it is revolutions that show us at every step how the question of *where* actual power lies is obscured, and reveal the divergence between formal and real power. That is one of the chief characteristics of every revolutionary period. It was not clear in March and April 1917 whether real power was in the hands of the government or the Soviet.

Now, however, it is particularly important for class-conscious workers to soberly face the fundamental issue of revolution, namely, who holds state power at the moment? Consider its material manifestations, do not mistake words for deeds, and you will have no difficulty in finding the answer.

Frederick Engels once wrote the state is primarily contingents of armed men with material adjuncts, such as prisons.<sup>94</sup> Now it is the military cadets and the reactionary Cossacks, who have been specially brought to Petrograd, those who are keeping Kamenev and the others in prison, who closed down *Pravda*, who disarmed the workers and a certain section of the soldiers, who are shooting down an equally certain section of the soldiers, who are shooting down an equally certain section of troops in the army. These butchers are the real power. The Tseretelis and Chernovs are ministers without power, puppet Ministers, leaders of parties that support the butchery. That is a fact. And the fact is no less true because Tsereteli and Chernov themselves probably "do not approve" of the butchery, or because their papers timidly dissociate themselves from it. Such changes of political garb change nothing in substance.

The newspaper of 150,000 Petrograd voters has been closed down. The military cadets on July 6 killed the worker Voinov for carrying *Listok "Pravdy"* out of the printers'. Isn't that butchery? Isn't that the handiwork of Cavaignacs? But neither the government nor the Soviets are to "blame" for this, they may tell us.

So much the worse for the government and the Soviets, we reply; for that means that they are mere figureheads, puppets, and that real power is not in their hands.

Primarily, and above all, the people must know the *truth*—they must know who actually wields state power. The people must be told the whole truth, namely, that power is in the hands of a military clique of Cavaignacs (Kerensky, certain generals, officers, etc.), who are supported by the bourgeois class headed by the Cadet Party, and by all the monarchists, acting through the Black Hundred papers, *Novoye Uremya*, *Zhivoye Slovo*, etc., etc.

That power must be overthrown. Unless this is done, all talk of fighting the counter-revolution is so much phrase-mongering, "self-deception and deception of the people".

That power now has the support both of the Tseretelis and Chernovs in the Cabinet and of their parties. We must explain to the people the butcher's role they are playing and the fact that such a "finale" for these parties was inevitable after their "errors" of April 21, May 5, June 9 and July 4 and after their approval of the policy of an offensive, a policy which went nine-tenths of the way to predetermining the victory of the Cavaignacs in July.

All agitational work among the people must be reorganised to ensure that it takes account of the specific experience of the present revolution, and particularly of the July days, i.e., that it clearly points to the real enemy of the people, the military clique, the Cadets and the Black Hundreds, and that it definitely unmasks the petty-bourgeois parties, the Socialist-Revolutionary and Menshevik parties, which played and are playing the part of butcher's aides.

All agitational work among the people must be reorganised so as to make clear that it is absolutely hopeless to expect the peasants to obtain land as long as the power of the military clique has not been overthrown, and as long as the Socialist-Revolutionary and Menshevik parties have not been exposed and deprived of the people's trust. That would be a very long and arduous process under the "normal" conditions of capitalist development, but both the war and economic disruption will tremendously accelerate it. These are "accelerators" that may make a month or even a week equal to a year.

Two objections may perhaps be advanced against what has



been said above: first, that to speak now of a decisive struggle is to encourage sporadic action, which would only benefit the counter-revolutionaries; second, that their overthrow would still mean transferring power to the Soviets.

In answer to the first objection, we say: the workers of Russia are already class-conscious enough not to yield to provocation at a moment which is obviously unfavourable to them. It is indisputable that for them to take action and offer resistance at the moment would mean aiding the counter-revolutionaries. It is also indisputable that a decisive struggle will be possible only in the event of a new revolutionary upsurge in the very depths of the masses. But it is not enough to speak in general terms of a revolutionary upsurge, of the rising tide of revolution, of aid by the West-European workers, and so forth; we must draw a definite conclusion from our past, from the lessons we have been given. And that will lead us to the slogan of a decisive struggle against the counter-revolutionaries, who have seized power.

The second objection also amounts to a substitution of arguments of too general a character for concrete realities. No one, no force, can overthrow the bourgeois counter-revolutionaries except the revolutionary proletariat. Now, after the experience of July 1917, it is the revolutionary proletariat that must independently take over state power. Without that the victory of the revolution is *impossible*. The only solution is for power to be in the hands of the proletariat, and for the latter to be supported by the poor peasants or semi-proletarians. And we have already indicated the factors that can enormously accelerate this solution.

Soviets may appear in this new revolution, and indeed are bound to, but *not* the present Soviets, not organs collaborating with the bourgeoisie, but organs of revolutionary struggle against the bourgeoisie. It is true that even then we shall be in favour of building the whole state on the model of the Soviets. It is not a question of Soviets in general, but of combating the *present* counter-revolution and the treachery of the *present* Soviets.

The substitution of the abstract for the concrete is one of the greatest and most dangerous sins in a revolution. The present Soviets have failed, have suffered complete defeat, because they are dominated by the Socialist-Revolutionary and Menshevik parties. At the moment these Soviets are like sheep brought to the slaughterhouse and bleating pitifully under the knife. The Soviets *at present* are powerless and helpless against the triumphant and triumphing counter-revolution. The slogan calling for the transfer of power to the Soviets might be construed as a "simple" appeal for the transfer of power to the present Soviets, and to say that, to appeal for it, would now mean deceiving the people. Nothing is more dangerous than deceit.



The cycle of development of the class and party struggle in Russia from February 27 to July 4 is complete. A new cycle is beginning, one that involves not the old classes, not the old parties, not the old Soviets, but classes, parties and Soviets rejuvenated in the fire of struggle, tempered, schooled and refashioned by the process of the struggle. We must look forward, not backward. We must operate not with the old, but with the new, post-July, class and party categories. We must, at the beginning of the new cycle, proceed from the triumphant bourgeois counter-revolution, which triumphed because the Socialist-Revolutionaries and Mensheviks compromised with it, and which can be defeated only by the revolutionary proletariat. Of course, in this new cycle there will be many and various stages, both before the complete victory of the counter-revolution and the complete defeat (without a struggle) of the Socialist-Revolutionaries and Mensheviks, and before a new upsurge of a new revolution. But it will only be possible to speak of this later, as each of these stages is reached.

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## LESSONS OF THE REVOLUTION

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at the end of July, the *Afterword*  
on September 6 (19), 1917

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Every revolution means a sharp turn in the lives of a vast number of people. Unless the time is ripe for such a turn, no real revolution can take place. And just as any turn in the life of an individual teaches him a great deal and brings rich experience and great emotional stress, so a revolution teaches an entire people very rich and valuable lessons in a short space of time.

During a revolution, millions and tens of millions of people learn in a week more than they do in a year of ordinary, somnolent life. For at the time of a sharp turn in the life of an entire people it becomes particularly clear what aims the various classes of the people are pursuing, what strength they possess, and what methods they use.

Every class-conscious worker, soldier and peasant should ponder thoroughly over the lessons of the Russian revolution, especially now, at the end of July, when it is clear that the first phase of our revolution has failed.

## I

Let us see, in fact, what the workers and peasants were striving for when they made the revolution. What did they expect of the revolution? As we know, they expected liberty, peace, bread and land.

But what do we see now?

Instead of liberty, the old tyranny is coming back. The death penalty is being introduced for the soldiers at the front. Peasants are prosecuted for the unauthorised seizure of landed estates. Printing presses of workers' newspapers are wrecked. Workers' newspapers are closed down without trial. Bolsheviks are arrested, often without any charge or upon blatantly trumped-up charges.

It may be argued that the persecution of Bolsheviks does not constitute a violation of freedom, for only certain individuals



are being prosecuted and on certain charges. Such an argument, however, would be a deliberate and obvious lie; for how can anyone wreck printing presses and close down newspapers for the crimes of individuals, even if these charges were proved and established by a court of law? It would be a different thing if the government had legally declared the whole party of the Bolsheviks, their very trend and views, to be criminal. But everybody knows that the government of free Russia could not, and did not, do anything of the kind.

What chiefly exposes the libellous character of the charges against the Bolsheviks is that the newspapers of the landowners and capitalists furiously abused the Bolsheviks for their struggle against the war and against the landowners and capitalists, and openly demanded the arrest and prosecution of the Bolsheviks even when not a single charge against a single Bolshevik had been trumped up.

The people want peace. Yet the revolutionary government of free Russia has resumed the war of conquest on the basis of those very same secret treaties which ex-Tsar Nicholas II concluded with the British and French capitalists so that the Russian capitalists might plunder other nations. Those secret treaties remain unpublished. The government of free Russia resorted to subterfuges, and to this day has not proposed a just peace to all nations.

There is no bread. Famine is again drawing near. Everybody sees that the capitalists and the rich are unscrupulously cheating the treasury on war deliveries (the war is now costing the nation fifty million rubles daily), that they are raking in fabulous profits through high prices, while nothing whatsoever has been done to establish effective control by the workers over the production and distribution of goods. The capitalists are becoming more brazen every day; they are throwing workers out into the street, and this at a time when the people are suffering from shortages.

A vast majority of the peasants, at congress after congress, have loudly and clearly declared that landed proprietorship is an injustice and robbery. Meanwhile, a government which calls itself revolutionary and democratic has been leading peasants by the nose for months and deceiving them by promises and delays. For months the capitalists did not allow Minister Chernov to issue a law prohibiting the purchase and sale of land. And when this law was finally passed, the capitalists started a foul slander campaign against Chernov, which they are still continuing. The government has become so brazen in its defence of the landowners that it is beginning to bring peasants to trial for "unauthorised" seizures of land.

They are leading the peasants by the nose, telling them to wait for the Constituent Assembly. The convocation of the As-

sembly, however, is being steadily postponed by the capitalists. Now that owing to Bolshevik pressure it has been set for September 30, the capitalists are openly clamouring about this being "impossibly" short notice, and are demanding the Constituent Assembly's postponement. The most influential members of the capitalist and landowner party, the "Cadet", or "people's freedom", Party, such as Panina, are openly urging that the convocation of the Constituent Assembly be delayed until after the war.

As to land, wait until the Constituent Assembly. As to the Constituent Assembly, wait until the end of the war. As to the end of the war, wait until complete victory. That is what it comes to. The capitalists and landowners, having a majority in the government, are plainly mocking at the peasants.

## II

But how could this happen in a free country, after the overthrow of the tsarist regime?

In a non-free country, the people are ruled by a tsar and a handful of landowners, capitalists and bureaucrats who are not elected by anybody.

In a free country, the people are ruled only by those who have been elected for that purpose by the people themselves. At the elections the people divide themselves into parties, and as a rule each class of the population forms its own party; for instance, the landowners, the capitalists, the peasants and the workers all form separate parties. In free countries, therefore, the people are ruled through an open struggle between parties and by free agreement between these parties.

For about four months after the overthrow of the tsarist regime on February 27, 1917, Russia was ruled as a free country, i.e., through an open struggle between freely-formed parties and by free agreement between them. To understand the development of the Russian revolution, therefore, it is above all necessary to study the chief parties, the class interests they defended, and the relations among them all.

## III

After the overthrow of the tsarist regime state power passed into the hands of the first Provisional Government, consisting of representatives of the bourgeoisie, i.e., the capitalists, who were joined by the landowners. The "Cadet" Party, the chief capitalist party, held pride of place as the ruling and government party of the bourgeoisie.

It was no accident this party secured power, although it was not the capitalists, of course, but the workers and peasants, the soldiers and sailors, who fought the tsarist troops and shed their blood for liberty. Power was secured by the capitalist party because the capitalist class possessed the power of wealth, organisation and knowledge. Since 1905, and particularly during the war, the class of the capitalists, and the landowners associated with them, have made in Russia the greatest progress in organising.

The Cadet Party has always been monarchist, both in 1905 and from 1905 to 1917. After the people's victory over tsarist tyranny it proclaimed itself a republican party. The experience of history shows that whenever the people triumphed over a monarchy, capitalist parties were willing to become republican as long as they could uphold the privileges of the capitalists and their unlimited power over the people.

The Cadet Party pays lip-service to "people's freedom". But actually it stands for the capitalists, and it was immediately backed by all the landowners, monarchists and Black Hundreds. The press and the elections are proof of this. After the revolution, all the bourgeois papers and the whole Black Hundred press began to sing in unison with the Cadets. Not daring to come out openly, all the monarchist parties supported the Cadet Party at the elections, as, for example, in Petrograd.

Having obtained state power, the Cadets made every effort to continue the predatory war of conquest begun by Tsar Nicholas II, who had concluded secret predatory treaties with the British and French capitalists. Under these treaties, the Russian capitalists were promised, in the event of victory, the seizure of Constantinople, Galicia, Armenia, etc. As to the people, the government of the Cadets put them off with empty subterfuges and promises, deferring the decision of all matters of vital and essential importance to the workers and peasants until the Constituent Assembly met, without appointing the date of its convocation.

Making use of liberty, the people began to organise independently. The chief organisation of the workers and peasants, who form the overwhelming majority of the population of Russia, was the Soviets of Workers', Soldiers' and Peasants' Deputies. These Soviets already began to be formed during the February Revolution, and within a few weeks all class-conscious and advanced workers and peasants were united in Soviets in most of the larger cities of Russia and in many rural districts.

The Soviets were elected in an absolutely free way. They were genuine organisations of the people, of the workers and peasants. They were genuine organisations of the vast majority of the people. The workers and peasants in soldiers' uniforms were armed.



It goes without saying that the Soviets could and should have taken over state power in full. Pending the convocation of the Constituent Assembly there should have been no other power in the state but the Soviets. Only then would our revolution have become a truly popular and truly democratic revolution. Only then could the working people, who are really striving for peace, and who really have no interest in a war of conquest, have begun firmly and resolutely to carry out a policy which would have ended the war of conquest and led to peace. Only then could the workers and peasants have curbed the capitalists, who are making fabulous profits "from the war" and who have reduced the country to a state of ruin and starvation. But in the Soviets only a minority of the deputies were on the side of the revolutionary workers' party, the Bolshevik Social-Democrats, who demanded that all state power should be transferred to the Soviets. The majority of the deputies to the Soviets were on the side of the parties of the Menshevik Social-Democrats and the Socialist-Revolutionaries, who were opposed to the transfer of power to the Soviets. Instead of removing the bourgeois government and replacing it by a government of the Soviets, these parties insisted on supporting the bourgeois government, compromising with it and forming a coalition government with it. This policy of compromise with the bourgeoisie pursued by the Socialist-Revolutionary and Menshevik parties, who enjoyed the confidence of the majority of the people, is the main content of the entire course of development of the revolution during the five months since it began.

#### IV

Let us first see how this compromising of the Socialist-Revolutionaries and Mensheviks with the bourgeoisie proceeded, and then let us try to explain why the majority of the people trusted them.

#### V

The Mensheviks and Socialist-Revolutionaries have compromised with the capitalists in one way or another at every stage of the Russian revolution.

At the very close of February 1917, as soon as the people had triumphed and the tsarist regime had been overthrown, the capitalist Provisional Government admitted Kerensky as a "socialist". As a matter of fact, Kerensky has never been a socialist; he was only a Trudovik, and he enlisted himself with the "Socialist-Revolutionaries" only in March 1917, when it was



already safe and quite profitable to do so. Through Kerensky, as Deputy Chairman of the Petrograd Soviet, the capitalist Provisional Government immediately set about gaining control of and taming the Soviet. The Soviet, i.e., the Socialist-Revolutionaries and Mensheviks who predominated in it, allowed itself to be tamed, agreeing immediately after the formation of the capitalist Provisional Government to "support it"—"to the extent" that it carried out its promises.

The Soviet regarded itself as a body verifying and exercising control over the activities of the Provisional Government. The leaders of the Soviet established what was known as a Contact Commission to keep in touch with the government.<sup>95</sup> Within that Contact Commission, the Socialist-Revolutionary and Menshevik leaders of the Soviet held continuous negotiations with the capitalist government, holding, properly speaking, the status of Ministers without portfolio or unofficial Ministers.

This state of affairs lasted throughout March and almost the whole of April. Seeking to gain time, the capitalists resorted to delays and subterfuges. Not a single step of any importance to further the revolution was taken by the capitalist government during this period. It did absolutely nothing even to further its direct and immediate task, the convocation of the Constituent Assembly; it did not submit the question to the localities or even set up a central commission to handle the preparations. The government was concerned with only one thing, namely, surreptitiously renewing the predatory international treaties concluded by the tsar with the capitalists of Britain and France, thwarting the revolution as cautiously and quietly as possible, and promising everything without fulfilling any of its promises. The Socialist-Revolutionaries and Mensheviks in the Contact Commission acted like simpletons who were fed on fancy phrases, promises, and more promises. Like the crow in the fable, the Socialist-Revolutionaries and Mensheviks succumbed to flattery and listened with pleasure to the assurances of the capitalists that they valued the Soviets highly and did not take a single step without them.

But time passed and the capitalist government did absolutely nothing for the revolution. On the contrary, during this period it managed, to the detriment of the revolution, to renew the secret predatory treaties, or, rather, to reaffirm them and "vitalise" them by supplementary and no less secret negotiations with Anglo-French imperialist diplomats. During this period it managed, to the detriment of the revolution, to lay the foundations of a counter-revolutionary organisation of (or at least of a rapprochement among) the generals and officers in the army in the field. To the detriment of the revolution it managed to start the organisation of industrialists, of factory-owners, who, under the onslaught

of the workers, were compelled to make concession after concession, but who at the same time began to sabotage (damage) production and prepare to bring it to a standstill when the opportunity came.

However, the organisation of the advanced workers and peasants in the Soviets made steady progress. The foremost representatives of the oppressed classes felt that, in spite of the agreement between the government and the Petrograd Soviet, in spite of Kerensky's pompous talk, in spite of the "Contact Commission", the government remained an enemy of the people, an enemy of the revolution. The people felt that unless the resistance of the capitalists was broken, the cause of peace, liberty and the revolution would inevitably be lost. The impatience and bitterness of the people kept on growing.

## VI

It burst out on April 20-21. The movement flared up spontaneously; nobody had cleared the ground for it. The movement was so markedly directed against the government that one regiment even appeared fully armed at the Mariinsky Palace to arrest the ministers. It became perfectly obvious to everybody that the government could not retain power. The Soviets could (and should) have taken over power without meeting the least resistance from any quarter. Instead, the Socialist-Revolutionaries and Mensheviks supported the collapsing capitalist government, entangled themselves even further in compromises with it and took steps that were even more fatal to the revolution, that tended to lead to its doom.

Revolution enlightens all classes with a rapidity and thoroughness unknown in normal, peaceful times. The capitalists, better organised and more experienced than anybody else in matters of class struggle and politics, learnt their lesson quicker than the others. Realising that the government's position was hopeless, they resorted to a method which for many decades, ever since 1848, has been practised by the capitalists of other countries in order to fool, divide and weaken the workers. This method is known as a "coalition" government, i.e., a joint cabinet formed of members of the bourgeoisie and turncoats from socialism.

In countries where freedom and democracy have long existed side by side with a revolutionary labour movement, in Britain and France, the capitalists have repeatedly and very successfully resorted to this method. When the "socialist" leaders entered a bourgeois cabinet, they invariably proved to be figureheads, puppets, screens for the capitalists, instruments for deceiving the workers. The "democratic and republican" capitalists of

Russia resorted to this very method. The Socialist-Revolutionaries and Mensheviks let themselves be fooled at once, and the "coalition" cabinet, joined by Chernov, Tsereteli and Co., became a fact on May 6.

The simpletons of the Socialist-Revolutionary and Menshevik parties were jubilant and fatuously bathed in the rays of the ministerial glory of their leaders. The capitalists gleefully rubbed their hands at having found helpers against the people in the persons of the "leaders of the Soviets" and at having secured their promise to support "offensive operations at the front", i.e., a resumption of the imperialist predatory war, which had come to a standstill for a while. The capitalists were well aware of the puffed-up impotence of these leaders, they knew that the promises of the bourgeoisie—regarding control over production, and even the organisation of production, regarding a peace policy, and so forth—would never be fulfilled.

And so it turned out. The second phase in the development of the revolution, May 6 to June 9, or June 18, fully corroborated the expectations of the capitalists as to the ease with which the Socialist-Revolutionaries and Mensheviks could be fooled.

While Peshekhonov and Skobelev were deceiving themselves and the people with florid speeches to the effect that one hundred per cent of the profits of the capitalists would be taken away from them, that their "resistance was broken", and so forth, the capitalists continued to consolidate their position. Nothing, absolutely nothing, was undertaken during this period to curb the capitalists. The ministerial turncoats from socialism proved to be mere talking machines for distracting the attention of the oppressed classes, while the entire apparatus of state administration actually remained in the hands of the bureaucracy (the officialdom) and the bourgeoisie. The notorious Palchinsky, Deputy Minister for Industry, was a typical representative of that apparatus, blocking every measure against the capitalists. While the ministers prated everything remained as of old.

The bourgeoisie used Minister Tsereteli in particular to fight the revolution. He was sent to "pacify" Kronstadt when the local revolutionaries had the audacity to remove an appointed commissar. The bourgeoisie launched in their newspapers an incredibly vociferous, violent and vicious campaign of lies, slander and vituperation against Kronstadt, accusing it of the desire "to secede from Russia", and repeating this and similar absurdities in a thousand ways to intimidate the petty bourgeoisie and the philistines. A most typically stupid and frightened philistine, Tsereteli, was the most "conscientious" of all in swallowing the bait of bourgeois slander; he was the most zealous of all in "smashing up and subduing" Kronstadt, without realising that he



was playing the role of a lackey of the counter-revolutionary bourgeoisie. He turned out to be the instrument of the "compromise" arrived at with revolutionary Kronstadt, whereby the commissar for Kronstadt was not simply appointed by the government, but was elected locally and was *confirmed* by the government. It was on such miserable compromises that the ministers who had deserted socialism for the bourgeoisie wasted their time.

Wherever a bourgeois minister could not appear in defence of the government, before the revolutionary workers or in the Soviets, Skobelev, Tsereteli, Chernov or some other "socialist" Minister appeared (or, to be precise, was sent by the bourgeoisie) and faithfully performed their assignment; he would do his level best to defend the Cabinet, whitewash the capitalists and fool the people by making promise after promise and by advising people to wait, wait and wait.

Minister Chernov particularly was engaged in bargaining with his bourgeois colleagues; down to July, to the new "crisis of power" which began after the movement of July 3-4, to the resignation of the Cadets from the Cabinet, Minister Chernov was continuously engaged in the useful and interesting work, so beneficial to the people, of "persuading" his bourgeois colleagues, exhorting them to agree at least to prohibition of the purchase and sale of land. This prohibition had been most solemnly promised to the peasants at the All-Russia Congress of Peasant Deputies in Petrograd. But the promise remained only a promise. Chernov proved unable to fulfil it either in May or in June, until the revolutionary tide, the spontaneous outbreak of July 3-4, which coincided with the resignation of the Cadets from the Cabinet, made it possible to enact this measure. Even then, however, it proved to be an isolated measure, incapable of promoting to any palpable extent the struggle of the peasants against the landowners for land.

Meanwhile, at the front, the counter-revolutionary, imperialist task of resuming the imperialist, predatory war, a task which Guchkov, so hated by the people, had been unable to accomplish, was being accomplished successfully and brilliantly by the "revolutionary democrat" Kerensky, that new-baked member of the Socialist-Revolutionary Party. He revelled in his own eloquence, incense was burned to him by the imperialists, who were using him as a pawn, he was flattered and worshipped—all because he served the capitalists faithfully, trying to talk the "revolutionary troops" into agreeing to resume the war being waged in pursuance of the treaties concluded by Tsar Nicholas II with the capitalists of Britain and France, a war waged so that Russian capitalists might secure Constantinople and Lvov, Erzurum and Trebizond.



So passed the second phase of the Russian revolution—May 6 to June 9. Shielded and defended by the “socialist” Ministers, the counter-revolutionary bourgeoisie grew in strength, consolidated their position and prepared an offensive both against the external enemy and against the internal enemy, i.e., the revolutionary workers.

## VII

On June 9, the revolutionary workers’ party, the Bolsheviks, was preparing for a demonstration in Petrograd to give organised expression to the irresistibly growing popular discontent and indignation. The Socialist-Revolutionary and Menshevik leaders, entangled in compromises with the bourgeoisie and bound by the imperialist policy of an offensive, were horrified, feeling that they were losing their influence among the masses. A general howl went up against the demonstration, and the counter-revolutionary Cadets joined in this howl, this time together with the Socialist-Revolutionaries and Mensheviks. Under their direction, and as a result of their policy of compromise with the capitalists, the swing of the petty-bourgeois masses to an alliance with the counter-revolutionary bourgeoisie became quite definite and strikingly obvious. This is the historical significance and class meaning of the crisis of June 9.

The Bolsheviks called off the demonstration, having no wish to lead the workers at that moment into a losing fight against the united Cadets, Socialist-Revolutionaries and Mensheviks. The latter, however, so as to retain at least a vestige of the people’s confidence, were compelled to call a general demonstration for June 18. The bourgeoisie were beside themselves with rage, rightly discerning in this a swing of the petty-bourgeois democrats towards the proletariat, and they decided to paralyse the action of the democrats by an offensive at the front.

In fact, June 18 was marked by an impressive victory for the slogans of the revolutionary proletariat, the slogans of Bolshevism, among the people of Petrograd. And on June 19 the bourgeoisie and the Bonapartist\* Kerensky solemnly announced that the offensive at the front had begun on June 18.

The offensive meant in effect the resumption of the predatory war in the interests of the capitalists and against the will of the vast majority of the working people. That is why the offensive

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\* Bonapartism (from Bonaparte, the name of the two French emperors) is a name applied to a government which endeavours to appear non-partisan by taking advantage of a highly acute struggle between the parties of the capitalists and the workers. Actually serving the capitalists, such a government dupes the workers most of all by promises and petty concessions.

was inevitably accompanied, on the one hand, by a gigantic growth of chauvinism and the transfer of military power (and consequently of state power) to the military gang of Bonapartists, and, on the other, by the use of violence against the masses, the persecution of the internationalists, the abolition of freedom of agitation, and the arrest and shooting of those who were against the war.

Whereas May 6 bound the Socialist-Revolutionaries and Mensheviks to the triumphal chariot of the bourgeoisie with a rope, June 19 shackled them, as servants of the capitalists, with a chain.

## VIII

Owing to the resumption of the predatory war, the bitterness of the people naturally grew even more rapidly and intensely. July 3-4 witnessed an outburst of their anger which the Bolsheviks attempted to restrain and which, of course, they had to endeavour to make as organised as possible.

The Socialist-Revolutionaries and Mensheviks, being slaves of the bourgeoisie, shackled by their master, agreed to everything: dispatching reactionary troops to Petrograd, bringing back the death penalty, disarming the workers and revolutionary troops, arresting and hounding, and closing down newspapers without trial. The power which the bourgeoisie in the government were unable to take entirely, and which the Soviets did not want to take, fell into the hands of the military clique, the Bonapartists, who, of course, were wholly backed by the Cadets and the Black Hundreds, by the landowners and capitalists.

Down the ladder, step by step. Having once set foot on the ladder of compromise with the bourgeoisie, the Socialist-Revolutionaries and Mensheviks slid irresistibly downwards, to rock bottom. On February 28, in the Petrograd Soviet, they promised conditional support to the bourgeois government. On May 6 they saved it from collapse and allowed themselves to be made its servants and defenders by agreeing to an offensive. On June 9 they united with the counter-revolutionary bourgeoisie in a campaign of furious rage, lies and slander against the revolutionary proletariat. On June 19 they approved the resumption of the predatory war. On July 3 they consented to the summoning of reactionary troops, which was the beginning of their complete surrender of power to the Bonapartists. Down the ladder, step by step.

This shameful finale of the Socialist-Revolutionary and Menshevik parties was not fortuitous but a consequence of the economic status of the small owners, the petty bourgeoisie, as has been repeatedly borne out by experience in Europe.

## IX

Everybody, of course, has seen the small owner bend every effort and strain every nerve to "get on in the world", to become a real master, to rise to the position of a "strong" employer, to the position of a bourgeois. As long as capitalism rules the roost, there is no alternative for the small owner other than becoming a capitalist (and that is possible at best in the case of one small owner out of a hundred), or becoming a ruined man, a semi-proletarian, and ultimately a proletarian. The same is true in politics: the petty-bourgeois democrats, especially their leaders, tend to trail after the bourgeoisie. The leaders of the petty-bourgeois democrats console their people with promises and assurances about the possibility of reaching agreement with the big capitalists; at best, and for a very brief period, they obtain certain minor concessions from the capitalists for a small upper section of the working people; but on every decisive issue, on every important matter, the petty-bourgeois democrats have always tailed after the bourgeoisie as a feeble appendage to them, as an obedient tool in the hands of the financial magnates. The experience of Britain and France has proved this over and over again.

The experience of the Russian revolution from February to July 1917, when events developed with unusual rapidity, particularly under the influence of the imperialist war and the deep-going crisis brought about by it, has most strikingly and palpably confirmed the old Marxist truth that the position of the petty bourgeoisie is unstable.

The lesson of the Russian revolution is that there can be no escape for the working people from the iron grip of war, famine, and enslavement by the landowners and capitalists unless they completely break with the Socialist-Revolutionary and Menshevik parties and clearly understand the latter's treacherous role, unless they renounce all compromises with the bourgeoisie and resolutely side with the revolutionary workers. Only the revolutionary workers, if supported by the peasant poor, are capable of smashing the resistance of the capitalists and leading the people in gaining land without compensation, complete liberty, victory over famine and the war, and a just and lasting peace.

## AFTERWORD

This article was written at the end of July, as is apparent from the text.

The history of the revolution during August has fully corroborated what is said in this article. Then, at the end of August,

the Kornilov revolt<sup>96</sup> caused a new turn in the revolution by clearly demonstrating to the whole people that the Cadets, in alliance with the counter-revolutionary generals, were striving to disband the Soviets and restore the monarchy. The near future will show how strong this new turn of the revolution is, and whether it will succeed in putting an end to the fatal policy of compromise with the bourgeoisie.

*N. Lenin*

September 6, 1917



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## TO THE CENTRAL COMMITTEE OF THE R.S.D.L.P.

It is possible that these lines will come too late, for events are developing with a rapidity that sometimes makes one's head spin. I am writing this on Wednesday, August 30, and the recipients will read it no earlier than Friday, September 2. Still, on chance, I consider it my duty to write the following.

The Kornilov revolt is a most unexpected (unexpected at such a moment and in such a form) and downright unbelievably sharp turn in events.

Like every sharp turn, it calls for a revision and change of tactics. And as with every revision, we must be extra-cautious not to become unprincipled.

It is my conviction that those who become unprincipled are people who (like Volodarsky) slide into defencism or (like other Bolsheviks) into a *bloc* with the S.R.s, into *supporting* the Provisional Government. Their attitude is absolutely wrong and unprincipled. We shall become defencists *only after* the transfer of power to the proletariat, *after* a peace offer, *after* the secret treaties and ties with the banks have been broken—*only afterwards*. Neither the capture of Riga *nor the capture of Petrograd* will make us defencists. (I should very much like Volodarsky to read this.) Until then we stand for a proletarian revolution, we are against the war, and we are *no* defencists.

*Even now* we must not support Kerensky's government. This is unprincipled. We may be asked: aren't we going to fight against Kornilov? Of course we must! But this is not the same thing; there is a dividing line here, which is being stepped over by some Bolsheviks who fall into compromise and allow themselves to be *carried away* by the course of events.

We shall fight, we are fighting against Kornilov, *just as Kerensky's troops do*, but we do not support Kerensky. *On the contrary*, we expose his weakness. There is the difference. It is rather a subtle difference, but it is highly essential and must not be forgotten.

1  
Уч. К. Р. С. Д. П. Д.

Вопросы? Из этого вопроса, что касается вопроса  
хорошо с другими, так как вопрос этот очень интересный. Я думаю  
из этого, 30 аб., только из этого вопроса не так много вопросов, 2. С. С. К.  
Все это, на самом деле, вопрос очень интересный.

Вопросы, которые очень часто встречаются (в этом  
вопросе) в этом вопросе (в этом вопросе) в этом вопросе.

Как это можно видеть из этого вопроса, он является вопросом в  
этом вопросе. Я думаю, что это так. И, как со всеми  
вопросами, так и с этим вопросом, так и с этим вопросом, так и с этим вопросом.

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What, then, constitutes our change of tactics after the Kornilov revolt?

We are changing the *form* of our struggle against Kerensky. Without in the least relaxing our hostility towards him, without taking back a single word said against him, without renouncing the task of overthrowing him, we say that we must *take into account* the present situation. We shall not overthrow Kerensky right now. We shall approach the task of fighting against him *in a different way*, namely, we shall point out to the people (who are fighting against Kornilov) Kerensky's *weakness* and *vacillation*. That has been done in the past *as well*. Now, however, it has become the *all-important* thing and this constitutes the change.

The change, further, is that the *all-important* thing now has become the intensification of our campaign for some kind of "partial demands" to be presented to Kerensky: arrest Milyukov, arm the Petrograd workers, summon the Kronstadt, Vyborg and Helsingfors troops to Petrograd, dissolve the Duma, arrest Rodzyanko, legalise the transfer of the landed estates to the peasants, introduce workers' control over grain and factories, etc., etc. We must present these demands not only to Kerensky, and *not so much* to Kerensky, as to the workers, soldiers and peasants who have been *carried away* by the course of the struggle against Kornilov. We must keep up their *enthusiasm*, encourage them to deal with the generals and officers who have declared for Kornilov, urge *them* to demand the immediate transfer of land to the peasants, suggest to *them* that it is necessary to arrest Rodzyanko and Milyukov, dissolve the Duma, close down *Rech* and other bourgeois papers, and institute investigations against them. The "Left" S.R.s must be especially urged on in this direction.

It would be wrong to think that we have moved farther away from the task of the proletariat winning power. No. We have come very close to it, *not directly*, but from the side. *At the moment* we must campaign not so much directly against Kerensky, as *indirectly* against him, namely, by demanding a more and more active, truly revolutionary war against Kornilov. The development of this war alone can lead *us* to power, but we must *speak* of this as little as possible in our propaganda (remembering very well that even tomorrow events may put power into our hands, and then we shall not relinquish it). It seems to me that this should be passed on in a letter (not in the papers) to the propagandists, to groups of agitators and propagandists, and to Party members in general. We must relentlessly fight against phrases about the defence of the country, about a united front of revolutionary democrats, about supporting the Provisional

Government, etc., etc., since they are just empty *phrases*. We must say: now is the time for *action*; you S.R. and Menshevik gentlemen have long since worn those phrases threadbare. Now is the time for *action*; the war against Kornilov must be conducted in a revolutionary way, by drawing the masses in, by arousing them, by inflaming them (Kerensky is *afraid* of the masses, *afraid* of the people). In the war against the Germans, *action* is required right now; *immediate and unconditional peace must be offered on precise terms*. If this is done, either a speedy peace *can* be attained or the war can be turned into a revolutionary war; if not, all the Mensheviks and Socialist-Revolutionaries remain lackeys of imperialism.

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P.S. Having read six issues of *Rabochy*,<sup>97</sup> after this was written, I must say that our views fully coincide. I heartily welcome the splendid editorials, press review and articles by V. M—in and Vol—y. As to Volodarsky's speech, I have read his letter to the editors, which likewise "eliminates" my reproaches. Once more, best wishes and greetings!

*Lenin*

Written on August 30  
(September 12), 1917

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November 7, 1920

*Collected Works*, Vol. 25



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## ON COMPROMISES

The term compromise in politics implies the surrender of certain demands, the renunciation of part of one's demands, by agreement with another party.

The usual idea the man in the street has about the Bolsheviks, an idea encouraged by a press which slanders them, is that the Bolsheviks will never agree to a compromise with anybody.

The idea is flattering to us as the party of the revolutionary proletariat, for it proves that even our enemies are compelled to admit our loyalty to the fundamental principles of socialism and revolution. Nevertheless, we must say that this idea is wrong. Engels was right when, in his criticism of the Manifesto of the Blanquist Communists (1873), he ridiculed their declaration: "No compromises!"<sup>98</sup> This, he said, was an empty phrase, for compromises are often unavoidably forced upon a fighting party by circumstances, and it is absurd to refuse once and for all to accept "payments on account".<sup>99</sup> The task of a truly revolutionary party is not to declare that it is impossible to renounce all compromises, but to be able, *through all compromises*, when they are unavoidable, to remain true to its principles, to its class, to its revolutionary purpose, to its task of paving the way for revolution and educating the mass of the people for victory in the revolution.

To agree, for instance, to participate in the Third and Fourth Dumas was a compromise, a temporary renunciation of revolutionary demands. But this was a compromise absolutely forced upon us, for the balance of forces made it impossible for us for the time being to conduct a mass revolutionary struggle, and in order to prepare this struggle over a long period we *had* to be able to work even from *inside* such a "pigsty". History has proved that this approach to the question by the Bolsheviks as a party was perfectly correct.

Now the question is not of a forced, but of a voluntary compromise.

Our Party, like any other political party, is striving after

political domination *for itself*. Our aim is the dictatorship of the revolutionary proletariat. Six months of revolution have proved very clearly, forcefully and convincingly that this demand is correct and inevitable in the interests of *this particular* revolution, for otherwise the people will never obtain a democratic peace, land for the peasants, or complete freedom (a fully democratic republic). This has been shown and proved by the course of events during the six months of our revolution, by the struggle of the classes and parties and by the development of the crises of April 20-21, June 9-10 and 18-19, July 3-5 and August 27-31.

The Russian revolution is experiencing so abrupt and original a turn that we, as a party, may offer a voluntary compromise—true, not to our direct and main class enemy, the bourgeoisie, but to our nearest adversaries, the “ruling” petty-bourgeois-democratic parties, the Socialist-Revolutionaries and Mensheviks.

We may offer a compromise to these parties only by way of exception, and only by virtue of the particular situation, which will obviously last only a very short time. And I think we should do so.

The compromise on our part is our return to the pre-July demand of all power to the Soviets and a government of S.R.s and Mensheviks responsible to the Soviets.

Now, and only now, perhaps *during only a few days* or a week or two, such a government could be set up and consolidated in a perfectly peaceful way. In all probability it could secure the peaceful *advance* of the whole Russian revolution, and provide exceptionally good chances for great strides in the world movement towards peace and the victory of socialism.

In my opinion, the Bolsheviks, who are partisans of world revolution and revolutionary methods, may and should consent to this compromise only for the sake of the revolution's peaceful development—an opportunity that is *extremely* rare in history and *extremely* valuable, an opportunity that only occurs once in a while.

The compromise would amount to the following: the Bolsheviks, without making any claim to participate in the government (which is impossible for the internationalists unless a dictatorship of the proletariat and the poor peasants has been realised), would refrain from demanding the immediate transfer of power to the proletariat and the poor peasants and from employing revolutionary methods of fighting for this demand. A condition that is self-evident and not new to the S.R.s and Mensheviks would be complete freedom of propaganda and the convocation of the Constituent Assembly without further delays or even at an earlier date.

The Mensheviks and S.R.s, being the government bloc, would then agree (assuming that the compromise had been reached) to form a government wholly and exclusively responsible to the Soviets, the latter taking over all power locally as well. This would constitute the "new" condition. I think the Bolsheviks would advance no other conditions, trusting that the revolution would proceed peacefully and party strife in the Soviets would be *peacefully overcome* thanks to really complete freedom of propaganda and to the immediate establishment of a new democracy in the composition of the Soviets (new elections) and in their functioning.

Perhaps this is *already* impossible? Perhaps. But if there is even one chance in a hundred, the attempt at realising this opportunity is still worth while.

What would both "contracting" parties gain by this "compromise", i.e., the Bolsheviks, on the one hand, and the S.R. and Menshevik bloc, on the other? If *neither* side gains anything, then the compromise must be recognised as impossible, and nothing more is to be said. No matter how difficult this compromise may be at present (after July and August, two months equivalent to two decades in "peaceful", somnolent times), I think it stands a small chance of being realised. This chance has been created by the decision of the S.R.s and Mensheviks not to participate in a government together with the Cadets.

The Bolsheviks would gain the opportunity of quite freely advocating their views and of trying to win influence in the Soviets under a really complete democracy. In words, "everybody" now concedes the Bolsheviks this freedom. In reality, this freedom is *impossible* under a bourgeois government or a government in which the bourgeoisie participate, or under any government, in fact, other than the Soviets. Under a Soviet government, such freedom would be *possible* (we do not say it would be a certainty, but still it would be possible). For the sake of such a possibility at such a difficult time, it would be worth compromising with the present majority in the Soviets. *We* have nothing to fear from real democracy, for reality is on our side, and even the course of development of trends within the S.R. and Menshevik parties, which are hostile to us, proves us right.

The Mensheviks and S.R.s would gain in that they would at once obtain every opportunity to carry out *their* bloc's programme with the support of the obviously overwhelming majority of the people and in that they would secure for themselves the "peaceful" use of their majority in the Soviets.

Of course, there would probably be two voices heard from this bloc, which is heterogeneous both because it is a bloc and because

petty-bourgeois democracy is *always* less homogeneous than the bourgeoisie and the proletariat.

One voice would say: we cannot follow the same road as the Bolsheviks and the revolutionary proletariat. It will demand too much anyway and will entice the peasant poor by demagogy. It will demand peace and a break with the Allies. That is impossible. We are better off and safer with the bourgeoisie; after all, we have not parted ways with them but only had a temporary *quarrel*, and only over the Kornilov incident. We have quarrelled, but we shall make it up. Moreover, the Bolsheviks are not "ceding" us anything, for their attempts at insurrection are as doomed to defeat as was the Commune of 1871.

The other voice would say: the allusion to the Commune is very superficial and even foolish. For, in the first place, the Bolsheviks have learnt something since 1871; they would not fail to seize the banks, and would not refuse to advance on Versailles. Under such conditions even the Commune might have been victorious. Furthermore, the Commune could not immediately offer the people what the Bolsheviks will be able to offer if they come to power, namely, land to the peasants, an immediate offer of peace, real control over production, an honest peace with the Ukrainians, Finns, etc. The Bolsheviks, to put it bluntly, hold ten times more "trumps" than the Commune did. In the second place, the Commune, after all, means a strenuous civil war, a set-back to peaceful cultural development for a long time to come, an opportunity for all sorts of MacMahons and Kornilovs to operate and plot with greater ease—and such operations are a menace to our whole bourgeois society. Is it wise to risk a Commune?

Now a Commune is inevitable in Russia if we do not take power into our own hands, if things remain in as grave a state as they were between May 6 and August 31. Every revolutionary worker and soldier will inevitably think about the Commune and believe in it; he will inevitably attempt to bring it about, for he will argue: "The people are perishing; war, famine and ruin are spreading. Only the Commune can save us. So let us all perish, let us die, but let us set up the Commune." Such thoughts are inevitable with the workers, and it will not be as easy to crush the Commune now as it was in 1871. The Russian Commune will have allies throughout the world, allies a hundred times stronger than those the Commune had in 1871.... Is it wise for us to risk a Commune? I cannot agree, either, that the Bolsheviks virtually cede us nothing by their compromise. For, in all civilised countries, civilised ministers value highly every agreement with the proletariat in war-time, however small. They value it very, very highly. And these are men of action, real ministers. The Bolsheviks are rapidly becoming stronger, in spite of repression, and



the weakness of their press. . . . Is it wise for us to risk a Commune?

We have a safe majority; the peasant poor will not wake up for some time to come; we are safe for our lifetime. I do not believe that in a peasant country the majority will follow the extremists. And against an obvious majority, no insurrection is possible in a really democratic republic. This is what the second voice would say.

There may also be a third voice coming from among the supporters of Martov or Spiridonova, which would say: I am indignant, "comrades", that both of you, speaking about the Commune and its likelihood, unhesitatingly side with its opponents. In one form or another, both of you side with those who suppressed the Commune. I will not undertake to campaign for the Commune and I cannot promise beforehand to fight in its ranks as every Bolshevik will do, but I must say that *if* the Commune does start *in spite of* my efforts, I shall rather help its defenders than its opponents.

The medley of voices in the "bloc" is great and inevitable, for a host of shades is represented among the petty-bourgeois democrats—from that of the completely ministerial<sup>100</sup> bourgeois down to the semi-pauper who is not yet capable of taking up the proletarian position. Nobody knows what will be the result of this medley of voices at any given moment.

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The above lines were written on Friday, September 1, but due to unforeseen circumstances (under Kerensky, as history will tell, not all Bolsheviks were free to choose their domicile) they did not reach the editorial office that day. After reading Saturday's and today's (Sunday's) papers, I say to myself: perhaps it is already too late to offer a compromise. Perhaps the few days in which a peaceful development was *still* possible have passed *too*. Yes, to all appearances, they have already passed.<sup>101</sup> In one way or another, Kerensky will abandon both the S.R. Party and the S.R.s themselves, and will consolidate his position with the aid of the bourgeoisie *without* the S.R.s, and thanks to their inaction. . . . Yes, to all appearances, the days when by chance the path of peaceful development became possible have *already* passed. All that remains is to send these notes to the editor with the request to have them entitled: "Belated Thoughts". Perhaps even belated thoughts are sometimes not without interest.

Written on September 1-3 (14-16), 1917

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September 19 (6), 1917  
Signed: *N. Lenin*

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## DRAFT RESOLUTION ON THE PRESENT POLITICAL SITUATION<sup>102</sup>

The Central Committee of the R.S.D.L.P., on the basis of the resolution on the political situation adopted by the Sixth Congress of the R.S.D.L.P. (Bolsheviks),<sup>103</sup> and applying that resolution to the present situation, at its plenary meeting states:

1. In the two months from July 3 to September 3, due to the unparalleled speed of the revolution, the course of the class struggle and the development of political events have carried the whole country as far forward as it would have been impossible for the country to advance over many years in peace-time, without revolution and war.

2. It becomes more and more apparent that the events of July 3-5 were the turning-point of the whole revolution. Without a correct estimate of these events, it is impossible to correctly estimate either the proletariat's tasks, or the speed of development of revolutionary events, which is beyond our control.

3. The slander against the Bolsheviks, which the bourgeoisie spread with tremendous zeal and which they put about very widely among the people with the aid of the millions invested in capitalist papers and publishing houses, is being exposed more and more rapidly and widely. First it was the workers in the capital and in the large cities, and then the peasants, who realised more and more that the slander against the Bolsheviks is one of the main weapons used by the landowners and capitalists in the struggle against the defenders of the interests of the workers and poor peasants, i.e., against the Bolsheviks.

4. An outright attempt was made to camouflage the Kornilov revolt, i.e., a revolt of generals and officers behind whom stand the landowners and the capitalists headed by the Cadet Party (the "people's freedom" party), by bringing up again the old slander against the Bolsheviks. It was this that helped finally to open the eyes of the broadest sections of the people to the true meaning of the bourgeois slander against the Bolshevik workers' party, the party of the true defenders of the poor.

5. Had our Party refused to support the July 3-4 mass movement, which burst out spontaneously despite our attempts to prevent it, we should have actually and completely betrayed the proletariat, since the people were moved to action by their well-founded and just anger at the protraction of the imperialist war, which is a predatory war conducted in the interests of the capitalists, and at the inaction of the government and the Soviets in regard to the bourgeoisie, who are intensifying and aggravating economic disruption and famine.

6. In spite of all the efforts of the bourgeoisie and the government, in spite of the arrest of hundreds of Bolsheviks, the seizure of their papers and documents, the search of their editorial offices, etc.—in spite of all this nobody has succeeded, and nobody will ever succeed, in proving the slander that our Party's aim in the July 3-4 movement was anything other than a "peaceful and organised" demonstration with the slogan of transfer of all state power to the Soviets of Workers', Soldiers' and Peasants' Deputies.

7. It would have been wrong if the Bolsheviks had aimed to seize power on July 3-4, since neither the majority of the people nor even the majority of the workers at that time had yet actually experienced the counter-revolutionary policies of generals in the army, of the landowners in the countryside, and of the capitalists in the town. These policies were only revealed to the masses after July 5, and stemmed from a compromise between the Socialist-Revolutionaries and Mensheviks, on the one hand, and the bourgeoisie, on the other. None of our Party organisations, either central or local, advocated, either in writing or by word of mouth, the slogan of seizing power on July 3-4; none of them even discussed this question.

8. The real mistake of our Party on July 3-4, as events now reveal, was merely that the Party considered the general situation in the country *less* revolutionary than it proved to be, that the Party *still* considered a peaceful development of political changes possible through an alteration in the Soviets' policies, whereas in reality the Mensheviks and S.R.s had become so much entangled and bound by compromising with the bourgeoisie, and the bourgeoisie had become so counter-revolutionary, that peaceful development was no longer possible. This erroneous view, however, which was sustained only by the hope that events would not develop too fast, our Party could not have got over other than by participating in the popular movement of July 3-4 with the slogan "All power to the Soviets" and with the aim of making the movement peaceful and organised.

9. The historic significance of the Kornilov revolt is that with extraordinary force, it opened the people's eyes to a fact which



the S.R.s and Mensheviks had concealed and still are concealing under conciliatory phrases. The fact is that the landowners and the bourgeoisie, headed by the Cadet Party, and the generals and officers who are on their side, have organised themselves; they are ready to commit, or are committing, the most outrageous crimes, such as surrendering Riga (followed by Petrograd) to the Germans, laying the war front open, putting the Bolshevik regiments under fire, starting a mutiny, leading troops against the capital with the "Savage Division"<sup>104</sup> at their head, etc. The purpose of all this is to seize power completely and put it in the hands of the bourgeoisie, to consolidate the power of the landowners in the countryside, and to drench the country in the blood of workers and peasants.

The Kornilov revolt has proved for Russia what has been proved throughout history for all countries, namely, that the bourgeoisie will betray their country and commit any crime to retain both their power over the people and their profits.

10. The workers and peasants of Russia have no other alternative than the most determined struggle against, and victory over, the landowners and the bourgeoisie, over the Cadet Party and the generals and officers sympathising with it. Only the urban working class can lead the people, i.e., all working people, into such a struggle and to such a victory, provided all state power passes into its hands and provided it is supported by the peasant poor.

11. Events in the Russian revolution; particularly since May 6, and even more so since July 3, have been developing with such incredible, storm- or hurricane-like velocity, that it can by no means be the task of the Party to speed them up. All efforts, in fact, must be directed towards keeping up with events and doing on time our work of explaining to the workers, and to the working people in general, as much as we can, the changes in the situation and in the course of the class struggle. This is still the main task of our Party; we must explain to the people that the situation is extremely critical, that every action may end in an explosion, and that therefore a premature uprising may cause the greatest harm. At the same time, the critical situation is inevitably leading the working class—perhaps with catastrophic speed—to a situation in which, due to a change in events beyond its control, it will find itself compelled to wage a determined battle with the counter-revolutionary bourgeoisie and to gain power.

12. The Kornilov revolt fully revealed that the entire army *hates the General Staff*. This had to be admitted even by those Mensheviks and S.R.s who through months of effort had proved their hatred for the Bolsheviks and their defence of the policy of agreement between the workers and peasants, on the one hand,



and the landowners and the bourgeoisie, on the other. The hatred of the army for the General Staff will not die down but will become stronger now that Kerensky's government has confined itself to substituting Alexeyev for Kornilov, leaving Klembovsky and other Kornilov generals, and has done absolutely nothing substantial to democratise the armed forces and remove the counter-revolutionary commanders. Soviets, which tolerate and support this weak, wavering, unprincipled policy of Kerensky and missed another opportunity to take all power peacefully when the Kornilov revolt was being liquidated, become guilty not only of conciliation but even of criminal conciliation.

The army, which hates the General Staff and does not want to fight a war it now knows to be a war of conquest, is inevitably doomed to new catastrophes.

13. Only the working class, when it has gained power, will be able to pursue a peace policy, not merely in words, like the Mensheviks and S.R.s, who in practice support the bourgeoisie and their secret treaties, but in deeds. Specifically, the working class will immediately offer *all* peoples open, precise, clear and *just* peace terms. This will be done irrespective of the military situation, even if Kornilov's generals follow up the surrender of Riga by that of Petrograd. The working class can do this in the name of the entire people, since the overwhelming majority of Russia's workers and peasants oppose the present war of annexation and support a peace on just terms, without annexations and indemnities.

The S.R.s and Mensheviks are deceiving themselves and the people when they spend months talking about this peace. The working class, on gaining power, will offer this peace to all without losing a single day.

The capitalists of all countries have so much difficulty in stemming the workers' revolution against war—a revolution which is growing everywhere—that if the Russian revolution were to pass from impotent and pitiful yearning for peace to a forthright peace offer coupled with the publication and annulment of secret treaties, etc., there are ninety-nine chances in a hundred that peace would quickly follow, that the capitalists would be unable to stand in the way of peace.

If, however, the highly improbable were to happen and the capitalists were to reject the peace terms of the Russian workers' government, against the will of their peoples, a revolution in Europe would come a hundred times nearer, and our workers' and peasants' army would elect for itself not hated but respected commanders and military leaders. The army would see the justice of the war once peace had been offered, the secret treaties torn up, the alliance with the landowners and the bourgeoisie

severed, and all land given to the peasants. Only then would the war become a just war for Russia, only this war would the workers and peasants fight of their own free will, without being bludgeoned into fighting; and this war would bring even nearer the inevitable workers' revolution in the advanced countries.

14. Only the working class, when it has gained power, will be able to guarantee the immediate transfer of all landed estates to the peasants without compensation. This must not be put off. The Constituent Assembly will legalise the transfer, but it is not the peasants' fault that the Constituent Assembly is being delayed. The peasants daily become more convinced that it is impossible to get the land by agreement with the landowners and the capitalists. The land can only be obtained through a very close, brotherly alliance of the poor peasants and the workers.

Chernov's resignation from the government after he had for months tried to uphold the interests of the peasants through concessions, big and small, to the Cadet landowners, and after all these attempts had failed, revealed with particular clarity the hopelessness of the policy of conciliation. The peasants see, know and feel that since July 5 the landowners have become arrogant in the villages and that it is necessary to curb them and render them harmless.

15. Only the working class, when it has gained power, will be able to put an end to economic disruption and the impending famine. Since May 6 the government has kept on promising control, but it has done and could do nothing because the capitalists and landowners obstructed all work. Unemployment is growing, famine is approaching, currency is losing value. Peshekhonov's resignation after the fixed prices have doubled will aggravate the crisis, and it again shows the utter feebleness and impotence of the government. Only workers' control over production and distribution can save the situation. Only a workers' government will curb the capitalists, will bring heroic support from all working people for the efforts of *state power*, and will establish order and a fair exchange of grain for manufactured goods.

16. The confidence of the peasant poor in the urban working class, temporarily undermined by the slander of the bourgeoisie and by hopes put in the policy of conciliation, has been returning, particularly after the arrests in the countryside and the various kinds of persecution of working people after July 5 and then the Kornilov revolt opened the people's eyes. One of the signs that the people are losing faith in conciliation with the capitalists is that among the S.R.s and Mensheviks, the two main parties responsible for introducing this policy of conciliation and bringing it to a culmination, there have been growing, especially since July 5, a discontent within these parties and a struggle against

conciliation. This opposition at the last Socialist-Revolutionary "Council" and at the Menshevik congress involved about two-fifths (40 per cent) of the members.

17. The whole course of events, all economic and political conditions, everything that is happening in the armed forces, are increasingly paving the way for the successful winning of power by the working class, which will bring peace, bread and freedom and will hasten the victory of the proletarian revolution in other countries.

Written not later than  
September 3 (16), 1917

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# **THE IMPENDING CATASTROPHE AND HOW TO COMBAT IT**

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## FAMINE IS APPROACHING

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

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

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

Yet nothing is being done.

Six months of revolution have elapsed. The catastrophe is even closer. Unemployment has assumed a mass scale. To think that there is a shortage of goods in the country, the country is perishing from a shortage of food and labour, although there is a sufficient quantity of grain and raw materials, and yet in such a country, at so critical a moment, there is mass unemployment! What better evidence is needed to show that after six months of revolution (which some call a great revolution, but which so far it would perhaps be fairer to call a rotten revolution), in a democratic republic, with an abundance of unions, organs and institutions which proudly call themselves "revolutionary-demo-



cratic", absolutely *nothing* of any importance has actually been done to avert catastrophe, to avert famine? We are nearing ruin with increasing speed. The war will not wait and is causing increasing dislocation in every sphere of national life.

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

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

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

### COMPLETE GOVERNMENT INACTIVITY

There is a universal, systematic and persistent sabotage of every kind of control, supervision and accounting and of all state attempts to institute them. And one must be incredibly naïve not to understand, one must be an utter hypocrite to pretend not to understand, where this sabotage comes from and by what means it is being carried on. For this sabotage by the bankers and capitalists, their *frustration* of every kind of control, supervision and accounting, is being adapted to the state forms of a democratic republic, to the existence of "revolutionary-democratic" institutions. The capitalist gentlemen have learnt very well a fact which all supporters of scientific socialism profess to recognise but which

the Mensheviks and Socialist-Revolutionaries tried to forget as soon as their friends had secured cushy jobs as ministers, deputy ministers, etc. That fact is that the economic substance of capitalist exploitation is in no wise affected by the substitution of republican-democratic forms of government for monarchist forms, and that, consequently, the reverse is also true—only the *form* of the struggle for the inviolability and sanctity of capitalist profits need be changed in order to uphold them under a democratic republic as effectively as under an absolute monarchy.

The present, modern republican-democratic sabotage of every kind of control, accounting and supervision consists in the capitalists “eagerly” accepting in words the “principle” of control and the necessity for control (as, of course, do all Mensheviks and Socialist-Revolutionaries), insisting only that this control be introduced “gradually”, methodically and in a “state-regulated” way. In practice, however, these specious catchwords serve to conceal the *frustration* of control, its nullification, its reduction to a fiction, the mere playing at control, the delay of all business-like and practically effective measures, the creation of extraordinarily complicated, cumbersome and bureaucratically lifeless institutions of control which are hopelessly dependent on the capitalists, and which do absolutely nothing and cannot do anything.

So as not to trot out bald statements, let us cite witnesses from among the Mensheviks and Socialist-Revolutionaries, i.e., the very people who had the majority in the Soviets during the first six months of revolution, who took part in the “coalition government” and who are therefore politically responsible to the Russian workers and peasants for winking at the capitalists and allowing them to frustrate all control.

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

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

The need for the regulation of economic life was already recognised under tsarism, and certain institutions were set up for

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

Four months have passed since May 6, four long months, in which Russia has sacrificed the lives of hundreds of thousands of soldiers for the sake of the absurd imperialist "offensive", in which chaos and disaster have been advancing in seven-league strides, in which the summer season afforded an exceptional opportunity to do a great deal in the matter of water transport, agriculture, prospecting for minerals, and so on and so forth—and after four months the Mensheviks and Socialist-Revolutionaries have been obliged officially to admit the "complete inactivity" of the control institutions set up under the government!!

And these Mensheviks and Socialist-Revolutionaries, with the serious mien of statesmen, now prate (I am writing this on the very eve of the Democratic Conference of September 12<sup>105</sup>) that matters can be furthered by replacing the coalition with the Cadets by a coalition with commercial and industrial Kit Kityches,<sup>106</sup> the Ryabushinskys, Bublikovs, Tereshchenkos and Co.

How, one may ask, are we to explain this astonishing blindness of the Mensheviks and Socialist-Revolutionaries? Are we to regard them as political babes in the wood who in their extreme foolishness and naïveté do not realise what they are doing and err in good faith? Or does the abundance of posts they occupy as ministers, deputy ministers, governors-general, commissars and the like have the property of engendering a special kind of "political" blindness?

### CONTROL MEASURES ARE KNOWN TO ALL AND EASY TO TAKE

One may ask: aren't methods and measures of control extremely complex, difficult, untried and even unknown? Isn't the delay due to the fact that although the statesmen of the Cadet Party, the merchant and industrial class, and the Menshevik and So-



cialist-Revolutionary parties have for six months been toiling in the sweat of their brow, investigating, studying and discovering measures and methods of control, still the problem is incredibly difficult and has not yet been solved?

Unfortunately, this is how they are trying to present matters to hoodwink the ignorant, illiterate and downtrodden muzhiks and the Simple Simons who believe everything and never look into things. In reality, however, even tsarism, even the "old regime", when it set up the War Industries Committees, *knew* the principal measure, the chief method and way to introduce control, namely, by uniting the population according to profession, purpose of work, branch of labour, etc. But tsarism *feared* the union of the population and therefore did its best to restrict and artificially hinder this generally known, very easy and quite practical method and way of control.

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

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

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

We shall see that all a government would have had to do, if its name of revolutionary-democratic government were not merely a joke, would have been to decree, in the very first week of its existence, the adoption of the principal measures of control, to



provide for strict and severe punishment to be meted out to capitalists who fraudulently evaded control, and to call upon the population itself to exercise supervision over the capitalists and see to it that they scrupulously observed the regulations on control—and control would have been introduced in Russia long ago.

These principal measures are:

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

(2) Nationalisation of the syndicates, i.e., the largest, monopolistic capitalist associations (sugar, oil, coal, iron and steel, and other syndicates).

(3) Abolition of commercial secrecy.

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

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

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

## NATIONALISATION OF THE BANKS

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

It is absurd to control and regulate deliveries of grain, or the production and distribution of goods generally, without controlling and regulating bank operations. It is like trying to snatch at odd kopeks and closing one's eyes to millions of rubles. Banks nowadays are so closely and intimately bound up with trade (in grain and everything else) and with industry that without "laying hands" on the banks nothing of any value, nothing "revolutionary-democratic", can be accomplished.

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

In reality, however, nationalisation of the banks, which would not deprive any "owner" of a single kopek, presents absolutely no technical or cultural difficulties, and is being delayed *exclusive-*

ly because of the vile greed of an insignificant handful of rich people. If nationalisation of the banks is so often confused with the confiscation of private property, it is the bourgeois press, which has an interest in deceiving the public, that is to blame for this widespread confusion.

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

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

It is that no effective control of any kind over the individual banks and their operations is possible (even if commercial secrecy, etc., were abolished) because it is impossible to keep track of the extremely complex, involved and wily tricks that are used in drawing up balance-sheets, founding fictitious enterprises and subsidiaries, enlisting the services of figureheads, and so on, and so forth. Only the amalgamation of all banks into one, which in itself would imply no change whatever in respect of ownership, and which, we repeat, would not deprive any owner of a single kopek, would make it *possible* to exercise real control—provided, of course, all the other measures indicated above were carried out. Only by nationalising the banks *can* the state *put itself in a position* to know where and how, whence and when, millions and billions of rubles flow. And only control over the banks, over the centre, over the pivot and chief mechanism of capitalist circulation, would make it possible to organise real and not fictitious control over all economic life, over the production and distribution of staple goods, and organise that “regulation of economic life” which otherwise is inevitably doomed to remain a ministerial phrase designed to fool the common people. Only control over banking operations, provided they were concentrated in a single state bank, would make it possible, if certain other easily-practicable measures were adopted, to organise the effective collection of income tax in such a way as to prevent the concealment of property and incomes; for at present the income tax is very largely a fiction.

Nationalisation of the banks has only to be decreed and it would be carried out by the directors and employees themselves. No special machinery, no special preparatory steps on the part of

the state would be required, for this is a measure that can be effected by a single decree, "at a single stroke". It was made economically feasible by capitalism itself once it had developed to the stage of bills, shares, bonds and so on. *All* that is required is to *unify accountancy*. And if the revolutionary-democratic government were to decide that immediately, by telegraph, meetings of managers and employees should be called in every city, and conferences in every region and in the country as a whole, for the immediate amalgamation of all banks into a single state bank, this reform would be carried out in a few weeks. Of course, it would be the managers and the higher bank officials who would offer resistance, who would try to deceive the state, delay matters, and so on, for these gentlemen would lose their highly remunerative posts and the opportunity of performing highly profitable fraudulent operations. *That is the heart of the matter*. But there is not the slightest technical difficulty in the way of the amalgamation of the banks; and if the state power were revolutionary not only in word (i.e., if it did not fear to do away with inertia and routine), if it were democratic not only in word (i.e., if it acted in the interests of the majority of the people and not of a handful of rich men), it would be enough to decree confiscation of property and imprisonment as the penalty for managers, board members and big shareholders for the slightest delay or for attempting to conceal documents and accounts. It would be enough, for example, to organise the poorer employees *separately* and to reward them for detecting fraud and delay on the part of the rich for nationalisation of the banks to be effected as smoothly and rapidly as can be.

The advantages accruing to the whole people from nationalisation of the banks—*not* to the workers especially (for the workers have little to do with banks) but to the mass of peasants and small industrialists—would be enormous. The saving in labour would be gigantic, and, assuming that the state would retain the former number of bank employees, nationalisation would be a highly important step towards making the use of the banks universal, towards increasing the number of their branches, putting their operations within easier reach, etc., etc. The availability of credit on easy terms for the *small* owners, for the peasants, would increase immensely. As to the state, it would for the first time be in a position first to *review* all the chief monetary operations, which would be unconcealed, then to *control* them, then to *regulate* economic life, and finally to *obtain* millions and billions for major state transactions, without paying the capitalist gentlemen sky-high "commissions" for their "services". That is the reason—and the only reason—why all the capitalists, all the bourgeois professors, all the bourgeoisie, and all the Plekhanovs,



Potresovs and Co., who serve them, are prepared to fight tooth and nail against nationalisation of the banks and invent thousands of excuses to prevent the adoption of this very easy and very pressing measure, although *even* from the standpoint of the "defence" of the country, i.e., from the military standpoint, this measure would provide a gigantic advantage and would tremendously enhance the "military might" of the country.

The following objection might be raised: why do such advanced states as Germany and the U.S.A. "regulate economic life" so magnificently without even thinking of nationalising the banks?

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

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

If we do not employ the phrase "revolutionary democracy" as a stereotyped ceremonial phrase, as a conventional epithet, but *reflect* on its meaning, we find that to be a democrat means reckoning in reality with the interests of the majority of the people and not the minority, and that to be a revolutionary means destroying everything harmful and obsolete in the most resolute and ruthless manner.

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

In Germany there are only *four* very large private banks of national importance. In America there are only *two*. It is easier, more convenient, more profitable for the financial magnates of those banks to unite privately, surreptitiously, in a reactionary and not a revolutionary way, in a bureaucratic and not a democratic way, bribing government officials (this is the general rule both in America *and in Germany*), and preserving the pri-



vate character of the banks in order to preserve secrecy of operations, to milk the state of millions upon millions in "super-profits", and to make financial frauds possible.

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

Such a course is quite possible in republican-imperialist Russia too. Indeed, it is the course being followed not only by the Milyukovs and Shingaryovs, but also by Kerensky in partnership with Tereshchenko, Nekrasov, Bernatsky, Prokopovich and Co., who *also uphold*, in a reactionary-bureaucratic manner, the "inviolability" of the banks and their sacred right to fabulous profits. So let us better tell the *truth*, namely, that in republican Russia they want to regulate economic life in a reactionary-bureaucratic manner, but "often" find it difficult to do so owing to the existence of the "Soviets", which Kornilov No. 1 did not manage to disband, but which Kornilov No. 2 will try to disband.

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

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Nationalisation of the banks would greatly facilitate the simultaneous nationalisation of the insurance business, i.e., the amalgamation of all the insurance companies into one, the centralisation of their operations, and state control over them. Here, too, congresses of insurance company employees could carry out this amalgamation immediately and without any great effort, provided a revolutionary-democratic government decreed this and ordered directors and big shareholders to effect the amalgamation without the slightest delay and held every one of them strictly accountable for it. The capitalists have invested hundreds of millions of rubles in the insurance business; the work is all done by the employees. The amalgamation of this business would lead to lower insurance premiums, would provide a host of facilities and conveniences for the insured and would make it possible to increase their number without increasing expenditure of effort and funds. Absolutely nothing but the inertia, routine and self-interest of a handful of holders of remunerative jobs are delaying this reform, which, among

other things, would enhance the country's defence potential by economising national labour and creating a number of highly important opportunities to "regulate economic life" not in word, but in deed.

## NATIONALISATION OF THE SYNDICATES

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

Let us take the sugar syndicate as an example. It came into being under tsarism, and at that time developed into a huge capitalist combine of splendidly equipped refineries. And, of course, this combine, thoroughly imbued with the most reactionary and bureaucratic spirit, secured scandalously high profits for the capitalists and reduced its employees to the status of humiliated and downtrodden slaves lacking any rights. Even at that time the state controlled and regulated production—in the interests of the rich, the magnates.

*All* that remains to be done here is to transform reactionary-bureaucratic regulation into revolutionary-democratic regulation by simple decrees providing for the summoning of a congress of employees, engineers, directors and shareholders, for the introduction of uniform accountancy, for control by the workers' unions, etc. This is an exceedingly simple thing, yet it has not been done! Under what is a democratic republic, the regulation of the sugar industry *actually* remains reactionary-bureaucratic; everything remains as of old—the dissipation of national labour, routine and stagnation, and the enrichment of the Bobrinskys and Tere-shchenkos. Democrats and not bureaucrats, the workers and other employees and not the "sugar barons", should be called upon to exercise independent initiative—and this could and should be

done in a few days, at a single stroke, if only the Socialist-Revolutionaries and Mensheviks did not befog the minds of the people by plans for "association" with these very sugar barons, for the very association with the wealthy from which the "complete inaction" of the government in the matter of regulating economic life follows with absolute inevitability, and of which it is a consequence.\*

Take the oil business. It was to a vast extent "socialised" by the earlier development of capitalism. Just a couple of oil barons wield millions and hundreds of millions of rubles, clipping coupons and raking in fabulous profits from a "business" which is *already* actually, technically and socially organised on a national scale and is *already* being conducted by hundreds and thousands of employees, engineers, etc. Nationalisation of the oil industry could be effected *at once* by, and is imperative for, a revolutionary-democratic state, especially when the latter suffers from an acute crisis and when it is essential to economise national labour and to increase the output of fuel at all costs. It is clear that here bureaucratic control can achieve nothing, can change nothing, for the "oil barons" can cope with the Tereshchenkos, the Kerenskys, the Avksentyevs and the Skobelevs as easily as they coped with the tsar's ministers—by means of delays, excuses and promises, and by bribing the bourgeois press directly or indirectly (this is called "public opinion", and the Kerenskys and Avksentyevs "reckon" with it), by bribing officials (left by the Kerenskys and Avksentyevs in their old jobs in the old state machinery which remains intact).

If anything real is to be done bureaucracy must be abandoned for democracy, and in a truly revolutionary way, i.e., war must be declared on the oil barons and shareholders, the confiscation of their property and punishment by imprisonment must be decreed for delaying nationalisation of the oil business, for concealing incomes or accounts, for sabotaging production, and for failing to take steps to increase production. The initiative of the workers and other employees must be drawn on; *they* must be immediately summoned to conferences and congresses; a certain proportion of the profits must be assigned to *them*, provided they institute overall control and increase production. Had these revolutionary-democratic steps been taken at once, immediately, in April 1917, Russia, which is one of the richest countries in the world in deposits of liquid fuel, could, using water transport, have done a very

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\* These lines had been written when I learnt from the newspapers that the Kerensky government is introducing a sugar monopoly, and, of course, is introducing it in a reactionary-bureaucratic way, without congresses of workers and other employees, without publicity, and without curbing the capitalists!



great deal during this summer to supply the people with the necessary quantities of fuel.

Neither the bourgeois nor the coalition Socialist-Revolutionary-Menshevik-Cadet government has done anything at all. Both have confined themselves to a bureaucratic playing at reforms. They have not dared to take a single revolutionary-democratic step. Everything has remained as it was under the tsars—the oil barons, the stagnation, the hatred of the workers and other employees for their exploiters, the resulting chaos, and the dissipation of national labour—only the *letterheads* on the incoming and outgoing papers in the “republican” offices have been changed!

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

## ABOLITION OF COMMERCIAL SECRECY

Unless commercial secrecy is abolished, either control over production and distribution will remain an empty promise, only needed by the Cadets to fool the Socialist-Revolutionaries and Mensheviks, and by the Socialist-Revolutionaries and Mensheviks to fool the working classes, or control can be exercised only by reactionary-bureaucratic methods and means. Although this is obvious to every unprejudiced person, and although *Pravda* persistently demanded the abolition of commercial secrecy\* (and was

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\* \* See *Collected Works*, Vol. 24, pp. 521-22 and Vol. 25, pp. 139-43.—Ed.



suppressed largely for this reason by the Kerensky government which is subservient to capital), neither our republican government nor the "authorised bodies of revolutionary democracy" have even thought of this *first step* to real control.

This is the very key to all control. Here we have the most sensitive spot of capital, which is robbing the people and sabotaging production. And this is exactly why the Socialist-Revolutionaries and Mensheviks are afraid to do anything about it.

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

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

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

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

While commercial secrecy is unavoidable in small commodity production, i.e., among the small peasants and handicraftsmen, where production itself is not socialised but scattered and disunited, in large-scale capitalist production, the protection of commer-

cial secrecy means protection of the privileges and profits of literally a handful of people *against* the interest of the whole people. This has already been recognised by the law, inasmuch as provision is made for the publication of the accounts of joint-stock companies. But *this* control, which has already been introduced in all advanced countries, as well as in Russia, is a reactionary-bureaucratic control which does not open the eyes of the *people* and which *does not allow the whole truth* about the operations of joint-stock companies to become known.

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

Add to this the war. The vast majority of commercial and industrial establishments are now working not for the "free market", but *for the government*, for the war. This is why I have already stated in *Pravda* that people who counter us with the argument that socialism cannot be introduced are liars, and bare-faced liars at that, because it is not a question of introducing socialism now, directly, overnight, but of *exposing plunder of the state*.\*

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

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

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\* See *Collected Works*, Vol. 25, pp. 68-69.—Ed.

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

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

Our Socialist-Revolutionaries and Mensheviks fully deserve to be called scared democrats, for on this question they repeat what is said by all the scared philistines, namely, that the capitalists will "run away" if "too severe" measures are adopted, that "we" shall be unable to get along without the capitalists, that the British and French millionaires, who are, of course, "supporting" us, will most likely be "offended" in their turn, and so on. It might be thought that the Bolsheviks were proposing something unknown to history, something that has never been tried before, something "utopian", while, as a matter of fact, even 125 years ago, in France, people who were real "revolutionary democrats", who were really convinced of the just and defensive character of the war they were waging, who really had popular support and were sincerely convinced of this, were able to establish *revolutionary* control over the rich and to achieve results which earned the admiration of the world. And in the century and a quarter that have since elapsed, the development of capitalism, which resulted in the creation of banks, syndicates, railways and so forth, has greatly facilitated and simplified the adoption of measures of really democratic control by the workers and peasants over the exploiters, the landowners and capitalists.

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\* I have already had occasion to point out in the Bolshevik press that it is right to argue against the death penalty only when it is applied by the exploiters against the *mass* of the working people with the purpose of maintaining exploitation. (See *Collected Works*, Vol. 25, pp. 261-64.—*Ed.*) It is hardly likely that any revolutionary government whatever could do without applying the death penalty to the *exploiters* (i.e., the landowners and capitalists).



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

### COMPULSORY ASSOCIATION

Compulsory syndication, i.e., compulsory association, of the industrialists, for example, is already being practised in Germany. Nor is there anything new in it. Here, too, through the fault of the Socialist-Revolutionaries and Mensheviks, we see the utter stagnation of republican Russia, whom these none-too-respectable parties "entertain" by dancing a quadrille with the Cadets, or with the Bublikovs, or with Tereshchenko and Kerensky.

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

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

Such laws can and should be passed in our country immediately, without wasting a single week of precious time; it should be left to *social conditions themselves* to determine the more specific forms of enforcing the law, the speed with which it is to be enforced, the methods of supervision over its enforcement, etc. In this case, the state requires no special machinery, no special investigation, nor preliminary enquiries for the passing of such a law. All



that is required is the determination to break with certain private interests of the capitalists, who are "not accustomed" to such interference and have no desire to forfeit the super-profits which are ensured by the old methods of management and the absence of control.

No machinery and no "statistics" (which Chernov wanted to substitute for the revolutionary initiative of the peasants) are required to *pass* such a law, inasmuch as its implementation must be made the duty of the manufacturers or industrialists themselves, of the *available* public forces, under the control of the available public (i.e., non-government, non-bureaucratic) forces too, which, however, must consist by all means of the so-called "lower estates", i.e., of the oppressed and exploited classes, which in history have always proved to be immensely *superior* to the exploiters in their capacity for heroism, self-sacrifice and comradely discipline.

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

consistent ought to introduce immediately in our country to combat the impending and inevitable catastrophe.

Serious difficulties, both technical and cultural, would be encountered in amalgamating the small and very small proprietors into associations, owing to the extremely small proportions and technical primitiveness of their enterprises and the illiteracy or lack of education of the owners. But precisely such enterprises could be exempted from the law (as was pointed out above in our hypothetical example). Their non-amalgamation, let alone their belated amalgamation, could create no serious obstacle, for the part played by the huge number of small enterprises in the sum total of production and their importance to the economy as a whole are *negligible*, and, moreover, they are often in one way or another dependent on the big enterprises.

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

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

## REGULATION OF CONSUMPTION

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

Using this as an example, we can draw, perhaps, the most strik-

ing comparison of all between reactionary-bureaucratic methods of combating a catastrophe, which are confined to minimum reforms, and revolutionary-democratic methods, which, to justify their name, must directly aim at a violent rupture with the old, obsolete system and at the achievement of the speediest possible progress.

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

A reactionary capitalist state which *fears* to undermine the pillars of capitalism, of wage slavery, of the economic supremacy of the rich, which *fears* to encourage the initiative of the workers and the working people generally, which *fears* to provoke them to a more exacting attitude—*such* a state will be quite content with bread cards. Such a state does not for a moment, in any measure it adopts, lose sight of the *reactionary* aim of strengthening capitalism, preventing its being undermined, and confining the “regulation of economic life” in general, and the regulation of consumption in particular, to such measures as are absolutely essential to feed the people, *and makes no attempt* whatsoever at real regulation of consumption by exercising *control over the rich* and laying the *greater part* of the burden in wartime on those who are better off, who are privileged, well fed and overfed in peace-time.

The reactionary-bureaucratic solution of the problem with which the war has confronted the peoples confines itself to bread cards,



to the equal distribution of "popular" foodstuffs, of those absolutely essential to feed the people, without retreating one little bit from bureaucratic and reactionary ideas, that is, from the aim of *not* encouraging the initiative of the poor, the proletariat, the mass of the people ("demos"), of *not* allowing *them* to exercise control over the rich, and of leaving *as many* loopholes *as possible* for the rich to compensate themselves with articles of luxury. And a great number of loopholes are left in *all* countries, we repeat, even in Germany—not to speak of Russia; the "common people" starve while the rich visit health resorts, supplement the meagre official ration by all sorts of "extras" obtained on the side, and do *not* allow *themselves* to be controlled.

In Russia, which has only just made a revolution against the tsarist regime in the name of liberty and equality, in Russia, which, as far as its actual political institutions are concerned, has at once become a democratic republic, what particularly strikes the people, what particularly arouses popular discontent, irritation, anger and indignation is that *everybody* sees the easy way in which the wealthy get around the bread cards. They do it very easily indeed. "From under the counter", and for a very high price, especially if one has "*pull*" (which only the rich have), one can obtain anything, and in large quantities, too. It is the people who are starving. The regulation of consumption is confined within the narrowest bureaucratic-reactionary limits. The government has not the slightest intention of putting regulation on a really revolutionary-democratic footing, is not in the least concerned about doing so.

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

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

The establishment of real democracy in this sphere and the display of a real revolutionary spirit in the organisation of control by the most needy classes of the people would be a very great stimulus to the employment of all available intellectual forces and to the development of the truly revolutionary energies of the entire



people. Yet now the ministers of republican and revolutionary-democratic Russia, exactly like their colleagues in all other imperialist countries, make pompous speeches about "working in common for the good of the people" and about "exerting every effort", but the people see, feel and sense the hypocrisy of this talk.

The result is that no progress is being made, chaos is spreading irresistibly, and a catastrophe is approaching, for our government cannot introduce war-time penal servitude for the workers in the Kornilov, Hindenburg, general imperialist way—the traditions, memories, vestiges, habits and institutions of the *revolution* are still too much alive among the people; our government does not want to take any really serious steps in a revolutionary-democratic direction, for it is thoroughly infected and thoroughly enmeshed by its dependence on the bourgeoisie, its "coalition" with the bourgeoisie, and its fear to encroach on their real privileges.

### DISRUPTION OF THE WORK OF THE DEMOCRATIC ORGANISATIONS

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

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

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

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

by all sorts of committees of supply, food committees, fuel councils, and so on and so forth.

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

By this fight, Palchinsky earned extremely wide and very sad notoriety all over Russia. He acted behind the government's back, without coming out publicly (just as the Cadets generally preferred to act, willingly pushing forward Tsereteli "for the people", while they themselves arranged all the important business on the quiet). Palchinsky hampered and thwarted every serious measure taken by the spontaneously created democratic organisations, for no serious measure could be taken without "injuring" the excessive profits and wilfulness of the Kit Kityches. And Palchinsky was in fact a loyal defender and servant of the Kit Kityches. Palchinsky went so far—and this fact was reported in the newspapers—as simply to *annul* the orders of the spontaneously created democratic organisations!

The whole history of Palchinsky's "reign"—and he "reigned" for many months, and just when Tsereteli, Skobelev and Chernov were "ministers"—was a monstrous scandal from beginning to end; the will of the people and the decisions of the democrats were frustrated to *please* the capitalists and meet their filthy greed. Of course, only a negligible part of Palchinsky's "feats" could find its way into the press, and a full investigation of the manner in which he *hindered* the struggle against famine can be made only by a truly democratic government of the proletariat when it gains power and submits all the actions of Palchinsky and his like, without concealing anything, *to the judgement* of the people.

It will perhaps be argued that Palchinsky was an exception, and that after all he was removed. But the fact is that Palchinsky was not the exception but the *rule*, that the situation has in no way improved with his removal, that his place has been taken by the same kind of Palchinskys with different names, and that all the "*influence*" of the capitalists, and the entire policy of *frustrating the struggle against hunger to please the capitalists*, has remained intact. For Kerensky and Co. are only a screen for defence of the interests of the capitalists.

The most striking proof of this is the resignation of Peshekhonov, the Food Minister. As we know, Peshekhonov is a very, very moderate Narodnik. But in the organisation of food supply he wanted to work honestly, in contact with and supported by the demo-

cratic organisations. The *experience* of Peshekhonov's work and his *resignation* are all the more interesting because this extremely moderate Narodnik, this member of the Popular Socialist Party, who was ready to accept any compromise with the bourgeoisie, was nevertheless compelled to resign! For the Kerensky government, to please the capitalists, landowners and kulaks, had *raised* the fixed prices of grain!

This is how M. Smith describes this "step" and its significance in the newspaper *Svobodnaya Zhizn*<sup>107</sup> No. 1, of September 2:

"Several days before the government decided to raise the fixed prices, the following scene was enacted in the national Food Committee: Rolovich, a Right-winger, a stubborn defender of the interests of private trade and a ruthless opponent of the grain monopoly and state interference in economic affairs, publicly announced with a smug smile that he understood the fixed grain prices would shortly be raised.

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

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

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

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

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

And how do our Socialist-Revolutionaries and Mensheviks react to this outrage to the people? Did they address an appeal to the workers and peasants, saying that after this, prison was the only place for Kerensky and his colleagues?

God forbid! The Socialist-Revolutionaries and Mensheviks, through their Economic Department, confined themselves to adopt-



ing the impressive resolution to which we have already referred! In this resolution they declare that the raising of grain prices by the Kerensky government is “a *ruinous* measure which deals a *severe blow* both at the food supply and at the whole economic life of the country”, and that these ruinous measures have been taken in direct “*violation*” of the law!!

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

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

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

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

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

## FINANCIAL COLLAPSE AND MEASURES TO COMBAT IT

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



population, and that it is the chief evil engendered by financial disorder.

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

There is no way of effectively combating financial disorganisation and inevitable financial collapse except that of revolutionary rupture with the interests of capital and that of the organisation of really democratic control, i.e., control from "below", control by the workers and the poor peasants *over* the capitalists, a way to which we referred throughout the earlier part of this exposition.

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

But this is hampered by the fear of infringing the privileges of the bourgeoisie and destroying the "coalition" with them. For unless truly revolutionary measures are adopted and compulsion is very seriously resorted to, the capitalists will not submit to any control, will not make known their budgets, and will not surrender their stocks of paper money for the democratic state to "keep account" of.

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

This requires a revolutionary dictatorship of the democracy, headed by the revolutionary proletariat; that is, it requires that the democracy should become revolutionary *in fact*. That is the crux of the matter. But that is just what is not wanted by our Socialist-Revolutionaries and Mensheviks, who are deceiving the people by displaying the *flag* of "revolutionary democracy" while they are in fact supporting the reactionary-bureaucratic policy of the bourgeoisie, who, as always, are guided by the rule: "*Après nous le déluge*"—after us the deluge!

We usually do not even notice how thoroughly we are permeated by anti-democratic habits and prejudices regarding the "sanctity" of bourgeois property. When an engineer or banker publishes the income and expenditure of a worker, information about his wages and the productivity of his labour, this is regarded as absolutely legitimate and fair. Nobody thinks of seeing it as an intrusion into the "private life" of the worker, as "spying or in-

forming" on the part of the engineer. Bourgeois society regards the labour and earnings of a wage-worker as *its* open book, any bourgeois being entitled to peer into it at any moment, and at any moment to expose the "luxurious living" of the worker, his supposed "laziness", etc.

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

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

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

### CAN WE GO FORWARD IF WE FEAR TO ADVANCE TOWARDS SOCIALISM?

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

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

The pseudo-Marxist lackeys of the bourgeoisie, who have been



joined by the Socialist-Revolutionaries and who argue in this way, do not understand (as an examination of the theoretical basis of their opinion shows) what imperialism is, what capitalist monopoly is, what the state is, and what revolutionary democracy is. For anyone who understands this is bound to admit that there can be no advance except towards socialism.

Everybody talks about imperialism. But imperialism is merely monopoly capitalism.

That capitalism in Russia has also become monopoly capitalism is sufficiently attested by the examples of the Prodigol, the Prodamet, the Sugar Syndicate, etc. This Sugar Syndicate is an object-lesson in the way monopoly capitalism develops into state-monopoly capitalism.

And what is the state? It is an organisation of the ruling class—in Germany, for instance, of the Junkers<sup>108</sup> and capitalists. And therefore what the German Plekhanovs (Scheidemann, Lensch, and others) call “war-time socialism” is in fact war-time state-monopoly capitalism, or, to put it more simply and clearly, war-time penal servitude for the workers and war-time protection for capitalist profits.

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

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

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

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

For socialism is merely the next step forward from state-capitalist monopoly. Or, in other words, socialism is merely state-capitalist monopoly *which is made to serve the interests of the whole people* and has to that extent *ceased* to be capitalist monopoly.

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



Either we have to be revolutionary democrats in fact, in which case we must not fear to take steps towards socialism. Or we fear to take steps towards socialism, condemn them in the Plekhanov, Dan or Chernov way, by arguing that our revolution is a bourgeois revolution, that socialism cannot be "introduced", etc., in which case we inevitably sink to the level of Kerensky, Milyukov and Kornilov, i.e., we in a *reactionary-bureaucratic* way suppress the revolutionary-democratic" aspirations of the workers and peasants.

There is no middle course.

And therein lies the fundamental contradiction of our revolution.

It is impossible to stand still in history in general, and in war-time in particular. We must either advance or retreat. It is *impossible* in twentieth-century Russia, which has won a republic and democracy in a revolutionary way, to go forward without *advancing* towards socialism, without taking *steps* towards it (steps conditioned and determined by the level of technology and culture: large-scale machine production cannot be "introduced" in peasant agriculture nor abolished in the sugar industry).

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

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

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

\* \* \*

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

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

What is universal labour conscription?

It is a step forward on the basis of modern monopoly capitalism,

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

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

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

## THE STRUGGLE AGAINST ECONOMIC CHAOS —AND THE WAR

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

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

And, indeed, nationalisation of the banks and syndicates, taken in conjunction with the abolition of commercial secrecy and the establishment of workers' control over the capitalists, would not only imply a tremendous saving of national labour, the possibility of economising forces and means, but would also imply an improvement in the conditions of the working *masses*, of the majority of the population. As everybody knows, economic organisation is of decisive importance in modern warfare. Russia has enough grain, coal, oil and iron; in this respect, we are in a better position than any of the belligerent European countries. And given a struggle against economic chaos by the measures indicated above, enlisting popular initiative in this struggle, improving the people's conditions, and nationalising the banks and syndicates, Russia could

use her revolution and her democracy to raise the whole country to an incomparably higher level of economic organisation.

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

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

Reference is constantly being made to the heroic patriotism and the miracles of military valour performed by the French in 1792-93. But the material, historical-economic conditions which alone made such miracles possible are forgotten. The suppression of obsolete feudalism in a really revolutionary way, and the introduction throughout the country of a superior mode of production and free peasant land tenure, effected, moreover, with truly revolutionary-democratic speed, determination, energy and devotion—such were the material, economic conditions which with "miraculous" speed saved France by *regenerating* and *renovating* her economic foundation.

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

The material, industrial renovation of France at the end of the



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

And what about Russia? We continue to wage an imperialist war in the interests of the capitalists, in alliance with the imperialists and in accordance with the secret treaties the *tsar* concluded with the capitalists of Britain and other countries, promising the Russian capitalists in these treaties the spoliation of foreign lands, of Constantinople, Lvov, Armenia, etc.

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

You cannot lead the people into a predatory war in accordance with secret treaties and expect them to be enthusiastic. The foremost class in revolutionary Russia, the proletariat, is becoming increasingly aware of the criminal character of the war, and not only have the bourgeoisie been unable to shatter this popular conviction, but, on the contrary, awareness of the criminal character of the war is growing. The proletariat of *both metropolitan cities* of Russia has definitely become internationalist!

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

One is inseparable from the other—home policy is inseparable from foreign policy. The country cannot be made capable of self-defence without the supreme heroism of the people in boldly and resolutely carrying out great economic transformations. And it is impossible to arouse popular heroism without breaking with imperialism, without proposing a democratic peace to all nations, and without thus turning the war from a criminal war of conquest and plunder into a just, revolutionary war of defence.



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

### THE REVOLUTIONARY DEMOCRATS AND THE REVOLUTIONARY PROLETARIAT

To be really revolutionary, the democrats of Russia today must march in very close alliance with the proletariat, supporting it in its struggle as the only thoroughly revolutionary class.

Such is the conclusion prompted by an analysis of the means of combating an impending catastrophe of unparalleled dimensions.

The war has created such an immense crisis, has so strained the material and moral forces of the people, has dealt such blows at the entire modern social organisation that humanity must now choose between perishing or entrusting its fate to the most revolutionary class for the swiftest and most radical transition to a superior mode of production.

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

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

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

Perish or forge full steam ahead. That is the alternative put by history.

And the attitude of the proletariat to the peasants in such a situation confirms the old Bolshevik concept, correspondingly modifying it, that the peasants must be wrested from the influence of the bourgeoisie. That is the sole guarantee of salvation for the revolution.

And the peasants are the most numerous section of the entire petty-bourgeois mass:

Our Socialist-Revolutionaries and Mensheviks have assumed

the reactionary function of keeping the peasants under the influence of the bourgeoisie and leading them to a coalition with the bourgeoisie, and not with the proletariat.

The masses are learning rapidly from the experience of the revolution. And the reactionary policy of the Socialist-Revolutionaries and Mensheviks is meeting with failure: they have been beaten in the Soviets of both Petrograd and Moscow.<sup>109</sup> A "Left" opposition is growing in both petty-bourgeois-democratic parties. On September 10, 1917, a city conference of the Socialist-Revolutionaries held in Petrograd gave a two-thirds majority to the *Left* Socialist-Revolutionaries, who incline towards an alliance with the proletariat and reject an alliance (coalition) with the bourgeoisie.

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

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

The Socialist-Revolutionaries and Mensheviks needed a false comparison to *conceal* the indisputable fact that between the bourgeoisie and the proletariat stand the *petty bourgeoisie*. By virtue of their economic class status, the latter inevitably vacillate between the bourgeoisie and the proletariat.

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

The Cadets are full of malicious glee. The revolution, they say, has suffered a fiasco; the revolution has been *unable* to cope either with the war or with economic dislocation.

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

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

September 10-14, 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 Socialist-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 bourgeoisie—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

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\* See pp. 167-68 of the present volume.—*Ed.*



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.

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" Cabinets 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.

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-revolutionary 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 aid of Palchinsky) crushed every more or less serious attempt 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 dis-



tribution, 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):

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



playing 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 majority 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 27 (14), 1917  
Signed: *N. Lenin*

*Collected Works*, Vol. 25

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# THE STATE AND REVOLUTION

THE MARXIST THEORY OF THE STATE  
AND THE TASKS OF THE PROLETARIAT IN THE REVOLUTION<sup>110</sup>

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Тема: Марксизм о государстве и задачи  
пролетариата в революции.

Thaësaërie.

Вопрос о государственной собственности в переходные время особенно  
важных в переходный и переходный-коммунистический процессы. После  
гражданской войны чрезвычайно важным и обширным процессом преоб-  
разования коммунистического капитала является в переходный-коммунистический  
период капиталов. Уменьшение размера производства и увеличение  
которого также и также снижается и капитализм созданы капитализм,  
спадом же все производящее. Переходя страна преобразуются — это го-  
ворит о "таблице" ил — в всеобщее-капитализм переходя, из капитализма

Несоблюдение унитар и федератив заградувањата војна стран/а  
поговорка или неопределеност, јемство/воложување итд. исто на-  
просто е меѓународна управителска ревизија. Непот од о/рмента  
са к. законодавство приобројат/направено јавление.

Какой-то человек десертный, или слабонервный и многого разбирал. Не-  
сказки оторванному человеку вондеришного в официальных соображениях  
еще каприз был еще более резкие критик-исполнители. За пределы соци-  
ализма на словах, исполнители не идут, признавая только капризным чужа-  
ком, социализм "социал-социализм" не имеет к марксизму связи "капо-  
настой буржуазии", ко "именно" своего государства, но социализ-  
мство т.-ка. Великие деревья дабы жидкообразной в пораб-  
ощающей кривой род малых и слабых народов. В империализ-  
мской война является как раз войной за народы и народный про-  
род и добры. Борьба за освобождение угнетенных масс не  
под великой буржуазии вообще, и империалистской буржуазии  
в особенности, невидимой для борьбы с империализмом.  
или извращенным каприз государства".

[illegible]

взр-ба в текст:

(Плеханов, Морсов, Брикклевская, Руданов, Лазарь Рудом, прикрасы  
Фролов, П. П. Череповский, Тернов и Ко. в России; Мензена, Морлов,  
Давид и пр. в Германии; Радзев, Рад, Wandersfeld во Франции  
и Анри Димон; Зайнцманс в Грабасе в России и т. д. и т. д.)

Aug 1917. Amos.





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## PREFACE TO THE FIRST EDITION

The question of the state is now acquiring particular importance both in theory and in practical politics. The imperialist war has immensely accelerated and intensified the process of transformation of monopoly capitalism into state-monopoly capitalism. The monstrous oppression of the working people by the state, which is merging more and more with the all-powerful capitalist associations, is becoming increasingly monstrous. The advanced countries—we mean their hinterland—are becoming military convict prisons for the workers.

The unprecedented horrors and miseries of the protracted war are making the people's position unbearable and increasing their anger. The world proletarian revolution is clearly maturing. The question of its relation to the state is acquiring practical importance.

The elements of opportunism that accumulated over the decades of comparatively peaceful development have given rise to the trend of social-chauvinism which dominates the official socialist parties throughout the world. This trend—socialism in words and chauvinism in deeds (Plekhanov, Potresov, Breshkovskaya, Rubanovich, and, in a slightly veiled form, Tsereteli, Chernov and Co. in Russia; Scheidemann, Legien, David and others in Germany; Renaudel, Guesde and Vandervelde in France and Belgium; Hyndman and the Fabians in England, etc., etc.)—is conspicuous for the base, servile adaptation of the "leaders of socialism" to the interests not only of "their" national bourgeoisie, but of "their" state, for the majority of the so-called Great Powers have long been exploiting and enslaving a whole number of small and weak nations. And the imperialist war is a war for the division and redivision of this kind of booty. The struggle to free the working people from the influence of the bourgeoisie in general, and of the imperialist bourgeoisie in particular, is impossible without a struggle against opportunist prejudices concerning the "state".

First of all we examine the theory of Marx and Engels of the state, and dwell in particular detail on those aspects of this theory which are ignored or have been distorted by the opportunists. Then we deal specially with the one who is chiefly responsible for these distortions, Karl Kautsky, the best-known leader of the Second International (1889-1914), which has met with such miserable bankruptcy in the present war. Lastly, we sum up the main results of the experience of the Russian revolutions of 1905 and particularly of 1917. Apparently, the latter is now (early August 1917) completing the first stage of its development; but this revolution as a whole can only be understood as a link in a chain of socialist proletarian revolutions being caused by the imperialist war. The question of the relation of the socialist proletarian revolution to the state, therefore, is acquiring not only practical political importance, but also the significance of a most urgent problem of the day, the problem of explaining to the masses what they will have to do before long to free themselves from capitalist tyranny.

*The Author*

August 1917

## **PREFACE TO THE SECOND EDITION**

The present, second edition is published virtually unaltered, except that section 3 has been added to Chapter II.

*The Author*

Moscow  
December 17, 1918

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## CHAPTER I

### CLASS SOCIETY AND THE STATE

#### 1. THE STATE—A PRODUCT OF THE IRRECONCILABILITY OF CLASS ANTAGONISMS

What is now happening to Marx's theory has, in the course of history, happened repeatedly to the theories of revolutionary thinkers and leaders of oppressed classes fighting for emancipation. During the lifetime of great revolutionaries, the oppressing classes constantly hounded them, received their theories with the most savage malice, the most furious hatred and the most unscrupulous campaigns of lies and slander. After their death, attempts are made to convert them into harmless icons, to canonise them, so to say, and to hallow their *names* to a certain extent for the "consolation" of the oppressed classes and with the object of duping the latter, while at the same time robbing the revolutionary theory of its *substance*, blunting its revolutionary edge and vulgarising it. Today, the bourgeoisie and the opportunists within the labour movement concur in this doctoring of Marxism. They omit, obscure or distort the revolutionary side of this theory, its revolutionary soul. They push to the foreground and extol what is or seems acceptable to the bourgeoisie. All the social-chauvinists are now "Marxists" (don't laugh!). And more and more frequently German bourgeois scholars, only yesterday specialists in the annihilation of Marxism, are speaking of the "national-German" Marx, who, they claim, educated the labour unions which are so splendidly organised for the purpose of waging a predatory war!

In these circumstances, in view of the unprecedentedly widespread distortion of Marxism, our prime task is to *re-establish* what Marx really taught on the subject of the state. This will necessitate a number of long quotations from the works of Marx and Engels themselves. Of course, long quotations will render the text cumbersome and not help at all to make it popular reading, but we cannot possibly dispense with them. All, or at any rate all the most essential passages in the works of Marx and Engels on the subject of the state must by all means be quoted



as fully as possible so that the reader may form an independent opinion of the totality of the views of the founders of scientific socialism, and of the evolution of those views, and so that their distortion by the "Kautskyism" now prevailing may be documentarily proved and clearly demonstrated.

Let us begin with the most popular of Engels's works, *The Origin of the Family, Private Property and the State*, the sixth edition of which was published in Stuttgart as far back as 1894. We shall have to translate the quotations from the German originals, as the Russian translations, while very numerous, are for the most part either incomplete or very unsatisfactory.

Summing up his historical analysis, Engels says:

"The state is, therefore, by no means a power forced on society from without; just as little is it 'the reality of the ethical idea', 'the image and reality of reason', as Hegel maintains. Rather, it is a product of society at a certain stage of development; it is the admission that this society has become entangled in an insoluble contradiction with itself, that it has split into irreconcilable antagonisms which it is powerless to dispel. But in order that these antagonisms, these classes with conflicting economic interests might not consume themselves and society in fruitless struggle, it became necessary to have a power, seemingly standing above society, that would alleviate the conflict and keep it within the bounds of 'order'; and this power, arisen out of society but placing itself above it, and alienating itself more and more from it, is the state." (Pp. 177-78, sixth German edition.)<sup>111</sup>

This expresses with perfect clarity the basic idea of Marxism with regard to the historical role and the meaning of the state. The state is a product and a manifestation of the *irreconcilability* of class antagonisms. The state arises where, when and insofar as class antagonisms objectively *cannot* be reconciled. And, conversely, the existence of the state proves that the class antagonisms are irreconcilable.

It is on this most important and fundamental point that the distortion of Marxism, proceeding along two main lines, begins.

On the one hand, the bourgeois, and particularly the petty-bourgeois, ideologists, compelled under the weight of indisputable historical facts to admit that the state only exists where there are class antagonisms and a class struggle, "correct" Marx in such a way as to make it appear that the state is an organ for the *reconciliation* of classes. According to Marx, the state could

neither have arisen nor maintained itself had it been possible to reconcile classes. From what the petty-bourgeois and philistine professors and publicists say, with quite frequent and benevolent references to Marx, it appears that the state does reconcile classes. According to Marx, the state is an organ of class rule, an organ for the *oppression* of one class by another; it is the creation of "order", which legalises and perpetuates this oppression by moderating the conflict between the classes. In the opinion of the petty-bourgeois politicians, however, order means the reconciliation of classes, and not the oppression of one class by another; to alleviate the conflict means reconciling classes and not depriving the oppressed classes of definite means and methods of struggle to overthrow the oppressors.

For instance, when, in the revolution of 1917, the question of the significance and role of the state arose in all its magnitude as a practical question demanding immediate action, and, moreover, action on a mass scale, all the Socialist-Revolutionaries and Mensheviks descended at once to the petty-bourgeois theory that the "state" "reconciles" classes. Innumerable resolutions and articles by politicians of both these parties are thoroughly saturated with this petty-bourgeois and philistine "reconciliation" theory. That the state is an organ of the rule of a definite class which *cannot* be reconciled with its antipode (the class opposite to it) is something the petty-bourgeois democrats will never be able to understand. Their attitude to the state is one of the most striking manifestations of the fact that our Socialist-Revolutionaries and Mensheviks are not socialists at all (a point that we Bolsheviks have always maintained), but petty-bourgeois democrats using near-socialist phraseology.

On the other hand, the "Kautskyite" distortion of Marxism is far more subtle. "Theoretically", it is not denied that the state is an organ of class rule, or that class antagonisms are irreconcilable. But what is overlooked or glossed over is this: if the state is the product of the irreconcilability of class antagonisms, if it is a power standing *above* society and "*alienating itself more and more from it*", it is clear that the liberation of the oppressed class is impossible not only without a violent revolution, *but also without the destruction* of the apparatus of state power which was created by the ruling class and which is the embodiment of this "alienation". As we shall see later, Marx very explicitly drew this theoretically self-evident conclusion on the strength of a concrete historical analysis of the tasks of the revolution. And—as we shall show in detail further on—it is this conclusion which Kautsky has "forgotten" and distorted.

## 2. SPECIAL BODIES OF ARMED MEN, PRISONS, ETC.

Engels continues:

"As distinct from the old gentile [tribal or clan] order, the state, first, divides its subjects *according to territory*...."

This division seems "natural" to us, but it cost a prolonged struggle against the old organisation according to generations or tribes.

"The second distinguishing feature is the establishment of a *public power* which no longer directly coincides with the population organising itself as an armed force. This special, public power is necessary because a self-acting armed organisation of the population has become impossible since the split into classes.... This public power exists in every state; it consists not merely of armed men but also of material adjuncts, prisons, and institutions of coercion of all kinds, of which gentile [clan] society knew nothing...."

Engels elucidates the concept of the "power" which is called the state, a power which arose from society but places itself above it and alienates itself more and more from it. What does this power mainly consist of? It consists of special bodies of armed men having prisons, etc., at their command.

We are justified in speaking of special bodies of armed men, because the public power which is an attribute of every state "does not directly coincide" with the armed population, with its "self-acting armed organisation".

Like all great revolutionary thinkers, Engels tries to draw the attention of the class-conscious workers to what prevailing philistinism regards as least worthy of attention, as the most habitual thing, hallowed by prejudices that are not only deep-rooted but, one might say, petrified. A standing army and police are the chief instruments of state power. But how can it be otherwise?

From the viewpoint of the vast majority of Europeans of the end of the nineteenth century whom Engels was addressing, and who had not gone through or closely observed a single great revolution, it could not have been otherwise. They could not understand at all what a "self-acting armed organisation of the population" was. When asked why it became necessary to have special bodies of armed men placed above society and alienating themselves from it (police and a standing army), the West-European and Russian philistines are inclined to utter a few phrases borrowed from Spencer or Mikhailovsky, to refer to the growing complexity of social life, the differentiation of functions, and so on.

Such a reference seems "scientific", and effectively lulls the ordinary person to sleep by obscuring the important and basic



fact, namely, the split of society into irreconcilably antagonistic classes.

Were it not for this split, the "self-acting armed organisation of the population" would differ from the primitive organisation of a stick-wielding herd of monkeys, or of primitive men, or of men united in clans, by its complexity, its high technical level, and so on. But such an organisation would still be possible.

It is impossible because civilised society is split into antagonistic, and, moreover, irreconcilably antagonistic, classes, whose "self-acting" arming would lead to an armed struggle between them. A state arises, a special power is created, special bodies of armed men, and every revolution, by destroying the state apparatus, shows us the naked class struggle, clearly shows us how the ruling class strives to restore the special bodies of armed men which serve *it*, and how the oppressed class strives to create a new organisation of this kind, capable of serving the exploited instead of the exploiters.

In the above argument, Engels raises theoretically the very same question which every great revolution raises before us in practice, palpably and, what is more, on a scale of mass action, namely, the question of the relationship between "special" bodies of armed men and the "self-acting armed organisation of the population". We shall see how this question is specifically illustrated by the experience of the European and Russian revolutions.

But to return to Engels's exposition.

He points out that sometimes—in certain parts of North America, for example—this public power is weak (he has in mind a rare exception in capitalist society, and those parts of North America in its pre-imperialist days where the free colonist predominated), but that, generally speaking, it grows stronger:

"It [the public power] grows stronger, however, in proportion as class antagonisms within the state become more acute, and as adjacent states become larger and more populous. We have only to look at our present-day Europe, where class struggle and rivalry in conquest have tuned up the public power to such a pitch that it threatens to swallow the whole of society and even the state."

This was written not later than the early nineties of the last century, Engels's last preface being dated June 16, 1891. The turn towards imperialism—meaning the complete domination of the trusts, the omnipotence of the big banks, a grand-scale colonial policy, and so forth—was only just beginning in France, and was even weaker in North America and in Germany. Since then "rivalry in conquest" has taken a gigantic stride, all the



more because by the beginning of the second decade of the twentieth century the world had been completely divided up among these "rivals in conquest", i.e., among the predatory Great Powers. Since then, military and naval armaments have grown fantastically and the predatory war of 1914-17 for the domination of the world by Britain or Germany, for the division of the spoils, has brought the "swallowing" of all the forces of society by the rapacious state power close to complete catastrophe.

Engels could, as early as 1891, point to "rivalry in conquest" as one of the most important distinguishing features of the foreign policy of the Great Powers, while the social-chauvinist scoundrels have ever since 1914, when this rivalry, many times intensified, gave rise to an imperialist war, been covering up the defence of the predatory interests of "their own" bourgeoisie with phrases about "defence of the fatherland", "defence of the republic and the revolution", etc.!

### 3. THE STATE—AN INSTRUMENT FOR THE EXPLOITATION OF THE OPPRESSED CLASS

The maintenance of the special public power standing above society requires taxes and state loans.

"Having public power and the right to levy taxes," Engels writes, "the officials now stand, as organs of society, *above* society. The free, voluntary respect that was accorded to the organs of the gentile [clan] constitution does not satisfy them, even if they could gain it..." Special laws are enacted proclaiming the sanctity and immunity of the officials. "The shabbiest police servant" has more "authority" than the representatives of the clan, but even the head of the military power of a civilised state may well envy the elder of a clan the "unstrained respect" of society.

The question of the privileged position of the officials as organs of state power is raised here. The main point indicated is: what is it that places them *above* society? We shall see how this theoretical question was answered in practice by the Paris Commune in 1871 and how it was obscured from a reactionary standpoint by Kautsky in 1912.

"Because the state arose from the need to hold class antagonisms in check, but because it arose, at the same time, in the midst of the conflict of these classes, it is, as a rule, the state of the most powerful, economically dominant class, which, through the medium of the state, becomes also the politically dominant class, and thus acquires new means of hold-

ing down and exploiting the oppressed class....” The ancient and feudal states were organs for the exploitation of the slaves and serfs; likewise, “the modern representative state is an instrument of exploitation of wage labour by capital. By way of exception, however, periods occur in which the warring classes balance each other so nearly that the state power as ostensible mediator acquires, for the moment, a certain degree of independence of both....” Such were the absolute monarchies of the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries, the Bonapartism of the First and Second Empires in France, and the Bismarck regime in Germany.

Such, we may add, is the Kerensky government in republican Russia since it began to persecute the revolutionary proletariat, at a moment when, owing to the leadership of the petty-bourgeois democrats, the Soviets have *already* become impotent, while the bourgeoisie are not *yet* strong enough simply to disperse them.

In a democratic republic, Engels continues, “wealth exercises its power indirectly, but all the more surely”, first, by means of the “direct corruption of officials” (America); secondly, by means of an “alliance of the government and the Stock Exchange” (France and America).

At present, imperialism and the domination of the banks have “developed” into an exceptional art both these methods of upholding and giving effect to the omnipotence of wealth in democratic republics of all descriptions. Since, for instance, in the very first months of the Russian democratic republic, one might say during the honeymoon of the “socialist” S.R.s and Mensheviks joined in wedlock to the bourgeoisie, in the coalition government, Mr. Palchinsky obstructed every measure intended for curbing the capitalists and their marauding practices, their plundering of the state by means of war contracts; and since later on Mr. Palchinsky, upon resigning from the Cabinet (and being, of course, replaced by another quite similar Palchinsky), was “rewarded” by the capitalists with a lucrative job with a salary of 120,000 rubles per annum—what would you call that? Direct or indirect bribery? An alliance of the government and the syndicates, or “merely” friendly relations? What role do the Chernovs, Tseretelis, Avksentyevs and Skobelevs play? Are they the “direct” or only the indirect allies of the millionaire treasury-looters?

Another reason why the omnipotence of “wealth” is more *certain* in a democratic republic is that it does not depend on defects in the political machinery or on the faulty political shell

of capitalism. A democratic republic is the best possible political shell for capitalism, and, therefore, once capital has gained possession of this very best shell (through the Palchinskys, Chernovs, Tseretelis and Co.), it establishes its power so securely, so firmly, that *no* change of persons, institutions or parties in the bourgeois-democratic republic can shake it.

We must also note that Engels is most explicit in calling universal suffrage as well an instrument of bourgeois rule. Universal suffrage, he says, obviously taking account of the long experience of German Social-Democracy, is

“the gauge of the maturity of the working class. It cannot and never will be anything more in the present-day state”.

The petty-bourgeois democrats, such as our Socialist-Revolutionaries and Mensheviks, and also their twin brothers, all the social-chauvinists and opportunists of Western Europe, expect just this “more” from universal suffrage. They themselves share, and instil into the minds of the people, the false notion that universal suffrage “in the *present-day* state” is really capable of revealing the will of the majority of the working people and of securing its realisation.

Here we can only indicate this false notion, only point out that Engels’s perfectly clear, precise and concrete statement is distorted at every step in the propaganda and agitation of the “official” (i.e., opportunist) socialist parties. A detailed exposure of the utter falsity of this notion which Engels brushes aside here is given in our further account of the views of Marx and Engels on the “*present-day*” state.

Engels gives a general summary of his views in the most popular of his works in the following words:

“The state, then, has not existed from all eternity. There have been societies that did without it, that had no idea of the state and state power. At a certain stage of economic development, which was necessarily bound up with the split of society into classes, the state became a necessity owing to this split. We are now rapidly approaching a stage in the development of production at which the existence of these classes not only will have ceased to be a necessity, but will become a positive hindrance to production. They will fall as inevitably as they arose at an earlier stage. Along with them the state will inevitably fall. Society, which will reorganise production on the basis of a free and equal association of the producers, will put the whole machinery of state where it will then belong: into a museum of antiquities, by the side of the spinning-wheel and the bronze axe.”



We do not often come across this passage in the propaganda and agitation literature of the present-day Social-Democrats. Even when we do come across it, it is mostly quoted in the same manner as one bows before an icon, i.e., it is done to show official respect for Engels, and no attempt is made to gauge the breadth and depth of the revolution that this relegating of "the whole machinery of state to a museum of antiquities" implies. In most cases we do not even find an understanding of what Engels calls the state machine.

#### 4. THE "WITHERING AWAY" OF THE STATE, AND VIOLENT REVOLUTION

Engels's words regarding the "withering away" of the state are so widely known, they are so often quoted, and so clearly reveal the essence of the customary adaptation of Marxism to opportunism that we must deal with them in detail. We shall quote the whole argument from which they are taken.

*"The proletariat seizes state power and turns the means of production into state property to begin with.* But thereby it abolishes itself as the proletariat, abolishes all class distinctions and class antagonisms, and abolishes also the state as state. Society thus far, operating amid class antagonisms, needed the state, that is, an organisation of the particular exploiting class, for the maintenance of its external conditions of production, and, therefore, especially, for the purpose of forcibly keeping the exploited class in the conditions of oppression determined by the given mode of production (slavery, serfdom or bondage, wage-labour). The state was the official representative of society as a whole, its concentration in a visible corporation. But it was this only insofar as it was the state of that class which itself represented, for its own time, society as a whole: in ancient times, the state of slave-owning citizens; in the Middle Ages, of the feudal nobility; in our own time, of the bourgeoisie. When at last it becomes the real representative of the whole of society, it renders itself unnecessary. As soon as there is no longer any social class to be held in subjection, as soon as class rule, and the individual struggle for existence based upon the present anarchy in production, with the collisions and excesses arising from this struggle, are removed, nothing more remains to be held in subjection—nothing necessitating a special coercive force, a state. The first act by which the state really comes forward as the representative of the whole of society—the taking possession of the



means of production in the name of society—is also its last independent act as a state. State interference in social relations becomes, in one domain after another, superfluous, and then dies down of itself. The government of persons is replaced by the administration of things, and by the conduct of processes of production. The state is not ‘abolished’. *It withers away*. This gives the measure of the value of the phrase ‘a free people’s state’, both as to its justifiable use for a time from an agitational point of view, and as to its ultimate scientific insufficiency; and also of the so-called anarchists’ demand that the state be abolished overnight.” (*Herr Eugen Dühring’s Revolution in Science* [*Anti-Dühring*], pp. 301-03, third German edition.)<sup>112</sup>

It is safe to say that of this argument of Engels’s, which is so remarkably rich in ideas, only one point has become an integral part of socialist thought among modern socialist parties, namely, that according to Marx the state “withers away”—as distinct from the anarchist doctrine of the “abolition” of the state. To prune Marxism to such an extent means reducing it to opportunism, for this “interpretation” only leaves a vague notion of a slow, even, gradual change, of absence of leaps and storms, of absence of revolution. The current, widespread, popular, if one may say so, conception of the “withering away” of the state undoubtedly means obscuring, if not repudiating, revolution.

Such an “interpretation”, however, is the crudest distortion of Marxism, advantageous only to the bourgeoisie. In point of theory, it is based on disregard for the most important circumstances and considerations indicated in, say, Engels’s “summary” argument we have just quoted in full.

In the first place, at the very outset of his argument, Engels says that, in seizing state power, the proletariat thereby “abolishes the state as state”. It is not done to ponder over the meaning of this. Generally, it is either ignored altogether, or is considered to be something in the nature of “Hegelian weakness” on Engels’s part. As a matter of fact, however, these words briefly express the experience of one of the greatest proletarian revolutions, the Paris Commune of 1871, of which we shall speak in greater detail in its proper place. As a matter of fact, Engels speaks here of the proletarian revolution “abolishing” the *bourgeois* state, while the words about the state withering away refer to the remnants of the *proletarian* state *after* the socialist revolution. According to Engels, the bourgeois state does not “wither away”, but is “abolished” by the proletariat in the course of the revolution. What withers away after this revolution is the proletarian state or semi-state.

Secondly, the state is a "special coercive force". Engels gives this splendid and extremely profound definition here with the utmost lucidity. And from it follows that the "special coercive force" for the suppression of the proletariat by the bourgeoisie, of millions of working people by handfuls of the rich, must be replaced by a "special coercive force" for the suppression of the bourgeoisie by the proletariat (the dictatorship of the proletariat). This is precisely what is meant by "abolition of the state as state". This is precisely the "act" of taking possession of the means of production in the name of society. And it is self-evident that *such* a replacement of one (bourgeois) "special force" by another (proletarian) "special force" cannot possibly take place in the form of "withering away".

Thirdly, in speaking of the state "withering away", and the even more graphic and colourful "dying down of itself", Engels refers quite clearly and definitely to the period *after* "the state has taken possession of the means of production in the name of the whole of society", that is, *after* the socialist revolution. We all know that the political form of the "state" at that time is the most complete democracy. But it never enters the head of any of the opportunists, who shamelessly distort Marxism, that Engels is consequently speaking here of *democracy* "dying down of itself", or "withering away". This seems very strange at first sight. But it is "incomprehensible" only to those who have not thought about democracy *also* being a state and, consequently, also disappearing when the state disappears. Revolution alone can "abolish" the bourgeois state. The state in general, i.e., the most complete democracy, can only "wither away".

Fourthly, after formulating his famous proposition that "the state withers away", Engels at once explains specifically that this proposition is directed against both the opportunists and the anarchists. In doing this, Engels puts in the forefront that conclusion, drawn from the proposition that "the state withers away", which is directed against the opportunists.

One can wager that out of every 10,000 persons who have read or heard about the "withering away" of the state, 9,990 are completely unaware, or do not remember, that Engels directed his conclusions from that proposition *not* against the anarchists *alone*. And of the remaining ten, probably nine do not know the meaning of a "free people's state" or why an attack on this slogan means an attack on the opportunists. This is how history is written! This is how a great revolutionary teaching is imperceptibly falsified and adapted to prevailing philistinism. The conclusion directed against the anarchists has been repeated thousands of times; it has been vulgarised, and rammed into people's heads in the shallowest form, and has acquired the strength of a prejudice, whereas the conclu-

sion directed against the opportunists has been obscured and “forgotten”!

The “free people’s state” was a programme demand and a catchword current among the German Social-Democrats in the seventies. This catchword is devoid of all political content except that it describes the concept of democracy in a pompous philistine fashion. Insofar as it hinted in a legally permissible manner at a democratic republic, Engels was prepared to “justify” its use “for a time” from an agitational point of view. But it was an opportunist catchword, for it amounted to something more than prettifying bourgeois democracy, and was also failure to understand the socialist criticism of the state in general. We are in favour of a democratic republic as the best form of state for the proletariat under capitalism. But we have no right to forget that wage slavery is the lot of the people even in the most democratic bourgeois republic. Furthermore, every state is a “special force” for the suppression of the oppressed class. Consequently, *every* state is *not* “free” and *not* a “people’s state”. Marx and Engels explained this repeatedly to their party comrades in the seventies.

Fifthly, the same work of Engels’s, whose argument about the withering away of the state everyone remembers, also contains an argument of the significance of violent revolution. Engels’s historical analysis of its role becomes a veritable panegyric on violent revolution. This “no one remembers”. It is not done in modern socialist parties to talk or even think about the significance of this idea, and it plays no part whatever in their daily propaganda and agitation among the people. And yet it is inseparably bound up with the “withering away” of the state into one harmonious whole.

Here is Engels’s argument:

“...That force, however, plays yet another role [other than that of a diabolical power] in history, a revolutionary role; that, in the words of Marx, it is the midwife of every old society which is pregnant with a new one, that it is the instrument with which social movement forces its way through and shatters the dead, fossilised political forms—of this there is not a word in Herr Dühring. It is only with sighs and groans that he admits the possibility that force will perhaps be necessary for the overthrow of an economy based on exploitation—unfortunately, because all use of force demoralises, he says, the person who uses it. And this in spite of the immense moral and spiritual impetus which has been given by every victorious revolution! And this in Germany, where a violent collision—which may, after all, be forced on the people—would at least have the advantage of wiping out the servility which has penetrated the nation’s mentality following the humiliation



of the Thirty Years' War. And this parson's mode of thought—dull, insipid and impotent—presumes to impose itself on the most revolutionary party that history has known!" (P. 193, third German edition, Part II, end of Chap. IV.)

How can this panegyric on violent revolution, which Engels insistently brought to the attention of the German Social-Democrats between 1878 and 1894, i.e., right up to the time of his death, be combined with the theory of the "withering away" of the state to form a single theory?

Usually the two are combined by means of eclecticism, by an unprincipled or sophistic selection made arbitrarily (or to please the powers that be) of first one, then another argument, and in ninety-nine cases out of a hundred, if not more, it is the idea of the "withering away" that is placed in the forefront. Dialectics are replaced by eclecticism—this is the most usual, the most widespread practice to be met with in present-day official Social-Democratic literature in relation to Marxism. This sort of substitution is, of course, nothing new; it was observed even in the history of classical Greek philosophy. In falsifying Marxism in opportunist fashion, the substitution of eclecticism for dialectics is the easiest way of deceiving the people. It gives an illusory satisfaction; it seems to take into account all sides of the process, all trends of development, all the conflicting influences, and so forth, whereas in reality it provides no integral and revolutionary conception of the process of social development at all.

We have already said above, and shall show more fully later, that the theory of Marx and Engels of the inevitability of a violent revolution refers to the bourgeois state. The latter *cannot* be superseded by the proletarian state (the dictatorship of the proletariat) through the process of "withering away", but, as a general rule, only through a violent revolution. The panegyric Engels sang in its honour, and which fully corresponds to Marx's repeated statements (see the concluding passages of *The Poverty of Philosophy*<sup>113</sup> and the *Communist Manifesto*,<sup>114</sup> with their proud and open proclamation of the inevitability of a violent revolution; see what Marx wrote nearly thirty years later, in criticising the Gotha Programme of 1875, when he mercilessly castigated the opportunist character of that programme<sup>115</sup>)—this panegyric is by no means a mere "impulse", a mere declamation or a polemical sally. The necessity of systematically imbuing the masses with *this* and precisely this view of violent revolution lies at the root of the *entire* theory of Marx and Engels. The betrayal of their theory by the now prevailing social-chauvinist and Kautskyite trends expresses itself strikingly in both these trends ignoring *such* propaganda and agitation.

The supersession of the bourgeois state by the proletarian state is impossible without a violent revolution. The abolition of the



proletarian state, i.e., of the state in general, is impossible except through the process of "withering away".

A detailed and concrete elaboration of these views was given by Marx and Engels when they studied each particular revolutionary situation, when they analysed the lessons of the experience of each particular revolution. We shall now pass to this, undoubtedly the most important, part of their theory.

## CHAPTER II

### THE STATE AND REVOLUTION.

#### THE EXPERIENCE OF 1848-51

##### 1. THE EVE OF THE REVOLUTION

The first works of mature Marxism—*The Poverty of Philosophy* and the *Communist Manifesto*—appeared just on the eve of the revolution of 1848. For this reason, in addition to presenting the general principles of Marxism, they reflect to a certain degree the concrete revolutionary situation of the time. It will, therefore, be more expedient, perhaps, to examine what the authors of these works said about the state immediately before they drew conclusions from the experience of the years 1848-51.

In *The Poverty of Philosophy*, Marx wrote:

"The working class, in the course of development, will substitute for the old bourgeois society an association which will preclude classes and their antagonism, and there will be no more political power proper, since political power is precisely the official expression of class antagonism in bourgeois society." (P. 182, German edition, 1885.)<sup>116</sup>

It is instructive to compare this general exposition of the idea of the state disappearing after the abolition of classes with the exposition contained in the *Communist Manifesto*, written by Marx and Engels a few months later—in November 1847, to be exact:

"...In depicting the most general phases of the development of the proletariat, we traced the more or less veiled civil war, raging within existing society up to the point where that war breaks out into open revolution, and where the violent overthrow of the bourgeoisie lays the foundation for the sway of the proletariat....

"...We have seen above that the first step in the revolution by the working class is to raise the proletariat to the position of ruling class, to win the battle of democracy.

"The proletariat will use its political supremacy to wrest,

by degrees, all capital from the bourgeoisie, to centralise all instruments of production in the hands of the state, i.e., of the proletariat organised as the ruling class; and to increase the total of productive forces as rapidly as possible." (Pp. 31 and 37, seventh German edition, 1906.)<sup>117</sup>

Here we have a formulation of one of the most remarkable and most important ideas of Marxism on the subject of the state, namely, the idea of the "dictatorship of the proletariat" (as Marx and Engels began to call it after the Paris Commune); and also, a highly interesting definition of the state, which is also one of the "forgotten words" of Marxism: "*the state, i.e., the proletariat organised as the ruling class*".

This definition of the state has never been explained in the prevailing propaganda and agitation literature of the official Social-Democratic parties. More than that, it has been deliberately ignored, for it is absolutely irreconcilable with reformism, and is a slap in the face for the common opportunist prejudices and philistine illusions about the "peaceful development of democracy".

The proletariat needs the state—this is repeated by all the opportunists, social-chauvinists and Kautskyites, who assure us that this is what Marx taught. But they "*forget*" to add that, in the first place, according to Marx, the proletariat needs only a state which is withering away, i.e., a state so constituted that it begins to wither away immediately, and cannot but wither away. And, secondly, the working people need a "state, i. e., the proletariat organised as the ruling class".

The state is a special organisation of force: it is an organisation of violence for the suppression of some class. What class must the proletariat suppress? Naturally, only the exploiting class, i. e., the bourgeoisie. The working people need the state only to suppress the resistance of the exploiters, and only the proletariat can direct this suppression, can carry it out. For the proletariat is the only class that is consistently revolutionary, the only class that can unite all the working and exploited people in the struggle against the bourgeoisie, in completely removing it.

The exploiting classes need political rule to maintain exploitation, i.e., in the selfish interests of an insignificant minority against the vast majority of the people. The exploited classes need political rule in order to completely abolish all exploitation, i. e., in the interests of the vast majority of the people, and against the insignificant minority consisting of the modern slave-owners—the landowners and capitalists.

The petty-bourgeois democrats, those sham socialists who replaced the class struggle by dreams of class harmony, even pictured the socialist transformation in a dreamy fashion—not as the

overthrow of the rule of the exploiting class, but as the peaceful submission of the minority to the majority which has become aware of its aims. This petty-bourgeois utopia, which is inseparable from the idea of the state being above classes, led in practice to the betrayal of the interests of the working classes, as was shown, for example, by the history of the French revolutions of 1848 and 1871, and by the experience of "socialist" participation in bourgeois Cabinets in Britain, France, Italy and other countries at the turn of the century.

All his life Marx fought against this petty-bourgeois socialism, now revived in Russia by the Socialist-Revolutionary and Menshevik parties. He developed his theory of the class struggle consistently, down to the theory of political power, of the state.

The overthrow of bourgeois rule can be accomplished only by the proletariat, the particular class whose economic conditions of existence prepare it for this task and provide it with the possibility and the power to perform it. While the bourgeoisie break up and disintegrate the peasantry and all the petty-bourgeois groups, they weld together, unite and organise the proletariat. Only the proletariat—by virtue of the economic role it plays in large-scale production—is capable of being the leader of *all* the working and exploited people, whom the bourgeoisie exploit, oppress and crush, often not less but more than they do the proletarians, but who are incapable of waging an *independent* struggle for their emancipation.

The theory of the class struggle, applied by Marx to the question of the state and the socialist revolution, leads as a matter of course to the recognition of the *political rule* of the proletariat, of its dictatorship, i.e., of undivided power directly backed by the armed force of the people. The overthrow of the bourgeoisie can be achieved only by the proletariat becoming the *ruling class*, capable of crushing the inevitable and desperate resistance of the bourgeoisie, and of organising *all* the working and exploited people for the new economic system.

The proletariat needs state power, a centralised organisation of force, an organisation of violence, both to crush the resistance of the exploiters and to *lead* the enormous mass of the population—the peasants, the petty bourgeoisie, and semi-proletarians—in the work of organising a socialist economy.

By educating the workers' party, Marxism educates the vanguard of the proletariat, capable of assuming power and *leading the whole people* to socialism, of directing and organising the new system, of being the teacher, the guide, the leader of all the working and exploited people in organising their social life without the bourgeoisie and against the bourgeoisie. By contrast, the opportunism now prevailing trains the members of the workers'



party to be the representatives of the better-paid workers, who lose touch with the masses, "get along" fairly well under capitalism, and sell their birthright for a mess of pottage, i.e., renounce their role as revolutionary leaders of the people against the bourgeoisie.

Marx's theory of "the state, i.e., the proletariat organised as the ruling class", is inseparably bound up with the whole of his doctrine of the revolutionary role of the proletariat in history. The culmination of this role is the proletarian dictatorship, the political rule of the proletariat.

But since the proletariat needs the state as a *special* form of organisation of violence *against* the bourgeoisie, the following conclusion suggests itself: is it conceivable that such an organisation can be created without first abolishing, destroying the state machine created by the bourgeoisie *for themselves*? The *Communist Manifesto* leads straight to this conclusion, and it is of this conclusion that Marx speaks when summing up the experience of the revolution of 1848-51.

## 2. THE REVOLUTION SUMMED UP

Marx sums up his conclusions from the revolution of 1848-51, on the subject of the state we are concerned with, in the following argument contained in *The Eighteenth Brumaire of Louis Bonaparte*:

"But the revolution is thoroughgoing. It is still journeying through purgatory. It does its work methodically. By December 2, 1851 [the day of Louis Bonaparte's coup d'état], it had completed one half of its preparatory work. It is now completing the other half. First it perfected the parliamentary power, in order to be able to overthrow it. Now that it has attained this, it is perfecting the *executive power*, reducing it to its purest expression, isolating it, setting it up against itself as the sole object, *in order to concentrate all its forces of destruction against it* [italics ours]. And when it has done this second half of its preliminary work, Europe will leap from its seat and exultantly exclaim: well grubbed, old mole!

"This executive power with its enormous bureaucratic and military organisation, with its vast and ingenious state machinery, with a host of officials numbering half a million, besides an army of another half million, this appalling parasitic body, which enmeshes the body of French society and chokes all its pores, sprang up in the days of the absolute monarchy, with the decay of the feudal system,



which it helped to hasten." The first French Revolution developed centralisation, "but at the same time" it increased "the extent, the attributes and the number of agents of governmental power. Napoleon completed this state machinery." The legitimate monarchy and the July monarchy "added nothing but a greater division of labour". . . .

"... Finally, in its struggle against the revolution, the parliamentary republic found itself compelled to strengthen, along with repressive measures, the resources and centralisation of governmental power. *All revolutions perfected this machine instead of smashing it* [italics ours]. The parties that contended in turn for domination regarded the possession of this huge state edifice as the principal spoils of the victor." (*The Eighteenth Brumaire of Louis Bonaparte*, pp. 98-99, fourth edition, Hamburg, 1907.)<sup>118</sup>

In this remarkable argument Marxism takes a tremendous step forward compared with the *Communist Manifesto*. In the latter the question of the state is still treated in an extremely abstract manner, in the most general terms and expressions. In the above-quoted passage, the question is treated in a concrete manner, and the conclusion is extremely precise, definite, practical and palpable: all previous revolutions perfected the state machine, whereas it must be broken, smashed.

This conclusion is the chief and fundamental point in the Marxist theory of the state. And it is precisely this fundamental point which has been completely *ignored* by the dominant official Social-Democratic parties and, indeed, *distorted* (as we shall see later) by the foremost theoretician of the Second International, Karl Kautsky.

The *Communist Manifesto* gives a general summary of history, which compels us to regard the state as the organ of class rule and leads us to the inevitable conclusion that the proletariat cannot overthrow the bourgeoisie without first winning political power, without attaining political supremacy, without transforming the state into the "proletariat organised as the ruling class"; and that this proletarian state will begin to wither away immediately after its victory because the state is unnecessary and cannot exist in a society in which there are no class antagonisms. The question as to how, from the point of view of historical development, the replacement of the bourgeois by the proletarian state is to take place is not raised here.

This is the question Marx raises and answers in 1852. True to his philosophy of dialectical materialism, Marx takes as his basis the historical experience of the great years of revolution, 1848 to 1851. Here, as everywhere else, his theory is a *summing up of ex-*

*perience*, illuminated by a profound philosophical conception of the world and a rich knowledge of history.

The problem of the state is put specifically: How did the bourgeois state, the state machine necessary for the rule of the bourgeoisie, come into being historically? What changes did it undergo, what evolution did it perform in the course of bourgeois revolutions and in the face of the independent actions of the oppressed classes? What are the tasks of the proletariat in relation to this state machine?

The centralised state power that is peculiar to bourgeois society came into being in the period of the fall of absolutism. Two institutions most characteristic of this state machine are the bureaucracy and the standing army. In their works, Marx and Engels repeatedly show that the bourgeoisie are connected with these institutions by thousands of threads. Every worker's experience illustrates this connection in an extremely graphic and impressive manner. From its own bitter experience, the working class learns to recognise this connection. That is why it so easily grasps and so firmly learns the doctrine which shows the inevitability of this connection, a doctrine which the petty-bourgeois democrats either ignorantly and flippantly deny, or still more flippantly admit "in general", while forgetting to draw appropriate practical conclusions.

The bureaucracy and the standing army are a "parasite" on the body of bourgeois society—a parasite created by the internal antagonisms which rend that society, but a parasite which "chokes" all its vital pores. The Kautskyite opportunism now prevailing in official Social-Democracy considers the view that the state is a *parasitic organism* to be the peculiar and exclusive attribute of anarchism. It goes without saying that this distortion of Marxism is of vast advantage to those philistines who have reduced socialism to the unheard-of disgrace of justifying and prettifying the imperialist war by applying to it the concept of "defence of the fatherland"; but it is unquestionably a distortion, nevertheless.

The development, perfection and strengthening of the bureaucratic and military apparatus proceeded during all the numerous bourgeois revolutions which Europe has witnessed since the fall of feudalism. In particular, it is the petty bourgeoisie who are attracted to the side of the big bourgeoisie and are largely subordinated to them through this apparatus, which provides the upper sections of the peasants, small artisans, tradesmen and the like with comparatively comfortable, quiet and respectable jobs raising their holders *above* the people. Consider what happened in Russia during the six months following February 27, 1917. The official posts which formerly were given by preference to the Black Hundreds have now become the spoils of the Cadets, Mensheviks

and Socialist-Revolutionaries. Nobody has really thought of introducing any serious reforms. Every effort has been made to put them off "until the Constituent Assembly meets", and to steadily put off its convocation until after the war! But there has been no delay, no waiting for the Constituent Assembly, in the matter of dividing the spoils, of getting the lucrative jobs of ministers, deputy ministers, governors-general, etc., etc.! The game of combinations that has been played in forming the government has been, in essence, only an expression of this division and redivision of the "spoils", which has been going on above and below, throughout the country, in every department of central and local government. The six months between February 27 and August 27, 1917, can be summed up, objectively summed up beyond all dispute, as follows: reforms shelved, distribution of official jobs accomplished and "mistakes" in the distribution corrected by a few redistributions.

But the more the bureaucratic apparatus is "redistributed" among the various bourgeois and petty-bourgeois parties (among the Cadets, Socialist-Revolutionaries and Mensheviks in the case of Russia), the more keenly aware the oppressed classes, and the proletariat at their head, become of their irreconcilable hostility to the *whole* of bourgeois society. Hence the need for all bourgeois parties, even for the most democratic and "revolutionary-democratic" among them, to intensify repressive measures against the revolutionary proletariat, to strengthen the apparatus of coercion, i.e., the state machine. This course of events compels the revolution "*to concentrate all its forces of destruction*" against the state power, and to set itself the aim, not of improving the state machine, but of *smashing and destroying* it.

It was not logical reasoning, but actual developments, the actual experience of 1848-51, that led to the matter being presented in this way. The extent to which Marx held strictly to the solid ground of historical experience can be seen from the fact that, in 1852, he did not yet specifically raise the question of *what* was to take the place of the state machine to be destroyed. Experience had not yet provided material for dealing with this question, which history placed on the agenda later on, in 1871. In 1852, all that could be established with the accuracy of scientific observation was that the proletarian revolution *had approached* the task of "concentrating all its forces of destruction" against the state power, of "smashing" the state machine.

Here the question may arise: is it correct to generalise the experience, observations and conclusions of Marx, to apply them to a field that is wider than the history of France during the three years 1848-51? Before proceeding to deal with this question, let us recall a remark made by Engels and then examine the facts.



In his introduction to the third edition of *The Eighteenth Brumaire*, Engels wrote:

“France is the country where, more than anywhere else, the historical class struggles were each time fought out to a finish, and where, consequently, the changing political forms within which they move and in which their results are summarised have been stamped in the sharpest outlines. The centre of feudalism in the Middle Ages, the model country, since the Renaissance, of a unified monarchy based on social estates, France demolished feudalism in the Great Revolution and established the rule of the bourgeoisie in a classical purity unequalled by any other European land. And the struggle of the upward striving proletariat against the ruling bourgeoisie appeared here in an acute form unknown elsewhere.” (P. 4, 1907 edition.)

The last remark is out of date inasmuch as since 1871 there has been a lull in the revolutionary struggle of the French proletariat, although, long as this lull may be, it does not at all preclude the possibility that in the coming proletarian revolution France may show herself to be the classic country of the class struggle to a finish.

Let us, however, cast a general glance over the history of the advanced countries at the turn of the century. We shall see that the same process went on more slowly, in more varied forms, in a much wider field: on the one hand, the development of “parliamentary power” both in the republican countries (France, America, Switzerland), and in the monarchies (Britain, Germany to a certain extent, Italy, the Scandinavian countries, etc.); on the other hand, a struggle for power among the various bourgeois and petty-bourgeois parties which distributed and redistributed the “spoils” of office, with the foundations of bourgeois society unchanged; and, lastly, the perfection and consolidation of the “executive power”, of its bureaucratic and military apparatus.

There is not the slightest doubt that these features are common to the whole of the modern evolution of all capitalist states in general. In the three years 1848-51 France displayed, in a swift, sharp, concentrated form, the very same processes of development which are peculiar to the whole capitalist world.

Imperialism—the era of bank capital, the era of gigantic capitalist monopolies, of the development of monopoly capitalism into state-monopoly capitalism—has clearly shown an extraordinary strengthening of the “state machine” and an unprecedented growth in its bureaucratic and military apparatus in connection with the intensification of repressive measures against the proletariat both in the monarchical and in the freest, republican countries.



World history is now undoubtedly leading, on an incomparably larger scale than in 1852, to the "concentration of all the forces" of the proletarian revolution on the "destruction" of the state machine.

What the proletariat will put in its place is suggested by the highly instructive material furnished by the Paris Commune.

### 3. THE PRESENTATION OF THE QUESTION BY MARX IN 1852\*

In 1907, Mehring, in the magazine *Neue Zeit*<sup>119</sup> (Vol. XXV, 2, p. 164), published extracts from Marx's letter to Weydemeyer dated March 5, 1852. This letter, among other things, contains the following remarkable observation:

"And now as to myself, no credit is due to me for discovering the existence of classes in modern society or the struggle between them. Long before me bourgeois historians had described the historical development of this class struggle and bourgeois economists, the economic anatomy of the classes. What I did that was new was to prove: (1) that the *existence of classes* is only bound up with *particular, historical phases in the development of production* (historische Entwicklungsphasen der Produktion), (2) that the class struggle necessarily leads to the *dictatorship of the proletariat*, (3) that this dictatorship itself only constitutes the transition to the *abolition of all classes* and to a *classless society*."<sup>120</sup>

In these words, Marx succeeded in expressing with striking clarity, first, the chief and radical difference between his theory and that of the foremost and most profound thinkers of the bourgeoisie; and, secondly, the essence of his theory of the state.

It is often said and written that the main point in Marx's theory is the class struggle. But this is wrong. And this wrong notion very often results in an opportunist distortion of Marxism and its falsification in a spirit acceptable to the bourgeoisie. For the theory of the class struggle was created *not* by Marx, *but* by the bourgeoisie *before* Marx, and, generally speaking, it is *acceptable* to the bourgeoisie. Those who recognise *only* the class struggle are not yet Marxists; they may be found to be still within the bounds of bourgeois thinking and bourgeois politics. To confine Marxism to the theory of the class struggle means curtailing Marxism, distorting it, reducing it to something acceptable to the bourgeoisie. Only he is a Marxist who *extends* the recognition of the class struggle to the recognition of the *dictatorship of the proletariat*. This is what constitutes the most profound distinction between the Marx-

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\* Added in the second edition.

ist and the ordinary petty (as well as big) bourgeois. This is the touchstone on which the *real* understanding and recognition of Marxism should be tested. And it is not surprising that when the history of Europe brought the working class face to face with this question as a *practical* issue, not only all the opportunists and reformists, but all the Kautskyites (people who vacillate between reformism and Marxism) proved to be miserable philistines and petty-bourgeois democrats *repudiating* the dictatorship of the proletariat. Kautsky's pamphlet, *The Dictatorship of the Proletariat*, published in August 1918, i.e., long after the first edition of the present book, is a perfect example of petty-bourgeois distortion of Marxism and base renunciation of it *in deeds*, while hypocritically recognising it *in words* (see my pamphlet, *The Proletarian Revolution and the Renegade Kautsky*, Petrograd and Moscow, 1918).

Opportunism today, as represented by its principal spokesman, the ex-Marxist Karl Kautsky, fits in completely with Marx's characterisation of the *bourgeois* position quoted above, for this opportunism limits recognition of the class struggle to the sphere of bourgeois relations. (Within this sphere, within its framework, not a single educated liberal will refuse to recognise the class struggle "in principle"!)

Opportunism *does not extend* recognition of the class struggle to the cardinal point, to the period of *transition* from capitalism to communism, of the *overthrow* and the complete *abolition* of the bourgeoisie. In reality, this period inevitably is a period of an unprecedentedly violent class struggle in unprecedentedly acute forms, and, consequently, during this period the state must inevitably be a state that is democratic *in a new way* (for the proletariat and the propertyless in general) and dictatorial *in a new way* (against the bourgeoisie).

Further. The essence of Marx's theory of the state has been mastered only by those who realise that the dictatorship of a *single* class is necessary not only for every class society in general, not only for the *proletariat* which has overthrown the bourgeoisie, but also for the entire *historical period* which separates capitalism from "classless society", from communism. Bourgeois states are most varied in form, but their essence is the same: all these states, whatever their form, in the final analysis are inevitably the *dictatorship of the bourgeoisie*. The transition from capitalism to communism is certainly bound to yield a tremendous abundance and variety of political forms, but the essence will inevitably be the same: *the dictatorship of the proletariat*.

## CHAPTER III

**THE STATE AND REVOLUTION.  
EXPERIENCE OF THE PARIS COMMUNE  
OF 1871. MARX'S ANALYSIS**

**1. WHAT MADE THE COMMUNARDS' ATTEMPT HEROIC?**

It is well known that in the autumn of 1870, a few months before the Commune, Marx warned the Paris workers that any attempt to overthrow the government would be the folly of despair. But when, in March 1871, a decisive battle was *forced* upon the workers and they accepted it, when the uprising had become a fact, Marx greeted the proletarian revolution with the greatest enthusiasm, in spite of unfavourable auguries. Marx did not persist in the pedantic attitude of condemning an "untimely" movement as did the ill-famed Russian renegade from Marxism, Plekhanov, who in November 1905 wrote encouragingly about the workers' and peasants' struggle, but after December 1905 cried, liberal fashion: "They should not have taken up arms."

Marx, however, was not only enthusiastic about the heroism of the Communards, who, as he expressed it, "stormed heaven". Although the mass revolutionary movement did not achieve its aim, he regarded it as a historic experience of enormous importance, as a certain advance of the world proletarian revolution, as a practical step that was more important than hundreds of programmes and arguments. Marx endeavoured to analyse this experiment, to draw tactical lessons from it and re-examine his theory in the light of it.

The only "correction" Marx thought it necessary to make to the *Communist Manifesto* he made on the basis of the revolutionary experience of the Paris Communards.

The last preface to the new German edition of the *Communist Manifesto*, signed by both its authors, is dated June 24, 1872. In this preface the authors, Karl Marx and Frederick Engels, say that the programme of the *Communist Manifesto* "has in some details become out-of-date", and they go on to say:

"...One thing especially was proved by the Commune, viz., that 'the working class cannot simply lay hold of the ready-made state machinery and wield it for its own purposes'..."<sup>121</sup>

The authors took the words that are in single quotation marks in this passage from Marx's book, *The Civil War in France*.

Thus, Marx and Engels regarded one principal and fundamental lesson of the Paris Commune as being of such enormous importance

that they introduced it as an important correction into the *Communist Manifesto*.

Most characteristically, it is this important correction that has been distorted by the opportunists, and its meaning probably is not known to nine-tenths, if not ninety-nine-hundredths, of the readers of the *Communist Manifesto*. We shall deal with this distortion more fully farther on, in a chapter devoted specially to distortions. Here it will be sufficient to note that the current, vulgar "interpretation" of Marx's famous statement just quoted is that Marx here allegedly emphasises the idea of slow development in contradistinction to the seizure of power, and so on.

As a matter of fact, *the exact opposite is the case*. Marx's idea is that the working class must *break up, smash* the "ready-made state machinery", and not confine itself merely to laying hold of it.

On April 12, 1871, i.e., just at the time of the Commune, Marx wrote to Kugelmann:

"If you look up the last chapter of my *Eighteenth Brumaire*, you will find that I declare that the next attempt of the French Revolution will be no longer, as before, to transfer the bureaucratic-military machine from one hand to another, but to *smash* it [Marx's italics—the original is *zerbrechen*], and this is the precondition for every real people's revolution on the Continent. And this is what our heroic Party comrades in Paris are attempting." (*Neue Zeit*, Vol. XX, 1, 1901-02, p. 709.)<sup>122</sup> (The letters of Marx to Kugelmann have appeared in Russian in no less than two editions, one of which I edited and supplied with a preface.)\*

The words, "to smash the bureaucratic-military machine", briefly express the principal lesson of Marxism regarding the tasks of the proletariat during a revolution in relation to the state. And it is this lesson that has been not only completely ignored, but positively distorted by the prevailing, Kautskyite, "interpretation" of Marxism!

As for Marx's reference to *The Eighteenth Brumaire*, we have quoted the relevant passage in full above.

It is interesting to note, in particular, two points in the above-quoted argument of Marx. First, he restricts his conclusion to the Continent. This was understandable in 1871, when Britain was still the model of a purely capitalist country, but without a militarist clique and, to a considerable degree, without a bureaucracy. Marx therefore excluded Britain, where a revolution, even a people's revolution, then seemed possible, and indeed was possible,

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\* See *Collected Works*, Vol. 12, pp. 104-12.—Ed.



*without* the precondition of destroying the "ready-made state machinery".

Today, in 1917, at the time of the first great imperialist war, this restriction made by Marx is no longer valid. Both Britain and America, the biggest and the last representatives—in the whole world—of Anglo-Saxon "liberty", in the sense that they had no militarist cliques and bureaucracy, have completely sunk into the all-European filthy, bloody morass of bureaucratic-military institutions which subordinate everything to themselves, and suppress everything. Today, in Britain and America, too, "the precondition for every real people's revolution" is the *smashing*, the *destruction* of the "ready-made state machinery" (made and brought up to "European", general imperialist, perfection in those countries in the years 1914-17).

Secondly, particular attention should be paid to Marx's extremely profound remark that the destruction of the bureaucratic-military state machine is "the precondition for every real *people's* revolution". This idea of a "people's" revolution seems strange coming from Marx, so that the Russian Plekhanovites and Mensheviks, those followers of Struve who wish to be regarded as Marxists, might possibly declare such an expression to be a "slip of the pen" on Marx's part. They have reduced Marxism to such a state of wretchedly liberal distortion that nothing exists for them beyond the antithesis between bourgeois revolution and proletarian revolution, and even this antithesis they interpret in an utterly lifeless way.

If we take the revolutions of the twentieth century as examples we shall, of course, have to admit that the Portuguese and the Turkish revolutions are both bourgeois revolutions. Neither of them, however, is a "people's" revolution, since in neither does the mass of the people, their vast majority, come out actively, independently, with their own economic and political demands to any noticeable degree. By contrast, although the Russian bourgeois revolution of 1905-07 displayed no such "brilliant" successes as at times fell to the Portuguese and Turkish revolutions, it was undoubtedly a "real people's" revolution, since the mass of the people, their majority, the very lowest social groups, crushed by oppression and exploitation, rose independently and stamped on the entire course of the revolution the imprint of *their* own demands, *their* attempts to build in their own way a new society in place of the old society that was being destroyed.

In Europe, in 1871, the proletariat did not constitute the majority of the people in any country on the Continent. A "people's" revolution, one actually sweeping the majority into its stream, could be such only if it embraced both the proletariat and the peasants. These two classes then constituted the "people". These

two classes are united by the fact that the "bureaucratic-military state machine" oppresses, crushes, exploits them. To *smash* this machine, to *break it up*, is truly in the interest of the "people", of their majority, of the workers and most of the peasants, is "the precondition" for a free alliance of the poor peasants and the proletarians, whereas without such an alliance democracy is unstable and socialist transformation is impossible.

As is well known, the Paris Commune was actually working its way toward such an alliance, although it did not reach its goal owing to a number of circumstances, internal and external.

Consequently, in speaking of a "real people's revolution", Marx, without in the least discounting the special features of the petty bourgeoisie (he spoke a great deal about them and often), took strict account of the actual balance of class forces in most of the continental countries of Europe in 1871. On the other hand, he stated that the "smashing" of the state machine was required by the interests of both the workers and the peasants, that it united them, that it placed before them the common task of removing the "parasite" and of replacing it by something new.

By what exactly?

## 2. WHAT IS TO REPLACE THE SMASHED STATE MACHINE?

In 1847, in the *Communist Manifesto*, Marx's answer to this question was as yet a purely abstract one; to be exact, it was an answer that indicated the tasks, but not the ways of accomplishing them. The answer given in the *Communist Manifesto* was that this machine was to be replaced by "the proletariat organised as the ruling class," by the "winning of the battle of democracy".

Marx did not indulge in utopias; he expected the *experience* of the mass movement to provide the reply to the question as to the specific forms this organisation of the proletariat as the ruling class would assume and as to the exact manner in which this organisation would be combined with the most complete, most consistent "winning of the battle of democracy".

Marx subjected the experience of the Commune, meagre as it was, to the most careful analysis in *The Civil War in France*. Let us quote the most important passages of this work.

Originating from the Middle Ages, there developed in the nineteenth century "the centralised state power, with its ubiquitous organs of standing army, police, bureaucracy, clergy, and judicature". With the development of class antagonisms between capital and labour, "state power assumed more and more the character of a public force for the suppression of the working class, of a machine of class rule. After every revolution, which marks an advance in the class struggle, the purely

coercive character of the state power stands out in bolder and bolder relief". After the revolution of 1848-49, state power became "the national war instrument of capital against labour". The Second Empire consolidated this.

"The direct antithesis to the empire was the Commune." It was the "specific form" of "a republic that was not only to remove the monarchical form of class rule, but class rule itself...."

What was this "specific" form of the proletarian, socialist republic? What was the state it began to create?

"...The first decree of the Commune... was the suppression of the standing army, and its replacement by the armed people...."

This demand now figures in the programme of every party calling itself socialist. The real worth of their programmes, however, is best shown by the behaviour of our Socialist-Revolutionaries and Mensheviks, who, right after the revolution of February 27, actually refused to carry out this demand!

"The Commune was formed of the municipal councillors, chosen by universal suffrage in the various wards of Paris, responsible and revocable at any time. The majority of its members were naturally working men, or acknowledged representatives of the working class.... The police, which until then had been the instrument of the Government, was at once stripped of its political attributes, and turned into the responsible and at all times revocable instrument of the Commune. So were the officials of all other branches of the administration. From the members of the Commune downwards, public service had to be done at *workmen's wages*. The privileges and the representation allowances of the high dignitaries of state disappeared along with the dignitaries themselves.... Having once got rid of the standing army and the police, the instruments of the physical force of the old Government, the Commune proceeded at once to break the instrument of spiritual suppression, the power of the priests.... The judicial functionaries lost that sham independence... they were thenceforward to be elective, responsible, and revocable...."<sup>123</sup>

The Commune, therefore, appears to have replaced the smashed state machine "only" by fuller democracy: abolition of the standing army; all officials to be elected and subject to recall. But as a matter of fact this "only" signifies a gigantic replacement of certain institutions by other institutions of a fundamentally different type. This is exactly a case of "quantity being transformed



into quality": democracy, introduced as fully and consistently as is at all conceivable, is transformed from bourgeois into proletarian democracy; from the state (= a special force for the suppression of a particular class) into something which is no longer the state proper.

It is still necessary to suppress the bourgeoisie and crush their resistance. This was particularly necessary for the Commune; and one of the reasons for its defeat was that it did not do this with sufficient determination. The organ of suppression, however, is here the majority of the population, and not a minority, as was always the case under slavery, serfdom and wage slavery. And since the majority of the people *itself* suppresses its oppressors, a "special force" for suppression *is no longer necessary!* In this sense, the state *begins to wither away*. Instead of the special institutions of a privileged minority (privileged officialdom, the chiefs of the standing army), the majority itself can directly fulfil all these functions, and the more the functions of state power are performed by the people as a whole, the less need there is for the existence of this power.

In this connection, the following measures of the Commune, emphasised by Marx, are particularly noteworthy: the abolition of all representation allowances, and of all monetary privileges to officials, the reduction of the remuneration of *all* servants of the state to the level of "*workmen's wages*". This shows more clearly than anything else the *turn* from bourgeois to proletarian democracy, from the democracy of the oppressors to that of the oppressed classes, from the state as a "*special force*" for the suppression of a particular class to the suppression of the oppressors by the *general force* of the majority of the people—the workers and the peasants. And it is on this particularly striking point, perhaps the most important as far as the problem of the state is concerned, that the ideas of Marx have been most completely ignored! In popular commentaries, the number of which is legion, this is not mentioned. The thing done is to keep silent about it as if it were a piece of old-fashioned "naïveté", just as Christians, after their religion had been given the status of a state religion, "forgot" the "naïveté" of primitive Christianity with its democratic revolutionary spirit.

The reduction of the remuneration of high state officials seems to be "simply" a demand of naïve, primitive democracy. One of the "founders" of modern opportunism, the ex-Social-Democrat Eduard Bernstein, has more than once repeated the vulgar bourgeois jeers at "primitive" democracy. Like all opportunists, and like the present Kautskyites, he did not understand at all that, first of all, the transition from capitalism to socialism is *impossible* without a certain "reversion" to "primitive" democracy (for how else can the majority, and then the whole population without ex-



ception, proceed to discharge state functions?); and that, secondly, "primitive democracy" based on capitalism and capitalist culture is not the same as primitive democracy in prehistoric or pre-capitalist times. Capitalist culture has *created* large-scale production, factories, railways, the postal service, telephones, etc., and *on this basis* the great majority of the functions of the old "state power" have become so simplified and can be reduced to such exceedingly simple operations of registration, filing and checking that they can be easily performed by every literate person, can quite easily be performed for ordinary "workmen's wages", and that these functions can (and must) be stripped of every shadow of privilege, of every semblance of "official grandeur".

All officials, without exception, elected and subject to recall *at any time*, their salaries reduced to the level of ordinary "workmen's wages"—these simple and "self-evident" democratic measures, while completely uniting the interests of the workers and the majority of the peasants, at the same time serve as a bridge leading from capitalism to socialism. These measures concern the reorganisation of the state, the purely political reorganisation of society; but, of course, they acquire their full meaning and significance only in connection with the "expropriation of the expropriators" either being accomplished or in preparation, i.e., with the transformation of capitalist private ownership of the means of production into social ownership.

"The Commune," Marx wrote, "made that catchword of all bourgeois revolutions, cheap government, a reality, by abolishing the two greatest sources of expenditure—the army and the officialdom."

From the peasants, as from other sections of the petty bourgeoisie, only an insignificant few "rise to the top", "get on in the world" in the bourgeois sense, i.e., become either well-to-do, bourgeois, or officials in secure and privileged positions. In every capitalist country where there are peasants (as there are in most capitalist countries), the vast majority of them are oppressed by the government and long for its overthrow, long for "cheap" government. This can be achieved *only* by the proletariat; and by achieving it, the proletariat at the same time takes a step towards the socialist reorganisation of the state.

### 3. ABOLITION OF PARLIAMENTARISM

"The Commune," Marx wrote, "was to be a working, not a parliamentary, body, executive and legislative at the same time. . . .

"Instead of deciding once in three or six years which

member of the ruling class was to represent and repress [ver- und zertreten] the people in parliament, universal suffrage was to serve the people constituted in communes, as individual suffrage serves every other employer in the search for workers, foremen and accountants for his business."

Owing to the prevalence of social-chauvinism and opportunism, this remarkable criticism of parliamentarism, made in 1871, also belongs now to the "forgotten words" of Marxism. The professional Cabinet Ministers and parliamentarians, the traitors to the proletariat and the "practical" socialists of our day, have left all criticism of parliamentarism to the anarchists, and, on this wonderfully reasonable ground, they denounce *all* criticism of parliamentarism as "anarchism"! It is not surprising that the proletariat of the "advanced" parliamentary countries, disgusted with such "socialists" as the Scheidemanns, Davids, Legiens, Sembats, Renaudels, Hendersons, Vanderveldes, Staunings, Brantings, Bisso-latis and Co., has been with increasing frequency giving its sympathies to anarcho-syndicalism, in spite of the fact that the latter is merely the twin brother of opportunism.

For Marx, however, revolutionary dialectics was never the empty fashionable phrase, the toy rattle, which Plekhanov, Kautsky and others have made of it. Marx knew how to break with anarchism ruthlessly for its inability to make use even of the "pigsty" of bourgeois parliamentarism, especially when the situation was obviously not revolutionary; but at the same time he knew how to subject parliamentarism to genuinely revolutionary proletarian criticism.

To decide once every few years which member of the ruling class is to repress and crush the people through parliament—this is the real essence of bourgeois parliamentarism, not only in parliamentary-constitutional monarchies, but also in the most democratic republics.

But if we deal with the question of the state, and if we consider parliamentarism as one of the institutions of the state, from the point of view of the tasks of the proletariat in *this* field, what is the way out of parliamentarism? How can it be dispensed with?

Once again we must say: the lessons of Marx, based on the study of the Commune, have been so completely forgotten that the present-day "Social-Democrat" (i.e., present-day traitor to socialism) really cannot understand any criticism of parliamentarism other than anarchist or reactionary criticism.

The way out of parliamentarism is not, of course, the abolition of representative institutions and the elective principle, but the conversion of the representative institutions from talking shops into "working" bodies. "The Commune was to be a working, not a

parliamentary, body, executive and legislative at the same time.” “A working, not a parliamentary, body”—this is a blow straight from the shoulder at the present-day parliamentarians and parliamentary “lap dogs” of Social-Democracy! Take any parliamentary country, from America to Switzerland, from France to Britain, Norway and so forth—in these countries the real business of “state” is performed behind the scenes and is carried on by the departments, chancelleries and General Staffs. Parliament is given up to talk for the special purpose of fooling the “common people”. This is so true that even in the Russian republic, a bourgeois-democratic republic, all these sins of parliamentarism came out at once, even before it managed to set up a real parliament. The heroes of rotten philistinism, such as the Skobelevs and Tseretelis, the Chernovs and Avksentyevs, have even succeeded in polluting the Soviets after the fashion of the most disgusting bourgeois parliamentarism, in converting them into mere talking shops. In the Soviets, the “socialist” Ministers are fooling the credulous rustics with phrase-mongering and resolutions. In the government itself a sort of permanent shuffle is going on in order that, on the one hand, as many Socialist-Revolutionaries and Mensheviks as possible may in turn get near the “pie”, the lucrative and honourable posts, and that, on the other hand, the “attention” of the people may be “engaged”. Meanwhile the chancelleries and army staffs “do” the business of “state”.

*Dyelo Naroda*, the organ of the ruling Socialist-Revolutionary Party, recently admitted in a leading article—with the matchless frankness of people of “good society”, in which “all” are engaged in political prostitution—that even in the ministries headed by the “socialists” (save the mark!), the whole bureaucratic apparatus is in fact unchanged, is working in the old way and quite “freely” sabotaging revolutionary measures! Even without this admission, does not the actual history of the participation of the Socialist-Revolutionaries and Mensheviks in the government prove this? It is noteworthy, however, that in the ministerial company of the Cadets, the Chernovs, Rusanovs, Zenzinovs and the other editors of *Dyelo Naroda* have so completely lost all sense of shame as to brazenly assert, as if it were a mere bagatelle, that in “their” ministries everything is unchanged!! Revolutionary-democratic phrases to gull the rural Simple Simons, and bureaucracy and red tape to “gladden the hearts” of the capitalists—that is the *essence* of the “honest” coalition.

The Commune substitutes for the venal and rotten parliamentarism of bourgeois society institutions in which freedom of opinion and discussion does not degenerate into deception, for the parliamentarians themselves have to work, have to execute their own laws, have themselves to test the results achieved in reality,



and to account directly to their constituents. Representative institutions remain, but there is *no* parliamentarism here as a special system, as the division of labour between the legislative and the executive, as a privileged position for the deputies. We cannot imagine democracy, even proletarian democracy, without representative institutions, but we can and *must* imagine democracy without parliamentarism, if criticism of bourgeois society is not mere words for us, if the desire to overthrow the rule of the bourgeoisie is our earnest and sincere desire, and not a mere "election" cry for catching workers' votes, as it is with the Mensheviks and Socialist-Revolutionaries, and also the Scheidemanns and Legiens, the Sembats and Vanderveldes.

It is extremely instructive to note that, in speaking of the functions of *those* officials who are necessary for the Commune and for proletarian democracy, Marx compares them to the workers of "every other employer", that is, of the ordinary capitalist enterprise, with its "workers, foremen and accountants".

There is no trace of utopianism in Marx, in the sense that he made up or invented a "new" society. No, he studied the *birth* of the new society *out of* the old, and the forms of transition from the latter to the former, as a natural-historical process. He examined the actual experience of a mass proletarian movement and tried to draw practical lessons from it. He "learned" from the Commune, just as all the great revolutionary thinkers learned unhesitatingly from the experience of great movements of the oppressed classes, and never addressed them with pedantic "homilies" (such as Plekhanov's: "They should not have taken up arms" or Tsereteli's: "A class must limit itself").

Abolishing the bureaucracy at once, everywhere and completely, is out of the question. It is a utopia. But to *smash* the old bureaucratic machine at once and to begin immediately to construct a new one that will make possible the gradual abolition of all bureaucracy—this is *not* a utopia, it is the experience of the Commune, the direct and immediate task of the revolutionary proletariat.

Capitalism simplifies the functions of "state" administration; it makes it possible to cast "bossing" aside and to confine the whole matter to the organisation of the proletarians (as the ruling class), which will hire "workers, foremen and accountants" in the name of the whole of society.

We are not utopians, we do not "dream" of dispensing *at once* with all administration, with all subordination. These anarchist dreams, based upon incomprehension of the tasks of the proletarian dictatorship, are totally alien to Marxism, and, as a matter of fact, serve only to postpone the socialist revolution until people are different. No, we want the socialist revolution with people as



they are now, with people who cannot dispense with subordination, control and "foremen and accountants".

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

*We*, the workers, shall organise large-scale production on the basis of what capitalism has already created, relying on our own experience as workers, establishing strict, iron discipline backed up by the state power of the armed workers. We shall reduce the role of state officials to that of simply carrying out our instructions as responsible, revocable, modestly paid "foremen and accountants" (of course, with the aid of technicians of all sorts, types and degrees). This is *our* proletarian task, this is what we can and must *start* with in accomplishing the proletarian revolution. Such a beginning, on the basis of large-scale production, will of itself lead to the gradual "withering away" of all bureaucracy, to the gradual creation of an order—an order without inverted commas, an order bearing no similarity to wage slavery—an order under which the functions of control and accounting, becoming more and more simple, will be performed by each in turn, will then become a habit and will finally die out as the *special* functions of a special section of the population.

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

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

#### 4. ORGANISATION OF NATIONAL UNITY

"In a brief sketch of national organisation which the Commune had no time to develop, it states explicitly that the Commune was to be the political form of even the smallest village. . . ." The communes were to elect the "National Delegation" in Paris.

"...The few but important functions which would still remain for a central government were not to be suppressed, as has been deliberately mis-stated, but were to be transferred to communal, i.e., strictly responsible, officials.

"...National unity was not to be broken, but, on the contrary, organised by the communal constitution; it was to become a reality by the destruction of state power which posed as the embodiment of that unity yet wanted to be independent of, and superior to, the nation, on whose body it was but a parasitic excrescence. While the merely repressive organs of the old governmental power were to be amputated, its legitimate functions were to be wrested from an authority claiming the right to stand above society, and restored to the responsible servants of society."

The extent to which the opportunists of present-day Social-Democracy have failed—perhaps it would be more true to say, have refused—to understand these observations of Marx is best shown by that book of Herostratean fame of the renegade Bernstein, *The Premises of Socialism and the Tasks of the Social-Democrats*. It is in connection with the above passage from Marx that Bernstein wrote that "as far as its political content is concerned", this programme "displays, in all its essential features, the greatest similarity to the federalism of Proudhon. . . . In spite of all the other points of difference between Marx and the 'petty-bourgeois' Proudhon [Bernstein places the word "petty-bourgeois" in inverted commas to make it sound ironical] on these points, their lines of reasoning run as close as could be". Of course, Bernstein continues, the importance of the municipalities is growing, but "it seems doubtful to me whether the first job of democracy would be such

a dissolution [Auflösung] of the modern states and such a complete transformation [Umwandlung] of their organisation as is visualised by Marx and Proudhon (the formation of a National Assembly from delegates of the provincial or district assemblies, which, in their turn, would consist of delegates from the communes), so that consequently the previous mode of national representation would disappear." (Bernstein, *Premises*, German edition, 1899, pp. 134 and 136.)

To confuse Marx's views on the "destruction of state power, a parasitic excrescence", with Proudhon's federalism is positively monstrous! But it is no accident, for it never occurs to the opportunist that Marx does not speak here at all about federalism as opposed to centralism, but about smashing the old bourgeois state machine which exists in all bourgeois countries.

The only thing that does occur to the opportunist is what he sees around him, in an environment of petty-bourgeois philistinism and "reformist" stagnation, namely, only "municipalities"! The opportunist has even grown out of the habit of thinking about proletarian revolution.

It is ridiculous. But the remarkable thing is that nobody argued with Bernstein on this point. Bernstein has been refuted by many, especially by Plekhanov in Russian literature and by Kautsky in European literature, but neither of them has said *anything* about *this* distortion of Marx by Bernstein.

The opportunist has so much forgotten how to think in a revolutionary way and to dwell on revolution that he attributes "federalism" to Marx, whom he confuses with the founder of anarchism, Proudhon. As for Kautsky and Plekhanov, who claim to be orthodox Marxists and defenders of the theory of revolutionary Marxism, they are silent on this point! Here is one of the roots of the extreme vulgarisation of the views on the difference between Marxism and anarchism, which is characteristic of both the Kautskyites and the opportunists, and which we shall discuss again later.

There is not a trace of federalism in Marx's above-quoted observations on the experience of the Commune. Marx agreed with Proudhon on the very point that the opportunist Bernstein did not see. Marx disagreed with Proudhon on the very point on which Bernstein found a similarity between them.

Marx agreed with Proudhon in that they both stood for the "smashing" of the modern state machine. Neither the opportunists nor the Kautskyites wish to see the similarity of views on this point between Marxism and anarchism (both Proudhon and Bakunin) because this is where they have departed from Marxism.

Marx disagreed both with Proudhon and Bakunin precisely on the question of federalism (not to mention the dictatorship of the proletariat). Federalism as a principle follows logically from the



petty-bourgeois views of anarchism. Marx was a centralist. There is no departure whatever from centralism in his observations just quoted. Only those who are imbued with the philistine "superstitious belief" in the state can mistake the destruction of the bourgeois state machine for the destruction of centralism!

Now if the proletariat and the poor peasants take state power into their own hands, organise themselves quite freely in communes, and *unite* the action of all the communes in striking at capital, in crushing the resistance of the capitalists, and in transferring the privately-owned railways, factories, land and so on to the *entire* nation, to the whole of society, won't that be centralism? Won't that be the most consistent democratic centralism and, moreover, proletarian centralism?

Bernstein simply cannot conceive of the possibility of voluntary centralism, of the voluntary amalgamation of the communes into a nation, of the voluntary fusion of the proletarian communes, for the purpose of destroying bourgeois rule and the bourgeois state machine. Like all philistines, Bernstein pictures centralism as something which can be imposed and maintained solely from above, and solely by the bureaucracy and the military clique.

As though foreseeing that his views might be distorted, Marx expressly emphasised that the charge that the Commune had wanted to destroy national unity, to abolish the central authority, was a deliberate fraud. Marx purposely used the words: "National unity was . . . to be organised", so as to oppose conscious, democratic, proletarian centralism to bourgeois, military, bureaucratic centralism.

But there are none so deaf as those who will not hear. And the very thing the opportunists of present-day Social-Democracy do not want to hear about is the destruction of state power, the amputation of the parasitic excrescence.

## 5. ABOLITION OF THE PARASITE STATE

We have already quoted Marx's words on this subject, and we must now supplement them.

"...It is generally the fate of new historical creations," he wrote, "to be mistaken for the counterpart of older and even defunct forms of social life, to which they may bear a certain likeness. Thus, this new Commune, which breaks [*bricht*, smashes] the modern state power, has been regarded as a revival of the medieval communes . . . as a federation of small states (as Montesquieu and the Girondins visualised it) . . . as an exaggerated form of the old struggle against over-centralisation. . . .



"...The Communal Constitution would have restored to the social body all the forces hitherto absorbed by that parasitic excrescence, the 'state', feeding upon and hampering the free movement of society. By this one act it would have initiated the regeneration of France. . . .

"...The Communal Constitution would have brought the rural producers under the intellectual lead of the central towns of their districts, and there secured to them, in the town working men, the natural trustees of their interests. The very existence of the Commune involved, as a matter of course, local self-government, but no longer as a counterpoise to state power, now become superfluous."

"Breaking state power", which was a "parasitic excrescence"; its "amputation", its "smashing"; "state power, now become superfluous"—these are the expressions Marx used in regard to the state when appraising and analysing the experience of the Commune.

All this was written a little less than half a century ago; and now one has to engage in excavations, as it were, in order to bring undistorted Marxism to the knowledge of the mass of the people. The conclusions drawn from the observation of the last great revolution which Marx lived through were forgotten just when the time for the next great proletarian revolutions had arrived.

"...The multiplicity of interpretations to which the Commune has been subjected, and the multiplicity of interests which expressed themselves in it show that it was a thoroughly flexible political form, while all previous forms of government had been essentially repressive. Its true secret was this: it was essentially *a working-class government*, the result of the struggle of the producing against the appropriating class, the political form at last discovered under which the economic emancipation of labour could be accomplished. . . .

"Except on this last condition, the Communal Constitution would have been an impossibility and a delusion. . . ."

The utopians busied themselves with "discovering" political forms under which the socialist transformation of society was to take place. The anarchists dismissed the question of political forms altogether. The opportunists of present-day Social-Democracy accepted the bourgeois political forms of the parliamentary democratic state as the limit which should not be overstepped; they battered their foreheads praying before this "model", and denounced as anarchism every desire to *break* these forms.

Marx deduced from the whole history of socialism and the political struggle that the state was bound to disappear, and that the transitional form of its disappearance (the transition from

state to non-state) would be the "proletariat organised as the ruling class". Marx, however, did not set out to *discover* the political forms of this future stage. He limited himself to carefully observing French history, to analysing it, and to drawing the conclusion to which the year 1851 had led, namely, that matters were moving towards the *destruction* of the bourgeois state machine.

And when the mass revolutionary movement of the proletariat burst forth, Marx, in spite of its failure, in spite of its short life and patent weakness, began to study the forms it had *discovered*.

The Commune is the form "at last discovered" by the proletarian revolution, under which the economic emancipation of labour can take place.

The Commune is the first attempt by a proletarian revolution to *smash* the bourgeois state machine; and it is the political form "at last discovered", by which the smashed state machine can and must be *replaced*.

We shall see further on that the Russian revolutions of 1905 and 1917, in different circumstances and under different conditions, continue the work of the Commune and confirm Marx's brilliant historical analysis.

## CHAPTER IV

### CONTINUATION. SUPPLEMENTARY EXPLANATIONS BY ENGELS

Marx gave the fundamentals concerning the significance of the experience of the Commune. Engels returned to the same subject time and again, and explained Marx's analysis and conclusions, sometimes elucidating *other* aspects of the question with such power and vividness that it is necessary to deal with his explanations specially.

#### 1. THE HOUSING QUESTION

In his work, *The Housing Question* (1872), Engels already took into account the experience of the Commune, and dealt several times with the tasks of the revolution in relation to the state. It is interesting to note that the treatment of this specific subject clearly revealed, on the one hand, points of similarity between the proletarian state and the present state—points that warrant speaking of the state in both cases—and, on the other hand, points of difference between them, or the transition to the destruction of the state.

"How is the housing question to be settled, then? In present-day society, it is settled just as any other social question: by the gradual economic levelling of demand and supply, a settlement which reproduces the question itself again and again and therefore is no settlement. How a social revolution would settle this question not only depends on the circumstances in each particular case, but is also connected with much more far-reaching questions, one of the most fundamental of which is the abolition of the antithesis between town and country. As it is not our task to create utopian systems for the organisation of the future society, it would be more than idle to go into the question here. But one thing is certain: there is already a sufficient quantity of houses in the big cities to remedy immediately all real 'housing *shortage*', provided they are used judiciously. This can naturally only occur through the expropriation of the present owners and by quartering in their houses homeless workers or workers overcrowded in their present homes. As soon as the proletariat has won political power, such a measure prompted by concern for the common good will be just as easy to carry out as are other expropriations and billetings by the present-day state." (German edition, 1887, p. 22.)<sup>124</sup>

The change in the form of state power is not examined here, but only the content of its activity. Expropriations and billetings take place by order even of the present state. From the formal point of view, the proletarian state will also "order" the occupation of dwellings and expropriation of houses. But it is clear that the old executive apparatus, the bureaucracy, which is connected with the bourgeoisie, would simply be unfit to carry out the orders of the proletarian state.

"...It must be pointed out that the 'actual seizure' of all the instruments of labour, the taking possession of industry as a whole by the working people, is the exact opposite of the Proudhonist 'redemption'. In the latter case the individual worker becomes the owner of the dwelling, the peasant farm, the instruments of labour; in the former case, the 'working people' remain the collective owners of the houses, factories and instruments of labour, and will hardly permit their use, at least during a transitional period, by individuals or associations without compensation for the cost. In the same way, the abolition of property in land is not the abolition of ground rent but its transfer, if in a modified form, to society. The actual seizure of all the instruments of labour by the working people, therefore, does not at all preclude the retention of rent relations." (P. 68.)

We shall examine the question touched upon in this passage, namely, the economic basis for the withering away of the state, in the next chapter. Engels expresses himself most cautiously, saying that the proletarian state would "hardly" permit the use of houses without payment, "at least during a transitional period". The letting of houses owned by the whole people to individual families presupposes the collection of rent, a certain amount of control, and the employment of some standard in allotting the housing. All this calls for a certain form of state, but it does not at all call for a special military and bureaucratic apparatus, with officials occupying especially privileged positions. The transition to a situation in which it will be possible to supply dwellings rent-free depends on the complete "withering away" of the state.

Speaking of the Blanquists' adoption of the fundamental position of Marxism after the Commune and under the influence of its experience, Engels, in passing, formulates this position as follows:

"... Necessity of political action by the proletariat and of its dictatorship as the transition to the abolition of classes and, with them, of the state. . . ." (P. 55.)

Addicts to hair-splitting criticism, or bourgeois "exterminators of Marxism", will perhaps see a contradiction between this *recognition* of the "abolition of the state" and repudiation of this formula as an anarchist one in the above passage from *Anti-Dühring*. It would not be surprising if the opportunists classed Engels, too, as an "anarchist", for it is becoming increasingly common with the social-chauvinists to accuse the internationalists of anarchism.

Marxism has always taught that with the abolition of classes the state will also be abolished. The well-known passage on the "withering away of the state" in *Anti-Dühring* accuses the anarchists not simply of favouring the abolition of the state, but of preaching that the state can be abolished "overnight".

As the now prevailing "Social-Democratic" doctrine completely distorts the relation of Marxism to anarchism on the question of the abolition of the state, it will be particularly useful to recall a certain controversy in which Marx and Engels came out against the anarchists.

## 2. CONTROVERSY WITH THE ANARCHISTS

This controversy took place in 1873. Marx and Engels contributed articles against the Proudhonists, "autonomists" or "anti-authoritarians", to an Italian socialist annual, and it was not until 1913 that these articles appeared in German in *Neue Zeit*.<sup>125</sup>



"If the political struggle of the working class assumes revolutionary forms," wrote Marx, ridiculing the anarchists for their repudiation of politics, "and if the workers set up their revolutionary dictatorship in place of the dictatorship of the bourgeoisie, they commit the terrible crime of violating principles, for in order to satisfy their wretched, vulgar everyday needs and to crush the resistance of the bourgeoisie, they give the state a revolutionary and transient form, instead of laying down their arms and abolishing the state. . . ." (*Neue Zeit*, Vol. XXXII, 1, 1913-14, p. 40.)

It was solely against this kind of "abolition" of the state that Marx fought in refuting the anarchists! He did not at all oppose the view that the state would disappear when classes disappeared, or that it would be abolished when classes were abolished. What he did oppose was the proposition that the workers should renounce the use of arms, organised violence, *that is, the state*, which is to serve to "crush the resistance of the bourgeoisie".

To prevent the true meaning of his struggle against anarchism from being distorted, Marx expressly emphasised the "revolutionary and *transient* form" of the state which the proletariat needs. The proletariat needs the state only temporarily. We do not at all differ with the anarchists on the question of the abolition of the state as the *aim*. We maintain that, to achieve this aim, we must temporarily make use of the instruments, resources and methods of state power *against* the exploiters, just as the temporary dictatorship of the oppressed class is necessary for the abolition of classes. Marx chooses the sharpest and clearest way of stating his case against the anarchists: After overthrowing the yoke of the capitalists, should the workers "lay down their arms", or use them against the capitalists in order to crush their resistance? But what is the systematic use of arms by one class against another if not a "transient form" of state?

Let every Social-Democrat ask himself: Is *that* how he has been posing the question of the state in controversy with the anarchists? Is *that* how it has been posed by the vast majority of the official socialist parties of the Second International?

Engels expounds the same ideas in much greater detail and still more popularly. First of all he ridicules the muddled ideas of the Proudhonists, who called themselves "anti-authoritarians", i.e., repudiated all authority, all subordination, all power. Take a factory, a railway, a ship on the high seas, said Engels: is it not clear that not one of these complex technical establishments, based on the use of machinery and the systematic co-operation of many people, could function without a certain amount of subor-

dination and, consequently, without a certain amount of authority or power?

"...When I counter the most rabid anti-authoritarians with these arguments, the only answer they can give me is the following: Oh, that's true, except that here it is not a question of authority with which we vest our delegates, *but of a commission!* These people imagine they can change a thing by changing its name. ..."

Having thus shown that authority and autonomy are relative terms, that the sphere of their application varies with the various phases of social development, that it is absurd to take them as absolutes, and adding that the sphere of application of machinery and large-scale production is steadily expanding, Engels passes from the general discussion of authority to the question of the state.

"Had the autonomists," he wrote, "contented themselves with saying that the social organisation of the future would allow authority only within the bounds which the conditions of production make inevitable, one could have come to terms with them. But they are blind to all facts that make authority necessary and they passionately fight the word.

"Why do the anti-authoritarians not confine themselves to crying out against political authority, the state? All socialists are agreed that the state, and with it political authority, will disappear as a result of the coming social revolution, that is, that public functions will lose their political character and become mere administrative functions of watching over social interests. But the anti-authoritarians demand that the political state be abolished at one stroke, even before the social relations that gave birth to it have been destroyed. They demand that the first act of the social revolution shall be the abolition of authority.

"Have these gentlemen ever seen a revolution? A revolution is certainly the most authoritarian thing there is; it is an act whereby one part of the population imposes its will upon the other part by means of rifles, bayonets and cannon, all of which are highly authoritarian means. And the victorious party must maintain its rule by means of the terror which its arms inspire in the reactionaries. Would the Paris Commune have lasted more than a day if it had not used the authority of the armed people against the bourgeoisie? Cannot we, on the contrary, blame it for having made too little use of that authority? Therefore, one of two things: either the anti-authoritarians don't know what they are talking about, in which case they are creating nothing but confusion. Or they

do know, and in that case they are betraying the cause of the proletariat. In either case they serve only reaction." (P. 39.)

This argument touches upon questions which should be examined in connection with the relationship between politics and economics during the withering away of the state (the next chapter is devoted to this). These questions are: the transformation of public functions from political into simple functions of administration, and the "political state". This last term, one particularly liable to cause misunderstanding, indicates the process of the withering away of the state: at a certain stage of this process, the state which is withering away may be called a non-political state.

Again, the most remarkable thing in this argument of Engels is the way he states his case against the anarchists. Social-Democrats, claiming to be disciples of Engels, have argued on this subject against the anarchists millions of times since 1873, but they have *not* argued as Marxists could and should. The anarchist idea of the abolition of the state is muddled and *non-revolutionary*—that is how Engels put it. It is precisely the revolution in its rise and development, with its specific tasks in relation to violence, authority, power, the state, that the anarchists refuse to see.

The usual criticism of anarchism by present-day Social-Democrats has boiled down to the purest philistine banality: "We recognise the state, whereas the anarchists do not!" Naturally, such banality cannot but repel workers who are at all capable of thinking and revolutionary-minded. What Engels says is different. He stresses that all socialists recognise that the state will disappear as a result of the socialist revolution. He then deals specifically with the question of the revolution—the very question which, as a rule, the Social-Democrats evade out of opportunism, leaving it, so to speak, exclusively for the anarchists "to work out". And when dealing with this question, Engels takes the bull by the horns; he asks: should not the Commune have made *more* use of the *revolutionary* power of the *state*, that is, of the proletariat armed and organised as the ruling class?

Prevailing official Social-Democracy usually dismissed the question of the concrete tasks of the proletariat in the revolution either with a philistine sneer, or, at best, with the sophistic evasion: "The future will show." And the anarchists were justified in saying about such Social-Democrats that they were failing in their task of giving the workers a revolutionary education. Engels draws upon the experience of the last proletarian revolution precisely for the purpose of making a most concrete study of what should be done by the proletariat, and in what manner, in relation to both the banks and the state.



### 3. LETTER TO BEBEL

One of the most, if not *the* most, remarkable observation on the state in the works of Marx and Engels is contained in the following passage in Engels's letter to Bebel dated March 18-28, 1875. This letter, we may observe in parenthesis, was, as far as we know, first published by Bebel in the second volume of his memoirs (*Aus meinem Leben*), which appeared in 1911, i.e., thirty-six years after the letter had been written and sent.

Engels wrote to Bebel criticising that same draft of the Gotha Programme which Marx criticised in his famous letter to Bracke. Referring specially to the question of the state, Engels said:

"The free people's state has been transformed into the free state. Taken in its grammatical sense, a free state is one where the state is free in relation to its citizens, hence a state with a despotic government. The whole talk about the state should be dropped, especially since the Commune, which was no longer a state in the proper sense of the word. The 'people's state' has been thrown in our faces by the anarchists to the point of disgust, although already Marx's book against Proudhon and later the *Communist Manifesto* say plainly that with the introduction of the socialist order of society the state dissolves of itself [sich auflöst] and disappears. As the state is only a transitional institution which is used in the struggle, in the revolution, to hold down one's adversaries by force, it is sheer nonsense to talk of a 'free people's state'; so long as the proletariat still *needs* the state, it does not need it 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. We would therefore propose replacing *state* everywhere by *Gemeinwesen*, a good old German word which can very well take the place of the French word *commune*." (Pp. 321-22 of the German original.)<sup>126</sup>

It should be borne in mind that this letter refers to the party programme which Marx criticised in a letter dated only a few weeks later than the above (Marx's letter is dated May 5, 1875), and that at the time Engels was living with Marx in London. Consequently, when he says "we" in the last sentence, Engels undoubtedly, in his own as well as in Marx's name, suggests to the leader of the German workers' party that the word "state" *be struck out of the programme* and replaced by the word "community".

What a howl about "anarchism" would be raised by the leading lights of present-day "Marxism", which has been falsified for the



convenience of the opportunists, if such an amendment of the programme were suggested to them!

Let them howl. This will earn them the praises of the bourgeoisie.

And we shall go on with our work. In revising the programme of our Party, we must by all means take the advice of Engels and Marx into consideration in order to come nearer the truth, to restore Marxism by ridding it of distortions, to guide the struggle of the working class for its emancipation more correctly. Certainly no one opposed to the advice of Engels and Marx will be found among the Bolsheviks. The only difficulty that may perhaps arise will be in regard to the term. In German there are two words meaning "community", of which Engels used the one which does *not* denote a single community, but their totality, a system of communities. In Russian there is no such word, and we may have to choose the French word "commune", although this also has its drawbacks.

"The Commune was no longer a state in the proper sense of the word"—this is the most theoretically important statement Engels makes. After what has been said above, this statement is perfectly clear. The Commune *was ceasing* to be a state since it had to suppress, not the majority of the population, but a minority (the exploiters). It had smashed the bourgeois state machine. In place of a *special* coercive force the population itself came on the scene. All this was a departure from the state in the proper sense of the word. And had the Commune become firmly established, all traces of the state in it would have "withered away" of themselves; it would not have had to "abolish" the institutions of the state—they would have ceased to function as they ceased to have anything to do.

"The 'people's state' has been thrown in our faces by the anarchists." In saying this, Engels above all has in mind Bakunin and his attacks on the German Social-Democrats. Engels admits that these attacks were justified *insofar* as the "people's state" was as much an absurdity and as much a departure from socialism as the "free people's state". Engels tried to put the struggle of the German Social-Democrats against the anarchists on the right lines, to make this struggle correct in principle, to rid it of opportunist prejudices concerning the "state". Unfortunately, Engels's letter was pigeon-holed for thirty-six years. We shall see farther on that, even after this letter was published, Kautsky persisted in virtually the same mistakes against which Engels had warned.

Bebel replied to Engels in a letter dated September 21, 1875, in which he wrote, among other things, that he "fully agreed" with Engels's opinion of the draft programme, and that he had reproached Liebknecht with readiness to make concessions (p. 334

of the German edition of Bebel's memoirs, Vol. II). But if we take Bebel's pamphlet, *Our Aims*, we find there views on the state that are absolutely wrong.

"The state must ... be transformed from one based on *class rule* into a *people's state*." (*Unsere Ziele*, German edition, 1886, p. 14.)

This was printed in the *ninth* (the ninth!) edition of Bebel's pamphlet! It is not surprising that opportunist views on the state, so persistently repeated, were absorbed by the German Social-Democrats, especially as Engels's revolutionary interpretations had been safely pigeon-holed, and all the conditions of life were such as to "wean" them from revolution for a long time.

#### 4. CRITICISM OF THE DRAFT OF THE ERFURT PROGRAMME

In analysing Marxist teachings on the state, the criticism of the draft of the Erfurt Programme,<sup>127</sup> sent by Engels to Kautsky on June 29, 1891, and published only ten years later in *Neue Zeit*, cannot be ignored; for it is with the *opportunist* views of the Social-Democrats on questions of *state* organisation that this criticism is mainly concerned.

We shall note in passing that Engels also makes an exceedingly valuable observation on economic questions, which shows how attentively and thoughtfully he watched the various changes occurring in modern capitalism, and how for this reason he was able to foresee to a certain extent the tasks of our present, the imperialist, epoch. Here is that observation: referring to the word "planlessness" (*Planlosigkeit*), used in the draft programme, as characteristic of capitalism, Engels wrote:

"When we pass from joint-stock companies to trusts which assume control over, and monopolise, whole industries, it is not only private production that ceases, but also planlessness." (*Neue Zeit*, Vol. XX, 1, 1901-02, p. 8.)

Here we have what is most essential in the theoretical appraisal of the latest phase of capitalism, i.e., imperialism, namely, that capitalism becomes monopoly *capitalism*. The latter must be emphasised because the erroneous bourgeois reformist assertion that monopoly capitalism or state-monopoly capitalism is *no longer* capitalism, but can now be called "state socialism" and so on, is very common. The trusts, of course, never provided, do not now provide, and cannot provide complete planning. But however much they do plan, however much the capitalist magnates calculate in advance the volume of production on a national and even on an international scale, and however much they systematically regulate

it, we still remain under *capitalism*—at its new stage, it is true, but still capitalism, without a doubt. The “proximity” of *such* capitalism to socialism should serve genuine representatives of the proletariat as an argument proving the proximity, facility, feasibility and urgency of the socialist revolution, and not at all as an argument for tolerating the repudiation of such a revolution and the efforts to make capitalism look more attractive, something which all reformists are trying to do.

But to return to the question of the state. In his letter Engels makes three particularly valuable suggestions: first, in regard to the republic; second, in regard to the connection between the national question and state organisation, and, third, in regard to local self-government.

In regard to the republic, Engels made this the focal point of his criticism of the draft of the Erfurt Programme. And when we recall the importance which the Erfurt Programme acquired for all the Social-Democrats of the world, and that it became the model for the whole Second International, we may say without exaggeration that Engels thereby criticised the opportunism of the whole Second International.

“The political demands of the draft,” Engels wrote, “have one great fault. *It lacks* [Engels’s italics] precisely what should have been said.”

And, later on, he makes it clear that the German Constitution is, strictly speaking, a copy of the extremely reactionary Constitution of 1850, that the Reichstag is only, as Wilhelm Liebknecht put it, “the fig leaf of absolutism” and that to wish “to transform all the instruments of labour into common property” on the basis of a constitution which legalises the existence of petty states and the federation of petty German states is an “obvious absurdity”.

“To touch on that is dangerous, however,” Engels added, knowing only too well that it was impossible legally to include in the programme the demand for a republic in Germany. But he refused to merely accept this obvious consideration which satisfied “everybody”. He continued: “Nevertheless, somehow or other, the thing has to be attacked. How necessary this is is shown precisely at the present time by opportunism, which is gaining ground [einreissende] in a large section of the Social-Democratic press. Fearing a renewal of the Anti-Socialist Law,<sup>128</sup> or recalling all manner of overhasty pronouncements made during the reign of that law, they now want the Party to find the present legal order in Germany adequate for putting through all Party demands by peaceful means. . . .”



Engels particularly stressed the fundamental fact that the German Social-Democrats were prompted by fear of a renewal of the Anti-Socialist Law, and explicitly described it as opportunism; he declared that precisely because there was no republic and no freedom in Germany, the dreams of a "peaceful" path were perfectly absurd. Engels was careful not to tie his hands. He admitted that in republican or very free countries "one can conceive" (only "conceive"! ) of a peaceful development towards socialism, but in Germany, he repeated,

"...in Germany, where the government is almost omnipotent and the Reichstag and all other representative bodies have no real power, to advocate such a thing in Germany, where, moreover, there is no need to do so, means removing the fig leaf from absolutism and becoming oneself a screen for its nakedness."

The great majority of the official leaders of the German Social-Democratic Party, which pigeon-holed this advice, have really proved to be a screen for absolutism.

"...In the long run such a policy can only lead one's own party astray. They push general, abstract political questions into the foreground, thereby concealing the immediate concrete questions, which at the moment of the first great events, the first political crisis, automatically pose themselves. What can result from this except that at the decisive moment the party suddenly proves helpless and that uncertainty and discord on the most decisive issues reign in it because these issues have never been discussed?...

"This forgetting of the great, the principal considerations for the momentary interests of the day, this struggling and striving for the success of the moment regardless of later consequences, this sacrifice of the future of the movement for its present may be 'honestly' meant, but it is and remains opportunism, and 'honest' opportunism is perhaps the most dangerous of all....

"If one thing is certain it is that our party and the working class can only come to power in the form of the democratic republic. This is even the specific form for the dictatorship of the proletariat, as the Great French Revolution has already shown...."

Engels repeated here in a particularly striking form the fundamental idea which runs through all of Marx's works, namely, that the democratic republic is the nearest approach to the dictatorship of the proletariat. For such a republic, without in the least abolishing the rule of capital, and, therefore, the oppression



of the masses and the class struggle, inevitably leads to such an extension, development, unfolding and intensification of this struggle that, as soon as it becomes possible to meet the fundamental interests of the oppressed masses, this possibility is realised inevitably and solely through the dictatorship of the proletariat, through the leadership of those masses by the proletariat. These, too, are "forgotten words" of Marxism for the whole of the Second International, and the fact that they have been forgotten was demonstrated with particular vividness by the history of the Menshevik Party during the first six months of the Russian revolution of 1917.

On the subject of a federal republic, in connection with the national composition of the population, Engels wrote:

"What should take the place of present-day Germany [with its reactionary monarchical Constitution and its equally reactionary division into petty states, a division which perpetuates all the specific features of "Prussianism" instead of dissolving them in Germany as a whole]? In my view, the proletariat can only use the form of the one and indivisible republic. In the gigantic territory of the United States, a federal republic is still, on the whole, a necessity, although in the Eastern states it is already becoming a hindrance. It would be a step forward in Britain where the two islands are peopled by four nations and in spite of a single Parliament three different systems of legislation already exist side by side. In little Switzerland, it has long been a hindrance, tolerable only because Switzerland is content to be a purely passive member of the European state system. For Germany, federalisation on the Swiss model would be an enormous step backward. Two points distinguish a union state from a completely unified state: first, that each member state, each canton, has its own civil and criminal legislative and judicial system, and, second, that alongside a popular chamber there is also a federal chamber in which each canton, whether large or small, votes as such." In Germany, the union state is the transition to the completely unified state, and the "revolution from above" of 1866 and 1870<sup>129</sup> must not be reversed but supplemented by a "movement from below".

Far from being indifferent to the forms of state, Engels, on the contrary, tried to analyse the transitional forms with the utmost thoroughness in order to establish, in accordance with the concrete historical peculiarities of each particular case, *from what and to what* the given transitional form is passing.

Approaching the matter from the standpoint of the proletariat and the proletarian revolution, Engels, like Marx, upheld dem-

ocratic centralism, the republic—one and indivisible. He regarded the federal republic either as an exception and a hindrance to development, or as a transition from a monarchy to a centralised republic, as a “step forward” under certain special conditions. And among these special conditions, he puts the national question to the fore.

Although mercilessly criticising the reactionary nature of small states, and the screening of this by the national question in certain concrete cases, Engels, like Marx, never betrayed the slightest desire to brush aside the national question—a desire of which the Dutch and Polish Marxists, who proceed from their perfectly justified opposition to the narrow philistine nationalism of “their” little states, are often guilty.

Even in regard to Britain, where geographical conditions, a common language and the history of many centuries would seem to have “put an end” to the national question in the various small divisions of the country—even in regard to that country, Engels reckoned with the plain fact that the national question was not yet a thing of the past, and recognised in consequence that the establishment of a federal republic would be a “step forward”. Of course, there is not the slightest hint here of Engels abandoning the criticism of the shortcomings of a federal republic or renouncing the most determined advocacy of, and struggle for, a unified and centralised democratic republic.

But Engels did not at all mean democratic centralism in the bureaucratic sense in which this term is used by bourgeois and petty-bourgeois ideologists, the anarchists among the latter. His idea of centralism did not in the least preclude such broad local self-government as would combine the voluntary defence of the unity of the state by the “communes” and districts, and the complete elimination of all bureaucratic practices and all “ordering” from above. Carrying forward the programme views of Marxism on the state, Engels wrote:

“So, then, a unified republic—but not in the sense of the present French Republic, which is nothing but the Empire established in 1798 without the Emperor. From 1792 to 1798 each French department, each commune [Gemeinde], enjoyed complete self-government on the American model, and this is what we too must have. How self-government is to be organised and how we can manage without a bureaucracy has been shown to us by America and the first French Republic, and is being shown even today by Australia, Canada and the other English colonies. And a provincial [regional] and communal self-government of this type is far freer than, for instance, Swiss federalism, under which, it is true, the canton

is very independent in relation to the Bund [i.e., the federated state as a whole], but is also independent in relation to the district [Bezirk] and the commune. The cantonal governments appoint the district governors [Bezirksstatthalter] and prefects—which is unknown in English-speaking countries and which we want to abolish here as resolutely in the future as the Prussian Landräte and Regierungsräte” (commissioners, district police chiefs, governors, and in general all officials appointed from above). Accordingly, Engels proposes the following wording for the self-government clause in the programme: “Complete self-government for the provinces [gubernias or regions], districts and communes through officials elected by universal suffrage. The abolition of all local and provincial authorities appointed by the state.”

I have already had occasion to point out—in *Pravda* (No. 68, May 28, 1917),\* which was suppressed by the government of Kerensky and other “socialist” Ministers—how on this point (of course, not on this point alone by any means) our pseudo-socialist representatives of pseudo-revolutionary pseudo-democracy have made glaring departures from democracy. Naturally, people who have bound themselves by a “coalition” to the imperialist bourgeoisie have remained deaf to this criticism.

It is extremely important to note that Engels, armed with facts, disproved by a most precise example the prejudice which is very widespread, particularly among petty-bourgeois democrats, that a federal republic necessarily means a greater amount of freedom than a centralised republic. This is wrong. It is disproved by the facts cited by Engels regarding the centralised French Republic of 1792-98 and the federal Swiss Republic. The really democratic centralised republic gave *more* freedom than the federal republic. In other words, the *greatest* amount of local, regional and other freedom known in history was accorded by a *centralised* and not by a federal republic.

Insufficient attention has been and is being paid in our Party propaganda and agitation to this fact, as, indeed, to the whole question of the federal and the centralised republic and local self-government.

## 5. THE 1891 PREFACE TO MARX'S *THE CIVIL WAR IN FRANCE*

In his preface to the third edition of *The Civil War in France* (this preface is dated March 18, 1891, and was originally published in *Neue Zeit*), Engels, in addition to some interesting incidental

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\* See *Collected Works*, Vol. 24, pp. 536-38.—Ed.



remarks on questions concerning the attitude towards the state, gave a remarkably vivid summary of the lessons of the Commune.<sup>130</sup> This summary, made more profound by the entire experience of the twenty years that separated the author from the Commune, and directed expressly against the "superstitious belief in the state" so widespread in Germany, may justly be called the *last word* of Marxism on the question under consideration.

In France, Engels observed, the workers emerged with arms from every revolution; "therefore the disarming of the workers was the first commandment for the bourgeois, who were at the helm of the state. Hence, after every revolution won by the workers, a new struggle, ending with the defeat of the workers".

This summary of the experience of bourgeois revolutions is as concise as it is expressive. The essence of the matter—among other things, on the question of the state (*has the oppressed class arms?*)—is here remarkably well grasped. It is precisely this essence that is most often evaded both by professors influenced by bourgeois ideology, and by petty-bourgeois democrats. In the Russian revolution of 1917, the honour (Cavaignac honour) of blabbing this secret of bourgeois revolutions fell to the Menshevik, would-be Marxist, Tsereteli. In his "historic" speech of June 11, Tsereteli blurted out that the bourgeoisie were determined to disarm the Petrograd workers—presenting, of course, this decision as his own, and as a necessity for the "state" in general!

Tsereteli's historic speech of June 11 will, of course, serve every historian of the revolution of 1917 as a graphic illustration of how the Socialist-Revolutionary and Menshevik bloc, led by Mr. Tsereteli, deserted to the bourgeoisie *against* the revolutionary proletariat.

Another incidental remark of Engels's, also connected with the question of the state, deals with religion. It is well known that the German Social-Democrats, as they degenerated and became increasingly opportunist, slipped more and more frequently into the philistine misinterpretation of the celebrated formula: "Religion is to be declared a private matter." That is, this formula was twisted to mean that religion was a private matter *even for the party* of the revolutionary proletariat!! It was against this complete betrayal of the revolutionary programme of the proletariat that Engels vigorously protested. In 1891 he saw only the *very feeble* beginnings of opportunism in his party, and, therefore, he expressed himself with extreme caution:

"As almost only workers, or recognised representatives of the workers, sat in the Commune, its decisions bore a decided-



ly proletarian character. Either they decreed reforms which the republican bourgeoisie had failed to pass solely out of cowardice, but which provided a necessary basis for the free activity of the working class—such as the realisation of the principle that *in relation to the state* religion is a purely private matter—or the Commune promulgated decrees which were in the direct interest of the working class and in part cut deeply into the old order of society.”

Engels deliberately emphasised the words “in relation to the state”, as a straight thrust at German opportunism, which had declared religion to be a private matter *in relation to the party*, thus degrading the party of the revolutionary proletariat to the level of the most vulgar “free-thinking” philistinism, which is prepared to allow a non-denominational status, but which renounces the *party* struggle against the opium of religion which stupefies the people.

The future historian of the German Social-Democrats, in tracing the roots of their shameful bankruptcy in 1914, will find a fair amount of interesting material on this question, beginning with the evasive declarations in the articles of the party’s ideological leader, Kautsky, which throw the door wide open to opportunism, and ending with the attitude of the party towards the “Los-von-Kirche-Bewegung” (the “Leave-the-Church” movement) in 1913.

But let us see how, twenty years after the Commune, Engels summed up its lessons for the fighting proletariat.

Here are the lessons to which Engels attached prime importance:

“...It was precisely the oppressing power of the former centralised government, army, political police, bureaucracy, which Napoleon had created in 1798 and which every new government had since then taken over as a welcome instrument and used against its opponents—it was this power which was to fall everywhere, just as it had fallen in Paris.

“From the very outset the Commune had to recognise that the working class, once in power, could not go on managing with the old state machine; that in order not to lose again its only just gained supremacy, this working class must, on the one hand, do away with all the old machinery of oppression previously used against it itself, and, on the other, safeguard itself against its own deputies and officials, by declaring them all, without exception, subject to recall at any time. . . .”

Engels emphasised once again that not only under a monarchy, but *also in a democratic republic* the state remains a state,

i.e., it retains its fundamental distinguishing feature of transforming the officials, the "servants of society", its organs, into the *masters* of society.

"Against this transformation of the state and the organs of the state from servants of society into masters of society—an inevitable transformation in all previous states—the Commune used two infallible means. In the first place, it filled all posts—administrative, judicial and educational—by election on the basis of universal suffrage of all concerned, subject to recall at any time by the electors. And, in the second place, it paid all officials, high or low, only the wages received by other workers. The highest salary paid by the Commune to anyone was 6,000 francs.\* In this way a dependable barrier to place-hunting and careerism was set up, even apart from the binding mandates to delegates to representative bodies, which were added besides. . . ."

Engels here approached the interesting boundary line at which consistent democracy, on the one hand, is *transformed* into socialism and, on the other, *demand*s socialism. For, in order to abolish the state, it is necessary to convert the functions of the civil service into the simple operations of control and accounting that are within the scope and ability of the vast majority of the population, and, subsequently, of every single individual. And if careerism is to be abolished completely, it must be made *impossible* for "honourable" though profitless posts in the Civil Service to be used as a springboard to highly lucrative posts in banks or joint-stock companies, as *constantly* happens in all the freest capitalist countries.

Engels, however, did not make the mistake some Marxists make in dealing, for example, with the question of the right of nations to self-determination, when they argue that it is impossible under capitalism and will be superfluous under socialism. This seemingly clever but actually incorrect statement might be made in regard to *any* democratic institution, including moderate salaries for officials, because fully consistent democracy is impossible under capitalism, and under socialism all democracy *will wither away*.

This is a sophism like the old joke about a man becoming bald by losing one more hair.

To develop democracy *to the utmost*, to find the *forms* for this

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\* Nominally about 2,400 rubles or, according to the present rate of exchange, about 6,000 rubles. The action of those Bolsheviks who propose that a salary of 9,000 rubles be paid to members of municipal councils, for instance, instead of a maximum salary of 6,000 rubles—quite an adequate sum—*throughout the state*, is inexcusable.

development, to test them *by practice*, and so forth—all this is one of the component tasks of the struggle for the social revolution. Taken separately, no kind of democracy will bring socialism. But in actual life democracy will never be “taken separately”; it will be “taken together” with other things, it will exert its influence on economic life as well, will stimulate *its* transformation; and in its turn it will be influenced by economic development, and so on. This is the dialectics of living history.

Engels continued:

“...This shattering [Sprengung] of the former state power and its replacement by a new and truly democratic one is described in detail in the third section of *The Civil War*. But it was necessary to touch briefly here once more on some of its features, because in Germany particularly the superstitious belief in the state has passed from philosophy into the general consciousness of the bourgeoisie and even of many workers. According to the philosophical conception, the state is the ‘realisation of the idea’, or the Kingdom of God on earth, translated into philosophical terms, the sphere in which eternal truth and justice are, or should be, realised. And from this follows a superstitious reverence for the state and everything connected with it, which takes root the more readily since people are accustomed from childhood to imagine that the affairs and interests common to the whole of society could not be looked after other than as they have been looked after in the past, that is, through the state and its lucratively positioned officials. And people think they have taken quite an extraordinarily bold step forward when they have rid themselves of belief in hereditary monarchy and swear by the democratic republic. In reality, however, the state is nothing but a machine for the oppression of one class by another, and indeed in the democratic republic no less than in the monarchy. And at best it is an evil inherited by the proletariat after its victorious struggle for class supremacy, whose worst sides the victorious proletariat will have to lop off as speedily as possible, just as the Commune had to, until a generation reared in new, free social conditions is able to discard the entire lumber of the state.”

Engels warned the Germans not to forget the principles of socialism with regard to the state in general in connection with the substitution of a republic for the monarchy. His warnings now read like a veritable lesson to the Tseretelis and Chernovs, who in their “coalition” practice have revealed a superstitious belief in, and a superstitious reverence for, the state!

Two more remarks. 1. Engels’s statement that in a democratic

republic, "no less" than in a monarchy, the state remains a "machine for the oppression of one class by another" by no means signifies that the *form* of oppression makes no difference to the proletariat, as some anarchists "teach". A wider, freer and more open *form* of the class struggle and of class oppression vastly assists the proletariat in its struggle for the abolition of classes in general.

2. Why will only a new generation be able to discard the entire lumber of the state? This question is bound up with that of overcoming democracy, with which we shall deal now.

## 6. ENGELS ON THE OVERCOMING OF DEMOCRACY

Engels came to express his views on this subject when establishing that the term "Social-Democrat" was *scientifically* wrong.

In a preface to an edition of his articles of the seventies on various subjects, mostly on "international" questions (*Internationales aus dem Volksstaat*\*), dated January 3, 1894, i.e., written a year and a half before his death, Engels wrote that in all his articles he used the word "Communist"; and *not* "Social-Democrat", because at that time the Proudhonists in France and the Lassalleans in Germany called themselves Social-Democrats.

"...For Marx and myself," continued Engels, "it was therefore absolutely impossible to use such a loose term to characterise our special point of view. Today things are different, and the word ["Social-Democrat"] may perhaps pass muster [mag passieren], inexact [*unpassend*, unsuitable] though it still is for a party whose economic programme is not merely socialist in general, but downright communist, and whose ultimate political aim is to overcome the whole state and, consequently, democracy as well. The names of *real* [Engels's italics] political parties, however, are never wholly appropriate; the party develops while the name stays."

The dialectician Engels remained true to dialectics to the end of his days. Marx and I, he said, had a splendid, scientifically exact name for the party, but there was no real party, i.e., no mass proletarian party. Now (at the end of the nineteenth century) there was a real party, but its name was scientifically wrong. Never mind, it would "pass muster", so long as the party *developed*, so long as the scientific inaccuracy of its name was not hidden from it and did not hinder its development in the right direction!

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\* On International Topics from "The People's State".—Ed.



Perhaps some wit would console us Bolsheviks in the manner of Engels: we have a real party, it is developing splendidly; even such a meaningless and ugly term as "Bolshevik" will "pass muster", although it expresses nothing whatever but the purely accidental fact that at the Brussels-London Congress of 1903 we were in the majority.\* Perhaps now that the persecution of our Party by republicans and "revolutionary" petty-bourgeois democrats in July and August has earned the name "Bolshevik" such universal respect, now that, in addition, this persecution marks the tremendous historical progress our Party has made in its *real* development—perhaps now even I might hesitate to insist on the suggestion I made in April to change the name of our Party. Perhaps I would propose a "compromise" to my comrades, namely, to call ourselves the Communist Party, but to retain the word "Bolsheviks" in brackets.

But the question of the name of the Party is incomparably less important than the question of the attitude of the revolutionary proletariat to the state.

In the usual arguments about the state, the mistake is constantly made against which Engels warned and which we have in passing indicated above, namely, it is constantly forgotten that the abolition of the state means also the abolition of democracy: that the withering away of the state means the withering away of democracy.

At first sight this assertion seems exceedingly strange and incomprehensible; indeed, someone may even suspect us of expecting the advent of a system of society in which the principle of subordination of the minority to the majority will not be observed—for democracy means the recognition of this very principle.

No, democracy is *not* identical with the subordination of the minority to the majority. Democracy is a *state* which recognises the subordination of the minority to the majority, i.e., an organisation for the systematic use of *force* by one class against another, by one section of the population against another.

We set ourselves the ultimate aim of abolishing the state, i.e., all organised and systematic violence, all use of violence against people in general. We do not expect the advent of a system of society in which the principle of subordination of the minority to the majority will not be observed. In striving for socialism, however, we are convinced that it will develop into communism and, therefore, that the need for violence against people in general, for the *subordination* of one man to another, and of one section

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\* Majority in Russian is *bolshinstvo*; hence the name *Bolshevik*.—Tr.

of the population to another, will vanish altogether since people will *become accustomed* to observing the elementary conditions of social life *without violence* and *without subordination*.

In order to emphasise this element of habit, Engels speaks of a new *generation*, "reared in new, free social conditions", which will "be able to discard the entire lumber of the state"—of any state, including the democratic-republican state.

In order to explain this, it is necessary to analyse the economic basis of the withering away of the state.

## CHAPTER V

### THE ECONOMIC BASIS OF THE WITHERING AWAY OF THE STATE

Marx explains this question most thoroughly in his *Critique of the Gotha Programme* (letter to Bracke, May 5, 1875, which was not published until 1891 when it was printed in *Neue Zeit*, Vol. IX, 1, and which has appeared in Russian in a special edition). The polemical part of this remarkable work, which contains a criticism of Lassalleanism, has, so to speak, overshadowed its positive part, namely, the analysis of the connection between the development of communism and the withering away of the state.

#### 1. PRESENTATION OF THE QUESTION BY MARX

From a superficial comparison of Marx's letter to Bracke of May 5, 1875, with Engels's letter to Bebel of March 28, 1875, which we examined above, it might appear that Marx was much more of a "champion of the state" than Engels, and that the difference of opinion between the two writers on the question of the state was very considerable.

Engels suggested to Bebel that all chatter about the state be dropped altogether, that the word "state" be eliminated from the programme altogether and the word "community" substituted for it. Engels even declared that the Commune was no longer a state in the proper sense of the word. Yet Marx even spoke of the "future state in communist society", i.e., he would seem to recognise the need for the state even under communism.

But such a view would be fundamentally wrong. A closer examination shows that Marx's and Engels's views on the state and its withering away were completely identical, and that Marx's expression quoted above refers to the state in the process of *withering away*.

Clearly there can be no question of specifying the moment of the *future* "withering away", the more so since it will obviously be a lengthy process. The apparent difference between Marx and Engels is due to the fact that they dealt with different subjects and pursued different aims. Engels set out to show Bebel graphically, sharply and in broad outline the utter absurdity of the current prejudices concerning the state (shared to no small degree by Lassalle). Marx only touched upon *this* question in passing, being interested in another subject, namely, the *development* of communist society.

The whole theory of Marx is the application of the theory of development—in its most consistent, complete, considered and pithy form—to modern capitalism. Naturally, Marx was faced with the problem of applying this theory both to the *forthcoming* collapse of capitalism and to the *future* development of *future* communism.

On the basis of what *facts*, then, can the question of the future development of future communism be dealt with?

On the basis of the fact that it *has its origin* in capitalism, that it develops historically from capitalism, that it is the result of the action of a social force to which capitalism *gave birth*. There is no trace of an attempt on Marx's part to make up a utopia, to indulge in idle guess-work about what cannot be known. Marx treated the question of communism in the same way as a naturalist would treat the question of the development of, say, a new biological variety, once he knew that it had originated in such and such a way and was changing in such and such a definite direction.

To begin with, Marx brushed aside the confusion the Gotha Programme brought into the question of the relationship between state and society. He wrote:

" 'Present-day society' is capitalist society, which exists in all civilised countries, being more or less free from medieval admixture, more or less modified by the particular historical development of each country, more or less developed. On the other hand, the 'present-day state' changes with a country's frontier. It is different in the Prusso-German Empire from what it is in Switzerland, and different in England from what it is in the United States. 'The present-day state' is, therefore, a fiction.

"Nevertheless, the different states of the different civilised countries, in spite of their motley diversity of form, all have this in common, that they are based on modern bourgeois society, only one more or less capitalistically developed. They have, therefore, also certain essential characteristics in common. In this sense it is possible to speak of the 'present-day

state', in contrast with the future, in which its present root, bourgeois society, will have died off.

"The question then arises: what transformation will the state undergo in communist society? In other words, what social functions will remain in existence there that are analogous to present state functions? This question can only be answered scientifically, and one does not get a flea-hop nearer to the problem by a thousandfold combination of the word people with the word state."<sup>131</sup>

After thus ridiculing all talk about a "people's state", Marx formulated the question and gave warning, as it were, that those seeking a scientific answer to it should use only firmly-established scientific data.

The first fact that has been established most accurately by the whole theory of development, by science as a whole—a fact that was ignored by the utopians, and is ignored by the present-day opportunists, who are afraid of the socialist revolution—is that, historically, there must undoubtedly be a special stage, or a special phase, of *transition* from capitalism to communism.

## 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 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 representatives of the oppressing class shall represent and repress them in parliament!

But from this capitalist democracy—that is inevitably narrow and stealthily pushes aside the poor, and is therefore hypocritical and false 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 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 revolts, 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. Naturally, 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 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, therefore, 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, therefore, receives from society as much as he has given to it.

"Equality" apparently reigns supreme.

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

"Equal right," says Marx, we certainly do have here; but it is still a "bourgeois right", which, like every right, *implies inequality*. Every right is an application of an *equal* measure to *different* people who in fact are not alike, are not equal to one another. That is why "equal right" is 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, right would have to be unequal rather than equal."

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 right", 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. Right can never be higher than the economic structure of society and its cultural development conditioned thereby."

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

However, it 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 this is not yet communism, and it does not yet abolish "bourgeois right", which gives un-

equal individuals, in return for unequal (really unequal) amounts of labour, equal amounts of products.

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

Now, there is no other standard than that of "bourgeois right". To this extent, therefore, there still remains the need for a state, which, while safeguarding the common ownership of the means of production, would safeguard equality in labour and 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 right", 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 right be crossed in its entirety and society inscribe on its banners: From each according to his ability, to each according to his needs!"

Only now can we fully appreciate the correctness of Engels's remarks 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 can-



not 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 productive that they will voluntarily work *according to their ability*. "The narrow horizon of bourgeois right", 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 crossed. There will then be no need for society, in distributing 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,<sup>132</sup> 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, Chernovs 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 "anarcho-trenchists", as Ghe, one of the few anarchists who have still preserved a sense of honour and a conscience, has put it).

But the scientific distinction between socialism and communism is clear. What is usually called socialism was termed by Marx the "first", or lower, phase of communist society. 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* right." Of course, bourgeois right in regard to the distribution of *consumer* goods inevitably presupposes the existence of the *bourgeois state*, for right is nothing without an apparatus capable of *enforcing* the observance of the standards of right.

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

This may sound like a paradox or simply a dialectical conundrum of which Marxism is often accused by people who 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" right into communism, but indicated what is economically and politically inevitable in a society emerging *out of the womb of* capitalism.

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

Democracy means equality. The great significance of the proletariat's struggle for equality and of equality as a slogan will be clear if we correctly interpret it as meaning the abolition of *classes*. But democracy means only *formal* equality. And as soon as equality is achieved for all members of society *in relation* to ownership of the means of production, that is, equality of labour and 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, it, like every state, 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 *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 cleaning 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

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\* When the more important functions of the state are reduced to such accounting and control by the workers themselves, it will cease 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).



inevitably become so incredibly difficult, such a rare exception, and will probably be accompanied by such swift and severe punishment (for the armed workers are practical men and not sentimental intellectuals, and they will scarcely allow anyone to trifle with them), that the *necessity* of observing the simple, fundamental rules of 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.

## CHAPTER VI

### THE VULGARISATION OF MARXISM BY THE OPPORTUNISTS

The question of the relation of the state to the social revolution, and of the social revolution to the state, like the question of revolution generally, was given very little attention by the leading theoreticians and publicists of the Second International (1889-1914). But the most characteristic thing about the process of the gradual growth of opportunism that led to the collapse of the Second International in 1914 is the fact that even when these people were squarely faced with this question they *tried to evade* it or ignored it.

In general, it may be said that *evasiveness* over the question of the relation of the proletarian revolution to the state—an evasiveness which benefited and fostered opportunism—resulted in the *distortion* of Marxism and in its complete vulgarisation.

To characterise this lamentable process, if only briefly, we shall take the most prominent theoreticians of Marxism: Plekhanov and Kautsky.

#### 1. PLEKHANOV'S CONTROVERSY WITH THE ANARCHISTS

Plekhanov wrote a special pamphlet on the relation of anarchism to socialism, entitled *Anarchism and Socialism*, which was published in German in 1894.

In treating this subject, Plekhanov contrived completely to evade the most urgent, burning, and most politically essential issue in the struggle against anarchism, namely, the relation of the revolution to the state, and the question of the state in general! His pamphlet falls into two distinct parts: one of them is historical and literary, and contains valuable material on the

history of the ideas of Stirner, Proudhon and others; the other is philistine, and contains a clumsy dissertation on the theme that an anarchist cannot be distinguished from a bandit.

It is a most amusing combination of subjects and most characteristic of Plekhanov's whole activity on the eve of the revolution and during the revolutionary period in Russia. In fact, in the years 1905 to 1917, Plekhanov revealed himself as a semi-doctrinaire and semi-philistine who, in politics, trailed in the wake of the bourgeoisie.

We have seen how, in their controversy with the anarchists, Marx and Engels with the utmost thoroughness explained their views on the relation of revolution to the state. In 1891, in his foreword to Marx's *Critique of the Gotha Programme*, Engels wrote that "we"—that is, Engels and Marx—"were at that time, hardly two years after the Hague Congress of the [First] International,<sup>133</sup> engaged in the most violent struggle against Bakunin and his anarchists".

The anarchists had tried to claim the Paris Commune as their "own", so to say, as a corroboration of their doctrine; and they completely misunderstood its lessons and Marx's analysis of these lessons. Anarchism has given nothing even approximating true answers to the concrete political questions: Must the old state machine be *smashed*? And *what* should be put in its place?

But to speak of "anarchism and socialism" while completely evading the question of the state, and *disregarding* the whole development of Marxism before and after the Commune, meant inevitably slipping into opportunism. For what opportunism needs most of all is that the two questions just mentioned should *not* be raised at all. That *in itself* is a victory for opportunism.

## 2. KAUTSKY'S CONTROVERSY WITH THE OPPORTUNISTS

Undoubtedly, an immeasurably larger number of Kautsky's works have been translated into Russian than into any other language. It is not without reason that some German Social-Democrats say in jest that Kautsky is read more in Russia than in Germany (let us say, in parenthesis, that this jest has a far deeper historical meaning than those who first made it suspect. The Russian workers, by making in 1905 an unusually great and unprecedented demand for the best works of the best Social-Democratic literature in the world, and by receiving translations and editions of these works in quantities unheard of in other countries, rapidly transplanted, so to speak, the enormous experience of a neighbouring, more advanced country to the young soil of our proletarian movement).

Besides his popularisation of Marxism, Kautsky is particularly known in our country for his controversy with the opportunists, with Bernstein at their head. One fact, however, is almost unknown, one which cannot be ignored if we set out to investigate how Kautsky drifted into the morass of unbelievably disgraceful confusion and defence of social-chauvinism during the supreme crisis of 1914-15. This fact is as follows: shortly before he came out against the most prominent representatives of opportunism in France (Millerand and Jaurès) and in Germany (Bernstein), Kautsky betrayed very considerable vacillation. The Marxist *Zarya*,<sup>134</sup> which was published in Stuttgart in 1901-02, and advocated revolutionary proletarian views, was forced to *enter into controversy* with Kautsky and describe as "elastic" the half-hearted, evasive resolution, conciliatory towards the opportunists, that he proposed at the International Socialist Congress in Paris in 1900.<sup>135</sup> Kautsky's letters published in Germany reveal no less hesitancy on his part before he took the field against Bernstein.

Of immeasurably greater significance, however, is the fact that, in his very controversy with the opportunists, in his formulation of the question and his manner of treating it, we can now see, as we study the *history* of Kautsky's latest betrayal of Marxism, his systematic deviation towards opportunism precisely on the question of the state.

Let us take Kautsky's first important work against opportunism, *Bernstein and the Social-Democratic Programme*. Kautsky refutes Bernstein in detail, but here is a characteristic thing:

Bernstein, in his *Premises of Socialism*, of Herostratean fame, accuses Marxism of "*Blanquism*" (an accusation since repeated thousands of times by the opportunists and liberal bourgeoisie in Russia against the revolutionary Marxists, the Bolsheviks). In this connection Bernstein dwells particularly on Marx's *The Civil War in France*, and tries, quite unsuccessfully, as we have seen, to identify Marx's views on the lessons of the Commune with those of Proudhon. Bernstein pays particular attention to the conclusion which Marx emphasised in his 1872 preface to the *Communist Manifesto*, namely, that "the working class cannot simply lay hold of the ready-made state machinery and wield it for its own purposes".

This statement "pleased" Bernstein so much that he used it no less than three times in his book, interpreting it in the most distorted, opportunist way.

As we have seen, Marx meant that the working class must *smash, break, shatter* (*Sprengung*, explosion—the expression used by Engels) the whole state machine. But according to Bernstein it would appear as though Marx in these words warned the working class *against* excessive revolutionary zeal when seizing power.

A cruder and more hideous distortion of Marx's idea cannot be imagined.

How, then, did Kautsky proceed in his most detailed refutation of Bernsteinism?

He refrained from analysing the utter distortion of Marxism by opportunism on this point. He cited the above-quoted passage from Engels's preface to Marx's *Civil War* and said that according to Marx the working class cannot *simply* take over the *ready-made* state machinery, but that, generally speaking, it *can* take it over—and that was all. Kautsky did not say a word about the fact that Bernstein attributed to Marx the *very opposite* of Marx's real idea, that since 1852 Marx had formulated the task of the proletarian revolution as being to "smash" the state machine.

The result was that the most essential distinction between Marxism and opportunism on the subject of the tasks of the proletarian revolution was slurred over by Kautsky!

"We can quite safely leave the solution of the problem of the proletarian dictatorship to the future," said Kautsky, writing "*against*" Bernstein. (P. 172, German edition.)

This is not a polemic *against* Bernstein, but, in essence, a *concession* to him, a surrender to opportunism; for at present the opportunists ask nothing better than to "quite safely leave to the future" all fundamental questions of the tasks of the proletarian revolution.

From 1852 to 1891, or for forty years, Marx and Engels taught the proletariat that it must smash the state machine. Yet, in 1899, Kautsky, confronted with the complete betrayal of Marxism by the opportunists on this point, fraudulently *substituted* for the question whether it is necessary to smash this machine the question of the concrete forms in which it is to be smashed, and then sought refuge behind the "indisputable" (and barren) philistine truth that concrete forms cannot be known in advance!!

A gulf separates Marx and Kautsky over their attitudes towards the proletarian party's task of training the working class for revolution.

Let us take the next, more mature, work by Kautsky, which was also largely devoted to a refutation of opportunist errors. It is his pamphlet, *The Social Revolution*. In this pamphlet, the author chose as his special theme the question of "the proletarian revolution" and "the proletarian regime". He gave much that was exceedingly valuable, but he *avoided* the question of the state. Throughout the pamphlet the author speaks of the winning of state power—and no more; that is, he has chosen a formula



which makes a concession to the opportunists, inasmuch as it *admits* the possibility of seizing power *without* destroying the state machine. The very thing which Marx in 1872 declared to be "obsolete" in the programme of the *Communist Manifesto*, is *revived* by Kautsky in 1902.

A special section in the pamphlet is devoted to the "forms and weapons of the social revolution". Here Kautsky speaks of the mass political strike, of civil war, and of the "instruments of the might of the modern large state, its bureaucracy and the army"; but he does not say a word about what the Commune has already taught the workers. Evidently, it was not without reason that Engels issued a warning, particularly to the German socialists, against "superstitious reverence" for the state.

Kautsky treats the matter as follows: the victorious proletariat "will carry out the democratic programme", and he goes on to formulate its clauses. But he does not say a word about the new material provided by 1871 on the subject of the replacement of bourgeois democracy by proletarian democracy. Kautsky disposes of the question by using such "impressive-sounding" banalities as:

"Still, it goes without saying that we shall not achieve supremacy under the present conditions. Revolution itself presupposes long and deep-going struggles, which, in themselves, will change our present political and social structure."

Undoubtedly, this "goes without saying", just as the fact that horses eat oats or the Volga flows into the Caspian. Only it is a pity that an empty and bombastic phrase about "deep-going" struggles is used to *avoid* a question of vital importance to the revolutionary proletariat, namely, *what* makes *its* revolution "deep-going" in relation to the state, to democracy, as distinct from previous, non-proletarian revolutions.

By avoiding this question, Kautsky *in practice* makes a concession to opportunism on this most essential point, although *in words* he declares stern war against it and stresses the importance of the "idea of revolution" (how much is this "idea" worth when one is afraid to teach the workers the concrete lessons of revolution?), or says, "revolutionary idealism before everything else", or announces that the English workers are now "hardly more than petty bourgeois".

"The most varied forms of enterprises—bureaucratic [??], trade unionist, co-operative, private ... can exist side by side in socialist society," Kautsky writes. "...There are, for example, enterprises which cannot do without a bureaucratic [??] organisation, such as the railways. Here the democratic organisation may take the following shape: the workers elect delegates who form a sort of parliament, which establishes the working regulations and supervises the management of the bureaucratic apparatus. The management

of other enterprises may be transferred to the trade unions, and still others may become co-operative enterprises."

This argument is erroneous; it is a step backward compared with the explanations Marx and Engels gave in the seventies, using the lessons of the Commune as an example.

As far as the supposedly necessary "bureaucratic" organisation is concerned, there is no difference whatever between a railway and any other enterprise in large-scale machine industry, any factory, large shop, or large-scale capitalist agricultural enterprise. The technique of all these enterprises makes absolutely imperative the strictest discipline, the utmost precision on the part of everyone in carrying out his allotted task, for otherwise the whole enterprise may come to a stop, or machinery or the finished product may be damaged. In all these enterprises the workers will, of course, "elect delegates who will form *a sort of parliament*".

The whole point, however, is that this "sort of parliament" will *not* be a parliament in the sense of a bourgeois parliamentary institution. The whole point is that this "sort of parliament" will *not* merely "establish the working regulations and supervise the management of the bureaucratic apparatus", as Kautsky, whose thinking does not go beyond the bounds of bourgeois parliamentarism, imagines. In socialist society, the "sort of parliament" consisting of workers' deputies will, of course, "establish the working regulations and supervise the management" of the "apparatus", *but* this apparatus will *not* be "bureaucratic". The workers, after winning political power, will smash the old bureaucratic apparatus, shatter it to its very foundations, and raze it to the ground; they will replace it by a new one, consisting of the very same workers and other employees, *against* whose transformation into bureaucrats the measures will at once be taken which were specified in detail by Marx and Engels: (1) not only election, but also recall at any time; (2) pay not to exceed that of a workman; (3) immediate introduction of control and supervision by *all*, so that *all* may become "bureaucrats" for a time and that, therefore, *nobody* may be able to become a "bureaucrat".

Kautsky has not reflected at all on Marx's words: "The Commune was a working, not a parliamentary, body, executive and legislative at the same time."

Kautsky has not understood at all the difference between bourgeois parliamentarism, which combines democracy (*not for the people*) with bureaucracy (*against the people*), and proletarian democracy, which will take immediate steps to cut bureaucracy down to the roots, and which will be able to carry these measures through to the end, to the complete abolition of bureaucracy, to the introduction of complete democracy for the people.

Kautsky here displays the same old "superstitious reverence" for the state, and "superstitious belief" in bureaucracy.

Let us now pass to the last and best of Kautsky's works against the opportunists, his pamphlet *The Road to Power* (which, I believe, has not been published in Russian, for it appeared in 1909, when reaction was at its height in our country). This pamphlet is a big step forward, since it does not deal with the revolutionary programme in general, as the pamphlet of 1899 against Bernstein, or with the tasks of the social revolution irrespective of the time of its occurrence, as the 1902 pamphlet, *The Social Revolution*; it deals with the concrete conditions which compel us to recognise that the "era of revolutions" is *setting in*.

The author explicitly points to the aggravation of class antagonisms in general and to imperialism, which plays a particularly important part in this respect. After the "revolutionary period of 1789-1871" in Western Europe, he says, a similar period began in the East in 1905. A world war is approaching with menacing rapidity. "It [the proletariat] can no longer talk of premature revolution." "We have entered a revolutionary period." The "revolutionary era is beginning".

These statements are perfectly clear. This pamphlet of Kautsky's should serve as a measure of comparison of what the German Social-Democrats *promised to be* before the imperialist war and the depth of degradation to which they, including Kautsky himself, sank when the war broke out. "The present situation," Kautsky wrote in the pamphlet under survey, "is fraught with the danger that we [i.e., the German Social-Democrats] may easily appear to be more 'moderate' than we really are." It turned out that in reality the German Social-Democratic Party was much more moderate and opportunist than it appeared to be!

It is all the more characteristic, therefore, that although Kautsky so explicitly declared that the era of revolutions had already begun, in the pamphlet which he himself said was devoted to an analysis of the "*political* revolution", he again completely avoided the question of the state.

These evasions of the question, these omissions and equivocations, inevitably added up to that complete swing-over to opportunism with which we shall now have to deal.

Kautsky, the German Social-Democrats' spokesman, seems to have declared: I abide by revolutionary views (1899), I recognise, above all, the inevitability of the social revolution of the proletariat (1902), I recognise the advent of a new era of revolutions (1909). Still, I am going back on what Marx said as early as 1852, since the question of the tasks of the proletarian revolution in relation to the state is being raised (1912).



It was in this point-blank form that the question was put in Kautsky's controversy with Pannekoek.

### 3. KAUTSKY'S CONTROVERSY WITH PANNEKOEK

In opposing Kautsky, Pannekoek came out as one of the representatives of the "Left radical" trend which included Rosa Luxemburg, Karl Radek and others. Advocating revolutionary tactics, they were united in the conviction that Kautsky was going over to the "Centre", which wavered in an unprincipled manner between Marxism and opportunism. This view was proved perfectly correct by the war, when this "Centrist" (wrongly called Marxist) trend, or Kautskyism, revealed itself in all its repulsive wretchedness.

In an article touching on the question of the state, entitled "Mass Action and Revolution" (*Neue Zeit*, 1912, Vol. XXX, 2), Pannekoek described Kautsky's attitude as one of "passive radicalism", as "a theory of inactive expectancy". "Kautsky refuses to see the process of revolution," wrote Pannekoek (p. 616). In presenting the matter in this way, Pannekoek approached the subject which interests us, namely, the tasks of the proletarian revolution in relation to the state.

"The struggle of the proletariat," he wrote, "is not merely a struggle against the bourgeoisie *for* state power, but a struggle *against* state power.... The content of this [the proletarian] revolution is the destruction and dissolution [Auflösung] of the instruments of power of the state with the aid of the instruments of power of the proletariat (p. 544). The struggle will cease only when, as the result of it, the state organisation is completely destroyed. The organisation of the majority will then have demonstrated its superiority by destroying the organisation of the ruling minority." (P. 548.)

The formulation in which Pannekoek presented his ideas suffers from serious defects. But its meaning is clear nonetheless, and it is interesting to note *how* Kautsky combated it.

"Up to now," he wrote, "the antithesis between the Social-Democrats and the anarchists has been that the former wished to win state power while the latter wished to destroy it. Pannekoek wants to do both." (P. 724.)

Although Pannekoek's exposition lacks precision and concreteness—not to speak of other shortcomings of his article which have no bearing on the present subject—Kautsky seized precisely on the point of *principle* raised by Pannekoek; and *on this fundamental point of principle* Kautsky completely abandoned the Marxist position and went over wholly to opportunism. His definition of the distinction between the Social-Democrats and the anarchists is absolutely wrong; he completely vulgarises and distorts Marxism.



The distinction between the Marxists and the anarchists is this: (1) The former, while aiming at the complete abolition of the state, recognise that this aim can only be achieved after classes have been abolished by the socialist revolution, as the result of the establishment of socialism, which leads to the withering away of the state. The latter want to abolish the state completely overnight, not understanding the conditions under which the state can be abolished. (2) The former recognise that after the proletariat has won political power it must completely destroy the old state machine and replace it by a new one consisting of an organisation of the armed workers, after the type of the Commune. The latter, while insisting on the destruction of the state machine, have a very vague idea of *what* the proletariat will put in its place and *how* it will use its revolutionary power. The anarchists even deny that the revolutionary proletariat should use the state power, they reject its revolutionary dictatorship. (3) The former demand that the proletariat be trained for revolution by utilising the present state. The anarchists reject this.

In this controversy, it is not Kautsky but Pannekoek who represents Marxism, for it was Marx who taught that the proletariat cannot simply win state power in the sense that the old state apparatus passes into new hands, but must smash this apparatus, must break it and replace it by a new one.

Kautsky abandons Marxism for the opportunist camp, for this destruction of the state machine, which is utterly unacceptable to the opportunists, completely disappears from his argument, and he leaves a loophole for them in that "conquest" may be interpreted as the simple acquisition of a majority.

To cover up his distortion of Marxism, Kautsky behaves like a doctrinaire: he puts forward a "quotation" from Marx himself. In 1850 Marx wrote that a "resolute centralisation of power in the hands of the state authority" was necessary, and Kautsky triumphantly asks: does Pannekoek want to destroy "Centralism"?

This is simply a trick, like Bernstein's identification of the views of Marxism and Proudhonism on the subject of federalism as against centralism.

Kautsky's "quotation" is neither here nor there. Centralism is possible with both the old and the new state machine. If the workers voluntarily unite their armed forces, this will be centralism, but it will be based on the "complete destruction" of the centralised state apparatus—the standing army, the police and the bureaucracy. Kautsky acts like an outright swindler by evading the perfectly well-known arguments of Marx and Engels on the Commune and plucking out a quotation which has nothing to do with the point at issue.

"Perhaps he [Pannekoek]," Kautsky continues, "wants to abolish the state functions of the officials? But we cannot do without officials even in the party and the trade unions, let alone in the state administration. And our programme does not demand the abolition of state officials, but that they be elected by the people. . . . We are discussing here not the form the administrative apparatus of the 'future state' will assume, but whether our political struggle abolishes [literally *dissolves*—*auföst*] the state power *before we have captured it* [Kautsky's italics]. Which ministry with its officials could be abolished?" Then follows an enumeration of the ministries of education, justice, finance and war. "No, not one of the present ministries will be removed by our political struggle against the government. . . . I repeat, in order to prevent misunderstanding: we are not discussing here the form the 'future state' will be given by the victorious Social-Democrats, but how the present state is changed by our opposition." (P. 725.)

This is an obvious trick. Pannekoek raised the question of *revolution*. Both the title of his article and the passages quoted above clearly indicate this. By skipping to the question of "opposition", Kautsky substitutes the opportunist for the revolutionary point of view. What he says means: at present we are an opposition; what we shall be *after* we have captured power, that we shall see. *Revolution has vanished!* And that is exactly what the opportunists wanted.

The point at issue is neither opposition nor political struggle in general, but *revolution*. Revolution consists in the proletariat *destroying* the "administrative apparatus" and the *whole* state machine, replacing it by a new one, made up of the armed workers. Kautsky displays a "superstitious reverence" for "ministries"; but why can they not be replaced, say, by committees of specialists working under sovereign, all-powerful Soviets of Workers' and Soldiers' Deputies?

The point is not at all whether the "ministries" will remain, or whether "committees of specialists" or some other bodies will be set up; that is quite immaterial. The point is whether the old state machine (bound by thousands of threads to the bourgeoisie and permeated through and through with routine and inertia) shall remain, or be *destroyed* and replaced by a *new* one. Revolution consists not in the new class commanding, governing with the aid of the *old* state machine, but in this class *smashing* this machine and commanding, governing with the aid of a *new* machine. Kautsky slurs over this *basic* idea of Marxism, or he does not understand it at all.

His question about officials clearly shows that he does not understand the lessons of the Commune or the teachings of Marx. "We cannot do without officials even in the party and the trade unions. . . ."

We cannot do without officials *under capitalism*, under the *rule of the bourgeoisie*. The proletariat is oppressed, the working people are enslaved by capitalism. Under capitalism, democ-

racy is restricted, cramped, curtailed, mutilated by all the conditions of wage slavery, and the poverty and misery of the people. This and this alone is the reason why the functionaries of our political organisations and trade unions are corrupted—or rather tend to be corrupted—by the conditions of capitalism and betray a tendency to become bureaucrats, i.e., privileged persons divorced from the people and standing *above* the people.

That is the *essence* of bureaucracy; and until the capitalists have been expropriated and the bourgeoisie overthrown, *even* proletarian functionaries will inevitably be “bureaucratised” to a certain extent.

According to Kautsky, since elected functionaries will remain under socialism, so will officials, so will the bureaucracy! This is exactly where he is wrong. Marx, referring to the example of the Commune, showed that under socialism functionaries will cease to be “bureaucrats”, to be “officials”, they will cease to be so *in proportion as*—in addition to the principle of election of officials—the principle of recall at any time is *also* introduced, as salaries are reduced to the level of the wages of the average workman, *and* as parliamentary institutions are replaced by “working bodies, executive and legislative at the same time”.

As a matter of fact, the whole of Kautsky’s argument against Pannekoek, and particularly the former’s wonderful point that we cannot do without officials even in our party and trade union organisations, is merely a repetition of Bernstein’s old “arguments” against Marxism in general. In his renegade book, *The Premises of Socialism*, Bernstein combats the ideas of “primitive” democracy, combats what he calls “doctrinaire democracy”: binding mandates, unpaid officials, impotent central representative bodies, etc. To prove that this “primitive” democracy is unsound, Bernstein refers to the experience of the British trade unions, as interpreted by the Webbs. Seventy years of development “in absolute freedom”, he says (p. 137, German edition), convinced the trade unions that primitive democracy was useless, and they replaced it by ordinary democracy, i.e., parliamentarism combined with bureaucracy.

In reality, the trade unions did not develop “in absolute freedom” *but in absolute capitalist slavery*, under which, it goes without saying, a number of concessions to the prevailing evil, violence, falsehood, exclusion of the poor from the affairs of “higher” administration, “cannot be done without”. Under socialism much of “primitive” democracy will inevitably be revived, since, for the first time in the history of civilised society, the *mass* of the population will rise to taking an *independent* part, not only in voting and elections, *but also in the everyday*



*administration of the state.* Under socialism *all* will govern in turn and will soon become accustomed to no one governing.

Marx's critico-analytical genius saw in the practical measures of the Commune the *turning-point* which the opportunists fear and do not want to recognise because of their cowardice, because they do not want to break irrevocably with the bourgeoisie, and which the anarchists do not want to see, either because they are in a hurry or because they do not understand at all the conditions of great social changes. "We must not even think of destroying the old state machine; how can we do without ministries and officials?" argues the opportunist, who is completely saturated with philistinism and who, at bottom, not only does not believe in revolution, in the creative power of revolution, but lives in mortal dread of it (like our Mensheviks and Socialist-Revolutionaries).

"We must think *only* of destroying the old state machine; it is no use probing into the *concrete* lessons of earlier proletarian revolutions and analysing *what* to put in the place of what has been destroyed, and *how*," argues the anarchist (the best of the anarchists, of course, and not those who, following the Kropotkins and Co., trail behind the bourgeoisie): Consequently, the tactics of the anarchist become the tactics of *despair* instead of a ruthlessly bold revolutionary effort to solve concrete problems while taking into account the practical conditions of the mass movement.

Marx teaches us to avoid both errors; he teaches us to act with supreme boldness in destroying the entire old state machine, and at the same time he teaches us to put the question concretely: the Commune was able in the space of a few weeks to *start* building a *new*, proletarian state machine by introducing such-and-such measures to provide wider democracy and to uproot bureaucracy. Let us learn revolutionary boldness from the Communards; let us see in their practical measures the *outline* of really urgent and immediately possible measures, and then, *following this road*, we shall achieve the complete destruction of bureaucracy.

The possibility of this destruction is guaranteed by the fact that socialism will shorten the working day, will raise the *people* to a new life, will create such conditions for the *majority* of the population as will enable *everybody*, without exception, to perform "state functions", and this will lead to the *complete withering away* of every form of state in general.

"Its object [the object of the mass strike]," Kautsky continues, "cannot be to *destroy* the state power; its only object can be to make the government compliant on some specific question, or to replace a government hostile to the proletariat by one willing to meet it half-way [entgegenkommende]....



But never, under no circumstances, can it [that is, the proletarian victory over a hostile government] lead to the *destruction* of the state power; it can lead only to a certain *shifting* [Verschiebung] of the balance of forces *within the state power*. . . . The aim of our political struggle remains, as in the past, the conquest of state power by winning a majority in parliament and by raising parliament to the rank of master of the government." (Pp. 726, 727, 732.)

This is nothing but the purest and most vulgar opportunism: repudiating revolution in deeds, while accepting it in words. Kautsky's thoughts go no further than a "government . . . willing to meet the proletariat half-way"—a step backward to philistinism compared with 1847, when the *Communist Manifesto* proclaimed "the organisation of the proletariat as the ruling class".

Kautsky will have to achieve his beloved "unity" with the Scheidemanns, Plekhanovs and Vanderveldes, all of whom agree to fight for a government "willing to meet the proletariat half-way".

We, however, shall break with these traitors to socialism, and we shall fight for the complete destruction of the old state machine, in order that the armed proletariat itself *may become the government*. These are two vastly different things.

Kautsky will have to enjoy the pleasant company of the Legiens and Davids, Plekhanovs, Potresovs, Tseretelis and Chernovs, who are quite willing to work for the "shifting of the balance of forces within the state power", for "winning a majority in parliament", and "raising parliament to the rank of master of the government". A most worthy object, which is wholly acceptable to the opportunists and which keeps everything within the bounds of the bourgeois parliamentary republic.

We, however, shall break with the opportunists; and the entire class-conscious proletariat will be with us in the fight—not to "shift the balance of forces", but to *overthrow the bourgeoisie, to destroy bourgeois parliamentarism*, for a democratic republic after the type of the Commune, or a republic of Soviets of Workers' and Soldiers' Deputies, for the revolutionary dictatorship of the proletariat.

\* . \* \*

To the right of Kautsky in international socialism there are trends such as *Socialist Monthly*<sup>136</sup> in Germany (Legien, David, Kolb and many others, including the Scandinavians Stauning and Branting); Jaurès's followers and Vandervelde in France and Belgium; Turati, Trèves and other Right-wingers of the Italian Party; the Fabians and "Independents" (the Independent Labour Party, which, in fact, has always been dependent on the Liberals) in Britain; and the like. All these gentry, who play a tremendous, very often a predominant role in the parlia-

mentary work and the press of their parties, repudiate outright the dictatorship of the proletariat and pursue a policy of undisguised opportunism. In the eyes of these gentry, the "dictatorship" of the proletariat "contradicts" democracy!! There is really no essential distinction between them and the petty-bourgeois democrats.

Taking this circumstance into consideration, we are justified in drawing the conclusion that the Second International, that is, the overwhelming majority of its official representatives, has completely sunk into opportunism. The experience of the Commune has been not only ignored, but distorted. Far from inculcating in the workers' minds the idea that the time is nearing when they must act to smash the old state machine, replace it by a new one, and in this way make their political rule the foundation for the socialist reorganisation of society, they have actually preached to the masses the very opposite and have depicted the "conquest of power" in a way that has left thousands of loopholes for opportunism.

The distortion and hushing up of the question of the relation of the proletarian revolution to the state could not but play an immense role at a time when states, which possess a military apparatus expanded as a consequence of imperialist rivalry, have become military monsters which are exterminating millions of people in order to settle the issue as to whether Britain or Germany—this or that finance capital—is to rule the world.\*

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\* The MS. continues as follows:

## CHAPTER VII

### THE EXPERIENCE OF THE RUSSIAN REVOLUTIONS OF 1905 AND 1917

The subject indicated in the title of this chapter is so vast that volumes could and should be written about it. In the present pamphlet we shall have to confine ourselves, naturally, to the most important lessons provided by experience, those bearing directly upon the tasks of the proletariat in the revolution with regard to state power. (Here the manuscript breaks off.—*Ed.*)

### POSTSCRIPT TO THE FIRST EDITION

This pamphlet was written in August and September 1917. I had already drawn up the plan for the next, the seventh, chapter, "The Experience of the Russian Revolutions of 1905 and 1917". Apart from the title, however, I had no time to write a single line of the chapter; I was "interrupted" by a political crisis—the eve of the October revolution of 1917. Such an "interruption" can only be welcomed; but the writing of the second part of the pamphlet ("The Experience of the Russian Revolutions of 1905 and 1917") will probably have to be put off for a long time. It is more pleasant and useful to go through the "experience of the revolution" than to write about it.

*The Author*

Petrograd  
November 30, 1917

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## THE BOLSHEVIKS MUST ASSUME POWER<sup>137</sup>

A LETTER TO THE CENTRAL COMMITTEE AND THE PETROGRAD  
AND MOSCOW COMMITTEES OF THE R.S.D.L.P.(B.)

The Bolsheviks, having obtained a majority in the Soviets of Workers' and Soldiers' Deputies of both capitals, can and *must* take state power into their own hands.

They can because the active majority of revolutionary elements in the two chief cities is large enough to carry the people with it, to overcome the opponent's resistance, to smash him, and to gain and retain power. For the Bolsheviks, by immediately proposing a democratic peace, by immediately giving the land to the peasants and by re-establishing the democratic institutions and liberties which have been mangled and shattered by Kerensky, will form a government which *nobody* will be able to overthrow.

The majority of the people are *on our side*. This was proved by the long and painful course of events from May 6 to August 31 and to September 12.<sup>138</sup> The majority gained in the Soviets of the metropolitan cities *resulted* from the people coming over *to our side*. The wavering of the Socialist-Revolutionaries and Mensheviks and the increase in the number of internationalists within their ranks prove the same thing.

The Democratic Conference represents *not* a majority of the revolutionary people, but *only the compromising upper strata of the petty bourgeoisie*. We must not be deceived by the election figures; elections prove nothing. Compare the elections to the city councils of Petrograd and Moscow with the elections to the Soviets. Compare the elections in Moscow with the Moscow strike of August 12. Those are objective facts regarding that majority of revolutionary elements that are leading the people.

The Democratic Conference is deceiving the peasants; it is giving them neither peace nor land.

A Bolshevik government *alone* will satisfy the demands of the peasants.



Why must the Bolsheviks assume power *at this very moment*?

Because the impending surrender of Petrograd will make our chances a hundred times less favourable.

And it is *not in our power* to prevent the surrender of Petrograd while the army is headed by Kerensky and Co.

Nor can we "wait" for the Constituent Assembly, for by surrendering Petrograd Kerensky and Co. *can* always *frustrate* its convocation. Our Party alone, on taking power, can secure the Constituent Assembly's convocation<sup>139</sup>; it will then accuse the other parties of procrastination and will be able to substantiate its accusations.

A separate peace between the British and German imperialists must and can be prevented, but only by quick action.

The people are tired of the waverings of the Mensheviks and Socialist-Revolutionaries. It is only our victory in the metropolitan cities that will carry the peasants with us.

\* \* \*

We are concerned now not with the "day", or "moment" of insurrection in the narrow sense of the word. That will be only decided by the common voice of those who are *in contact* with the workers and soldiers, with *the masses*.

The point is that now, at the Democratic Conference, our Party has virtually *its own congress*, and this congress (whether it wishes to or not) *must* decide the *fate of the revolution*.

The point is to make the *task* clear to the Party. The present task must be an *armed uprising* in Petrograd and Moscow (with its region), the seizing of power and the overthrow of the government. We must consider *how* to agitate for this without expressly saying as much in the press.

We must remember and weigh Marx's words about insurrection, "*Insurrection is an art*", etc.

\* \* \*

It would be naïve to wait for a "formal" majority for the Bolsheviks. No revolution ever waits for *that*. Kerensky and Co. are not waiting either, and are preparing to surrender Petrograd. It is the wretched waverings of the Democratic Conference that are bound to exhaust the patience of the workers of Petrograd and Moscow! History will not forgive us if we do not assume power now.

There is no apparatus? There is an apparatus—the Soviets and the democratic organisations. The international situation *right now*, on *the eve* of the conclusion of a separate peace

between the British and the Germans, is *in our favour*. To propose peace to the nations right now means *to win*.

By taking power both in Moscow and in Petrograd *at once* (it doesn't matter which comes first, Moscow may possibly begin), we shall win *absolutely and unquestionably*.

*N. Lenin*

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## MARXISM AND INSURRECTION

A LETTER TO THE CENTRAL COMMITTEE OF THE R.S.D.L.P. (B.)

One of the most vicious and probably most widespread distortions of Marxism resorted to by the dominant "socialist" parties is the opportunist lie that preparation for insurrection, and generally the treatment of insurrection as an art, is "Blanquism".

Bernstein, the leader of opportunism, has already earned himself unfortunate fame by accusing Marxism of Blanquism, and when our present-day opportunists cry Blanquism they do not improve on or "enrich" the meagre "ideas" of Bernstein one little bit.

Marxists are accused of Blanquism for treating insurrection as an art! Can there be a more flagrant perversion of the truth, when not a single Marxist will deny that it was Marx who expressed himself on this score in the most definite, precise and categorical manner, referring to insurrection specifically as an *art*, saying that it must be treated as an art, that you must *win* the first success and then proceed from success to success, never ceasing the *offensive* against the enemy, taking advantage of his confusion, etc., etc.?

To be successful, insurrection must rely not upon conspiracy and not upon a party, but upon the advanced class. That is the first point. Insurrection must rely upon a *revolutionary upsurge of the people*. That is the second point. Insurrection must rely upon that *turning-point* in the history of the growing revolution when the activity of the advanced ranks of the people is at its height, and when the *vacillations* in the ranks of the enemy and *in the ranks of the weak, half-hearted and irresolute friends of the revolution* are strongest. That is the third point. And these three conditions for raising the question of insurrection distinguish *Marxism from Blanquism*.

Once these conditions exist, however, to refuse to treat insurrection as an *art* is a betrayal of Marxism and a betrayal of the revolution.

To show that it is precisely the present moment that the Party *must* recognise as the one in which the entire course of events has objectively placed *insurrection* on the order of the day and that insurrection must be treated as an art, it will perhaps be best to use the method of comparison, and to draw a parallel between July 3-4 and the September days.

On July 3-4 it could have been argued, without violating the truth, that the correct thing to do was to take power, for our enemies would in any case have accused us of insurrection and ruthlessly treated us as rebels. However, to have decided on this account in favour of taking power at that time would have been wrong, because the objective conditions for the victory of the insurrection did not exist.

(1) We still lacked the support of the class which is the vanguard of the revolution.

We still did not have a majority among the workers and soldiers of Petrograd and Moscow. Now we have a majority in both Soviets. It was created *solely* by the history of July and August, by the experience of the "ruthless treatment" meted out to the Bolsheviks, and by the experience of the Kornilov revolt.

2) There was no country-wide revolutionary upsurge at that time. There is now, after the Kornilov revolt; the situation in the provinces and assumption of power by the Soviets in many localities prove this.

(3) At that time there was no *vacillation* on any serious political scale among our enemies and among the irresolute petty bourgeoisie. Now the vacillation is enormous. Our main enemy, Allied and world imperialism (for world imperialism is headed by the "Allies"), *has begun to waver* between a war to a victorious finish and a separate peace directed against Russia. Our petty-bourgeois democrats, having clearly lost their majority among the people, have begun to vacillate enormously, and have rejected a bloc, i.e., a coalition, with the Cadets.

(4) Therefore, an insurrection on July 3-4 would have been a mistake; we could not have retained power either physically or politically. We could not have retained it physically even though Petrograd was at times in our hands, because at that time our workers and soldiers would not have *fought and died* for Petrograd. There was not at the time that "savageness", or fierce hatred *both of the Kerenskys and of the Tseretelis and Chernovs*. Our people had still not been tempered by the experience of the persecution of the Bolsheviks in which the Socialist-Revolutionaries and Mensheviks participated.

We could not have retained power politically on July 3-4 because, *before the Kornilov revolt*, the army and the provinces could and would have marched against Petrograd.



Now the picture is entirely different.

We have the following of the majority of a *class*, the vanguard of the revolution, the vanguard of the people, which is capable of carrying the masses with it.

We have the following of the *majority* of the people, because Chernov's resignation, while by no means the only symptom, is the most striking and obvious symptom that the peasants *will not receive land* from the Socialist-Revolutionaries' bloc (or from the Socialist-Revolutionaries themselves). And that is the chief reason for the popular character of the revolution.

We are in the advantageous position of a party that knows for certain which way to go at a time when *imperialism as a whole* and the Menshevik and Socialist-Revolutionary bloc as a whole are vacillating in an incredible fashion.

*Our victory is assured*, for the people are close to desperation, and we are showing the entire people a sure way out; we demonstrated to the entire people during the "Kornilov days" the value of our leadership, and then *proposed* to the politicians of the bloc a compromise, *which they rejected*, although there is no let-up in their vacillations.

It would be a great mistake to think that our offer of a compromise had not *yet* been rejected, and that the Democratic Conference may *still* accept it. The compromise was proposed *by a party to parties*; it could not have been proposed in any other way. It was rejected *by parties*. The Democratic Conference is a *conference*, and nothing more. One thing must not be forgotten, namely, that the *majority* of the revolutionary people, the poor, embittered peasants, are not represented in it. It is a conference of *a minority of the people*—this obvious truth must not be forgotten. It would be a big mistake, sheer parliamentary cretinism<sup>140</sup> on our part, if we were to regard the Democratic Conference as a parliament; for even *if it were* to proclaim itself a permanent and sovereign parliament of the revolution, it would nevertheless *decide nothing*. The power of decision lies *outside it* in the working-class quarters of Petrograd and Moscow.

All the objective conditions exist for a successful insurrection. We have the exceptional advantage of a situation in which *only* our victory in the insurrection can put an end to that most painful thing on earth, vacillation, which has worn the people out; in which only our victory in the insurrection will give the peasants land immediately; a situation in which *only our* victory in the insurrection can *foil* the game of a separate peace directed against the revolution—foil it by publicly proposing a fuller, juster and earlier peace, a peace that will *benefit* the revolution.

Finally, our Party alone *can*, by a victorious insurrection,

save Petrograd; for if our proposal for peace is rejected, if we do not secure even an armistice, then *we* shall become "defencists", we shall place ourselves *at the head of the war parties*, we shall be the *war party par excellence*, and we shall conduct the war in a truly revolutionary manner. We shall take away all the bread and boots from the capitalists. We shall leave them only crusts and dress them in bast shoes. We shall send all the bread and footwear to the front.

And then we shall save Petrograd.

The resources, both material and spiritual, for a truly revolutionary war in Russia are still immense; the chances are a hundred to one that the Germans will grant us at least an armistice. And to secure an armistice now would in itself mean to win the *whole world*.

\* \* \*

Having recognised the absolute necessity for an insurrection of the workers of Petrograd and Moscow in order to save the revolution and to save Russia from a "separate" partition by the imperialists of both groups, we must first adapt our political tactics at the Conference to the conditions of the growing insurrection; secondly, we must show that it is not only in words that we accept Marx's idea that insurrection must be treated as an art.

At the Conference we must immediately cement the Bolshevik group, without striving after numbers, and without fearing to leave the waverers in the waverers' camp. They are more useful to the cause of the revolution *there* than in the camp of the resolute and devoted fighters.

We must draw up a brief declaration from the Bolsheviks, emphasising in no uncertain manner the irrelevance of long speeches and of "speeches" in general, the necessity for immediate action to save the revolution, the absolute necessity for a complete break with the bourgeoisie, for the removal of the present government, in its entirety, for a complete rupture with the Anglo-French imperialists, who are preparing a "separate" partition of Russia, and for the immediate transfer of all power to *revolutionary democrats, headed by the revolutionary proletariat*.

Our declaration must give the briefest and most trenchant formulation of *this* conclusion in connection with the programme proposals of peace for the peoples, land for the peasants, confiscation of scandalous profits, and a check on the scandalous sabotage of production by the capitalists.

The briefer and more trenchant the declaration, the better. Only two other highly important points must be clearly indicated in it, namely, that the people are worn out by the vacilla-

tions, that they are fed up with the irresolution of the Socialist-Revolutionaries and Mensheviks; and that we are definitely breaking with these *parties* because they have betrayed the revolution.

And another thing. By immediately proposing a peace without annexations, by immediately breaking with the Allied imperialists and with all imperialists, either we shall at once obtain an armistice, or the entire revolutionary proletariat will rally to the defence of the country, and a really just, really revolutionary war will then be waged by revolutionary democrats under the leadership of the proletariat.

Having read this declaration, and having appealed for *decisions* and not talk, for *action* and not resolution-writing, we must *dispatch* our entire group to the *factories and the barracks*. Their place is there, the pulse of life is there, there is the source of salvation for our revolution, and there is the motive force of the Democratic Conference.

There, in ardent and impassioned speeches, we must explain our programme and put the alternative: either the Conference adopts it *in its entirety*, or else insurrection. There is no middle course. Delay is impossible. The revolution is dying.

By putting the question in this way, by concentrating our entire group in the factories and barracks, *we shall be able to determine the right moment to start the insurrection*.

In order to treat insurrection in a Marxist way, i.e., as an art, we must at the same time, without losing a single moment, organise a *headquarters* of the insurgent detachments, distribute our forces, move the reliable regiments to the most important points, surround the Alexandrinsky Theatre, occupy the Peter and Paul Fortress,<sup>141</sup> arrest the General Staff and the government, and move against the officer cadets and the Savage Division those detachments which would rather die than allow the enemy to approach the strategic points of the city. We must mobilise the armed workers and call them to fight the last desperate fight, occupy the telegraph and the telephone exchange at once, move *our* insurrection headquarters to the central telephone exchange and connect it by telephone with all the factories, all the regiments, all the points of armed fighting, etc.

Of course, this is all by way of example, only to *illustrate* the fact that at the present moment it is impossible to remain loyal to Marxism, to remain loyal to the revolution *unless insurrection is treated as an art*.

N. Lenin

Written September 13-14 (26-27), 1917

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ЕЖЕДНЕВНАЯ ГАЗЕТА.

30-го Октября (7-го октября ст. ст.) 1917 г.

Товарищи рабочие, солдаты и крестьяне! Готовьтесь к Всероссийскому Съезду Советов на 20-ое октября! Немедленно созывайте областные Съезды Советов!

Закрытый партийный съезд, законченный на 17 октября, в 5 часов утра уполномоченный на партийном съезде Центральный Комитет Р. С. Д. Р. П.

Соборный съезд Советов Областной комиссии, законченный в 6 октября в 7 часов утра, уполномоченный на партийном съезде Центральный Комитет Р. С. Д. Р. П. (большинство).

Съезд на 4 часа для постановки на повестку дня 18 (7) октября 1917 г. 2-й сессии Центрального Комитета Р. С. Д. Р. П. (большинство).

Съезд на 2 часа для постановки на повестку дня 19 (8) октября 1917 г. 3-й сессии Центрального Комитета Р. С. Д. Р. П. (большинство).

Съезд на 2 часа для постановки на повестку дня 20 (9) октября 1917 г. 4-й сессии Центрального Комитета Р. С. Д. Р. П. (большинство).

Съезд на 2 часа для постановки на повестку дня 21 (10) октября 1917 г. 5-й сессии Центрального Комитета Р. С. Д. Р. П. (большинство).

Съезд на 2 часа для постановки на повестку дня 22 (11) октября 1917 г. 6-й сессии Центрального Комитета Р. С. Д. Р. П. (большинство).

Съезд на 2 часа для постановки на повестку дня 23 (12) октября 1917 г. 7-й сессии Центрального Комитета Р. С. Д. Р. П. (большинство).

Съезд на 2 часа для постановки на повестку дня 24 (13) октября 1917 г. 8-й сессии Центрального Комитета Р. С. Д. Р. П. (большинство).

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Съезд на 2 часа для постановки на повестку дня 30 (19) октября 1917 г. 14-й сессии Центрального Комитета Р. С. Д. Р. П. (большинство).

Съезд на 2 часа для постановки на повестку дня 31 (20) октября 1917 г. 15-й сессии Центрального Комитета Р. С. Д. Р. П. (большинство).

Съезд на 2 часа для постановки на повестку дня 1 (21) ноября 1917 г. 16-й сессии Центрального Комитета Р. С. Д. Р. П. (большинство).

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Съезд на 2 часа для постановки на повестку дня 4 (24) ноября 1917 г. 19-й сессии Центрального Комитета Р. С. Д. Р. П. (большинство).

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## THE CRISIS HAS MATURED<sup>142</sup>

### I

The end of September undoubtedly marked a great turning-point in the history of the Russian revolution and, to all appearances, of the world revolution as well.

The world working-class revolution began with the action of individuals, whose boundless courage represented everything honest that remained of that decayed official "socialism" which is in reality social-chauvinism. Liebknecht in Germany, Adler in Austria, MacLean in Britain—these are the best-known names of the isolated heroes who have taken upon themselves the arduous role of forerunners of the world revolution.

The second stage in the historical preparation for this revolution was a widespread mass discontent, expressing itself in the split of the official parties, in illegal publications and in street demonstrations. The protest against the war became stronger, and the number of victims of government persecution increased. The prisons of countries famed for their observance of law and even for their freedom—Germany, France, Italy and Britain—became filled with tens and hundreds of internationalists, opponents of the war and advocates of a working-class revolution.

The third stage has now begun. This stage may be called the eve of revolution. Mass arrests of party leaders in free Italy, and particularly the beginning of *mutinies* in the German army, are indisputable symptoms that a great turning-point is at hand, that we are *on the eve of a world-wide revolution*.

Even before this there were, no doubt, individual cases of mutiny among the troops in Germany, but they were so small, so weak and isolated that it was possible to hush them up—and that was the chief way of checking the *mass contagion* of seditious action. Finally, there developed such a movement in the navy that it was *impossible* to hush it up, despite all the severity of the German regime of military servitude, severity elaborated with amazing minuteness of detail and observed with incredible pedantry.

Doubt is out of the question. We are on the threshold of a world proletarian revolution. And since of all the proletarian interna-

tionalists in all countries only we Russian Bolsheviks enjoy a measure of freedom—we have a legal party and a score or so of papers, we have the Soviets of Workers' and Soldiers' Deputies of both capitals on our side, and we have the support of a *majority* of the people in a time of revolution—to us the saying “To whom much has been given, of him much shall be required” in all justice can and must be applied.

## II

The crucial point of the revolution in Russia has undoubtedly arrived.

In a peasant country, and under a revolutionary, republican government which enjoys the support of the Socialist-Revolutionary and Menshevik parties that only yesterday dominated petty-bourgeois democracy, a *peasant revolt* is developing.

Incredible as this is, it is a fact.

We Bolsheviks are not surprised by this fact. We have always said that the government of the notorious “coalition” with the bourgeoisie is a government that *betrays* democracy and the revolution, that it is a government of *imperialist* slaughter, a government that *protects* the capitalists and landowners *from* the people.

Owing to the deception practised by the Socialist-Revolutionaries and the Mensheviks, there still exists in Russia, under a republic and in a time of revolution, a government of capitalists and landowners side by side with the Soviets. This is the bitter and sinister reality. Is it then surprising, in view of the incredible hardship inflicted on the people by prolonging the imperialist war and by its consequences, that a peasant revolt has begun and is spreading in Russia?

Is it then surprising that the enemies of the Bolsheviks, the leaders of the *official* Socialist-Revolutionary Party, the very party that supported the “coalition” all along, the party that until the last few days or weeks had the majority of the people on its side, the party that continues to harry and abuse the “new” Socialist-Revolutionaries, who have realised that the policy of coalition is a betrayal of the interests of the peasants—is it surprising that these leaders of the official Socialist-Revolutionary Party wrote the following in an editorial in their official organ, *Dyelo Naroda* of September 29:

“So far practically nothing has been done to put an end to the relations of bondage that still prevail in the villages of central Russia.... The bill for the regulation of land relations in the countryside, which was introduced in the Provisional Government long ago, and which has even passed through

such a purgatory as the Judicial Conference, has got hopelessly stuck in some office.... Are we not right in asserting that our republican government is still a long way from having rid itself of the old habits of the tsarist administration, and that the dead hand of Stolypin is still making itself strongly felt in the methods of the revolutionary ministers?"

This is written by the official Socialist-Revolutionaries! Just think: the supporters of the coalition are *forced* to admit that in a peasant country, after seven months of revolution, "practically nothing has been done to put an end to the bondage" of the peasants, to their enslavement by the landowners! These Socialist-Revolutionaries are *forced* to give the name of *Stolypins* to their colleague, Kerensky, and his gang of ministers.

Could we get more eloquent testimony than this from the camp of our opponents, not only to the effect that the coalition has collapsed and that the official Socialist-Revolutionaries who tolerate Kerensky have become *an anti-popular, anti-peasant and counter-revolutionary* party, but also that the whole Russian revolution has reached a turning-point?

A peasant revolt in a peasant country against the government of the Socialist-Revolutionary Kerensky, the Mensheviks Nikitin and Gvozdyov, and other ministers who represent capital and the interests of the landowners! The crushing of this revolt by *military measures* by a republican government!

In the face of such facts, can one remain a conscientious champion of the proletariat and yet deny that a crisis has matured, that the revolution is passing through an extremely critical moment, that the government's victory over the peasant revolt would now sound the death knell of the revolution, would be the final triumph of the Kornilov revolt?

### III

It is obvious that if in a peasant country, after seven months of a democratic republic, matters could come to a peasant revolt, it irrefutably proves that the revolution is suffering nation-wide collapse, that it is experiencing a crisis of unprecedented severity, and that the forces of counter-revolution have gone the *limit*.

That is obvious. In the face of such a fact as a peasant revolt all other political symptoms, even were they to contradict the fact that a nation-wide crisis is maturing, would have no significance whatsoever.

But on the contrary, all the symptoms do indicate that a nation-wide crisis has matured.

Next to the agrarian question, the most important question in Russia's state affairs is the national question, particularly for



the petty-bourgeois masses of the population. And at the "Democratic" Conference, which was fixed by Mr. Tsereteli and Co., we find that the "national" curia takes second place for radicalism, yielding only to the trade unions, and *exceeding* the curia of the Soviets of Workers' and Soldiers' Deputies in the percentage of votes cast *against* the coalition (40 out of 55). The Kerensky government—a government suppressing the peasant revolt—is withdrawing the revolutionary troops from Finland in order to strengthen the reactionary Finnish bourgeoisie. In the Ukraine, the conflicts of the Ukrainians in general, and of the Ukrainian troops in particular, with the government are becoming more and more frequent.

Furthermore, let us take the army, which in war-time plays an exceptionally big role in all state affairs. We find that the army in Finland and the fleet in the Baltic have completely *parted ways* with the government. We have the testimony of the officer Dubasov, a non-Bolshevik, who speaks in the name of the whole front and declares in a manner more revolutionary than that of any Bolsheviks that the soldiers will not fight any longer.<sup>143</sup> We have governmental reports stating that the soldiers are in a state of "agitation" and that it is impossible to guarantee the maintenance of "order" (i.e., participation of these troops in the suppression of the peasant revolt). We have, finally, the voting in Moscow, where fourteen thousand out of seventeen thousand soldiers voted for the Bolsheviks.

This vote in the elections to the district councils in Moscow is in general one of the most striking symptoms of the profound change which has taken place in the mood of the whole nation. It is generally known that Moscow is more petty-bourgeois than Petrograd. It is a fact frequently corroborated and indisputable that the Moscow proletariat has an incomparably greater number of connections with the countryside, that it has greater sympathy for the peasant and is closer to the sentiments of the peasant.

In Moscow the vote cast for the Socialist-Revolutionaries and the Mensheviks nevertheless dropped from 70 per cent in June to 18 per cent. There can be no doubt that the petty bourgeoisie and the people have turned away from the coalition. The Cadets have increased their strength from 17 to 30 per cent, but they remain a minority, a hopeless minority, despite the fact that they have obviously been joined by the "Right" Socialist-Revolutionaries, and the "Right" Mensheviks. *Russkiye Vedomosti*<sup>144</sup> states that the *absolute* number of votes cast for the Cadets fell from 67,000 to 62,000. Only the votes cast for the Bolsheviks increased—from 34,000 to 82,000. They received 47 per cent of the total vote. There can be no shadow of doubt that we, together with the Left

Socialist-Revolutionaries, now have a majority in the Soviets, in the army, and *in the country*.

Among the symptoms that have not only a symptomatic, but also a very real significance is the fact that the armies of railway and postal employees, who are of immense importance from the general economic, political and military point of view, continue to be in sharp conflict with the government, even the Menshevik defencists are dissatisfied with "their" Minister, Nikitin, and the official Socialist-Revolutionaries call Kerensky and Co. "Stolypins". Is it not clear that if such "support" of the government by the Mensheviks and Socialist-Revolutionaries has any value at all it can be only a negative value?

#### IV

#### V

Yes, the leaders of the Central Executive Committee are pursuing the correct tactics of defending the bourgeoisie and the landowners. And there is not the slightest doubt that if the Bolsheviks allowed themselves to be caught in the trap of constitutional illusions, "faith" in the Congress of Soviets and in the convocation of the Constituent Assembly, "waiting" for the Congress of Soviets, and so forth—these Bolsheviks would most certainly be *miserable traitors* to the proletarian cause.

They would be traitors to the cause, for by their conduct they would be betraying the German revolutionary workers who have started a revolt in the navy. To "wait" for the Congress of Soviets and so forth under such circumstances would be a *betrayal of internationalism*, a betrayal of the cause of the world socialist revolution.

For internationalism consists of *deeds* and not phrases, not expressions of solidarity, not resolutions.

The Bolsheviks would be traitors to the *peasants*, for to tolerate the suppression of the peasant revolt by a government which *even Dyelo Naroda* compares with the Stolypin government would be *to ruin* the whole revolution, to ruin it for good. An outcry is raised about anarchy and about the increasing indifference of the people, but what else can the people be but indifferent to the elections, when the peasants have been *driven to revolt* while the so-called "revolutionary democrats" are patiently tolerating its suppression by military force!

The Bolsheviks would be traitors to democracy and to freedom, for to tolerate the suppression of the peasant revolt at such a moment would *mean* allowing the elections to the Constituent Assembly to be fixed *in exactly the same* way as the Democratic Conference and the "Pre-parliament" were fixed, only even worse and more crudely.

The crisis has matured. The whole future of the Russian revolution is at stake. The honour of the Bolshevik Party is in question. The whole future of the international workers' revolution for socialism is at stake.

The crisis has matured. . . .

September 29, 1917

Everything to this point may be published, but what follows is *to be distributed* among the members of the *Central Committee, the Petrograd Committee, the Moscow Committee, and the Soviets.*

## VI

What, then, is to be done? We must *aussprechen was ist*, "state the facts", admit the truth that there is a tendency, or an opinion, in our Central Committee and among the leaders of our Party which favours *waiting* for the Congress of Soviets, and is *opposed* to taking power immediately, is *opposed* to an immediate insurrection. That tendency, or opinion, must be *overcome*<sup>145</sup>.

Otherwise, the Bolsheviks will cover themselves with eternal *shame* and *destroy themselves* as a party.

For to miss such a moment and to "wait" for the Congress of Soviets would be *utter idiocy*, or *sheer treachery*.

It would be sheer treachery to the German workers. Surely we should not wait until their revolution *begins*. In that case even the Lieberdans<sup>146</sup> would be in favour of "supporting" it. But it *cannot* begin as long as Kerensky, Kishkin and Co. are in power.

It would be sheer treachery to the peasants. To allow the peasant revolt to be suppressed when we control the Soviets of both *capitals* would be to *lose*, and *justly lose*, every ounce of the peasants' confidence. In the eyes of the peasants we would be putting ourselves on a level with the Lieberdans and other scoundrels.

To "wait" for the Congress of Soviets would be utter idiocy, for it would mean losing *weeks* at a time when weeks and even days decide *everything*. It would mean faint-heartedly *renouncing* power, for on November 1-2 it will have become impossible to take power (both politically and technically, since the Cossacks

would be mobilised for the day of the insurrection so foolishly "appointed"\*).

To "wait" for the Congress of Soviets is idiocy, for the Congress will *give nothing, and can give nothing!*

"Moral" importance? Strange, indeed, to talk of the "importance" of resolutions and conversations with the Lieberdants when we know that the Soviets *support* the peasants and that the peasant revolt is *being suppressed!* We would be reducing the *Soviets* to the status of wretched debating parlours. First defeat Kerensky, then call the Congress.

The Bolsheviks are now *guaranteed* the success of the insurrection: (1) we can\*\* (if we do not "wait" for the Soviet Congress) launch a *surprise* attack from three points—from Petrograd, from Moscow and from the Baltic fleet; (2) we have slogans that guarantee us support—down with the government that is suppressing the revolt of the peasants against the landowners! (3) we have a majority *in the country*; (4) the disorganisation among the Mensheviks and the Socialist-Revolutionaries is complete; (5) we are technically in a position to take power in Moscow (where the start might even be made, so as to catch the enemy unawares); (6) we have *thousands* of armed workers and soldiers in Petrograd who could *at once* seize the Winter Palace, the General Staff building, the telephone exchange and the large printing presses. Nothing will be able to drive us out, while agitational work in the *army* will be such as to make it *impossible* to combat this government of peace, of land for the peasants, and so forth.

If we were to attack at once, suddenly, from three points, Petrograd, Moscow and the Baltic fleet, the chances are a hundred to one that we would succeed with smaller sacrifices than on July 3-5, because *the troops will not advance* against a government of peace. Even though Kerensky *already* has "loyal" cavalry, etc., in Petrograd, if we were to attack from two sides, he would be compelled to *surrender* since *we* enjoy the sympathy of the army. If with such chances as we have at present we do not take power, then all talk of transferring the power to the Soviets becomes *a lie*.

To refrain from taking power now, to "wait", to indulge in talk in the Central Executive Committee, to confine ourselves to

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\* To "convene" the Congress of Soviets for October 20 in order to decide upon "taking power"—how does that differ from foolishly "appointing" an insurrection? It is possible to take power now, whereas on October 20-29 you will not be given a chance to.

\*\* What has the Party done to *study* the disposition of the troops, etc.? What has it done to conduct the insurrection as an "art"? Mere talk in the Central Executive Committee, and so on!



“fighting for the organ” (of the Soviet), “fighting for the Congress”, *is to doom the revolution to failure.*

In view of the fact that the Central Committee has *even left unanswered* the persistent demands I have been making for such a policy ever since the beginning of the Democratic Conference, in view of the fact that the Central Organ is *deleting* from my articles all references to such glaring errors on the part of the Bolsheviks as the shameful decision to participate in the Pre-parliament, the admission of Mensheviks to the Presidium of the Soviet, etc., etc.—I am compelled to regard this as a “subtle” hint at the unwillingness of the Central Committee even to consider this question, a subtle hint that I should keep my mouth shut, and as a proposal for me to retire.

I am compelled to *tender my resignation from the Central Committee*, which I hereby do, reserving for myself freedom to campaign among the *rank and file* of the Party and at the Party Congress.

For it is my profound conviction that if we “wait” for the Congress of Soviets and let the present moment pass, we shall *ruin* the revolution.

*N. Lenin*

September 29

P. S. There are a number of facts which serve to prove that *even* the Cossack troops will not go against a government of peace! And how many are there? Where are they? And will not the entire army dispatch units *for our support*?

Sections I-III and V published  
on October 20 (7), 1917  
in the newspaper *Rabochy Put* No. 30;  
section VI first published in 1924

*Collected Works*, Vol. 26

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## **CAN THE BOLSHEVIKS RETAIN STATE POWER?<sup>147</sup>**

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

Published in October 1917  
in the magazine *Prosveshcheniye* No. 1-2

*Collected Works*, Vol. 26



## FOREWORD TO THE SECOND EDITION

The present pamphlet, as is evident from the text, was written at the end of September and was finished on October 1, 1917.

The October 25 Revolution has transferred the question raised in this pamphlet from the sphere of theory to the sphere of practice.

This question must now be answered by deeds, not words. The theoretical arguments advanced against the Bolsheviks taking power were feeble in the extreme. These arguments have been shot to pieces.

The task now is for the advanced class—the proletariat—to prove *in practice* the viability of the workers' and peasants' government. All class-conscious workers, all the active and honest peasants, all working and exploited people, will do everything they can to solve the immense historic question in practice.

To work, everybody to work, the cause of the world socialist revolution must and will triumph.

St. Petersburg, November 9, 1917

*N. Lenin*

First published in 1918  
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*Can the Bolsheviks Retain State Power?*  
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St. Petersburg



On what are all trends agreed, from *Rech* to *Novaya Zhizn* inclusively, from the Kornilovite Cadets to the semi-Bolsheviks, *all*, except the Bolsheviks?

They all agree that the Bolsheviks will either never dare take over full state power alone, or, if they do dare, and do take power, they will not be able to retain it even for the shortest while.

If anybody asserts that the question of the Bolsheviks alone taking over full state power is a totally unfeasible political question, that only a swelled-headed "fanatic" of the worst kind can regard it as feasible, we refute this assertion by quoting the exact statements of the most responsible and most influential political parties and trends of various "hues".

But let me begin with a word or two about the first of the questions mentioned—will the Bolsheviks dare take over full state power alone? I have already had occasion, at the All-Russia Congress of Soviets, to answer this question in the affirmative in no uncertain manner by a remark that I shouted from my seat during one of Tsereteli's<sup>48</sup> ministerial speeches. And I have not met in the press, or heard, any statements by Bolsheviks to the effect that we ought not to take power alone. I still maintain that a political party—and the party of the advanced class in particular—would have no right to exist, would be unworthy of the name of party, would be a nonentity in any sense, if it refused to take power when opportunity offers.

We shall now quote statements by the Cadets, Socialist-Revolutionaries and semi-Bolsheviks (I would prefer to say quarter-Bolsheviks) on the question that interests us.

The leading article in *Rech* of September 16:

"Discord and confusion reigned in the Alexandrinsky Theatre, and the socialist press reflects the same picture. Only the views of the Bolsheviks are definite and straightforward. At the Conference, they are the views of the minority. In the Soviets, they represent a constantly growing trend. But in spite of all their verbal pugnacity, their boastful phrases and display of self-confidence, the Bolsheviks, except for a few fanatics, are brave only in words.

They would not attempt to take 'full power' on their own accord. Disorganisers and disrupters *par excellence*, they are really cowards who in their heart of hearts are fully aware of both their own intrinsic ignorance and the ephemeral nature of their present successes. They know as well as we all do that the first day of their ultimate triumph would also be the first day of their precipitous fall. Irresponsible by their very nature, anarchists in method and practice, they should be regarded only as a trend of political thought, or rather, as one of its aberrations. The best way to get rid of Bolshevism for many a year, to banish it, would be to place the country's fate in the hands of its leaders. And if it were not for the awareness that experiments of this kind are impermissible and fatal, one might in desperation decide on even this heroic measure. Happily, we repeat, these dismal heroes of the day are not by any means actually out to seize full power. Not under any circumstances are they capable of constructive work. Thus, all their definite and straightforward views are confined to the political rostrum, to soap-box oratory. For practical purposes their position cannot be taken into consideration from any point of view. In one respect, however, it has some practical consequence: it unites all other shades of 'socialist thought' opposed to it. . . ."

This is the way the Cadets reason. Here, however, is the view of the biggest, "ruling and governing", party in Russia, the Socialist-Revolutionaries, also expressed in an unsigned, i.e., editorial, leading article in their official organ *Dyelo Naroda* of September 21:

... "If the bourgeoisie refuse, pending the convocation of the Constituent Assembly, to work with the democracy on the basis of the platform that was endorsed by the Conference, then the *coalition must arise from within the Conference itself*. This would be a serious sacrifice on the part of the supporters of the coalition, *but even those campaigning for the idea of a 'pure line' of power will have to agree to it*. We are afraid, however, that agreement may not be reached here. In that case a third and final combination remains, namely: the government *must* be organised by that half of the Conference which on *principle* advocated the idea of a homogeneous government.

"Let us put it definitely: *the Bolsheviks will be obliged to form a Cabinet*. With the greatest energy, they imbued the revolutionary democrats with hatred of the coalition, promising them all sorts of benefits as soon as 'compromise' was abandoned, and attributing to the latter all the country's misfortunes.

"If they were aware of what they were doing by their *agitation*, if they were *not deceiving the people*, it is *their duty* to redeem the promissory notes they have been handing out right and left.

"The question is clear.

"Let them not make futile attempts to hide behind hastily concocted theory that it is impossible for them to take power.

"The democracy will not accept these theories.

"At the same time, the advocates of coalition must guarantee them full support. These are the three combinations, the three ways, open to us—there are no others!" (The italics are those of *Dyelo Naroda*.)

This is the way the Socialist-Revolutionaries reason. And here, finally, is the "position" (if attempts to sit between two stools can be called a position) of the *Novaya Zhizn* "quarter-Bolsheviks", taken from the editorial in *Novaya Zhizn* of September 23.

"If a coalition with Konovalov and Kishkin is formed again, it will mean nothing but a new capitulation by the democracy and the abrogation of the

Conference resolution on the formation of a responsible government on the platform of August 14. . . .

"A homogeneous ministry of Mensheviks and Socialist-Revolutionaries will be able to feel its responsibility as little as the responsible socialist ministers felt it in the coalition cabinet. . . . This government would not only be incapable of rallying the 'live forces' of the revolution around itself, but would not even be able to count on any active support from its vanguard—the proletariat.

"But the formation of another type of homogeneous cabinet, a government of the 'proletariat and poor peasants', would be, not a better, but an even worse way out of the situation, in fact it would not be a way out at all, but sheer bankruptcy. True, nobody is advancing such a slogan except in casual, timid and later systematically 'explained away' comments in *Rabochy Put*."

(This glaring untruth is "boldly" written by responsible journalists who have forgotten even the *Dyelo Naroda* editorial of September 21.)

"Formally, the Bolsheviks have now revived the slogan 'All Power to the Soviets'. It was withdrawn after the July days, when the Soviets, represented by the Central Executive Committee, definitely adopted an active anti-Bolshevik policy. Now, however, not only can the 'Soviet line' be regarded as straightened out, but there is every ground to assume that at the proposed Congress of Soviets the Bolsheviks will have a majority. Under such circumstances, the slogan 'All Power to the Soviets', resurrected by the Bolsheviks, is a 'tactical line' for achieving precisely the dictatorship of the proletariat and the 'poor peasants'. True, the Soviets also imply the Soviets of Peasants' Deputies; the Bolshevik slogan therefore implies a power resting on the overwhelmingly greater part of the entire democracy of Russia. In that case, however, the slogan 'All Power to the Soviets' loses all independent significance, for it makes the Soviets almost identical in composition to the Pre-parliament set up by the Conference. . . ."

(*Novaya Zhizn*'s assertion is a brazen lie, equivalent to declaring that spurious and fraudulent democracy is "almost identical" to democracy: the Pre-parliament is a *sham* which passes off the will of the minority of the people, particularly of Kuskova, Berkenheim, Chaikovsky and Co., as the will of the majority. This is the first point. The second point is that at the Conference even the Peasants' Soviets that had been packed by the Avksentyevs and Chaikovskys gave such a high percentage opposed to the coalition that taken together with the Soviets of Workers' and Soldiers' Deputies, they would have brought about the *absolute collapse of the coalition*. And the third point is that "Power to the Soviets" means that the power of the Peasants' Soviets would embrace mainly the rural districts, and in the rural districts the predominance of the *poor* peasants is assured.)

"If it is one and the same thing, then the Bolshevik slogan should be immediately withdrawn. If, however, 'Power to the Soviets' is only a disguise for the dictatorship of the proletariat, then such a power would mean precisely the failure and collapse of the revolution.

"Does it need proof that the proletariat, isolated not only from the other classes in the country, but also from the real live forces of the democracy, will not be able either technically to lay hold of the state apparatus and



set it in motion in an exceptionally complicated situation, or politically to resist all the pressure by hostile forces that will sweep away not only the proletarian dictatorship, but the entire revolution into the bargain?

"The only power that will answer the requirements of the present situation is a really honest coalition within the democracy."

\* \* \*

We apologise to the reader for quoting these lengthy extracts, but they are absolutely necessary. It is necessary to present a precise picture of the positions taken by the different parties hostile to the Bolsheviks. It is necessary to prove in a definite manner the extremely important fact that *all* these parties have admitted that the question of the Bolsheviks taking full state power alone is not only feasible, but also urgent.

Let us now proceed to examine the arguments which convince "everybody", from the Cadets to the *Novaya Zhizn* people, that the Bolsheviks will not be able to retain power.

The respectable *Rech* advances no arguments whatsoever. It merely pours out upon the Bolsheviks a flood of the choicest and most irate abuse. The extract we quoted shows, among other things, how utterly wrong it would be to say, "Watch out, comrades, for what the enemy advises must certainly be bad", thinking that *Rech* is "provoking" the Bolsheviks to take power. If, instead of weighing up the general and concrete considerations in a practical way, we allow ourselves to be "persuaded" by the plea that the bourgeoisie are "provoking" us to take power, we shall be fooled by the bourgeoisie, for the latter will of course always maliciously prophesy millions of disasters that will result from the Bolsheviks taking power and will always maliciously shout, "It would be better to get rid of the Bolsheviks at one blow and 'for many a year' by allowing them to take power and then crushing them." These cries are also "provocation", if you will, but from a different angle. The Cadets and the bourgeoisie do not by any means "advise", and have never "advised", us to take power; they are only trying to *frighten* us with the allegedly insoluble problems of government.

No. We must not allow ourselves to be frightened by the screams of the frightened bourgeoisie. We must bear firmly in mind that we have never set ourselves "insoluble" social problems, and as for the *perfectly* soluble problem of taking immediate steps towards socialism, which is the only way out of the exceedingly difficult situation, that will be *solved only* by the dictatorship of the proletariat and poor peasants. Victory, and lasting victory, is now more than ever, more than anywhere else, assured for the proletariat in Russia if it takes power.

We shall in a purely practical manner discuss the *concrete* cir-



cumstances that make a certain moment unfavourable; but we shall not for a moment allow ourselves to be scared by the savage howls of the bourgeoisie; and we shall not forget that the question of the Bolsheviks taking full power is becoming really *urgent*. Our Party will now be threatened with an immeasurably greater danger if we forget this than if we were to admit that taking power is "premature". In this respect, there can be *nothing* "premature" now: there is every chance in a million, except one or two perhaps, in favour of this.

Concerning the irate abuse poured out by *Rech*, we can, and must, say:

*In savage cries of irritation  
We hear the voice of approbation,  
Not in dulcet sounds of praise.<sup>149</sup>*

That the bourgeoisie hate us so passionately is one of the most striking proofs that we are showing the people the *right* ways and means of overthrowing the rule of the bourgeoisie.

\* \* \*

This time, by way of rare exception, *Dyelo Naroda* did not deign to honour us with its abuse nor did it advance a ghost of an argument. It merely tried, by indirect hints, to *frighten* us with the prospect that "the Bolsheviks will be obliged to form a cabinet". I can quite believe that while trying to frighten us, the Socialist-Revolutionaries are themselves sincerely scared to death by the phantom of the frightened liberal. I can equally believe that the Socialist-Revolutionaries do succeed in certain exceptionally high and exceptionally rotten institutions, such as the Central Executive Committee and similar "contact" (i.e., contact with the Cadets, in plain language, hobnobbing with the Cadets) commissions, in scaring some Bolsheviks because, first, the atmosphere in all those Central Executives, Pre-parliaments, etc., is abominable, putrid to the point of nausea, and harmful for *any* man to breathe for any length of time; and secondly, sincerity is contagious, and a sincerely frightened philistine is capable of converting even an individual revolutionary into a philistine for a time.

But however much we may, "humanly" speaking, understand the sincere fright of a Socialist-Revolutionary who has had the misfortune to be a minister in the company of the Cadets, or who is eligible as a minister in the eyes of the Cadets, we would be committing a political error that might only too easily border on treachery to the proletariat if we allowed ourselves to be scared. Let us have your practical arguments, gentlemen! Cherish no hope that we shall allow ourselves to be scared by your fright!

\* \* \*

This time we find practical arguments only in *Novaya Zhizn*. On this occasion the paper comes out in the role of counsel for the bourgeoisie, a role that suits it far better than that of counsel for the defence of the Bolsheviks, which so obviously "shocks" this lady with many good points.<sup>150</sup>

The counsel has advanced *six* pleas:

(1) the proletariat is "isolated from the other classes in the country";

(2) it is "isolated from the real live forces of the democracy";

(3) it "will not be able technically to lay hold of the state apparatus";

(4) it "will not be able to set this apparatus in motion";

(5) "the situation is exceptionally complicated";

(6) it "will be incapable of resisting all the pressure by hostile forces that will sweep away not only the proletarian dictatorship, but the entire revolution into the bargain".

*Novaya Zhizn* formulates the first plea in a ridiculously clumsy fashion, for in capitalist and semi-capitalist society we know of only three classes: the bourgeoisie, the petty bourgeoisie (which consists mainly of the peasantry), and the proletariat. What sense is there in talking about the proletariat being isolated from the other classes when the point at issue is the proletariat's struggle against the bourgeoisie, revolution against the bourgeoisie?

Evidently, *Novaya Zhizn* wanted to say that the proletariat is isolated from the peasants, for it could not possibly have meant the landowners. It could not, however, say clearly and definitely that the proletariat is now isolated from the peasants, for the utter incorrectness of this assertion would be too obvious.

It is difficult to imagine that in a capitalist country the proletariat should be so little isolated from the petty bourgeoisie—and, mark you, in a revolution *against the bourgeoisie*—as the proletariat now is in Russia. The latest returns of the voting by "curias" *for* and *against* coalition with the bourgeoisie in Tsereteli's "Bulygin Duma",<sup>151</sup> i.e., in the notorious "Democratic" Conference, constitute one of the objective and incontrovertible proofs of this. If we take the Soviets' curias we get:

	For coalition	Against
Soviets of Workers' and Soldiers'		
Deputies . . . . .	83	192
Soviets of Peasants' Deputies . . .	102	70
All Soviets . .	185	262

So, the majority as a whole is on the side of the proletarian slogan: *against* coalition with the bourgeoisie. We have seen above that even the Cadets are obliged to admit the growth of Bolshevik influence in the Soviets. And here we have the Conference convened by *yesterday's* leaders in the Soviets, Socialist-Revolutionaries and Mensheviks, who have an assured majority in the central institutions! Obviously, the *actual* degree to which the Bolsheviks predominate in the Soviets is here *understated*.

Both on the question of coalition with the bourgeoisie and on the question of immediately transferring the landed estates to peasant committees, the Bolsheviks already have a *majority* in the Soviets of Workers', Soldiers' and Peasants' Deputies, a *majority of the people*, a majority of the petty bourgeoisie. *Rabochy Put* No. 19 of September 24 quotes from No. 25 of the organ of the Socialist-Revolutionaries *Znamya Truda*<sup>152</sup> a report on a conference of local Soviets of Peasants' Deputies held in Petrograd on September 18. At this conference the Executive Committees of four Peasants' Soviets (Kostroma, Moscow, Samara and Taurida gubernias) voted for an unrestricted coalition. The Executive Committees of *three* gubernias and *two* armies (Vladimir, Ryazan and the Black Sea gubernias) voted in favour of a coalition without the Cadets. The Executive Committees of *twenty-three* gubernias and *four* armies voted against a coalition.

*So, the majority of the peasants are against a coalition!*

So much for the "isolation of the proletariat".

We should note, by the way, that the supporters of a coalition were three outlying gubernias, Samara, Taurida and the Black Sea, where there is a relatively very large number of rich peasants and big landowners who employ hired labour, and also four industrial gubernias (Vladimir, Ryazan, Kostroma and Moscow) in which the peasant bourgeoisie are also stronger than in the majority of the gubernias in Russia. It would be interesting to collect more detailed figures on this question and to ascertain whether information is available concerning the *poor* peasants in the gubernias where there are larger numbers of "*rich*" peasants.

It is interesting, moreover, that the "non-Russian groups" revealed a considerable predominance of opponents of a coalition, namely, 40 votes against 15. The policy of annexation and open violence pursued by the Bonapartist Kerensky and Co. towards the non-sovereign nations of Russia has borne fruit. Wide sections of the people of the oppressed nations (i.e., including the mass of the petty bourgeoisie) trust the proletariat of Russia more than they do the bourgeoisie, for here history has brought to the fore the struggle for liberation of the oppressed nations against the oppressing nations. The bourgeoisie has despicably betrayed the



cause of freedom of the oppressed nations; the proletariat is faithful to the cause of freedom.

At the present time the national and agrarian questions are fundamental questions for the petty-bourgeois sections of the population of Russia. This is indisputable. And on both these questions the proletariat is "*not isolated*"—farther from it than ever. It has the majority of the people behind it. It *alone* is capable of pursuing such a determined, genuinely "revolutionary-democratic" policy on both questions which would immediately ensure the proletarian state power not only the support of the majority of the population, but also a real outburst of revolutionary enthusiasm among the people. This is because, for the first time, the people would not see the ruthless oppression of peasants by landowners and of Ukrainians by Great Russians on the part of the government, as was the case under tsarism, nor the effort to continue the same policy camouflaged in pompous phrases under the republic, nor nagging, insult, chicanery, procrastination, underhand dealing and evasions (all that with which Kerensky rewards the peasants and the oppressed nations), but would receive warm sympathy proved by deeds, immediate and revolutionary measures against the landowners, immediate restitution of *full* freedom for Finland, the Ukraine, Byelorussia, for the Moslems, and so on.

The Socialist-Revolutionary and Menshevik gentlemen know this perfectly well, and are therefore dragging in the semi-Cadet bosses of the co-operative societies to help them pursue their *reactionary-democratic* policy *against* the people. That is why they will never dare canvass popular opinion, take a popular referendum, or at least a vote of all the local Soviets, of all the local organisations, concerning definite points of practical policy, for example, whether all the landed estates should at once be handed over to peasant committees, whether certain demands of the Finns or the Ukrainians should be conceded, etc.

Take the question of peace, the crucial issue of today. The proletariat "is isolated from the other classes"... On this issue the proletariat truly represents the *whole* nation, all live and honest people *in all* classes, the vast majority of the petty bourgeoisie; because only the proletariat, on achieving power, will *immediately* offer a just peace to all the belligerent nations, because only the proletariat will dare take genuinely *revolutionary* measures (publication of the secret treaties, and so forth) to achieve the speediest and most just peace possible.

The proletariat is not isolated. The gentlemen of *Novaya Zhizn* who are shouting about the proletariat being isolated are only betraying their subjective fear of the bourgeoisie. The objective state of affairs in Russia is undoubtedly such that the proletariat, *precisely at the present time*, is not "isolated" from the majority



of the petty bourgeoisie. Precisely now, after the sad experience with the "coalition", the proletariat enjoys the sympathy of the *majority* of the people. *This* condition for the retention of power by the Bolsheviks *does exist*.

\* \* \*

The second plea is that the proletariat "is isolated from the real live forces of the democracy". What this means is incomprehensible. It is probably "Greek", as the French say in such cases.

The writers of *Novaya Zhizn* would make good ministers. They would be quite suitable as ministers in a Cadet cabinet because all these ministers need is the ability to spout plausible, polished, but utterly meaningless phrases with which to cover up the dirtiest work and which are therefore sure of winning the applause of the imperialists and social-imperialists. The *Novaya Zhizn* writers are sure to earn the applause of the Cadets, Breshkovskaya, Plekhanov and Co. for asserting that the proletariat is isolated from the real live forces of the democracy, because *indirectly* they imply—or will be understood to imply—that the Cadets, Breshkovskaya, Plekhanov, Kerensky and Co. are the "live forces of democracy".

This is not true. They are dead forces. The history of the coalition has proved this.

Overawed by the bourgeoisie and by their bourgeois-intellectual environment, the *Novaya Zhizn* people regard as "live" the *Right* wing of the Socialist-Revolutionaries and Mensheviks like *Volya Naroda*<sup>153</sup>, *Yedinstvo*, and others who in essentials do not differ from the Cadets. We, however, regard as live only those who are connected with the people and not with the kulaks, only those whom the lessons of the coalition have repelled. The "active live forces" of the petty-bourgeois democracy are represented by the *Left* wing of the Socialist-Revolutionaries and Mensheviks. That this wing has gained strength, particularly since the July counter-revolution, is one of the surest objective signs that the proletariat is *not* isolated.

This has been made even more strikingly evident by the very recent swing to the left of the Socialist-Revolutionary Centrists, as is proved by Chernov's statement on September 24 that his group cannot support the new coalition with Kishkin and Co. This swing to the left of the Socialist-Revolutionary Centre, which up to now had constituted the overwhelming majority of the members of the Socialist-Revolutionary Party, the leading and dominant party from the point of view of the number of votes it obtained in the urban and particularly in the rural districts, proves that the statements we quoted from *Dyelo Naroda* that the democracy

must, under certain circumstances, "guarantee full support" for a purely Bolshevik government are at any rate not mere empty phrases.

Facts like the refusal of the Socialist-Revolutionary Centre to support the new coalition with Kishkin, or the predominance of the *opponents* of the coalition among the *Menshevik-defencists* in the provinces (Jordania in the Caucasus, etc.), are objective proof that a certain section of the *people* which has up to now followed the Mensheviks and Socialist-Revolutionaries *will support* a purely Bolshevik government.

It is precisely from the *live* forces of the democracy that the proletariat of Russia is now not isolated.

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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 *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

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\* See pp. 283-376 of the present volume.—Ed.

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 on the part of *Novaya Zhizn* is all the more monstrous because even the internationalist Mensheviks (with whom *Novaya Zhizn* 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. Fifthly, 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.

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The chief difficulty facing the proletarian revolution is the establishment on a country-wide scale of the most precise and most conscientious accounting and control, of *workers' control* of the production and distribution of goods.

When the writers of *Novaya Zhizn* argued that in advancing the slogan "workers' control" we were slipping into syndicalism, this argument was an example of the stupid schoolboy method of applying "Marxism" without studying it, just *learning it by rote* in the Struve manner. Syndicalism either repudiates the revolutionary dictatorship of the proletariat, or else relegates it, as it does political power in general, to a back seat. We, however, put it in the forefront. If we simply say in unison with the *Novaya Zhizn* writers: *not* workers' control *but* state control, it is simply a bourgeois-reformist phrase, it is, in essence, a purely Cadet formula, because the Cadets have no objection to the workers *participating* in "state" control. The Kornilovite Cadets know perfectly well that such participation offers the bourgeoisie the best way of fooling the workers, the most subtle way of politically *bribing* all the Gvozdyovs, Nikitins, Prokopoviches, Tseretelis and the rest of that gang.

When we say: "workers' control", always *juxtaposing* this slogan to dictatorship of the proletariat, always putting it *immediately after* the latter, we thereby explain what kind of state we mean. The state is the organ of *class* domination. Of which class? If of the bourgeoisie, then it is the Cadet-Kornilov-"Kerensky" state which has been "Kornilovising" and "Kerenskyising" the working people of Russia for more than six months. If it is of the proletariat, if we are speaking of a proletarian state, *that is*, of the proletarian dictatorship, then workers' control *can* become the country-wide, all-embracing, omnipresent, most precise and most conscientious *accounting* of the production and distribution of goods.

This is the chief difficulty, the chief task that faces the proletarian, i.e., socialist, revolution. Without the Soviets, this task would be impracticable, at least in Russia. The Soviets *indicate* to the proletariat the organisational work which *can* solve this historically important problem.

This brings us to another aspect of the question of the state apparatus. In addition to the chiefly "oppressive" apparatus—the

standing army, the police and the bureaucracy—the modern state possesses an apparatus which has extremely close connections with the banks and syndicates, an apparatus which performs an enormous amount of accounting and registration work, if it may be expressed this way. This apparatus must not, and should not, be smashed. It must be wrested from the control of the capitalists; the capitalists and the wires they pull must be *cut off, lopped off, chopped away from* this apparatus; it must be *subordinated* to the proletarian Soviets; it must be expanded, made more comprehensive, and nation-wide. And this *can* be done by utilising the achievements already made by large-scale capitalism (in the same way as the proletarian revolution can, in general, reach its goal only by utilising these achievements).

Capitalism has created an accounting *apparatus* in the shape of the banks, syndicates, postal service, consumers' societies, and office employees' unions. *Without big banks socialism would be impossible.*

The big banks *are* the "state apparatus" which we *need* to bring about socialism, and which we *take ready-made* from capitalism; our task here is merely to *lop off* what *capitalistically mutilates* this excellent apparatus, to make it *even bigger*, even more democratic, even more comprehensive. Quantity will be transformed into quality. A single State Bank, the biggest of the big, with branches in every rural district, in every factory, will constitute as much as nine-tenths of the *socialist* apparatus. This will be country-wide *book-keeping*, country-wide *accounting* of the production and distribution of goods, this will be, so to speak, something in the nature of the *skeleton* of socialist society.

We can "lay hold of" and "set in motion" this "state apparatus" (which is not fully a state apparatus under capitalism, but which will be so with us, under socialism) at one stroke, by a single decree, because the actual work of book-keeping, control, registering, accounting and counting is performed by *employees*, the majority of whom themselves lead a proletarian or semi-proletarian existence.

By a single decree of the proletarian government these employees can and must be transferred to the status of state employees, in the same way as the watchdogs of capitalism like Briand and other bourgeois ministers, by a single decree, transfer railwaymen on strike to the status of state employees. We shall need many more state employees of this kind, and more *can* be obtained, because capitalism has simplified the work of accounting and control, has reduced it to a comparatively simple system of *book-keeping*, which any literate person can do.

The conversion of the bank, syndicate, commercial, etc., etc., rank-and-file employees into state employees is quite feasible

both technically (thanks to the preliminary work performed for us by capitalism, including finance capitalism) and politically provided the *Soviets* exercise control and supervision.

As for the higher officials, of whom there are very few, but who gravitate towards the capitalists, they will have to be dealt with in the same way as the capitalists, i.e., "severely". Like the capitalists, they will offer *resistance*. This resistance will have to be *broken*, and if the immortally-naïve Peshekhonov, as early as June 1917, lisped like the infant that he was in state affairs, that "the resistance of the capitalists has been broken", this childish phrase, this childish boast, this childish swagger, *will be converted by the proletariat into reality*.

We can do this, for it is merely a question of breaking the resistance of an insignificant minority of the population, literally a handful of people, over each of whom the employees' unions, the trade unions, the consumers' societies and the Soviets will institute such *supervision* that every Tit Titych will be *surrounded* as the French were at Sedan. We know these Tit Tityches by name: we only have to consult the lists of directors, board members, large shareholders, etc. There are several hundred, at most several thousand of them in the *whole* of Russia, and the proletarian state, with the apparatus of the Soviets, of the employees' unions, etc., will be able to appoint ten or even a hundred supervisors to each of them, so that instead of "breaking resistance" it may even be possible, by means of *workers' control* (over the capitalists), to make all resistance *impossible*.

The important thing will not be even the confiscation of the capitalists' property, but country-wide, all-embracing workers' control over the capitalists and their possible supporters. Confiscation alone leads nowhere, as it does not contain the element of organisation, of accounting for proper distribution. Instead of confiscation, we could easily impose a *fair* tax (even on the Shingaryov scale, for instance), taking care, of course, to preclude the possibility of anyone evading assessment, concealing the truth, evading the law. And this possibility can be *eliminated only* by the workers' control of the *workers' state*.

*Compulsory syndication*, i.e., compulsory amalgamation in associations under state control—this is what capitalism has prepared the way for, this is what has been carried out in Germany by the Junkers' state, this is what can be easily carried out in Russia by the Soviets, by the proletarian dictatorship, and this is what will *provide us with a state apparatus* that will be universal, up-to-date, and non-bureaucratic.\*

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\* For further details of the meaning of compulsory syndication see my pamphlet: *The Impending Catastrophe and How to Combat It*. (See pp. 257-59 of the present volume.—Ed.)



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The fourth plea of the counsels for the bourgeoisie is that the proletariat will not be able "to set the state apparatus in motion". There is nothing new in this plea compared with the preceding one. We could not, of course, either lay hold of or set in motion the old apparatus. The new apparatus, the Soviets, *has already* been set in motion by "a mighty burst of creative enthusiasm that stems from the people themselves". We only have to free it from the *shackles* put on it by the domination of the Socialist-Revolutionary and Menshevik leaders. This apparatus *is already* in motion; we only have to free it from the monstrous, petty-bourgeois impediments preventing it from going full speed ahead.

Two circumstances must be considered here to supplement what has already been said. In the first place, the new means of control have been created *not* by us, but by capitalism in its military-imperialist stage; and in the second place, it is important to introduce more democracy into the *administration* of a proletarian state.

The grain monopoly and bread rationing were introduced not by us, but by the capitalist state in war-time. It had already introduced universal labour conscription within the framework of capitalism, which is war-time penal servitude for the workers. But here too, as in all its history-making activities, the proletariat takes its weapons from capitalism and does not "invent" or "create them out of nothing".

The grain monopoly, bread rationing and labour conscription in the hands of the proletarian state, in the hands of sovereign Soviets, will be the most powerful means of accounting and control, means which, applied to the capitalists, and to *the rich in general*, applied to them by the *workers*, will provide a force unprecedented in history for "setting the state apparatus in motion", for overcoming the resistance of the capitalists, for subordinating them to the proletarian state. These means of control and of *compelling people to work* will be more potent than the laws of the Convention and its guillotine. The guillotine *only* terrorised, only broke *active* resistance. *For us, this is not enough.*

For us, this is not enough. We must not only "terrorise" the capitalists, i.e., make them feel the omnipotence of the proletarian state and give up all idea of actively resisting it. We must also break *passive* resistance, which is undoubtedly more dangerous and harmful. We must not only break resistance of every kind. We must also *compel the capitalists to work* within the framework of the new state organisation. It is not enough to



“remove” the capitalists; we must (after removing the undesirable and incorrigible “resisters”) employ them *in the service of the new state*. This applies both to the capitalists and to the upper section of the bourgeois intellectuals, office employees, etc.

And we have the means to do this. The means and instruments for this have been placed in our hands by the capitalist state in the war. These means are the grain monopoly, bread rationing and labour conscription. “He who does not work, neither shall he eat”—this is the fundamental, the first and most important rule the Soviets of Workers’ Deputies can and will introduce when they become the ruling power.

Every worker has a work-book. This book does not degrade him, although *at present* it is undoubtedly a document of capitalist wage-slavery, certifying that the workman belongs to some parasite.

The Soviets will introduce work-books *for the rich* and *then* gradually for the whole population (in a peasant country work-books will probably not be needed for a long time for the overwhelming majority of the peasants). The work-book will cease to be the badge of the “common herd”, a document of the “lower” orders, a certificate of wage-slavery. It will become a document certifying that in the new society there are no longer any “workmen”, nor, on the other hand, are there any longer men *who do not work*.

The rich will be obliged to get a work-book from the workers’ or office employees’ union with which their occupation is most closely connected, and every week, or other definite fixed period, they will have to get from that union a certificate to the effect that they are performing their work conscientiously; without this they will not be able to receive bread ration cards or provisions in general. The proletarian state will say: we need good organisers of banking and the amalgamation of enterprises (in this matter the capitalists have more experience, and it is easier to work with experienced people), and we need far, far more engineers, agronomists, technicians and scientifically trained specialists of every kind than were needed before. We shall give all these specialists work to which they are accustomed and which they can cope with; in all probability we shall introduce complete wage equality only gradually and shall pay these specialists higher salaries during the transition period. We shall place them, however, under comprehensive workers’ control and we shall achieve the complete and absolute operation of the rule “He who does not work, neither shall he eat.” We shall not invent the organisational form of the work, but take it ready-made from capitalism—we shall take over the banks, syndicates, the best factories, experimental stations, academies, and so forth; all that

we shall have to do is to borrow the best models furnished by the advanced countries.

Of course, we shall not in the least descend to a utopia, we are not deserting the soil of most sober, practical reason when we say that the entire capitalist class will offer the most stubborn resistance, but this resistance will be broken by the organisation of the entire population in Soviets. Those capitalists who are exceptionally stubborn and recalcitrant will, of course, have to be punished by the confiscation of their whole property and by imprisonment. On the other hand, however, the victory of the proletariat will bring about *an increase* in the number of cases of the kind that I read about in today's *Izvestia* for example:

"On September 26, two engineers came to the Central Council of Factory Committees to report that a group of engineers had decided to form a union of socialist engineers. The Union believes that the present time is actually the beginning of the social revolution and places itself at the disposal of the working people, desiring, in defence of the workers' interests, to work in complete unity with the workers' organisations. The representatives of the Central Council of Factory Committees answered that the Council will gladly set up in its organisation an Engineers' Section which will embody in its programme the main theses of the First Conference of Factory Committees on workers' control over production. A joint meeting of delegates of the Central Council of Factory Committees and of the initiative group of socialist engineers will be held within the next few days." (*Izvestia*, September 27, 1917.)

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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 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.

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Pertinent to the question of the state apparatus is also the question of centralism raised with unusual vehemence and ineptitude by Comrade Bazarov in *Novaya Zhizn* No. 138, of September 27, in an article entitled: "The Bolsheviks and the Problem of Power".

Comrade Bazarov reasons as follows: "The Soviets are not an apparatus suitable for all spheres of state life", for, he says, seven months' experience has shown, and "scores and hundreds of documents in the possession of the Economic Department of the St. Petersburg Executive Committee" have confirmed, that

the Soviets, although actually enjoying "full power" in many places, "have not been able to achieve anything like satisfactory results in combating economic ruin". What is needed is an apparatus "divided up according to branches of production, with strict centralisation within each branch, and subordinated to one, country-wide centre". "It is a matter", if you please, "not of replacing the old apparatus, but merely of reforming it . . . no matter how much the Bolsheviks may jeer at people with a plan. . . ."

All these arguments of Comrade Bazarov's are positively amazing for their helplessness, they echo the arguments of the bourgeoisie and reflect their class point of view.

In fact, to say that the Soviets have anywhere in Russia ever enjoyed "full power" is simply ridiculous (if it is not a repetition of the selfish class lie of the capitalists). Full power means power over all the land, over all the banks, over all the factories; a man who is at all familiar with the facts of history and science on the connection between politics and economics could not have "forgotten" this "trifling" circumstance.

The bourgeoisie's device is to *withhold* power from the Soviets, *sabotage* every important step they take, while at the same time retaining government in their own hands, retaining power over the land, the banks, etc., and then throwing the blame for the ruin upon the Soviets! This is exactly what the whole sad experience of the coalition amounts to.

The Soviets have never had full power, and the measures they have taken could not result in anything but palliatives that added to the confusion.

The effort to prove the necessity for centralism to the Bolsheviks who are centralists by conviction, by their programme and by the entire tactics of their Party, is really like forcing an open door. The writers of *Novaya Zhizn* are wasting their time only because they have totally failed to understand the meaning and significance of our jeers at their "country-wide" point of view. And the *Novaya Zhizn* people have failed to understand this because they merely pay *lip-service* to the doctrine of the class struggle, but do not accept it seriously. Repeating the words about the class struggle they have learned by rote, they are constantly slipping into the "above-class point of view", amusing in theory and reactionary in practice, and are calling this fawning upon the bourgeoisie a "country-wide" plan.

The state, dear people, is a class concept. The state is an organ or instrument of violence exercised by one class against another. So long as it is an instrument of violence exercised by the bourgeoisie against the proletariat, the proletariat can have only one slogan: *destruction* of this state. But when the state will be a pro-

letarian state, when it will be an instrument of violence exercised by the proletariat against the bourgeoisie, we shall be fully and unreservedly in favour of a strong state power and of centralism.

To put it in more popular language, we do not jeer at "plans", but at Bazarov and Co.'s failure to understand that by repudiating "workers' control", by repudiating the "dictatorship of the proletariat" they *are for* the dictatorship of the bourgeoisie. There is no middle course; a middle course is the futile dream of the petty-bourgeois democrat.

Not a single central body, not a single Bolshevik has ever argued against *centralisation* of the Soviets, against their amalgamation. None of us objects to having factory committees in each branch of production, or to their centralisation. Bazarov is *wide of the mark*.

We laugh, have laughed, and will laugh not at "centralism", and not at "plans", but at *reformism*, because, after the experience of the coalition, your reformism is utterly ridiculous. And to say "not replace the apparatus but reform it" means to be a reformist, means to become not a revolutionary but a reformist democrat. Reformism means nothing more than concessions on the part of the ruling class, but *not* its overthrow; it makes concessions, but power remains in *its hands*.

This is precisely what has been tried during six months of the coalition.

This is what we laugh at. Having failed to obtain a thorough grasp of the doctrine of the class struggle, Bazarov allows himself to be caught by the bourgeoisie who sing in chorus "Just so, just so, we are by no means opposed to reform, we are in favour of the workers participating in country-wide control, we fully agree with that", and good Bazarov *objectively* sings the descant for the capitalists.

This has always been and always will be the case with people who in the thick of intense class struggle want to take up a "middle" position. And it is because the writers of *Novaya Zhizn* are incapable of understanding the class struggle that their policy is such a ridiculous and eternal oscillation between the bourgeoisie and the proletariat.

Get busy on "plans", dear citizens, that is not politics, that is not the class struggle; here you may be of use to the people. You have many economists on your paper. Unite with those engineers and others who are willing to work on problems of regulating production and distribution; devote the centre page of your big "apparatus" (your paper) to a practical study of precise facts on the production and distribution of goods in Russia, on banks, syndicates, etc., etc.—that is how you will be of use to the people; that is how your sitting between two stools will not



be particularly harmful; such work on "plans" will earn not the ridicule, but the gratitude of the workers.

When the proletariat is victorious it will do the following, it will set economists, engineers, agronomists, and so forth, to work *under the control* of the workers' organisations on drawing up a "plan", on verifying it, on devising labour-saving methods of centralisation, on devising the simplest, cheapest, most convenient and universal measures and methods of control. For this we shall pay the economists, statisticians and technicians good money . . . but we shall not give them anything to eat if they do not perform this work conscientiously and entirely *in the interests of the working people*.

We are in favour of centralism and of a "plan", but of the centralism and plan of the *proletarian* state, of proletarian regulation of production and distribution in the interests of the poor, the working people, the exploited, *against* the exploiters. We can agree to only one meaning of the term "country-wide", namely, that which breaks the resistance of the capitalists, which gives all power to the majority of the people, i.e., the proletarians and semi-proletarians, the workers and the poor peasants.

\* \* \*

The fifth plea is that the Bolsheviks will not be able to retain power because "the situation is exceptionally complicated". . . .

O wise men! They, perhaps, would be willing to reconcile themselves to revolution if only the "situation" were not "exceptionally complicated".

Such revolutions never occur, and sighs for such a revolution amount to nothing more than the reactionary wails of a bourgeois intellectual. Even if a revolution has started in a situation that seemed to be not very complicated, the development of the revolution itself *always* creates an *exceptionally* complicated situation. A revolution, a real, profound, a "people's" revolution, to use Marx's expression,<sup>154</sup> is the incredibly complicated and painful process of the death of the old and birth of the new social order, of the mode of life of tens of millions of people. Revolution is a most intense, furious, desperate class struggle and civil war. Not a single great revolution in history has taken place without civil war. And only a "man in a muffler"<sup>155</sup> can think that civil war is conceivable without an "exceptionally complicated situation".

If the situation were not exceptionally complicated there would be no revolution. If you are afraid of wolves don't go into the forest.

There is nothing to discuss in the fifth plea, because there is



no economic, political, or any other meaning whatever in it. It contains only the yearning of people who are distressed and frightened by the revolution. To characterise this yearning I shall take the liberty of mentioning two little things from my personal experience.

I had a conversation with a wealthy engineer shortly before the July days. This engineer had once been a revolutionary, had been in the Social-Democratic movement and even a member of the Bolshevik Party. Now he was full of fear and rage at the turbulent and indomitable workers. "If they were at least like the German workers," he said (he is an educated man and has been abroad), "of course, I understand that the social revolution is, in general, inevitable, but here, when the workers' level has been so reduced by the war . . . it is not a revolution, it is an abyss."

He was willing to accept the social revolution if history were to lead to it in the peaceful, calm, smooth and precise manner of a German express train pulling into a station. A sedate conductor would open the carriage door and announce: "Social Revolution Station! *Alle aussteigen!* (All change!)" In that case he would have no objection to changing his position of engineer under the Tit Tityches to that of engineer under the workers' organisations.

That man has seen strikes. He knows what a storm of passion the most ordinary strike arouses even in the most peaceful times. He, of course, understands how many million times more furious this storm must be when the class struggle has aroused *all* the working people of a vast country, when war and exploitation have driven almost to desperation millions of people who for centuries have been tormented by the landowners, for decades have been robbed and downtrodden by the capitalists and the tsar's officials. He understands all this "theoretically", he only pays *lip-service* to this, he is simply terrified by the "exceptionally complicated situation".

After the July days, thanks to the extremely solicitous attention with which the Kerensky government honoured me, I was obliged to go underground. Of course, it was the workers who sheltered people like us. In a small working-class house in a remote working-class suburb of Petrograd, dinner is being served. The hostess puts bread on the table. The host says: "Look what fine bread. 'They' dare not give us bad bread now. And we had almost given up even thinking that we'd ever get good bread in Petrograd again."

I was amazed at this class appraisal of the July days. My thoughts had been revolving around the political significance of those events, weighing the role they played in the general course of events, analysing the situation that caused this zigzag in his-

tory and the situation it would create, and how we ought to change our slogans and alter our Party apparatus to adapt it to the changed situation. As for bread, I, who had not known want, did not give it a thought. I took bread for granted, as a by-product of the writer's work, as it were. The mind approaches the foundation of everything, the class struggle for bread, through political analysis that follows an extremely complicated and devious path.

This member of the oppressed class, however, even though one of the well-paid and quite intelligent workers, takes the bull by the horns with that astonishing simplicity and straightforwardness, with that firm determination and amazing clarity of outlook from which we intellectuals are as remote as the stars in the sky. The whole world is divided into two camps: "us", the working people, and "them", the exploiters. Not a shadow of embarrassment over what had taken place; it was just one of the battles in the long struggle between labour and capital. When you fell trees, chips fly.

"What a painful thing is this 'exceptionally complicated situation' created by the revolution," that's how the bourgeois intellectual thinks and feels.

"We squeezed 'them' a bit; 'they' won't dare to lord it over us as they did before. We'll squeeze again—and chuck them out altogether," that's how the worker thinks and feels.

\* \* \*

The sixth and last plea: the proletariat "will be incapable of resisting all the pressure by hostile forces that will sweep away not only the proletarian dictatorship, but the entire revolution into the bargain".

Don't try to scare us, gentlemen, you won't succeed. We saw these hostile forces and their pressure in Kornilovism (from which the Kerensky regime in no way differs). Everybody saw, and the people remember, how the proletariat and the poor peasants swept away the Kornilov gang, and how pitiful and helpless proved to be the position of the supporters of the bourgeoisie and of the few exceptionally well-to-do local small landowners who were exceptionally "hostile" to the revolution. *Dyelo Naroda* of September 30 urges the workers to "be patient and put up with" Kerensky (i.e., Kornilov) and the fake Tsereteli Bulygin Duma until the convocation of the Constituent Assembly (convened under the protection of "military measures" against insurgent peasants!) and, with great gusto, it repeats precisely *Novaya Zhizn's* sixth plea and shouts until it is hoarse: "The Kerensky government will under no circumstances submit" (to the rule

of the Soviets, the rule of the workers and peasants, which *Dyelo Naroda*, not wishing to lag behind the pogrom-mongers and anti-Semites, monarchists and Cadets, calls the rule of "Trotsky and Lenin": these are the lengths to which the Socialist-Revolutionaries go!).

But neither *Novaya Zhizn* nor *Dyelo Naroda* can scare the class-conscious workers. "The Kerensky government," you say, "will under no circumstances submit", i.e., it will repeat the Kornilov revolt, to put it more simply, bluntly and clearly. And the gentlemen of *Dyelo Naroda* dare to say that this will be "civil war", that this is a "horrible prospect"!

No, gentlemen, you will not fool the workers. It will not be civil war but a hopeless revolt of a handful of Kornilovites. If they want to "refuse to submit" to the people and at all costs provoke a repetition on a wide scale of what happened to the Kornilov men in Vyborg—if that is what the Socialist-Revolutionaries *want*, if that is what the member of the Socialist-Revolutionary Party Kerensky wants, he may drive the people to desperation. But you will not scare the workers and soldiers with this, gentlemen.

What boundless insolence. They faked up a new Bulygin Duma; by means of fraud they recruited a crowd of reactionary co-operators and village kulaks to help them, added to these the capitalists and landowners (the so-called property-owning classes) and with the aid of this gang of Kornilovites they want to *thwart the will of the people*, the will of the workers and peasants.

They have brought affairs in a peasant country to such a pass that peasant revolt is spreading everywhere like a river in flood! Think of it! In a democratic republic in which 80 per cent of the population are peasants, the peasants have been driven to revolt. . . . This same *Dyelo Naroda*, Chernov's newspaper, the organ of the "Socialist-Revolutionary" Party, which on September 30 has the effrontery to advise the workers and peasants to "be patient", was obliged to admit in a leading article on September 29:

"So far practically nothing has been done to put an end to those relations of bondage that still prevail in the villages of central Russia."

This same *Dyelo Naroda*, in the same leading article of September 29, says that "the dead hand of Stolypin is still making itself strongly felt" in the methods employed by the "revolutionary ministers"; in other words, putting it more clearly and simply, it brands Kerensky, Nikitin, Kishkin and Co. as *Stolypins*.

The "Stolypins" Kerensky and Co. have driven the peasants to revolt, are now taking "military measures" against the peasants, are trying to soothe the people with the convocation of



the Constituent Assembly (although Kerensky and Tsereteli have already *deceived* the people once by solemnly proclaiming on July 8 that the Constituent Assembly would be convened on the appointed date, September 17; they then *broke their promise* and postponed the Constituent Assembly even against the advice of the *Menshevik Dan*, postponed the Constituent Assembly not to the end of October as the Menshevik Central Executive Committee of that time wished, but to the end of November). The "Stolypins" Kerensky and Co. are trying to soothe the people with the imminent convocation of the Constituent Assembly, as if the people can believe those who have already lied in this matter, as if the people can believe that the Constituent Assembly will be *properly* convened by a government which has taken *military measures* in remote villages, that is to say, is openly *conniving* at the arbitrary arrest of class-conscious peasants and the *rigging* of the elections.

The government has driven the peasants to revolt and now has the effrontery to say to them: "You must 'be patient', you must wait, trust the government which is pacifying insurgent peasants by 'military measures'!"

To bring matters to such a pitch that hundreds of thousands of Russian soldiers perish in the offensive after June 19, the war is being protracted, German sailors have mutinied and are throwing their officers overboard, to bring matters to such a pitch, all the time uttering phrases about peace but *not offering* a just peace to *all* the belligerents, and yet to have the effrontery to tell the workers and peasants, to tell the dying soldiers, "you must be patient", trust the government of the "Stolypin man" Kerensky, trust the Kornilov generals for another month, perhaps in that month they will send several tens of thousands more soldiers to the slaughter.... "You must be patient"....

Isn't that shameless?

But you won't fool the soldiers, gentlemen of the Socialist-Revolutionaries, Kerensky's fellow party members.

The workers and soldiers will not endure the Kerensky government for a single day, for an *extra* hour, for they know that the *Soviet* Government will *immediately* offer all the belligerents a just peace and therefore will *in all probability* achieve an immediate armistice and a speedy peace.

Not for a single day, not for an *extra* hour will the soldiers of our peasant army allow the Kerensky government—the government which is employing *military measures* to suppress the peasant revolt—to remain in power against the will of the Soviets.

No, gentlemen of the Socialist-Revolutionaries, Kerensky's fellow party members, you won't fool the workers and peasants any more.



\* \* \*

On the question of the pressure by hostile forces which the mortally frightened *Novaya Zhizn* assures us will sweep away the proletarian dictatorship, still another monstrous logical and political mistake is made, which only people who have allowed themselves to be frightened out of their wits can fail to see.

"Pressure by hostile forces will sweep away the proletarian dictatorship," you say. Very well. But you are all economists and educated people, dear fellow-citizens. You all know that to contrast democracy to the bourgeoisie is senseless and a sign of ignorance; it is the same as contrasting pounds to yards, for there is a democratic bourgeoisie and undemocratic groups of the petty bourgeoisie (capable of raising a Vendée).

"Hostile forces" is merely an empty phrase. The class term is *bourgeoisie* (backed by the landowners).

The bourgeoisie and the landowners, the proletariat, and the petty bourgeoisie, the small proprietors, primarily the peasants—these are the three main "forces" into which Russia, like *every* capitalist country, is divided. These are the three main "forces" that have long been revealed in every capitalist country (including Russia) not only by scientific economic analysis, but also by the *political experience* of the modern history of *all* countries, by the experience of *all* European revolutions since the eighteenth century, by the experience of the *two* Russian revolutions of 1905 and 1917.

So, you threaten the proletariat with the prospect that its rule will be swept away by the pressure of the bourgeoisie? That, and that alone, is what your threat amounts to, it has no other meaning.

Very well. If, for example, the bourgeoisie can sweep away the rule of the workers and poor peasants, then the only alternative is a "coalition", i.e., an alliance, or agreement, between the petty bourgeoisie and the bourgeoisie. Nothing else can be contemplated!

But coalition has been tried for about six months and it has led to bankruptcy, and you yourselves, my dear but dense citizens of *Novaya Zhizn*, have *renounced* coalition.

So what do we get?

You have become so muddled, citizens of *Novaya Zhizn*, you have allowed yourselves to be so scared, that you cannot think straight in the extremely simple matter of *counting even up to three, let alone up to five*.

Either all power to the bourgeoisie—the slogan you have long ceased to advocate, and which the bourgeoisie themselves dare not even hint at, for they know that the people overthrew this

power with one hitch of the shoulder at the time of the April 20-21 events, and would overthrow it now with thrice that determination and ruthlessness; or power to the petty bourgeoisie, i.e., a coalition (alliance, agreement) between them and the bourgeoisie, for the petty bourgeoisie do not wish to and *cannot* take power alone and independently, as has been proved by the experience of all revolutions, and as is proved by economics, which explains that in a capitalist country it is possible to stand for capital and it is possible to stand for labour, but it is impossible to stand for long in between. In Russia this coalition has for six months tried scores of ways and failed.

Or, finally, all power to the proletarians and the poor peasants against the bourgeoisie in order to break their resistance. This has not yet been tried, and you, gentlemen of *Novaya Zhizn*, are *dissuading* the people from this, you are trying to frighten them with your own fear of the bourgeoisie.

No fourth way can be invented.

If *Novaya Zhizn*, therefore, is afraid of the proletarian dictatorship and rejects it because, as it claims, the proletarian power may be defeated by the bourgeoisie, it is tantamount to its *sur-reptitiously reverting* to the position of *compromise* with the capitalists! It is as clear as daylight, that whoever is afraid of resistance, whoever does not believe that it is possible to break this resistance, whoever warns the people: "beware of the resistance of the capitalists, you will not be able to cope with it", is *thereby* again calling for compromise with the capitalists.

*Novaya Zhizn* is hopelessly and pitifully muddled, as are all the petty-bourgeois democrats who now realise that the coalition is bankrupt, dare not defend it openly and, at the same time, protected by the bourgeoisie, fear the transfer of all power to the proletarians and poor peasants.

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To fear the resistance of the capitalists and yet to call oneself a revolutionary, to wish to be regarded as a socialist—isn't that disgraceful? How low must international socialism, corrupted by opportunism, have fallen ideologically if such voices *could* be raised?

We have already seen the strength of the capitalists' resistance; the entire people have seen it, for the capitalists are more class-conscious than the other classes and at once realised the significance of the Soviets, at once exerted *all their efforts* to the utmost, resorted to everything, went to all lengths, resorted to the most incredible lies and slander, to military plots *in order*

to frustrate the Soviets, to reduce them to nought, to prostitute them (with the aid of the Mensheviks and Socialist-Revolutionaries), to transform them into talking-shops, to wear down the peasants and workers by months and months of empty talk and playing at revolution.

*We have not yet seen*, however, the strength of resistance of the proletarians and poor peasants, for this strength will become fully apparent only when power is in the hands of the proletariat, when tens of millions of people who have been crushed by want and capitalist slavery see from experience and *feel* that state power has passed into the hands of the oppressed classes, that the state is helping the poor to fight the landowners and capitalists, is *breaking* their resistance. *Only* then shall we see what untapped forces of resistance to the capitalists are latent among the people; only then will what Engels called "latent socialism" manifest itself. Only then, for every *ten thousand* overt and concealed enemies of working-class rule, manifesting themselves actively or by passive resistance, there will arise *a million* new fighters who had been politically dormant, writhing in the torments of poverty and despair, having ceased to believe that they were human, that they had the right to live, that they too could be served by the entire might of the modern centralised state, that contingents of the proletarian militia could, with the fullest confidence, also call upon *them* to take a direct, immediate, daily part in state administration.

The capitalists and landowners, with the kind help of Plekhanov, Breshkovskaya, Tsereteli, Chernov and Co., have done *everything* in their power to *defile* the democratic republic, to defile it by servility to wealth to such a degree that the people are being overcome by apathy, indifference; *it is all the same to them*, because the hungry man cannot see the difference between the republic and the monarchy; the freezing, barefooted, worn-out soldier sacrificing his life for alien interests is not inclined to love the republic.

But when every labourer, every unemployed worker, every cook, every ruined peasant sees, not from the newspapers, but with his own eyes, that the proletarian state is not cringing to wealth but is helping the poor, that this state does not hesitate to adopt revolutionary measures, that it confiscates surplus stocks of provisions from the parasites and distributes them to the hungry, that it forcibly installs the homeless in the houses of the rich, that it compels the rich to pay for milk but does not give them a drop until the children of *all* poor families are sufficiently supplied, that the land is being transferred to the working people and the factories and banks are being placed under the control of the workers, and that immediate and severe punishment



is meted out to the millionaires who conceal their wealth—when the poor see and feel this, no capitalist or kulak forces, no forces of world finance capital which manipulates thousands of millions, will vanquish the people's revolution; on the contrary, *the socialist revolution* will triumph all over the world for it is maturing in all countries.

Our revolution will be invincible if it is not afraid of itself, if it transfers all power to the proletariat, for behind us stand the immeasurably larger, more developed, more organised world forces of the proletariat which are temporarily held down by the war but not destroyed; on the contrary, the war has multiplied them.

\* \* \*

How can one be afraid that the Bolshevik government, that is to say, the proletarian government, which is assured of the devoted support of the poor peasants, will be "swept away" by the capitalist gentlemen! What short-sightedness! What disgraceful fear of the people! What hypocrisy! Those who show this fear belong to that "high" (by capitalist standards, but actually *rotten*) "society" which utters the word "justice" without believing in it, from habit, as a trite phrase, attaching no meaning to it.

Here is an example.

Mr. Peshekhonov is a well-known semi-Cadet. A more moderate Trudovik, one of the same mind as the Breshkovskayas and Plekhanovs, will not be found. There has never been a minister more servile to the bourgeoisie. The world has never seen a more ardent advocate of "coalition", of compromise with the capitalists.

Here are the admissions this gentleman was *forced* to make in his speech at the "Democratic" (read: Bulygin) Conference as reported by the defencist *Izvestia*:

"There are two programmes. One is the programme of group claims, class and national claims. This programme is most frankly advocated by the Bolsheviks. It is not easy, however, for the other sections of the democracy to reject this programme. They are the claims of the working people, the claims of the cheated and oppressed nationalities. It is not so easy, therefore, for the democracy to break with the Bolsheviks, to reject these class demands, primarily because in essence these demands are just. But this programme, for which we fought before the revolution, for the sake of which we made the revolution, and which we would all unanimously support under other circumstances, constitutes a very grave danger under present conditions. The danger is all the greater now because these demands have to be presented at a time when it is impossible for the state to comply with them. We must first defend the whole—the state, to save it from doom, and there is only one way to do that; not the satisfaction of demands, however just and cogent they may be, but, on the contrary, restriction and sacrifice, which must be contributed from all quarters." (*Izvestia*, September 17.)



Mr. Peshekhonov fails to understand that as long as the capitalists are in power he is defending *not* the whole, but the selfish interests of Russian and "Allied" imperialist capital. Mr. Peshekhonov fails to understand that the war would cease to be an imperialist, predatory war of annexation only after a rupture with the capitalists, with *their* secret treaties, with *their* annexations (seizure of alien territory), with *their* banking and financial swindles. Mr. Peshekhonov fails to understand that only *after* this would the war become—if the enemy rejected the formal offer of a just peace—a defensive war, a just war. Mr. Peshekhonov fails to understand that the defence potential of a country that has thrown off the yoke of capital, that has given the peasants land and has placed the banks and factories under workers' control, would be *many times* greater than the defence potential of a capitalist country.

The main thing that Mr. Peshekhonov *fails* to understand is that he *surrenders* his entire position, the entire position of the entire petty-bourgeois democracy when he is forced to admit the justice of Bolshevism, to admit that its demands are the demands of the "*working people*", i.e., of the majority of the people.

This is where our strength lies. This is why our government will be invincible; because even our opponents are forced to admit that the Bolshevik programme is that of the "*working people*" and the "*oppressed nationalities*".

After all, Mr. Peshekhonov is the political friend of the Cadets, of the *Yedinstvo* and *Dyelo Naroda* people, of the Breshkovskayas and Plekhanovs, he is the representative of the kulaks and of the gentlemen whose wives and sisters would come tomorrow to gouge out with their umbrellas the eyes of wounded Bolsheviks if they were to be defeated by Kornilov's or (which is the same thing) Kerensky's troops.

A gentleman like that is *forced* to admit the "justice" of the Bolshevik demands.

For him "justice" is merely an empty phrase. For the mass of semi-proletarians, however, and for the majority of the urban and rural petty bourgeoisie who have been ruined, tortured and worn out by the war, it is not an empty phrase, but a most acute, most burning and immense question of death from starvation, of a crust of bread. That is why *no* policy can be based on a "coalition", on a "compromise" between the interests of the starving and ruined and the interests of the exploiters. That is why the Bolshevik government is *assured* of the support of the overwhelming majority of *these* people.

Justice is an empty word, say the intellectuals and those rascals who are inclined to proclaim themselves Marxists on the

lofty grounds that they have "contemplated the *hind parts*" of economic materialism.

Ideas become a power when they grip the people. And precisely at the present time the Bolsheviks, i.e., the representatives of revolutionary proletarian internationalism, have embodied in their policy the idea that is motivating countless working people all over the world.

Justice alone, the mere anger of the people against exploitation, would never have brought them on to the true path of socialism. But now that, thanks to capitalism, the material apparatus of the big banks, syndicates, railways, and so forth, has grown, now that the immense experience of the advanced countries has accumulated a stock of engineering marvels, the employment of which is being *hindered* by capitalism, now that the class-conscious workers have built up a party of a quarter of a million members to systematically lay hold of this apparatus and set it in motion with the support of all the working and exploited people—now that these conditions *exist*, no power on earth can prevent the Bolsheviks, *if they do not allow themselves to be scared* and if they succeed in taking power, from retaining it until the triumph of the world socialist revolution.

## AFTERWORD

The foregoing lines were already written when the leading article in *Novaya Zhizn* of October 1 produced another gem of stupidity which is all the more dangerous because it professes sympathy with the Bolsheviks and offers most sagacious philistine admonitions "not to allow yourselves to be provoked" (not to allow ourselves to be caught in the trap of screams about provocation, the object of which is to frighten the Bolsheviks and cause them to *refrain* from taking power).

Here is this gem:

"The lessons of movements, like that of July 3-5, on the one hand, and of the Kornilov days, on the other, have shown quite clearly that the democracy, having at its command organs that exercise immense influence among the population, is invincible when it takes a defensive position in civil war, and that it suffers defeat, loses all the middle vacillating groups when it takes the initiative and launches an offensive."

If the Bolsheviks were to yield in any form and in the slightest degree to the philistine stupidity of this argument they would ruin their Party and the revolution.

For the author of this argument, taking it upon himself to talk about civil war (just the subject for a lady with many good points), has distorted *the lessons of history* on this question in an incredibly comical manner.

This is how *these* lessons, the lessons of history on *this* question, were treated by the representative and founder of proletarian revolutionary tactics, Karl Marx:

"Now, insurrection is an art quite as much as war or any other art, and is subject to certain procedural rules which, when neglected, will bring about the downfall of the party neglecting them. These rules, logical deductions from the nature of the parties and the circumstances you have to deal with in such a case, are so plain and simple that the brief experience of 1848 made the Germans fairly well acquainted with them. Firstly, never play with insurrection unless you are fully prepared to go

the whole way [literally: face the consequences of your game].\* Insurrection is an equation with very indefinite magnitudes, the value of which may change every day; the forces opposed to you have all the advantage of organisation, discipline and habitual authority [Marx has in mind the most "difficult" case of insurrection: against the "firmly established" old authority, against the army not yet disintegrated by the influence of the revolution and the vacillation of the government]; unless you bring strong odds against them you are defeated and ruined. Secondly, once you have entered upon the insurrectionary career, act with the greatest determination, and on the offensive. The defensive is the death of every armed rising; it is lost before it measures itself with its enemies. Surprise your antagonists while their forces are scattered, prepare the way for new successes, however small, but prepare daily; keep up the moral superiority which the first successful rising has given to you; rally in this way those vacillating elements to your side which always follow the strongest impulse and which always look out for the safer side; force your enemies to retreat before they can collect their strength against you; in the words of Danton, the greatest master of revolutionary tactics yet known: *de l'audace, de l'audace, encore de l'audace!*" (*Revolution and Counter-Revolution in Germany*, German edition, 1907, p. 118.)

We have changed all that, the "would-be Marxists" of *Novaya Zhizn* may say about themselves; instead of triple audacity they have two virtues: "We have two, sir: moderation and accuracy."<sup>156</sup> For "us", the experience of world history, the experience of the Great French Revolution, is nothing. The important thing for "us" is the experience of the two movements in 1917, distorted by Molchalin spectacles.

Let us examine this experience without these charming spectacles.

You compare July 3-5 with "civil war", because you believed Alexinsky, Pereverzev and Co. It is typical of the gentlemen of *Novaya Zhizn* that they believe *such* people (and do absolutely nothing themselves to *collect information* about July 3-5, although they have the huge apparatus of a big daily newspaper at their disposal).

Let us assume for a moment, however, that July 3-5 was not the rudiment of civil war that was kept within the rudimentary stage by the Bolsheviks, but actual civil war. Let us assume this.

In that case, then, what does this lesson prove?

First, the Bolsheviks did *not* take the offensive, for it is indis-

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\* Interpolations in square brackets (within passages quoted by Lenin) have been introduced by Lenin unless otherwise indicated.—*Ed.*



putable that on the night of July 3-4, and even on July 4, they would have gained a great deal if they had taken the offensive. Their defensive position was their weakness, if we are to speak of civil war (as *Novaya Zhizn* does, and not of converting a spontaneous outburst into a demonstration of the type of April 20-21, as the *facts* show).

The "lesson" therefore proves that the wise men of *Novaya Zhizn* are *wrong*.

Secondly, if the Bolsheviks did not even set out to start an insurrection on July 3 or 4, if *not a single* Bolshevik *body* even raised such a question, the reason for it lies *beyond* the scope of our controversy with *Novaya Zhizn*. For we are arguing about the *lessons* of "civil war", i.e., of insurrection, and not about the point that obvious lack of a majority to support it restrains the revolutionary party from thinking of insurrection.

Since everybody knows that the Bolsheviks received a majority in the metropolitan Soviets and in the country (over 49 per cent of the Moscow votes) *much later* than July 1917, it again follows that the "lessons" are far, far from what *Novaya Zhizn*, that lady with many good points, would like them to be.

No, no, you had better not meddle with politics, citizens of *Novaya Zhizn*!

If the revolutionary party has no majority in the advanced contingents of the revolutionary classes and in the country, insurrection is out of the question. Moreover, insurrection requires: (1) growth of the revolution on a country-wide scale; (2) the complete moral and political bankruptcy of the old government, for example, the "coalition" government; (3) extreme vacillation in the camp of all middle groups, i.e., those who do *not* fully support the government, although they did fully support it yesterday.

Why did *Novaya Zhizn*, when speaking of the "lessons" of July 3-5, fail even to note this very important lesson? Because a political question was not dealt with by politicians but by a circle of intellectuals who had been terrified by the bourgeoisie.

To proceed. Thirdly, the facts show that it was *after* July 3-4 that the *rot* set in among the Socialist-Revolutionaries and Mensheviks, precisely because the Tseretelis had *exposed* themselves by their *July* policy, precisely because the mass of the *people* realised that the Bolsheviks were *their own* front-rank fighters and that the "social-bloc" advocates were traitors. *Even before* the Kornilov revolt this rot was fully revealed by the Petrograd elections on August 20, which resulted in a victory for the Bolsheviks and the rout of the "social-bloc" advocates (*Dyelo Naroda* recently tried to refute this *by concealing* the returns for *all* parties, but this was both self-deception and deception of its

readers; according to the figures published in *Dyen* of August 24, covering only the city, the Cadets' share of the total vote increased from 22 to 23 per cent, but the absolute number of votes cast for the Cadets dropped 40 per cent; the Bolsheviks' share of the total vote increased from 20 to 33 per cent, while the absolute number of votes cast for the Bolsheviks dropped only 10 per cent; the share of all "middle groups" dropped from 58 to 44 per cent, but the absolute number of votes cast for them dropped 60 per cent!).

That a rot had set in among the Socialist-Revolutionaries and Mensheviks after the July days and before the Kornilov days is also proved by the growth of the Left wings in both parties, reaching almost 40 per cent: this is "retribution" for the persecution of the Bolsheviks by the Kerenskys.

In spite of the "loss" of a few hundred members, the proletarian party *gained* enormously from July 3-4, for it was precisely during those stern days that the *people* realised and saw its devotion and the *treachery* of the Socialist-Revolutionaries and Mensheviks. So, the "lesson" is far, very far from being of the *Novaya Zhizn* sort, it is one entirely different, namely: don't desert the seething masses for the "Molchalins of democracy"; and if you launch an insurrection, go over to the offensive while the enemy forces are scattered, catch the enemy unawares.

Is that not so, gentlemen "would-be Marxists" of *Novaya Zhizn*?

Or does "Marxism" mean *not* basing tactics on an exact appraisal of the *objective* situation but senselessly and uncritically lumping together "civil war" and "a Congress of Soviets and the convocation of the Constituent Assembly"?

But this is simply ridiculous, gentlemen, this is a sheer mockery of Marxism and of logic in general!

If there is *nothing* in the *objective* situation that warrants the intensification of the class struggle to the point of "civil war", why did you speak of "civil war" *in connection* with "a Congress of Soviets and the Constituent Assembly"? (For this is the title of the leading article in *Novaya Zhizn* here under discussion.) In that case you should clearly have told the reader and proved to him that there is *no* ground in the objective situation for civil war and that, therefore, peaceful, constitutionally-legal, juridically and parliamentarily "simple" things like a Congress of Soviets and a Constituent Assembly can and should be the cornerstone of tactics. In that case it is *possible* to hold the opinion that such a congress and such an assembly are really capable of *making decisions*.

If, however, the present objective conditions harbour the inevitability or even only the probability of civil war, if you did

not “idly” speak about it, but did so clearly seeing, feeling, sensing the existence of a situation of civil war, how could you make a Congress of Soviets or a Constituent Assembly the cornerstone? This is a sheer mockery of the starving and tormented people! Do you think the starving will consent to “wait” two months? Or that the ruin, about the increase of which you yourselves write every day, will consent to “wait” for the Congress of Soviets or for the Constituent Assembly? Or that the German offensive, in the absence of serious steps on our part towards peace (i.e., in the absence of a formal offer of a just peace to all belligerents), will consent to “wait” for the Congress of Soviets or for the Constituent Assembly? Or are you in possession of facts which permit you to conclude that the history of the Russian revolution, which from February 28 to September 30 had proceeded with extraordinary turbulence and unprecedented rapidity, will, from October 1 to November 29,<sup>157</sup> proceed at a super-tranquil, peaceful, legally balanced pace that will preclude upheavals, spurts, military defeats and economic crises? Or will the army at the front, concerning which the *non*-Bolshevik officer Dubasov said officially, in the name of the front, “it will not fight”, quietly starve and freeze until the “appointed” date? Or will the peasant revolt cease to be a factor of civil war because you call it “anarchy” and “pogrom”, or because Kerensky will send “military” forces *against the peasants*? Or is it possible, *conceivable*, that the government can work calmly, honestly, and *without* deception to convene the Constituent Assembly in a *peasant* country when that same government is *suppressing* the peasant revolt?

Don’t laugh at the “confusion in the Smolny Institute”,<sup>158</sup> gentlemen! There is no less confusion in your own ranks. You answer the formidable questions of civil war with confused phrases and pitiful constitutional illusions. That is why I say that if the Bolsheviks were to give in to these moods they would ruin both their Party and their revolution.

*N. Lenin*

October 1, 1917

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LETTER TO THE CENTRAL COMMITTEE,  
THE MOSCOW AND PETROGRAD COMMITTEES  
AND THE BOLSHEVIK MEMBERS  
OF THE PETROGRAD AND MOSCOW SOVIETS<sup>159</sup>

Dear Comrades,

Events are prescribing our task so clearly for us that procrastination is becoming positively *criminal*.

The peasant movement is developing. The government is intensifying its severe repressive measures. Sympathy for us is growing in the army (99 per cent of the soldiers' votes were cast for us in Moscow, the army in Finland and the fleet are against the government, and there is Dubasov's evidence about the front in general).

In Germany the beginning of a revolution is obvious, especially since the sailors were shot.<sup>160</sup> The elections in Moscow—47 per cent Bolsheviks—are a tremendous victory. Together with the Left Socialist-Revolutionaries we have an *obvious* majority in the country.

The railway and postal employees are in conflict with the government.<sup>161</sup> Instead of calling the Congress for October 20, the Lieberdants are already talking of calling it at the end of October, etc., etc.

Under such circumstances to "wait" would be a crime.

The Bolsheviks have no right to wait for the Congress of Soviets, they must *take power at once*. By so doing they will save the world revolution (for otherwise there is danger of a deal between the imperialists of all countries, who, after the shootings in Germany, will be more accommodating to each other and *will unite against us*), the Russian revolution (otherwise a wave of real anarchy may become stronger *than we are*) and the lives of hundreds of thousands of people at the front.

Delay is criminal. To wait for the Congress of Soviets would be a childish game of formalities, a disgraceful game of formalities, and a betrayal of the revolution.

If power cannot be achieved without insurrection, we must *resort to insurrection at once*. It may very well be that right now power can be achieved without insurrection, for example, if the



Moscow Soviet were to take power at once, immediately, and proclaim itself (together with the Petrograd Soviet) the government. Victory in Moscow is guaranteed, and there is no need to fight. Petrograd can wait. The government cannot do anything to save itself; it will surrender.

For, by seizing power and taking over the banks, the factories and *Russkoye Slovo*, the Moscow Soviet would secure a tremendous basis and tremendous strength, it would be able to campaign throughout Russia and raise the issue thus: we shall propose *peace tomorrow* if the Bonapartist Kerensky surrenders (and if he does not, we shall overthrow him). We shall hand over the *land* to the peasants *at once*, we shall make concessions to the railway and postal employees *at once*, and so on.

It is not necessary to "begin" with Petrograd. If Moscow "begins" without any blood being shed, it will certainly be supported by (1) the army at the front by its sympathy, (2) the peasants everywhere and (3) the fleet and the troops in Finland, which will *proceed to Petrograd*.

Even if Kerensky has a corps or two of mounted troops near Petrograd, he will be obliged to surrender. The Petrograd Soviet can wait and campaign for the Moscow Soviet Government. The slogan is: Power to the Soviets, Land to the Peasants, Peace to the Nations, Bread to the Starving!

Victory is certain, and the chances are ten to one that it will be a bloodless victory.

To wait would be a crime to the revolution.

Greetings, *N. Lenin*

Written on October 1 (14), 1917

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Vol. XIV, Part 2

*Collected Works*, Vol. 26

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## ADVICE OF AN ONLOOKER

I am writing these lines on October 8 and have little hope that they will reach Petrograd comrades by the 9th. It is possible that they will arrive too late, since the Congress of the Northern Soviets has been fixed for October 10.<sup>162</sup> Nevertheless, I shall try to give my "Advice of an Onlooker" in the event that the probable action of the workers and soldiers of Petrograd and of the whole "region" will take place soon but has not yet taken place.

It is clear that all power must pass to the Soviets. It should be equally indisputable for every Bolshevik that proletarian revolutionary power (or Bolshevik power—which is now one and the same thing) is assured of the utmost sympathy and unreserved support of all the working and exploited people all over the world in general, in the belligerent countries in particular, and among the Russian peasants especially. There is no need to dwell on these all too well known and long established truths.

What must be dealt with is something that is probably not quite clear to all comrades, namely, that in practice the transfer of power to the Soviets now means armed uprising. This would seem obvious, but not everyone was or is giving thought to the point. To repudiate armed uprising now would mean to repudiate the key slogan of Bolshevism (All Power to the Soviets) and proletarian revolutionary internationalism in general.

But armed uprising is a *special* form of political struggle, one subject to special laws to which attentive thought must be given. Karl Marx expressed this truth with remarkable clarity when he wrote that "*insurrection is an art quite as much as war*".

Of the principal rules of this art, Marx noted the following:

(1) *Never play* with insurrection, but when beginning it realise firmly that you must *go all the way*.

(2) Concentrate a *great superiority of forces* at the decisive point and at the decisive moment, otherwise the enemy, who has the advantage of better preparation and organisation, will destroy the insurgents.

(3) Once the insurrection has begun, you must act with the greatest *determination*, and by all means, without fail, take the *offensive*. "The defensive is the death of every armed rising."

(4) You must try to take the enemy by surprise and seize the moment when his forces are scattered.

(5) You must strive for *daily* successes, however small (one might say hourly, if it is the case of one town), and at all costs retain "*moral superiority*".

Marx summed up the lessons of all revolutions in respect to armed uprising in the words of "Danton, the greatest master of revolutionary tactics yet known: *de l'audace, de l'audace, encore de l'audace*".<sup>163</sup>

Applied to Russia and to October 1917, this means: a simultaneous offensive on Petrograd, as sudden and as rapid as possible, which must without fail be carried out from within and from without, from the working-class quarters and from Finland, from Revel and from Kronstadt, an offensive of the *entire* navy, the concentration of a *gigantic superiority* of forces over the 15,000 or 20,000 (perhaps more) of our "bourgeois guard" (the officers' schools), our "Vendée troops" (part of the Cossacks), etc.

Our *three* main forces—the fleet, the workers, and the army units—must be so combined as to occupy without fail and to hold *at any cost*: (a) the telephone exchange; (b) the telegraph office; (c) the railway stations; (d) and above all, the bridges.

The *most determined* elements (our "shock forces" and *young workers*, as well as the best of the sailors) must be formed into small detachments to occupy all the more important points and to *take part* everywhere in all important operations, for example: to encircle and cut off Petrograd; to seize it by a combined attack of the sailors, the workers, and the troops—a task which requires *art and triple audacity*;

to form detachments from the best workers, armed with rifles and bombs, for the purpose of attacking and surrounding the enemy's "centres" (the officers' schools, the telegraph office, the telephone exchange, etc.). Their watchword must be: "*Better die to a man than let the enemy pass!*"

Let us hope that if action is decided on, the leaders will successfully apply the great precepts of Danton and Marx.

The success of both the Russian and the world revolution depends on two or three days' fighting.

Written on October 8 (21), 1917

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Signed: *An Onlooker*

*Collected Works*, Vol. 26

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## LETTER TO THE BOLSHEVIK COMRADES ATTENDING THE CONGRESS OF SOVIETS OF THE NORTHERN REGION

Comrades,

Our revolution is passing through a highly critical period. This crisis coincides with the great crisis—the growth of the world socialist revolution and the struggle waged against it by world imperialism. A gigantic task is being presented to the responsible leaders of our Party, and failure to perform it will involve the danger of a complete collapse of the internationalist proletarian movement. The situation is such that, in truth, delay would be fatal.

Take a glance at the international situation. The growth of a world revolution is beyond dispute. The outburst of indignation on the part of the Czech workers has been suppressed with incredible ferocity, testifying to the government's extreme fright. Italy too has witnessed a mass outbreak in Turin.<sup>164</sup> Most important, however, is the revolt in the German navy. One can imagine the enormous difficulties of a revolution in a country like Germany, especially under present conditions. It cannot be doubted that the revolt in the German navy is indicative of the great crisis—the growth of the world revolution. While our chauvinists, who are advocating Germany's defeat, demand a revolt of the German workers immediately, we Russian revolutionary internationalists know from the experience of 1905-17 that a more impressive sign of the growth of revolution than a revolt among the troops cannot be imagined.

Just think what our position is now in the eyes of the German revolutionaries. They can say to us: We have only Liebknecht who openly called for a revolution. His voice has been stifled in a convict prison. We have not a single newspaper which openly explains the necessity for a revolution; we have not got freedom of assembly. We have not a single Soviet of Workers' or Soldiers' Deputies. Our voice barely reaches the real, broad mass of people. Yet we made an attempt at revolt, although our chance was only



one in a hundred. But you Russian revolutionary internationalists have behind you a half-year of free agitation, you have a score of newspapers, you have a number of Soviets of Workers' and Soldiers' Deputies, you have gained the upper hand in the Soviets of Petrograd and Moscow, you have on your side the entire Baltic fleet and all the Russian troops in Finland. And still you do not respond to our call for an uprising, you do not overthrow your imperialist, Kerensky, although the chances are a hundred to one that your uprising will be successful.

Yes, we shall be real traitors to the International if, at such a moment and under such favourable conditions, we respond to this call from the German revolutionaries with ... *mere* resolutions.

Add to this, as we all perfectly well know, that the plotting and conspiracy of the international imperialists against the Russian revolution are rapidly growing. International imperialism is coming closer to the idea of stifling the revolution at all costs, stifling it both by military measures and by a peace made at the expense of Russia. It is this that is making the crisis in the world socialist revolution so acute, and is rendering our delay of the uprising particularly dangerous—I would almost say criminal.

Take, further, Russia's internal situation. The petty-bourgeois compromising parties which expressed the naïve confidence of the masses in Kerensky and in the imperialists in general, are absolutely bankrupt. Their collapse is complete. The vote cast against coalition by the Soviet curia at the Democratic Conference, the vote cast against coalition by a *majority* of the local Soviets of Peasants' Deputies (in spite of their central Soviet, where Avksentyev and other friends of Kerensky's are installed), the elections in Moscow, where the working-class population has the closest ties with the peasants, and where *over 49 per cent* voted for the Bolsheviks (and among the soldiers fourteen thousand out of seventeen thousand)—does this not signify that the confidence of the people in Kerensky and in those who are compromising with Kerensky and Co. has completely collapsed? Can one imagine any way in which the people could say more clearly to the Bolsheviks than they did by this vote, "Lead us, we shall follow you"?

And we, who have thus won the majority of the people over to our side, and who have gained the Soviets in both the capital cities—are we to wait? What for? For Kerensky and his Kornilovite generals to surrender Petrograd to the Germans, and thus enter directly or indirectly, openly or secretly, into a conspiracy with *both* Buchanan *and* Wilhelm for the purpose of completely stifling the Russian revolution.

By the Moscow vote and by the re-elections to the Soviets, the people have expressed their confidence in us, but that is not all. There are signs of growing apathy and indifference. That is understandable. It implies not the ebb of the revolution, as the Cadets and their henchmen vociferate, but the ebb of confidence in resolutions and elections. In a revolution, the masses demand action, not words from the leading parties, they demand victories in the struggle, not talk. The moment is approaching when the people may conceive the idea that the Bolsheviks are no better than the others, since they were unable *to act* when the people placed confidence in them. . . .

The peasant revolt is spreading over the whole country. It is perfectly clear that the Cadets and their hangers-on are minimising it in every way and are claiming it to be nothing but "riots" and "anarchy". That lie is being refuted because in the revolt centres the land is beginning to be handed over to the peasants. "Riots" and "anarchy" have never led to such splendid political results! The tremendous strength of the peasant revolt is shown by the fact that the compromisers and the Socialist-Revolutionaries of *Dyelo Naroda*, and even Breshko-Breshkovskaya, have begun to talk of transferring the land to the peasants in order to check the movement before it has finally engulfed them.

Are we to wait until the Cossack units of the Kornilovite Kerensky (who was recently exposed as a Kornilovite by the Socialist-Revolutionaries themselves) succeed in suppressing this peasant revolt *piecemeal*?

Apparently, many leaders of our Party have failed to note the *specific* meaning of the slogan which we all adopted and which we have repeated endlessly. The slogan is "All Power to the Soviets". There were periods, there were moments during the six months of the revolution, when this slogan did *not* mean insurrection. Perhaps those periods and those moments blinded some of our comrades and led them to forget that now, at least since the middle of September, this slogan for us too has become *equivalent to a call for insurrection*.

There can be no shadow of doubt on this score. *Dyelo Naroda* recently explained this "in a popular way", when it said "Kerensky will under no circumstances submit!" As if he could!

The slogan "All Power to the Soviets" is nothing but a call for insurrection. And the blame will be wholly and undoubtedly ours, if we, who for months have been calling upon the people to revolt and repudiate compromise, fail to lead them to revolt on the eve of the revolution's collapse, after the people have expressed their confidence in us.

The Cadets and compromisers are trying to scare us by citing

the example of July 3-5, by pointing to the intensified agitation of the Black Hundreds, and so forth. But if any mistake was made on July 3-5, it was that we did not take power. I do not think we made a mistake then, for at that time we were not *yet* in a majority. But now it would be a fatal mistake, worse than a mistake. The spread of Black-Hundred agitation is understandable. It is an aggravation of extremes in an atmosphere of a developing proletarian and peasant revolution. But to use this as an argument *against* an uprising is ridiculous, for the impotence of the Black Hundreds, hirelings of the capitalists, *the impotence of the Black Hundreds in the struggle*, does not even require proof. In the struggle they are not worth considering. In the struggle Kornilov and Kerensky can only rely on the Savage Division and the Cossacks. And now demoralisation has set in even among the Cossacks; furthermore, the peasants are threatening them with civil war within their Cossack regions.

I am writing these lines on Sunday, October 8. You will read them not earlier than October 10. I have heard from a comrade who passed through here that people travelling on the Warsaw railway say, "Kerensky is bringing Cossacks to Petrograd!" This is quite probable, and it will be entirely our fault if we do not verify it *most carefully* and do not *make a study* of the strength and distribution of *the Kornilovite troops of the second draft*.

Kerensky has again brought Kornilovite troops into the vicinity of Petrograd in order to prevent state power from passing into the hands of the Soviets, in order to prevent this power from proposing an immediate peace, in order to prevent all the land from being immediately handed over to the peasants, in order to surrender Petrograd to the Germans,<sup>165</sup> and himself escape to Moscow! That is the slogan of the insurrection which we must circulate as widely as possible and which will have a tremendous success.

We must not wait for the All-Russia Congress of Soviets, which the Central Executive Committee may delay even until November. We must not delay and permit Kerensky to bring up more Kornilovite troops. Finland, the fleet and Revel are represented at the Congress of Soviets. These can together start an immediate movement on Petrograd against the Kornilovite regiments, a movement of the fleet, artillery, machine-guns and two or three army corps, such as have shown, for instance in Vyborg, the intensity of their hatred for the Kornilovite generals, with whom Kerensky is again in collusion.

It would be a great mistake to refuse to seize the opportunity of immediately smashing the Kornilovite regiments of the second



draft on the ground that the Baltic fleet, by moving into Petrograd, would allegedly expose the front to the Germans. The Kornilovite slanderers will say this, as they will tell any lie, but it is unworthy of revolutionaries to allow themselves to be intimidated by lies and slanders. Kerensky will surrender Petrograd to the Germans, that is now as clear as daylight. No assertions to the contrary can destroy our full conviction that this is so, for it follows from the entire course of events and Kerensky's entire policy.

Kerensky and the Kornilovites will surrender Petrograd to the Germans. And it is in order to save Petrograd that Kerensky must be overthrown and power taken by the *Soviets of both capital cities*. These Soviets will immediately propose a peace to all the nations and will thereby fulfil their duty to the German revolutionaries. They will thereby also be taking a decisive step towards frustrating the criminal conspiracies against the Russian revolution, the conspiracies of international imperialism.

Only the immediate movement of troops from Finland, and of the Baltic fleet, Revel and Kronstadt against the Kornilovite forces quartered near Petrograd can save the Russian and the world revolution. Such a movement has a hundred to one chance of leading *within a few days* to the surrender of a part of the Cossack troops, to the utter defeat of the other part, and to the overthrow of Kerensky, for the workers and the soldiers of both capital cities will support such a movement.

In truth, delay would be fatal.

The slogan "All Power to the Soviets" is a slogan of insurrection. Whoever uses this slogan without having grasped this and given thought to it will have only himself to blame. And insurrection must be treated as an *art*. I insisted on this during the Democratic Conference and I insist on it now, because *that* is what Marxism teaches us, and it is what is being taught us by the present situation in Russia and in the world generally.

It is not a question of voting, of attracting the Left Socialist-Revolutionaries, of additional provincial Soviets, or of a congress of these Soviets. It is a question of insurrection, which *can* and must be decided by Petrograd, Moscow, Helsingfors, Kronstadt, Vyborg and Revel. It is *in the vicinity of Petrograd* and in Petrograd itself that the insurrection can and must be decided on and effected, as earnestly as possible, with as much preparation as possible, as quickly as possible and as energetically as possible.

The fleet, Kronstadt, Vyborg, and Revel can and must advance on Petrograd; they can and must smash the Kornilovite



regiments, rouse both the capital cities, start a mass agitation for a government which will immediately give land to the peasants and immediately make proposals for peace, overthrow Kerensky's government and establish such a government.

Delay would be fatal.

*N. Lenin*

October 8, 1917

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# MEETING OF THE CENTRAL COMMITTEE OF THE R.S.D.L.P.(B.)

OCTOBER 10 (23), 1917<sup>106</sup>

## 1

### REPORT

#### MINUTES

Comrade Lenin maintains that a sort of indifference to the question of insurrection has been noticeable since the beginning of September. But this is impermissible if we are issuing the slogan of the seizure of power by the Soviets in all seriousness. It is therefore high time to pay attention to the technical aspect of the question. Apparently a lot of time has already been lost.

Nevertheless the question is an urgent one, and the decisive moment is near.

The international situation is such that we must take the initiative.

What is being done to surrender territory as far as Narva, and to surrender Petrograd makes it still more imperative for us to take decisive action.

The political situation is also working impressively in this direction. Decisive action on our part on July 3, 4 and 5 would have failed because we did not have the majority behind us. Since then we have made tremendous progress.

Absenteeism and indifference on the part of the masses is due to their being tired of words and resolutions.

We now have the majority behind us. Politically, the situation is fully ripe for taking power.

The agrarian movement is also developing in that direction, for it is obvious that extreme effort would be needed to stem that movement. The slogan of the transfer of all land has become the general slogan of the peasants. The political situation, therefore, is mature. We must speak of the technical aspect. That is the crux of the matter. Nevertheless we, like the defencists, are inclined to regard the systematic preparation of an uprising as something in the nature of a political sin.

It is senseless to wait for the Constituent Assembly that will obviously not be on our side, for this will only make our task more involved.

The regional congress and the proposal from Minsk<sup>167</sup> must be used for the beginning of decisive action.

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*Collected Works*, Vol. 26

## 2

**RESOLUTION**

The Central Committee recognises that the international position of the Russian revolution (the revolt in the German navy which is an extreme manifestation of the growth throughout Europe of the world socialist revolution; the threat of peace by the imperialists with the object of strangling the revolution in Russia) as well as the military situation (the indubitable decision of the Russian bourgeoisie and Kerensky and Co. to surrender Petrograd to the Germans), and the fact that the proletarian party has gained a majority in the Soviets—all this, taken in conjunction with the peasant revolt and the swing of popular confidence towards our Party (the elections in Moscow), and, finally, the obvious preparations being made for a second Kornilov revolt (the withdrawal of troops from Petrograd, the dispatch of Cossacks to Petrograd, the encircling of Minsk by Cossacks, etc.)—all this places the armed uprising on the order of the day.

Considering therefore that an armed uprising is inevitable, and that the time for it is fully ripe, the Central Committee instructs all Party organisations to be guided accordingly, and to discuss and decide all practical questions (the Congress of Soviets of the Northern Region, the withdrawal of troops from Petrograd, the action of our people in Moscow and Minsk, etc.) from this point of view.



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# MEETING OF THE CENTRAL COMMITTEE OF THE R.S.D.L.P.(B.)

OCTOBER 16 (29), 1917<sup>168</sup>

## MINUTES

### 1

## REPORT

Comrade Lenin read the resolution adopted by the Central Committee at the previous meeting. He stated that the resolution had been adopted with two dissenting votes. If the dissident comrades wished to make a statement, a discussion could be held; meanwhile he continued with the motives of the resolution.

If the Menshevik and Socialist-Revolutionary parties were to break with their policy of conciliation, a compromise with them could be proposed. The proposal had been made, but those parties had obviously rejected the compromise.\* On the other hand, by that time it had become definitely clear that the masses were following the Bolsheviks. That had been before the Kornilov revolt. Lenin cited election returns from Petrograd and Moscow as evidence. The Kornilov revolt had pushed the masses still more decisively to the side of the Bolsheviks. The alignment of forces at the Democratic Conference. The position was clear—either Kornilov's dictatorship or the dictatorship of the proletariat and the poorer strata of the peasantry. The Party could not be guided by the temper of the masses because it was changeable and incalculable; the Party must be guided by an objective analysis and an appraisal of the revolution. The masses had put their trust in the Bolsheviks and demanded deeds from them and not words, a decisive policy both in the struggle against the war and in the struggle against economic ruin. If the political analysis of the revolution were taken as the basis, it would be perfectly clear that even anarchic outbursts confirmed that.

Lenin went on to analyse the situation in Europe and showed that revolution would be even more difficult in Europe than in Russia; if matters had gone as far as a revolt in the navy in such a country as Germany, there too they must already have gone

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\* See pp. 226-30 of the present volume.—*Ed.*

very far. Certain objective data on the international situation showed that by acting at that moment the Bolsheviks would have all proletarian Europe on their side; he showed that the bourgeoisie wanted to surrender Petrograd. That could only be prevented by the Bolsheviks taking over Petrograd. The obvious conclusion from all this was—the armed uprising was on the order of the day as was stated in the resolution of the Central Committee.

It would be better to draw practical conclusions from the resolution after hearing the reports of representatives from the centres.

From a political analysis of the class struggle in Russia and in Europe there emerged the necessity to pursue the most determined and most active policy, which could be only the armed uprising.

## 2

### SPEECHES IN DISCUSSION

#### 1

Comrade Lenin argued against Milyutin and Schotmann and showed that it was not a matter of armed forces, that it was not a question of fighting against the troops but of one part of the army fighting against another. He could see no pessimism in what had been said there. He demonstrated that the forces on the side of the bourgeoisie were small. The facts showed that ours were superior to the enemy. Why could the Central Committee not begin? There was no reason that derived from the facts. To reject the resolution of the Central Committee it would have to be proved that there was no economic ruin and that the international situation would not lead to complications. If trade union leaders were in favour of full power they knew very well what they wanted. Objective conditions showed that the peasantry must be led; they would follow the proletariat.

Some were afraid that Bolsheviks would not be able to maintain power, but at that moment there was a better chance than ever that they would be able to.

Lenin expressed the wish that the debate be confined to the substance of the resolution.

#### 2

If all resolutions were defeated in that manner nothing better could be wished for. Zinoviev was saying: do away with the "Power to the Soviets" slogan and bring pressure to bear on the government. When it was said that the time was ripe for insur-

rection there could be no question of conspiracy. Since an insurrection was inevitable politically, it must be regarded as an act. Politically, an insurrection was due.

Because there was only enough bread for a day the Party could not wait for the Constituent Assembly. Comrade Lenin proposed that the resolution be approved, that energetic preparations be begun and that it be left to the Central Committee and the Soviet to decide when.

### 3

Comrade Lenin opposed Zinoviev, saying that the revolution could not be contrasted to the February revolution. He proposed a resolution straight to the point.

### 3

## RESOLUTION

The meeting fully welcomes and fully supports the resolution of the Central Committee and calls upon all organisations and on workers and soldiers to make all-round, energetic preparations for an armed uprising and to support the centre set up for that purpose by the Central Committee; the meeting expresses its complete confidence that the Central Committee and the Soviet will indicate in good time the favourable moment and the most appropriate methods of attack.

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## LETTER TO BOLSHEVIK PARTY MEMBERS<sup>169</sup>

Comrades,

I have not yet been able to obtain the Petrograd papers for Wednesday, October 18. When the full text of Kamenev's and Zinoviev's statement in the non-Party paper *Novaya Zhizn* was transmitted to me by telephone, I refused to believe it. But, as it has turned out, there can be no doubt about it and I have to avail myself of this opportunity to get a letter to Party members by Thursday evening or Friday morning; for to remain silent in the face of such unheard-of *strike-breaking* would be a crime.

The more serious the practical problem, and the more responsible and "prominent" the persons guilty of strike-breaking, the more dangerous it is, the more resolutely must the strike-breakers be kicked out, and the more unpardonable would it be to stop even to consider the past "services" of the strike-breakers.

Just think of it! It has been known in Party circles that the Party has been discussing the question of an insurrection since September. Nobody has ever heard of a single letter or manifesto by either of the persons named! Now, on the eve, one might say, of the Congress of Soviets, two prominent Bolsheviks come out *against* the majority, and, obviously, *against the Central Committee*. It is not said plainly, but the harm done to the cause is all the greater, for to speak in hints is even more dangerous.

It is perfectly clear from the text of Kamenev's and Zinoviev's statement that they have gone against the Central Committee, for otherwise their statement would be meaningless. But they do not say *what* specific decision of the Central Committee they are disputing.

Why?

The reason is obvious: because it has not been published by the Central Committee.

What does this boil down to?

On a burning question of supreme importance, on the eve of the critical day of October 20, two "prominent Bolsheviks" attack an *unpublished* decision of the Party centre and attack it in the *non-Party* press and, furthermore, in a paper which on this very question is *hand in glove with the bourgeoisie against the workers' party!*



This is a thousand times more despicable and a *million times more harmful* than all the statements Plekhanov, for example, made in the non-Party press in 1906-07, and which the Party so sharply condemned! At that time it was only a question of elections, whereas now it is a question of an insurrection for the conquest of power!

On such a question, *after* a decision has been taken by the centre, to dispute this *unpublished* decision in front of the Rodzyankos and Kerenskys in a non-Party paper—can you imagine an act more treacherous or blacklegging any worse?

I should consider it disgraceful on my part if I were to hesitate to condemn these former comrades because of my earlier close relations with them. I declare outright that I no longer consider either of them comrades and that I will fight with all my might, both in the Central Committee and at the Congress, to secure the expulsion of both of them from the Party.

A workers' party, which the course of events is confronting more and more frequently with the need for an insurrection, is unable to accomplish that difficult task if, after their adoption, unpublished decisions of the centre are disputed in the non-Party press, and vacillation and confusion are brought into the ranks of the fighters.

Let Mr. Zinoviev and Mr. Kamenev found their own party with the dozens of perplexed people or with candidates for election to the Constituent Assembly. The workers will not join such a party, for its first slogan will be:

“Members of the Central Committee who are defeated at a meeting of the Central Committee on the question of a decisive fight are permitted to resort to the non-Party press for the purpose of attacking the unpublished decisions of the Party.”

Let them build themselves *such* a party; our workers' Bolshevik Party will only gain from it.

When all the documents are published, the strike-breaking act of Zinoviev and Kamenev will stand out even more glaringly. Meanwhile, let the workers consider the following question:

“Let us assume that the Executive Committee of an all-Russia trade union had decided, after a month of deliberation and by a majority of over 80 per cent, that preparations must be made for a strike, but that for the time being neither the date nor any other details should be divulged. Let us assume that, *after* the decision had been taken, two members, under the false pretext of a ‘dissenting opinion’, not only began to write to local groups urging a reconsideration of the decision, but also permitted their letters to be communicated to *non-Party* newspapers. Let us assume, finally,

that they themselves attacked the decision in non-Party papers, although it had not yet been published, and began to vilify the strike in front of the capitalists.

"We ask, would the workers hesitate to expel such blacklegs from their midst?"

\* \* \*

As to the situation with regard to an insurrection now, when October 20 is so close at hand, I cannot judge from afar to what exact extent the cause has been damaged by the strike-breaking statement in the non-Party press. There is no doubt that very great *practical* damage has been done. In order to remedy the situation, it is necessary first of all to restore unity in the Bolshevik front by expelling the blacklegs.

The weakness of the ideological arguments against an insurrection will become clearer, the more we drag them into the light of day. I recently sent an article on this subject to *Rabochy Put*, and if the editors do not find it possible to print it, Party members will probably acquaint themselves with it in the manuscript.<sup>170</sup>

There are basically two so-called "ideological" arguments. First, that it is necessary to "wait" for the Constituent Assembly. Let us wait, perhaps we can hold on until then—that is the whole argument. Perhaps, despite famine, despite economic chaos, despite the fact that the patience of the soldiers is exhausted, despite Rodzyanko's steps to surrender Petrograd to the Germans, despite the lockouts, perhaps we can hold on.

Perhaps and maybe—that is the whole point of the argument.

The second is noisy pessimism. Everything is fine with the bourgeoisie and Kerensky; everything is wrong with us. The capitalists have prepared everything wonderfully; everything is wrong with the workers. The "pessimists" are shouting at the top of their voices about the military side of the matter, but the "optimists" are silent, for to disclose certain things to Rodzyanko and Kerensky is hardly pleasant to anybody but blacklegs.

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Difficult times. A hard task. A grave betrayal.

Nevertheless, the task will be accomplished; the workers will consolidate their ranks, the peasant revolt and the extreme impatience of the soldiers at the front will do their work! Let us close our ranks—the proletariat must win!

*N. Lenin*

Written on October 18 (31), 1917

First published in *Pravda* No. 250,  
November 1, 1927

*Collected Works*, Vol. 26

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## LETTER TO THE CENTRAL COMMITTEE OF THE R.S.D.L.P.(B.)

Dear Comrades,

No self-respecting party can tolerate strike-breaking and black-legs in its midst. That is obvious. The more we reflect upon Zinoviev's and Kamenev's statement in the non-Party press, the more self-evident it becomes that their action is strike-breaking in the full sense of the term. Kamenev's evasion at the meeting of the Petrograd Soviet is something really despicable. He is, don't you see, in full agreement with Trotsky. But is it so difficult to understand that in the face of the enemy, Trotsky *could not* have said, he had no right to say, and should not have said more than he did? Is it so difficult to understand that it is a *duty* to the Party which has concealed *its* decision from the enemy (on the necessity for an armed uprising, on the fact that the time for it is fully ripe, on the thorough preparations to be made for it, etc.), and it is this decision that makes it *obligatory* in public statements to fasten not only the "blame", but also the initiative upon the adversary? Only a child could fail to understand that. Kamenev's evasion is a sheer fraud. The same must be said of Zinoviev's evasion, at least of his letter of "justification" (written, I think, to the Central Organ), which is the only document I have seen (for, as to a dissenting opinion, "an alleged dissenting opinion", which has been trumpeted in the *bourgeois* press, I, a member of the Central Committee, have *to this very day* seen nothing of it). Among Zinoviev's "arguments" there is this: Lenin, he says, sent out his letters "*before* any decisions were adopted", and you did not protest. That is literally what Zinoviev wrote, himself underlining the word *before* four times. Is it really so difficult to understand that *before* a decision has been taken on a strike by the centre, it is permissible to agitate for and against it; but that *after* a decision in favour of a strike (with the additional decision to conceal this from the enemy), to carry on agitation against the strike is strike-breaking? Any worker will understand that. The question of insurrection has been discussed in the centre since September. That is when Zino-

viev and Kamenev could and *should* have come out in writing, so that *everybody*, upon seeing their arguments, would have realised that they had completely lost their heads. To conceal one's views from the Party for a whole month *before* a decision is taken, and to send out a dissenting opinion *after* a decision is taken—that is strike-breaking.

Zinoviev pretends not to understand this difference, he pretends not to understand that after a decision to strike has been taken by the centre, only blacklegs can carry on agitation among the lower bodies against that decision. Any worker will understand that.

And Zinoviev did agitate and attempted to defeat the centre's decision, both at Sunday's meeting, where he and Kamenev secured not a single vote, and in his present letter. For Zinoviev has the effrontery to assert that "the opinion of the Party has not been canvassed" and that such questions "cannot be decided by ten men". Just think! Every member of the Central Committee knows that more than ten C.C. members were present at the decisive meeting, that a *majority of the plenary meeting* were present, that Kamenev himself declared at the meeting that "this meeting is decisive", that it was known with absolute certainty that the *majority* of the absent members of the Central Committee *were not in agreement* with Zinoviev and Kamenev. And now, *after* the Central Committee has adopted a decision at a meeting which Kamenev himself admitted to be *decisive*, a member of the Central Committee has the audacity to write that "the opinion of the Party has not been canvassed", and that such questions "cannot be decided by ten men". That is strike-breaking in the full sense of the term. Between Party congresses, the Central Committee decides. The Central Committee has decided. Kamenev and Zinoviev, who did not come out in writing *before* the decision was taken, began to *dispute* the Central Committee's decision *after* it had been taken.

That is strike-breaking in the full sense of the term. After a decision has been taken, any dispute is *impermissible* when it concerns immediate and *secret* preparations for a strike. Now Zinoviev has the insolence to blame *us* for "warning the enemy". Is there any limit to his brazenness? Who is it that has damaged the cause, frustrated the strike by "warning the enemy", if not those who came out in the *non-Party* press?

How can one come out *against* a "decisive" resolution of the Party in a paper which on *this* question is hand in glove with the entire bourgeoisie?

If that is tolerated, the Party will become impossible, the Party will be destroyed.

It is ridiculing the Party to give the name of "dissenting opinion"



to that which Bazarov learns about and publishes in a non-Party paper.

Kamenev's and Zinoviev's statement in the non-Party press was especially despicable for the additional reason that the Party is not in a position to refute their *slandorous lie* openly. I know of no decisions regarding the date, Kamenev writes and publishes his writings in his own name and in the name of Zinoviev. (After such a statement, Zinoviev bears full responsibility for Kamenev's conduct and statements.)

How can the Central Committee refute this?

We cannot tell the capitalists the truth, namely, that we have *decided* on a strike and have decided to *conceal the moment chosen* for it.

We cannot refute the slanderous lie of Zinoviev and Kamenev *without doing even greater damage to the cause*. And the utter baseness, the real treachery of these two individuals is precisely in their having revealed the strikers' plan to the capitalists, for, since we remain silent in the press, everybody will guess *how* things stand.

Kamenev and Zinoviev have *betrayed* to Rodzyanko and Kerensky the decision of the Central Committee of their Party on insurrection and the decision to conceal from the enemy preparations for insurrection and the date appointed for it. That is a fact and no evasions can refute it. Two members of the Central Committee have by a slanderous lie *betrayed* the decision of the workers to the capitalists. There can and must be only one answer to that: an immediate decision of the Central Committee:

"The Central Committee, regarding Zinoviev's and Kamenev's statement in the non-Party press as strike-breaking in the full sense of the term, expels both of them from the Party."

It is not easy for me to write in this way about former close comrades. But I should regard any hesitation in this respect as a crime, for otherwise a party of revolutionaries which does not punish prominent blacklegs would *perish*.

The question of insurrection, even if the blacklegs have now delayed it for a long time by betraying it to Rodzyanko and Kerensky, has not been *removed from the agenda*, it has not been removed by the Party. But how can we prepare ourselves for insurrection and lay plans for it, if we *tolerate* "prominent" strike-breakers in our midst? The more prominent, the *more dangerous* they are, and the less deserving of "forgiveness". *On n'est trahi que par les siens*, the French say. Only your *own people* can betray you.

The more "*prominent*" the strike-breakers are, the more imperative it is to punish them by immediate expulsion.

That is the only way for the workers' party to recuperate, rid

itself of a dozen or so spineless intellectuals, rally the ranks of the revolutionaries, and advance to meet great and momentous difficulties hand in hand *with the revolutionary workers*.

We cannot publish the truth, namely, that *after* the decisive meeting of the Central Committee, Zinoviev and Kamenev at Sunday's meeting had the audacity to demand a *revision*, that Kamenev had the effrontery to shout: "The Central Committee has collapsed, for it has done nothing for a whole week" (I could *not* refute that because to say *what really had been done* was impossible), while Zinoviev with an air of innocence proposed this resolution, which was rejected by the meeting: "No action shall be taken before consulting with the Bolsheviks who are to arrive on October 20 for the Congress of Soviets."

Just imagine! After the *centre* has taken a decision to call a strike, it is proposed at a meeting of the rank and file that it be postponed (until October 20, when the Congress was to convene. The Congress was subsequently postponed—the Zinovievs trust the Lieberdants) and be referred to a body *such* as the Party Rules do not provide for, that has *no* authority over the Central Committee, and that does *not* know Petrograd.

And *after this* Zinoviev still has the insolence to write: "This is hardly the way to strengthen the unity of the Party."

What else can you call it but a threat to effect a split?

My answer to this threat is that I shall go the limit, I shall win freedom of speech for myself before the workers, and I shall, *at whatever cost*, brand the blackleg Zinoviev as a blackleg. My answer to the threat of a split is to declare war to a finish, war for the expulsion of both blacklegs from the Party.

The Executive Committee of a trade union, after a *month* of deliberation, decides that a strike is inevitable, that the time is ripe, but that the date is to be concealed from the employers. After that, two members of the Executive Committee appeal *to the rank and file*, disputing the decision, and are defeated. Thereupon these two come out in the press and with a slanderous lie betray the decision of the Executive Committee to the capitalists, thus more than half wrecking the strike, or delaying it to a less favourable time by warning the enemy.

Here we have strike-breaking in the full sense of the term. And that is why I demand the expulsion of both the blacklegs, reserving for myself the right (in view of their threat of a split) to publish *everything* when publication becomes possible.

Written on October 19 (November 1), 1917

First published on November 1, 1927  
in *Pravda* No. 250

*Collected Works*, Vol. 26

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## LETTER TO Y. M. SVERDLOV

Comrade Sverdlov,

I learned only last night that Zinoviev had denied *in writing* his participation in Kamenev's statement in *Novaya Zhizn*.

How is it that you do not send me anything???

I have sent all the letters about Kamenev and Zinoviev to Central Committee members *alone*. You know that; is it not strange after this that you seem to doubt it?

It appears that I shall be unable to attend the Plenary Meeting as I am being "chased". In the case of Zinoviev and Kamenev, if *you* (+Stalin, Sokolnikov and Dzerzhinsky) demand a compromise, table a proposal *against* me to refer the matter to the Party Tribunal (the facts are clear—Zinoviev also deliberately *sabotaged*): that will be a postponement.

"Kamenev's resignation accepted"? From the Central Committee? Send me the text of his statement.

The cancelling of the Cossack demonstration is a tremendous *victory. Hurrah! Take the offensive in full strength* and we shall win altogether in a few days! Best wishes! Yours.

Written on October 22-23 (November 4-5), 1917

First published in 1957 in the book  
*The October Insurrection in Petrograd*,  
Academy of Sciences of the U.S.S.R., Moscow

Published according to the manuscript

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## LETTER TO CENTRAL COMMITTEE MEMBERS<sup>171</sup>

Comrades,

I am writing these lines on the evening of the 24th. The situation is critical in the extreme. In fact it is now absolutely clear that to delay the uprising would be fatal.

With all my might I urge comrades to realise that everything now hangs by a thread; that we are confronted by problems which are not to be solved by conferences or congresses (even congresses of Soviets), but exclusively by peoples, by the masses, by the struggle of the armed people.

The bourgeois onslaught of the Kornilovites and the removal of Verkhovsky show that we must not wait. We must at all costs, this very evening, this very night, arrest the government, having first disarmed the officer cadets (defeating them, if they resist), and so on.

We must not wait! We may lose everything!

The value of the immediate seizure of power will be the defence of the *people* (not of the congress, but of the people, the army and the peasants in the first place) from the Kornilovite government, which has driven out Verkhovsky and has hatched a second Kornilov plot.

Who must take power?

That is not important at present. Let the Revolutionary Military Committee do it, or "some other institution" which will declare that it will relinquish power only to the true representatives of the interests of the people, the interests of the army (the immediate proposal of peace), the interests of the peasants (the land to be taken immediately and private property abolished), the interests of the starving.

All districts, all regiments, all forces must be mobilised at once and must immediately send their delegations to the Revolutionary Military Committee and to the Central Committee of the Bolsheviks with the insistent demand that under no circumstances should power be left in the hands of Kerensky and Co. until the



25th—not under any circumstances; the matter must be decided without fail this very evening, or this very night.

History will not forgive revolutionaries for procrastinating when they could be victorious today (and they certainly will be victorious today), while they risk losing much tomorrow, in fact, they risk losing everything.

If we seize power today, we seize it not in opposition to the Soviets but on their behalf.

The seizure of power is the business of the uprising; its political purpose will become clear after the seizure.

It would be a disaster, or a sheer formality, to await the wavering vote of October 25. The people have the right and are in duty bound to decide such questions not by a vote, but by force; in critical moments of revolution, the people have the right and are in duty bound to give directions to their representatives, even their best representatives, and not to wait for them.

This is proved by the history of all revolutions; and it would be an infinite crime on the part of the revolutionaries were they to let the chance slip, knowing that the *salvation of the revolution*, the offer of peace, the salvation of Petrograd, salvation from famine, the transfer of the land to the peasants depend upon them.

The government is tottering. It must be *given the deathblow* at all costs.

To delay action is fatal.

Written on October 24 (November 6), 1917

First published in 1924

*Collected Works*, Vol. 26

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## TO THE CITIZENS OF RUSSIA!<sup>172</sup>

The Provisional Government has been deposed. State power has passed into the hands of the organ of the Petrograd Soviet of Workers' and Soldiers' Deputies—the Revolutionary Military Committee, which heads the Petrograd proletariat and the garrison.

The cause for which the people have fought, namely, the immediate offer of a democratic peace, the abolition of landed proprietorship, workers' control over production, and the establishment of Soviet power—this cause has been secured.

Long live the revolution of workers, soldiers and peasants!

*Revolutionary Military Committee  
of the Petrograd Soviet of Workers'  
and Soldiers' Deputies*<sup>173</sup>

10 a.m., October 25, 1917

*Rabochy i Soldat*<sup>174</sup> No. 8,  
October 25 (November 7), 1917

*Collected Works*, Vol. 26



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*SECOND ALL-RUSSIA CONGRESS OF  
SOVIETS OF WORKERS'  
AND SOLDIERS' DEPUTIES*<sup>175</sup>

*OCTOBER 25-26 (NOVEMBER 7-8), 1917*





# РАБОЧІЙ И СОЛДАТЪ

Органъ Петроградскаго Совѣта Рабочихъ и Солдатскихъ  
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## РАБОЧИМЪ, СОЛДАТАМЪ И КРЕСТЬЯНАМЪ!

Второй Всероссийскій Съездъ Совѣтовъ Рабочихъ и Солдатскихъ Депутатовъ открылся. На немъ представлено громадное большинство Совѣтовъ. На съездъ присутствуетъ и рядъ делегатовъ отъ крестьянскихъ Совѣтовъ. Полномочія соглашательскаго Ц. И. К. окончилась. Опираясь на волю громаднаго большинства рабочихъ, солдатъ и крестьянъ, опираясь на совершившееся въ Петроградѣ побѣдоносное возстаніе рабочихъ и гарнизона, Съездъ беретъ власть въ свои руки.

Временное Правительство низложено. Большинство членовъ Временнаго Правительства уже арестовано.

Совѣтская власть предложить немедленный демократическій миръ всѣмъ народамъ и немедленное перемиріе на всѣхъ фронтахъ. Она обезпечиваетъ безвозмездную передачу помѣщичьихъ, удѣльныхъ и монастырскихъ земель въ распоряженіе крестьянскихъ комитетовъ, отстаивать права солдата, провести полную демократизацію арміи, установить рабочий контроль надъ производствомъ, обезпечить своевременный созывъ Учредительнаго Собранія, озаботится доставкой хлѣба въ города и предметовъ первой необходимости въ деревню, обезпечить всѣмъ націямъ, населяющимъ Россію, подлинное право на самоопредѣленіе.

Съездъ постановляетъ: вся власть на мѣстахъ переходитъ къ Совѣтамъ Рабочихъ, Солдатскихъ и Крестьянскихъ депутатовъ, которые и должны обезпечить подлинный революціонный порядокъ.

Съездъ призываетъ солдатъ въ окопахъ къ бдительности и стойкости. Съездъ Совѣтовъ увѣренъ, что революціонная армія сумѣетъ защитить революцію отъ всѣхъ посягательствъ империализма, пока новое правительство не добьется заключенія демократическаго мира, который оно непосредственно предложить всѣмъ народамъ. Новое Правительство приметъ всѣ мѣры къ тому, чтобы обезпечить революціонную армію всѣмъ необходимымъ, путемъ рѣшительной политики ревизицій и обложенія имущихъ классовъ, а также улучшить положеніе солдатскихъ семей.

Корниловцы — Керенскій, Калединъ и др. дѣлають попытку вести войска на Петроградъ. Нѣсколько отрядовъ, обманнымъ путемъ двинутыхъ Керенскимъ, перешли на сторону возставшаго народа.

**Солдаты, окажите активное противодѣйствіе корниловцу Керенскому! Будьте на сторожѣ!**

**Желѣзнодорожники, останавливайте всѣ эшалоны, посылаемые Керенскимъ на Петроградъ!**

**Солдаты, рабочіе, служащіе, — въ вашихъ рукахъ судьба революціи и судьба демократическаго мира!**

**ДН ЗДРАВСТВУЕТЪ РЕВОЛЮЦІЯ!**

Всероссійскій Съездъ Совѣтовъ  
Рабочихъ и Солдатскихъ Депутатовъ.  
Делегаты отъ Крестьянскихъ Совѣтовъ.



## TO WORKERS, SOLDIERS AND PEASANTS!

The Second All-Russia Congress of Soviets of Workers' and Soldiers' Deputies has opened. The vast majority of the Soviets are represented at the Congress. A number of delegates from the Peasants' Soviets are also present. The mandate of the compromising Central Executive Committee has terminated.<sup>176</sup> Backed by the will of the vast majority of the workers, soldiers and peasants, backed by the victorious uprising of the workers and the garrison which has taken place in Petrograd, the Congress takes power into its own hands.

The Provisional Government has been overthrown. The majority of the members of the Provisional Government have already been arrested.

The Soviet government will propose an immediate democratic peace to all the nations and an immediate armistice on all fronts. It will secure the transfer of the land of the landed proprietors, the crown and the monasteries to the peasant committees without compensation; it will protect the rights of the soldiers by introducing complete democracy in the army; it will establish workers' control over production; it will ensure the convocation of the Constituent Assembly at the time appointed; it will see to it that bread is supplied to the cities and prime necessities to the villages; it will guarantee all the nations inhabiting Russia the genuine right to self-determination.

The Congress decrees: all power in the localities shall pass to the Soviets of Workers', Soldiers' and Peasants' Deputies, which must guarantee genuine revolutionary order.

The Congress calls upon the soldiers in the trenches to be vigilant and firm. The Congress of Soviets is convinced that the revolutionary army will be able to defend the revolution against all attacks of imperialism until such time as the new government succeeds in concluding a democratic peace, which it will propose directly to all peoples. The new government will do everything to fully supply the revolutionary army by means of a determined



policy of requisitions and taxation of the propertied classes, and also will improve the condition of soldiers' families.

The Kornilov men—Kerensky, Kaledin and others—are attempting to bring troops against Petrograd. Several detachments, whom Kerensky had moved by deceiving them, have come over to the side of the insurgent people.

*Soldiers, actively resist Kerensky the Kornilovite! Be on your guard!*

*Railwaymen, hold up all troop trains dispatched by Kerensky against Petrograd!*

*Soldiers, workers in factory and office, the fate of the revolution and the fate of the democratic peace is in your hands!*

*Long live the revolution!*

*The All-Russia Congress of Soviets  
of Workers' and Soldiers' Deputies*

*The Delegates from the Peasants'  
Soviets*

Written on October 25  
(November 7), 1917

Published in the newspaper  
*Rabochy i Soldat* No. 9,  
October 26 (November 8), 1917

*Collected Works*, Vol. 26

## 2

**REPORT ON PEACE, OCTOBER 26 (NOVEMBER 8)**

The question of peace is a burning question, the painful question of the day. Much has been said and written on the subject, and all of you, no doubt, have discussed it quite a lot. Permit me, therefore, to proceed to read a declaration which the government you elect should publish.

**DECREE ON PEACE**

The workers' and peasants' government, created by the Revolution of October 24-25 and basing itself on the Soviets of Workers', Soldiers' and Peasants' Deputies, calls upon all the belligerent peoples and their governments to start immediate negotiations for a just, democratic peace.

By a just or democratic peace, for which the overwhelming majority of the working class and other working people of all the belligerent countries, exhausted, tormented and racked by the war, are craving—a peace that has been most definitely and insistently demanded by the Russian workers and peasants ever since the overthrow of the tsarist monarchy—by such a peace the government means an immediate peace without annexations (i.e., without the seizure of foreign lands, without the forcible incorporation of foreign nations) and without indemnities.

The Government of Russia proposes that this kind of peace be immediately concluded by all the belligerent nations, and expresses its readiness to take all the resolute measures now, without the least delay, pending the final ratification of all the terms of such a peace by authoritative assemblies of the people's representatives of all countries and all nations.

In accordance with the sense of justice of democrats in general, and of the working classes in particular, the government conceives the annexation or seizure of foreign lands to mean every incorporation of a small or weak nation into a large or powerful state

without the precisely, clearly and voluntarily expressed consent and wish of that nation, irrespective of the time when such forcible incorporation took place, irrespective also of the degree of development or backwardness of the nation forcibly annexed to the given state, or forcibly retained within its borders, and irrespective, finally, of whether this nation is in Europe or in distant, overseas countries.

If any nation whatsoever is forcibly retained within the borders of a given state, if, in spite of its expressed desire—no matter whether expressed in the press, at public meetings, in the decisions of parties, or in protests and uprisings against national oppression—it is not accorded the right to decide the forms of its state existence by a free vote, taken after the complete evacuation of the troops of the incorporating or, generally, of the stronger nation and without the least pressure being brought to bear, such incorporation is annexation, i.e., seizure and violence.

The government considers it the greatest of crimes against humanity to continue this war over the issue of how to divide among the strong and rich nations the weak nationalities they have conquered, and solemnly announces its determination immediately to sign terms of peace to stop this war on the terms indicated, which are equally just for all nationalities without exception.

At the same time the government declares that it does not regard the above-mentioned peace terms as an ultimatum; in other words, it is prepared to consider any other peace terms, and insists only that they be advanced by any of the belligerent countries as speedily as possible, and that in the peace proposals there should be absolute clarity and the complete absence of all ambiguity and secrecy.

The government abolishes secret diplomacy, and, for its part, announces its firm intention to conduct all negotiations quite openly in full view of the whole people. It will proceed immediately with the full publication of the secret treaties endorsed or concluded by the government of landowners and capitalists from February to October 25, 1917. The government proclaims the unconditional and immediate annulment of everything contained in these secret treaties insofar as it is aimed, as is mostly the case, at securing advantages and privileges for the Russian landowners and capitalists and at the retention, or extension, of the annexations made by the Great Russians.

Proposing to the governments and peoples of all countries immediately to begin open negotiations for peace, the government, for its part, expresses its readiness to conduct these negotiations in writing, by telegraph, and by negotiations between representatives of the various countries, or at a conference of such representatives. In order to facilitate such negotiations, the government is

appointing its plenipotentiary representative to neutral countries.

The government proposes an immediate armistice to the governments and peoples of all the belligerent countries, and, for its part, considers it desirable that this armistice should be concluded for a period of not less than three months, i.e., a period long enough to permit the completion of negotiations for peace with the participation of the representatives of all peoples or nations, without exception, involved in or compelled to take part in the war, and the summoning of authoritative assemblies of the representatives of the peoples of all countries for the final ratification of the peace terms.

While addressing this proposal for peace to the governments and peoples of all the belligerent countries, the Provisional Workers' and Peasants' Government of Russia appeals in particular also to the class-conscious workers of the three most advanced nations of mankind and the largest states participating in the present war, namely, Great Britain, France and Germany. The workers of these countries have made the greatest contributions to the cause of progress and socialism; they have furnished the great examples of the Chartist movement in England, a number of revolutions of historic importance effected by the French proletariat, and, finally, the heroic struggle against the Anti-Socialist Law in Germany and, the prolonged, persistent and disciplined work of creating mass proletarian organisations in Germany, a work which serves as a model to the workers of the whole world. All these examples of proletarian heroism and historical creative work are a pledge that the workers of the countries mentioned will understand the duty that now faces them of saving mankind from the horrors of war and its consequences, that these workers, by comprehensive, determined, and supremely vigorous action, will help us to conclude peace successfully, and at the same time emancipate the labouring and exploited masses of our population from all forms of slavery and all forms of exploitation.

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The workers' and peasants' government, created by the Revolution of October 24-25 and basing itself on the support of the Soviets of Workers', Soldiers' and Peasants' Deputies, must start immediate negotiations for peace. Our appeal must be addressed both to the governments and to the peoples. We cannot ignore the governments, for that would delay the possibility of concluding peace, and the people's government dare not do that; but we have no right not to appeal to the peoples at the same time. Everywhere there are differences between the governments and the peoples, and we must therefore help the peoples to intervene in questions of war and peace. We will, of course, insist upon the whole of our programme for a peace without annexations and indemnities. We



shall not retreat from it; but we must not give our enemies an opportunity to say that their conditions are different from ours and that therefore it is useless to start negotiations with us. No, we must deprive them of that advantageous position and not present our terms in the form of an ultimatum. Therefore the point is included that we are willing to consider any peace terms and all proposals. We shall consider them, but that does not necessarily mean that we shall accept them. We shall submit them for consideration to the Constituent Assembly which will have the power to decide what concessions can and what cannot be made. We are combating the deception practised by governments which pay lip-service to peace and justice, but in fact wage annexationist and predatory wars. No government will say all it thinks. We, however, are opposed to secret diplomacy and will act openly in full view of the whole people. We do not close our eyes to difficulties and never have done. War cannot be ended by refusal, it cannot be ended by one side. We are proposing an armistice for three months, but shall not reject a shorter period, so that the exhausted army may breathe freely, even if only for a little while; moreover, in all the civilised countries national assemblies must be summoned for the discussion of the terms.

In proposing an immediate armistice, we appeal to the class-conscious workers of the countries that have done so much for the development of the proletarian movement. We appeal to the workers of Britain, where there was the Chartist movement, to the workers of France, who have in repeated uprisings displayed the strength of their class-consciousness, and to the workers of Germany, who waged the fight against the Anti-Socialist Law and have created powerful organisations.

In the Manifesto of March 14,<sup>177</sup> we called for the overthrow of the bankers, but, far from overthrowing our own bankers, we entered into an alliance with them. Now we have overthrown the government of the bankers.

The governments and the bourgeoisie will make every effort to unite their forces and drown the workers' and peasants' revolution in blood. But the three years of war have been a good lesson to the masses—the Soviet movement in other countries and the mutiny in the German navy, which was crushed by the officer cadets of Wilhelm the hangman. Finally, we must remember that we are not living in the depths of Africa, but in Europe, where news can spread quickly.

The workers' movement will triumph and will pave the way to peace and socialism. (*Prolonged applause.*)

## 3

**CONCLUDING SPEECH FOLLOWING THE DISCUSSION  
ON THE REPORT ON PEACE  
OCTOBER 26 (NOVEMBER 8)**

I shall not touch on the general character of the declaration. The government which your Congress sets up may amend unessential points.

I shall vigorously oppose lending our demand for peace the form of an ultimatum. An ultimatum may prove fatal to our whole cause. We cannot demand that, since some insignificant departure from our demands on the part of the imperialist governments would give them the opportunity of saying that it was impossible to enter into negotiations for peace because of our irreconcilability.

We shall send out our appeal everywhere, it will be made known to everybody. It will be impossible to conceal the terms proposed by our workers' and peasants' government.

It will be impossible to hush up our workers' and peasants' revolution, which has overthrown the government of bankers and landowners.

The governments may not reply to an ultimatum; they will have to reply to the text as we formulate it. Let everyone know what their governments have in mind. We do not want any secrets. We want a government to be always under the supervision of the public opinion of its country.

What will the peasant of some remote province say if, owing to our insistence on ultimatums, he will not know what another government wants? He will say: Comrades, why did you rule out the possibility of any peace terms being proposed? I would have discussed them, I would have examined them, and would then have instructed my representatives in the Constituent Assembly how to act. I am prepared to fight by revolutionary methods for just terms if the governments do not agree, but there might be such terms for some countries that I would be prepared to recommend their governments to go on fighting by themselves. The full realisation of our ideas depends solely on the overthrow of the entire capitalist system. This is what the peasant might say to us, and he

would accuse us of being excessively uncompromising over trifles, when for us the main thing is to expose all the vileness, all the baseness of the bourgeoisie and of its crowned and uncrowned hangers-on at the head of the government.

We should not and must not give the governments an opportunity of taking refuge behind our uncompromising attitude and of concealing from the peoples the reason why they are being sent to the shambles. This is a tiny drop, but we should not and must not reject this drop, which will wear away the stone of bourgeois conquest. An ultimatum would make the position of our opponents easier. But we shall make all the terms known to the people. We shall confront all the governments with our terms, and let them give an answer to their people. We shall submit all peace proposals to the Constituent Assembly for decision.

There is still another point, comrades, to which you must pay the most careful attention. The secret treaties must be published. The clauses dealing with annexations and indemnities must be annulled. There are various clauses, comrades—the predatory governments, you know, not only made agreements between themselves on plunder, but among them they also included economic agreements and various other clauses on good-neighbourly relations.

We shall not bind ourselves by treaties. We shall not allow ourselves to be entangled by treaties. We reject all clauses on plunder and violence, but we shall welcome all clauses containing provisions for good-neighbourly relations and all economic agreements; we cannot reject these. We propose an armistice for three months; we choose a lengthy period because the peoples are exhausted, the peoples long for a respite from this bloody shambles that has lasted over three years. We must realise that the peoples should be given an opportunity to discuss the peace terms and to express their will with parliament participating; and this takes time. We demand a lengthy armistice, so that the soldiers in the trenches may enjoy a respite from this nightmare of constant slaughter; but we shall not reject proposals for a shorter armistice; we shall examine them, and it is incumbent upon us to accept them, even if we are offered an armistice of a month or a month and a half. Nor must our proposal for an armistice have the form of an ultimatum, for we shall not give our enemies an opportunity of concealing the whole truth from the peoples, using our irreconcilability as a pretext. It must not be in the form of an ultimatum, for a government is criminal that does not desire an armistice. If we do not put our proposal for an armistice in the form of an ultimatum, we shall thereby show the peoples that the governments are criminal, and the peoples will not stand on ceremony with such criminals. The objection is raised that by not resort-

ing to an ultimatum we are displaying weakness, but it is time to cast aside all bourgeois cant when speaking of the strength of the people. According to the bourgeois conception, there is strength when the people go blindly to the slaughter in obedience to the imperialist governments. The bourgeoisie admit a state to be strong only when it can, by the power of the government apparatus, hurl the people wherever the bourgeois rulers want them hurled. Our idea of strength is different. Our idea is that a state is strong when the people are politically conscious. It is strong when the people know everything, can form an opinion of everything and do everything consciously. We need not fear to tell the truth about fatigue, for what state today is not tired, what nation does not talk about it openly? Take Italy, where, owing to this tiredness, there was a prolonged revolutionary movement demanding the termination of the slaughter. Are there not mass demonstrations of workers in Germany that put forward a demand for the termination of the war? Was it not fatigue that provoked the mutiny in the German navy that was so ruthlessly suppressed by that hangman, Wilhelm, and his hirelings? If such things are possible in so disciplined a country as Germany, where they are beginning to talk about fatigue and about putting an end to the war, we need not fear to say the same openly, because it is the truth, equally true both of our country and of all the belligerent and even non-belligerent countries.



## 4

## REPORT ON LAND OCTOBER 26 (NOVEMBER 8)

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

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

### DECREE ON LAND

1) Landed proprietorship is abolished forthwith without any compensation.

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

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

(4) The following peasant Mandate, compiled by the newspaper *Izvestia Userossiiskogo Soveta Kretyanskikh Deputatov*<sup>178</sup> from 242 local peasant mandates and published in No. 88 of that paper (Petrograd, No. 88, August 19, 1917), shall serve everywhere to guide the implementation of the great land reforms until a final decision on the latter is taken by the Constituent Assembly.

#### Peasant Mandate on the Land

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

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

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

"All land, whether *state, crown, monastery, church, factory, entailed,*<sup>179</sup> *private, public, peasant, etc., shall be confiscated without compensation* and become the property of the whole people, and pass into the use of all those who cultivate it.

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

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

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

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

"(4) Stud farms, government and private pedigree stock and poultry farms, etc., shall be confiscated and become the property of the whole people, and

pass into the exclusive use of the state or a commune, depending on the size and importance of such farms.

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

"(8) All land, when alienated, shall become part of the national land fund. Its distribution among the peasants shall be in charge of the local and central self-government bodies, from democratically organised village and city communes, in which there are no distinctions of social rank, to central regional government bodies.

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

The entire contents of this Mandate, as expressing the absolute will of the vast majority of the class-conscious peasants of all Russia, is proclaimed a provisional law, which, pending the convocation of the Constituent Assembly, shall be carried into effect as far as

possible immediately, and as to certain of its provisions with due gradualness, as shall be determined by the uyezds Soviets of Peasants' Deputies.

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

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Voices are being raised here that the decree itself and the Mandate were drawn up by the Socialist-Revolutionaries. What of it? Does it matter who drew them up? As a democratic government, we cannot ignore the decision of the masses of the people, even though we may disagree with it. In the fire of experience, applying the decree in practice, and carrying it out locally, the peasants will themselves realise where the truth lies. And even if the peasants continue to follow the Socialist-Revolutionaries, even if they give this party a majority in the Constituent Assembly, we shall still say—what of it? Experience is the best teacher and it will show who is right. Let the peasants solve this problem from one end and we shall solve it from the other. Experience will oblige us to draw together in the general stream of revolutionary creative work, in the elaboration of new state forms. We must be guided by experience; we must allow complete freedom to the creative faculties of the masses. The old government, which was overthrown by armed uprising, wanted to settle the land problem with the help of the old, unchanged tsarist bureaucracy. But instead of solving the problem, the bureaucracy only fought the peasants. The peasants have learned something during the eight months of our revolution; they want to settle all land problems themselves. We are therefore opposed to all amendments to this draft law. We want no details in it, for we are writing a decree, not a programme of action. Russia is vast, and local conditions vary. We trust that the peasants themselves will be able to solve the problem correctly, properly, better than we could do it. Whether they do it in our spirit or in the spirit of the Socialist-Revolutionary programme is not the point. The point is that the peasants should be firmly assured that there are no more landowners in the countryside, that they themselves must decide all questions, and that they themselves must arrange their own lives. (*Loud applause.*)



## 5

**DECISION TO FORM THE WORKERS' AND PEASANTS' GOVERNMENT**

The All-Russia Congress of Soviets of Workers', Soldiers' and Peasants' Deputies resolves:

To establish a provisional workers' and peasants' government, to be known as the Council of People's Commissars, to govern the country until the Constituent Assembly is convened. The management of individual branches of state activity is entrusted to commissions whose members shall ensure the fulfilment of the programme announced by the Congress, and shall work in close contact with mass organisations of men and women workers, sailors, soldiers, peasants and office employees. Governmental authority is vested in a collegium of the chairmen of those commissions, i.e., the Council of People's Commissars.

Control over the activities of the People's Commissars with the right to replace them is vested in the All-Russia Congress of Soviets of Workers', Peasants' and Soldiers' Deputies and its Central Executive Committee.

At the present time the Council of People's Commissars is constituted as follows:

Chairman of the Council—*Uladimir Ulyanov (Lenin)*;  
People's Commissar of the Interior—*A. I. Rykov*;  
Agriculture—*U. P. Milyutin*;  
Labour—*A. G. Shlyapnikov*;  
Army and Navy Affairs—a committee consisting of: *U. A. Ovseyenko (Antonov)*, *N. U. Krylenko* and *P. Y. Dybenko*;  
Commerce and Industry—*U. P. Nogin*;  
Education—*A. U. Lunacharsky*;  
Finance—*I. I. Skvortsov (Stepanov)*;  
Foreign Affairs—*L. D. Bronstein (Trotsky)*;  
Justice—*G. I. Oppokov (Lomov)*;  
Food—*I. A. Teodorovich*;  
Posts and Telegraph—*N. P. Avilov (Glebov)*;

Chairman for Nationalities Affairs—*J. V. Jugashvili (Stalin)*.

The office of People's Commissar of Railways is temporarily vacant.

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## WIRELESS MESSAGE OF THE COUNCIL OF PEOPLE'S COMMISSARS

OCTOBER 30 (NOVEMBER 12), 1917

### Calling Everyone

The All-Russia Congress of Soviets has set up a new Soviet Government. Kerensky's government has been overthrown and arrested. Kerensky has fled. All institutions are in the hands of the Soviet Government. A revolt of officer cadets who had been released on parole on October 25 broke out on October 29. The revolt was suppressed that same day. Kerensky and Savinkov, together with the officer cadets and a part of the Cossacks, have made their way by deceit to Tsarskoye Syelo. The Soviet Government has mustered forces for the suppression of the new Kornilov advance on Petrograd. The fleet, headed by the armoured battleship *Republic*, has been summoned to the capital. Kerensky's officer cadets and Cossacks are wavering. Prisoners arriving from Kerensky's camp assure us that the Cossacks have been deceived and that if they come to realise the true state of affairs they will refuse to shoot. The Soviet Government is making every effort to avert bloodshed. If bloodshed cannot be avoided and if Kerensky's units do begin to shoot, the Soviet Government will not hesitate to suppress the new Kerensky-Kornilov campaign ruthlessly.

We announce for your information that the Congress of Soviets which has already dispersed, adopted two important decrees: (1) on the immediate transfer of all the landed estates to the peasant committees, and (2) on the proposal of a democratic peace.

*Uladimir Ulyanov (Lenin),*  
Chairman of the Soviet Government

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## DRAFT REGULATIONS ON WORKERS' CONTROL<sup>180</sup>

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* 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 on October 26 or 27  
(November 8 or 9), 1917

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# SPEECHES

## AT A MEETING OF THE CENTRAL COMMITTEE OF THE R.S.D.L.P.(B.), NOVEMBER 1 (14) 1917

### MINUTES

#### 1

Comrade Lenin considers that Kamenev's policy must be checked at once. There is now no point in negotiating with the Vikzhel.<sup>181</sup> Troops must be dispatched to Moscow. He proposes a resolution on the Vikzhel. The Vikzhel is not represented on the Soviet, and must not be admitted to it; the Soviets are voluntary organisations, and the Vikzhel has no support among the people.

#### 2

Comrade Lenin considers that the negotiations were to serve as diplomatic cover for military operations. The only correct solution would be to put an end to the wavering of the waverers and to become firm ourselves. Assistance must be given to the Muscovites, and our victory will be assured.

#### 3

Comrade Lenin considers the question a fundamental one, and thinks it is time to put an end to wavering. It is obvious that the Vikzhel sides with the Kaledins and Kornilovs. There must be no vacillation. We are backed by the majority of the workers and peasants and of the army. Nobody here has proved that the rank and file are against us. Either with the agents of Kaledin, or with the rank and file. We must rely on the people, we must send propagandists into the countryside. The Vikzhel was called upon to transport troops to Moscow; it refused, we must appeal to the people, and they will overthrow it.

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## RESOLUTION OF THE CENTRAL COMMITTEE OF THE R.S.D.L.P.(B.) ON THE OPPOSITION WITHIN THE CENTRAL COMMITTEE

NOVEMBER 2 (15), 1917

The Central Committee considers that the present meeting is of historic importance and that it is therefore necessary to record the two positions which have been revealed here.

1. The Central Committee considers that the opposition formed within the Central Committee has departed completely from all the fundamental positions of Bolshevism and of the proletarian class struggle in general by reiterating the utterly un-Marxist talk of the impossibility of a socialist revolution in Russia and of the necessity of yielding to the ultimatums and threats of resignation on the part of the obvious minority in the Soviet organisation, thus thwarting the will and the decision of the Second All-Russia Congress of Soviets and sabotaging the dictatorship of the proletariat and the poor peasantry which has been inaugurated.

2. The Central Committee lays the whole responsibility for hindering revolutionary work and for the vacillations, so criminal at the present moment, on this opposition, and invites them to transfer their discussion and their scepticism to the press and to withdraw from the practical work they do not believe in. For this opposition reflects nothing but intimidation by the bourgeoisie and the sentiments of the exhausted (not the revolutionary) section of the population.

3. The Central Committee affirms that the purely Bolshevik government cannot be renounced without betraying the slogan of Soviet power, since the majority at the Second All-Russia Congress of Soviets, without excluding anybody from the Congress, entrusted power to this government.

4. The Central Committee affirms that, without betraying the slogan of the power of the Soviets of Workers', Soldiers' and Peasants' Deputies, there can be no entering into petty bargaining over the affiliation to the Soviets of organisations of a non-Soviet type, i.e., organisations which are not voluntary associations of the revolutionary vanguard of the people who are fighting for the overthrow of the landowners and capitalists.

5. The Central Committee affirms that to yield to the ultima-

tums and threats of the minority of the Soviets would be tantamount to complete renunciation not only of Soviet power but of democracy, for such yielding would be tantamount to the majority's fear to make use of its majority, it would be tantamount to submitting to anarchy and inviting the repetition of ultimatums on the part of any minority.

6. The Central Committee affirms that, not having excluded anybody from the Second All-Russia Congress of Soviets, it is even now fully prepared to permit the return of those who walked out and to agree to a coalition within the Soviets with those who walked out, and that, consequently, all talk about the Bolsheviks refusing to share power with anybody is absolutely false.

7. The Central Committee affirms that on the day the present government was formed, a few hours before its formation, the Central Committee invited three representatives of the Left Socialist-Revolutionaries to attend its meeting and formally proposed that they should join the government. The refusal of the Left Socialist-Revolutionaries, although it was provisional and conditional, places on these Left Socialist-Revolutionaries the entire responsibility for the fact that an agreement with them was not reached.

8. The Central Committee recalls that a resolution, proposed by the Bolshevik group, was adopted by the Second All-Russia Congress of Soviets expressing readiness to reinforce the Soviet both by soldiers from the trenches and by peasants from the localities, from the villages, and that therefore the assertion that the Bolshevik government is opposed to a coalition with the peasants is absolutely false. On the contrary, the Central Committee declares that the land law of our government, which was wholly copied from the Socialist-Revolutionary Mandate, is practical proof of the complete and most sincere readiness of the Bolsheviks to effect a coalition with the vast majority of Russia's population.

9. The Central Committee affirms, finally, that despite all difficulties, the victory of socialism both in Russia and in Europe can only be ensured by the unswerving continuation of the present government's policy. The Central Committee expresses its firm belief in the victory of this socialist revolution and calls upon all sceptics and waverers to abandon their waverings and whole-heartedly and with supreme energy support the actions of this government.

*Lenin*

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*Collected Works*, Vol. 26



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## ULTIMATUM FROM THE MAJORITY ON THE CENTRAL COMMITTEE OF THE R.S.D.L.P.(B.) TO THE MINORITY

The majority on the Central Committee of the R.S.D.L.P. (Bolsheviks), fully approving the policy so far pursued by the Council of People's Commissars, considers it necessary to address the following categorical statement to the minority on the Central Committee.

Our Party's policy at the present moment is defined in the resolution submitted by Comrade Lenin and adopted yesterday, November 2, by the Central Committee.\* This resolution declares that every attempt to induce our Party to decline power is treason to the proletariat's cause, since the All-Russia Congress of Soviets, in the name of the millions of workers, soldiers and peasants, has entrusted this power to the representatives of our Party on the basis of our programme. This fundamental line of our tactics, which follows logically from our whole struggle against the conciliators and which guided us in the uprising against Kerensky's government, at present constitutes the revolutionary essence of Bolshevism and is once again endorsed by the Central Committee. This line is absolutely binding on all members of the Party, and first and foremost, on the Central Committee minority.

Yet members of the minority, both before and after yesterday's meeting of the Central Committee, have been pursuing a policy which obviously runs counter to our Party's fundamental line and which is demoralising our own ranks by causing hesitation at a moment when the greatest firmness and steadfastness are essential.

Thus, at yesterday's meeting of the Central Executive Committee, the Bolshevik group, with the direct participation of the Central Committee's minority members, openly voted against a decision of the Central Committee (on the number and persons of the representatives of our Party in the government). This unparalleled violation of discipline, committed by Central Committee

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\* See pp. 484-85 of the present volume.—*Ed.*

members behind the back of the Central Committee after many hours' discussions on the Central Committee, discussions provoked by these same members of the opposition, makes it obvious to us that the opposition intend to force the hand of Party institutions by sabotaging the Party's work at a moment when the fate of the Party, the fate of the revolution, depends upon the immediate result of this work.

We cannot and do not wish to bear responsibility for such a state of affairs.

Addressing the present statement to the minority of the Central Committee, we categorically demand a written reply to the question: Does the minority undertake to submit to Party discipline and to carry out the policy formulated in Comrade Lenin's resolution which was adopted by the Central Committee?

In the event of a negative or indefinite reply to this question we shall immediately place before the Petrograd Committee, the Moscow Committee, the Bolshevik group on the Central Executive Committee, the Petrograd City Conference and the Extraordinary Party Congress, the following alternative proposal:

Either the Party must entrust the present opposition with the task of forming a new government in conjunction with those of its allies on whose behalf the opposition is at present sabotaging our work—in which case we shall consider ourselves absolutely free in relation to this new government, which can contribute nothing but wavering, impotence and chaos.

Or—which we do not doubt—the Party will endorse the only possible revolutionary line, as expressed in yesterday's decision of the Central Committee—in which case the Party must categorically demand that the members of the opposition conduct their disorganising work outside our Party organisation. There is not and cannot be any other solution. It stands to reason, a split would be highly deplorable. But an honest and open split would now be incomparably better than internal sabotage, the thwarting of our own decisions, disorganisation and prostration. At any rate, we do not doubt for a moment that the submission of our differences (which are in the main a replica of our differences with the *Novaya Zhizn* and Martov groups) to the people's judgement will ensure our policy the unreserved and devoted support of the revolutionary workers, soldiers and peasants, and will very soon condemn the wavering opposition to impotent isolation.

Written on November 3 (16), 1917

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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.<sup>182</sup>

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' revolution 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 order, 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



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## REPLY TO QUESTIONS FROM PEASANTS<sup>183</sup>

In reply to numerous questions from peasants, be it known that all power in the country henceforth belongs wholly to the Soviets of Workers', Soldiers' and Peasants' Deputies. The workers' revolution has won in Petrograd and Moscow and is winning everywhere else in Russia. The Workers' and Peasants' Government ensures the alliance of the mass of the peasants, the poor peasants, the majority of the peasants, with the workers against the landowners, against the capitalists.

Hence the Soviets of Peasants' Deputies, primarily the uyezd and then the gubernia Soviets, are from now on, pending the convocation of the Constituent Assembly, vested with full governmental authority in their localities. Landed proprietorship has been *abolished* by the Second All-Russia Congress of Soviets. A decree on land has already been issued by the present Provisional Workers' and Peasants' Government. In conformity with this decree all landed estates pass over wholly to the Soviets of Peasants' Deputies.

The volost land committees must at once take over the administration of all landed estates, instituting the strictest accounting, maintaining perfect order and safeguarding with utmost strictness the former property of the landowners, which henceforth is the property of the whole people and which the people themselves must therefore protect.

All rulings of the volost land committees issued with the approval of the uyezd Soviets of Peasants' Deputies have the force of *law* and must be carried out unconditionally and without delay.

The Workers' and Peasants' Government appointed by the Second All-Russia Congress of Soviets has been named the Council of People's Commissars.

The Council of People's Commissars calls upon the peasants to take all power into their own hands in their respective localities.

The workers give their full, undivided, all-round support to the peasants, are getting the production of machines and implements started, and ask the peasants to help by delivering grain.

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

Petrograd.  
November 5, 1917

*Izvestia* No. 219,  
November 8, 1917

*Collected Works*, Vol. 26

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# FROM THE CENTRAL COMMITTEE OF THE RUSSIAN SOCIAL-DEMOCRATIC LABOUR PARTY (BOLSHEVIKS)

TO ALL PARTY MEMBERS  
AND TO ALL THE WORKING CLASSES OF RUSSIA

Comrades,

It is a matter of common knowledge that the majority at the Second All-Russia Congress of Soviets of Workers' and Soldiers' Deputies were delegates belonging to the Bolshevik Party.

This fact is fundamental for a proper understanding of the victorious revolution that has just taken place in Petrograd, Moscow and the whole of Russia. Yet that fact is constantly forgotten and ignored by all the supporters of the capitalists and their unwitting *aides*, who are undermining the fundamental principle of the new revolution, namely, *all power to the Soviets*. There must be no government in Russia other than the *Soviet Government*. Soviet power has been won in Russia, and the transfer of government from one Soviet party to another is guaranteed without any revolution, simply by a decision of the Soviets, simply by new elections of deputies to the Soviets. The majority at the Second All-Russia Congress of Soviets belonged to the Bolshevik Party. Therefore the only Soviet Government is the one formed by that Party. And everybody knows that the Central Committee of the Bolshevik Party, several hours prior to the formation of the new government, and to the presentation of the list of its members to the Second All-Russia Congress of Soviets, summoned to its session three of the most prominent members of the group of Left Socialist-Revolutionaries, Comrades Kamkov, Spiro and Karelin, and *invited them* to join the new government.<sup>184</sup> We very much regret that the Left Socialist-Revolutionary comrades refused; we regard their refusal as impermissible on the part of revolutionaries and champions of the working people. We are ready at any moment to include Left Socialist-Revolutionaries in the government, but we declare that, as the majority party at the Second All-Russia Congress of Soviets, we are entitled to form the government, *and it is our duty* to the people to do so.

Everybody knows that the Central Committee of our Party sub-

mitted a purely Bolshevik list of People's Commissars to the Second All-Russia Congress of Soviets, and that *the Congress approved this list of a purely Bolshevik government.*

The statements to the effect that the Bolshevik government is *not* a Soviet Government are therefore pure lies, and come, and can come, only from the enemies of the people, from the enemies of Soviet power. On the contrary, now, after the Second All-Russia Congress of Soviets, and until the Third Congress meets, or until new elections to the Soviets are held, or until a new government is formed by the Central Executive Committee, *only* a Bolshevik government can be regarded as the *Soviet* Government.

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Comrades, yesterday, November 4, several members of the Central Committee of our Party and of the Council of People's Commissars—Kamenev, Zinoviev, Nogin, Rykov, Milyutin and a few others—resigned from the Central Committee of our Party, and the three last named from the Council of People's Commissars. In a large party like ours, notwithstanding the proletarian and revolutionary line of our policy, it was inevitable that individual comrades should have proved to be insufficiently staunch and firm in the struggle against the enemies of the people. The tasks that now face our Party are really immense, the difficulties are enormous, and several members of our Party who formerly held posts of responsibility have flinched in face of the onslaught of the bourgeoisie and fled from our ranks. The bourgeoisie and all its helpers are jubilant over this fact and are maliciously rejoicing, clamouring about disintegration and predicting the fall of the Bolshevik government.

Comrades, do not believe these lies. The comrades who have resigned have acted as deserters, since they not only quitted the posts entrusted to them, but violated the direct decision of the Central Committee of our Party binding them to delay their resignation at least until a decision was taken by the Petrograd and Moscow Party organisations. We strongly condemn this desertion. We are profoundly convinced that all class-conscious workers, soldiers and peasants who belong to or sympathise with our Party will condemn the actions of the deserters with equal severity.

But we declare that the desertion of a few individuals belonging to the leading group of our Party cannot for a moment or in the slightest way shake the unity of the *masses* who follow our Party and that it therefore will not shake our Party.

You must recall, comrades, that two of the deserters, Kamenev and Zinoviev, acted as deserters and blacklegs even before the



Petrograd uprising; for they not only voted against the uprising at the decisive meeting of the Central Committee on October 10, 1917, but, even *after* the decision had been taken by the Central Committee, agitated among the Party workers against the uprising. It is common knowledge that newspapers which fear to take the side of the workers and are more inclined to side with the bourgeoisie (e.g., *Novaya Zhizn*), raised at that time, in common with the whole bourgeois press, a hue and cry about the "disintegration" of our Party, about "the collapse of the uprising" and so on. Events, however, swiftly refuted the lies and slanders of some and the doubts, waverings and cowardice of others. The "storm" they tried to raise over the efforts of Kamenev and Zinoviev to thwart the Petrograd uprising proved to be *a storm in a teacup*, while the great enthusiasm of the people, the great heroism of millions of workers, soldiers, and peasants in Petrograd, in Moscow, at the front, in the trenches and in the villages, pushed the deserters out of the way as easily as a railway train pushes aside splinters of wood.

Shame on all the faint-hearted, all the waverers and doubters, on all those who allowed themselves to be intimidated by the bourgeoisie or who have succumbed to the outcries of their direct and indirect supporters! *There is not the slightest* hesitation among the mass of the workers and soldiers of Petrograd, Moscow and other places. Our Party stands solidly and firmly, as one man, in defence of Soviet power, in defence of the interests of all the working people, and first and foremost of the workers and poor peasants.

Bourgeois hacks and those who allowed themselves to be intimidated by the bourgeoisie accuse us in chorus of being uncompromising, of being irreconcilable, of refusing to share power with another party. That is not true, comrades. *We have invited* and continue to invite the Left Socialist-Revolutionaries to share power with us. It is not our fault that *they have refused*. We began the negotiations, and, after the delegates of the Second Congress of Soviets had dispersed, we made all kinds of concessions in the course of these negotiations, even to the point of provisionally agreeing to admit representatives of a section of the Petrograd City Council, that nest of Kornilov men, which will be the first to be swept away by the people should the Kornilovite scoundrels, should the darling sons of the capitalists and landowners, the officer cadets, attempt once more to resist the will of the people as they did last Sunday in Petrograd and as they would like to do again (as is proved by the exposure of the conspiracy of Purishkevich and the documents seized on him yesterday, November 3). But the gentlemen who stand behind the Left Socialist-Revolutionaries and act through them in the interests of the bourgeoisie interpreted our readiness to make concessions as weakness, and took advantage of

this readiness to present us with new ultimatums. At the conference on November 3, Mr. Abramovich and Mr. Martov appeared and presented an ultimatum: no negotiations until our government puts a stop to the arrests and to the suppression of bourgeois newspapers.

Both our Party and the Central Executive Committee of the Congress of Soviets *refused* to accept this ultimatum, which obviously emanated from the supporters of Kaledin, the bourgeoisie, Kerensky and Kornilov. The conspiracy of Purishkevich and the appearance in Petrograd on November 5 of a delegation from a unit of the 17th Army Corps threatening us with a march on Petrograd (a ridiculous threat, for the advanced detachments of these Kornilovites have already been beaten and have fled at Gatchina, while most of them have refused to fight against the Soviets)—all these events have proved who were the *real* authors of the ultimatum of Mr. Abramovich and Mr. Martov and whom these people *really* served.

Let the working people, therefore, remain calm and firm! Our Party will never yield to the ultimatums of the minority in the Soviets, the minority who have allowed themselves to be intimidated by the bourgeoisie and, despite their "good intentions" virtually act as puppets in the hands of the Kornilov gang.

We stand firmly by the principle of Soviet power, i.e., the power of the *majority* obtained at the last Congress of Soviets. We agreed, and *still agree*, to share power with the minority in the Soviets, provided that minority loyally and honestly undertake to submit to the majority and carry out the programme, *approved by the whole* Second All-Russia Congress of Soviets, for gradual, but firm and undeviating steps towards socialism. But we shall not submit to any ultimatums of groups of intellectuals who are not backed by the people, and who *in actual fact* are backed only by the Kornilovites, the Savinkov men, the officer cadets, etc.

Let the working people, therefore, remain calm and firm! Our Party, the party of the Soviet majority, stands solid and united in defence of their interests and, as before, behind our Party stand the millions of the workers in the cities, the soldiers in the trenches and the peasants in the villages, prepared at all costs to achieve the victory of peace and the victory of socialism!

Written November 5-6 (18-19), 1917

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# THE EXTRAORDINARY ALL-RUSSIA CONGRESS OF SOVIETS OF PEASANTS' DEPUTIES<sup>185</sup>

NOVEMBER 10-25 (NOVEMBER 23-DECEMBER 8), 1917

## 1

### DRAFT RESOLUTION

The Peasants' Congress fully and in every way supports the law (decree) on land of October 26, 1917, approved by the Second All-Russia Congress of Soviets of Workers' and Soldiers' Deputies and published by the Council of People's Commissars as the provisional workers' and peasants' government of the Russian Republic. The Peasants' Congress declares its firm and unshakable resolve to ensure the implementation of this law, calls upon all peasants to support it unanimously and to carry it out themselves in the localities without delay, and also to elect to all and every responsible post and office only people who have proved not in word but in deed their complete devotion to the interests of the working and exploited peasants, their readiness and ability to uphold these interests against any resistance the landowners, capitalists, and their supporters or accomplices may offer.

The Peasants' Congress also expresses its conviction that the full implementation of all the measures constituting the law on land is possible only if the workers' socialist revolution which began on October 25 is successful, for only the socialist revolution can ensure the transfer of the land to the working peasantry without compensation, the confiscation of the landowners' implements, full protection of the interests of agricultural wage-workers and the immediate commencement of the unconditional abolition of the entire system of capitalist wage-slavery, the proper and planned distribution of the products of both agriculture and industry among the various regions and the population of the country, control over the banks (without such control the people will not be masters of the land even though private property in land is abolished), all-round state assistance specifically to the working and exploited people, etc.

Therefore the Peasants' Congress, fully supporting the Revolution of October 25, and supporting it precisely as a socialist revolution, declares its unswerving resolve to carry out, with due gradualness but without the slightest vacillation, measures aimed at the socialist transformation of the Russian Republic.

A necessary condition for the victory of the socialist revolution, which alone can secure the lasting triumph and full implementation of the law on land, is the close alliance of the working and exploited peasantry with the working class—the proletariat—in all the advanced countries. In the Russian Republic the entire organisation and administration of the state from top to bottom must henceforth be based on such an alliance. Rejecting all and every attempt, direct and indirect, overt and covert, to return to a course that experience has rejected, to the course of conciliation with the bourgeoisie and the champions of bourgeois policy, this alliance alone can ensure the victory of socialism the world over.

Written on November 14 (27), 1917

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November 15 (28), 1917

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## 2

**CONCLUDING SPEECH ON THE AGRARIAN QUESTION  
NOVEMBER 18 (DECEMBER 1)****NEWSPAPER REPORT**

Comrade Lenin first showed that the accusation of anarchism made against the Bolsheviks by the Left Socialist-Revolutionaries had not been proved.

In what way did socialists differ from anarchists? The anarchists did not recognise state power whereas the socialists, the Bolsheviks among them, did recognise it in the period of transition between the state of affairs then obtaining and the socialism towards which they were progressing.

The Bolsheviks favoured a strong authority, but it must be a workers' and peasants' authority.

All state power is compulsion, but until then it had always been the power of the minority, the power of the landowner and capitalist employed against the worker and peasant.

He said that the Bolsheviks stood for the state power that would be a firm authority of the majority of the workers and peasants employed against the capitalists and landowners.

Comrade Lenin then went on to show that the Left Socialist-Revolutionaries' resolution on the land had called the new government a people's socialist government, and dwelt on the points that could closely unite the Bolsheviks and Left Socialist-Revolutionaries.

The alliance of the peasants and workers was a basis for an agreement between the Left Socialist-Revolutionaries and the Bolsheviks.

It was an honest coalition, an honest alliance, but it would be an honest coalition at the summit too, between the Left Socialist-Revolutionaries and the Bolsheviks, if the Left Socialist-Revolutionaries were more definite in stating their conviction that the revolution was a socialist revolution. It was a socialist revolution. The abolition of private property in land, the introduction of workers' control, the nationalisation of the banks—all these were measures that would lead to socialism. They were not socialism, but they were measures that would lead to socialism by gigantic strides. The Bolsheviks did not promise the workers and peasants milk and

honey immediately, but they did say that a close alliance between the workers and the exploited peasantry, a firm, unwavering struggle for the power of the Soviets would lead to socialism, and any party that really wanted to be a people's party would have to state clearly and decisively that the revolution was a socialist revolution.

And only in the event of the Left Socialist-Revolutionaries stating that clearly and unambiguously would the Bolsheviks' alliance with them grow and become stronger.

It had been said that the Bolsheviks were against the socialisation of the land and could not, therefore, come to an agreement with the Left Socialist-Revolutionaries.

The Bolsheviks answered that they were indeed against the Socialist-Revolutionaries' socialisation of the land but that did not prevent an honest alliance with them.

Today or tomorrow the Left Socialist-Revolutionaries would nominate their Minister of Agriculture, and the Bolsheviks would not vote against a law on the socialisation of the land if he proposed it; they would abstain from voting.

In conclusion Comrade Lenin stressed that only an alliance of workers and peasants could acquire land and make peace.

Among other things Comrade Lenin was asked what the Bolsheviks would do in the Constituent Assembly if the Left Socialist-Revolutionaries were there in a minority and proposed a bill on the socialisation of the land—would the Bolsheviks abstain from voting? Of course not. The Bolsheviks would vote for the bill but would make the proviso that they were voting for it in order to support the peasants against their enemies.

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## ALLIANCE BETWEEN THE WORKERS AND THE WORKING AND EXPLOITED PEASANTS

A LETTER TO PRAVDA

Today, Saturday, November 18, in the course of a speech I made at the Peasants' Congress, I was publicly asked a question to which I forthwith replied. It is essential that this question and my reply should immediately be made known to all the reading public, for while formally speaking only in my own name, I was actually speaking in the name of the whole Bolshevik Party.

The matter was the following.

Touching on the question of an alliance between the Bolshevik workers and the Left Socialist-Revolutionaries, whom many peasants at present trust, I argued in my speech that this alliance *can* be an "honest coalition", an honest alliance, for there is *no* radical divergence of interests between the wage-workers and the working and exploited peasants. Socialism is *fully* able to meet the interests of both. *Only* socialism can meet their interests. Hence the possibility and necessity for an "honest coalition" between the proletarians and the working and exploited peasantry. On the contrary, a "coalition" (alliance) between the working and exploited classes, on the one hand, and the bourgeoisie, on the other, *cannot* be an "honest coalition" because of the radical divergence of interests between these classes.

Imagine, I said, that there is a majority of Bolsheviks and a minority of Left Socialist-Revolutionaries in the government, or even, let us assume, only one Left Socialist-Revolutionary—the Commissar of Agriculture. Could the Bolsheviks practise an honest coalition under such circumstances?

They could; for, while they are irreconcilable in their fight against the counter-revolutionary elements (including the Right Socialist-Revolutionary and the defencist elements), the Bolsheviks would be obliged to *abstain* from voting on questions which concern purely Socialist-Revolutionary points in the land programme approved by the Second All-Russia Congress of Soviets. Such, for instance, would be the point on equal land tenure and the redistribution of land among the small holders.

By abstaining from voting on such a point the Bolsheviks would not be changing their programme in the slightest. For, given the victory of socialism (workers' control over the factories, to be followed by their expropriation, the nationalisation of the banks, and the creation of a Supreme Economic Council for the regulation of the entire economic life of the country)—given that the workers *would be obliged* to agree to the transitional measures proposed by the small working and exploited peasants, provided such measures were *not detrimental* to the cause of socialism. Even Kautsky, when he was still a Marxist (1899-1909), frequently admitted—I said—that the measures of transition to socialism cannot be identical in countries with large-scale and those with small-scale farming.

We Bolsheviks would be obliged to abstain from voting when such a point was being decided in the Council of People's Commissars or in the Central Executive Committee, for if the Left Socialist-Revolutionaries (as well as the peasants who support them) agreed to workers' control, to the nationalisation of the banks, etc., equal land tenure would be only one of the measures of *transition* to full socialism. For the proletariat to *impose* such transitional measures would be absurd; it is obliged, in the interests of the victory of socialism, to *yield* to the small working and exploited peasants in the choice of these transitional measures, for they could do *no harm* to the cause of socialism.

Thereupon, a Left Socialist-Revolutionary (it was Comrade Feofilaktov, if I am not mistaken) asked me the following question:

"How would the Bolsheviks act if in the Constituent Assembly the peasants wanted to pass a law on equal land tenure, while the bourgeoisie were opposed to the peasants and the decision depended on the Bolsheviks?"

I replied: under such circumstances, when the cause of socialism would be ensured by the introduction of workers' control, the nationalisation of the banks, etc., the alliance between the workers and the working and exploited peasants would make it obligatory for the party of the proletariat to vote for the peasants and against the bourgeoisie. The Bolsheviks, in my opinion, would be entitled when the vote was being taken to make a declaration of dissent, to place on record their non-agreement, etc., but to abstain from voting under such circumstances would be to betray their allies *in the fight for socialism* because of a difference with them on a partial issue. The Bolsheviks would never betray the peasants in such a situation. Equal land tenure and like measures *cannot* prejudice socialism if the power is in the hands of a workers' and peasants' government, if workers' control has been introduced, the banks nationalised, a workers'



and peasants' supreme economic body set up to direct (regulate) the *entire* economic life of the country, and so forth.

Such was my reply.

*N. Lenin*

Written on November 18 (December 1), 1917

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December 2 (November 19), 1917

*Collected Works*, Vol. 26

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# SESSION OF THE ALL-RUSSIA CENTRAL EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE

DECEMBER 1 (14), 1917

## I

### SPEECH ON THE QUESTION OF SETTING UP A SUPREME ECONOMIC COUNCIL<sup>186</sup>

Lenin speaks in defence of the Soviet draft, pointing out that the Supreme Economic Council cannot be reduced to a parliament, but must be the same kind of fighting organ for combating the capitalists and landowners in the economy as the Council of People's Commissars is in politics.

Published on December 3 (16), 1917  
in the newspaper *Novaya Zhizn* No. 192

*Collected Works*, Vol. 36

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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.

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



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## THESES ON THE CONSTITUENT ASSEMBLY

1. The demand for the convocation of a Constituent Assembly was a perfectly legitimate part of the programme of revolutionary Social-Democracy, because in a bourgeois republic the Constituent Assembly represents the highest form of democracy and because, in setting up a Pre-parliament, the imperialist republic headed by Kerensky was preparing to rig the elections and violate democracy in a number of ways.

2. While demanding the convocation of a Constituent Assembly, revolutionary Social-Democracy has ever since the beginning of the Revolution of 1917 repeatedly emphasised that a republic of Soviets is a higher form of democracy than the usual bourgeois republic with a Constituent Assembly.

3. For the transition from the bourgeois to the socialist system, for the dictatorship of the proletariat, the Republic of Soviets (of Workers', Soldiers' and Peasants' Deputies) is not only a higher type of democratic institution (as compared with the usual bourgeois republic crowned by a Constituent Assembly), but is the only form capable of securing the most painless transition to socialism.

4. The convocation of the Constituent Assembly in our revolution on the basis of lists submitted in the middle of October 1917 is taking place under conditions which preclude the possibility of the elections to this Constituent Assembly faithfully expressing the will of the people in general and of the working people in particular.

5. Firstly, proportional representation results in a faithful expression of the will of the people only when the party lists correspond to the real division of the people according to the party groupings reflected in those lists. In our case, however, as is well known, the party which from May to October had the largest number of followers among the people, and especially among the peasants—the Socialist-Revolutionary Party—came out with united election lists for the Constituent Assembly in

the middle of October 1917, but split in November 1917, after the elections and before the Assembly met.

For this reason, there is not, nor can there be, even a formal correspondence between the will of the mass of the electors and the composition of the elected Constituent Assembly.

6. Secondly, a still more important, not a formal nor legal, but a socio-economic, class source of the discrepancy between the will of the people, and especially the will of the working classes, on the one hand, and the composition of the Constituent Assembly, on the other, is due to the elections to the Constituent Assembly having taken place at a time when the overwhelming majority of the people could not yet know the full scope and significance of the October, Soviet, proletarian-peasant revolution, which began on October 25, 1917, i.e., after the lists of candidates for the Constituent Assembly had been submitted.

7. The October Revolution is passing through successive stages of development before our very eyes, winning power for the Soviets and wresting political rule from the bourgeoisie and transferring it to the proletariat and poor peasantry.

8. It began with the victory of October 24-25 in the capital, when the Second All-Russia Congress of Soviets of Workers' and Soldiers' Deputies, the vanguard of the proletarians and of the most politically active section of the peasants, gave a majority to the Bolshevik Party and put it in power.

9. Then, in the course of November and December, the revolution spread to the entire army and peasants, this being expressed first of all in the deposition of the old leading bodies (army committees, gubernia peasant committees, the Central Executive Committee of the All-Russia Soviet of Peasants' Deputies, etc.)—which expressed the superseded, compromising phase of the revolution, its bourgeois, and not proletarian, phase, and which were therefore inevitably bound to disappear under the pressure of the deeper and broader masses of the people—and in the election of new leading bodies in their place.

10. This mighty movement of the exploited people for the reconstruction of the leading bodies of their organisations has not ended even now, in the middle of December 1917, and the Railwaymen's Congress, which is still in session, represents one of its stages.

11. Consequently, the grouping of the class forces in Russia in the course of their class struggle is in fact assuming, in November and December 1917, a form differing in principle from the one that the party lists of candidates for the Constituent Assembly compiled in the middle of October 1917 could have reflected.

12. Recent events in the Ukraine (partly also in Finland and Byelorussia, as well as in the Caucasus) point similarly to a re-

grouping of class forces which is taking place in the process of the struggle between the bourgeois nationalism of the Ukrainian Rada,<sup>187</sup> the Finnish Diet, etc., on the one hand, and Soviet power, the proletarian-peasant revolution in each of these national republics, on the other.

13. Lastly, the civil war which was started by the Cadet-Kaledin counter-revolutionary revolt against the Soviet authorities, against the workers' and peasants' government, has finally brought the class struggle to a head and has destroyed every chance of settling in a formally democratic way the very acute problems with which history has confronted the peoples of Russia, and in the first place her working class and peasants.

14. Only the complete victory of the workers and peasants over the bourgeois and landowner revolt (as expressed in the Cadet-Kaledin movement), only the ruthless military suppression of this revolt of the slave-owners can really safeguard the proletarian-peasant revolution. The course of events and the development of the class struggle in the revolution have resulted in the slogan "All Power to the Constituent Assembly!"—which disregards the gains of the workers' and peasants' revolution, which disregards Soviet power, which disregards the decisions of the Second All-Russia Congress of Soviets of Workers' and Soldiers' Deputies, of the Second All-Russia Congress of Peasants' Deputies, etc.—*becoming in fact* the slogan of the Cadets and the Kaledinites and of their helpers. The entire people are now fully aware that the Constituent Assembly, if it parted ways with Soviet power, would inevitably be doomed to political extinction.

15. One of the particularly acute problems of national life is the problem of peace. A really revolutionary struggle for peace began in Russia only after the victory of the October 25 Revolution, and the first fruits of this victory were the publication of the secret treaties, the conclusion of an armistice, and the beginning of open negotiations for a general peace without annexations and indemnities.

Only now are the broad sections of the people actually receiving a chance fully and openly to observe the policy of revolutionary struggle for peace and to study its results.

At the time of the elections to the Constituent Assembly the mass of the people had no such chance.

It is clear that the discrepancy between the composition of the elected Constituent Assembly and the actual will of the people on the question of terminating the war is inevitable from this point of view too.

16. The result of all the above-mentioned circumstances taken together is that the Constituent Assembly, summoned on the



basis of the election lists of the parties existing prior to the proletarian-peasant revolution under the rule of the bourgeoisie, must inevitably clash with the will and interests of the working and exploited classes which on October 25 began the socialist revolution against the bourgeoisie. Naturally, the interests of this revolution stand higher than the formal rights of the Constituent Assembly, even if those formal rights were not undermined by the absence in the law on the Constituent Assembly of a provision recognising the right of the people to recall their deputies and hold new elections at any moment.

17. Every direct or indirect attempt to consider the question of the Constituent Assembly from a formal, legal point of view, within the framework of ordinary bourgeois democracy and disregarding the class struggle and civil war, would be a betrayal of the proletariat's cause, and the adoption of the bourgeois standpoint. The revolutionary Social-Democrats are duty bound to warn all and sundry against this error, into which a few Bolshevik leaders, who have been unable to appreciate the significance of the October uprising and the tasks of the dictatorship of the proletariat, have strayed.

18. The only chance of securing a painless solution to the crisis which has arisen owing to the divergence between the elections to the Constituent Assembly, on the one hand, and the will of the people and the interests of the working and exploited classes, on the other, is for the people to exercise as broadly and as rapidly as possible the right to elect the members of the Constituent Assembly anew, and for the Constituent Assembly to accept the law of the Central Executive Committee on these new elections, to proclaim that it unreservedly recognises Soviet power, the Soviet revolution, and its policy on the questions of peace, the land and workers' control, and to resolutely join the camp of the enemies of the Cadet-Kaledin counter-revolution.

19. Unless these conditions are fulfilled, the crisis in connection with the Constituent Assembly can be settled only in a revolutionary way, by Soviet power adopting the most energetic, speedy, firm and determined revolutionary measures against the Cadet-Kaledin counter-revolution, no matter behind what slogans and institutions (even participation in the Constituent Assembly) this counter-revolution may hide. Any attempt to tie the hands of Soviet power in this struggle would be tantamount to aiding counter-revolution.

Written on December 11 or 12  
(24 or 25), 1917

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December 26 (13), 1917

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## FOR BREAD AND PEACE

Two questions now take precedence over all other political questions—the question of bread and the question of peace. The imperialist war, the war between the biggest and richest banking firms, Britain and Germany, that is being waged for world domination, the division of the spoils, for the plunder of small and weak nations; this horrible, criminal war has ruined all countries, exhausted all peoples, and confronted mankind with the alternative—either sacrifice all civilisation and perish or throw off the capitalist yoke in the revolutionary way, do away with the rule of the bourgeoisie and win socialism and durable peace.

If socialism is not victorious, peace between the capitalist states will be only a truce, an interlude, a time of preparation for a fresh slaughter of the peoples. Peace and bread are the basic demands of the workers and the exploited. The war has made these demands extremely urgent. The war has brought hunger to the most civilised countries, to those most culturally developed. On the other hand, the war, as a tremendous historical process, has accelerated social development to an unheard-of degree. Capitalism had developed into imperialism, i.e., into monopoly capitalism, and under the influence of the war it has become state monopoly capitalism. We have now reached the stage of world economy that is the immediate stepping stone to socialism.

The socialist revolution that has begun in Russia is, therefore, only the beginning of the world socialist revolution. Peace and bread, the overthrow of the bourgeoisie, revolutionary means for the healing of war wounds, the complete victory of socialism—such are the aims of the struggle.

Petrograd, December 14, 1917

Written in Russian  
on December 14 (27), 1917

Signed: *Lenin*

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*Jugend-Internationale* No. 11

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Signed: *W. Lenin*

First published in Russian  
(translated from the German)  
in 1927 in the book *Transactions*  
*of the Lenin Institute*, Vol. II  
Facsimile of the first paragraph  
of the MS published in 1919  
in *Det röda Ryssland*.  
1917 7/11 1919, Stockholm

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**SPEECH ON THE NATIONALISATION  
OF THE BANKS DELIVERED AT A MEETING  
OF THE ALL-RUSSIA  
CENTRAL EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE  
DECEMBER 14 (27), 1917**

**MINUTES**

The last speaker tried to intimidate us by asserting that we are heading towards an abyss, towards certain destruction. There is, however, nothing new for us in this intimidation. *Novaya Zhizn*, the newspaper that expresses the views of the group to which the speaker belongs, said before the October days that our revolution would bring nothing but disorders and anarchic riots. Talk about our travelling the wrong road is, therefore, a reflection of bourgeois psychology that even disinterested people cannot get rid of. (*Voice from among the internationalists*: "Demagogy!") No, that is not demagogy, it is your constant talk of the axe that is real demagogy.

The measures proposed in the decree<sup>188</sup> are only an effective way of ensuring control.

You speak of the intricacy of the machinery, of its fragility and of the involved nature of the problem—these are elementary truths that everybody is aware of. But if these truths are merely used to put a brake on all socialist undertakings, we say that anyone who takes that line is a demagogue, and a dangerous demagogue at that.

We want to begin an inventory of the vaults, but the learned specialists tell us there is nothing in them but documents and securities. Then what is there bad about representatives of the people checking them?

If what they say is true, why do those same learned specialists who criticise us not come out with it openly? Whenever the Council makes decisions they declare that they agree with us, but only in principle. This is the way of the bourgeois intelligentsia, of all conciliators, who ruin everything with their constant agreement in principle and disagreement in practice.

If you know so much about all these things and have the experience, why don't you help us, why do we meet with nothing but sabotage from you in our difficult task?

You proceed from a correct scientific theory, but for us theory forms the basis of actions to be undertaken, it gives us confidence in those actions and does not scare the life out of us. Of course it is difficult to make a beginning and we often come up against fragile things; nevertheless we have coped with them, are coping with them and shall continue to cope with them.

If book-learning were to serve no other purpose than that of hampering every new step and instilling eternal fear of the new, it would be useless.

Nobody, with the exception of the utopian socialists, has ever asserted that victory is possible without resistance, without the dictatorship of the proletariat and without seizing the old world in an iron grip.

You accepted this dictatorship in principle, but when that word is translated into Russian, called an "iron grip" and applied in practice, you warn us of the fragility and involved nature of the matter.

You stubbornly refuse to see that the iron hand that destroys also creates. It is an undoubted advantage to us to go over from principles to deeds.

To effect control we have called upon the bankers and together with them have elaborated measures that they agreed to, so that loans could be obtained under full control and properly accounted for. But there are people among the bank employees who have the interests of the people at heart and who have told us: "They are deceiving you, make haste and check their criminal activity that is directly harmful to you." And we did make haste.

We realise that this is an involved measure. None of us, even those who are trained economists, will undertake to carry it out. We shall invite the specialists who are engaged in that work, but only when we have the keys in our own hands. Then we shall even be able to draw advisers from the former millionaires. We invite anybody who wants to work as long as he does not try to reduce every revolutionary enterprise to mere words; that is something we shall not stand for. We use the words "dictatorship of the proletariat" in all seriousness and we shall effect that dictatorship.

We wanted to take the line of agreement with the banks, we gave them loans to finance factories, but they carried out sabotage on an unprecedented scale, and practical experience has forced us to adopt other measures of control.

A comrade from the Left Socialist-Revolutionaries has said that in principle they would vote for the immediate nationalisation of the banks and afterwards work out practical measures in the shortest possible time. But he was wrong in that, because our draft does not contain anything but principles. The Supreme

Economic Council is waiting to discuss them, but if the decree is not approved the banks will immediately do everything to further disrupt the economy.

The adoption of the decree is urgent, otherwise opposition and sabotage will ruin us. (*Stormy applause.*)

*Pravda* No. 216,  
December 29 (16), 1917  
and *Izvestia* No. 253,  
December 16, 1917

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## **DRAFT DECREE ON THE NATIONALISATION OF THE BANKS AND ON MEASURES NECESSARY FOR ITS IMPLEMENTATION<sup>189</sup>**

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

Similarly, the railway unions, working in conjunction with the local Soviets, shall be responsible for most vigorously combating speculation in food and mercilessly suppressing all profiteering, not hesitating to adopt revolutionary measures.

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

10. Members of the wealthy classes shall be obliged to keep all their monetary possessions in the State Bank and its branches,

or in the savings-banks, and shall be entitled to withdraw not more than 100-125 rubles a week (as shall be established by the local Soviets) for living expenses; withdrawals for the needs of production and trade shall be made only on presentation of written certificates of the organs of workers' control.

To supervise the due observance of the present law, regulations will be introduced providing for the exchange of existing currency notes for new currency notes. All the property of persons guilty of deceiving the state and the people shall be confiscated.

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

12. The trade unions and other organisations of the working people, in conjunction with the local Soviets, and with the collaboration of the most reliable persons recommended by Party and other organisations, shall form mobile groups of inspectors to supervise the implementation of the present law, to verify the quantity and quality of work performed and to bring to trial before the revolutionary courts persons guilty of violating or evading the law.

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

Written not earlier than  
December 14 (27), 1917

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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" 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 proletariat. But every *rank-and-file* worker and peasant who can read and write, who can judge people and has practical experience, is capable of *organizational* 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 roguery, 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"<sup>190</sup> 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 about socialism. For "theory, my friend, is grey, but green is the eternal tree of life".<sup>191</sup>

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 organised *practically*. These are the *practical* successes our "communes" and our worker and peasant organisers should be proud of. And this applies particularly to the organisers among the intellectuals (*particularly*, because they

are *too much, far too much* in the habit of being proud of their general instructions and resolutions).

Thousands of practical forms and methods of accounting and controlling the rich, the rogues and the idlers 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 compositors in Petrograd, particularly in the Party printing-shops, shirk their work) will be put in prison. In another place they will be put to cleaning latrines. In a third place they will be provided with “yellow tickets” after they have served their time, so that everyone shall keep an eye on them, as *harmful* persons, until they reform. In a fourth place, one out of every ten idlers will be shot on the spot. In a fifth place mixed methods may be adopted, and by probational release, for example, the rich, the bourgeois intellectuals, the rogues and 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.

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(January 6-9, 1918)

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Signed: *V. Lenin*

*Collected Works*, Vol. 26



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## DECLARATION OF RIGHTS OF THE WORKING AND EXPLOITED PEOPLE<sup>192</sup>

The Constituent Assembly resolves:

1. 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.
11. 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 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,<sup>193</sup> commencing the evacuation of troops from Persia,<sup>194</sup> and proclaiming freedom of self-determination for Armenia.<sup>195</sup>

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.

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## PEOPLE FROM ANOTHER WORLD

"Friends, I have lost a day," says an old Latin tag. One cannot help but recall it when one remembers how the fifth of January<sup>196</sup> was lost.

After real, lively, Soviet work among workers and peasants engaged on *real tasks*, clearing the forest and uprooting the stumps of landowner and capitalist exploitation, we were suddenly transported to "another world", to arrivals from another world, from the camp of the bourgeoisie with its willing or unwilling, conscious or unconscious champions, with its hangers-on, servants and advocates. Out of the world in which the working people and their Soviet organisation were conducting the struggle against the exploiters we were transported to the world of saccharine phrases, of slick, empty declamations, of promises and more promises based, as before, on conciliation with the capitalists.

It is as though history had accidentally, or by mistake, turned its clock back, and January 1918 for a single day became May or June 1917!

It was terrible! To be transported from the world of living people into the company of corpses, to breathe the odour of the dead, to hear those mummies with their empty "social" Louis Blanc phrases, to hear Chernov and Tsereteli, was simply intolerable.

Comrade Skvortsov was right when he rapped out to the Right Socialist-Revolutionaries these two or three brief phrases, simple, calm and at the same time ruthlessly cutting: "Between us everything is over. We are carrying the October Revolution against the bourgeoisie to its culmination. We and you are on different sides of the barricades."

In reply to that came a torrent of over-smooth, empty phrases from Chernov and Tsereteli that carefully avoided only (only!) one question—that of Soviet power, of the October Revolution. "Let there be no civil war, let there be no sabotage," said Chernov, invoking the revolution in the name of the Right Socialist-

Revolutionaries. And the latter who for six months, from June 1917 to January 1918, had been sleeping like corpses in their coffins, stood up and clapped furiously and persistently. It is really so easy and so pleasant to settle the problems of the revolution by an incantation. "Let there be no civil war, let there be no sabotage, let everybody recognise the Constituent Assembly." In what way does that differ, in essence, from the invocation: "Let the workers and capitalists make peace"? Not in any way. The Kaledins and Ryabushinskys together with their imperialist friends in all countries will not disappear or change their policy because of the invocations of the mealy-mouthed Chernov or because of Tsereteli's boring precepts that seem to have been taken from a misunderstood, poorly read and misinterpreted book.

Either conquer the Kaledins and Ryabushinskys or give up the revolution. Either victory over the exploiters in the civil war, or the collapse of the revolution. Such has been the issue in *all* revolutions, in the English revolution in the seventeenth century, in the French in the eighteenth century and in the German in the nineteenth century. How could it be thought that the Russian revolution in the twentieth century would *not* face that issue? How can wolves become lambs?

Tsereteli and Chernov do not show a grain of an idea, not the slightest desire to accept the fact of the class struggle that has become civil war, not by chance, not suddenly, not because of somebody's caprice or ill will, but inevitably, in the long process of revolutionary development.

It was a hard, boring and irksome day in the elegant rooms of the Taurida Palace whose very aspect differs from that of Smolny approximately in the same way as elegant, but moribund bourgeois parliamentarism differs from the plain, proletarian Soviet apparatus that is in many ways still disorderly and imperfect but is living and vital. There, in that old world of bourgeois parliamentarism, the leaders of hostile classes and hostile groups of the bourgeoisie did their *fencing*. Here, in the new world of the proletarian and peasant, socialist state, the oppressed classes are making clumsy, inefficient. . . .\*

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\* Here the manuscript breaks off.—Ed.



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## DRAFT DECREE ON THE DISSOLUTION OF THE CONSTITUENT ASSEMBLY<sup>197</sup>

At its very inception, the Russian revolution produced the Soviets of Workers', Soldiers' and Peasants' Deputies as the only mass organisation of all the working and exploited classes capable of leading the struggle of these classes for their complete political and economic emancipation.

During the whole of the initial period of the Russian revolution the Soviets multiplied in number, grew and gained strength and were taught by their own experience to discard the illusions of compromise with the bourgeoisie and to realise the deceptive nature of the forms of the bourgeois-democratic parliamentary system; they arrived by practical experience at the conclusion that the emancipation of the oppressed classes was impossible unless they broke with these forms and with every kind of compromise. The break came with the October Revolution, which transferred the entire power to the Soviets.

The Constituent Assembly, elected on the basis of electoral lists drawn up prior to the October Revolution, was an expression of the old relation of political forces which existed when power was held by the compromisers and the Cadets. When the people at that time voted for the candidates of the Socialist-Revolutionary Party, they were not in a position to choose between the Right Socialist-Revolutionaries, the supporters of the bourgeoisie, and the Left Socialist-Revolutionaries, the supporters of socialism. The Constituent Assembly, therefore, which was to have crowned the bourgeois parliamentary republic, was bound to become an obstacle in the path of the October Revolution and Soviet power.

The October Revolution, by giving power to the Soviets, and through the Soviets to the working and exploited classes, aroused the desperate resistance of the exploiters, and in the crushing of this resistance it fully revealed itself as the beginning of the socialist revolution. The working classes learned by experience that the old bourgeois parliamentary system had outlived its

purpose and was absolutely incompatible with the aim of achieving socialism, and that not national institutions, but only class institutions (such as the Soviets) were capable of overcoming the resistance of the propertied classes and of laying the foundations of socialist society. To relinquish the sovereign power of the Soviets, to relinquish the Soviet Republic won by the people, for the sake of the bourgeois parliamentary system and the Constituent Assembly, would now be a step backwards and would cause the collapse of the October workers' and peasants' revolution.

Owing to the above-mentioned circumstances, the Party of Right Socialist-Revolutionaries, the party of Kerensky, Avksentyev and Chernov, obtained the majority in the Constituent Assembly which met on January 5. Naturally, this party refused to discuss the absolutely clear, precise and unambiguous proposal of the supreme organ of Soviet power, the Central Executive Committee of the Soviets, to recognise the programme of Soviet power, to recognise the Declaration of Rights of the Working and Exploited People, to recognise the October Revolution and Soviet power. By this action the Constituent Assembly severed all ties with the Soviet Republic of Russia. It was inevitable that the Bolshevik group and the Left Socialist-Revolutionary group, who now patently constitute the overwhelming majority in the Soviets and enjoy the confidence of the workers and the majority of the peasants, should withdraw from such a Constituent Assembly.

The Right Socialist-Revolutionary and Menshevik parties are in fact carrying on outside the Constituent Assembly a most desperate struggle against Soviet power, calling openly in their press for its overthrow and describing as arbitrary and unlawful the crushing of the resistance of the exploiters by the forces of the working classes, which is essential in the interests of emancipation from exploitation. They are defending the saboteurs, the servants of capital, and are going as far as undisguised calls to terrorism, which certain "unidentified groups" have already begun. It is obvious that under such circumstances the remaining part of the Constituent Assembly could only serve as a screen for the struggle of the counter-revolutionaries to overthrow Soviet power.

Accordingly, the Central Executive Committee resolves that the Constituent Assembly is hereby dissolved.

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## ON THE HISTORY OF THE QUESTION OF THE UNFORTUNATE PEACE

It might be argued that this is no time to deal with history. Certainly, this kind of assertion would be permissible if a particular question from the past were not inseparably and directly connected in practice with the present. The question of the unfortunate peace, the exceptionally harsh peace is, however, such a burning question that it calls for elucidation. I am therefore publishing my theses on this subject that were read at a meeting of about sixty of the leading Petrograd Party functionaries on January 8, 1918.

Here are these theses:

January 7, 1918

### THESES

#### ON THE QUESTION OF THE IMMEDIATE CONCLUSION OF A SEPARATE AND ANNEXATIONIST PEACE<sup>198</sup>

1. The position of the Russian revolution at the present moment is such that nearly all the workers and the vast majority of the peasants undoubtedly side with Soviet power and the socialist revolution which it has started. To that extent the socialist revolution in Russia is assured.

2. At the same time, the civil war, provoked by the frantic resistance of the wealthy classes, who realise full well that they are faced with the last and decisive fight for the preservation of private ownership of the land and means of production, has not yet reached its climax. The victory of Soviet power in this war is assured, but some time must inevitably elapse, no little exertion of effort will inevitably be required, a certain period of acute economic dislocation and chaos, which accompany all wars, and civil war in particular, is inevitable, before the resistance of the bourgeoisie is crushed.

3. Furthermore, this resistance, in its less active and non-

military forms—sabotage, the hire of declassed elements and agents of the bourgeoisie, who worm their way into the ranks of the socialists in order to ruin their cause, and so on and so forth—has proved so stubborn and capable of assuming such diversified forms, that the fight against it will inevitably require some more time, and, in its main forms, is hardly likely to end until several months have passed. And unless this passive and covert resistance of the bourgeoisie and its supporters is definitely crushed, the socialist revolution cannot succeed.

4. Lastly, the organisational problems of the socialist transformation of Russia are so immense and difficult that their solution—in view of the numerous petty-bourgeois fellow-travellers of the socialist proletariat, and of the latter's low cultural level—will also require a fairly long time.

5. All these circumstances taken together are such as to make it perfectly clear that for the success of socialism in Russia a certain amount of time, several months at least, will be necessary, during which the hands of the socialist government must be absolutely free to achieve victory over the bourgeoisie first in our own country and to launch far-reaching mass organisational work on a wide scale.

6. The position of the socialist revolution in Russia must form the basis of any definition of the international tasks of our Soviet power, for the international situation in the fourth year of the war is such that it is quite impossible to predict the probable moment of outbreak of revolution and overthrow of any of the European imperialist governments (including the German). That the socialist revolution in Europe must come, and will come, is beyond doubt. All our hopes for the *final* victory of socialism are founded on this certainty and on this scientific prognosis. Our propaganda activities in general, and the organisation of fraternisation in particular, must be intensified and extended. It would be a mistake, however, to base the tactics of the Russian socialist government on attempts to determine whether or not the European, and especially the German, socialist revolution will take place in the next six months (or some such brief period). Inasmuch as it is quite impossible to determine this, all such attempts, objectively speaking, would be nothing but a blind gamble.

7. The peace negotiations in Brest-Litovsk have by now—January 7, 1918—made it perfectly clear that the war party has undoubtedly gained the upper hand in the German Government (which has the other governments of the Quadruple Alliance at its beck and call) and has virtually already presented Russia with an ultimatum (and it is to be expected, most certainly to be expected, that any day now it will be presented formally). The



ultimatum is as follows: either the continuation of the war, or a peace with annexations, i.e., peace on condition that we surrender all the territory we have occupied, while the Germans retain *all* the territory they have occupied and impose upon us an indemnity (outwardly disguised as payment for the maintenance of prisoners)—an indemnity of about three thousand million *rubles*, payable over a number of years.

8. The socialist government of Russia is faced with the question—a question whose solution brooks no delay—of whether to accept this peace with annexations now, or to immediately wage a revolutionary war. In fact, no middle course is possible. No further postponement can now be achieved, for we have *already* done everything possible and impossible to deliberately protract the negotiations.

9. On examining the arguments in favour of an immediate revolutionary war, the first argument we encounter is that a separate peace at this juncture would, objectively speaking, be an agreement with the German imperialists, an “imperialistic deal”, and so forth, and that, consequently, such a peace would mean a complete break with the fundamental principles of proletarian internationalism.

This argument, however, is obviously incorrect. Workers who lose a strike and sign terms for the resumption of work which are unfavourable to them and favourable to the capitalists, do not betray socialism. The only people who betray socialism are those who secure advantages for a section of the workers in exchange for profit to the capitalists; only such agreements are impermissible in principle.

He betrays socialism who calls the war with German imperialism a defensive and just war, but actually receives support from the Anglo-French imperialists, and conceals secret treaties concluded with them from the people. He does not in the least betray socialism who, without concealing anything from the people, and without concluding any secret treaties with the imperialists, agrees to sign terms of peace which are unfavourable to the weak nation and favourable to the imperialists of one group, if at that moment there is no strength to continue the war.

10. Another argument in favour of immediate war is that, by concluding peace, we objectively become agents of German imperialism, for we afford it the opportunity to release troops from our front, we surrender to it millions of prisoners of war, and so on. But this argument too is manifestly incorrect, for a revolutionary war at the present juncture would, objectively speaking, make us agents of Anglo-French imperialism, by providing it with forces which would promote its aims. The British bluntly offered our Commander-in-Chief, Krylenko, one hundred

rubles per month for every one of our soldiers provided we continued the war. Even if we did not take a single kopek from the Anglo-French, we nevertheless would be helping them, objectively speaking, by diverting part of the German army.

From that point of view, in neither case would we be entirely escaping some sort of imperialist bond, and it is obvious that it is impossible to escape it completely without overthrowing world imperialism. The correct conclusion from this is that the moment a socialist government triumphed in any one country, questions must be decided, not from the point of view of whether this or that imperialism is preferable, but exclusively from the point of view of the conditions which best make for the development and consolidation of the socialist revolution which has already begun.

In other words, the underlying principle of our tactics must not be, which of the two imperialisms it is more profitable to aid at this juncture, but rather, how the socialist revolution can be most firmly and reliably ensured the possibility of consolidating itself, or, at least, of maintaining itself in one country until it is joined by other countries.

11. It is said that the German Social-Democratic opponents of the war have now become "defeatists" and are requesting us not to yield to German imperialism. But we recognised defeatism only in respect of *one's own* imperialist bourgeoisie, and we always discountenanced victory over an alien imperialism, victory attained in formal or actual alliance with a "friendly" imperialism, as a method impermissible in principle and generally wrong.

This argument is therefore only a modification of the previous one. If the German Left Social-Democrats were proposing that we delay concluding a separate peace for a *definite* period, and guaranteed revolutionary action in Germany within this period, the question *might* assume a different aspect for us. Far from saying this, however, the German Lefts formally declare: "Hold out as long as you can, but decide the question from the point of view of the state of affairs in the *Russian* socialist revolution, for we cannot promise you anything positive regarding the German revolution."

12. It is said that in a number of Party statements we actually "promised" a revolutionary war, and that by concluding a separate peace we would be going back on our word.

That is not true. We said that in the era of imperialism a socialist government *had* to "*prepare for and wage*" a revolutionary war\*; we said this in order to combat abstract pacifism and the theory that "defence of the fatherland" must be completely rejected in the era of imperialism, and, lastly to combat the

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\* See *Collected Works*, Vol. 21, p. 404.—Ed.

purely selfish instincts of a part of the soldiers, but we never gave any pledge to start a revolutionary war without considering whether it is possible to wage it at a given moment.

Unquestionably, even at this juncture we must *prepare for* a revolutionary war. We are carrying out this promise, as we have, in general, carried out all our promises that could be carried out at once: we annulled the secret treaties, offered all peoples a fair peace, and several times did our best to drag out peace negotiations so as to give other peoples a chance to join us.

But the question whether it is possible to carry on a revolutionary war *now, immediately*, must be decided exclusively from the point of view of whether material conditions permit it, and of the interests of the socialist revolution which has already begun.

13. Summing up the arguments in favour of an immediate revolutionary war, we have to conclude that such a policy might perhaps answer the human yearning for the beautiful, dramatic and striking, but that it would totally disregard the objective balance of class forces and material factors at the present stage of the socialist revolution now under way.

14. There can be no doubt that our army is absolutely in no condition at the present moment, and will not be for the next few weeks (and probably for the next few months), to beat back a German offensive successfully; firstly, owing to the extreme fatigue and exhaustion of the majority of the soldiers, coupled with the incredible chaos in the matter of food supply, replacement of the overfatigued, etc.; secondly, owing to the utter unfitness of the horses and the consequent inevitable ruin of our artillery; and thirdly, owing to the absolute impossibility of defending the coastline from Riga to Revel, which affords the enemy a very certain chance of seizing the rest of Lifland, and then Estland,<sup>199</sup> and of outflanking a large part of our forces, and finally, of capturing Petrograd.

15. Further, there is not the slightest doubt that the peasant majority of our army would at the present juncture unreservedly declare in favour of a peace with annexations and not in favour of an immediate revolutionary war; the socialist reorganisation of the army, the merging of the Red Guard detachments with it, and so on, have only just begun.

With the army completely democratised, to carry on war in defiance of the wishes of the majority of the soldiers would be a reckless gamble, while to create a really staunch and ideologically stable socialist workers' and peasants' army will, at the very least, require months and months.

16. The poor peasants in Russia are capable of supporting the socialist revolution led by the working class, but they are not capable of agreeing to fight a serious revolutionary war immedi-



ately, at the present juncture. To ignore the objective balance of class forces on this issue would be a fatal error.

17. Consequently, the situation at present with regard to a revolutionary war is as follows:

If the German revolution were to break out and triumph in the coming three or four months, the tactics of an immediate revolutionary war might perhaps not ruin our socialist revolution.

If, however, the German revolution does not occur in the next few months, the course of events, if the war is continued, will inevitably be such that grave defeats will compel Russia to conclude an even more disadvantageous separate peace, a peace, moreover, which would be concluded, not by a socialist government, but by some other (for example, a bloc of the bourgeois Rada and Chernov's followers, or something similar). For the peasant army, which is exhausted to the limit by the war, will after the very first defeats—and very likely within a matter of weeks, and not of months—overthrow the socialist workers' government.

18. This being the state of affairs, it would be absolutely impermissible tactics to stake the fate of the socialist revolution, which has already begun in Russia, merely on the chance that the German revolution may begin in the immediate future, within a matter of weeks. Such tactics would be a reckless gamble. We have no right to take such risks.

19. The German revolution will by no means be made more difficult of accomplishment as far as its objective premises are concerned, if we conclude a separate peace. Probably chauvinist intoxication will weaken it for a time, but Germany's position will remain extremely grave, the war with Britain and America will be a protracted one, and aggressive imperialism will be fully and completely exposed on both sides. A socialist Soviet Republic in Russia will stand as a living example to the peoples of all countries, and the propaganda and revolutionising effect of this example will be immense. There—the bourgeois system and a fully exposed predatory war between two groups of marauders. Here—peace and a socialist Soviet Republic.

20. In concluding a separate peace we free ourselves *as much as is possible at the present moment* from both hostile imperialist groups, we take advantage of their mutual enmity and warfare which hamper concerted action on their part against us, and for a certain period have our hands free to advance and to consolidate the socialist revolution. The reorganisation of Russia on the basis of the dictatorship of the proletariat, and the nationalisation of the banks and large-scale industry, coupled with *exchange of products* in kind between the towns and the small-peasant consumers' societies, is quite feasible economically, provided we are assured a few months in which to work in peace. And such a



reorganisation will render socialism invincible both in Russia and all over the world, and at the same time will create a solid economic basis for a mighty workers' and peasants' Red Army.

21. A really revolutionary war at this juncture would be a war waged by a socialist republic against the bourgeois countries, with the aim—an aim clearly defined and fully approved by the socialist army—of overthrowing the bourgeoisie in other countries. However, we *obviously* cannot set ourselves this aim at the *present* moment. Objectively, we would be fighting now for the liberation of Poland, Lifland and Courland. But no Marxist, without renouncing the principles of Marxism and of socialism generally, can deny that the interests of socialism are higher than the interests of the right of nations to self-determination. Our socialist republic has done all it could, and continues to do all it can to give effect to the right to self-determination of Finland, the Ukraine, etc. But if the concrete situation is such that the existence of the socialist republic is being imperilled at the present moment on account of the violation of the right to self-determination of several nations (Poland, Lifland, Courland, etc.), naturally the preservation of the socialist republic has the higher claim.

Consequently, whoever says, "We cannot sign a humiliating, atrocious, etc., peace, betray Poland, and so forth", does not realise that by concluding peace on the condition that Poland is liberated, he would only be strengthening German imperialism against Britain, Belgium, Serbia and other countries *still further*. Peace on the condition of the liberation of Poland, Lifland and Courland would be a "patriotic" peace *from the point of view of Russia*, but would by no means cease to be a peace *with the annexationists*, with the German imperialists.

January 21, 1918. The following should be added to the above theses:

22. The mass strikes in Austria and Germany, and, subsequently, the formation of the Soviets of Workers' Deputies in Berlin and Vienna, and, lastly, beginning from January 18-20, armed clashes and street fighting in Berlin—all this should be regarded as evidence of the fact that the revolution in Germany has begun.

This fact offers us the opportunity, for the time being, of further delaying and dragging out the peace negotiations.

Written—the Theses on January 7 (20);  
Thesis 22 on January 21 (February 3);  
introduction prior to February 11 (24),  
1918

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Signed: *N. Lenin*

*Collected Works*, Vol. 26

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## AFTERWORD TO THE THESES ON THE QUESTION OF THE IMMEDIATE CONCLUSION OF A SEPARATE AND ANNEXATIONIST PEACE

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I read the above Theses to a small private meeting of Party functionaries on January 8, 1918. The discussion on them showed three opinions in the Party on this question—about a half those present spoke in favour of revolutionary war (this was sometimes called the “Moscow” point of view because the Moscow Regional Bureau of our Party<sup>200</sup> adopted it earlier than other organisations); then about a quarter were for Comrade Trotsky who proposed to “declare the cessation of hostilities, demobilise the army, send the soldiers home but refrain from signing a treaty”, and, lastly, about a quarter supported me.

The state of affairs now obtaining in the Party reminds me very strongly of the situation in the summer of 1907 when the overwhelming majority of the Bolsheviks favoured the boycott of the Third Duma and I stood side by side with Dan in favour of participation and was subjected to furious attacks for my opportunism. Objectively, the present issue is a complete analogy; as then, the majority of the Party functionaries, proceeding from the very best revolutionary motives and the best Party traditions, allow themselves to be carried away by a “flash” slogan and *do not grasp the new socio-economic and political situation*, do not take into consideration *the change in the conditions* that demands a speedy and abrupt change in tactics. The essence of my argument, today as then, is to make clear that Marxism demands the consideration of objective conditions and their changes, that the question must be presented concretely as applicable to those conditions, that the most significant change that has occurred is the foundation of the Russian Soviet Republic, and the preservation of the republic that has already begun the socialist revolution is most important to us and to the *international socialist movement*; that at the moment the slogan of revolutionary war proclaimed by Russia would either be an empty phrase and an unsupported demonstration, or would be tantamount, objectively, to falling into the trap set for us by the imperialists, who wish to *inveigle* us into continuing the

*imperialist* war while we are still a weak unit, so that the young Soviet Republic might be *crushed* as cheaply as possible.

"I stand by Lenin's old position," exclaimed one young Muscovite (youth is one of the greatest virtues distinguishing that group of speakers). And that same speaker reproached me for repeating the old arguments of the defencists about the improbability of a revolution in Germany.

The whole trouble is that the Muscovites want to stick to the old *tactical* position, and stubbornly refuse to see the *change* that has taken place, the *new objective* situation that has arisen.

The Muscovites, in their zealous repetition of old slogans, have not even taken into consideration the fact that we Bolsheviks have now all become defencists. Having overthrown the bourgeoisie, having denounced and exposed the secret treaties, having proposed peace to all peoples, actually. . . .\*

Written between January 8  
and 11 (21 and 24), 1918

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in *Lenin Miscellany XI*

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\* Here the manuscript breaks off.—Ed.

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# **THIRD ALL-RUSSIA CONGRESS OF SOVIETS OF WORKERS', SOLDIERS' AND PEASANTS' DEPUTIES<sup>201</sup>**

*JANUARY 10-18 (23-31), 1918*

## **REPORT ON THE ACTIVITIES OF THE COUNCIL OF PEOPLE'S COMMISSARS JANUARY 11 (24)**

Comrades, on behalf of the Council of People's Commissars I must submit to you a report of its activities for the two months and fifteen days that have elapsed since the establishment of Soviet power and the Soviet Government in Russia.

Two months and fifteen days—that is only five days more than the preceding workers' power lasted and ruled over a whole country, or over the exploiters and the capitalists, the power of the Paris workers at the time of the Paris Commune of 1871.

We must first of all remember this workers' power, we must cast our minds back and compare it with the Soviet power that was formed on October 25. And if we compare the preceding dictatorship of the proletariat with the present one we shall see at once what a gigantic stride the international working-class movement has made, and in what an immeasurably more favourable position Soviet power in Russia finds itself, notwithstanding the incredibly complicated conditions of war and economic ruin.

After retaining power for two months and ten days, the workers of Paris, who for the first time in history established the Commune, the embryo of Soviet power, perished at the hands of the French Cadets, Mensheviks and Right Socialist-Revolutionaries of a Kaledin type. The French workers had to pay an unprecedentedly heavy price for the first experience of workers' government, the meaning and purpose of which the overwhelming majority of the peasants in France did not know.

We find ourselves in immeasurably more favourable circumstances because the Russian soldiers, workers and peasants were able to create the Soviet Government, an apparatus which informed the whole world of their methods of struggle. It is this that puts the Russian workers and peasants in a position that differs from the power of the Paris proletariat. They had no apparatus, the country did not understand them; we were immediately able to rely on Soviet power, and that is why we never



doubted that Soviet power enjoys the sympathy and the warmest and most devoted support of the overwhelming majority of the people, and that therefore Soviet power is invincible.

Those who were sceptical of Soviet power and frequently, either consciously or unconsciously, sold and betrayed it for compromise with the capitalists and the imperialists, raised a deafening clamour about the power of the proletariat alone not being able to be maintained in Russia. As if any Bolsheviks or their supporters forgot even for a moment that in Russia only that power could last for any length of time that would be able to unite the working class and the majority of the peasants, all the working and exploited classes, in a single, inseparably interconnected force fighting against the landowners and the bourgeoisie.

We never doubted that only the alliance of the workers and the poor peasants, the semi-proletarians, mentioned in our Party Programme, can, in Russia, embrace the majority of the population and ensure firm support for the government. And after October 25 we were immediately able, in the course of several weeks, to overcome all difficulties and establish a government on the basis of this firm alliance.

Yes, comrades! When the Socialist-Revolutionary Party, in its old form—when the peasants did not yet understand who in this party were real advocates of socialism—put forward the slogan of equalitarian land tenure, without caring who was to put it through, whether it was to be effected in alliance with the bourgeoisie or not, we branded that as a fraud. And this section, which has now realised that the people are not with it and that it is a bubble, claimed that it could carry out equalitarian land tenure in alliance with the bourgeoisie. In this lay the basic fraud. And when the Russian revolution presented an example of collaboration between the working people and the bourgeoisie, in the greatest moment in the life of the people; when the war had been ruining the people and dooming millions to death from starvation and its consequences showed what compromise meant in practice; when the Soviets themselves experienced it and felt it after having passed through the school of compromise, it became obvious that there was a sound, virile and great socialist core in the teachings of those who wanted to unite the working section of the peasants with the great socialist movement of the workers of the whole world.

And as soon as this became a clear and distinct practical question to the peasants, something happened of which no one had any doubt, as has now been proved by the Peasants' Soviets and Congresses: when the time came to implement socialism, the peasants were able to see clearly these two main political lines—alliance with the bourgeoisie, or alliance with the working people. They then realised that the party which expressed the real aims

and interests of the peasants was the Left Socialist-Revolutionary Party. And when we concluded our government alliance with this party, we, from the very outset, arranged it so that the alliance rested on the clearest and most obvious principles. If the peasants of Russia want to socialise the land in alliance with the workers who will nationalise the banks and establish workers' control, then they are our loyal colleagues, our most loyal and valuable allies. Comrades, no socialist would refuse to admit the obvious truth that between socialism and capitalism there lies a long, more or less difficult transitional period of the dictatorship of the proletariat, and that the forms this period will take will be determined to a large extent by whether small or big ownership, small- or large-scale farming, predominates. It goes without saying that the transition to socialism in Estland, that small country in which the whole population is literate, and which consists of large-scale farms, cannot be the same as the transition to socialism in Russia, which is mainly a petty-bourgeois country. This must be taken into account.

Every politically-conscious socialist says that socialism cannot be imposed upon the peasants by force and that we must count only on the power of example and on the mass of the peasants assimilating day-to-day experience. How would the peasants prefer to pass to socialism? This is the problem which now confronts the Russian peasants in practice. How can they support the socialist proletariat and begin the transition to socialism? The peasants have already tackled this transition, and we have complete confidence in them.

The alliance we concluded with the Left Socialist-Revolutionaries is built on a firm basis and is growing stronger and stronger by the hour. At first we on the Council of People's Commissars feared that factional struggle would hinder the work, but now, after the experience of two months' work together, I must say definitely that on the majority of questions we arrive at unanimous decisions.

We know that only when experience has shown the peasants, for example, the kind of exchange there must be between town and country they will themselves, from below, on the basis of their own experience, establish their own connections. On the other hand, the experience of the Civil War has demonstrated to the peasants that there is no other road to socialism except the dictatorship of the proletariat and the ruthless suppression of the rule of the exploiters. (*Applause.*)

Comrades, every time we touch upon this theme, at the present meeting, or in the Central Executive Committee, I, from time to time, hear from the Right side of the meeting the exclamation "Dictator!" Yes, "when we were socialists" everyone recognised

the dictatorship of the proletariat; they even wrote about it in their programmes, they were indignant at the widespread false idea that it was possible to persuade and prove to the population that the working people ought not to be exploited, that this was sinful and disgraceful, and that once people were persuaded of this there would be paradise on earth. No, this utopian notion was smashed in theory long ago, and now our task is to smash it in practice.

We must not depict socialism as if socialists will bring it to us on a plate all nicely dressed. That will never happen. Not a single problem of the class struggle has ever been solved in history except by violence. When violence is exercised by the working people, by the mass of exploited against the exploiters—then we are for it! (*Stormy applause.*) And we are not in the least disturbed by the howls of those people who consciously or unconsciously side with the bourgeoisie, or who are so frightened by them, so oppressed by their rule, that they have been flung into consternation at the sight of this unprecedentedly acute class struggle, have burst into tears, forgotten all their premises and demand that we perform the impossible, that we socialists achieve complete victory without fighting against the exploiters and without suppressing their resistance.

As far back as the summer of 1917 the exploiters understood that it is a matter of “the last and decisive battles”, and that if the Soviets came to power the last bulwark of the bourgeoisie, their principal source for suppressing the working people, would be torn out of their hands.

That is why the October Revolution began this systematic and unswerving struggle to compel the exploiters to cease their resistance and to become reconciled to the idea, no matter how difficult that may be for even the best of them, that the rule of the exploiting classes has gone never to return, that from now on the ordinary peasant will give the orders and that they must obey, however unpleasant that may be.

This will entail many difficulties, sacrifices and mistakes; it is something new, unprecedented in history and cannot be studied from books. It goes without saying that this is the greatest and most difficult transition that has ever occurred in history; but there is no other way to make this great transition and the fact that Soviet power has been established in Russia has shown that it is the revolutionary people who are richest of all in revolutionary experience—when millions come to the assistance of a few score of Party people—the people who actually take their exploiters by the throat.

That is why civil war has acquired predominance in Russia at the present time. Against us is advanced the slogan: “Down with civil war!” I happened to hear this shouted from the Right benches



of the so-called Constituent Assembly. Down with civil war. . . . What does that mean? Civil war against whom? Against Kornilov, Kerensky and Ryabushinsky who are spending millions to bribe vagabonds and officials? Against the saboteurs who, consciously or unconsciously, are accepting these bribes? Undoubtedly, among the latter there are ignorant people who accept these bribes unconsciously, because they cannot even imagine that the old bourgeois system can and must be destroyed to the very foundation and that an entirely new, socialist society can and must be built up on its ruins. Undoubtedly there are people like that, but does that alter the situation?

That is why the representatives of the propertied classes are staking their all, that is why these are the last and decisive battles for them, and they would stop at no crime in their efforts to smash Soviet power. Does not the whole history of socialism, particularly of French socialism, which is so rich in revolutionary striving, show us that when the working people themselves take power in their hands the ruling classes resort to unheard-of crimes and shootings if it is a matter of protecting their money-bags. When these people talk to us about civil war we answer them with ridicule; but when they spread their slogans among the students we say—you are deceiving them!

The class struggle did not accidentally assume its latest form, the form in which the exploited class takes all the means of power in its own hands in order to completely destroy its class enemy, the bourgeoisie, in order to sweep from the land of Russia not only the bureaucrats, but also the landowners, as the Russian peasants in several gubernias have done.

We are told that the sabotage with which the bureaucrats and the landowners met the Council of People's Commissars is an indication of their unwillingness to assist socialism, as if it were not clear that the whole of this gang of capitalists and swindlers, vagabonds and saboteurs, represent a single gang bribed by the bourgeoisie and resisting the power of the working people. Of course, those who thought that it was possible to leap straight from capitalism to socialism, or those who imagined that it was possible to convince the majority of the population that this could be achieved through the medium of the Constituent Assembly—those who believed in this bourgeois-democratic fable, can go on blithely believing it, but let them not complain if life destroys this fable.

Those who have come to understand what the class struggle means, what the sabotage organised by the bureaucrats means, know that we cannot leap straight into socialism. There remained the bourgeoisie, capitalists, who hope to restore their rule and who defend their money-bags. There remained vagabonds, a section of corrupt people who are absolutely downtrodden by capitalism



and who are unable to grasp the idea of the proletarian struggle. There remained office employees, bureaucrats who believe that it is in the interests of society to protect the old system. How can anyone imagine that the victory of socialism can come about except by the complete collapse of these sections, except by the complete destruction of the Russian and European bourgeoisie? Do you think the Ryabushinskys do not understand their class interests? It is they who are paying the saboteurs not to work. Or do they operate disunited? Are they not operating in conjunction with the French, British and American capitalists by buying up securities? It remains to be seen whether they will get much out of these transactions. Will not the heaps of securities they are now buying up turn out to be merely useless heaps of scrap-paper?

That is why, comrades, our reply to all the reproaches and accusations hurled against us of employing terror, dictatorship, civil war, although we are far from having resorted to real terror, because we are stronger than they—we have the Soviets, it will be sufficient if we nationalise the banks and confiscate their property in order to compel them to submit—our reply to all these charges of instigating civil war is: yes, we have openly proclaimed what no other government has been able to proclaim. The first government in the world that can speak openly of civil war is the government of the workers, peasants and soldiers. Yes, we have started and we are waging civil war against the exploiters. The more straightforwardly we say this, the more quickly will this war come to an end, the more quickly will all the working and exploited people understand us, will understand that Soviet power is fighting for the real, vital cause of all the working people.

Comrades, I do not think we shall achieve victory in this struggle quickly, but we are very rich in experience: we have managed to achieve a great deal in the course of two months. We have experienced Kerensky's attempt to launch an attack against Soviet power and the complete failure of this attempt. We have experienced the organisation of power of the Ukrainian Kerenskys—the struggle has not yet ended there, but to anyone who has watched it, who has heard at least a few truthful reports from representatives of Soviet power, it is obvious that the bourgeois elements of the Ukrainian Rada are living their last days. (*Applause.*) There cannot be the slightest doubt about the victory of Soviet power, of the Ukrainian People's Republic, over the Ukrainian bourgeois Rada.

As for the struggle against Kaledin—here, indeed, everything rests on the basis of the exploitation of the working people, on the basis of the bourgeois dictatorship—if there is any social basis at all against Soviet power. The Peasants' Congress has clearly demonstrated that Kaledin's cause is hopeless; the working people

are against him. The experience of Soviet power, propaganda by deeds, by the example of the Soviet organisations, is having its effect, and Kaledin's stronghold in the Don Region is now collapsing—not so much externally as internally.

That is why, looking at the civil war front in Russia, we can say with complete conviction: here the victory of Soviet power is complete and absolutely assured. And, comrades, the victory of Soviet power is being achieved because right from the outset it began to realise the age-old aspirations of socialism, while consistently and determinedly relying on the people and considering it to be its duty to awaken the most oppressed and down-trodden sections of society to active life, to raise them to socialist creative work. That is why the old army with its barrack-square drilling and torture of soldiers has retreated into the past. It has been thrown on the scrap-heap, nothing remains of it. (*Applause.*) The complete democratisation of the army has been carried out.

Permit me to relate an incident that occurred when I was in the carriage of a Finnish train and I overheard a conversation between several Finns and an old woman. I could not take part in the conversation because I cannot speak Finnish. But one of the Finns turned to me and said: "Do you know the curious thing this old woman said? She said, 'Now there is no need to fear the man with the gun. I was in the woods one day and I met a man with a gun, and instead of taking the firewood I had collected from me, he added some more'."

When I heard that, I said to myself: let the hundreds of newspapers, no matter what they call themselves—socialist, near-socialist, etc.—let hundreds of extremely loud voices shout at us, "dictators", "violators", and similar words. We know that another voice is now rising from among the people; they say to themselves: now we need not be afraid of the man with the gun because he protects the working people and will be ruthless in suppressing the rule of the exploiters. (*Applause.*) This is what the people have felt, and that is why the propaganda that simple and uneducated people are carrying on when they relate how the Red Guards are turning their might against the exploiters—that propaganda is invincible. It will spread among millions and tens of millions, and will firmly create what the French Commune of the nineteenth century began to create, but was able to continue for only a very short time because it was wrecked by the bourgeoisie—it will create a socialist Red Army, something all socialists have always aimed at, i.e., the general arming of the people. It will create new Red Guard cadres that will enable us to train the working people for the armed struggle.

It used to be said about Russia that she would be unable to fight because she would have no officers. But we must not forget what

these very bourgeois officers said as they observed the workers fighting against Kerensky and Kaledin. They said: "The Red Guards' technical level is very low, but if these people had a little training they would have an invincible army." This is because, for the first time in the history of the world struggle, elements have entered the army which are not the vehicles of bureaucratic knowledge, but are guided by the idea of the struggle to emancipate the exploited. And when the work we have commenced is completed, the Russian Soviet Republic will be invincible. (*Applause.*)

Comrades, the road which Soviet power has traversed insofar as concerns the socialist army has also been traversed insofar as concerns another instrument of the ruling classes, an even more subtle, an even more complicated instrument—the bourgeois court, which claimed to maintain order, but which, as a matter of fact, was a blind, subtle instrument for the ruthless suppression of the exploited, and an instrument for protecting the interests of the money-bags. Soviet power acted in the way all the proletarian revolutions had shown that it must act; it immediately threw the old court on to the scrap-heap. Let them shout that we, without reforming the old court, immediately threw it on to the scrap-heap. By that we paved the way for a real people's court, and not so much by the force of repressive measures as by massive example, the authority of the working people, without formalities; we transformed the court from an instrument of exploitation into an instrument of education on the firm foundations of socialist society. There is no doubt whatever that we cannot attain such a society at once.

These, then, are the main steps Soviet power has taken along the road indicated by the experience of the great popular revolutions throughout the world. There has not been a single revolution in which the working people did not begin to take some steps along this road in order to set up a new state power. Unfortunately, they only began to do this, but were unable to finish, they were unable to create the new type of state power. We have created it—we have already established a socialist Republic of Soviets.

I have no illusions about our having only just entered the period of *transition* to socialism, about not yet having reached socialism. But if you say that our state is a socialist Republic of Soviets, you will be right. You will be as right as those who call many Western bourgeois republics democratic republics although everybody knows that not one of even the most democratic of these republics is completely democratic. They grant scraps of democracy, they cut off tiny bits of the rights of the exploiters, but the working people are as much oppressed there as they are everywhere else. Nevertheless, we say that the bourgeois system is represented by both old monarchies and by constitutional republics.



And so in our case now. We are far from having completed even the transitional period from capitalism to socialism. We have never cherished the hope that we could finish it without the aid of the international proletariat. We never had any illusions on that score, and we know how difficult is the road that leads from capitalism to socialism. But it is our duty to say that our Soviet Republic is a socialist republic because we have taken this road, and our words will not be empty words.

We have initiated many measures undermining the capitalists' rule. We know that our power had to unite the activities of all our institutions by a single principle, and this principle we express in the words: "Russia is declared to be a Socialist Republic of Soviets." (*Applause.*) This will be that truth which rests on what we must do and have already begun to do, this will be the best unification of all our activities, the proclamation of our programme, a call to the working people and the exploited of all countries who either do not know at all what socialism is; or, what is worse, believe that socialism is the Chernov-Tsereteli mess of bourgeois reforms which we have tasted and tried during the ten months of the revolution and which we have become convinced is a falsification and not socialism.

And that is why "free" Britain and France did all they could during the ten months of our revolution to prevent a single copy of Bolshevik and Left Socialist-Revolutionary newspapers from entering their countries. They had to act in this way because they saw that the workers and peasants in all countries instinctively grasped what the Russian workers were doing. There was not a single meeting where news about the Russian revolution and the slogan of Soviet power was not hailed with stormy applause. The working people and the exploited everywhere have already come into conflict with their party top leadership. The old socialism of these leaders is not yet buried like that of Chkheidze and Tsereteli in Russia, but it is already done for in all countries of the world, it is already dead.

A new state—the Republic of Soviets, the republic of the working people, of the exploited classes that are breaking down the old bourgeois barriers, now stands against the old bourgeois system. New state forms have been created, which make it possible to suppress the exploiters, to overcome the resistance of this insignificant handful who are still strong because of yesterday's money-bags and yesterday's store of knowledge. They—the professors, teachers and engineers—transform their knowledge into an instrument for the exploitation of the working people, saying they want their knowledge to serve the bourgeoisie, otherwise they refuse to work. But their power has been broken by the workers' and peasants' revolution, and a state is rising against them in



which the people themselves freely elect their own representatives.

It is precisely at the present time that we can say that we really have an organisation of power which clearly indicates the transition to the complete abolition of any power, of any state. This will be possible when every trace of exploitation has been abolished, that is, in socialist society.

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 something



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,<sup>202</sup> they show that the workers are becoming aware of their strength.

Comrades, in my report I have not dealt with the particularly painful and difficult questions of peace and the food supply, because they are special items on the agenda and will be discussed separately.

My purpose in making this brief report was to show, as it appears to me and to the whole of the Council of People's Commissars, the entire history of what we have experienced during the past two and a half months, how the relation of class forces took shape in this new period of the Russian revolution, how a new state power was formed and what social tasks confront it.

Russia has started to achieve socialism in the right way—by the nationalisation of the banks and the transfer of all the land entirely to the working people. We are well aware of the difficulties that lie ahead, but we are convinced, by comparing our revolution with previous revolutions, that we shall achieve enormous successes and that we are on the road that guarantees complete victory.

And with us will go the masses of the more advanced countries, countries which have been divided by a predatory war, whose workers have passed through a longer period of training in democracy. When people depict the difficulties of our task, when we are told that the victory of socialism is possible only on a world scale, we regard this merely as an attempt, a particularly hopeless attempt, on the part of the bourgeoisie and of its voluntary and involuntary supporters to distort the irrefutable truth. The final victory of socialism in a single country is of course impossible. Our contingent of workers and peasants which is upholding Soviet power is one of the contingents of the great world army, which at present has been split by the world war, but which is striving for unity, and every piece of information, every fragment of a report about our revolution, every name, the proletariat greets with loud and sympathetic cheers, because it knows that in Russia the common cause is being pursued, the cause of the proletariat's uprising, the international socialist revolution. A living example, tackling the job somewhere in one country is more effective than any proclamations and conferences; this is what inspires the working people in all countries.

The October strike in 1905—the first steps of the victorious revolution—immediately spread to Western Europe and then, in



1905, called forth the movement of the Austrian workers; already at that time we had a practical illustration of the value of the example of revolution, of the action by the workers in one country, and today we see that the socialist revolution is maturing by the hour in all countries of the world.

If we make mistakes and blunders and meet with obstacles on our way, that is not what is important to them; what is important to them is our example, that is what unites them. They say: we shall go together and conquer, come what may. (*Applause.*)

The great founders of socialism, Marx and Engels, having watched the development of the labour movement and the growth of the world socialist revolution for a number of decades saw clearly that the transition from capitalism to socialism would require prolonged birth pangs, a long period of the dictatorship of the proletariat, the break-up of all that belonged to the past, the ruthless destruction of all forms of capitalism, the co-operation of the workers of all countries, who would have to combine their efforts to ensure complete victory. And they said that at the end of the nineteenth century "the Frenchman will begin it, and the German will finish it"<sup>203</sup>—the Frenchman would begin it because in the course of decades of revolution he had acquired that intrepid initiative in revolutionary action that made him the vanguard of the socialist revolution.

Today we see a different combination of international socialist forces. We say that it is easier for the movement to start in the countries that are not among those exploiting countries which have opportunities for easy plunder and are able to bribe the upper section of their workers. The pseudo-socialist, nearly all ministerial, Chernov-Tsereteli parties of Western Europe do not accomplish anything, and they lack firm foundations. We have seen the example of Italy; during the past few days we witnessed the heroic struggle of the Austrian workers against the predatory imperialists.<sup>204</sup> Though the pirates may succeed in holding up the movement for a time, they cannot stop it altogether, it is invincible.

The example of the Soviet Republic will stand before them for a long time to come. Our socialist Republic of Soviets will stand secure, as a torch of international socialism and as an example to all the working people. Over there—conflict, war, bloodshed, the sacrifice of millions of people, capitalist exploitation; here—a genuine policy of peace and a socialist Republic of Soviets.

Things have turned out differently from what Marx and Engels expected and we, the Russian working and exploited classes, have the honour of being the vanguard of the international socialist revolution; we can now see clearly how far the development of

the revolution will go. The Russian began it—the German, the Frenchman and the Englishman will finish it, and socialism will be victorious. (*Applause.*)

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and February 2 (January 20), 1918

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Draft decree on expunging  
references to the Constituent  
Assembly from Soviet legislation  
first published in 1931 in  
*Lenin Miscellany XVIII*

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## DRAFT WIRELESS MESSAGE TO THE GOVERNMENT OF THE GERMAN REICH<sup>205</sup>

The Council of People's Commissars lodges a protest over the German Government's movement of troops against the Russian Soviet Republic, which had declared the state of war ended and had started to demobilise its army on all fronts. The Workers' and Peasants' Government of Russia could not have expected such a step, especially since neither of the parties to the armistice had, directly or indirectly, made any announcement either on February 10, or at any other time, that the armistice was at an end, as both parties to the treaty of December 2 (15), 1917 had undertaken to do.

The Council of People's Commissars finds itself forced, in the situation that has arisen, to declare its readiness formally to conclude peace on the terms the German Government demanded at Brest-Litovsk.

At the same time, the Council of People's Commissars expresses its readiness, if the German Government should formulate its precise peace terms, to reply within 12 hours whether or not these terms are acceptable.

Written on the night  
of February 18, 1918

Message published  
on February 19 (6),  
1918 in *Pravda* No. 30  
(evening edition)

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In order to save this exhausted and ravaged country from new ordeals of war we decided to make a very great sacrifice and informed the Germans of our readiness to sign their terms of peace. Our truce envoys left Rezhitsa for Dvinsk in the evening on February 20 (7), *and still there is no reply*. The German Government is evidently in no hurry to reply. It obviously does not want peace. Fulfilling the task with which it has been charged by the capitalists of all countries, German militarism *wants to strangle the Russian and Ukrainian workers and peasants, to return the land to the landowners, the mills and factories to the bankers, and power to the monarchy*. The German generals want to establish their "order" in Petrograd and Kiev. *The Socialist Republic of Soviets is in gravest danger*. Until the proletariat of Germany rises and triumphs, it is the sacred duty of the workers and peasants of Russia devotedly to defend the Republic of Soviets against the hordes of bourgeois-imperialist Germany. The Council of People's Commissars resolves: (1) *The country's entire manpower and resources are placed entirely at the service of revolutionary defence*. (2) *All Soviets and revolutionary organisations are ordered to defend every position to the last drop of blood*. (3) Railway organisations and the Soviets associated with them must do their utmost to prevent the enemy from availing himself of the transport system; in the event of a retreat, they are to destroy the tracks and blow up or burn down the railway buildings; all rolling stock—carriages and locomotives—must be immediately dispatched eastward, into the interior of the country. (4) All grain and food stocks generally, as well as all valuable property in danger of falling into the enemy's hands, must be unconditionally destroyed; the duty of seeing that this is done is laid upon the local Soviets and their chairmen are made personally responsible. (5) The workers and peasants of Petrograd, Kiev, and of all towns, townships, villages and hamlets along the line of the new front are to mobilise battalions to dig trenches, under the direction of military experts. (6) *These battalions are to include all able-bodied mem-*



*bers of the bourgeois class, men and women, under the supervision of Red Guards; those who resist are to be shot. (7) All publications which oppose the cause of revolutionary defence and side with the German bourgeoisie, or which endeavour to take advantage of the invasion of the imperialist hordes in order to overthrow Soviet rule, are to be suppressed; able-bodied editors and members of the staffs of such publications are to be mobilised for the digging of trenches or for other defence work. (8) Enemy agents, profiteers, marauders, hooligans, counter-revolutionary agitators and German spies are to be shot on the spot.*

*The socialist fatherland is in danger! Long live the socialist fatherland! Long live the international socialist revolution!*

*Council of People's Commissars*

February 21, 1918  
Petrograd

*Pravda* No. 32,  
February 22, 1918

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**POSITION OF THE C.C.  
OF THE R.S.D.L.P. (BOLSHEVIKS)  
ON THE QUESTION OF THE SEPARATE  
AND ANNEXATIONIST PEACE<sup>207</sup>**

Dear Comrades,

The Organising Bureau of the Central Committee considers it essential to submit to you an explanation of the motives that led the Central Committee to agree to the peace terms proposed by the German Government. The Organising Bureau is addressing this explanation to you, comrades, in order that all Party members should be thoroughly informed of the point of view of the Central Committee which, in the period between Congresses, represents the entire Party. The Organising Bureau considers it essential to state that the Central Committee was not unanimous on the question of signing the peace terms. Since the decision has been made, however, it must be supported by the whole Party. A Party Congress is due in a few days, and only then will it be possible to decide the question of the extent to which the Central Committee rightly expressed the actual position of the whole Party. Until the Congress, all Party members, in pursuance of their duty to the Party and for the sake of the maintenance of unity in our Party ranks, will carry out the decisions of their central leading body, the Central Committee of the Party.

The absolute necessity of signing, at the given moment (February 24, 1918), an annexationist and unbelievably harsh peace treaty with Germany is due primarily to the fact that we have no army and cannot defend ourselves.

Everybody knows why since October 25, 1917, since the victory of the dictatorship of the proletariat and the poor peasantry, we have all become defencists, we are all for the defence of the fatherland.

From the point of view of defending the fatherland, it is impermissible for us to allow ourselves to be drawn into an armed conflict when we have no army and the enemy is armed to the teeth and excellently prepared.

The Soviet Socialist Republic cannot wage a war when the obviously overwhelming majority of the masses of workers,

peasants and soldiers who elect deputies to the Soviets are against the war. It would be a rash gamble. It will be a different thing if an end is put to this war, excessively harsh though the terms of peace may be, and German imperialism again decides to start an aggressive war against Russia. Then the majority of the Soviets will most certainly be in favour of war.

To wage war today would amount objectively to falling for the provocation of the Russian bourgeoisie. They know full well that at the moment Russia is defenceless and would be crushed by even insignificant German forces, which would have only to cut the main railway lines to starve Petrograd and Moscow into surrendering. The bourgeoisie want war, because they want the overthrow of Soviet power and an agreement with the German bourgeoisie. The jubilation of the bourgeoisie when the German troops arrived in Dvinsk and Rezhitsa, Venden and Gapsal, Minsk and Drissa confirms this as clearly as can be.

Defence of revolutionary war at the present moment is nothing but an empty revolutionary phrase. It is impossible for a ruined peasant country to wage a modern war against advanced imperialism without an army and without the most serious economic preparation. It is beyond all doubt that German imperialism must be resisted, for it will crush us and hold us prisoner. It would, however, be empty talk to demand resistance specifically by means of armed uprising, especially now, when *such* resistance is obviously hopeless for us, and obviously to the advantage of the German and Russian bourgeoisie.

It is equally empty talk to argue in favour of revolutionary war at this moment on the grounds of support for the international socialist movement. If we make it easier for German imperialism to crush the Soviet Republic by our untimely acceptance of battle, we shall harm and not help the German and international working-class movement and the cause of socialism. We must help only the revolutionary internationalists in all countries by all-round, persistent and systematic work; but to undertake the gamble of launching an armed uprising, when it would obviously be a gamble, is unworthy of a Marxist.

If Liebknecht is victorious in two or three weeks (which is possible) he will, of course, get us out of all difficulties. It would, however, be simply foolish and would be turning the great slogan of the solidarity of the working people of all countries into sheer mockery if we were to assure the people that Liebknecht will certainly and unavoidably score victory within the next few weeks. Indeed, by arguing in this way we should be turning the great slogan "We bank on the world revolution" into an empty phrase.

Objectively the situation is similar to that of the summer of 1907. Then, it was the Russian monarchist Stolypin who crushed

us and held us prisoner; today it is the German imperialist. Then, the slogan of an immediate insurrection, which, unfortunately, was supported by the entire Socialist-Revolutionary Party, proved to be an empty phrase. Today, at this very moment, the slogan of revolutionary war is obviously an empty phrase that attracts the Left Socialist-Revolutionaries, who repeat the arguments of the Right Socialist-Revolutionaries. We are the prisoners of German imperialism and we have ahead of us a long and difficult struggle to overthrow that ringleader of world imperialism; this struggle is undoubtedly the last decisive struggle for socialism, but to begin that struggle at the present moment with an armed uprising against the leader of imperialism would be a gamble that no Marxist would ever undertake.

The systematic, unrelenting, all-round building up of the country's defence potential, self-discipline everywhere, the use of grievous defeat to improve discipline in all spheres of life for the purpose of the country's economic progress and the consolidation of Soviet power—that is the task of the day, that is the way to prepare a revolutionary war in deed and not merely in word.

In conclusion, the Organising Bureau considers it essential to state that, since the offensive of German imperialism has not yet been halted, all members of the Party must organise a concerted opposition to it. If it is impossible to sign a peace treaty, even the harshest, and gain time to prepare for new battles, our Party must emphasise the need to exert every effort for all-out resistance.

If we can gain time, gain even a brief respite for organisational work, we must do our best to get it. If we are granted no deferment our Party must call on the masses to fight, to engage in the most energetic self-defence. We are confident that all Party members will do their duty by the Party, by the working class of their country, by the people and the proletariat. By preserving Soviet power we are rendering the best, the most powerful support to the proletariat of all countries in their incredibly hard struggle against their own bourgeoisie. Today the cause of socialism could suffer no heavier blow than the collapse of Soviet power in Russia.

With comradely greetings,

*Organising Bureau of the Central Committee  
of the R.S.D.L.P. (Bolsheviks)*

Written on February 24, 1918

Published on February 26, 1918  
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## A PAINFUL BUT NECESSARY LESSON

The week from February 18 to 24, 1918, has been one that will be remembered as a great turning-point in the history of the Russian—and the international—revolution.

On February 27, 1917, the Russian proletariat, jointly with part of the peasantry who had been aroused by the course the war was taking, and also with the bourgeoisie, overthrew the monarchy. On April 21, 1917, the proletariat overthrew the absolute rule of the imperialist bourgeoisie and shifted power into the hands of the petty-bourgeois advocates of compromise with the bourgeoisie. On July 3, the urban proletariat gave the compromisers' government a severe shock by its spontaneous demonstration. On October 25, it overthrew that government and established the dictatorship of the proletariat and the poor peasantry.

This victory had to be defended in civil war. It took about three months, beginning with the victory over Kerensky near Gatchina, continued in the victories over the bourgeoisie, the officer cadets and part of the counter-revolutionary Cossacks in Moscow, Irkutsk, Orenburg and Kiev, and ending with the victory over Kaledin, Kornilov and Alexeyev at Rostov-on-Don.

The fire of proletarian insurrection flared up in Finland,<sup>208</sup> and the conflagration spread to Rumania.

Victories on the home front were achieved with relative ease since the enemy did not possess any material or organisational advantage, and, furthermore, did not have any sound economic basis or any support among the masses. The ease with which these victories were gained was bound to turn the heads of many leaders. Their attitude has been: "We'll have a walk-over."

They have disregarded the widespread disintegration of the army, which is rapidly demobilising itself and abandoning the front. They have become intoxicated with revolutionary phrases. They have applied them to the struggle against world imperialism. They have mistaken Russia's temporary "freedom" from imperialist pressure for something normal, although actually that

“freedom” was due only to an interruption in the war between the German and Anglo-French plunderers. They have mistaken the mass strikes that are beginning in Austria and Germany for a revolution that is supposed to have delivered us from any serious danger from German imperialism. Instead of serious, effective, sustained work to aid the German revolution, which is coming to birth in a particularly difficult and painful manner, we have had people waving their arms—“what can those German imperialists do—with Liebknecht on our side we’ll kick them out in no time!”

The week from February 18 to February 24, 1918, from the capture of Dvinsk to the capture of Pskov (later recaptured), the week of imperialist Germany’s military offensive against the Soviet Socialist Republic, has been a bitter, distressing, and painful lesson, but it has been a necessary, useful and beneficial one. How highly instructive it has been to compare the two groups of telegraphic and telephonic communications that have reached the central government in the past week! On the one hand there has been the unrestrained flood of “resolution-type” revolutionary phrases—one might call them Steinberg phrases, if one recalls a chef d’oeuvre in that style, the speech of the “Left” (hm . . . hm) Socialist-Revolutionary Steinberg at the Saturday meeting of the Central Executive Committee.<sup>209</sup> On the other hand there have been the painful and humiliating reports of regiments refusing to retain their positions, of refusal to defend even the Narva Line, and of disobedience to the order to destroy everything in the event of a retreat, not to mention the running away, the chaos, ineptitude, helplessness and slovenliness.

A bitter, distressing, painful but necessary, useful and beneficial lesson!

The thoughtful, class-conscious worker will draw three conclusions from this historic lesson—on our attitude to the defence of the fatherland, its defence potential and to socialist revolutionary war; on the conditions under which we may come into collision with world imperialism; on the correct presentation of the question of our attitude to the world socialist movement.

We are and have been defencists since October 25, 1917, we champion the defence of the fatherland ever since that day. That is because we have shown *by deeds* that we have broken away from imperialism. We have denounced and published the filthy, bloodstained treaties of the imperialist plotters. We have overthrown *our own* bourgeoisie. We have given freedom to the peoples *we* formerly oppressed. We have given land to the people and introduced workers’ control. We are in favour of defending the Russian Soviet Socialist Republic.

And because we are in favour of defending the fatherland we demand a *serious* attitude towards the country’s defence poten-

tial and preparedness for war. We declare a ruthless war against revolutionary phrases about revolutionary war. There must be a lengthy, serious preparation for it, beginning with economic progress, the restoration of the railways (for without them modern warfare is an empty phrase) and with the establishment of the strictest revolutionary discipline and self-discipline everywhere.

From the point of view of the defence of the fatherland it would be a crime to enter into an armed conflict with an infinitely superior and well-prepared enemy when we obviously have no army. From the point of view of the defence of the fatherland we have to conclude the most harsh, oppressive, brutal, disgraceful peace—not in order to “capitulate” to imperialism but in order to learn and prepare to fight against imperialism in a serious and effective manner.

The past week has raised the Russian revolution to an immeasurably higher level of historical development. In the course of it history has progressed, has ascended several steps at once.

Until now we have been faced with miserable, despicable (from the standpoint of world imperialism) enemies, an idiot called Romanov, Kerensky the boaster, gangs of officer cadets and bourgeois. Now there has arisen against us the giant of world imperialism, a splendidly organised and technically well-equipped, civilised giant. That giant *must* be fought. And one must *know how* to fight him. A peasant country that has been subjected to unparalleled devastation by three years of war and that has begun the socialist revolution, must avoid armed conflicts—must avoid them while it is still possible, even at the cost of huge sacrifices—in order to be able to do something worthwhile before the “last, decisive battle” begins.

That battle will begin only when the socialist revolution breaks out in the leading imperialist countries. That revolution is undoubtedly maturing and growing stronger month by month, week by week. That growing strength *must* be helped. And we have to *know how* to help it. It would harm and not help that growing strength if we were to give up the neighbouring Soviet Socialist Republic to destruction at a moment when it obviously has no army.

We must not turn into an empty phrase the great slogan “We bank on the victory of socialism in Europe”. It is a true slogan if we have in mind the long and difficult path to the full victory of socialism. It is an indisputable philosophic-historical truth in respect of the entire “era of the socialist revolution”. But any abstract truth becomes an empty phrase if it is applied to *any* concrete situation. It is indisputable that “every strike conceals the hydra of the social revolution”. But it is nonsense to think that we can stride directly from a strike to the revolution. If we “bank on the victory of socialism in Europe” in the sense that we guar-

antee to the people that the European revolution will break out and is certain to be victorious within the next few weeks, certainly before the Germans have time to reach Petrograd, Moscow or Kiev, before they have time to "finish off" our railway transport, we shall be acting not as serious internationalist revolutionaries, but as adventurers.

If Liebknecht is victorious over the bourgeoisie in two or three weeks (it is not impossible), he will get us out of all difficulties. That is beyond doubt. If, however, we determine our tactics for today in the struggle against the imperialism of today in the hope that Liebknecht will probably be victorious within the next few weeks, we shall deserve nothing but ridicule. We shall be turning the greatest revolutionary slogans of the present day into an empty revolutionary phrase.

Worker comrades, learn from the painful but useful lessons of the revolution! Prepare seriously, vigorously and unwaveringly to defend the fatherland, to defend the Soviet Socialist Republic!

*Pravda* (evening edition) No. 35,  
February 25, 1918  
Signed: *Lenin*

*Collected Works*, Vol. 27



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## DRAFT DECISION OF THE COUNCIL OF PEOPLE'S COMMISSARS ON THE EVACUATION OF THE GOVERNMENT<sup>240</sup>

1. Choose Moscow as the seat of government.
2. From each department evacuate the minimum number of leaders of the central administrative body, not more than two or three dozen people (plus families).
3. Whatever happens, immediately remove the State Bank, the gold and the Stationery Office.
4. Begin evacuating Moscow valuables.

Written on February 26, 1918

First published in 1929  
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*Collected Works*, Vol. 27

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## STRANGE AND MONSTROUS

The Moscow Regional Bureau of our Party, in a resolution adopted on February 24, 1918,<sup>211</sup> has expressed lack of confidence in the Central Committee, refused to obey those of its decisions "that will be connected with the implementation of the terms of the peace treaty with Austria and Germany", and, in an "explanatory note" to the resolution, declared that it "considers a split in the Party in the very near future hardly avoidable".\*

There is nothing monstrous, nor even strange in all this. It is quite natural that comrades who sharply disagree with the Central Committee over the question of a separate peace should sharply condemn the Central Committee and express their conviction that a split is inevitable. All that is the most legitimate right of Party members, which is quite understandable.

But here is what is strange and monstrous. An "explanatory note" is appended to the resolution. Here it is in full:

"The Moscow Regional Bureau considers a split in the Party in the very near future hardly avoidable, and it sets itself the aim of helping to unite all consistent revolutionary communists who equally oppose both the advocates of the conclusion of a separate peace and all moderate opportunists in the Party. *In the interests of the world revolution, we consider it expedient to accept the possibility of losing Soviet power, which is now becoming purely formal.* We maintain as before that our primary task is to spread the ideas of the socialist revolution to all other countries and

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\* Here is the full text of the resolution: "Having discussed the activities of the Central Committee, the Moscow Regional Bureau of the R.S.D.L.P. expresses lack of confidence in the Central Committee in view of its political line and composition, and will at the first opportunity insist that a new Central Committee be elected. Furthermore, the Moscow Regional Bureau does not consider itself bound to obey unreservedly those decisions of the Central Committee that will be connected with the implementation of the terms of the peace treaty with Austria and Germany." The resolution was adopted unanimously.

resolutely to promote the workers' dictatorship, ruthlessly to suppress bourgeois counter-revolution in Russia."

It is the words we have stressed in this passage which are—strange and monstrous.

It is in these words that the crux of the matter lies.

These words reduce to an absurdity the whole line put forward by the authors of the resolution. These words expose the root of their error with exceptional clarity.

"In the interests of the world revolution it is expedient to accept the possibility of losing Soviet power. . . ." That is strange, for there is not even any connection between the premises and the conclusion. "In the interests of the world revolution it is expedient to accept the *military defeat* of Soviet power"—such a proposition might be right or wrong, but it could not be called strange. That is the first thing.

Second thing: Soviet power "is now becoming purely formal". Now this is not only strange but downright monstrous. Obviously, the authors have got themselves thoroughly entangled. We shall have to disentangle them.

As regards the first question, the authors' idea evidently is that it would be expedient in the interests of the world revolution to accept the possibility of defeat in war, which would lead to the loss of Soviet power, in other words, to the triumph of the bourgeoisie in Russia. By voicing this idea the authors indirectly admit the truth of what I said in the theses (on January 8, 1918, published in *Pravda* on February 24, 1918),\* namely, that refusal to accept the peace terms presented by Germany would lead to Russia's defeat and the overthrow of Soviet power.

And so, *la raison finit toujours par avoir raison*—the truth always triumphs! My "extremist" opponents, the Muscovites who threaten a split, have been obliged—just because they have got to the point of talking openly of a split—to be equally explicit about their *real* reasons, the reasons which people who confine themselves to general phrase-making about revolutionary war prefer to pass over in silence. The very essence of my theses and arguments (as anyone who cares to read attentively my theses of January 7, 1918, may see) is that we must accept this extremely harsh peace *now*, at once, while at the same time seriously *preparing* for a revolutionary war (and accept it, moreover, precisely *in the interest* of such serious preparations). Those who confined themselves to general phrase-making about a revolutionary war ignored or failed to notice, or did not want to notice, the very essence of my arguments. And now it is my "extremist" opponents, the Muscovites, whom I have to thank from the bottom

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\* See pp. 532-38 of the present volume.—*Ed.*

of my heart for having broken the "conspiracy of silence" over the *essence* of my arguments. The Muscovites have been the *first* to reply to them.

And what is their reply?

Their reply is an *admission of the correctness* of my *concrete* argument. Yes, the Muscovites have admitted, we shall certainly be defeated if we fight the Germans now.\* Yes, this defeat would certainly lead to the fall of Soviet power.

Again and again I thank my "extremist" opponents, the Muscovites, from the bottom of my heart for having broken the "conspiracy of silence" against the *essence* of my arguments, i.e., against my *concrete* statement as to what the conditions of war would be, if we were to accept it at once, and for having fearlessly admitted the correctness of my concrete statement.

Further, on what grounds are my arguments, the substantial correctness of which the Muscovites have been compelled to admit, rejected?

On the grounds that in the interests of the world revolution *we must* accept the loss of Soviet power.

Why should the interests of the world revolution demand it? This is the crux of the matter; this is the very essence of the reasoning of those who would like to defeat my arguments. And it is on this, the most important, fundamental and vital point, that not a word is said, either in the resolution or in the explanatory note. The authors of the resolution found time and space to speak of what is universally known and indisputable—of "ruthlessly suppressing bourgeois counter-revolution in Russia" (using the methods and means of a policy which would lead to the loss of Soviet power?), and of opposing all moderate opportunists in the Party—but of that which is really disputable and which concerns the very essence of the position of the opponents of peace—not a word!

Strange. Extremely strange. Did the authors of the resolution keep silent about this because they felt that on this point they were particularly weak? To have plainly stated *why* (this is demanded by the interests of the world revolution) would most likely have meant exposing themselves. . . .

However that may be, we have to *seek out* the arguments which *may* have guided the authors of the resolution.

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\* As to the counter-argument, that to avoid fighting was anyway impossible, the reply has been given by the facts: On January 8 my theses were read; by January 15 we *might* have had peace. A respite would have been certainly assured (and for us even the briefest respite would have been of gigantic significance, both materially and morally, for the *Germans* would have had to declare a *new* war), if . . . if it had not been for revolutionary phrase-making.



Perhaps the authors believe that the interests of the world revolution forbid making any peace at all with imperialists? This opinion was expressed by some of the opponents of peace at one of the Petrograd meetings, but only an insignificant minority of those who objected to a separate peace supported it.<sup>212</sup> It is clear that this opinion would lead to a denial of the expediency of the Brest negotiations and to a rejection of peace, "even" if accompanied by the return of Poland, Latvia and Courland. The incorrectness of this view (which was rejected, for example, by a majority of the Petrograd opponents of peace) is as clear as day. A socialist republic surrounded by imperialist powers could not, from this point of view, conclude any economic treaties, and could not exist at all, without flying to the moon.

Perhaps the authors believe that the interests of the world revolution require that it should be *given a push*, and that such a push can be given only by war, never by peace, which might give the people the impression that imperialism was being "legitimised"? Such a "theory" would be completely at variance with Marxism, for Marxism has always been opposed to "pushing" revolutions, which develop with the growing acuteness of the class antagonisms that engender revolutions. Such a theory would be tantamount to the view that armed uprising is a form of struggle which is obligatory always and under all conditions. Actually, however, the interests of the world revolution demand that Soviet power, having overthrown the bourgeoisie in our country, should *help* that revolution, but that it should choose a *form* of help which is commensurate with its own strength. To help the socialist revolution on an international scale by accepting the possibility of defeat of that revolution in *one's own* country is a view that does not follow even from the "pushing" theory.

Perhaps the authors of the resolution believe that revolution has already begun in Germany and has already reached the stage of an open, nation-wide civil war, that we must therefore devote our strength to helping the German workers, and must perish ourselves ("losing Soviet power") to *save* a German revolution which has already started its decisive fight and is being hard pressed? According to this theory, we, while perishing ourselves, would be diverting part of the forces of German counter-revolution, thereby saving the German revolution.

It is quite conceivable that, given these premises, it would not only be "expedient" (as the authors of the resolution put it) but a downright *duty* to accept the possibility of defeat and the possibility of the loss of Soviet power. But obviously these premises do not exist. The German revolution is ripening, but it has obviously not reached the stage of an explosion in Germany, of civil war in Germany. By "accepting the possibility of losing Soviet power",

we certainly would not be helping the German revolution to reach maturity, but *would be hindering* it. We would be helping German reaction, playing into its hands, hampering the socialist movement in Germany and frightening away from socialism large masses of German proletarians and semi-proletarians who have not yet come over to socialism and would be scared by the defeat of Soviet Russia, just as the British workers were scared by the defeat of the Paris Commune in 1871.

Twist and turn them how you will, but you can find no logic in the authors' contentions. There are no sensible arguments to support the view that "in the interests of the world revolution it is expedient to accept the possibility of losing Soviet power".

"Soviet power is now becoming purely formal"—this, as we see, is the monstrous view the authors of the Moscow resolution have come to proclaim.

Since the German imperialists are going to make us pay indemnities and forbid us to carry on propaganda and agitation against Germany, Soviet power loses all significance and "becomes purely formal"—this is probably the line of "reasoning" of the authors of the resolution. We say "probably", for the authors offer nothing clear and specific in support of their thesis.

Profound and hopeless pessimism and complete despair—such is the sum and substance of the "theory" that the significance of Soviet power is purely formal, and that tactics which will risk the possible loss of Soviet power are permissible. Since there is no salvation anyway, then let even Soviet power perish—such is the sentiment that dictated this monstrous resolution. The allegedly "economic" arguments in which such ideas are sometimes clothed reveal the same hopeless pessimism: what sort of Soviet republic is it—the implication is—when not just tribute, but tribute on such a scale can be exacted from it?

Nothing but despair: we shall perish anyhow!

It is a quite understandable mood in the extremely desperate situation in which Russia finds herself. But it is not "understandable" among conscious revolutionaries. The typical thing about it is that here we have the views of the Muscovites reduced to absurdity. The Frenchmen of 1793 would never have said that their gains—the republic and democracy—were becoming purely formal and that they would have to accept the possibility of losing the republic. They were not filled with despair, but with faith in victory. To call for a revolutionary war, and at the same time to talk in an official resolution of "accepting the possibility of losing Soviet power", is to expose oneself completely.

Early in the nineteenth century, at the time of the Napoleonic wars, Prussia and a number of other countries suffered incomparably and immeasurably greater hardships and burdens of

defeat, conquest, humiliation and oppression on the part of the conqueror than Russia is suffering in 1918. Yet the best men of Prussia, when Napoleon's military jackboots trampled upon them a hundred times more heavily than we can be trampled upon now, did not despair, and did not say that their national political institutions were "purely formal". They did not give up, did not succumb to the feeling: "We shall perish anyhow." They signed peace treaties infinitely more drastic, brutal, humiliating and oppressive than the Brest Treaty, and then knew how to bide their time; they staunchly bore the conqueror's yoke, fought again, fell under the conqueror's yoke again, again signed the vilest of vile peace treaties, and again rose, and *in the end liberated themselves* (not without exploiting the dissensions among the stronger competing conquerors).

Why shouldn't this be repeated in our history?

Why should we give way to despair and write resolutions—which, by heavens, are more disgraceful than the most disgraceful peace—saying that "Soviet power is becoming purely formal"?

Why shouldn't the most crushing military defeats in the struggle against the giants of modern imperialism steel the national character in Russia, too, strengthen self-discipline, put an end to the bragging and phrase-making, teach fortitude and bring the people round to the correct tactics of the Prussians when they were crushed by Napoleon—the tactics of signing the most humiliating of peace treaties when you haven't an army, then mustering your forces and rising again and again?

Why should we give way to despair at the first peace treaty, incredibly harsh though it be, when other nations were able staunchly to bear even bitterer misfortunes?

Is it the staunchness of the proletarian who knows that one must submit when strength is lacking, and is then nevertheless able to rise again and again at any price and to build up strength under *all* circumstances, that corresponds to these tactics of despair, or, rather, the spinelessness of the petty bourgeois, who in our country, in the shape of the Left Socialist-Revolutionary Party, has beaten the record for phrase-making about a revolutionary war?

No, dear Moscow "extremist" comrades, every day of trial will drive away from you those very workers who are the most class-conscious and the staunchest. Soviet power, they will say, is not *becoming*, and will not *become*, purely formal; and not only now, when the conqueror is in Pskov and is making us pay a ten-thousand-million-ruble tribute in grain, ore and money, but even if he gets as far as Nizhni-Novgorod and Rostov-on-Don and makes us pay a tribute of twenty thousand million rubles.

Never will any foreign conquest render a popular political institution "purely formal" (and Soviet power is *not* only a political



institution far and away superior to anything known to history). On the contrary, alien conquest will only strengthen popular sympathy for Soviet power, provided—provided it does not indulge in reckless follies.

And to refuse to conclude even the vilest peace when you have no army would be a reckless gamble, for which the people would be justified in condemning the government that refused to do so.

Immensely more harsh and humiliating peace treaties than the Brest Treaty have been signed before in history (we gave some instances above) without discrediting the regime or turning it into a formality; they ruined neither the regime nor the people, but rather steeled the people, *taught* them the stern and difficult science of building up an effective army even in the most desperate conditions and under the heel of the conqueror.

Russia is making for a new and genuine patriotic war, a war for the preservation and consolidation of Soviet power. It is possible that another epoch will—like the epoch of the Napoleonic wars—be an epoch of liberation *wars* (not one war, but wars) imposed by aggressors upon Soviet Russia. That is possible.

And, therefore, more humiliating than any harsh or even extremely harsh peace, rendered imperative owing to the lack of an army—more humiliating than any humiliating peace is humiliating despair. We shall not perish even from a dozen obnoxious peace treaties if we take revolt and war *seriously*. No conquerors can destroy us if we do not destroy ourselves by despair and phrase-making.

*Pravda* Nos. 37 and 38,  
February 28 and March 1, 1918

Signed: *N. Lenin*

*Collected Works*, Vol. 27





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**EXTRAORDINARY SEVENTH CONGRESS  
OF THE R.C.P.(B.)<sup>213</sup>**

**MARCH 6-8, 1918**

First published in full in 1923  
in the book *Seventh Congress  
of the Russian Communist Party  
Verbatim Report. March 6-8, 1918*

*Collected Works, Vol. 27*



## POLITICAL REPORT OF THE CENTRAL COMMITTEE MARCH 7

A political report might consist of an enumeration of measures taken by the Central Committee; but the essential thing at the present moment is not a report of this kind, but a review of our revolution as a whole; that is the only thing that can provide a truly Marxist substantiation of all our decisions. We must examine the whole preceding course of development of the revolution and ascertain why the course of its further development has changed. There have been turning-points in our revolution that will have enormous significance for the world revolution. One such turning-point was the *October Revolution*.

The first successes of the February Revolution were due to the fact that the proletariat was followed, not only by the masses of the rural population, but also by the bourgeoisie. Hence, the easy victory over tsarism, something we had failed to achieve in 1905. The spontaneous formation of Soviets of Workers' Deputies in the February Revolution was a repetition of the experience of 1905—we had to proclaim the principle of Soviet power. The masses learned the tasks of the revolution from their own experience of the struggle. The events of April 20-21 were a peculiar combination of demonstrations and of something in the nature of armed uprising. This was enough to cause the fall of the bourgeois government. Then began the long period of the collaboration policy, which stemmed from the very nature of the petty-bourgeois government that had come to power. The July events could not then establish the dictatorship of the proletariat—the masses were still not prepared for it. That was why not one of the responsible organisations called upon them to establish it. But as a reconnoitring operation in the enemy's camp, the July events were of enormous significance. The Kornilov revolt and the subsequent events served as practical lessons and made possible the October victory. The mistake committed by those who even in October wished to divide power<sup>214</sup> was their failure to connect the October victory with the July days, with the offensive, with the Kornilov



revolt, etc., etc., events which caused the millions of the common people to realise that Soviet power had become inevitable. Then followed our triumphal march throughout Russia, accompanied by a universal desire for peace. We know that we cannot achieve peace by a unilateral withdrawal from the war. We pointed to this as far back as the April Conference.\* In the period from April to October, the soldiers clearly realised that the policy of collaboration was prolonging the war and was leading to the savage, senseless attempts of the imperialists to start an offensive and to get still more entangled in a war that would last for years. That was the reason why it was necessary at all costs to adopt an active policy of peace as quickly as possible, why it was necessary for the Soviets to take power into their own hands, and abolish landed proprietorship. You know that the latter was upheld not only by Kerensky but also by Avksentyev, who even went so far as to order the arrest of the members of the Land Committees. The policy we adopted, the slogan of "Power to the Soviets", which we instilled into the minds of the majority of the people, enabled us, in October, to achieve victory very easily in St. Petersburg, and transformed the last months of the Russian revolution into one continuous triumphal march.

Civil war became a fact. The transformation of the imperialist war into civil war, which we had predicted at the beginning of the revolution, and even at the beginning of the war, and which considerable sections of socialist circles treated sceptically and even with ridicule, actually took place on October 25, 1917, in one of the largest and most backward of the belligerent countries. In this civil war the overwhelming majority of the population proved to be on our side, and that is why victory was achieved with such extraordinary ease.

The troops who abandoned the front carried with them wherever they went the maximum of revolutionary determination to put an end to collaboration; and the collaborationist elements, the whiteguards and the landowners' sons found themselves without support among the population. The war against them gradually turned into a victorious triumphal march of the revolution as the masses of the people and the military units that were sent against us came over to the side of the Bolsheviks. We saw this in Petrograd, on the Gatchina front, where the Cossacks, whom Kerensky and Krasnov tried to lead against the Red capital, wavered; we saw this later in Moscow, in Orenburg and in the Ukraine. A wave of civil war swept over the whole of Russia, and everywhere we achieved victory with extraordinary ease precisely because the fruit had ripened, because the masses had

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\* See pp. 112-13 of the present volume.—*Ed.*

already gone through the experience of collaboration with the bourgeoisie. Our slogan "All Power to the Soviets", which the masses had tested in practice by long historical experience, had become part of their flesh and blood.

That is why the Russian revolution was a continuous triumphal march in the first months after October 25, 1917. As a result of this the difficulties which the socialist revolution immediately encountered, and could not but encounter, were forgotten, were pushed into the background. One of the fundamental differences between bourgeois revolution and socialist revolution is that for the bourgeois revolution, which arises out of feudalism, the new economic organisations are gradually created in the womb of the old order, gradually changing all the aspects of feudal society. The bourgeois revolution faced only one task—to sweep away, to cast aside, to destroy all the fetters of the preceding social order. By fulfilling this task every bourgeois revolution fulfils all that is required of it; it accelerates the growth of capitalism.

The socialist revolution is in an altogether different position. The more backward the country which, owing to the zigzags of history, has proved to be the one to start the socialist revolution, the more difficult is it for that country to pass from the old capitalist relations to socialist relations. New incredibly difficult tasks, organisational tasks, are added to the tasks of destruction. Had not the popular creative spirit of the Russian revolution, which had gone through the great experience of the year 1905, given rise to the Soviets as early as February 1917, they could not under any circumstances have assumed power in October, because success depended entirely upon the existence of available organisational forms of a movement embracing millions. The Soviets were the available form, and that is why in the political sphere the future held out to us those brilliant successes, the continuous triumphal march, that we had; for the new form of political power was already available, and all we had to do was to pass a few decrees, and transform the power of the Soviets from the embryonic state in which it existed in the first months of the revolution into the legally recognised form which had become established in the Russian state—i.e., into the Russian Soviet Republic. The Republic was born at one stroke; it was born so easily because in February 1917 the masses had created the Soviets even before any party had managed to proclaim this slogan. It was the great creative spirit of the people, which had passed through the bitter experience of 1905 and had been made wise by it, that gave rise to this form of proletarian power. The task of achieving victory over the internal enemy was an extremely easy one. The task of creating the political power was an extremely easy one because the masses had created the skeleton, the basis of this power.

The Republic of Soviets was born at one stroke. But two exceedingly difficult problems still remained, the solution of which could not possibly be the triumphal march we experienced in the first months of our revolution—we did not doubt, we could not doubt, that the socialist revolution would be later confronted with enormously difficult tasks.

First, there was the problem of internal organisation, which confronts every socialist revolution. The difference between a socialist revolution and a bourgeois revolution is that in the latter case there are ready-made forms of capitalist relationships; Soviet power—the proletarian power—does not inherit such ready-made relationships, if we leave out of account the most developed forms of capitalism, which, strictly speaking, extended to but a small top layer of industry and hardly touched agriculture. The organisation of accounting, the control of large enterprises, the transformation of the whole of the state economic mechanism into a single huge machine, into an economic organism that will work in such a way as to enable hundreds of millions of people to be guided by a single plan—such was the enormous organisational problem that rested on our shoulders. Under the present conditions of labour this problem could not possibly be solved by the “hurrah” methods by which we were able to solve the problems of the Civil War. The very nature of the task prevented a solution by these methods. We achieved easy victories over the Kaledin revolt and created the Soviet Republic in face of a resistance that was not even worth serious consideration; the course of events was predetermined by the whole of the preceding objective development, so that all we had to do was to say the last word and change the signboard, i.e., take down the sign “The Soviet exists as a trade union organisation”, and put up instead the sign “The Soviet is the sole form of state power”; the situation, however, was altogether different in regard to organisational problems. In this field we encountered enormous difficulties. It immediately became clear to everyone who cared to ponder over the tasks of our revolution that only by the hard and long path of self-discipline would it be possible to overcome the disintegration that the war had caused in capitalist society, that only by extraordinarily hard, long and persistent effort could we cope with this disintegration and defeat those elements aggravating it, elements which regarded the revolution as a means of discarding old fetters and getting as much out of it for themselves as they possibly could. The emergence of a large number of such elements was inevitable in a small-peasant country at a time of incredible economic chaos, and the fight against these elements that is ahead of us, that we have only just started, will be a hundred times more difficult, it will be a fight which promises no spectacular opportunities. We are only in the first stage of this fight. Severe



trials await us. The objective situation precludes any idea of limiting ourselves to a triumphal march with flying banners such as we had in fighting against Kaledin. Anyone who attempted to apply these methods of struggle to the organisational tasks that confront the revolution would only prove his bankruptcy as a politician, as a socialist, as an active worker in the socialist revolution.

The same thing awaited some of our young comrades who were carried away by the initial triumphal march of the revolution, when it came up against the second enormous difficulty—the international question. The reason we achieved such an easy victory over Kerensky's gangs, the reason we so easily set up our government and without the slightest difficulty passed decrees on the socialisation of the land and on workers' control, the reason we achieved all this so easily was a fortunate combination of circumstances that protected us for a short time from international imperialism. International imperialism, with the entire might of its capital, with its highly organised war machine, which is a real force, a real stronghold of international capital, could not, under any circumstances, under any conditions, live side by side with the Soviet Republic, both because of its objective position and because of the economic interests of the capitalist class embodied in it, because of commercial connections, of international financial relations. In this sphere a conflict is inevitable. This is the greatest difficulty of the Russian revolution, its greatest historical problem—the need to solve international problems, the need to evoke a world revolution, to effect the transition from our strictly national revolution to the world revolution. This problem confronts us in all its incredible difficulty. I repeat, very many of our young friends who regard themselves as Lefts have begun to forget the most important thing: why in the course of the weeks and months of the enormous triumph after October we were able so easily to pass from victory to victory. And yet this was due only to a special combination of international circumstances that temporarily shielded us from imperialism. Imperialism had other things to bother about besides us. And it seemed to us that we, too, had other things to bother about besides imperialism. Individual imperialists had no time to bother with us, solely because the whole of the great social, political and military might of modern world imperialism was split by internecine war into two groups. The imperialist plunderers involved in this struggle had gone to such incredible lengths, were locked in mortal combat to such a degree, that neither of the groups was able to concentrate any effective forces against the Russian revolution. These were the circumstances in which we found ourselves in October. It is paradoxical but true that our revolution broke out at so fortunate a moment, when unprecedented disasters



involving the destruction of millions of human beings had overtaken most of the imperialist countries, when the unprecedented calamities attending the war had exhausted the nations, when in the fourth year of the war the belligerent countries had reached an impasse, a parting of the ways, when the question arose objectively—could nations reduced to such a state continue fighting? It was only because our revolution broke out at so fortunate a moment as this, when neither of the two gigantic groups of plunderers was in a position immediately either to hurl itself at the other, or to unite with the other against us; our revolution could (and did) take advantage only of a situation such as this in international political and economic relations to accomplish its brilliant triumphal march in European Russia, spread to Finland and begin to win the Caucasus and Rumania. This alone explains the appearance of Party functionaries, intellectual supermen, in the leading circles of our Party who allowed themselves to be carried away by this triumphal march and who said we could cope with international imperialism; over there, there will also be a triumphal march, over there, there will be no real difficulties. This was at variance with the objective position of the Russian revolution which had merely taken advantage of the setback of international imperialism; the engine that was supposed to bear down on us with the force of a railway train bearing down on a wheelbarrow and smashing it to splinters, was temporarily stalled—and the engine was stalled because the two groups of predators had clashed. Here and there the revolutionary movement was growing, but in all the imperialist countries without exception it was still mainly in the initial stage. Its rate of development was entirely different from ours. Anyone who has given careful thought to the economic prerequisites of the socialist revolution in Europe must be clear on the point that in Europe it will be immeasurably more difficult to start, whereas it was immeasurably more easy for us to start; but it will be more difficult for us to continue the revolution than it will be over there. This objective situation caused us to experience an extraordinarily sharp and difficult turn in history. From the continuous triumphal march on our internal front, against our counter-revolution, against the enemies of Soviet power in October, November and December, we had to pass to a collision with real international imperialism, in its real hostility towards us. From the period of the triumphal march we had to pass to a period in which we were in an extraordinary difficult and painful situation, one which certainly could not be brushed aside with words, with brilliant slogans—however pleasant that would have been—because in our disorganised country we had to deal with incredibly weary masses, who had reached a state in which they could not possibly go on fighting, who were so shattered by three years of agonising war

that they were absolutely useless from the military point of view. Even before the October Revolution we saw representatives of the masses of the soldiers, not members of the Bolshevik Party, who did not hesitate to tell the bourgeoisie the truth that the Russian army would not fight. This state of the army has brought about a gigantic crisis. A small-peasant country, disorganised by war, reduced to an incredible state, has been placed in an extremely difficult position. We have no army, but we have to go on living side by side with a predator who is armed to the teeth, a predator who still remains and will continue to remain a plunderer and is not, of course, affected by agitation in favour of peace without annexations and indemnities. A tame, domestic animal has been lying side by side with a tiger and trying to persuade the latter to conclude a peace without annexations and indemnities, although the only way such a peace could be attained was by attacking the tiger. The top layer of our Party—intellectuals and some of the workers' organisations—has been trying in the main to brush this prospect aside with phrases and such excuses as "that is not the way it should be". This peace was too incredible a prospect for them to believe that we, who up to now had marched in open battle with colours flying and had stormed the enemy's positions with "hurrahs", could yield and accept these humiliating terms. Never! We are exceedingly proud revolutionaries, we declare above all: "The Germans cannot attack."

This was the first argument with which these people consoled themselves. History has now placed us in an extraordinarily difficult position; in the midst of organisational work of unparalleled difficulty we shall have to experience a number of painful defeats. Regarded from the world-historical point of view, there would doubtlessly be no hope of the ultimate victory of our revolution if it were to remain alone, if there were no revolutionary movements in other countries. When the Bolshevik Party tackled the job alone, it did so in the firm conviction that the revolution was maturing in all countries and that in the end—but not at the very beginning—no matter what difficulties we experienced, no matter what defeats were in store for us, the world socialist revolution would come—because it is coming; would mature—because it is maturing and will reach full maturity. I repeat, our salvation from all these difficulties is an all-Europe revolution. Taking this truth, this absolutely abstract truth, as our starting-point, and being guided by it, we must see to it that it does not in time become a mere phrase, because every abstract truth, if it is accepted without analysis, becomes a mere phrase. If you say that every strike conceals the hydra of revolution, and he who fails to understand this is no socialist, you are right. Yes, the socialist revolution looms behind every strike. But if you say that every

single strike is an immediate step towards the socialist revolution, you will be uttering perfectly empty phrases. We have heard these phrases "every blessed time in the same place" and have got so sick and tired of them that the workers have rejected these anarchist phrases, because undoubtedly, clear as it is that behind every strike there looms the hydra of socialist revolution, it is equally clear that the assertion that every strike can develop into revolution is utter nonsense. Just as it is indisputable that all the difficulties in our revolution will be overcome only when the world socialist revolution matures—and it is maturing now everywhere—it is absolutely absurd to declare that we must conceal every real difficulty of our revolution today and say: "I bank on the international socialist movement—I can commit any piece of folly I please." "Liebknecht will help us out, because he is going to win, anyhow." He will create such an excellent organisation, he will plan everything beforehand so well that we shall be able to take ready-made forms in the same way as we took the ready-made Marxist doctrine from Western Europe—and maybe that is why it triumphed in our country in a few months, whereas it has been taking decades to triumph in Western Europe. Thus it would have been reckless gambling to apply the old method of solving the problem of the struggle by a triumphal march to the new historical period which has set in, and which has confronted us, not with feeble Kerensky and Kornilov, but with an international predator—the imperialism of Germany, where the revolution has been maturing but has obviously not yet reached maturity. The assertion that the enemy would not dare attack the revolution was such a gamble. The situation at the time of the Brest negotiations was not yet such as to compel us to accept any peace terms. The objective alignment of forces was such that a respite would not have been enough. It took the Brest negotiations to show that the Germans would attack, that German society was not so pregnant with revolution that it could give birth to it at once; and we cannot blame the German imperialists for not having prepared that outbreak by their conduct, or, as our young friends who regard themselves as Lefts say, for not having created a situation in which the Germans could not attack. When we tell them that we have no army, that we were compelled to demobilise—we were compelled to do so, although we never forgot that a tiger was lying beside our tame, domestic animal—they refuse to understand. Although we were compelled to demobilise we did not for a moment forget that it was impossible to end the war unilaterally by issuing an order to stick the bayonets in the ground.

Generally speaking, how is it that not a single trend, not a single tendency, not a single organisation in our Party opposed this demobilisation? Had we gone mad? Not in the least. Officers,



not Bolsheviks, had stated even before October that the army could not fight, that it could not be kept at the front even for a few weeks longer. After October this became obvious to everybody who was willing to recognise the facts, willing to see the unpleasant, bitter reality and not hide, or pull his cap over his eyes, and make shift with proud phrases. We have no army, we cannot hold it. The best thing we can do is to demobilise it as quickly as possible. This is the sick part of the organism, which has suffered incredible torture, has been ravaged by the privations of a war into which it entered technically unprepared, and from which it has emerged in such a state that it succumbs to panic at every attack. We cannot blame these people who have experienced incredible suffering. In hundreds of resolutions, even in the first period of the Russian revolution, the soldiers have said quite frankly: "We are drowning in blood, we cannot go on fighting." One could have delayed the end of the war artificially, one could have committed the frauds Kerensky committed, one could have postponed the end for a few weeks, but objective reality broke its own road. This is the sick part of the Russian state organism which can no longer bear the burden of the war. The quicker we demobilise the army, the sooner it will become absorbed by those parts that are not so sick and the sooner will the country be prepared for new severe trials. That is what we felt when we unanimously, without the slightest protest, adopted the decision—which was absurd from the point of view of foreign events—to demobilise the army. It was the proper step to take. We said that it was a frivolous illusion to believe that we could hold the army. The sooner we demobilised the army, the sooner would the social organism as a whole recover. That is why the revolutionary phrase, "The Germans cannot attack", from which the other phrase ("We can declare the state of war terminated. Neither war nor the signing of peace."<sup>215</sup>) derived, was such a profound mistake, such a bitter over-estimation of events. But suppose the Germans do attack? "No, they cannot attack." But have you the right to risk the world revolution? What about the concrete question of whether you may not prove to be accomplices of German imperialism when that moment comes? But we, who since October 1917 have all become defencists, who have recognised the principle of defence of the fatherland, we all know that we have broken with imperialism, not merely in word but in deed; we have destroyed the secret treaties, vanquished the bourgeoisie in our own country and proposed an open and honest peace so that all the nations may see what our intentions really are. How could people who seriously uphold the position of defending the Soviet Republic agree to this gamble, which has already produced results? And this is a fact, because the severe crisis which our Party is now experiencing,



owing to the formation of a "Left" opposition within it, is one of the gravest crises the Russian revolution has experienced.

This crisis will be overcome. Under no circumstances will it break the neck of our Party, or of our revolution, although at the present moment it has come very near to doing so, there was a possibility of it. The guarantee that we shall not break our neck on this question is this: instead of applying the old method of settling factional differences, the old method of issuing an enormous quantity of literature, of having many discussions and plenty of splits, instead of this old method, events have provided our people with a new method of learning things. This method is to put everything to the test of facts, events, the lessons of world history. You said that the Germans could not attack. The logic of your tactics was that we could declare the state of war to be terminated. History has taught you a lesson, it has shattered this illusion. Yes, the German revolution is growing, but not in the way we should like it, not as fast as Russian intellectuals would have it, not at the rate our history developed in October—when we entered any town we liked, proclaimed Soviet power, and within a few days nine-tenths of the workers came over to our side. The German revolution has the misfortune of not moving so fast. What do you think? Must we reckon with the revolution, or must the revolution reckon with us? You wanted the revolution to reckon with you. But history has taught you a lesson. It is a lesson, because it is the absolute truth that without a German revolution we are doomed—perhaps not in Petrograd, not in Moscow, but in Vladivostok, in more remote places to which perhaps we shall have to retreat, and the distance to which is perhaps greater than the distance from Petrograd to Moscow. At all events, under all conceivable circumstances, if the German revolution does not come, we are doomed. Nevertheless, this does not in the least shake our conviction that we must be able to bear the most difficult position without blustering.

The revolution will not come as quickly as we expected. History has proved this, and we must be able to take this as a fact, to reckon with the fact that the world socialist revolution cannot begin so easily in the advanced countries as the revolution began in Russia—in the land of Nicholas and Rasputin, the land in which an enormous part of the population was absolutely indifferent as to what peoples were living in the outlying regions, or what was happening there. In such a country it was quite easy to start a revolution, as easy as lifting a feather.

But to start without preparation a revolution in a country in which capitalism is developed and has given democratic culture and organisation to everybody, down to the last man—to do so would be wrong, absurd. There we are only just approaching the

painful period of the beginning of socialist revolutions. This is a fact. We do not know, no one knows, perhaps—it is quite possible—it will triumph within a few weeks, even within a few days, but we cannot stake everything on that. We must be prepared for extraordinary difficulties, for extraordinarily severe defeats, which are inevitable because the revolution in Europe has not yet begun, although it may begin tomorrow; and when it does begin, then, of course, we shall not be tortured by doubts, there will be no question about a revolutionary war, but just one continuous triumphal march. That is to come, it will inevitably be so, but it is not so yet. This is the simple fact that history has taught us, with which it has hit us very painfully—and it is said a man who has been thrashed is worth two who haven't. That is why I think that now history has given us a very painful thrashing, because of our hope that the Germans could not attack and that we could get everything by shouting "hurrah!"; this lesson, with the help of our Soviet organisations, will be very quickly brought home to the masses all over Soviet Russia. They are all up and doing, gathering, preparing for the Congress, passing resolutions, thinking over what has happened. What is taking place at the present time does not resemble the old pre-revolutionary controversies, which remained within narrow Party circles; now all decisions are submitted for discussion to the masses, who demand that they be tested by experience, by deeds, who never allow themselves to be carried away by frivolous speeches, and never allow themselves to be diverted from the path prescribed by the objective progress of events. Of course, an intellectual, or a Left Bolshevik, can try to talk his way out of difficulties. He can try to talk his way out of such facts as the absence of an army and the failure of the revolution to begin in Germany. The millions-strong masses—and politics begin where millions of men and women are; where there are not thousands, but millions, that is where serious politics begin—the masses know what the army is like, they have seen soldiers returning from the front. They know—that is, if you take, not individual persons, but real masses—that we cannot fight, that every man at the front has endured everything imaginable. The masses have realised the truth that if we have no army, and a predator is lying beside us, we shall have to sign a most harsh, humiliating peace treaty. That is inevitable until the birth of the revolution, until you cure your army, until you allow the men to return home. Until then the patient will not recover. And we shall not be able to cope with the German predator by shouting "hurrah!"; we shall not be able to throw him off as easily as we threw off Kerensky and Kornilov. This is the lesson the masses have learned without the excuses that certain of those who desire to evade bitter reality have tried to present them with.

At first a continuous triumphal march in October and November—then, suddenly, in the space of a few weeks, the Russian revolution is defeated by the German predator; the Russian revolution is prepared to accept the terms of a predatory treaty. Yes, the turns taken by history are very painful. All such turns affect us painfully. When, in 1907, we signed the incredibly shameful internal treaty with Stolypin, when we were compelled to pass through the pigsty of the Stolypin Duma and assumed obligations by signing scraps of monarchist paper,<sup>216</sup> we experienced what we are experiencing now but on a smaller scale. At that time, people who were among the finest in the vanguard of the revolution said (and they too had not the slightest doubt that they were right), “We are proud revolutionaries, we believe in the Russian revolution, we will never enter legal Stolypin institutions.” Yes, you will, we said. The life of the masses, history, are stronger than your protestations. If you won’t go, we said, history will compel you to. These were very Left people and after the first turn in history nothing remained of them as a group but smoke. Just as we proved able to remain revolutionaries, proved able to work under terrible conditions and emerge from them, so shall we emerge now because it is not our whim, it is objective inevitability that has arisen in an utterly ruined country, because in spite of our desires the European revolution dared to be late, and in spite of our desires German imperialism dared to attack.

Here one must know how to retreat. We cannot hide the incredibly bitter, deplorable reality from ourselves with empty phrases; we must say: God grant that we retreat in what is half-way good order. We cannot retreat in good order, but God grant that our retreat is half-way good order, that we gain a little time in which the sick part of our organism can be absorbed at least to some extent. On the whole the organism is sound, it will overcome its sickness. But you cannot expect it to overcome it all at once, instantaneously; you cannot stop an army in flight. When I said to one of our young friends, a would-be Left, “Comrade, go to the front, see what is going on in the army”, he took offence at this proposal. He said, “They want to banish us so as to prevent our agitating here for the great principles of a revolutionary war.” In making this proposal I really had no intention whatever of banishing factional enemies; I merely suggested that they go and see for themselves that the army had begun to run away in an unprecedented manner. We knew that even before this, even before this we could not close our eyes to the fact that the disintegration of the army had gone on to such an unheard-of extent that our guns were being sold to the Germans for a song. We knew this, just as we know that the army cannot be held back, and the argument that the Germans would not attack was a great



gamble. If the European revolution is late in coming, gravest defeats await us because we have no army, because we lack organisation, because, at the moment, these are two problems we cannot solve. If you are unable to adapt yourself, if you are not inclined to crawl on your belly in the mud, you are not a revolutionary but a chatterbox; and I propose this, not because I like it, but because we have no other road, because history has not been kind enough to bring the revolution to maturity everywhere simultaneously.

The way things are turning out is that the civil war has begun as an attempt at a clash with imperialism, and this has shown that imperialism is rotten to the core, and that proletarian elements are rising in every army. Yes, we shall see the world revolution, but for the time being it is a very good fairy-tale, a very beautiful fairy-tale—I quite understand children liking beautiful fairy-tales. But I ask, is it proper for a serious revolutionary to believe in fairy-tales? There is an element of reality in every fairy-tale. If you told children fairy-tales in which the cock and the cat did not converse in human language they would not be interested. In the same way, if you tell the people that civil war will break out in Germany and also guarantee that instead of a clash with imperialism we shall have a field revolution on a world-wide scale,<sup>217</sup> the people will say you are deceiving them. In doing this you will be overcoming the difficulties with which history has confronted us only in your own minds, by your own wishes. It will be a good thing if the German proletariat is able to take action. But have you measured it, have you discovered an instrument that will show that the German revolution will break out on such-and-such a day? No, you do not know that, and neither do we. You are staking everything on this card. If the revolution breaks out, everything is saved. Of course! But if it does not turn out as we desire, if it does not achieve victory tomorrow—what then? Then the masses will say to you, you acted like gamblers—you staked everything on a fortunate turn of events that did not take place, you proved unfitted for the situation that actually arose instead of the world revolution, which will inevitably come, but which has not yet reached maturity.

A period has set in of severe defeats, inflicted by imperialism, which is armed to the teeth, upon a country which has demobilised its army, which had to demobilise. What I predicted has come to pass; instead of the Brest peace we have a much more humiliating peace, and the blame for this rests upon those who refused to accept the former peace. We knew that through the fault of the army we were concluding peace with imperialism. We sat at the table beside Hoffmann and not Liebknecht—and in doing so we assisted the German revolution. But now you are assisting



German imperialism, because you have surrendered wealth valued at millions in guns and shells; and anybody who had seen the state—the incredible state—of the army could have predicted this. Everyone of integrity who came from the front said that had the Germans made the slightest attack we should have perished inevitably and absolutely. We should have fallen prey to the enemy within a few days.

Having been taught this lesson, we shall overcome our split, our crisis, however severe the disease may be, because an immeasurably more reliable ally will come to our assistance—the world revolution. When the ratification of this Peace of Tilsit,<sup>218</sup> this unbelievable peace, more humiliating and predatory than the Brest peace, is spoken of, I say: certainly, yes. We must do this because we look at things from the point of view of the masses. Any attempt to apply the tactics applied internally in one country between October and November—the triumphant period of the revolution—to apply them with the aid of our imagination to the progress of events in the world revolution, is doomed to failure. When it is said that the respite is a fantasy, when a newspaper called *Kommunist*<sup>219</sup>—from the word “Commune”, I suppose—when this paper fills column after column with attempts to refute the respite theory, I say that I have lived through quite a lot of factional conflicts and splits and so I have a great deal of experience; and I must say that it is clear to me that this disease will not be cured by the old method of factional Party splits because events will cure it more quickly. Life is marching forward very quickly. In this respect it is magnificent. History is driving its locomotive so fast that before the editors of *Kommunist* bring out their next issue the majority of the workers in Petrograd will have begun to be disappointed in its ideas, because events are proving that the respite is a fact. We are now signing a peace treaty, we have a respite, we are taking advantage of it the better to defend our fatherland—because had we been at war we should have had an army fleeing in panic which would have had to be stopped, and which our comrades cannot and could not stop, because war is more powerful than sermons, more powerful than ten thousand arguments. Since they did not understand the objective situation they could not hold back the army, and cannot do so. This sick army infected the whole organism, and another unparalleled defeat was inflicted upon us. German imperialism struck another blow at the revolution, a severe blow, because we allowed ourselves to face the blows of imperialism without machine-guns. Meanwhile, we shall take advantage of this breathing-space to persuade the people to unite and fight, to say to the Russian workers and peasants: “Organise self-discipline, strict discipline, otherwise you will have to remain lying under

the German jackboot as you are lying now, as you will inevitably have to lie until the people learn to fight and to create an army capable, not of running away, but of bearing untold suffering." It is inevitable, because the German revolution has not yet begun, and we cannot guarantee that it will come tomorrow.

That is why the respite theory, which is totally rejected in the flood of articles in *Kommunist*, is advanced by reality. Everyone can see that the respite is a fact, that everyone is taking advantage of it. We believed that we would lose Petrograd in a few days when the advancing German troops were only a few days' march away, and when our best sailors and the Putilov workers,<sup>220</sup> notwithstanding all their great enthusiasm, remained alone, when incredible chaos and panic broke out, which compelled our troops to flee all the way to Gatchina, and when we had cases of positions being recaptured that had never been lost—by a telegraph operator, arriving at the station, taking his place at the key and wiring, "No Germans in sight. We have occupied the station." A few hours later I received a telephone communication from the Commissariat of Railways informing me, "We have occupied the next station. We are approaching Yamburg. No Germans in sight. Telegraph operator at his post." That is the kind of thing we had. This is the real history of the eleven days' war.<sup>221</sup> It was described to us by sailors and Putilov workers, who ought to be brought to the Congress of Soviets. Let them tell the truth. It is a frightfully bitter, disappointing, painful and humiliating truth, but it is a hundred times more useful, it can be understood by the Russian people.

One may dream about the field revolution on a world-wide scale, for it will come. Everything will come in due time; but for the time being, set to work to establish self-discipline, subordination before all else, so that we can have exemplary order, so that the workers for at least one hour in twenty-four may train to fight. This is a little more difficult than relating beautiful fairy-tales. This is what we can do today; in this way you will help the German revolution, the world revolution. We do not know how many days the respite will last, but we have got it. We must demobilise the army as quickly as possible, because it is a sick organ; meanwhile, we will assist the Finnish revolution.

Yes, of course, we are violating the treaty; we have violated it thirty or forty times. Only children can fail to understand that in an epoch like the present, when a long painful period of emancipation is setting in, which has only just created and raised the Soviet power three stages in its development—only children can fail to understand that in this case there must be a long, circumspect struggle. The shameful peace treaty is rous-

ing protest, but when comrades from *Kommunist* talk about war they appeal to sentiment and forget that the people are clenching their fists with rage, are "seeing red". What do they say? "A class-conscious revolutionary will never live through this, will never submit to such a disgrace." Their newspaper bears the title *Kommunist*, but it should bear the title *Szlachcic*\* because it looks at things from the point of view of the *szlachcic* who, dying in a beautiful pose, sword in hand, said: "Peace is disgraceful, war is honourable." They argue from the point of view of the *szlachcic*; I argue from the point of view of the peasant.

If I accept peace when the army is in flight, and must be in flight if it is not to lose thousands of men, I accept it in order to prevent things from getting worse. Is the treaty really shameful? Why, every sober-minded peasant and worker will say I am right, because they understand that peace is a means of gathering forces. History knows—I have referred to it more than once—the case of the liberation of the Germans from Napoleon after the Peace of Tilsit. I deliberately called the peace a Peace of Tilsit although we did not undertake to do what had been stipulated in that treaty, we did not undertake to provide troops to assist the victor to conquer other nations—things like that have happened in history, and will happen to us if we continue to place our hopes in the field revolution on a world-wide scale. Take care that history does not impose upon you this form of military slavery as well. And before the socialist revolution is victorious in all countries the Soviet Republic may be reduced to slavery. At Tilsit, Napoleon compelled the Germans to accept incredibly disgraceful peace terms. That peace had to be signed several times. The Hoffmann of those days—Napoleon—time and again caught the Germans violating the peace treaty, and the present Hoffmann will catch us at it. Only we shall take care that he does not catch us soon.

The last war has been a bitter, painful, but serious lesson for the Russian people. It has taught them to organise, to become disciplined, to obey, to establish a discipline that will be exemplary. Learn discipline from the Germans; for, if we do not, we, as a people, are doomed, we shall live in eternal slavery.

This way, and no other, has been the way of history. History tells us that peace is a respite for war, war is a means of obtaining a somewhat better or somewhat worse peace. At Brest the relation of forces corresponded to a peace imposed upon the one who has been defeated, but it was not a humiliating peace. The

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\* *Szlachcic*—a Polish nobleman.—Ed.



relation of forces at Pskov corresponded to a disgraceful, more humiliating peace; and in Petrograd and Moscow, at the next stage, a peace four times more humiliating will be dictated to us. We do not say that the Soviet power is only a form, as our young Moscow friends<sup>222</sup> have said, we do not say that the content can be sacrificed for this or that revolutionary principle. We do say, let the Russian people understand that they must become disciplined and organised, and then they will be able to withstand all the Tilsit peace treaties. The whole history of wars of liberation shows that when these wars involved large masses liberation came quickly. We say, since history marches forward in this way, we shall have to abandon peace for war, and this may happen within the next few days. Everyone must be prepared. I have not the slightest shadow of doubt that the Germans are preparing near Narva, if it is true that it has not been taken, as all the newspapers say; if not in Narva, then near Narva, if not in Pskov, then near Pskov, the Germans are grouping their regular army, making ready their railways, to capture Petrograd at the next jump. And this beast can jump very well. He has proved that. He will jump again. There is not a shadow of doubt about that. That is why we must be prepared, we must not brag, but must be able to take advantage of even a single day of respite, because we can take advantage of even one day's respite to evacuate Petrograd, the capture of which will cause unprecedented suffering to hundreds of thousands of our proletarians. I say again that I am ready to sign, and that I consider it my duty to sign, a treaty twenty times, a hundred times more humiliating, in order to gain at least a few days in which to evacuate Petrograd, because by that I will alleviate the sufferings of the workers, who otherwise may fall under the yoke of the Germans; by that I facilitate the removal from Petrograd of all the materials, gunpowder, etc., which we need; because I am a defencist, because I stand for the preparation of an army, even in the most remote rear, where our present, demobilised, sick army is being healed.

We do not know how long the respite will last—we will try to take advantage of the situation. Perhaps the respite will last longer, perhaps it will last only a few days. Anything may happen, no one knows, or can know, because all the major powers are bound, restricted, compelled to fight on several fronts. Hoffmann's behaviour is determined first by the need to smash the Soviet Republic; secondly, by the fact that he has to wage war on a number of fronts, and thirdly, by the fact that the revolution in Germany is maturing, is growing, and Hoffmann knows this. He cannot, as some assert, take Petrograd and Moscow this very minute. But he may do so tomorrow, that is quite possible. I



repeat that at a moment when the army is obviously sick, when we are taking advantage of every opportunity, come what may, to get at least one day's respite, we say that every serious revolutionary who is linked with the masses and who knows what war is, what the masses are, must discipline the masses, must heal them, must try to arouse them for a new war—every such revolutionary will admit that we are right, will admit that any disgraceful peace is proper, because it is in the interests of the proletarian revolution and the regeneration of Russia, because it will help to get rid of the sick organ. As every sensible man understands, by signing this peace treaty we do not put a stop to our workers' revolution; everyone understands that by concluding peace with the Germans we do not stop rendering military aid; we are sending arms to the Finns, but not military units, which turn out to be unfit.

Perhaps we will accept war; perhaps tomorrow we will surrender even Moscow and then go over to the offensive; we will move our army against the enemy's army if the necessary turn in the mood of the people takes place. This turn is developing and perhaps much time is required, but it will come, when the great mass of the people will not say what they are saying now. I am compelled to accept the harshest peace terms because I cannot say to myself that this time has arrived. When the time of regeneration arrives everyone will realise it, will see that the Russian is no fool; he sees, he will understand that for the time being we must refrain, that this slogan must be carried through—and this is the main task of our Party Congress and of the Congress of Soviets.

We must learn to work in a new way. That is immensely more difficult, but it is by no means hopeless. It will not break Soviet power if we do not break it ourselves by utterly senseless adventurism. The time will come when the people will say, we will not permit ourselves to be tortured any longer. But this will take place only if we do not agree to this adventure but prove able to work under harsh conditions and under the unprecedentedly humiliating treaty we signed the other day, because a war, or a peace treaty, cannot solve such a historical crisis. Because of their monarchic organisation the German people were fettered in 1807, when after several humiliating peace treaties, which were transformed into respites to be followed by new humiliations and new infringements, they signed the Peace of Tilsit. The Soviet organisation of the people makes our task easier.

We should have but one slogan—to learn the art of war properly and put the railways in order. To wage a socialist revolutionary war without railways would be rank treachery. We must produce order and we must produce all the energy and all

the strength that will produce the best that is in the revolution.

Grasp even an hour's respite if it is given you, in order to maintain contact with the remote rear and there create new armies. Abandon illusions for which real events have punished you and will punish you more severely in the future. An epoch of most grievous defeats is ahead of us, it is with us now, we must be able to reckon with it, we must be prepared for persistent work in conditions of illegality, in conditions of downright slavery to the Germans; it is no use painting it in bright colours, it is a real Peace of Tilsit. If we are able to act in this way, then, in spite of defeats, we shall be able to say with absolute certainty—victory will be ours. (*Applause.*)

## 2

**REPLY TO THE DEBATE ON THE POLITICAL REPORT  
OF THE CENTRAL COMMITTEE  
MARCH 8**

Comrades, let me begin with some relatively minor remarks, let me begin from the end. At the end of his speech Comrade Bukharin went so far as to compare us to Petlyura. If he thinks that is so, how can he remain with us in the same party? Isn't it just empty talk? If things were really as he said, we should not, of course, be members of the same party. The fact that we are together shows that we are ninety per cent in agreement with Bukharin. It is true he added a few revolutionary phrases about our wanting to betray the Ukraine. I am sure it is not worth while talking about such obvious nonsense. I shall return to Comrade Ryazanov, and here I want to say that in the same way as an exception that occurs once in ten years proves the rule, so has Comrade Ryazanov chanced to say a serious word. (*Applause.*) He said that Lenin was surrendering space to gain time. That is almost philosophical reasoning. This time it happened that we heard from Comrade Ryazanov a serious phrase—true it is only a phrase—which fully expresses the case; to gain time I want to surrender space to the actual victor. That and that alone is the whole point at issue. All else is mere talk—the need for a revolutionary war, rousing the peasantry, etc. When Comrade Bukharin pictures things as though there could not be two opinions as to whether war is possible and says—"ask any soldier" (I wrote down his actual words)—since he puts the question this way and wants to ask any soldier, I'll answer him. "Any soldier" turned out to be a French officer that I had a talk with. That French officer looked at me, with anger in his eyes, of course—had I not sold Russia to the Germans?—and said: "I am a royalist, I am also a champion of the monarchy in France, a champion of the defeat of Germany, so don't think I support Soviet power—who would, if he was a royalist?—but I favour your signing the Brest Treaty because it's necessary."<sup>223</sup> That's "asking any soldier" for you. Any soldier would say what I have said—we had to sign the Brest Treaty. If it now emerges from Bukharin's speech that our differences have greatly diminished, it

is only because his supporters have concealed the chief point on which we differ.

Now that Bukharin is thundering against us for having demoralised the masses, he is perfectly correct, except that it is himself and not us that he is attacking. Who caused this mess in the Central Committee?—You, Comrade Bukharin. (*Laughter.*) No matter how much you shout “No”, the truth will out; we are here in our own comradely family, we are at our own Congress, we have nothing to hide, the truth must be told. And the truth is that there were three trends in the Central Committee. On February 17 Lomov and Bukharin did not vote. I have asked for the record of the voting to be reproduced and copies made so that every Party member who wishes to do so can go into the secretariat and see how people voted—the historic voting of January 21, which shows that they wavered and we did not, not in the least; we said, “Let us accept the Brest peace—you’ll get nothing better—so as to prepare for a revolutionary war”. Now we have gained five days in which to evacuate Petrograd. Now the manifesto signed by Krylenko and Podvoisky<sup>224</sup> has been published; they were not among the Lefts, and Bukharin insulted them by saying that Krylenko had been “dragged in”, as though we had invented what Krylenko reported. We agree in full with what they said; that is how matters stand, for it was these army men who gave proof of what I had said; and you dismiss the matter by saying the Germans won’t attack. How can this situation be compared with October, when the question of equipment did not arise? If you want to take facts into consideration, then consider this one—that the disagreement arose over the statement that we cannot start a war that is obviously to our disadvantage. When Comrade Bukharin began his concluding speech with the thunderous question “Is war possible in the near future?” he greatly surprised me. I answer without hesitation—yes, it is possible, but today we must accept peace. There is no contradiction in this.

After these brief remarks I shall give detailed answers to previous speakers. As far as Radek is concerned I must make an exception. But there was another speech, that of Comrade Uritsky. What was there in that speech apart from Canossa,<sup>225</sup> “treachery”, “retreated”, “adapted”? What is all this about? Haven’t you borrowed your criticism from a Left Socialist-Revolutionary newspaper? Comrade Bubnov read us a statement submitted to the Central Committee by those of its members who consider themselves very Left-wing and who gave us a striking example of a demonstration before the eyes of the whole world—“the behaviour of the Central Committee strikes a blow at the international proletariat”. Is that anything but an empty phrase? “Demon-



strate weakness before the eyes of the whole world!" How are we demonstrating? By proposing peace? Because our army has run away? Have we not proved that to begin war with Germany at this moment, and not to accept the Brest peace, would mean showing the world that our army is sick and does not want to give battle? Bubnov's statement was quite empty when he asserted that the wavering was entirely of our making—it was due to our army's being sick. Sooner or later, there had to be a respite. If we had had the correct strategy we should have had a month's breathing-space, but since your strategy was incorrect we have only five days—even that is good. The history of war shows that even days are sometimes enough to halt a panic-stricken army. Anyone who does not accept, does not conclude this devilish peace now, is a man of empty phrases and not a strategist. That is the pity of it. When Central Committee members write to me about "demonstrations of weakness", "treachery", they are writing the most damaging, empty, childish phrases. We demonstrated our weakness by attempting to fight at a time when the demonstration should not have been made, when an offensive against us was inevitable. As for the peasants of Pskov, we shall bring them to the Congress of Soviets to relate how the Germans treat people, so that they can change the mood of the soldier in panic-stricken flight and he will begin to recover from his panic and say, "This is certainly not the war the Bolsheviki promised to put an end to, this is a new war the Germans are waging against Soviet power." Then recovery will come. But you raise a question that cannot be answered. Nobody knows how long the respite will last.

Now I must say something about Comrade Trotsky's position. There are two aspects to his activities; when he began the negotiations at Brest and made splendid use of them for agitation, we all agreed with Comrade Trotsky. He has quoted part of a conversation with me, but I must add that it was agreed between us that we would hold out until the Germans presented an ultimatum, and then we would give way. The Germans deceived us—they stole five days out of seven from us.<sup>226</sup> Trotsky's tactics were correct as long as they were aimed at delaying matters; they became incorrect when it was announced that the state of war had been terminated but peace had not been concluded. I proposed quite definitely that peace be concluded. We could not have got anything better than the Brest peace. It is now clear to everybody that we would have had a month's respite and that we would not have lost anything. Since history has swept that away it is not worth recalling, but it is funny to hear Bukharin say, "Events will show that we were right." I was right because I wrote about it back in 1915—

"We must prepare to wage war, it is inevitable, it is coming, it will come."<sup>\*</sup> But we had to accept peace and not try vain blustering. And because war is coming, it was all the more necessary to accept peace, and now we are at least making easier the evacuation of Petrograd—we have made it easier. That is a fact. And when Comrade Trotsky makes fresh demands, "promise not to conclude peace with Vinnichenko", I say that under no circumstances will I take that obligation upon myself.<sup>227</sup> If the Congress accepts this obligation, neither I, nor those who agree with me, will accept responsibility for it. It would mean tying our hands again with a formal decision instead of following a clear line of manoeuvre—retreat when possible, and at times attack. In war you must never tie yourself down with formal decisions. It is ridiculous not to know the history of war, not to know that a treaty is a means of gathering strength—I have already mentioned Prussian history. There are some people who are just like children, they think that if we have signed a treaty we have sold ourselves to Satan and have gone to hell. That is simply ridiculous when it is quite obvious from the history of war that the conclusion of a treaty after defeat is a means of gathering strength. There have been cases in history of one war following immediately after another, we have all forgotten that, we see that the old war is turning into. . . .<sup>\*\*</sup> If you like, you can bind yourselves for ever with formal decisions and then hand over all the responsible posts to the Left Socialist-Revolutionaries. We shall not accept responsibility for it. There is not the least desire for a split here. I am sure that events will teach you—March 12<sup>228</sup> is not far away, and you will obtain plenty of material.

Comrade Trotsky says that it will be treachery in the full sense of the word. I maintain that that is an absolutely wrong point of view. To demonstrate this concretely, I will give you an example: two men are walking together and are attacked by ten men, one fights and the other runs away—that is treachery; but suppose we have two armies of a hundred thousand each and there are five armies against them; one army is surrounded by two hundred thousand, and the other must go to its aid; knowing that the other three hundred thousand of the enemy are ambushed to trap it, should the second army go to the aid of the first? It should not. That is not treachery, that is not cowardice; a simple increase in numbers has changed all concepts, any soldier knows this; it is no longer a personal concept. By acting in this way I preserve my army; let the other

\* See *Collected Works*, Vol. 21, p. 404.—Ed.

\*\* Several words are missing in the verbatim report.—Ed.

army be captured, I shall be able to renew mine, I have allies, I shall wait till the allies arrive. That is the only way to argue; when military arguments are mixed up with others, you get nothing but empty phrases. That is not the way to conduct politics.

We have done everything that could be done. By signing the treaty we have saved Petrograd, even if only for a few days. (The secretaries and stenographers should not think of putting that on record.) The treaty requires us to withdraw our troops from Finland, troops that are clearly no good, but we are not forbidden to take arms into Finland. If Petrograd had fallen a few days ago, the city would have been in a panic and we should not have been able to take anything away; but in those five days we have helped our Finnish comrades—how much I shall not say, they know it themselves.

The statement that we have betrayed Finland is just a childish phrase. We helped the Finns precisely by retreating before the Germans in good time. Russia will never perish just because Petrograd falls, Comrade Bukharin is a thousand times right in that, but if we manoeuvre in Bukharin's way we may ruin a good revolution. (*Laughter.*)

We have not betrayed either Finland or the Ukraine. No class-conscious worker would accuse us of this. We are helping as best we can. We have not taken one good man away from our army and shall not do so. You say that Hoffmann will catch us—of course he may, I do not doubt it, but how many days it will take him, he does not know and nobody knows. Furthermore, your arguments about his catching us are arguments about the political alignment of forces, of which I shall speak later.

Now that I have explained why I am absolutely unable to accept Trotsky's proposal—you cannot conduct politics in that way—I must say that Radek has given us an example of how far the comrades at our Congress have departed from empty phrases such as Uritsky still sticks to. I certainly cannot accuse him of empty phrases in that speech. He said, "There is not a shadow of treachery, not a shadow of disgrace, because it is clear that you retreated in the face of overpowering military force." That is an appraisal that destroys Trotsky's position. When Radek said, "We must grit our teeth and prepare our forces," he was right—I agree with that in full—don't bluster, grit your teeth and make preparations.

Grit your teeth, don't bluster and muster your forces. The revolutionary war will come, there is no disagreement on this; the difference of opinion is on the Peace of Tilsit—should we conclude it or not? The worst of it is that we have a sick army, and the Central Committee, therefore, must have a firm line



and not differences of opinion or the middle line that Comrade Bukharin also supported. I am not painting the respite in bright colours; nobody knows how long it will last and I don't know. The efforts that are being made to force me to say how long it will last are ridiculous. As long as we hold the main lines we are helping the Ukraine and Finland. We are taking advantage of the respite, manoeuvring and retreating.

The German worker cannot now be told that the Russians are being awkward, for it is now clear that German and Japanese imperialism is attacking—it will be clear to everybody; apart from a desire to strangle the Bolsheviks, the Germans also want to do some strangling in the West, everything is all mixed up, and in this war we shall have to and must be able to manoeuvre.

With regard to Comrade Bukharin's speech, I must say that when he runs short of arguments he puts forward something in the Uritsky manner and says, "The treaty disgraces us." Here no arguments are needed; if we have been disgraced we should collect our papers and run, but, although we have been "disgraced", I do not think our position has been shaken. Comrade Bukharin attempted to analyse the class basis of our position, but instead of doing so told us an anecdote about a deceased Moscow economist. When you discovered some connection between our tactics and food speculation—this was really ridiculous—you forgot that the attitude of the class as a whole, the class, and not the food speculators, shows that the Russian bourgeoisie and their hangers-on—the *Dyelo Naroda* and *Novaya Zhizn* writers—are bending all their efforts to goad us on to war. You do not stress that class fact. To declare war on Germany at the moment would be to fall for the provocation of the Russian bourgeoisie. That is not new because it is the surest—I do not say absolutely certain, because nothing is absolutely certain—the surest way of getting rid of us today. When Comrade Bukharin said that events were on their side, that in the long run we would recognise revolutionary war, he was celebrating an easy victory since we prophesied the inevitability of a revolutionary war in 1915. Our differences were on the following—would the Germans attack or not; that we should have declared the state of war terminated; that in the interests of revolutionary war we should have to retreat, surrendering territory to gain time. Strategy and politics prescribe the most disgusting peace treaty imaginable. Our differences will all disappear once we recognise these tactics.



## 3

**RESOLUTION ON WAR AND PEACE<sup>229</sup>**

The Congress recognises the necessity to confirm the extremely harsh, humiliating peace treaty with Germany that has been concluded by Soviet power in view of our lack of an army, in view of the most unhealthy state of the demoralised army at the front, in view of the need to take advantage of any, even the slightest, possibility of obtaining a respite before imperialism launches its offensive against the Soviet Socialist Republic.

In the present period of the era that has begun, the era of the socialist revolution, numerous military attacks on Soviet Russia by the imperialist powers (both from the West and from the East) are historically inevitable. The historical inevitability of such attacks at a time when both internal, class relations and international relations are extremely tense, can at any moment, even immediately, within the next few days, lead to fresh imperialist aggressive wars against the socialist movement in general and against the Russian Socialist Soviet Republic in particular.

The Congress therefore declares that it recognises the primary and fundamental task of our Party, of the entire vanguard of the class-conscious proletariat and of Soviet power, to be the adoption of the most energetic, ruthlessly determined and Draconian measures to improve the self-discipline and discipline of the workers and peasants of Russia, to explain the inevitability of Russia's historic advance towards a socialist, patriotic war of liberation, to create everywhere soundly co-ordinated mass organisations held together by a single iron will, organisations that are capable of concerted, valorous action in their day-to-day efforts and especially at critical moments in the life of the people, and, lastly, to train systematically and comprehensively in military matters and military operations the entire adult population of both sexes.

The Congress considers the only reliable guarantee of consolidation of the socialist revolution that has been victorious

in Russia to be its conversion into a world working-class revolution.

The Congress is confident that the step taken by Soviet power in view of the present alignment of forces in the world arena was, from the standpoint of the interests of the world revolution, inevitable and necessary.

Confident that the working-class revolution is maturing persistently in all belligerent countries and is preparing the full and inevitable defeat of imperialism, the Congress declares that the socialist proletariat of Russia will support the fraternal revolutionary movement of the proletariat of all countries with all its strength and with every means at its disposal.

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## 4

**ADDENDUM TO THE RESOLUTION ON WAR AND PEACE  
MARCH 8**

The Congress deems it essential not to publish the resolution that has been adopted and requires of all Party members that they keep this resolution secret<sup>230</sup>. The only communication to be made to the press—and that not today but on the instructions of the Central Committee—will be that the Congress is in favour of ratification.

Furthermore, the Congress lays special stress on the authority granted to the Central Committee to denounce at any moment all peace treaties concluded with imperialist and bourgeois states, and also to declare war on them.

## 5

**REPORT ON THE REVIEW OF THE PROGRAMME<sup>231</sup>**  
**AND ON CHANGING THE NAME OF THE PARTY<sup>232</sup>**  
**MARCH 8**

Comrades, as you know, a fairly comprehensive Party discussion on changing the name of the Party has developed since April 1917 and the Central Committee has therefore been able to arrive at an immediate decision that will probably not give rise to considerable dispute—there may even be practically none at all; the Central Committee proposes to you that the name of our Party be changed to the Russian Communist Party, with the word “Bolsheviks” added to it in brackets. We all recognise the necessity for this addition because the word “Bolshevik” has not only acquired rights of citizenship in the political life of Russia but also throughout the entire foreign press, which in a general way keeps track of events in Russia. It has already been explained in our press that the name “Social-Democratic Party” is scientifically incorrect. When the workers set up their own state they realised that the old concept of democracy—bourgeois democracy—had been surpassed in the process of the development of our revolution. We have arrived at a type of democracy that has never existed anywhere in Western Europe. It has its prototype only in the Paris Commune, and Engels said with regard to the Paris Commune that it was not a state in the proper sense of the word.<sup>233</sup> In short, since the working people themselves are undertaking to administer the state and establish armed forces that support the given state system, the special government apparatus is disappearing, the special apparatus for a certain state coercion is disappearing, and we cannot therefore uphold democracy in its old form.

On the other hand, as we begin socialist reforms we must have a clear conception of the goal towards which these reforms are in the final analysis directed, that is, the creation of a communist society that does not limit itself to the expropriation of factories, the land and the means of production, does not confine itself to strict accounting for, and control of, production



and distribution of products, but goes farther towards implementing the principle "From each according to his ability, to each according to his needs". That is why the name of Communist Party is the only one that is scientifically correct. The objection that it may cause us to be confused with the anarchists was immediately rejected by the Central Committee on the grounds that the anarchists never call themselves simply Communists but always add something to that name. In this respect we may mention the many varieties of socialism, but they do not cause the confusion of the Social-Democrats with social-reformers, or national socialists, or any similar parties.

On the other hand, the most important argument in favour of changing the name of the Party is that up to now the old official socialist parties in all the leading European countries have still not got rid of their intoxication with social-chauvinism and social-patriotism that led to the complete collapse of European official socialism during the present war, so that up to now almost all official socialist parties have been a real hindrance to the working-class revolutionary socialist movement, a real encumbrance to it. And our Party, which at the present time undoubtedly enjoys the greatest sympathy of the masses of the working people of all countries—our Party must make the most decisive, sharp, clear and unambiguous statement that is possible to the effect that it has broken off connections with that old official socialism, for which purpose a change in the name of the Party will be the most effective means.

Further, comrades, the much more difficult question was that of the theoretical part of the Programme and of its practical and political part. As far as the theoretical part of the Programme is concerned, we have some material—the Moscow and Petrograd symposia on the review of the Programme, which have been published<sup>234</sup>; the two main theoretical organs of our Party, *Prosveshcheniye* published in Petrograd, and *Spartak*<sup>235</sup> published in Moscow, have carried articles substantiating certain trends in changing the theoretical part of the Programme of our Party. In this sphere we have a certain amount of material. Two main points of view are to be seen which, in my opinion, do not diverge, at any rate radically, on matters of principle; one point of view, the one I defended, is that we have no reason to reject the old theoretical part of our Programme, and that it would be actually incorrect to do so. We have only to add to it an analysis of imperialism as the highest stage of the development of capitalism and also an analysis of the era of the socialist revolution, proceeding from the fact that the era of the socialist revolution has begun. Whatever may be the fate of our revolution, of our contingent of the international proletarian

army, whatever may be the future complications of the revolution, the objective situation of the imperialist countries embroiled in a war that has reduced the most advanced countries to starvation, ruin and barbarity, that situation, in any case, is hopeless. And here I must repeat what Frederick Engels said thirty years ago, in 1887, when appraising the probable prospects of a European war. He said that crowns would lie around in Europe by the dozen and nobody would want to pick them up; he said that incredible ruin would fall to the lot of the European countries, and that there could be only one outcome to the horrors of a European war—he put it this way—“either the victory of the working class or the creation of conditions that would make that victory possible and necessary”.<sup>236</sup> Engels expressed himself on this score with exceptional precision and caution. Unlike those people who distort Marxism and offer their belated pseudo-philosophising about socialism being impossible in conditions of ruin, Engels realised full well that every war, even in an advanced society, would create not only devastation, barbarity, torment, calamities for the masses, who would drown in blood, and that there could be no guarantee that it would lead to the victory of socialism; he said it would be “either the victory of the working class or the creation of conditions that would make that victory possible and necessary”, i.e., that there was, consequently, the possibility of a number of difficult stages of transition in view of the tremendous destruction of culture and the means of production, but that the result could be only the rise of the working class, the vanguard of all working people, and the beginning of its taking over power into its own hands for the creation of a socialist society. For no matter to what extent culture has been destroyed, it cannot be removed from history; it will be difficult to restore but no destruction will ever mean the complete disappearance of that culture. Some part of it, some material remains of that culture will be indestructible, the difficulties will be only in restoring it. There you have one point of view—that we must retain the old Programme and add to it an analysis of imperialism and of the beginning of the social revolution.

I expressed that point of view in the draft Programme that I have published.\* Another draft was published by Comrade Sokolnikov in the Moscow symposium. The second point of view has been expressed in our private conversations, in particular by Comrade Bukharin, and by Comrade V. Smirnov in the press, in the Moscow symposium. This point of view is that the old theoretical part of our Programme should be completely or

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\* See *Collected Works*, Vol. 24, pp. 459-63.—Ed.

almost completely eliminated and replaced by a new part that does not analyse the development of commodity production and capitalism, as the present Programme does, but analyses the contemporary, highest stage of capitalist development—imperialism—and the immediate transition to the epoch of the social revolution. I do not think that these two points of view diverge radically and in principle, but I shall defend my point of view. It seems to me that it would be theoretically incorrect to eliminate the old programme that analyses the development from commodity production to capitalism. There is nothing incorrect in it. That is how things were and how they are, for commodity production begot capitalism and capitalism led to imperialism. Such is the general historical perspective, and the fundamentals of socialism should not be forgotten. No matter what the further complications of the struggle may be, no matter what occasional zigzags we may have to contend with (there will be very many of them—we have seen from experience what gigantic turns the history of the revolution has made, and so far it is only in our own country; matters will be much more complicated and proceed much more rapidly, the rate of development will be more furious and the turns will be more intricate when the revolution becomes a European revolution)—in order not to lose our way in these zigzags, these sharp turns in history, in order to retain the general perspective, to be able to see the scarlet thread that joins up the entire development of capitalism and the entire road to socialism, the road we naturally imagine as straight, and which we must imagine as straight in order to see the beginning, the continuation and the end—in real life it will never be straight, it will be incredibly involved—in order not to lose our way in these twists and turns, in order not to get lost at times when we are taking steps backward, times of retreat and temporary defeat or when history or the enemy throws us back—in order not to get lost, it is, in my opinion, important not to discard our old, basic Programme; the only theoretically correct line is to retain it. Today we have reached only the first stage of transition from capitalism to socialism here in Russia. History has not provided us with that peaceful situation that was theoretically assumed for a certain time, and which is desirable for us, and which would enable us to pass through these stages of transition speedily. We see immediately that the civil war has made many things difficult in Russia, and that the civil war is interwoven with a whole series of wars. Marxists have never forgotten that violence must inevitably accompany the collapse of capitalism in its entirety and the birth of socialist society. That violence will constitute a period of world history, a whole era of various kinds of wars, imperialist wars, civil



wars inside countries, the intermingling of the two, national wars liberating the nationalities oppressed by the imperialists and by various combinations of imperialist powers that will inevitably enter into various alliances in the epoch of tremendous state-capitalist and military trusts and syndicates. This epoch, an epoch of gigantic cataclysms, of mass decisions forcibly imposed by war, of crises, has begun—that we can see clearly—and it is only the beginning. We therefore have no reason to discard everything bearing on the definition of commodity production in general, of capitalism in general. We have only just taken the first steps towards shaking off capitalism altogether and beginning the transition to socialism. We do not know and we cannot know how many stages of transition to socialism there will be. That depends on when the full-scale European socialist revolution begins and on whether it will deal with its enemies and enter upon the smooth path of socialist development easily and rapidly or whether it will do so slowly. We do not know this, and the programme of a Marxist party must be based on facts that have been established with absolute certainty. The power of our Programme—the programme that has found its confirmation in all the complications of the revolution—is in that alone. Marxists must build up their programme on this basis alone. We must proceed from facts that have been established with absolute certainty, facts that show how the development of exchange and commodity production became a dominant historical phenomenon throughout the world, how it led to capitalism and capitalism developed into imperialism; that is an absolutely definite fact that must first and foremost be recorded in our Programme. That imperialism begins the era of the social revolution is also a fact, one that is obvious to us, and about which we must speak clearly. By stating this fact in our Programme we are holding high the torch of the social revolution before the whole world, not as an agitational speech, but as a new Programme that says to the peoples of Western Europe, “Here is what you and we have gathered from the experience of capitalist development. This is what capitalism was, this is how it developed into imperialism, and here is the epoch of the social revolution that is beginning, and in which it is our lot to play, chronologically, the first role.” We shall proclaim this manifesto before all civilised countries; it will not only be a fervent appeal but will be substantiated with absolute accuracy and will derive from facts recognised by all socialist parties. It will make all the clearer the contradiction between the tactics of those parties that have now betrayed socialism and the theoretical premises which we all share, and which have entered the flesh and blood of every class-conscious worker—the rise of capitalism and its develop-



ment into imperialism. On the eve of imperialist wars the congresses at Chemnitz and Basle passed resolutions defining imperialism, and there is a flagrant contradiction between that definition and the present tactics of the social-traitors.<sup>237</sup> We must, therefore, repeat that which is basic in order to show the working people of Western Europe all the more clearly what we accuse their leaders of.

Such is the basis which I consider to be the only theoretically correct one on which to build a programme. The abandoning of the analysis of commodity production and capitalism as though it were old rubbish is not dictated by the historical nature of what is now happening, since we have not gone farther than the first steps in the transition from capitalism to socialism, and our transition is made more intricate by features that are specific to Russia and do not exist in most civilised countries. And so it is not only possible but inevitable that the stages of transition will be different in Europe; it would be theoretically incorrect to turn all attention to specific national stages of transition that are essential to us but may not be essential in Europe. We must begin with the general basis of the development of commodity production, the transition to capitalism and the growth of capitalism into imperialism. In this way we shall occupy and strengthen a theoretical position from which nobody without betraying socialism can shift us. From this we draw the equally inevitable conclusion—the era of the social revolution is beginning.

We draw this conclusion without departing from our basis of definitely proved facts.

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*.<sup>\*</sup> 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

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<sup>\*</sup> See pp. 283-376 of the present volume.—*Ed.*

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 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 slogans, 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

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\* See *Collected Works*, Vol. 27, pp. 152-58.—Ed.

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 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.

It is obvious that we cannot elaborate a programme at the moment. We must work out its basic premises and hand them over to a commission or to the Central Committee for the elaboration of the main theses. Or still more simply—the elaboration is possible on the basis of the resolution on the Brest-Litovsk Conference, which has already provided theses.\*\* Such a definition of Soviet power should be given on the basis of the experience of the Russian revolution, and followed by a proposal

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\* See *Collected Works*, Vol. 26, pp. 169-73.—*Ed.*

\*\* See pp. 602-03 of the present volume.—*Ed.*



for practical reforms. I think it is here, in the historical part, that mention should be made that the expropriation of the land and of industrial enterprises has begun. Here we shall present the concrete task of organising distribution, unifying the banks into one universal type and converting them into a network of state institutions covering the whole country and providing us with public book-keeping, accounting and control carried out by the population itself and forming the foundation for further socialist steps. I think that this part, being the most difficult, should be formulated as the concrete demands of our Soviet power—what we want to do at the moment, what reforms we intend to carry out in the sphere of banking policy, the organisation of production, the organisation of exchange, accountancy and control, the introduction of labour conscription, etc. When we are able to, we shall add what great or small measures or half-measures we have taken in that direction. Here we must state with absolute precision and clarity what has been begun and what has not been completed. We know full well that a large part of what has been begun has not been completed. Without any exaggeration, with full objectivity, without departing from the facts, we must state in our Programme what we have done and what we want to do. We shall show the European proletariat this truth and say, this must be done, so that they will say, such-and-such things the Russians are doing badly but we shall do them better. When this urge reaches the masses the socialist revolution will be invincible. The imperialist war is proceeding before the eyes of all people, a war that is nothing but a war of plunder. When the imperialist war exposes itself in the eyes of the world and becomes a war waged by all the imperialists against Soviet power, against socialism, it will give the proletariat of the West yet another push forward. That must be revealed, the war must be described as an alliance of the imperialists against the socialist movement. These are the general considerations that I think should be shared with you, and on the basis of which I now make the practical proposal to exchange basic views on that question and then, perhaps, elaborate a few fundamental theses here on the spot, and, if that should be found difficult, give up the idea and hand the question of the Programme over to the Central Committee or to a special commission that will be instructed, on the basis of the material available and of the shorthand or secretaries' detailed reports of the Congress, to draw up a Programme for the Party, which must immediately change its name. I am of the opinion that we can do this at the present time, and I think everybody will agree that with our Programme in the editorially unprepared state in which events found it, there is nothing else we can do. I am sure we can do

this in a few weeks. We have a sufficient number of theoreticians in all the trends of our Party to obtain a programme in a few weeks. There may be much that is erroneous in it, of course, to say nothing of editorial and stylistic inaccuracies, because we have not got months in which to settle down to it with the composure that is necessary for editorial work.

We shall correct all these errors in the course of our work in the full confidence that we are giving Soviet power an opportunity to implement the programme. If we at least state precisely, without departing from reality, that Soviet power is a new type of state, a form of the dictatorship of the proletariat, that we present democracy with different tasks, that we have translated the tasks of socialism from a general abstract formula—"the expropriation of the expropriators"—into such concrete formulas as the nationalisation of the banks and the land, that will be an important part of the Programme.

The land question must be reshaped so that we can see in it the first steps of the small peasantry wanting to take the side of the proletariat and help the socialist revolution, see how the peasants, for all their prejudices and all their old convictions, have set themselves the practical task of the transition to socialism. This is a fact, although we shall not impose it on other countries. The peasantry have shown, not in words but by their deeds, that they wish to help and are helping the proletariat that has taken power to put socialism into effect. It is wrong to accuse us of wanting to introduce socialism by force. We shall divide up the land justly, mainly from the point of view of the small farm. In doing this we give preference to communes and big labour co-operatives. We support the monopolising of the grain trade. We support, the peasantry have said, the confiscation of banks and factories. We are prepared to help the workers in implementing socialism. I think a fundamental law on the socialisation of the land should be published in all languages. This will be done, if it has not been done already.<sup>238</sup> That is an idea we shall state concretely in the Programme—it must be expressed theoretically without departing one single step from concretely established facts. It will be done differently in the West. Perhaps we are making mistakes, but we hope that the proletariat of the West will correct them. And we appeal to the European proletariat to help us in our work.

In this way we can work out our Programme in a few weeks, and the mistakes we make will be corrected as time goes on—we shall correct them ourselves. Those mistakes will be as light as feathers compared with the positive results that will be achieved.

## 6

**RESOLUTION ON CHANGING THE NAME OF THE PARTY  
AND THE PARTY PROGRAMME**

The Congress resolves that our Party (the Russian Social-Democratic Labour Party of Bolsheviks) be named henceforth the *Russian Communist Party*, with the word "Bolsheviks" added in brackets.

The Congress resolves to change the Programme of our Party, re-editing the theoretical part or adding to it a definition of imperialism and the era of the international socialist revolution that has begun.

Following this, the change in the political part of our Programme must consist in the most accurate and comprehensive definition possible of the new type of state, the Soviet Republic, as a form of the dictatorship of the proletariat and as a continuation of those achievements of the world working-class revolution which the Paris Commune began. The Programme must show that our Party does not reject the use even of bourgeois parliamentarism, should the course of the struggle push us back, for a time, to this historical stage which our revolution has now passed. But in any case and under all circumstances the Party will strive for a Soviet Republic as the highest, from the standpoint of democracy, type of state, as a form of the dictatorship of the proletariat, of abolition of the exploiters' yoke and of suppression of their resistance.

The economic, including agrarian, and educational and other parts of our Programme must be recast in the same spirit and direction. The centre of gravity must be a precise definition of the economic and other reforms begun by our Soviet power, with a definite statement of the immediate definite tasks which Soviet power has set itself, and which proceed from the practical steps we have already taken towards expropriating the expropriators.

The Congress instructs the special commission to compile, with the utmost urgency, a programme for our Party based on the points laid down and to have it approved as the Programme of our Party.

## 7

**RESOLUTION ON THE REFUSAL  
OF THE "LEFT COMMUNISTS" TO BE MEMBERS  
OF THE CENTRAL COMMITTEE**

The Congress is of the opinion that a refusal to enter the Central Committee in the situation at present obtaining in the Party is particularly undesirable, since such a refusal is in general impermissible in principle to those who desire the unity of the Party, and would today be a double threat to unity.<sup>239</sup>

The Congress declares that everyone can and should deny his responsibility for any step taken by the Central Committee, if he does not agree with it, by means of a declaration to that effect but not by leaving the Central Committee.

The Congress is firm in the hope that the comrades will, after a consultation with the mass organisations, withdraw their resignation; the Congress will, therefore, carry through elections without taking the statement of resignation into consideration.



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## THE CHIEF TASK OF OUR DAY<sup>240</sup>

*Thou art wretched, thou art abundant,  
Thou art mighty, thou art impotent  
—Mother Russia!<sup>241</sup>*

Human history these days is making a momentous and most difficult turn, a turn, one might say without the least exaggeration, of immense significance for the emancipation of the world. A turn from war to peace; a turn from a war between plunderers who are sending to the shambles millions of the working and exploited people for the sake of establishing a new system of dividing the spoils looted by the strongest of them, to a war of the oppressed against the oppressors for liberation from the yoke of capital; a turn from an abyss of suffering, anguish, starvation and degradation to the bright future of communist society, universal prosperity and enduring peace. No wonder that at the sharpest points of this sharp turn, when all around the old order is breaking down and collapsing with a terrible grinding crash, and the new order is being born amid indescribable suffering, there are some whose heads grow dizzy, some who are seized by despair, some who seek salvation from the at times too bitter reality in fine-sounding and alluring phrases.

It has been Russia's lot to see most clearly, and experience most keenly and painfully the sharpest of sharp turning-points in history as it swings round from imperialism towards the communist revolution. In the space of a few days we destroyed one of the oldest, most powerful, barbarous and brutal of monarchies. In the space of a few months we passed through a number of stages of collaboration with the bourgeoisie and of shaking off petty-bourgeois illusions, for which other countries have required decades. In the course of a few weeks, having overthrown the bourgeoisie, we crushed its open resistance in civil war. We passed in a victorious triumphal march of Bolshevism from one end of a vast country to the other. We raised the lowest strata of the working people oppressed by tsarism and the bourgeoisie to liberty and independent life. We established and consolidated a Soviet Republic, a new type of state, which is infinitely superior to, and more democratic than, the best of the bourgeois-parlia-

mentary republics. We established the dictatorship of the proletariat supported by the poor peasantry, and began a broadly conceived system of socialist reforms. We awakened the faith of the millions upon millions of workers of all countries in their own strength and kindled the fires of enthusiasm in them. Everywhere we issued the call for a world workers' revolution. We flung a challenge to the imperialist plunderers of all countries.

Then in a few days we were thrown to the ground by an imperialist plunderer, who fell upon the unarmed. He compelled us to sign an incredibly burdensome and humiliating peace—as tribute for having dared to tear ourselves, even for the shortest space of time, from the iron clutches of an imperialist war. The more ominously the shadow of a workers' revolution in his own country rises before the plunderer, the greater his ferocity in crushing and stifling Russia and tearing her to pieces.

We were compelled to sign a "Tilsit" peace. We need no self-deception. We must courageously look the bitter, unadorned truth straight in the face. We must measure fully, to the very bottom, that abyss of defeat, dismemberment, enslavement, and humiliation into which we have now been pushed. The more clearly we understand this, the firmer, the more steeled and tempered will be our will to liberation, our aspiration to rise again from enslavement to independence, and our unbending determination to ensure that at any price Russia ceases to be wretched and impotent and becomes mighty and abundant in the full meaning of these words.

And mighty and abundant she can become, for, after all, we still have sufficient territory and natural wealth left to us to supply each and all, if not with abundant, at least with adequate means of life. Our natural wealth, our man-power and the splendid impetus which the great revolution has given to the creative powers of the people are ample material to build a truly mighty and abundant Russia.

Russia will become mighty and abundant if she abandons all dejection and all phrase-making, if, with clenched teeth, she musters all her forces and strains every nerve and muscle, if she realises that salvation lies *only* along that road of world socialist revolution upon which we have set out. March forward along that road, undismayed by defeats, lay the firm foundation of socialist society stone by stone, work with might and main to establish discipline and self-discipline, consolidate everywhere organisation, order, efficiency, and the harmonious co-operation of all the forces of the people, introduce comprehensive accounting of and control over production and distribution—such is the way to build up military might and socialist might.

It would be unworthy of a genuine socialist who has suffered

grave defeat either to bluster or to give way to despair. It is not true that our position is hopeless and that all that remains for us is to choose between an "inglorious" death (inglorious from the point of view of the *szlachcic*), such as this harsh peace represents, and a "gallant" death in a hopeless fight. It is not true that by signing a "Tilsit" peace we have betrayed our ideals or our friends. We have betrayed nothing and nobody, we have not sanctified or covered up any lie, we have not refused to help a single friend or comrade in misfortune in every way we could and with everything at our disposal. A general who withdraws the remnants of his army into the heart of the country when it has been beaten or is in panic-stricken flight, or who, in extremity, shields this retreat by a harsh and humiliating peace, is not guilty of treachery towards that part of his army which he is powerless to help and which has been cut off by the enemy. Such a general performs his duty by choosing the only way of saving what can still be saved, by refusing to gamble recklessly, by not embellishing the bitter truth for the people, by "surrendering space in order to gain time", by taking advantage of *any and every* respite, even the briefest, in which to muster his forces and to allow his army to rest or recover, if it is affected by disintegration and demoralisation.

We have signed a "Tilsit" peace. When Napoleon I, in 1807, compelled Prussia to sign the Peace of Tilsit, the conqueror smashed the Germans' entire army, occupied their capital and all their big cities, brought in his own police, compelled the vanquished to supply him, the conqueror, with auxiliary corps for fresh predatory wars, and partitioned Germany, concluding alliances with some German states against others. Nevertheless, the German people survived even *such* a peace, proved able to muster their forces, to rise and to win the right to liberty and independence.

To all those who are able and willing to think, the example of the Peace of Tilsit (which was only one of many harsh and humiliating treaties forced upon the Germans at that period) clearly shows how childishly naïve is the idea that under all conditions a harsh peace means the bottomless pit of ruin, while war is the path of valour and salvation. Periods of war teach us that peace has not infrequently in history served as a respite and a means of mustering forces for new battles. The Peace of Tilsit was a supreme humiliation for Germany, but at the same time it marked a turn towards a supreme national resurgence. At that time historical conditions were such that this resurgence could be channelled only in the direction of a *bourgeois* state. At that time, more than a hundred years ago, history was made by handfuls of nobles and a sprinkling of bourgeois intellectuals, while the worker and peasant masses were somnolent and dormant. As a

result history at that time could only crawl along at a terribly slow pace.

But now capitalism has raised culture in general, and the culture of the masses in particular, to a much higher level. War has shaken up the masses, its untold horrors and suffering have awakened them. War has given history momentum and it is now flying with locomotive speed. History is now being independently made by millions and tens of millions of people. Capitalism has now matured for socialism.

Consequently, if Russia is now passing—as she undeniably is—from a “Tilsit” peace to a national resurgence, to a great patriotic war, the outlet for it is not in the direction of a bourgeois state, but in the direction of a world socialist revolution. Since October 25, 1917, we have been defencists. We are for “defence of the fatherland”; but that patriotic war towards which we are moving is a war for a socialist fatherland, for socialism as a fatherland, for the Soviet Republic as a *contingent* of the world army of socialism.

“Hate the Germans, kill the Germans”—such was, and is, the slogan of common, i.e., bourgeois, patriotism. But we will say “Hate the imperialist plunderers, hate capitalism, death to capitalism” and at the same time “Learn from the Germans! Remain true to the brotherly alliance with the German workers. They are late in coming to our aid. We shall gain time, we shall live to see them coming, and they *will come*, to our aid.”

Yes, learn from the Germans! History is moving in zigzags and by roundabout ways. It so happens that it is the Germans who now personify, besides a brutal imperialism, the principle of discipline, organisation, harmonious co-operation on the basis of modern machine industry, and strict accounting and control.

And that is just what we are lacking. That is just what we must learn. That is just what our great revolution needs in order to pass from a triumphant beginning, through a succession of severe trials, to its triumphant goal. That is just what the Russian Soviet Socialist Republic requires in order to cease being wretched and impotent and become mighty and abundant for all time.

March 11, 1918

*Izvestia UTsIK* No. 46,  
March 12, 1918  
Signed: *N. Lenin*

*Collected Works*, Vol. 27





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*EXTRAORDINARY FOURTH ALL-RUSSIA  
CONGRESS OF SOVIETS<sup>242</sup>*

*MARCH 14-16, 1918*



**DRAFT RESOLUTION ON WILSON'S MESSAGE<sup>243</sup>**

The Congress expresses its gratitude to the American people, and primarily to the working and exploited classes of the United States of America, in connection with President Wilson's expression of his sympathy for the Russian people through the Congress of Soviets at a time when the Soviet Socialist Republic of Russia is passing through severe trials.

The Russian Soviet Republic, having become a neutral country, takes advantage of the message received from President Wilson to express to all peoples that are perishing and suffering from the horrors of the imperialist war its profound sympathy and firm conviction that the happy time is not far away when the working people of all bourgeois countries will throw off the yoke of capital and establish the socialist system of society, the only system able to ensure a durable and just peace and also culture and well-being for all working people.

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## 2

**REPORT ON RATIFICATION OF THE PEACE TREATY  
MARCH 14**

Comrades, today we have to settle a question that marks a turning-point in the development of the Russian revolution, and not only of the Russian but also of the international revolution, and in order to decide correctly on this very harsh peace which representatives of Soviet power have concluded at Brest-Litovsk, and which Soviet power asks you to approve, or ratify—in order to settle this question correctly it is more than ever necessary for us to get an understanding of the historical meaning of the turning-point we are at, an understanding of the main feature of the development of the revolution up to now and the main reason for the severe defeat and the period of stern trials we have passed through.

It seems to me that the chief source of disagreement among the Soviet parties on this question is that some people too easily give way to a feeling of just and legitimate indignation over the defeat of the Soviet Republic by imperialism, too easily give way at times to despair instead of considering the historical conditions of the revolution as they developed up to the time of the present peace, and as they appear to us since the peace; instead of doing that they try to answer questions of the tactics of the revolution on the basis of their immediate feelings. The entire history of revolutions, however, teaches us that when we have to do with a mass movement or with the class struggle, especially one like that at present developing not only throughout a single country, albeit a tremendous country, but also involving all international relations—in such a case we must base our tactics first and foremost on an appraisal of the objective situation, we must examine analytically the course of the revolution up to this moment and the reason it has taken a turn so menacing and so sharp, and so much to our disadvantage.

If we examine the development of our revolution from that point of view we see clearly that it has so far passed through a period of relative and largely imaginary self-dependence, and of being temporarily independent of international relations. The

path travelled by our revolution from the end of February 1917 to February 11 of this year, when the German offensive began, was, by and large, a path of easy and rapid successes. If we study the development of that revolution on an international scale, from the standpoint of the Russian revolution alone, we shall see that we have passed through three periods in the past year. The first period is that in which the working class of Russia, together with all advanced, class-conscious and active peasants, supported not only by the petty bourgeoisie but also by the big bourgeoisie, swept away the monarchy in a few days. This astounding success is to be explained by the fact that on the one hand, the Russian people had acquired a big reserve of revolutionary fighting potential from the experience of 1905, while on the other hand, Russia, an extremely backward country, had suffered more than any other from the war and had, at an especially early date, reached a stage when it was absolutely impossible to continue the war under the old regime.

This short tempestuous success when a new organisation was created—the Soviets of Workers', Soldiers' and Peasants' Deputies—was followed by the long months of the period of transition of our revolution, the period in which the government of the bourgeoisie, immediately undermined by the Soviets, was kept going and strengthened by the petty-bourgeois compromising parties, the Mensheviks and Socialist-Revolutionaries, who supported it. It was a government that supported the imperialist war and the imperialist secret treaties, fed the working class on promises, did literally nothing, and preserved the state of economic ruin. The Soviets mustered their forces in this period, a period that for us, for the Russian revolution, was a long one; it was a long period for the Russian revolution but it was a short one from the international point of view, because in most of the leading countries the period of overcoming petty-bourgeois illusions, of compromise by various parties, groups and trends had been taking not months but long decades. The span of time, from April 20 to the moment Kerensky renewed the imperialist war in June (he had the secret imperialist treaty in his pocket), was decisive. This second period included our July defeat and the Kornilov revolt, and only through the experience of the mass struggle, only when the working-class and peasant masses had realised from their own experience and not from sermons that petty-bourgeois compromise was all in vain—only then, after long political development, after long preparations and changes in the moods and views of party groups, was the ground made ready for the October Revolution; only then did the Russian revolution enter the third period of its initial stage, a stage of isolation, or temporary separation, from the world revolution.

This third, or October, period, the period of organisation, was the most difficult; at the same time it was a period of the biggest and most rapid triumphs. After October, our revolution—the revolution that placed power in the hands of the revolutionary proletariat, established its dictatorship and obtained for it the support of the vast majority of the proletariat and the poor peasantry—after October our revolution made a victorious, triumphal advance. Throughout Russia civil war began in the form of resistance by the exploiters, the landowners and bourgeoisie, supported by part of the imperialist bourgeoisie.

Civil war broke out, and in that war the forces of the enemies of Soviet power, the forces of the enemies of the working and exploited masses, proved to be insignificant; the civil war was one continuous triumph for Soviet power because its opponents, the exploiters, the landowners and bourgeoisie, had neither political nor economic support, and their attacks collapsed. The struggle against them was not so much a military operation as agitation; section after section, mass after mass, down to the working Cossacks, abandoned the exploiters who were trying to lead them away from Soviet power.

This period of the victorious, triumphal advance of the dictatorship of the proletariat and Soviet power, when great masses of the working and exploited people of Russia were drawn to the side of Soviet power definitely and irrevocably—this period constituted the final and highest point of development of the Russian revolution, which had been progressing all this time, apparently, independently of world imperialism. That was the reason why a country which was extremely backward and was the most prepared for the revolution by the experience of 1905 was able to promote one class after another to power rapidly, easily and systematically, getting rid of various political alignments until at last that political structure was reached which was the last word, not only in the Russian revolution, but also in the West-European workers' revolutions, for Soviet power has been consolidated in Russia and has won the absolute sympathy of the working and exploited people because it has destroyed the old state apparatus that was an instrument of oppression and has laid the foundation of a state of a new and higher form of which the Paris Commune was the prototype. The Commune destroyed the old state machine and replaced it by the armed force of the masses themselves, replaced bourgeois parliamentary democracy by the democracy of the working people, which excluded the exploiters and systematically suppressed their resistance.

That is what the Russian revolution did in this period and that is why a small vanguard of the Russian revolution is under the impression that this rapid triumphal advance can be expected to



continue in further victory. That is precisely their mistake because the period when the Russian revolution was developing, passing state power in Russia from one class to another and getting rid of class compromise within the bounds of Russia alone—this period was able to exist historically only because the predatory giants of world imperialism were temporarily halted in their advance against Soviet power. A revolution that overthrew the monarchy in a few days, exhausted all possibilities of compromise with the bourgeoisie in a few months and overcame all the resistance by the bourgeoisie in a civil war of a few weeks, this revolution, the revolution of a socialist republic, could live side by side with the imperialist powers, among the international plunderers, the wild beasts of international imperialism, only so long as the bourgeoisie, locked in mortal struggle with each other, were paralysed in their offensive against Russia.

And then began the period that we feel so keenly and see before our eyes, the period of disastrous defeats and severe trials for the Russian revolution, the period in which the swift, direct and open offensive against the enemies of the revolution is over while in its place we are experiencing disastrous defeats and have to retreat before forces that are immeasurably greater than ours, before the forces of international imperialism and finance capital, before the military might that the entire bourgeoisie with its modern weapons and its organisation has mustered against us in the interests of plunder, oppression and the strangling of small nations; we had to think of bringing our forces up to their level; we had to face a task of tremendous difficulty, that of direct combat with enemies that differed from Romanov and Kerensky who could not be taken seriously; we had to meet the forces of the international imperialist bourgeoisie, all its military might, we had to stand face to face with the world plunderers. In view of the delay in getting help from the international socialist proletariat we naturally had to take upon ourselves a conflict with these forces and we suffered a disastrous defeat.

And this epoch is one of disastrous defeats, an epoch of retreat, an epoch in which we must save at least a small part of our position by retreating before imperialism, by awaiting the time when there will be changes in the world situation in general, when the forces of the European proletariat arrive, the forces that exist and are maturing but which have not been able to deal with their enemy as easily as we did with ours; it would be a very great illusion, a very great mistake, to forget that it was easy for the Russian revolution to begin but difficult for it to take further steps. This was inevitable because we had to begin with the most backward and most rotten political system. The European revolution will have to begin against the bourgeoisie, against a much more serious



enemy and under immeasurably more difficult conditions. It will be much more difficult for the European revolution to begin. We see that it is immeasurably more difficult to make the first breach in the system that is holding back the revolution. It will be much easier for the European revolution to advance to the second and third stages. Things cannot be different with the alignment of forces of the revolutionary and reactionary classes that at present obtains in the world. This is the main turn in events that is always overlooked by people who view the present situation, the extremely serious position of the revolution, from the standpoint of their own feelings and their indignation, and not from the historical standpoint. Historical experience teaches us that always, in all revolutions, at a time when a revolution takes an abrupt turn from swift victory to severe defeats, there comes a period of pseudo-revolutionary phrase-making that invariably causes the greatest damage to the development of the revolution. And so, comrades, we shall be able to appraise our tactics correctly only when we set out to consider the turn in events that has hurled us back from swift, easy and complete victories to grave defeats. This is an extremely difficult and extremely serious question arising out of the present turning-point in the development of the revolution, the turn from easy victories within the country to exceptionally heavy defeats without; it is also a turning-point in the entire world revolution, a turn from the period of propaganda and agitation on the part of the Russian revolution, with imperialism biding its time, to the offensive of imperialism against Soviet power, and this turn puts a particularly difficult and acute question before the international movement in Western Europe. If we are not to ignore this historical aspect of the situation we must try to understand how Russia's basic interests in the question of the present harsh, or obscene, as it is called, peace took shape.

When arguing against those who refused to see the need to accept that peace, I have often come up against the statement that the idea of concluding the peace expresses only the interests of the exhausted peasant masses, the declassed soldiers, and so on and so forth. Whenever I hear such statements, whenever I hear such things referred to, I am always amazed that the class aspect of national development is forgotten by comrades—people who limit themselves exclusively to seeking explanations. As though the Party of the proletariat on taking power had not counted on the alliance of the proletariat and the semi-proletariat, i.e., the poor peasantry (i.e., the majority of the peasantry of Russia), had not known that only such an alliance would be able to hand the government of Russia over to the revolutionary power of the Soviets, the power of the majority, the real majority of the people, and that without this alliance it would be senseless to make

any attempt to establish power, especially at difficult turning-points in history! As though we could now abandon this verity that was accepted by all of us and confine ourselves to a contemptuous reference to the exhausted state of the peasantry and the declassed soldiers! With regard to the exhausted state of the peasantry and the declassed soldiers we must say that the country will offer resistance, and that the poor peasants will be able to offer resistance only in so far as those poor peasants are capable of directing their forces to the struggle.

When we were about to take power in October it was obvious that events were inevitably leading up to it, that the turn towards Bolshevism in the Soviets indicated a turn throughout the country, and that the Bolsheviks must inevitably take power. When we, realising this, took power in October, we said to ourselves and to all the people, very clearly and unequivocally, that it was a transfer of power to the proletariat and the poor peasantry, that the proletariat knew the peasantry would support it—you know yourselves in what—in its active struggle for peace and its readiness to continue the fight against big finance capital. In this we are making no mistake, and nobody who sticks to the concept of class forces and class alignments can get away from the indisputable truth that we cannot ask a country of small peasants, a country that has given much for the European and world revolution, to carry on the struggle in a difficult situation, a most difficult situation, when help from the West-European proletariat has undoubtedly been delayed, although there is no doubt that it is coming to us, as the facts, the strikes, etc., show. That is why I say that such references to the exhaustion of the peasant masses, etc., are made by people who simply have no arguments, who are absolutely helpless when they seek such arguments, and who are quite unable to grasp class relations as a whole, in their entirety, the relations of the revolution of the proletariat and of the peasant masses; it is only when, at every sharp turn in history, we appraise the class relations as a whole, the relations of all classes, and do not select individual examples and individual cases, that we feel ourselves firmly supported by an analysis of probable facts. I realise full well that the Russian bourgeoisie are today urging us on towards a revolutionary war when it is absolutely impossible for us to have such a war. This is essential to the class interests of the bourgeoisie.

When they shout about an obscene peace and do not say a word about who brought the army to its present state, I realise quite well that it is the bourgeoisie together with the *Dyelo Naroda* people, the Tsereteli and Chernov Mensheviks and their yes-men (*applause*)—I know quite well that it is the bourgeoisie who are

bawling for a revolutionary war. Their class interests demand it, their anxiety to see Soviet power make a false move demands it. It is not surprising that this comes from people who, on the one hand, fill the pages of their newspapers with counter-revolutionary scribbling. . . . (*Voices*: "They've all been suppressed!") Unfortunately, not yet all of them, but we will close them all down. (*Applause*.) I should like to see the proletariat that would allow the counter-revolutionaries, those who support the bourgeoisie and collaborate with them, to continue using the monopoly of wealth to drug the people with their bourgeois opium. There is no such proletariat. (*Applause*.)

I realise, of course, that nothing but shouts, howls and screams about an obscene peace comes from those publications, I realise full well that the people who favour this revolutionary war—from the Constitutional-Democrats to the Right Socialist-Revolutionaries—are those who meet the Germans as they advance and say triumphantly, here come the Germans, and then allow their officers, again wearing their badges of rank, to strut about in the places that have been occupied by the German imperialist invaders. Oh no, I am not a bit surprised at these bourgeois, these collaborators, preaching a revolutionary war. They want Soviet power to be caught in a trap. They have shown their hand, these bourgeois and collaborators. We have seen them and can still see live specimens, we know that in the Ukraine there are Ukrainian Kerenskys, Ukrainian Chernovs and Ukrainian Tseretelis—there they are, the Vinnichenkos. Those gentlemen, the Ukrainian Kerenskys, Chernovs and Tseretelis, concealed from the people the peace they concluded with the German imperialists, and today they are trying to overthrow Soviet power in the Ukraine with the help of German bayonets. That is what those bourgeois and those collaborators and their accomplices have done. That is what they have done, those Ukrainian bourgeois and collaborators, whose example you have before your very eyes; they concealed and are still concealing their secret treaties from the people, they are attacking Soviet power with the aid of German bayonets. That is what the Russian bourgeoisie want, that is where the bourgeois yes-men are trying to push Soviet power, wittingly or unwittingly; they know that under no circumstances can Soviet power undertake an imperialist war against the might of imperialism at the present moment. That is why it is only in this international situation, in this general class situation, that we can understand the full depth of the mistake of those who, like the Left Socialist-Revolutionary Party, have allowed themselves to be carried away by a theory that is common to the history of all revolutions at moments of difficulty, a theory that is half desperation and half empty phrases; according to this theory, instead of taking a sober view of reality and ap-



praising the tasks of the revolution in respect of the internal and external enemy from the standpoint of class forces, you are asked to settle a serious and very grave problem only under the impact of your feelings, merely from the standpoint of feelings. The peace is incredibly harsh and shameful. In my statements and speeches I have had occasion to liken it to the Peace of Tilsit that the conqueror Napoleon forced on the Prussian and German peoples after a series of heavy defeats. Yes, the peace is a grave defeat and is humiliating to Soviet power, but if you, proceeding from this, and limiting yourselves to it, appeal to feelings and arouse discontent in an attempt to settle a gigantic historical problem, you will get into that ridiculous and pitiful situation into which the Socialist-Revolutionary Party once got itself, when in 1907, in a situation that was somewhat similar in certain respects, that party also appealed to the feelings of revolutionaries, when, after our revolution had suffered heavy defeats in 1906 and 1907, Stolypin presented us with the laws on the Third Duma—shameful and extremely difficult conditions of work in one of the rottenest of representative institutions—when our Party, after brief internal wavering (the wavering on the question was greater than it is today), decided the question in this way: we have no right to give way to feelings; no matter how great our indignation and dissatisfaction with the shameful Third Duma, we have to recognise that it was not chance but the historical necessity of a developing class struggle which lacked the strength to continue but which could muster that strength even in the shameful conditions that have been imposed. We proved to be right. Those who tried to attract people by revolutionary phrases, by appeals to justice (since they were expressing feelings that were trebly legitimate)—those people were given a lesson that will not be forgotten by any revolutionary capable of thought and possessing ideas.

Revolutions do not go smoothly enough to ensure rapid and easy progress. There has never been any great revolution, even on a national scale, that did not experience a hard period of defeat, and the attitude of a revolutionary towards the serious question of mass movements, of developing revolutions, must not be one of declaring the peace obscene and humiliating and then saying he cannot reconcile himself to it; it is not sufficient to quote agitational phrases, to shower reproaches on us because of the peace—that is the known ABC of the revolution, the experience of all revolutions. Our experience since 1905—and if we are rich in anything, if there is any reason why the Russian working class and poor peasantry have taken upon themselves the most difficult and honourable task of beginning the world socialist revolution, it is because the Russian people have been able, owing to specific historical conditions, to make two great revolutions at the begin-



ning of the twentieth century—we have to learn from the experience of those revolutions, we have to learn to understand that only by studying the changes in the class connections between one country and another is it possible to prove definitely that we are in no condition to accept battle at the moment; we have to take this into consideration and say to ourselves, whatever respite we may obtain, no matter how unstable, no matter how brief, harsh and humiliating the peace may be, it is better than war, because it gives the masses a breathing-space, because it provides us with an opportunity to correct what the bourgeoisie have done, the bourgeoisie that are shouting wherever they have an opportunity to shout, especially under the protection of the Germans in the occupied regions.

The bourgeoisie are shouting that the Bolsheviks are responsible for the disintegration of the army, that there is no army and the Bolsheviks are to blame for it; but let us look at the past, comrades, let us look, firstly, at the development of our revolution. Do you not know that desertion and the disintegration of our army began long before the revolution, in 1916, and that everybody who has seen the army will have to admit that? And what did our bourgeoisie do to prevent it? Is it not clear that the only chance for salvation from the imperialists at that time was in their hands, that a chance presented itself in March and April, when Soviet organisations could have taken power by a simple motion of the hand against the bourgeoisie. And if the Soviets had then taken power, if the bourgeois and petty-bourgeois intelligentsia, together with the Socialist-Revolutionaries and Mensheviks, instead of helping Kerensky deceive the people, conceal the secret treaties and lead the army to an offensive—if they had then come to the aid of the army, had supplied it with munitions and rations and had compelled the bourgeoisie to help the fatherland—not the fatherland of the hucksters, not the fatherland of treaties that help to slaughter the people (*applause*)—and had themselves participated; if the Soviets had forced the bourgeoisie to help the fatherland of the workers and all working people, and had helped the ragged, barefoot and hungry army, then, perhaps, we should have had a period of ten months, long enough to rest the army and gain unanimous support for it, so that without the army having moved one step from the front a general, democratic peace could have been proposed, the secret treaties could have been torn up and the line held without retreating a single step. There would then have been a chance of peace, which the workers and peasants would have willingly supported and approved. That would have been the tactics of the defence of the fatherland, not the fatherland of the Romanovs, Kerenskys, or Chernovs, a fatherland with secret treaties, a fatherland of the treacherous bourgeoisie—not that

fatherland but the fatherland of the working people. That is who is responsible for having made the transition from war to revolution and from the Russian revolution to world socialism a period of severe trials. That is why such proposals as a revolutionary war sound like empty phrases, when we know that we have no army, when we know that it would have been impossible to hold the army, and people with a knowledge of the situation could not help seeing that our decree on demobilisation was not an invention but the result of obvious necessity, because it would have been impossible to hold the army. The army could not have been held. That officer, not a Bolshevik, was right who, before the October Revolution, said that the army could not and would not fight.<sup>244</sup> This is what has come of months of bargaining with the bourgeoisie and of all the speeches about the need to continue the war; no matter what noble sentiments on the part of many revolutionaries, or of few revolutionaries, may have dictated them, they proved to be empty revolutionary phrases that played into the hands of international imperialism so that it could plunder as much again and more, just as it has been doing since our tactical or diplomatic error, since the time we did not sign the Brest Treaty. When we told those who opposed concluding peace that if we had a respite of any length they would realise that the recuperation of the army and the interests of the working people were more important than anything else, and that peace should have been concluded for this reason—they maintained that there could be no respite.

But our revolution differs from all previous revolutions in having aroused among the masses a desire to build and create, and the working people in the most out-of-the-way villages, people humiliated, downtrodden and oppressed by tsars, landowners, and bourgeoisie, have been aroused; this is a period of the revolution that is only now being accomplished, now that the rural revolution is under way, the revolution that is building a new way of life. And for the sake of this respite, no matter how brief and how small it may be, it was our duty to sign the treaty, since we place the interests of the working people above the interests of the bourgeois warriors who rattle their sabres and call on us to fight. That is what the revolution teaches. The revolution teaches that when we make diplomatic mistakes, when we assume that the German workers will come to our aid tomorrow, when we hope that Liebknecht will be victorious immediately (and we know that one way or another Liebknecht will win, that is inevitable in the development of the working-class movement [*applause*]), it means that, when used unthinkingly, the revolutionary slogans of the difficult socialist movement turn into empty phrases. There is not a single representative of the working people, there is not a single honest worker who would refuse to make the greatest sacrifice to

help the socialist movement of Germany, because during all this time at the front he has learned to distinguish between the German imperialists and the soldiers tormented by German discipline, most of whom are in sympathy with us. That is why I say that the Russian revolution has corrected our mistake in practice, has corrected it by giving us the respite. It is very probable that it will be an extremely brief one, but we have the chance of at least a brief respite in which the army, worn out and hungry as it is, will become conscious of the fact that it has been given an opportunity to recuperate. It is clear to us that the period of the old imperialist wars is over and we are threatened with the further horrors of an outbreak of fresh wars, but there have been such periods of war in many historical epochs, and they have always become most fierce towards the end. This must be understood, not only at meetings in Petrograd and Moscow; it must be understood by the many tens of millions in the countryside; and the more enlightened part of the rural population, those returning from the front, those who have experienced the horrors of war, must help them understand it; the huge masses of peasants and workers must become convinced of the necessity for a revolutionary front—they will then say we have acted correctly.

They tell us we have betrayed the Ukraine and Finland—what disgrace! But the situation that has arisen is such that we are cut off from Finland, with whom we concluded an unwritten treaty before the revolution and have now concluded a formal treaty. They say we are surrendering the Ukraine, which Chernov, Kerensky and Tsereteli are going to ruin; they say we are traitors, we have betrayed the Ukraine! I say: Comrades, I've seen enough of the history of revolution not to be embarrassed by the hostile glances and shouts of people who give way to their feelings and are incapable of clear judgement. I will give you a simple example. Suppose that two friends are out walking at night and they are attacked by ten men. If the scoundrels isolate one of them, what is the other to do? He cannot render assistance, and if he runs away is he a traitor? And suppose that it is not a matter of individuals or of spheres in which questions of direct feelings are being settled, but of five armies, each a hundred-thousand strong, that surround an army of two hundred thousand, and that there is another army that should come to the embattled army's assistance. But if that second army knows that it is certain to fall into a trap, it should withdraw; it must withdraw, even if the retreat has to be covered by the conclusion of an obscene, foul peace—curse as much as you like, but it is necessary to conclude the peace. There is no reason for considering the feelings of a duelist who draws his sword and says that he must die because he is being compelled to conclude a humiliating peace. But we all know that, however we



may decide, we have no army, and no gestures will save us from the necessity of withdrawing to gain time and enable our army to recuperate; everybody who looks reality in the face and does not deceive himself with revolutionary phrase-making will agree with this. Anyone who faces the facts without blinding himself with phrase-making and arrogance must know this.

If we know this, it is our revolutionary duty to conclude even this harsh, super-harsh and rapacious treaty, for by so doing we shall reach a better position for ourselves and for our allies. Did we actually lose anything by concluding the peace treaty of March 3? Anyone who wants to look at things from the point of view of mass relations, and not from that of the aristocratic duelist, will realise that without an army, or having only the sick remnant of an army, it would be self-deception, it would be the greatest deception of the people, to accept battle and call it a revolutionary war. It is our duty to tell the people the truth; yes, the peace is a harsh one. The Ukraine and Finland are perishing but we must accept this peace and all class-conscious working people in Russia will accept it because they know the unvarnished truth, they know the meaning of war, they know that to stake everything on one card on the assumption that the German revolution will begin immediately is self-deception. By concluding peace we have obtained what we gave our Finnish friends—a respite, help and not destruction.

I know of examples from history of much more rapacious peace treaties having been concluded, treaties that surrendered viable nations to the mercy of the conqueror. Let us compare our peace to the Peace of Tilsit; the Peace of Tilsit was enforced on Prussia and Germany by a conqueror. That peace was so harsh that not only were all the capital cities of all the German states seized, not only were the Prussians thrown back to Tilsit, which would be the same as throwing us back to Omsk or Tomsk; not only that—the worst of all was that Napoleon compelled the conquered peoples to supply him with auxiliary troops for his wars; but nevertheless, when the situation became such that the German peoples had to withstand the attacks of the conqueror, when the epoch of revolutionary wars in France gave place to the epoch of imperialist wars of conquest, then came the revelation which those people who wax enthusiastic over empty phrases do not want to understand, those people, that is, who picture the conclusion of peace as a downfall. This psychology is understandable in an aristocratic duelist but not in a worker or peasant. The latter has been through the hard school of war and has learned to calculate. There have been even greater trials, and nations even more backward have come through them. Harsher peace treaties have been concluded, the Germans concluded one in an epoch when they had no army, or when their army



was sick like ours. They concluded a very harsh peace with Napoleon. But that peace was not the downfall of Germany—on the contrary, it was the turning-point, national defence, renewal. We are on the eve of just such a turning-point and are experiencing analogous conditions. We must look truth in the face and banish all empty phrases and declarations. We must say, peace, if it is necessary, must be concluded. The war of liberation, the class war, the war of the people will take the place of the Napoleonic wars. The system of the Napoleonic wars will change, war will give place to peace and peace to war, and from every harsh peace there has always emerged a more extensive preparation for war. The harshest of peace treaties—the Peace of Tilsit—has gone down in history as a turning-point towards the time when the German people began to swing round; when they retreated to Tilsit, to Russia, they were actually gaining time, waiting for the international situation that had, at one time, favoured Napoleon—he was another plunderer like Hohenzollern or Hindenburg—waiting until the situation changed, until the mentality of the German people, tormented by decades of Napoleonic wars and defeats, had recuperated and the German people were resuscitated. That is what history teaches us, that is why all despair and empty phrases are criminal, that is why everyone will say yes, the old imperialist wars are ending—an historical turning-point has come.

Our revolution has been one long triumph since October, and now the lengthy times of hardship have come, we do not know for how long, but we do know that it will be a long and difficult period of defeats and retreats, because the alignment of forces is what it is, because by retreating we shall give the people a chance to recuperate. We shall make it possible for every worker and peasant to realise the truth that will enable him to understand that new wars waged by the imperialist plunderers against the oppressed peoples are beginning, and every worker and peasant will realise that we must rise in defence of the fatherland, because we have been defencists since October. Since October 25 we have said openly that we stand for the defence of the fatherland, because we have a fatherland, the one from which we have driven the Kerenskys and Chernovs, because we have torn up the secret treaties, because we have crushed the bourgeoisie—badly so far, but we shall learn to do it better.

Comrades, there is another important difference between the condition of the German people and of the Russian people who have suffered a severe defeat at the hands of the German invaders—there is a tremendous difference that must be mentioned, although I have already touched upon it briefly in the preceding part of my speech. Comrades, when the German people, over a hundred years ago, entered a period of the most cruel wars of conquest, a period

when they had to retreat and conclude one shameful treaty after another before they were awakened—at that time the German people were weak and backward, just that and nothing more. They had against them not only the military forces and the might of the conqueror Napoleon, they had against them a country that was far above Germany in the revolutionary and political sense and in every other respect, a country that had risen far above all others, a country that had reached the top. That country was far above the people who were languishing in subjection to the imperialists and landowners. A people that, I repeat, had been nothing but a weak and backward people, managed to learn from its bitter lessons and to raise itself up. We are in a better position; we are not merely a weak and backward people, we are the people who have been able—not because of any special services or of historical predestination, but because of a definite conjunction of historical circumstances—who have been able to accept the honour of raising the banner of the international socialist revolution. (*Applause.*)

I am well aware, comrades, that the banner is in weak hands, I have said that outright several times already, and the workers of the most backward country will not be able to hold that banner unless the workers of all advanced countries come to their aid. The socialist reforms that we have accomplished are far from perfect, they are weak and insufficient; they will serve as a guide to the advanced West-European workers who will say to themselves, “The Russians haven’t made a very good beginning on the job that has to be done”; the important thing is that our people are not merely a weak and backward people as compared with the Germans, they are the people who have raised the banner of revolution. Although the bourgeoisie of any country you like are filling the columns of their press with slander of the Bolsheviks, although the voice of the imperialist press in France, Britain, Germany, etc., curses the Bolsheviks in unison, you will not find a meeting of workers in any country at which the names and slogans of our socialist government give rise to bursts of indignation. (*Voice: “That’s a lie!”*) No, it is not, it is the truth, and anyone who has been in Germany, Austria, Switzerland or America during the past few months will tell you it is the truth and not a lie, that the names and slogans of representatives of Soviet power in Russia are greeted with the greatest enthusiasm by the workers and that, despite all the lies of the bourgeoisie of Germany, France, etc., the working-class masses have realised that no matter how weak we may be, their cause is being served here in Russia. Yes, our people have a very heavy burden to bear, the burden they have themselves taken up; but a people that has been able to establish Soviet power cannot perish. Again I repeat—there is not a single politically conscious socialist, not a single worker among those who think

over the history of the revolution, who can dispute the fact that Soviet power—despite all the defects that I know only too well and fully appreciate—is the highest type of state, the direct successor to the Paris Commune. It has ascended a step higher than the other European revolutions so that we are not experiencing the difficult conditions that the German people experienced a hundred years ago; the change in the balance of forces among the plunderers, taking advantage of the conflict and satisfying the demands of plunderer Napoleon, plunderer Alexander I and the plundering British monarchy—that was the only thing left, the one chance, for the German people, oppressed by feudalism; and yet the German people did not perish from the Peace of Tilsit. But we, I say again, have better conditions, we have a powerful ally in all West-European countries, the international socialist proletariat, the proletariat that is on our side no matter what our enemies may say. (*Applause.*) True, it is not easy for that ally to raise his voice, any more than it was easy for us until the end of February 1917. That ally is living in the underground, under conditions of the military prison into which all imperialist countries have been turned, but he knows us and understands our cause; it is difficult for him to come to our aid, and Soviet troops, therefore, will need much time and patience and will have to go through many trials before the time comes when he will aid us—we shall use even the slightest chance of procrastination, for time is working on our side. Our cause is gaining strength, the forces of the imperialists are weakening, and no matter what trials and defeats may emerge from the “Tilsit” peace, we are beginning the tactics of withdrawal and, once more I say it, there is no doubt the politically-conscious proletariat and, likewise, the politically-conscious peasants are on our side, and we shall be able not only to make heroic attacks, but also to make a heroic retreat and we shall wait until the international socialist proletariat comes to our aid and shall then begin a second socialist revolution that will be world-wide in its scope. (*Applause.*)

## 3

**RESOLUTION ON RATIFICATION  
OF THE BREST TREATY**

The Congress confirms (ratifies) the peace treaty signed by our representatives at Brest-Litovsk on March 3, 1918.

The Congress recognises as correct the actions of the Central Executive Committee and the Council of People's Commissars in deciding to conclude the present incredibly harsh, rapacious and humiliating peace in view of our having no army and of the extreme war weariness of the people, who in their distress have received no support from the bourgeoisie and bourgeois intelligentsia, but have seen that distress made use of for selfish class purposes.

The Congress also recognises the undoubted correctness of the actions of the peace delegation that refused to enter into a detailed discussion on the German peace terms, because those terms were imposed on us in the form of an obvious ultimatum and by undisguised force.

The Congress most insistently urges upon all workers, soldiers and peasants, all the working and oppressed masses, the main, immediate and most urgent task of the moment—the improvement of the discipline and self-discipline of the working people; the creation throughout the country of strong, well-founded organisations that cover, as far as possible, all production and distribution; a ruthless struggle against the chaos, disorganisation and economic ruin which are historically inevitable as the legacy of a most agonising war, but which are, at the same time, the main obstacle to the complete victory of socialism and the strengthening of the foundations of socialist society.

Today, after the October Revolution, after the overthrow of the political power of the bourgeoisie in Russia, after our denunciation and publication of all secret imperialist treaties, after the cancellation of the foreign loans, after the workers' and peasants' government has proposed a just peace to all peoples without exception, Russia, having escaped from the clutches of the imperialist



war, has the right to announce that she is not a participant in the plunder and suppression of other countries.

The Russian Soviet Federative Republic, having unanimously condemned predatory wars, from now on deems it its right and its duty to defend the socialist fatherland against all possible attacks by any of the imperialist powers.

The Congress therefore deems it the unconditional duty of all working people to muster all forces to re-establish and improve the defence potential of our country, to re-establish its military strength on the basis of a socialist militia and the universal military training of all adolescents and adults of both sexes.

The Congress expresses its absolute confidence that Soviet power, which has valiantly fulfilled all the obligations of the international solidarity of the workers of all countries in their struggle for socialism against the yoke of capital, will in future do everything possible to promote the international socialist movement, to secure and shorten the road leading mankind to deliverance from the yoke of capital and from wage slavery, to the creation of a socialist society and to an enduring, just peace between the peoples.

The Congress is firmly convinced that the international workers' revolution is not far away, that the full victory of the socialist proletariat is assured despite the fact that the imperialists of all countries do not hesitate to use the most brutal means for the suppression of the socialist movement.

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## THE IMMEDIATE TASKS OF THE SOVIET GOVERNMENT<sup>245</sup>

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and *Izvestia VTsIK* No. 85  
Signed: *N. Lenin*

*Collected Works*, Vol. 27



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## 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 organisation.

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

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

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

It goes without saying that with such an unreliable guard for protection, our Soviet Socialist Republic is in an extremely unstable and certainly critical international position. All our efforts must be

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\* See p. 641 of the present volume.—*Ed.*



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

# Тезисы о задачах Советской власти в переходный моментъ.

Нелегальный текстъ в Рижской Советской Республ. и опубликованъ в "Советской России".

1. Благодаря <sup>своей</sup> доживкой силе, — несмотря на  
всю ее <sup>3</sup>плодотворность и на ее <sup>1</sup>капитализм, — <sup>2</sup>россий-  
ская советская республика <sup>2</sup>попытае<sup>2</sup>сь <sup>2</sup>вмешательство  
на <sup>2</sup>уверенное <sup>2</sup>бремя <sup>2</sup>середоточения <sup>2</sup>своих сил на  
важнейшей <sup>3</sup>дороге и <sup>1</sup>труднейшей <sup>2</sup>социально-  
экономической <sup>2</sup>революции, <sup>2</sup>именно: на <sup>2</sup>задачу <sup>2</sup>организа-  
ционной.

Эта задача <sup>2</sup>явно и <sup>2</sup>точно <sup>2</sup>подразделяется <sup>2</sup>перед  
всем <sup>2</sup>трудящимся и <sup>2</sup>упреждающим <sup>2</sup>массами в  
4-ой <sup>2</sup>адапте (4-ой <sup>2</sup>части) <sup>2</sup>революции, <sup>2</sup>примененной <sup>2</sup>Н. III  
1918 г. на <sup>2</sup>московском <sup>2</sup>уездном <sup>2</sup>съезде <sup>2</sup>советов, —  
в 7-ой <sup>2</sup>адапте (или в 7-ой <sup>2</sup>части) <sup>2</sup>революции, <sup>2</sup>это <sup>2</sup>зада-  
ча <sup>2</sup>самоуправления <sup>2</sup>трудящихся и <sup>2</sup>беспо-  
средней <sup>2</sup>борьбы с <sup>2</sup>хаосом и <sup>2</sup>деорганизацией.

First page of the manuscript of Lenin's "Theses on the Tasks of the  
Soviet Government in the Present Situation", April 1918  
Reduced



universal accounting and control of the production and distribution of goods, raising the productivity of labour and *socialising* production *in practice*.

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

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

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

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

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



people and of suppressing the exploiters by armed force to the principal task of *administration*.

For the first time in human history a socialist party has managed to complete in the main the conquest of power and the suppression of the exploiters, and has managed to *approach directly* the task of *administration*. We must prove worthy executors of this most difficult (and most gratifying) task of the socialist revolution. We must *fully realise* that in order to administer successfully, *besides* being able to convince people, besides being able to win a civil war, we must be able to do *practical organisational work*. This is the most difficult task, because it is a matter of organising in a new way the most deep-rooted, the economic, foundations of life of scores of millions of people. And it is the most gratifying task, because only *after* it has been fulfilled (in the principal and main outlines) will it be possible to say that Russia *has become* not only a Soviet, but also a socialist, republic.

### THE GENERAL SLOGAN OF THE MOMENT

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

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

### THE NEW PHASE OF THE STRUGGLE AGAINST THE BOURGEOISIE

The bourgeoisie in our country has been conquered, but it has not yet been uprooted, not yet destroyed, and not even utterly broken. That is why we are faced with a new and higher form of struggle against the bourgeoisie, the transition from the very simple task of further expropriating the capitalists to the much more complicated and difficult task of creating conditions in which it will be impossible for the bourgeoisie to exist, or for a new bourgeoisie to arise. Clearly, this task is immeasurably more significant

than the previous one; and until it is fulfilled there will be no socialism.

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

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

That is why the present task could not be defined by the simple formula: continue the offensive against capital. Although we have certainly not finished off capital and although it is certainly necessary to continue the offensive against this enemy of the working people, such a formula would be inexact, would not be concrete, would not take into account the *peculiarity* of the present situation in which, in order to go on advancing successfully *in the future*, we must “suspend” our offensive *now*.

This can be explained by comparing our position in the war against capital with the position of a victorious army that has captured, say, a half or two-thirds of the enemy's territory and is compelled to halt in order to muster its forces, to replenish its supplies of munitions, repair and reinforce the lines of communication, build new storehouses, bring up new reserves, etc. To suspend the offensive of a victorious army under such conditions is necessary precisely in order to gain the rest of the enemy's territory, i.e., in order to achieve complete victory. Those who have failed to understand that the objective state of affairs at the present moment dictates to us precisely such a “suspension” of the offensive against capital have failed to understand anything at all about the present political situation.

It goes without saying that we can speak about the “suspension” of the offensive against capital only in quotation marks, i.e., only metaphorically. In ordinary war, a general order can be issued to stop the offensive, the advance can actually be stopped. In the war against capital, however, the advance cannot be stopped, and there



can be no thought of our abandoning the further expropriation of capital. What we are discussing is the shifting of the *centre of gravity* of our economic and political work. Up to now measures for the direct expropriation of the expropriators were *in the forefront*. Now the organisation of accounting and control in those enterprises in which the capitalists have already been expropriated, and in all other enterprises, advances *to the forefront*.

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

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

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

Secondly, we could not at that time put methods of administration in the forefront in place of methods of suppression, because the art of administration is not innate, but is acquired by experience. At that time we lacked this experience; now we have it. Thirdly, at that time we could not have specialists in the various fields of knowledge and technology at our disposal because those specialists were either fighting in the ranks of the Bogayevskys, or were still able to put up systematic and stubborn passive re-



sistance by way of *sabotage*. Now we have broken the sabotage. The "Red Guard" attack on capital was successful, was victorious, because we broke capital's military resistance and its resistance by sabotage.

Does that mean that a "Red Guard" attack on capital is *always* appropriate, under *all* circumstances, that we have *no* other means of fighting capital? It would be childish to think so. We achieved victory with the aid of light cavalry, but we also have heavy artillery. We achieved victory by methods of suppression; we shall be able to achieve victory also by methods of administration. We must know how to change our methods of fighting the enemy to suit changes in the situation. We shall not for a moment renounce "Red Guard" suppression of the Savinkovs and Gegechkoris and all other landowner and bourgeois counter-revolutionaries. We shall not be so foolish, however, as to put "Red Guard" methods in the forefront at a time when the period in which Red Guard attacks were necessary has, in the main, drawn to a close (and to a victorious close), and when the period of utilising bourgeois specialists by the proletarian state power for the purpose of re-ploughing the soil in order to prevent the growth of any bourgeoisie whatever is knocking at the door.

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

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

and control from below, which would inevitably and of themselves subordinate the experts and enlist them for our work).

Now we have to resort to the old bourgeois method and to agree to pay a very high price for the "services" of the top bourgeois experts. All those who are familiar with the subject appreciate this, but not all ponder over the significance of this measure being adopted by the proletarian state. Clearly, this measure is a compromise, a departure from the principles of the Paris Commune and of every proletarian power, which call for the reduction of all salaries to the level of the wages of the average worker, which urge that careerism be fought not merely in words, but in deeds.

Moreover, it is clear that this measure not only implies the cessation—in a certain field and to a certain degree—of the offensive against capital (for capital is not a sum of money, but a definite social relation); it is also *a step backward* on the part of our socialist Soviet state power, which from the very outset proclaimed and pursued the policy of reducing high salaries to the level of the wages of the average worker.<sup>246</sup>

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

We shall now discuss the question from the practical point of view. Let us assume that the Russian Soviet Republic requires one thousand first-class scientists and experts in various fields of knowledge, technology and practical experience to direct the labour of the people towards securing the speediest possible economic revival. Let us assume also that we shall have to pay these "stars

of the first magnitude"—of course the majority of those who shout loudest about the corruption of the workers are themselves utterly corrupted by bourgeois morals—25,000 rubles per annum each. Let us assume that this sum (25,000,000 rubles) will have to be doubled (assuming that we have to pay bonuses for particularly successful and rapid fulfilment of the most important organisational and technical tasks), or even quadrupled (assuming that we have to enlist several hundred foreign specialists, who are more demanding). The question is, would the annual expenditure of fifty or a hundred million rubles by the Soviet Republic for the purpose of reorganising the labour of the people on modern scientific and technological lines be excessive or too heavy? Of course not. The overwhelming majority of the class-conscious workers and peasants will approve of this expenditure because they know from practical experience that our backwardness causes us to lose thousands of millions, and that we have *not yet* reached that degree of organisation, accounting and control which would induce all the "stars" of the bourgeois intelligentsia to participate voluntarily in *our* work.

It goes without saying that this question has another side to it. The corrupting influence of high salaries—both upon the Soviet authorities (especially since the revolution occurred so rapidly that it was impossible to prevent a certain number of adventurers and rogues from getting into positions of authority, and they, together with a number of inept or dishonest commissars, would not be averse to becoming "star" embezzlers of state funds) and upon the mass of the workers—is indisputable. Every thinking and honest worker and poor peasant, however, will agree with us, will admit, that we cannot immediately rid ourselves of the evil legacy of capitalism, and that we can liberate the Soviet Republic from the duty of paying an annual "tribute" of fifty million or one hundred million rubles (a tribute for our own backwardness in organising *country-wide* accounting and control *from below*) only by organising ourselves, by tightening up discipline in our own ranks, by purging our ranks of all those who are "preserving the legacy of capitalism", who "follow the traditions of capitalism", i.e., of idlers, parasites and embezzlers of state funds (now all the land, all the factories and all the railways are the "state funds" of the Soviet Republic). If the class-conscious advanced workers and poor peasants manage with the aid of the Soviet institutions to organise, become disciplined, pull themselves together, create powerful labour discipline in the course of one year, then in a year's time we shall throw off this "tribute", which can be reduced even before that ... in exact proportion to the successes we achieve in our workers' and peasants' labour discipline and organisation. The sooner we ourselves, workers and peasants, learn the best labour discipline and the most modern technique of labour, using the bour-



geois experts to teach us, the sooner we shall liberate ourselves from any "tribute" to these specialists.

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

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

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

Consolidate and improve the state monopolies (in grain, leather, etc.) which have already been introduced, and by doing so prepare for the state monopoly of foreign trade. Without this monopoly we shall not be able to "free ourselves" from foreign capital by paying "tribute". And the possibility of building up



socialism depends entirely upon whether we shall be able, by paying a certain tribute to foreign capital during a certain transitional period, to safeguard our internal economic independence.

We are also lagging very far behind in regard to the collection of taxes generally, and of the property and income tax in particular. The imposing of indemnities upon the bourgeoisie—a measure which in principle is absolutely permissible and deserves proletarian approval—shows that in this respect we are still nearer to the methods of warfare (to win Russia from the rich for the poor) than to the methods of administration. In order to become stronger, however, and in order to be able to stand firmer on our feet, we must adopt the latter methods, we must substitute for the indemnities imposed upon the bourgeoisie the constant and regular collection of a property and income tax, which will bring a *greater* return to the proletarian state, and which calls for better organisation on our part and better accounting and control.

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

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

The state, which for centuries has been an organ 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 enormous perseverance to accomplish it. This “legacy” is especially apparent in the problem of accounting and control—the fundamental problem facing the socialist revolution on the morrow of the overthrow of the bourgeoisie. A certain amount of time will inevitably pass be-

fore the people, who feel free for the first time now that the land-owners 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,<sup>247</sup> 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.<sup>248</sup> 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 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 commercial transactions, contracts, etc., behind a veil of "trade secrets", which protect "the sacred right of property". The Soviet government has abolished trade secrets; it has 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 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 citi-



zens; 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? Let them yelp. We shall go our way and try as carefully and as patiently as possible to test and discover real organisers, people with sober and practical minds, people who combine loyalty to socialism with ability without fuss (and in spite of 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.

### **"HARMONIOUS ORGANISATION" AND DICTATORSHIP**

The resolution adopted by the recent Moscow Congress of Soviets advanced as the primary task of the moment the establishment of a "harmonious organisation", and the tightening of discipline.\* Everyone now readily "votes for" and "subscribes to" resolutions of this kind; but usually people do not think over the fact that the application of such resolutions calls for coercion—coercion precisely in the form of dictatorship. And yet it would

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\* See p. 641 of the present volume.—*Ed.*

be extremely stupid and absurdly utopian to assume that the transition from capitalism to socialism is possible without coercion and without dictatorship. Marx's theory very definitely opposed this petty-bourgeois-democratic and anarchist absurdity long ago. And Russia of 1917-18 confirms the correctness of Marx's theory in this respect so strikingly, palpably and imposingly that only those who are hopelessly dull or who have obstinately decided to turn their backs on the truth can be under any misapprehension concerning this. Either the dictatorship of Kornilov (if we take him as the Russian type of bourgeois Cavaignac), or the dictatorship of the proletariat—any other choice is *out of the question* for a country which is developing at an extremely rapid rate with extremely sharp turns and amidst desperate ruin created by one of the most horrible wars in history. Every solution that offers a middle path is either a deception of the people by the bourgeoisie—for the bourgeoisie dare not tell the truth, dare not say that they need Kornilov—or an expression of the dull-wittedness of the petty-bourgeois democrats, of the Chernovs, Tseretelis and Martovs, who chatter about the unity of democracy, the dictatorship of democracy, the general democratic front, and similar nonsense. Those whom even the progress of the Russian Revolution of 1917-18 has not taught that a middle course is impossible, must be given up for lost.

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

There has not been a single great revolution in history in which the people did not instinctively realise this and did not show salutary firmness by shooting thieves on the spot. The misfortune of previous revolutions was that the revolutionary enthusiasm of the people, which sustained them in their state of tension and gave them the strength to suppress ruthlessly the elements of disintegration, did not last long. The social, i.e., the class, reason for this instability of the revolutionary enthusiasm of the people was the weakness of the proletariat, which *alone* is able (if it is sufficiently numerous, class-conscious and disciplined) to win over to its side *the majority* of the working and exploited people (the majority of the poor, to speak more simply and popularly) and retain power sufficiently long to suppress completely all the exploiters as well as all the elements of disintegration.

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

Dictatorship, however, is a big word, and big words should not be thrown about carelessly. Dictatorship is iron rule, government that is revolutionarily bold, swift and ruthless in suppressing both exploiters and hooligans. But our government is excessively mild, very often it resembles jelly more than iron. We must not forget for a moment that the bourgeois and petty-bourgeois element is fighting against the Soviet system in two ways; on the one hand, it is operating from without, by the methods of the Savinkovs, Gotzes, Gegechkoris and Kornilovs, by conspiracies and rebellions, and by their filthy “ideological” reflection, the flood of lies and slander in the Constitutional-Democratic, Right Socialist-Revolutionary and Menshevik press; on the other hand, this element operates from within and takes advantage of every manifestation of disintegration, of every weakness, in order to bribe, to increase indiscipline, laxity and chaos. The nearer we approach the complete military suppression of the bourgeoisie, the more dangerous does the element of petty-bourgeois anarchy become. And the fight against this element cannot be waged solely with the



aid of propaganda and agitation, solely by organising competition and by selecting organisers. The struggle must also be waged by means of coercion.

As the fundamental task of the government becomes, not military suppression, but administration, the typical manifestation of suppression and compulsion will be, not shooting on the spot, but trial by court. In this respect also the revolutionary people after October 25, 1917 took the right path and demonstrated the viability of the revolution by setting up their own workers' and peasants' courts, even before the decrees dissolving the bourgeois bureaucratic judiciary were passed. But our revolutionary and people's courts are extremely, incredibly weak. One feels that we have not yet done away with the people's attitude towards the courts as towards something official and alien, an attitude inherited from the yoke of the landowners and of the bourgeoisie. It is not yet sufficiently realised that the courts are an organ which enlists precisely the poor, every one of them, in the work of state administration (for the work of the courts is one of the functions of state administration), that the courts are an *organ of the power* of the proletariat and of the poor peasants, that the courts are an instrument *for inculcating discipline*. There is not yet sufficient appreciation of the simple and obvious fact that if the principal misfortunes of Russia at the present time are hunger and unemployment, these misfortunes cannot be overcome by spurts, but only by comprehensive, all-embracing, country-wide organisation and discipline in order to increase the output of bread for the people and bread for industry (fuel), to transport these in good time to the places where they are required, and to distribute them properly; and it is not fully appreciated that, consequently, it is *those* who violate labour discipline at any factory, in any undertaking, in any matter, who are *responsible* for the sufferings caused by the famine and unemployment, that we must know how to find the guilty ones, to bring them to trial and ruthlessly punish them. Where the petty-bourgeois anarchy against which we must now wage a most persistent struggle makes itself felt is in the failure to appreciate the economic and political connection between famine and unemployment, on the one hand, and general laxity in matters of organisation and discipline, on the other—in the tenacity of the *small-proprietor* outlook, namely, I'll grab all I can for myself; the rest can go hang.

In the rail transport service, which perhaps most strikingly embodies the economic ties of an organism created by large-scale capitalism, the struggle between the element of petty-bourgeois laxity and proletarian organisation is particularly evident. The "administrative" elements provide a host of saboteurs and bribe-takers; the best part of the proletarian elements



fight for discipline; but among both elements there are, of course, many waverers and "weak" characters who are unable to withstand the "temptation" of profiteering, bribery, personal gain obtained by spoiling the whole apparatus, upon the proper working of which the victory over famine and unemployment depends.

The struggle that has been developing around the recent decree on the management of the railways, the decree which grants individual executives dictatorial powers (or "unlimited" powers),<sup>249</sup> is characteristic. The conscious (and to a large extent, probably, unconscious) representatives of petty-bourgeois laxity would like to see in this granting of "unlimited" (i.e., dictatorial) powers to individuals a departure from the collegiate principle, from democracy and from the principles of Soviet government. Here and there, among Left Socialist-Revolutionaries, a positively hooligan agitation, i.e., agitation appealing to the base instincts and to the small proprietor's urge to "grab all he can", has been developed against the dictatorship decree. The question has become one of really enormous significance. Firstly, the question of principle, namely, is the appointment of individuals, dictators with unlimited powers, in general compatible with the fundamental principles of Soviet government? Secondly, what relation has this case—this precedent, if you will—to the special tasks of government in the present concrete situation? We must deal very thoroughly with both these questions.

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

These are exceedingly poor arguments. If we are not anarchists, we must admit that the state, *that is, coercion*, is necessary for the transition from capitalism to socialism. The form of coercion is determined by the degree of development of the given revolutionary class, and also by special circumstances, such as, for example, the legacy of a long and reactionary war and the

forms of resistance put up by the bourgeoisie and the petty bourgeoisie. There is, therefore, absolutely *no* contradiction in principle between Soviet (*that is*, socialist) democracy and the exercise of dictatorial powers by individuals. The difference between proletarian dictatorship and bourgeois dictatorship is that the former strikes at the exploiting minority in the interests of the exploited majority, and that it is exercised—*also through individuals*—not only by the working and exploited people, but also by organisations which are built in such a way as to rouse these people to history-making activity. (The Soviet organisations are organisations of this kind.)

In regard to the second question, concerning the significance of individual dictatorial powers from the point of view of the specific tasks of the present moment, it must be said that large-scale machine industry—which is precisely the material source, the productive source, the foundation of socialism—calls for absolute and strict *unity of will*, which directs the joint labours of hundreds, thousands and tens of thousands of people. The technical, economic and historical necessity of this is obvious, and all those who have thought about socialism have always regarded it as one of the conditions of socialism. But how can strict unity of will be ensured? By thousands subordinating their will to the will of one.

Given ideal class-consciousness and discipline on the part of those participating in the common work, this subordination would be something like the mild leadership of a conductor of an orchestra. It may assume the sharp forms of a dictatorship if ideal discipline and class-consciousness are lacking. But be that as it may, *unquestioning subordination* to a single will is absolutely necessary for the success of processes organised on the pattern of large-scale machine industry. On the railways it is twice and three times as necessary. In this transition from one political task to another, which *on the surface* is totally dissimilar to the first, lies the whole originality of the present situation. The revolution has only just smashed the oldest, strongest and heaviest of fetters, to which the people submitted under duress. That was yesterday. Today, however, the same revolution demands—precisely in the interests of its development and consolidation, precisely in the interests of socialism—that the people *unquestioningly obey the single will* of the leaders of labour. Of course, such a transition cannot be made at one step. Clearly, it can be achieved only as a result of tremendous jolts, shocks, reversions to old ways, the enormous exertion of effort on the part of the proletarian vanguard, which is leading the people to the new ways. Those who drop into the philistine hysterics of *Novaya Zhizn* or *Uperyod*,<sup>250</sup> *Dyelo Naroda* or *Nash Uek*<sup>251</sup> do not stop to think about this.

Take the psychology of the average, ordinary representative of the toiling and exploited masses, compare it with the objective, material conditions of his life in society. Before the October Revolution he did *not* see a single instance of the propertied, exploiting classes making any real sacrifice for him, giving up anything for his benefit. He did *not* see them giving him the land and liberty that had been repeatedly promised him, giving him peace, sacrificing "Great Power" interests and the interests of Great Power secret treaties, sacrificing capital and profits. He saw this only *after* October 25, 1917, when he took it himself by force, and had to defend by force what he had taken, against the Kerenskys, Gotzes, Gegechkoris, Dutovs and Kornilovs. Naturally, for a certain time, all his attention, all his thoughts, all his spiritual strength, were concentrated on taking a breath, on unbending his back, on straightening his shoulders, on taking the blessings of life that were there for the taking, and that had always been denied him by the now overthrown exploiters. Of course, a certain amount of time is required to enable the ordinary working man not only to see for himself, not only to become convinced, but also to feel that he cannot simply "take", snatch, grab things, that this leads to increased disruption, to ruin, to the return of the Kornilovs. The corresponding change in the conditions of life (and consequently in the psychology) of the ordinary working men is only just beginning. And our whole task, the task of the Communist Party (Bolsheviks), which is the class-conscious spokesman for the strivings of the exploited for emancipation, is to appreciate this change, to understand that it is necessary, to stand at the head of the exhausted people who are wearily seeking a way out and lead them along the true path, along the path of labour discipline, along the path of co-ordinating the task of arguing at mass meetings *about* the conditions of work with the task of unquestioningly obeying the will of the Soviet leader, of the dictator, *during* the work.

The "mania for meetings" is an object of the ridicule, and still more often of the spiteful hissing of the bourgeoisie, the Mensheviks, the *Novaya Zhizn* people, who see only the chaos, the confusion and the outbursts of small-proprietor egoism. But without the discussions at public meetings the mass of the oppressed could never have changed from the discipline forced upon them by the exploiters to conscious, voluntary discipline. The airing of questions at public meetings is the genuine democracy of the working people, their way of unbending their backs, their awakening to a new life, their first steps along the road which they themselves have cleared of vipers (the exploiters, the imperialists, the landowners and capitalists) and which they want to learn to build themselves, in their own way, for themselves, on the principles of their own *Soviet*, and not alien, not aristocratic, not bourgeois rule.



It required precisely the October victory of the working people over the exploiters, it required a whole historical period in which the working people themselves could first of all discuss the new conditions of life and the new tasks, in order to make possible the durable transition to superior forms of labour discipline, to the conscious appreciation of the necessity for the dictatorship of the proletariat, to unquestioning obedience to the orders of individual representatives of the Soviet government during the work.

This transition has now begun.

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

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

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

We have not yet learned to do this.

We shall learn it.

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



## 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>252</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 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.

## CONCLUSION

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

Try to compare with the ordinary everyday concept "revolutionary" the slogans that follow from the specific conditions of the present stage, namely, manoeuvre, retreat, wait, build slowly,



ruthlessly tighten up, rigorously discipline, smash laxity. . . . Is it surprising that when certain "revolutionaries" hear this they are seized with noble indignation and begin to "thunder" abuse at us for forgetting the traditions of the October Revolution, for compromising with the bourgeois experts, for compromising with the bourgeoisie, for being petty bourgeois, reformists, and so on and so forth?

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

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



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## SIX THESES ON THE IMMEDIATE TASKS OF THE SOVIET GOVERNMENT<sup>253</sup>

1. The international position of the Soviet Republic is extremely difficult and critical, because the deepest and fundamental interests of international capital and imperialism induce it to strive not only for a military onslaught on Russia, but also for an agreement on the partition of Russia and the strangulation of the Soviet power.

Only the intensification of the imperialist slaughter of the peoples in Western Europe and the imperialist rivalry between Japan and America in the Far East paralyse, or restrain, these aspirations, and then only partially, and only for a certain, probably short, time.

Therefore, the tactics of the Soviet Republic must be, on the one hand, to exert every effort to ensure the country's speediest economic recovery, to increase its defence capacity, to build up a powerful socialist army; on the other hand, in international policy, the tactics must be those of manoeuvring, retreat, waiting for the moment when the international proletarian revolution—which is now maturing more quickly than before in a number of advanced countries—fully matures.

2. In the sphere of domestic policy, the task that comes to the forefront at the present time in conformity with the resolution adopted by the All-Russia Congress of Soviets on March 15, 1918, is the task of organisation. It is this task, in connection with the new and higher organisation of production and distribution on the basis of socialised large-scale machine (labour) production, that constitutes the chief content—and chief condition of complete victory—of the socialist revolution that was begun in Russia on October 25, 1917.

3. From the purely political point of view, the essence of the present situation is that the task of convincing the working people of Russia that the programme of the socialist revolution is correct and the task of winning Russia from the exploiters for the working people have, in main and fundamental outline, been

carried out, and the chief problem that comes to the forefront now is—how to administer Russia. The organisation of proper administration, the undeviating fulfilment of the decisions of the Soviet government—this is the urgent task of the Soviets, this is the condition for the complete victory of the Soviet type of state, which it is not enough to proclaim in formal decrees, which it is not enough to establish and introduce in all parts of the country, but which must also be practically organised and tested in the course of the regular, everyday work of administration.

4. In the sphere of the economic building of socialism, the essence of the present situation is that our work of organising the country-wide and all-embracing accounting and control of production and distribution, and of introducing proletarian control of production, lags far behind the direct expropriation of the expropriators—the landowners and capitalists. This is the fundamental fact determining our tasks.

From this it follows, on the one hand, that the struggle against the bourgeoisie is entering a new phase, namely: the centre of gravity is shifting to the organisation of accounting and control. Only in this way is it possible to consolidate all the economic achievements directed against capital, all the measures in nationalising individual branches of the national economy that we have carried out since October; and only in this way is it possible to prepare for the successful consummation of the struggle against the bourgeoisie, i.e., the complete consolidation of socialism.

From this basic fact follows, on the other hand, the explanation as to why the Soviet government was obliged in certain cases to take a step backward, or to agree to compromise with bourgeois tendencies. Such a step backward and departure from the principles of the Paris Commune was, for example, the introduction of high salaries for a number of bourgeois experts. Such a compromise was the agreement with the bourgeois co-operatives concerning steps and measures for gradually bringing the entire population into the co-operatives. Compromises of this kind will be necessary until the proletarian government has put country-wide control and accounting firmly on its feet; and our task is, while not in the least concealing their unfavourable features from the people, to exert efforts to improve accounting and control as the only means and method of completely eliminating all compromises of this kind. Compromises of this kind are needed at the present time as the sole (because we are late with accounting and control) guarantee of slower, but surer progress. When the accounting and control of production and distribution is fully introduced the need for such compromises will disappear.

5. Particular significance now attaches to measures for raising labour discipline and the productivity of labour. Every effort

must be exerted for the steps already undertaken in this direction, especially by the trade unions, to be sustained, consolidated and increased. This includes, for example, the introduction of piece-work, the adoption of much that is scientific and progressive in the Taylor system, the payment of wages commensurate with the general results of the work of a factory, the exploitation of rail and water transport, etc. This also includes the organisation of competition between individual producers' and consumers' communes, selection of organisers, etc.

6. The proletarian dictatorship is absolutely indispensable during the transition from capitalism to socialism, and in our revolution this truth has been fully confirmed in practice. Dictatorship, however, presupposes a revolutionary government that is really firm and ruthless in crushing both exploiters and hooligans, and our government is too mild. Obedience, and unquestioning obedience at that, during work to the one-man decisions of Soviet directors, of the dictators elected or appointed by Soviet institutions, vested with dictatorial powers (as is demanded, for example, by the railway decree), is far, very far from being guaranteed as yet. This is the effect of the influence of petty-bourgeois anarchy, the anarchy of small-proprietor habits, aspirations and sentiments, which fundamentally contradict proletarian discipline and socialism. The proletariat must concentrate all its class-consciousness on the task of combating this petty-bourgeois anarchy, which is not only directly apparent (in the support given by the bourgeoisie and their hangers-on, the Mensheviks, Right Socialist-Revolutionaries, etc., to every kind of resistance to the proletarian government), but also indirectly apparent (in the historical vacillation displayed on the major questions of policy by both the petty-bourgeois Left Socialist-Revolutionaries and the trend in our Party called "Left Communist", which descends to the methods of petty-bourgeois revolutionariness and copies the Left Socialist-Revolutionaries).

Iron discipline and the thorough exercise of proletarian dictatorship against petty-bourgeois vacillation—this is the general and summarising slogan of the moment.

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and May 3, 1918

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## DRAFT PLAN OF SCIENTIFIC AND TECHNICAL WORK<sup>254</sup>

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

The plan should include:

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

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

enabling the present Russian Soviet Republic (excluding the Ukraine and the regions occupied by the Germans) as far as possible to provide itself *independently* with *all* the chief items of raw materials and organise main branches of industry;

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

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

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



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## “LEFT-WING” CHILDISHNESS AND THE PETTY-BOURGEOIS MENTALITY

The publication by a small group of “Left Communists” of their journal, *Kommunist*<sup>255</sup> (No. 1, April 20, 1918), and of their “theses”, strikingly confirms my views expressed in the pamphlet *The Immediate Tasks of the Soviet Government*.<sup>\*</sup> There could not be better confirmation, in political literature, of the utter naïveté of the defence of petty-bourgeois sloppiness that is sometimes concealed by “Left” slogans. It is useful and necessary to deal with the arguments of “Left Communists” because they are characteristic of the period we are passing through. They show up with exceptional clarity the negative side of the “core” of this period. They are instructive, because the people we are dealing with are the best of those who have failed to understand the present period, people who by their knowledge and loyalty stand far, far above the *ordinary* representatives of the same mistaken views, namely, the Left Socialist-Revolutionaries.

### I

As a political magnitude, or as a group claiming to play a political role, the “Left Communist” group has presented its “Theses on the Present Situation”. It is a good Marxist custom to give a coherent and complete exposition of the principles underlying one’s views and tactics. And this good Marxist custom has helped to reveal the mistake committed by our “Lefts”, because the mere attempt to argue and not to declaim exposes the unsoundness of their argument.

The first thing that strikes one is the abundance of allusions, hints and evasions with regard to the old question of whether it was right to conclude the Brest Treaty. The “Lefts” dare not put the question in a straightforward manner. They flounder

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<sup>\*</sup> See pp. 643-80 of the present volume.—Ed.

about in a comical fashion, pile argument on argument, fish for reasons, plead that "on the one hand" it may be so, but "on the other hand" it may not, their thoughts wander over all and sundry subjects, they try all the time not to see that they are defeating themselves. The "Lefts" are very careful to quote the figures: twelve votes at the Party Congress against peace, twenty-eight votes in favour, but they discreetly refrain from mentioning that of the hundreds of votes cast at the meeting of the Bolshevik group of the Congress of Soviets they obtained less than one-tenth. They have invented a "theory" that the peace was carried by "the exhausted and declassed elements", while it was opposed by "the workers and peasants of the southern regions, where there was greater vitality in economic life and the supply of bread was more assured"... Can one do anything but laugh at this? There is not a word about the voting at the All-Ukraine Congress of Soviets in favour of peace, nor about the social and class character of the typically petty-bourgeois and declassed political conglomeration in Russia who were opposed to peace (the Left Socialist-Revolutionary party). In an utterly childish manner, by means of amusing "scientific" explanations, they try to conceal their own bankruptcy, to conceal the facts, the mere review of which would show that it was precisely the declassed, intellectual "cream" of the party, the élite, who opposed the peace with slogans couched in revolutionary petty-bourgeois phrases, that it was precisely the *mass* of workers and exploited peasants who carried the peace.

Nevertheless, in spite of all the above-mentioned declarations and evasions of the "Lefts" on the question of war and peace, the plain and obvious truth manages to come to light. The authors of the theses are compelled to admit that "the conclusion of peace has for the time being weakened the imperialists' attempts to make a deal on a world scale" (this is inaccurately formulated by the "Lefts", but this is not the place to deal with inaccuracies). "The conclusion of peace has already caused the conflict between the imperialist powers to become more acute."

Now this is a fact. Here is something that has *decisive* significance. That is why those who opposed the conclusion of peace were unwittingly playthings in the hands of the imperialists and fell into the trap laid for them by the imperialists. For, until the world socialist revolution breaks out, until it embraces several countries and is strong enough to overcome *international imperialism*, it is the direct duty of the socialists who have conquered in one country (especially a backward one) *not* to accept battle against the giants of imperialism. Their duty is to try to avoid battle, to wait until the conflicts between the imperialists weaken them *even more*, and bring the revolution in other countries even nearer. Our

"Lefts" did not understand this simple truth in January, February and March. Even now they are afraid of admitting it openly. But it comes to light through all their confused reasoning like "on the one hand it must be confessed, on the other hand one must admit."

"During the coming spring and summer," the "Lefts" write in their theses, "the collapse of the imperialist system must begin. In the event of a victory for German imperialism in the present phase of the war this collapse can only be postponed, but it will then express itself in even more acute forms."

This formulation is even more childishly inaccurate despite its playing at science. It is natural for children to "understand" science to mean something that can determine in what year, spring, summer, autumn or winter the "collapse must begin".

These are ridiculous, vain attempts to ascertain what cannot be ascertained. No serious politician will ever say *when* this or that collapse of a "system" "must begin" (the more so that the collapse of the *system* has already begun, and it is now a question of the moment when the outbreak of revolution in *particular* countries will begin). But an indisputable truth forces its way through this childishly helpless formulation, namely, the outbreaks of revolution in other, more advanced, countries are *nearer* now, a month since the beginning of the "respite" which followed the conclusion of peace, than they were a month or six weeks ago.

What follows?

It follows that the peace supporters were absolutely right, and their stand has been justified by the course of events. They were right in having drummed into the minds of the lovers of ostentation that one must be able to calculate the balance of forces and *not help* the imperialists by making the battle against socialism easier for them, when socialism is still weak, and when the chances of the battle are manifestly *against* socialism.

Our "Left" Communists, however, who are also fond of calling themselves "proletarian" Communists, because there is very little that is proletarian about them and very much that is petty-bourgeois, are incapable of giving thought to the balance of forces, to calculating it. This is the core of Marxism and Marxist tactics, but they disdainfully brush aside the "core" with "proud" phrases such as:

"...That the masses have become firmly imbued with an inactive 'peace mentality' is an objective fact of the political situation. . . ."

What a gem! After three years of the most agonising and reactionary war, the people, thanks to Soviet power and its correct tactics, which never lapsed into mere phrase-making, have obtained a very, very brief, insecure and far from sufficient respite. The "Left" intellectual striplings, however, with the magnificence of a self-infatuated Narcissus, profoundly declare "that the masses

{???} have become firmly imbued [!!!] with an inactive [!!!???] peace mentality". Was I not right when I said at the Party Congress that the paper or journal of the "Lefts" ought to have been called not *Kommunist* but *Szlachcic*?\*

Can a Communist with the slightest understanding of the mentality and the conditions of life of the toiling and exploited people descend to the point of view of the typical declassed petty-bourgeois intellectual with the mental outlook of a noble or *szlachcic*, which declares that a "peace mentality" is "inactive" and believes that the brandishing of a cardboard sword is "activity"? For our "Lefts" merely brandish a cardboard sword when they ignore the universally known fact, of which the war in the Ukraine has served as an additional proof, that peoples utterly exhausted by three years of butchery cannot go on fighting without a respite; and that war, if it cannot be organised on a national scale, very often creates a mentality of disintegration peculiar to petty proprietors, instead of the iron discipline of the proletariat. Every page of *Kommunist* shows that our "Lefts" have no idea of iron proletarian discipline and how it is achieved, that they are thoroughly imbued with the mentality of the declassed petty-bourgeois intellectual.

## II

Perhaps all these phrases of the "Lefts" about war can be put down to mere childish exuberance, which, moreover, concerns the past, and therefore has not a shadow of political significance? This is the argument some people put up in defence of our "Lefts". But this is wrong. Anyone aspiring to political leadership must be able to *think out* political problems, and lack of this ability converts the "Lefts" into spineless preachers of a policy of vacillation, which objectively can have only one result, namely, by their vacillation the "Lefts" *are helping* the imperialists to provoke the Russian Soviet Republic into a battle that will obviously be to its disadvantage, they *are helping* the imperialists to draw us into a snare. Listen to this:

"...The Russian workers' revolution cannot 'save itself' by abandoning the path of world revolution, by continually avoiding battle and yielding to the pressure of international capital, by making concessions to 'home capital'.

"From this point of view it is necessary to adopt a determined class international policy which will unite international revolutionary propaganda by word and deed, and to strengthen the

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\* See p. 592 of the present volume.—*Ed.*



organic connection with international socialism (and not with the international bourgeoisie). . . .”

I shall deal separately with the thrusts at home policy contained in this passage. But examine this riot of phrase-making—and timidity in deeds—in the sphere of foreign policy. What tactics *are binding* at the *present* time on all who do not wish to be tools of imperialist provocation, and who do not wish to walk into the snare? Every politician must give a clear, straightforward reply to this question. Our Party’s reply is well known. At the *present* moment we must *retreat* and avoid battle. Our “Lefts” dare not contradict this and shoot into the air: “A determined class international policy”!!

This is deceiving the people. If you want to fight now, say so openly. If you don’t wish to *retreat* now, say so openly. Otherwise, in your objective role, you are a tool of imperialist provocation. And your subjective “mentality” is that of a frenzied petty bourgeois who swaggers and blusters but senses perfectly well that the proletarian is *right* in retreating and in trying to retreat in an organised way. He senses that the proletarian is right in arguing that because we lack strength we must retreat (before Western and Eastern imperialism) even as far as the Urals, for in this lies the *only* chance of playing for time while the revolution in the West matures, the revolution which is not “bound” (despite the twaddle of the “Lefts”) to begin in “spring or summer”, but which is coming nearer and becoming more probable *every month*.

The “Lefts” have no policy of their “own”. They *dare not* declare that retreat at the *present moment* is unnecessary. They twist and turn, play with words, substitute the question of “continuously” avoiding battle for the question of avoiding battle at the *present moment*. They blow soap bubbles such as “international revolutionary propaganda by deed”!! What does this mean?

It can only mean one of two things: either it is mere Nozdryovism,<sup>256</sup> or it means an offensive war to overthrow international imperialism. Such nonsense cannot be uttered openly, and that is why the “Left” Communists are obliged to take refuge from the derision of every politically conscious proletarian behind high-sounding and empty phrases. They hope the inattentive reader will not notice the real meaning of the phrase “international revolutionary propaganda by deed”.

The flaunting of high-sounding phrases is characteristic of the declassed petty-bourgeois intellectuals. The organised proletarian Communists will certainly punish this “habit” with nothing less than derision and expulsion from all responsible posts. The people must be told the bitter truth simply, clearly and in a straightforward manner: it is possible, and even probable, that the war party will again get the upper hand in Germany (that is, an offen-

sive against us will commence at once), and that Germany together with Japan, by official agreement or by tacit understanding, will partition and strangle us. Our tactics, if we do not want to listen to the ranters, must be to wait, procrastinate, avoid battle and retreat. If we shake off the ranters and "brace ourselves" by creating genuinely iron, genuinely proletarian, genuinely communist discipline, we shall have a good chance of gaining many months. And then by retreating even, if the worst comes to the worst, to the Urals, we shall *make it easier* for our ally (the international proletariat) to come to our aid, to "catch up" (to use the language of sport) the distance between the beginning of revolutionary outbreaks and revolution.

These, and these alone, are the tactics which can in fact strengthen the connection between one temporarily isolated section of international socialism and the other sections. But to tell the truth, all that your arguments lead to, dear "Left Communists", is the "strengthening of the organic connection" between one high-sounding phrase and another. A bad sort of "organic connection", this!

I shall enlighten you, my amiable friends, as to why such disaster overtook you. It is because you devote more effort to learning by heart and committing to memory revolutionary slogans than to thinking them out. This leads you to write "the defence of the socialist fatherland" in quotation marks, which are probably meant to signify your attempts at being ironical, but which really prove that you are muddleheads. You are accustomed to regard "defencism" as something base and despicable; you have learned this and committed it to memory. You have learned this by heart so thoroughly that some of you have begun talking nonsense to the effect that defence of the fatherland in an imperialist *epoch* is impermissible (as a matter of fact, it is impermissible only in an imperialist, reactionary war, waged by the bourgeoisie). But you have not thought out why and when "defencism" is abominable.

To recognise defence of the fatherland means recognising the legitimacy and justice of war. Legitimacy and justice from what point of view? Only from the point of view of the socialist proletariat and its struggle for its emancipation. We do not recognise any other point of view. If war is waged by the exploiting class with the object of strengthening its rule as a class, such a war is a criminal war, and "defencism" in *such* a war is a base betrayal of socialism. If war is waged by the proletariat after it has conquered the bourgeoisie in its own country, and is waged with the object of strengthening and developing socialism, such a war is legitimate and "holy".

We have been "defencists" since October 25, 1917. I have said this more than once very definitely, and you dare not deny this.

It is precisely in the interests of "strengthening the connection" with international socialism that we *are in duty bound* to defend our *socialist* fatherland. Those who treat frivolously the defence of the country in which the proletariat has already achieved victory are the ones who destroy the connection with international socialism. When we were the representatives of an oppressed class we did not adopt a frivolous attitude towards defence of the fatherland in an imperialist war. We opposed such defence on principle. Now that we have become representatives of the ruling class, which has begun to organise socialism, we demand that everybody adopt a *serious* attitude towards defence of the country. And adopting a serious attitude towards defence of the country means thoroughly preparing for it, and strictly calculating the balance of forces. If our forces are obviously small, the best means of defence is *retreat into the interior of the country* (anyone who regards this as an artificial formula, made up to suit the needs of the moment, should read old Clausewitz,<sup>257</sup> one of the greatest authorities on military matters, concerning the lessons of history to be learned in this connection). The "Left Communists", however, do not give the slightest indication that they understand the significance of the question of the balance of forces.

When we were opposed to defencism on principle we were justified in holding up to ridicule those who wanted to "save" their fatherland, ostensibly in the interests of socialism. When we gained the right to be proletarian defencists the whole question was radically altered. It has become our duty to calculate with the utmost accuracy the different forces involved, to weigh with the utmost care the chances of our ally (the international proletariat) being able to come to our aid in time. It is in the interest of capital to destroy its enemy (the revolutionary proletariat) bit by bit, before the workers in all countries have united (actually united, i.e., by beginning the revolution). It is in our interest to do all that is possible, to take advantage of the slightest opportunity to postpone the decisive battle until the moment (or *until after* the moment) the revolutionary workers' contingents have united in a single great international army.

### III

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

"...The systematic use of the remaining means of production is conceivable only if a most determined policy of socialisation is pursued" ... "not to capitulate to the bourgeoisie and its petty-



bourgeois intellectualist servitors, but to rout the bourgeoisie and to put down sabotage completely. . . ."

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

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

Yesterday, the main task of the moment was, as determinedly as possible, to nationalise, confiscate, beat down and crush the bourgeoisie, and put down sabotage. Today, only a blind man could fail to see that we have nationalised, confiscated, beaten down and put down more *than we have had time to count*. The difference between socialisation and simple confiscation is that confiscation can be carried out by "determination" alone, without the ability to calculate and distribute properly, *whereas socialisation cannot be brought about without this ability*.

The historical service we have rendered is that yesterday we were determined (and we shall be tomorrow) in confiscating, in beating down the bourgeoisie, in putting down sabotage. To write about this today in "theses on the present situation" is to fix one's eyes on the past and to fail to understand the transition to the future.

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



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

It has not occurred to them that state capitalism would be a *step forward* as compared with the present state of affairs in our Soviet Republic. If in approximately six months' time state capitalism became established in our Republic, this would be a great success and a sure guarantee that within a year socialism will have gained a permanently firm hold and will have become invincible in our country.

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

Here we come to the root of the *economic* mistake of the "Left Communists". And that is why we must deal with this point in greater detail.

Firstly, the "Left Communists" do not understand what kind of *transition* it is from capitalism to socialism that gives us the right and the grounds to call our country the Socialist Republic of Soviets.

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

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

Let us examine these three points.

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

But what does the word "transition" mean? Does it not mean, as applied to an economy, that the present system contains elements, particles, fragments of *both* capitalism and socialism? Everyone will admit that it does. But not all who admit this take the trouble to consider what elements actually constitute the

various socio-economic structures that exist in Russia at the present time. And this is the crux of the question.

Let us enumerate these elements:

- 1) patriarchal, i.e., to a considerable extent natural, peasant farming;
- 2) small commodity production (this includes the majority of those peasants who sell their grain);
- 3) private capitalism;
- 4) state capitalism;
- 5) socialism.

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

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

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

petty-bourgeois hydra now and again encircle various sections of the workers, that, *instead of state monopoly*, profiteering forces its way into every pore of our social and economic organism.

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

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

The petty bourgeois who hoards his thousands is an enemy of state capitalism. He wants to employ his thousands just for himself, against the poor, in opposition to any kind of state control. And the sum total of these thousands, amounting to many thousands of millions, forms the base for profiteering, which undermines our socialist construction. Let us assume that a certain number of workers produce in a few days values equal to 1,000. Let us then assume that 200 of this total vanishes owing to petty profiteering, various kinds of embezzlement and the "evasion" by the small proprietors of Soviet decrees and regulations. Every politically conscious worker will say that if better order and organisation could be obtained at the price of 300 out of the 1,000 he would willingly give 300 instead of 200, for it will be quite easy under Soviet power to reduce this "tribute" later on to, say, 100



or 50, once order and organisation are established and once the petty-bourgeois disruption of state monopoly is completely overcome.

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

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

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

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



## IV

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

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

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

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

While the revolution in Germany is still slow in "coming forth", our task is to study the state capitalism of the Germans, to spare *no effort* in copying it and not shrink from adopting *dictatorial* methods to hasten the copying of it. Our task is to hasten this copying even more than Peter hastened the copying of Western culture by barbarian Russia, and we must not hesitate to use barbarous methods in fighting barbarism. If there are anarchists and Left

Socialist-Revolutionaries (I recall off-hand the speeches of Karelín and Ghe at the meeting of the Central Executive Committee) who indulge in Narcissus-like reflections and say that it is unbecoming for us revolutionaries to "take lessons" from German imperialism, there is only one thing we can say in reply: the revolution that took these people seriously would perish irrevocably (and deservedly).

At present, petty-bourgeois capitalism prevails in Russia, and it is *one and the same road* that leads from it to *both* large-scale state capitalism and to socialism, *through one and the same* intermediary station called "national accounting and control of production and distribution". Those who fail to understand this are committing an unpardonable mistake in economics. Either they do not know the facts of life, do not see what actually exists and are unable to look the truth in the face, or they confine themselves to abstractly comparing "capitalism" with "socialism" and fail to study the concrete forms and stages of the transition that is taking place in our country. Let it be said in parenthesis that this is the very theoretical mistake which misled the best people in the *Novaya Zhizn* and *Uperyod* camp. The worst and the mediocre of these, owing to their stupidity and spinelessness, tag along behind the bourgeoisie, of whom they stand in awe. The best of them have failed to understand that it was not without reason that the teachers of socialism spoke of a whole period of transition from capitalism to socialism and emphasised the "prolonged birth pangs" of the new society. And this new society is again an abstraction which can come into being only by passing through a series of varied, imperfect concrete attempts to create this or that socialist state.

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

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

"...Try to substitute *for* the Junker-capitalist state, for the landowner-capitalist state, a *revolutionary-democratic* state, i.e., a state which in a revolutionary way abolishes *all* privileges and

does not fear to introduce the fullest democracy in a revolutionary way. You will find that, given a really revolutionary-democratic state, state-monopoly capitalism inevitably and unavoidably implies a step, and more than one step, towards socialism!

"...For socialism is merely the next step forward from state-capitalist monopoly.

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

Please note that this was written when Kerensky was in power, that we are discussing *not* the dictatorship of the proletariat, *not* the socialist state, but the "revolutionary-democratic" state. Is it not clear that the *higher* we stand on this political ladder, *the more completely* we incorporate the socialist state and the dictatorship of the proletariat in the Soviets, *the less* ought we to fear "state capitalism"? Is it not clear that from the *material*, economic and productive point of view, we are not yet on "the threshold" of socialism? Is it not clear that we cannot pass through the door of socialism without crossing "the threshold" we have not yet reached?

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

## V

The following is also extremely instructive.

When we argued with Comrade Bukharin in the Central Executive Committee,\*\* he declared, among other things, that on the question of high salaries for specialists "we" (evidently meaning the "Left Communists") were "more to the right than Lenin", for in this case "we" saw no deviation from principle, bearing in mind Marx's words that under certain conditions it is more expedient for the working class to "buy out the whole lot of them"<sup>258</sup> (namely, the whole lot of capitalists, i.e., *to buy* from the bourgeoisie the land, factories, works and other means of production).

This extremely interesting statement shows, in the first place, that Bukharin is head and shoulders above the Left Socialist-Revolutionaries and anarchists, that he is by no means hopelessly

\* See pp. 269-70 of the present volume.—Ed.

\*\* See *Collected Works*, Vol. 27, p. 310.—Ed.



stuck in the mud of phrase-making, but on the contrary is making efforts to think out the *concrete* difficulties of the transition—the painful and difficult transition—from capitalism to socialism.

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

Let us consider Marx's idea carefully.

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

Well, and what about Soviet Russia? Is it not clear that *after* the seizure of power by the proletariat and *after* the crushing of the exploiters' armed resistance and sabotage, *certain* conditions prevail which correspond to those which might have existed in Britain half a century ago had a peaceful transition to socialism begun there? The subordination of the capitalists to the workers in Britain would have been assured at that time owing to the following circumstances: (1) the absolute preponderance of workers, of proletarians, in the population owing to the absence of a peasantry (in Britain in the seventies there was hope of an extremely rapid spread of socialism among agricultural labourers); (2) the excellent organisation of the proletariat in trade unions (Britain was at that time the leading country in the world in this respect); (3) the comparatively high level of culture of the proletariat, which had been trained by centuries of development of political liberty; (4) the old habit of the well-organised British capitalists of settling political and economic questions by compromise—at that time the British capitalists were better organised than the capitalists of any country in the world (this superiority has now passed to Germany). These were the circumstances which at that time gave rise to the idea that the *peaceful* subjugation of the British capitalists by the workers was possible.

In our country, at the present time, this subjugation is assured by certain premises of fundamental significance (the victory in October and the suppression, from October to February, of the



capitalists' armed resistance and sabotage). But *instead of* the absolute preponderance of workers, of proletarians, in the population, and *instead of* a high degree of organisation among them, the important factor of victory in Russia was the support the proletarians received from the poor peasants and those who had experienced sudden ruin. Finally, we have neither a high degree of culture nor the habit of compromise. If these concrete conditions are carefully considered, it will become clear that we can and ought to employ two methods *simultaneously*. On the one hand we must ruthlessly suppress\* the uncultured capitalists who refuse to have anything to do with "state capitalism" or to consider any form of compromise, and who continue by means of profiteering, by bribing the poor peasants, etc., to hinder the realisation of the measures taken by the Soviets. On the other hand, we must use the *method of compromise*, or of buying off the cultured capitalists who agree to "state capitalism", who are capable of putting it into practice and who are useful to the proletariat as intelligent and experienced organisers of the *largest* types of enterprises, which actually supply products to tens of millions of people.

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

But Bukharin went astray because he did not go deep enough into the specific features of the situation in Russia at the present time—an exceptional situation when we, the Russian proletariat, are in *advance* of any Britain or any Germany as regards our political order, as regards the strength of the workers' political power, but are *behind* the most backward West-European country

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

as regards organising a good state capitalism, as regards our level of culture and the degree of material and productive preparedness for the "introduction" of socialism. Is it not clear that the specific nature of the present situation creates the need for a specific type of "buying out" which the workers must offer to the most cultured, the most skilled, the most capable organisers among the capitalists who are ready to enter the service of Soviet power and to help honestly in organising "state" production on the largest possible scale? Is it not clear that in this specific situation we must make every effort to avoid two mistakes, both of which are of a petty-bourgeois nature? On the one hand, it would be a fatal mistake to declare that since there is a discrepancy between our economic "forces" and our political strength, it "follows" that we should not have seized power. Such an argument can be advanced only by a "man in a muffler", who forgets that there will always be such a "discrepancy", that it always exists in the development of nature as well as in the development of society, that only by a series of attempts—each of which, taken by itself, will be one-sided and will suffer from certain inconsistencies—will complete socialism be created by the revolutionary co-operation of the proletarians of *all* countries.

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

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

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

Bogayevskys, the universal setting up of the Soviet 'institutions, and in every act of confiscation.

Now power has been seized, retained and consolidated in the hands of a single party, the party of the proletariat, even without the "unreliable fellow-travellers". To speak of compromise at the present time when there is no question, and can be none, of sharing *power*, of renouncing the dictatorship of the proletariat over the bourgeoisie, is merely to repeat, parrot-fashion, words which have been learned by heart but not understood. To describe as "compromise" the fact that, having arrived at a situation when we can and must rule the country, we try to win over to our side, not grudging the cost, the most skilled people capitalism has trained and to take them into our service against small proprietary disintegration, reveals a total incapacity to think out the economic task of socialist construction.

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

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

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

Isn't it marvellous?

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



(that is, of establishing "state capitalism"!), of introducing the Taylor system.

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

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

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

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

"In connection with the restoration of capitalist management"—these are the words with which the "Left Communists" hope to "defend themselves". A perfectly useless defence, because, in the first place, when putting "management" in the hands of capitalists Soviet power appoints workers' Commissars or workers' committees who watch the manager's every step, who learn from his management experience and who not only have the right to appeal against his orders, but can secure his removal through the organs of Soviet power. In the second place, "management" is entrusted to capitalists only for executive functions while at work, the conditions of which are determined by the Soviet power, by



which they may be abolished or revised. In the third place, "management" is entrusted by the Soviet power to capitalists not as capitalists, but as technicians or organisers for higher salaries. And the workers know very well that ninety-nine per cent of the organisers and first-class technicians of really large-scale and giant enterprises, trusts or other establishments belong to the capitalist class. But it is precisely these people whom we, the proletarian party, must appoint to "manage" the labour process and the organisation of production, for there are *no* other people who have practical experience in this matter. The workers, having grown out of the infancy when they could have been misled by "Left" phrases or petty-bourgeois loose thinking, are advancing towards socialism precisely through the capitalist management of trusts, through gigantic machine industry, through enterprises which have a turnover of several millions per year—only through such a system of production and such enterprises. The workers are not petty bourgeois. They are not afraid of large-scale "state capitalism", they prize it as their *proletarian* weapon which *their Soviet power* will use against small proprietary disintegration and disorganisation.

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

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

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

Osinsky thinks this is funny. He wants to make "rank-and-file workers" out of the organisers of the trusts. If this had been written by a man of the age of which the poet wrote "But fifteen years, not more?..."<sup>259</sup> there would have been nothing surprising about it. But it is somewhat strange to hear such things from a Marxist who has learned that socialism is impossible unless it makes use of the achievements of the engineering and culture created by large-scale capitalism. There is no trace of Marxism in this.

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

scale production on trust lines, as trusts are organised, except by acquiring it from first-class capitalist experts.

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

The best workers in Russia have realised this. They have begun to learn from the capitalist organisers, the managing engineers and the technicians. They have begun to learn steadily and cautiously with easy things, gradually passing on to the more difficult things. If things are going more slowly in the iron and steel and engineering industries, it is because they present greater difficulties. But the textile and tobacco workers and tanners are not afraid of "state capitalism" or of "learning from the organisers of the trusts", as the declassed petty-bourgeois intelligentsia are. These workers in the central leading institutions like Chief Leather Committee and Central Textile Committee take their place by the side of the capitalists, *learn from them*, establish trusts, establish "state capitalism", which under Soviet power represents the threshold of socialism, the condition of its firm victory.

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

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

## VI

Two remarks in conclusion.

In arguing with the "Left Communists" on April 4, 1918 (see *Kommunist* No. 1, p. 4, footnote), I put it to them bluntly: "Explain what you are dissatisfied with in the railway decree; submit *your* amendments to it. It is your duty as Soviet leaders of the proletariat to do so, otherwise what you say is nothing but empty phrases."

The first issue of *Kommunist* appeared on April 20, 1918, but did not contain a *single word* about how, according to the "Left Communists", the railway decree should be altered or amended.

The "Left Communists" stand condemned by their own silence. They did nothing but *attack* the railway decree with all sorts of insinuations (pp. 8 and 16 of No. 1), they *gave no* articulate answer to the question, "How should the decree be amended if it is wrong?"

No comment is needed. The class-conscious workers will call *such* "criticism" of the railway decree (which is a typical example of our line of action, the line of firmness, the line of dictatorship, the line of proletarian discipline) either "Isuvian" criticism or empty phrase-making.

Second remark. The first issue of *Kommunist* contained a very flattering review by Comrade Bukharin of my pamphlet *The State and Revolution*. But however much I value the opinion of people like Bukharin, my conscience compels me to say that the *character* of the review reveals a sad and significant fact. Bukharin regards the tasks of the proletarian dictatorship from the point of view of the *past* and not of the future. Bukharin noted and emphasised what the proletarian revolutionary and the petty-bourgeois revolutionary may have in common on the question of the state. But Bukharin "overlooked" the very thing that distinguishes the one from the other.

Bukharin noted and emphasised that the old state machinery must be "smashed" and "blown up", that the bourgeoisie must be "finally and completely strangled" and so on. The frenzied petty bourgeoisie may also want this. And this, in the main, is what our revolution has *already* done between October 1917 and February 1918.

In my pamphlet I also mention what even the most revolutionary petty bourgeois cannot want, what the class-conscious proletarian does want, what our revolution has *not yet* accomplished. On this task, the task of tomorrow, Bukharin said nothing.

And I have all the more reason not to be silent on this point, because, in the first place, a Communist is expected to devote greater attention to the tasks of tomorrow, and not of yesterday,



and, in the second place, my pamphlet was written *before* the Bolsheviks seized power, when it was impossible to treat the Bolsheviks to vulgar petty-bourgeois arguments such as: "Yes, *of course, after* seizing power, you begin to talk about discipline."

"... Socialism will develop into communism ... since people will become accustomed to observing the elementary conditions of social life without violence and without subordination." (*The State and Revolution*, pp. 77-78\*; thus, "elementary conditions" were discussed *before* the seizure of power.)

"... Only then will democracy begin to wither away ..." when "people 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 the special apparatus for coercion called the state" (*ibid.*, p. 84\*\*; thus mention was made of "copy-book maxims" *before* the seizure of power).

"... The higher phase of the development of communism" (from each according to his ability, to each according to his needs) "... 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" (*ibid.*, p. 91).\*\*\*

"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..." (*ibid.*).

"Accounting and control—that is mainly what is needed for the smooth working, for the proper functioning of the first phase of communist society" (*ibid.*, p. 95).\*\*\*\* And this control must be established not only over "the insignificant capitalist minority, over the gentry who wish to preserve their capitalist habits", but also over the workers who "have been thoroughly corrupted by capitalism" (*ibid.*, p. 96)\*\*\*\*\* and over the "parasites, the sons of the wealthy, the swindlers and other guardians of capitalist traditions" (*ibid.*).

It is significant that Bukharin did *not* emphasise *this*.

May 5, 1918

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Signed: *N. Lenin*

*Collected Works*, Vol. 27

\* See pp. 346-47 of the present volume.—*Ed.*

\*\* *Ibid.*, pp. 351-52.—*Ed.*

\*\*\* *Ibid.*, pp. 357-58.—*Ed.*

\*\*\*\* *Ibid.*, pp. 358, 360.—*Ed.*

\*\*\*\*\* *Ibid.*, p. 361.—*Ed.*



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## THESES ON THE PRESENT POLITICAL SITUATION<sup>260</sup>

### I

The extreme instability of the international situation of the Soviet Republic, surrounded as it is by imperialist powers, has been frequently pointed out in the Bolshevik press and has been admitted in the resolutions of the higher organs of Soviet power.

During the past few days, i.e., the first ten days of May 1918, the political situation has become extremely critical owing to both external and internal causes:

First, the direct offensive of the counter-revolutionary forces (Semyonov and others) with the aid of the Japanese in the Far East has been stepped up, and in connection with it there are a number of signs indicating the possibility of the entire anti-German imperialist coalition coming to an agreement on the presentation of an ultimatum to Russia—either fight against Germany, or there will be a Japanese invasion aided by us.

Secondly, since Brest the war party has gained the upper hand in German politics in general, and this party could now, at any moment, gain the upper hand on the question of an immediate general offensive against Russia, i.e., it could completely overcome the other policy of German bourgeois-imperialist circles that strive for fresh annexations in Russia but for the time being want peace with her and not a general offensive against her.

Thirdly, the restoration of bourgeois-landowner monarchism in the Ukraine with the support of the Constitutional-Democratic and Octobrist elements of the bourgeoisie of all Russia and with the aid of the German troops was bound to make the struggle against the counter-revolution in Russia more intense, was bound to encourage the plans and raise the spirit of our counter-revolutionaries.

Fourthly, the disorganised food situation has become extremely acute and in many places has led to real hunger both because we were cut off from Rostov-on-Don and because of the efforts of the petty bourgeoisie and the capitalists in general to sabotage

the grain monopoly, accompanied by insufficiently firm, disciplined and ruthless opposition on the part of the ruling class, i.e., the proletariat, to those strivings, efforts and attempts.

## II

The foreign policy of Soviet power must not be changed in any way. Our military preparations are not yet complete, and our general slogan, therefore, will remain as before—manoeuvre, withdraw, bide our time, and continue our preparations with all our might.

Although we do not in general reject military agreements with one of the imperialist coalitions against the other in those cases in which such an agreement could, without undermining the basis of Soviet power, strengthen its position and paralyse the attacks of any imperialist power, we cannot at the present moment enter into a military agreement with the Anglo-French coalition. For them, the importance of such an agreement would be the diversion of German troops from the West, i.e., by means of the advance of many Japanese army corps into the interior of European Russia, which is an unacceptable condition since it would mean the complete collapse of Soviet power. If the Anglo-French coalition were to present us with an ultimatum of this kind we should reject it, because the danger of the Japanese advance can more easily be paralysed (or can be delayed for a longer time) than the threat of the Germans occupying Petrograd, Moscow and a large part of European Russia.

## III

In considering the tasks of the foreign policy of Soviet power at the present moment, the greatest caution, discretion and restraint must be observed in order not to help the extreme elements in the war parties of Japan and Germany by any ill-considered or hasty step.

The fact of the matter is that the extreme elements in the war parties of both these countries favour an immediate general offensive against Russia for the purpose of occupying all her territory and overthrowing Soviet power. At any moment these extreme elements may gain the upper hand.

On the other hand, however, it is an undoubted fact that the majority of the imperialist bourgeoisie in Germany are against such a policy and at the present moment prefer the annexationist peace with Russia to a continuation of the war for the simple

reason that war would divert forces from the West and increase the instability of the internal situation in Germany that is already making itself felt; it would also make it difficult to obtain raw materials from places involved in insurrection or that are suffering from damage to railways, from failure to plant sufficient crops, etc., etc.

The Japanese urge to attack Russia is being held back, first, by the danger of the movement and of revolts in China, and secondly, there is a certain antagonism on the part of America, the latter fearing the strengthening of Japan and hoping to obtain raw materials from Russia more easily under peaceful conditions.

It goes without saying that it is quite possible for the extreme elements of the war parties in both Germany and Japan to gain the upper hand at any moment. There can be no guarantee against this until the revolution breaks out in Germany. The American bourgeoisie may plot together with the Japanese bourgeoisie, or the Japanese with the German. It is, therefore, our imperative duty to make the most energetic preparations for war.

As long as there remains even a slight chance of preserving peace or of concluding peace with Finland, the Ukraine and Turkey, at the cost of certain new annexations or losses, we must not take a single step that might aid the extreme elements in the war parties of the imperialist powers.

#### IV

The primary task in undertaking more energetic military training, as in the question of combating famine, is that of organisation.

There cannot be any really serious preparation for war unless the food difficulties are overcome, unless the population is properly supplied with bread, unless the strictest order is introduced on the railways, unless truly iron discipline is established among the masses of the working people (and not only at the top). It is in this field that we are most backward.

Guiltiest of all of a complete lack of understanding of this truth are the Left Socialist-Revolutionary and anarchist elements with their screaming about "insurrectionary committees" and their howls of "to arms", etc. Such screams and howls are the quintessence of stupidity and are nothing but pitiful, despicable and disgusting phrase-making; it is ridiculous to talk about "insurrection" and "insurrectionary committees" when Soviet central power is doing its utmost to persuade the people to start military training and arm themselves, when we have more weapons than we can count and distribute, when it is precisely the

economic ruin and the lack of discipline that prevent us from using the weapons available and compel us to lose valuable time that could be used for training.

Intensified military training for a serious war cannot be done by means of a sudden impulse, a battle-cry, a militant slogan; it requires lengthy, intense, persistent and disciplined work on a mass scale. We must deal ruthlessly with the Left Socialist-Revolutionary and anarchist elements that do not wish to understand this, and must not give them an opportunity to infect certain elements of our proletarian Communist Party with their hysteria.

## V

It is essential to wage a ruthless struggle against the bourgeoisie, which on account of the above circumstances has raised its head during the past few days, and to declare a state of emergency, close newspapers, arrest the leaders and so on. These measures are as necessary as the military campaign against the rural bourgeoisie, who are holding back grain surpluses and infringing the grain monopoly. There will be no salvation either from the counter-revolution or from famine without iron discipline on the part of the proletariat.

In particular it must be borne in mind that during the past few days the bourgeoisie have been making extremely skilful and cunning use of panic-spreading as a weapon against proletarian power. Some of our comrades, especially those who are less resolute in their attitude to the Left Socialist-Revolutionary and anarchist revolutionary phrases, have allowed themselves to be diverted, have got into a panic or have failed to observe the line that divides legitimate and necessary warning of the coming danger from the spreading of panic.

The basic specific features of the entire present economic and political situation in Russia must be kept firmly in mind; because of these features our cause cannot be helped by outbursts. We must become firmly convinced ourselves and try to convince all workers of the truth that only restraint and patient creative work to establish iron proletarian discipline, including ruthless measures against hooligans, kulaks and disorganising elements, can protect Soviet power at this moment, one of the most difficult and dangerous periods of transition, unavoidable owing to the delay of the revolution in the West.

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# ON THE FAMINE

## A LETTER TO THE WORKERS OF PETROGRAD

Comrades, the other day your delegate, a Party comrade, a worker in the Putilov Works, called on me. This comrade drew a detailed and extremely harrowing picture of the famine in Petrograd. We all know that the food situation is just as acute in many of the industrial gubernias, that famine is knocking just as cruelly at the door of the workers and the poor generally.

And side by side with this we observe an orgy of profiteering in grain and other food products. The famine is not due to the fact that there is no grain in Russia, but to the fact that the bourgeoisie and the rich generally are putting up a last decisive fight against the rule of the toilers, against the state of the workers, against Soviet power, on this most important and acute of issues, the issue of bread. The bourgeoisie and the rich generally, including the rural rich, the kulaks, are thwarting the grain monopoly; they are disrupting the distribution of grain undertaken by the state for the purpose and in the interests of supplying bread to the whole of the population, and in the first place to the workers, the toilers, the needy. The bourgeoisie are disrupting the fixed prices, they are profiteering in grain, they are making a hundred, two hundred and more rubles' profit on every pood of grain; they are disrupting the grain monopoly and the proper distribution of grain by resorting to bribery and corruption and by deliberately supporting everything tending to destroy the power of the workers, which is endeavouring to put into effect the prime, basic and root principle of socialism: "He who does not work, neither shall he eat."

"He who does not work, neither shall he eat"—every toiler understands that. Every worker, every poor and even middle peasant, everybody who has suffered need in his lifetime, everybody who has ever lived by his own labour, is in agreement with this. Nine-tenths of the population of Russia are in agreement with this truth. In this simple, elementary and perfectly obvious

truth lies the basis of socialism, the indefeasible source of its strength, the indestructible pledge of its final victory.

But the whole point is that it is one thing to subscribe to this truth, to swear one's allegiance to it, to give it verbal recognition, but it is quite different to be able to put it into effect. When hundreds of thousands and millions of people are suffering the pangs of hunger (in Petrograd, in the non-agricultural gubernias, and in Moscow) in a country where millions upon millions of poods of grain are being concealed by the rich, the kulaks, and the profiteers—in a country which calls itself a socialist Soviet Republic—there is something to which every conscious worker and peasant must give serious and profound thought.

"He who does not work, neither shall he eat"—how is this to be put into effect? It is as clear as daylight that in order to put it into effect we require, first, a state grain monopoly, i.e., the absolute prohibition of all private trade in grain, the compulsory delivery of all surplus grain to the state at a fixed price, the absolute prohibition of all hoarding and concealment of surplus grain, no matter by whom. Secondly, we require the strictest registration of all grain surpluses, faultless organisation of the transportation of grain from places of abundance to places of shortage, and the building up of reserves for consumption, for processing, and for seed. Thirdly, we require a just and proper distribution of bread, controlled by the workers' state, the proletarian state, among all the citizens of the state, a distribution which will permit of no privileges and advantages for the rich.

One has only to reflect ever so slightly on these conditions for coping with the famine to see the abysmal stupidity of the contemptible anarchist windbags, who deny the necessity of a state power (and, what is more, a power ruthless in its severity towards the bourgeoisie and ruthlessly firm towards disorganisers of government) for the transition from capitalism to communism and for the ridding of the working people of all forms of oppression and exploitation. It is at this moment, when our revolution has directly, concretely, and practically approached the tasks involved in the realisation of socialism—and therein lies its inestimable merit—it is at this moment, and exactly in connection with this most important of issues, the issue of bread, that the need becomes absolutely clear for an iron revolutionary rule, for a dictatorship of the proletariat, for the organisation of the collection of food products, their transportation, and distribution on a mass, national scale, taking into account the requirements of tens and hundreds of millions of people, calculating the conditions and the results of production for a year and many years ahead (for there are sometimes years of crop failure,

sometimes land improvements essential for increasing grain crops require years of work, and so forth).

Romanov and Kerensky left to the working class a country utterly impoverished by their predatory, criminal, and most terrible war, a country picked clean by Russian and foreign imperialists. Bread will suffice for all only if we keep the strictest account of every pood, only if every pound is distributed absolutely evenly. There is also an acute shortage of bread for machines, i.e., fuel; the railways and factories will come to a standstill, unemployment and famine will bring ruin on the whole nation, if we do not bend every effort to establish a strict and ruthless economy of consumption and proper distribution. We are faced by disaster, it is very near. An intolerably difficult May will be followed by a still more difficult June, July and August.

Our state grain monopoly exists in law, but in practice it is being thwarted at every step by the bourgeoisie. The rural rich, the kulak, the parasite who has been robbing the whole neighbourhood for decades, prefers to enrich himself by profiteering and illicit distilling: it is so good for his pocket, and he can throw the blame for the famine on Soviet power. That, too, is the line of the political defenders of the kulak—the Constitutional-Democrats, the Right Socialist-Revolutionaries, and the Mensheviks—who are overtly and covertly “working” against the grain monopoly and against Soviet power. The party of the spineless, i.e., the Left Socialist-Revolutionaries, are displaying their spinelessness here too: they are yielding to the covetous howls and outcries of the bourgeoisie, they are crying out against the grain monopoly, they are “protesting” against the food dictatorship, they are allowing themselves to be intimidated by the bourgeoisie, they are afraid to fight the kulak, and are flapping about hysterically, recommending that the fixed prices be raised, that private trading be permitted, and so forth.

This party of the spineless reflects in politics something akin to what takes place in ordinary life when the kulak incites the poor peasants against the Soviets, bribes them by, say, letting some poor peasant have a pood of grain not for six, but for three rubles, so that the poor peasant, thus corrupted, may himself “make a bit” by profiteering, may “turn a penny” by selling that pood of grain at a profiteering price of one hundred and fifty rubles, and himself become a decrier of the Soviets, which have prohibited private trading in grain.

Anyone who is capable of reflecting, anyone who is willing to reflect ever so little, will see clearly what line this fight has taken.

Either the advanced and class-conscious workers triumph and unite the poor peasant masses around themselves, establish

rigorous order, a mercilessly severe rule, a genuine dictatorship of the proletariat—either they compel the kulak to submit, and institute a proper distribution of food and fuel on a national scale;

—or the bourgeoisie, with the help of the kulaks, and with the indirect support of the spineless and muddle-headed (the anarchists and the Left Socialist-Revolutionaries), will overthrow Soviet power and set up a Russo-German or a Russo-Japanese Kornilov, who will present the people with a sixteen-hour working day, an ounce of bread per week, mass shooting of workers and torture in dungeons, as has been the case in Finland and the Ukraine.

Either—or.

There is no middle course.

The situation of the country is desperate in the extreme.

Anyone who reflects upon political life cannot fail to see that the Constitutional-Democrats, the Right Socialist-Revolutionaries, and the Mensheviks are coming to an understanding about who would be “pleasanter”, a Russo-German or a Russo-Japanese Kornilov, about who would crush the revolution more effectively and reliably, a crowned or a republican Kornilov.

It is time all class-conscious and advanced workers came to an understanding. It is time they bestirred themselves and realised that every minute’s delay may spell ruin to the country and ruin to the revolution.

Half-measures will be of no avail. Complaining will lead us nowhere. Attempts to secure bread or fuel “in retail fashion”, “each man for himself”, i.e., for “our” factory, “our” workshop, are only increasing the disorganisation and facilitating for the profiteers their selfish, filthy, and blackguardly work.

That is why, comrades, workers of Petrograd, I have taken the liberty of addressing this letter to you. Petrograd is not Russia. The Petrograd workers are only a small part of the workers of Russia. But they are one of the best, the advanced, most class-conscious, most revolutionary, most steadfast detachments of the working class and of all the working people of Russia, and one of the least liable to succumb to empty phrases, to spineless despair and to the intimidation of the bourgeoisie. And it has frequently happened at critical moments in the life of nations that even small advanced detachments of advanced classes have carried the rest with them, have fired the masses with revolutionary enthusiasm, and have accomplished tremendous historical feats.

“There were forty thousand of us at the Putilov Works,” the delegate from the Petrograd workers said to me. “But the majority of them were ‘temporary’ workers, not proletarians, an un-



reliable, flabby lot. Now there are fifteen thousand left, but these are proletarians, tried and steeled in the fight."

That is the sort of vanguard of the revolution—in Petrograd and throughout the country—that must sound the call, must *rise together*, must understand that the salvation of the country is in their hands, that from them is demanded a heroism no less than that which they displayed in January and October 1905 and in February and October 1917, that a great "*crusade*" must be organised against the grain profiteers, the kulaks, the parasites, the disorganisers and bribe-takers, a great "*crusade*" against the violators of strictest state order in the collection, transportation, and distribution of bread for the people and bread for the machines.

The country and the revolution can be saved only by the mass effort of the advanced workers. We need tens of thousands of advanced and steeled proletarians, class-conscious enough to explain matters to the millions of poor peasants all over the country and to assume the leadership of these millions, resolute enough to ruthlessly cast out of their midst and shoot all who allow themselves to be "tempted"—as indeed happens—by the temptations of profiteering and turn from fighters for the cause of the people into robbers; we need proletarians steadfast enough and devoted enough to the revolution to bear in an organised way all the hardships of the *crusade* and take it to every corner of the country for the establishment of order, for the consolidation of the local organs of Soviet power, and for the exercise of control in the localities over every pood of grain and every pood of fuel.

It is rather more difficult to do this than to display heroism for a few days without leaving one's accustomed place, without joining in a crusade, confining oneself to an impulsive uprising against the idiot monster Romanov or the fool and braggart Kerensky. Heroism displayed in prolonged and persevering organisational work on a national scale is immensely more difficult than, but at the same time immensely superior to, heroism displayed in an uprising. But the strength of working-class parties, the strength of the working class has always been that it looks danger boldly, squarely and openly in the face, that it does not fear to admit danger and soberly weighs the forces in "our" camp and in "the other" camp, the camp of the exploiters. The revolution is progressing, developing, and growing. The tasks we face are also growing. The struggle is broadening and deepening. Proper distribution of bread and fuel, their procurement in greater quantities and the very strict account and control of them by *the workers* on a national scale—that is the real and chief prelude to socialism. That is no longer a "general

revolutionary" task but a *communist* task, a task which requires that the working people and the poor engage capitalism in a decisive battle.

And this battle is worth giving all one's strength to it; the difficulties are great, but so is the cause of the abolition of oppression and exploitation for which we are fighting.

When the people are starving, when unemployment is becoming ever more terrible, anyone who conceals an extra pood of grain, anyone who deprives the state of a pood of fuel is an out-and-out criminal.

At such a time—and for a genuinely communist society, it is always true—every pood of grain and fuel is veritably sacred, much more so than the sacred things which priests use to confuse the minds of fools, promising them the kingdom of heaven as a reward for slavery on earth. And in order to rid this genuinely sacred thing of every remnant of the "sacredness" of the priests, we must *take possession of it practically*, we must achieve its proper distribution *in practice*, we must collect the whole of it without exception; every particle of surplus grain must be brought into the state stores, *the whole country must be swept clean* of concealed or ungarnered grain surpluses; we need the firm hand of the worker to harness every effort to increase the output of fuel and to secure the greatest economy of fuel, the greatest efficiency in its transportation and consumption.

We need a mass "crusade" of the advanced workers to every centre of production of grain and fuel, to every important centre of supply and distribution—a mass "crusade" to increase the intensity of work tenfold, to assist the local organs of Soviet power in the matter of accounting and control, and to eradicate profiteering, graft, and slovenliness by armed force. This is not a new task. History, properly speaking, is not advancing new tasks—all it is doing is to increase the size and scope of old tasks as the scope of the revolution, its difficulties, and the greatness of its world-historic aim increase.

One of the greatest and indefeasible accomplishments of the October Revolution—the Soviet revolution—is that the advanced worker, *as the leader* of the poor, *as the leader* of the toiling masses of the countryside, *as the builder of the state of the toilers*, has "gone among the people". Petrograd and other proletarian centres have given thousands upon thousands of their best workers to the countryside. The detachments of fighters against the Kaledins and Dutovs, and the food detachments, are nothing new. Only the proximity of disaster, the acuteness of the situation compel us to do *ten times more* than before.

When the worker became the vanguard leader of the poor he did not thereby become a saint. He led the people forward, but

he also became infected with the diseases of petty-bourgeois disintegration. The fewer the detachments of best organised, of most class-conscious, and most disciplined and steadfast workers were, the more frequently did these detachments degenerate, the more frequently did the small-proprietor instincts of the past triumph over the proletarian-communist consciousness of the future.

Having begun the communist revolution, the working class cannot instantly discard the weaknesses and vices inherited from the society of landowners and capitalists, the society of exploiters and parasites, the society based on the filthy selfishness and personal gain of a few and the poverty of the many. But the working class can vanquish the old world—*and in the end will certainly and inevitably vanquish it*—with its vices and weaknesses, if against the enemy are brought ever greater detachments of workers, ever more enlightened by experience and tempered by the hardships of the struggle.

Such and only such 'is the state of affairs in Russia today. Single-handed and disunited, we shall not be able to cope with famine and unemployment. We need a mass "crusade" of advanced workers to every corner of this vast country. We need ten times more *iron detachments* of the proletariat, class-conscious and boundlessly devoted to communism. Then we shall triumph over famine and unemployment. Then we shall make the revolution the real prelude to socialism, and then, too, we shall be in a position to conduct a victorious war of defence against the imperialist vultures.

May 22, 1918

*N. Lenin*

*Pravda* No. 101,  
May 24, 1918

*Collected Works, Vol. 27*

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## SPEECH AT THE SECOND ALL-RUSSIA CONGRESS OF COMMISSARS FOR LABOUR<sup>261</sup>

MAY 22, 1918

Comrades, permit me first of all to greet the Congress of Commissars for Labour in the name of the Council of People's Commissars. (*Enthusiastic applause.*)

At yesterday's session of the Council of People's Commissars, Comrade Shlyapnikov reported that your Congress had subscribed to the resolution of the trade unions on labour discipline and production rates. Comrades, I believe you have taken an important step in passing this resolution, which not only deals with the productivity of labour and production conditions, but is also a very important step in principle from the standpoint of the present situation in general. Your contact with the broad masses of the workers is constant and a matter of business and not merely a casual contact, and you know that our revolution is experiencing one of the most important and critical moments of its development.

You are fully aware that our enemies, the Western imperialists, are lying in wait for us, and that there may perhaps come a time when they will turn their hordes loose on us. That external enemy is now being joined by another dangerous enemy—the internal enemy—the disruption, chaos and disorganisation that are being intensified by the bourgeoisie in general and by the petty bourgeoisie in particular, and by various yes-men and hangers-on of the bourgeoisie. You know, comrades, that after the most brutal war, in which we were involved by the tsarist regime and by the collaborators headed by Kerensky, we were left with a heritage of disruption and extreme economic ruin. We now have to face the most critical moment, when hunger and unemployment are knocking at the door of an increasing number of workers, when hundreds and thousands of people are suffering the pangs of hunger, when the situation is being aggravated by there being no bread when there could be bread, when we know that the proper distribution of bread depends on proper transport of grain. The shortage of fuel since we have been cut off from the rich fuel



regions, the catastrophic condition of the railways that may possibly be threatened with a stoppage of traffic—such are the conditions that breed difficulties for the revolution and fill with joy the hearts of the Kornilovites of all kinds and colours. They are now daily, hourly, perhaps, discussing how to take advantage of the difficulties of the Soviet Republic and proletarian power, how to again place a Kornilov on the throne. They are now arguing about what nationality the new Kornilov is to be—it must be someone who suits the bourgeoisie, whether he wears a crown or is a republican Kornilov. The workers now know what the matter is, and after what the Russian revolution has experienced since Kerensky, they are not a bit surprised. But the strength of the working-class organisation, of the working-class revolution, lies in our not closing our eyes to the truth, in our realising the exact state of affairs.

We have said that the war, such is its scale and incredible brutality, threatens the complete destruction of European civilisation. The only possible salvation is for the workers to take over power and establish strict law and order. Since 1905 the proletariat of Russia has for a certain time moved far ahead of the other international armies of the proletariat because of the course taken by the Russian revolution and a special historical situation. We have now reached the stage when the revolution is maturing in all West-European countries, when it is becoming clear that the situation of the armies of German workers is hopeless. We know that over there in the West, the working people are not confronted with the rotten regime of Romanov and empty boasters but by a bourgeoisie that is fully organised and can rely on all the achievements of modern civilisation and engineering. That is why it was so easy for us to start the revolution and more difficult to continue it, and why over there in the West it will be more difficult to start and easier to continue. Our difficulty is that everything has to be done by the efforts of the proletariat of Russia alone, and that we have to maintain our position until our ally, the international proletariat of all countries, grows strong enough. Every day impresses it on us that there is no other way out. Our position is made more difficult because, without reinforcements, we are faced with disorganisation on the railways, with transport and food disruptions. There the question must be presented in a way that is clear to everyone.

I hope that the Congress of Commissars for Labour, which is in more immediate contact with the workers than anybody else—that this Congress will not only mark a stage in the direct improvement of those labour arrangements which we must make the basis of socialism, but that it will also serve to clear the minds

of the workers in respect of the situation we are at present experiencing. The working class is confronted with a difficult but honourable task on which the fate of socialism in Russia depends, and probably in other countries, too. That is why a resolution on labour discipline is so important.

Now that power is firmly in the hands of the workers, everything depends on proletarian discipline and proletarian organisation. It is a question of discipline and the dictatorship of the proletariat, a question of iron rule. The type of government that meets with the warmest sympathy and very determined support of the poor must be as strong as iron, because incredible calamities are advancing upon us. A large section of the workers are living under the impression of the old and hope that we shall somehow manage to get out of the present situation.

Every day, however, these illusions are being shattered, and it is becoming more and more obvious that the world war threatens whole countries with famine and decay if the working class does not overcome the economic ruin by means of its organisational ability. Side by side with the politically conscious section of the working class whose entire activity is devoted to making the new discipline of comradeship the basis of everything, we see the many millions of petty property-owners, the petty-bourgeois element, who look at everything from the standpoint of their own narrow interests. We cannot fight against the famine and disaster that are approaching, other than by establishing the iron discipline of the politically conscious workers—without it we can do nothing. Because of the huge extent of Russia we are living under conditions in which there is a lot of bread at one end of the country and none at the other. It is no use consoling ourselves with the thought that the war of defence that may be forced on us will not take place. It must not be thought that the towns and the huge industrial centres can be fed if food is not delivered regularly. Every pood of grain must be recorded so that not a single pood is wasted. We know, however, that no such record is really made, except on paper. In real life the petty profiteers are only corrupting the village poor by impressing on them that private trading can make up for their shortages. We cannot get out of the crisis under those conditions. In Russia there can be enough bread for the people and enough bread, i.e., fuel, for industry, only if everything we have is strictly divided among all citizens so that nobody can take an extra pound of bread and not a single pound of fuel can remain unused. That is the only way to save the country from famine. That is a lesson in communist distribution—everything accounted for, so that there is enough bread for the people and enough fuel

for industry—and it is not a lesson taken from a book, it is one we have arrived at through bitter experience.

The broad masses of the workers may not immediately realise that we are face to face with disaster. What is needed is a workers' crusade against disorganisation and against the concealment of grain. And a crusade is needed to establish throughout the country the labour discipline you have passed a resolution on and have been talking about within the limits of the factories; the masses must be made to understand that there is no other way out. In the history of our revolution, the strength of the politically conscious workers has always been their ability to look the most bitter and dangerous reality straight in the face, to harbour no illusions but calculate their forces exactly. We can count on the politically conscious workers alone; the remaining mass, the bourgeoisie and the petty proprietors, are against us; they do not believe in the new order and take advantage of every opportunity to worsen the plight of the people. What we see in the Ukraine and in Finland may serve as an example: the incredible atrocities and the seas of blood in which the bourgeoisie and its supporters, from the Constitutional-Democrats to the Socialist-Revolutionaries, are drowning the towns they conquer with the aid of their allies. All this goes to show what awaits the proletariat in the future if it does not fulfil its historic task. We know how small is the section of advanced and politically conscious workers in Russia. We also know the plight of the people and know that the broad masses are certain to realise that we cannot get out of the situation by half-measures, that there will have to be a proletarian revolution. We live at a time when countries are being ruined and millions of people are doomed to perish or subjected to military slavery. Hence, the revolution that history has forced on us, not by the evil will of individuals, but because the entire capitalist system is breaking up, because its foundations are cracking.

Comrades, Commissars for Labour, make use of every meeting you hold at any factory, of your talks with delegations of workers, make use of every opportunity to explain the situation, so that the workers know that we are faced with either destruction or self-discipline, organisation and the possibility to defend ourselves. Let them know that we are faced with a return of the Kornilovs—Russian, German or Japanese Kornilovs—who will bring a ration of an ounce of bread a week if the politically conscious workers, at the head of all the poor, do not organise a crusade against the chaos and disorganisation which the petty bourgeoisie are everywhere intensifying, and which we must put down. It is a question of every politically conscious worker feeling that he is not only the master in his own factory but that he is also

a representative of the country, of his feeling his responsibility. The politically conscious worker must know that he is a representative of his class. He must win if he takes the lead in the movement against the bourgeoisie and the profiteers. The politically conscious worker will understand what the main task of the socialist is, and then we shall win. Then we shall find the forces and shall be able to fight. (*Loud, prolonged applause.*)

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and *Pravda* No. 101, May 24, 1918

*Collected Works*, Vol. 27



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## SPEECH AT THE FIRST CONGRESS OF ECONOMIC COUNCILS<sup>262</sup>

MAY 26, 1918

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

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

That is why, comrades, when I look at the experience of our Supreme Economic Council and of the local councils, with the activities of which it is closely and inseparably connected, I think that, in spite of much that is unfinished, incomplete and unorganised, we have not even the slightest grounds for pessimistic conclusions. For the task which the Supreme Economic Council sets itself, and the task which all the regional and local councils set themselves, is so enormous, so all-embracing, that there is absolutely nothing that gives rise to alarm in what we all observe. Very often—of course, from our point of view, perhaps too often—the proverb “measure thrice and cut once” has

not been applied. Unfortunately, things are not so simple in regard to the organisation of the economy on socialist lines as they are expressed in that proverb.

With the transition of all power—this time not only political and not even mainly political, but economic power, that is, power that affects the deepest foundations of everyday human existence—to a new class, and, moreover, to a class which for the first time in the history of humanity is the leader of the overwhelming majority of the population, of the whole mass of the working and exploited people—our tasks become more complicated.

It goes without saying that in view of the supreme importance and the supreme difficulty of the organisational tasks that confront us, when we must organise the deepest foundations of the existence of hundreds of millions of people on entirely new lines, it is impossible to arrange matters as simply as in the proverb "measure thrice and cut once". We, indeed, are not in a position to measure a thing innumerable times and then cut out and fix what has been finally measured and fitted. We must build our economic edifice as we go along, trying out various institutions, watching their work, testing them by the collective common experience of the working people, and, above all, by the results of their work. We must do this as we go along, and, moreover, in a situation of desperate struggle and frenzied resistance by the exploiters, whose frenzy grows the nearer we come to the time when we can pull out the last bad teeth of capitalist exploitation. It is understandable that if even within a brief period we have to alter the types, the regulations and the bodies of administration in various branches of the national economy several times, there are not the slightest grounds for pessimism in these conditions, although, of course, this gives considerable grounds for malicious outbursts on the part of the bourgeoisie and the exploiters, whose best feelings are hurt. Of course, those who take too close and too direct a part in this work, say, the Chief Water Board, do not always find it pleasant to alter the regulations, the norms and the laws of administration three times; the pleasure obtained from work of this kind cannot be great. But if we abstract ourselves somewhat from the direct unpleasantness of extremely frequent alteration of decrees, and if we look a little deeper and further into the enormous world-historic task that the Russian proletariat has to carry out with the aid of its own still inadequate forces, it will become immediately understandable that even far more numerous alterations and testing in practice of various systems of administration and various forms of discipline are inevitable; that in such a gigantic task, we could never claim, and no sensible socialist

who has ever written on the prospects of the future ever even thought, that we could immediately establish and compose the forms of organisation of the new society according to some pre-determined instruction and at one stroke.

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

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

Take one of the secondary tasks that the Economic Council—the Supreme Economic Council—comes up against with particular frequency, the task of utilising bourgeois experts. We all know, at least those who take their stand on the basis of science and socialism, that this task can be fulfilled only when—that this task can be fulfilled only to the extent that international



capitalism has developed the material and technical prerequisites of labour, organised on an enormous scale and based on science, and hence on the training of an enormous number of scientifically educated specialists. We know that without this socialism is impossible. If we reread the works of those socialists who have observed the development of capitalism during the last half-century, and who have again and again come to the conclusion that socialism is inevitable, we shall find that all of them without exception have pointed out that socialism alone will liberate science from its bourgeois fetters, from its enslavement to capital, from its slavery to the interests of dirty capitalist greed. Socialism alone will make possible the wide expansion of social production and distribution on scientific lines and their actual subordination to the aim of easing the lives of the working people and of improving their welfare as much as possible. Socialism alone can achieve this. And we know that it must achieve this, and in the understanding of this truth lies the whole complexity and the whole strength of Marxism.

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

We cannot conceal these difficulties of endeavour and achievement from ourselves. Of all the socialists who have written about this, I cannot recall the work of a single socialist or the opinion of a single prominent socialist on future socialist society, which pointed to this concrete, practical difficulty that would confront the working class when it took power, when it set itself the task of turning the sum total of the very rich, historically inevitable and necessary for us store of culture and knowledge and technique accumulated by capitalism from an instrument of capitalism into an instrument of socialism. It is easy to do this in a general formula, in abstract reasoning, but in the struggle against capitalism, which does not die at once but puts up increasingly furious resistance the closer death approaches, this task is one that calls for tremendous effort. If experiments take place in this field, if we make repeated corrections of partial mistakes,



this is inevitable because we cannot, in this or that sphere of the national economy, immediately turn specialists from servants of capitalism into servants of the working people, into their advisers. If we cannot do this at once it should not give rise to the slightest pessimism, because the task which we set ourselves is a task of world-historic difficulty and significance. We do not shut our eyes to the fact that in a single country, even if it were a much less backward country than Russia, even if we were living in better conditions than those prevailing after four years of unprecedented, painful, severe and ruinous war, we could not carry out the socialist revolution completely, solely by our own efforts. He who turns away from the socialist revolution now taking place in Russia and points to the obvious disproportion of forces is like the conservative "man in a muffler" who cannot see further than his nose, who forgets that not a single historical change of any importance takes place without there being several instances of a disproportion of forces. Forces grow in the process of the struggle, as the revolution grows. When a country has taken the path of profound change, it is to the credit of that country and the party of the working class which achieved victory in that country, that they should take up in a practical manner the tasks that were formerly raised abstractly, theoretically. This experience will never be forgotten. The experience which the workers now united in trade unions and local organisations are acquiring in the practical work of organising the whole of production on a national scale cannot be taken away, no matter how difficult the vicissitudes the Russian revolution and the international socialist revolution may pass through. It has gone down in history as socialism's gain, and on it the future world revolution will erect its socialist edifice.

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

have undertaken. Only then will it be possible to appreciate the enormous significance of the fact that on this occasion, the most advanced representatives of society, the working and exploited people are, on their own initiative, taking on themselves the task which hitherto, in feudal Russia, up to 1861,<sup>263</sup> was solved by a handful of landed proprietors, who regarded it as their own affair. At that time it was their affair to bring about state integration and discipline.

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

And so, comrades, if you look at the matter from this angle, you will not allow yourselves to be misled by those people, by those classes, by those bourgeoisie and their hangers-on whose sole task is to sow panic, to sow despondency, to cause complete

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

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## NOTES





<sup>1</sup> *Letters from Afar*. Lenin wrote these letters at the end of March and the beginning of April 1917 before he left Switzerland. In his analysis of the revolutionary events in Russia Lenin showed that the February bourgeois-democratic revolution that had overthrown tsarism was only the first stage of a revolution that had to develop into a socialist revolution. Altogether there were five letters. "First Letter. The First Stage of the First Revolution" was published in *Pravda* Nos. 14 and 15 on March 21 and 22 (April 3 and 4), 1917. The other four were published in 1924. "Fifth Letter. The Tasks of Revolutionary Proletarian State Organisation" was not finished and appeared in *Lenin Miscellany XXXVI* as the draft of the fifth *Letter from Afar*. p. 31

<sup>2</sup> *Octobrists*, members of the *Octobrist Party* (also known as the Union of October Seventeen)—a counter-revolutionary party that was formed in Russia after the publication of the Manifesto of October 17 (30), 1905 in which the tsar, frightened by the revolution, promised the people the "unshakable foundations of civil liberty". The party represented and defended the interests of the big industrialists and the landowners who ran their estates on capitalist lines; the party leaders were A. I. Guchkov, a prominent industrialist and Moscow property-owner, and M. V. Rodzyanko, a big landowner. The Octobrists gave their full support to the home and foreign policy of the tsarist government.

*Cadets*—members of the Constitutional-Democratic Party, the leading liberal-monarchist bourgeois party in Russia. The party was formed in October 1905; its membership was drawn from the bourgeoisie, landowning Zemstvo members and bourgeois intellectuals. Among the leaders of the party were P. N. Milyukov, S. A. Muromtsev, V. A. Maklakov, A. I. Shingaryov, P. B. Struve and F. I. Rodichev. The Cadets gave themselves the name of "people's freedom party" to deceive the working people, but actually they never went beyond the demand for a constitutional monarchy. During the First World War the Cadets were active supporters of the annexationist foreign policy of the tsarist government. At the time of the February bourgeois-democratic revolution they tried to save the monarchy. The Cadets occupied a leading position in the bourgeois Provisional Government and conducted an anti-popular, counter-revolutionary policy that met with the approval of the British, French and American imperialists. After the Great October Socialist Revolution the Cadets became the implacable enemies of Soviet power and took part in all armed counter-revolutionary acts and in the campaigns of the interventionists. The Cadets emigrated after the defeat of the whiteguards and interventionists and continued their anti-Soviet counter-revolutionary activity abroad. p. 33

<sup>3</sup> *Basle Manifesto*—the manifesto on war adopted unanimously by the Basle Extraordinary Congress of the Second International held on November 24 and 25, 1912. The Manifesto pointed to the predatory nature of the imperialist war for which preparations were being made and called upon the workers of all countries to struggle energetically against it. The Manifesto recommended, in the event of the outbreak of an imperialist war, that socialists take advantage of the economic and political crisis that would ensue and struggle for the socialist revolution.

Kautsky, Vandervelde and other leaders of the Second International voted for the Manifesto at the Congress. In 1914, however, when the First World War began, they ignored the Basle Manifesto and took sides with their own imperialist governments. p. 33

<sup>4</sup> *Organising Committee of the R.S.D.L.P.*—the leading Menshevik centre founded in 1912 at the August Conference of the Menshevik liquidators and all other anti-Party groups and trends; it functioned until the election of the Menshevik Central Committee at the "Unity" Congress of the R.S.D.L.P. (Mensheviks) held between August 19 and August 26 (September 1-8), 1917. p. 35

<sup>5</sup> *Mensheviks*—supporters of the petty-bourgeois opportunist trend in the Russian Social-Democratic Party who were the vehicle of bourgeois influence among the workers. The name (meaning members of the minority) dates from the Second Congress of the R.S.D.L.P. in 1903; in the elections to the central bodies of the Party, held at the end of the Congress, they were in the minority, while the revolutionary Social-Democrats, headed by Lenin, constituted the majority (the word Bolsheviks means members of the majority). During the Revolution of 1905-07, the Mensheviks were against the hegemony of the proletariat in the revolution, against the alliance of the working class and the peasants; they favoured an agreement with the liberal bourgeoisie and their hegemony in the revolution. During the years of reaction (1907-10), that followed the defeat of the revolution, the Mensheviks preached liquidationism, the abolition of the illegally functioning revolutionary party of the proletariat.

The February bourgeois-democratic revolution of 1917 led to the establishment of dual power in Russia—the dictatorship of the bourgeoisie through the Provisional Government and the dictatorship of the proletariat and the peasantry through the Soviets; the Mensheviks and Socialist-Revolutionaries entered the Provisional Government, supported its imperialist policy and fought against the proletarian revolution that was gaining strength. In the Soviets the Mensheviks pursued the same policy of supporting the Provisional Government and diverting the masses from the revolutionary movement.

After the October Revolution the Mensheviks became an openly counter-revolutionary party, the organisers of and participants in plots and revolts aimed at the overthrow of Soviet power. p. 35

<sup>6</sup> *Party of Peaceful Renovation*—a bourgeois-landowner counter-revolutionary organisation formed in 1906 to unite the Left Octobrists and Right Cadets. p. 36

<sup>7</sup> *Trudoviks* (Trudovik group)—a group of petty-bourgeois democrats formed in April 1906 by peasant deputies to the First Duma. There were Trudovik groups in all four Dumas. During the First World War (1914-18) the Trudoviks maintained a chauvinist position. After the February bourgeois-democratic revolution the Trudoviks, who represented the interests of the kulaks, together with the Popular Socialists, went over to the side of the counter-revolution. p. 36

<sup>8</sup> *Duma*—a representative body which revolutionary events of 1905 forced the tsarist government to convene. The Duma was formally a legislative body but in practice it possessed no real power. The elections to the Duma were indirect and unequal and were not universal. The franchise of the working people and of the non-Russian nationalities inhabiting Russia was greatly limited, and a considerable section of the workers and peasants had no franchise whatever. According to the election law of December 11 (24), 1905, one landowner vote was the equivalent of three votes of the urban bourgeoisie, 15 peasant votes and 45 workers' votes. The First State Duma (April-July 1906) and the Second (February-June 1907) were dissolved by the tsarist government. Following the June Third coup d'état in 1907, the government published a new election law that still further curtailed the franchise of the workers, peasants and urban petty bourgeoisie and ensured the absolute supremacy of the reactionary bloc of landowners and big capitalists in the Third (1907-12) and Fourth (1912-17) Dumas. p. 36

<sup>9</sup> *War industries committees* were set up in Russia in 1915 by the big imperialist bourgeoisie. "Workers' groups" in the committees were part of an effort to subordinate the workers to bourgeois influence and infect them with "defence of the fatherland" ideas. It was to the advantage of the bourgeoisie to draw into the groups workers who would agitate for greater labour productivity at the war factories. The Mensheviks played an active part in this pseudo-patriotic undertaking of the bourgeoisie. The Bolsheviks declared a boycott of the war industries committees, and were successful in obtaining the support of most workers in carrying it out. p. 36

<sup>10</sup> This article was published in *Pravda* No. 26 on April 7, 1917 and bore the signature *N. Lenin*. It contains the famous April Theses which indicated the Party's course in the development of the bourgeois-democratic revolution into a socialist revolution and provided a concrete, theoretically-grounded plan for the transition. Lenin analysed the motive forces of the proletarian revolution and proposed, on the basis of a study of the experience of the revolutions of 1905 and 1917, a Republic of Soviets as the political form of the dictatorship of the proletariat. The Theses defined the economic and political programme of the Party at the new stage of revolutionary development. Lenin read the Theses at two meetings held on April 4 (17), 1917—a meeting of Bolsheviks and a joint meeting of Bolshevik and Menshevik delegates to the All-Russia Conference of Soviets of Workers' and Soldiers' Deputies—in the Taurida Palace. The article appeared in the Bolshevik newspapers: *Sotsial-Demokrat* (Moscow), *Proletary* (Kharkov), *Krasnoyarsky Rabochy* (Krasnoyarsk), *Uperyod* (Ufa), *Bakinsky Rabochy* (Baku), *Kavkazsky Rabochy* (Tiflis) and others. p. 41

<sup>11</sup> *Popular Socialists*—members of a petty-bourgeois Labour Popular Socialist Party formed in 1906 by a group which separated from the Right Socialist-Revolutionaries; their demands were moderately democratic and did not go beyond a constitutional monarchy. The Popular Socialists rejected the Socialist-Revolutionaries' programme for the socialisation of the land and recognised the payment of compensation for alienated lands. Lenin called the Popular Socialists "petty-bourgeois opportunists", "Social-Cadets" and "Socialist-Revolutionary Mensheviks". Among the leaders of the party were A. V. Peshekhonov, V. A. Myakotin and N. F. Annensky.

After the February revolution the Popular Socialists gave the bourgeois Provisional Government their active support and went over to the side of counter-revolution. p. 44



- <sup>12</sup> *Socialist-Revolutionaries* (S.R.s)—members of a petty-bourgeois party that emerged in late 1901-early 1902 when a number of Narodnik groups and circles joined forces (the Union of Socialist-Revolutionaries, the Party of Socialist-Revolutionaries and others). Their official publications were the newspaper *Revolutionnaya Rossiya* (*Revolutionary Russia*) (1900-05) and the journal *Herald of the Russian Revolution* (1901-05). The Socialist-Revolutionaries did not distinguish between the proletariat and petty proprietors, glossed over the class differences within the peasantry and denied the leading role of the proletariat in the revolution. The S.R.s' views were an eclectic mixture of Narodnik ideas and revisionism; to use Lenin's expression, the Socialist-Revolutionaries tried "to patch up the rents in the Narodnik ideas with bits of fashionable opportunist 'criticism' of Marxism" (*Collected Works*, Vol. 9, p. 310).

The Bolshevik Party exposed the attempts of the S.R.s to hide behind the mask of socialism and pursued a stubborn struggle against them for influence among the peasantry; the Bolsheviks showed that their terrorist tactics were harmful to the working-class movement. Nevertheless, the Bolsheviks, under certain circumstances, entered into temporary agreements with them in the struggle against tsarism. At the time of the First Russian Revolution (1905-07) the Right wing broke away from the S.R.s and formed the legally existing Popular Socialist Party, whose views were close to those of the Cadets; the Left wing formed the semi-anarchist League of Maximalists. In the period of the Stolypin reaction the S.R. Party experienced ideological and organisational collapse; during the First World War most of them became social-chauvinists.

After the February Revolution, the S.R.s, together with the Mensheviks and Cadets, were the mainstay of the counter-revolutionary bourgeois-landlord Provisional Government, the leaders of which (Kerensky, Avksentyev, Chernov) were S.R.s. At the end of November 1917 the Left wing of the party formed the independent Left Socialist-Revolutionary Party. In an effort to retain their influence among the peasants the Left S.R.s formally recognised Soviet power and entered into an agreement with the Bolsheviks, but soon began to struggle against them.

During the foreign intervention and the Civil War, the S.R.s engaged in counter-revolutionary subversive activity, gave active support to the interventionists and whiteguard generals, took part in counter-revolutionary plots and organised terrorist acts against leaders of the Soviet Government and the Communist Party. After the Civil War the S.R.s continued their hostile acts against the Soviet state both inside the country and among the whiteguard émigrés.

p. 44

- <sup>13</sup> *Yedinstvo* (*Unity*)—a daily newspaper published in Petrograd from March to November 1917 and again, under the name of *Nashe Yedinstvo* (*Our Unity*), from December 1917 to January 1918. Its editor from issue No. 5 of April 5 (18) was G. V. Plekhanov. The paper expressed the views of the extreme Right-wing Menshevik "defencists" and gave unconditional support to the Provisional Government; it conducted a furious struggle against the Bolsheviks. Its position after the October Revolution was hostile to Soviet power.

p. 46

- <sup>14</sup> *Russkaya Volya* (*Russia's Will*)—a bourgeois daily founded and maintained on funds obtained from the big banks; published in Petrograd from December 1916. Following the February Revolution it actively supported the home and foreign policy of the Provisional Government and agitated for the destruction of the Bolshevik Party. Lenin called it one of the rottenest bourgeois newspapers. The Revolutionary Military Committee of the Petrograd Soviet suppressed it on October 25 (November 7), 1917.

p. 46

- <sup>15</sup> K. Marx and F. Engels, *Selected Works*, Vol. I, Moscow, 1962, pp. 21-22, 516-30; *ibid.*, Vol. II, pp. 42, 463-64. p. 47
- <sup>16</sup> *On August 4, 1914*, the Social-Democratic group in the German Reichstag voted in favour of granting war credits to the government of Kaiser Wilhelm II. p. 47
- <sup>17</sup> *Blanquists*—a trend in the French socialist movement headed by Louis Auguste Blanqui (1805-81), a prominent revolutionary and champion of French Utopian communism.
- The Blanquists denied the class struggle, and expected that “mankind will be emancipated from wage-slavery, not by the proletarian class struggle, but through a conspiracy hatched by a small minority of intellectuals” (*Collected Works*, Vol. 10, p. 392). In substituting the acts of a group of conspirators for the activities of a revolutionary party, the Blanquists did not take into account the concrete situation essential for an insurrection and disregarded contacts with the masses. p. 50
- <sup>18</sup> These words are from Krylov’s fable, *The Cat and the Cook*. p. 58
- <sup>19</sup> K. Marx and F. Engels, *Selected Works*, Vol. II, Moscow, 1962, p. 42. p. 62
- <sup>20</sup> K. Marx and F. Engels, *Selected Works*, Vol. I, Moscow, 1962, p. 522. p. 63
- <sup>21</sup> *Manilovism*—the totality of traits possessed by Manilov, a character in Gogol’s *Dead Souls*, a weak-willed and empty dreamer, an idle chatterer. p. 68
- <sup>22</sup> *Fabians*—members of the Fabian Society, a British reformist organisation founded in 1884; the society took its name from Quintus Fabius Maximus Cunctator (Procrastinator), a third-century B. C. Roman general, who earned the nickname because of his tactics of procrastination and refusal to accept a decisive battle in the war against Hannibal. The Fabians were mostly bourgeois intellectuals—scientists, writers, politicians (e.g., Sidney and Beatrice Webb, George Bernard Shaw, Ramsay MacDonald); they denied the need for the class struggle and for the socialist revolution, and maintained that the transition from capitalism to socialism was possible by means of petty reforms alone and that these would gradually transform society. The Fabian Society was hostile to Marxism and spread bourgeois influence among the working class; it had always been a vehicle of opportunism and social-chauvinism in the British working-class movement. Lenin described Fabianism as “an extremely opportunist trend” (*Collected Works*, Vol. 13, p. 358). In 1900 the Fabian Society entered the Labour Party; Fabian socialism became one of the sources of Labour Party ideology. p. 68
- <sup>23</sup> *The British Labour Party* was founded in 1900 as an alliance of trade unions and socialist organisations and groups for the purpose of sending working-class candidates to parliament; it was first known as the Labour Representation committee but in 1906 took the name of Labour Party. The party was originally a party of workers but was later joined by a considerable number of petty bourgeois; it is opportunist in its ideology and tactics. The leaders of the Labour Party have always pursued a policy of class collaboration with the bourgeoisie. During the First World War the Labour Party leaders adopted a social-chauvinist position. The Labour Party has formed a government several times. p. 68
- <sup>24</sup> *Workers’ or labour group* (Arbeitsgemeinschaft) (Social-Democratic Labour Group)—an organisation of German Centrists formed in March 1916 by Reichstag deputies who separated from the official Social-Democratic group in the Reichstag. This group was the core of the Centrist Independent

Social-Democratic Party of Germany formed in 1917; the party justified the policy of the downright social-chauvinists and favoured the retention of unity with them. p. 69

- <sup>25</sup> *Minoritaires or Longuetists*—a minority in the French Socialist Party formed in 1915. They supported the theories of Jean Longuet, a social-reformist, held Centrist views and pursued a compromise policy towards the social-chauvinists.

During the First World War the Longuetists were social-pacifists. After the October Socialist Revolution in Russia they declared themselves supporters of the dictatorship of the proletariat but were actually opposed to it. They continued their policy of compromise with the social-chauvinists and supported the annexationist Treaty of Versailles. They remained a minority at the Tours Congress of the French Socialist Party held in December 1920, where the Left wing was victorious, and, together with the open reformists, they broke away from the party and joined the Two-and-a-Half International; after the collapse of that organisation they returned to the Second International. p. 69

- <sup>26</sup> *Independent Labour Party*—formed in 1893 under the leadership of James Keir Hardie, Ramsay MacDonald and others. The I.L.P. pretended to be politically independent of the bourgeois parties but in reality was "independent" only of socialism, but very dependent on liberalism" (*Collected Works*, Vol. 18, p. 360). At the beginning of the First World War the I.L.P. issued a Manifesto against war (August 13, 1914) but at the London Conference of Entente socialists in February 1915, the party subscribed to the social-chauvinist resolution adopted by the Conference. From that time onwards the leaders of the I.L.P., under cover of pacifist phrases, maintained a social-chauvinist stand. After the founding of the Communist International in 1919, the leaders of the I.L.P., under pressure from the party membership that had swung to the Left, passed a resolution to withdraw from the Second International. In 1921 the I.L.P. joined the so-called Two-and-a-Half International and after its collapse returned to the Second International. In 1921 the Left wing of the I.L.P. broke away from the party and joined the Communist Party of Great Britain. p. 69

- <sup>27</sup> *British Socialist Party*—founded at Manchester in 1911 by the union of the Social-Democratic Party with other socialist groups. The B.S.P. conducted its agitation in the spirit of Marxism, it was "not opportunist and was *really* independent of the Liberals" (*Collected Works*, Vol. 19, p. 273). The numerical weakness of the party and its poor contacts with the masses made for a certain sectarianism.

During the First World War there was a sharp struggle between the internationalists (A. Inkpin, T. Rothstein, J. MacLean, W. Gallacher and others) and the social-chauvinist trend headed by Hyndman. Within the internationalist trend there were a number of people whose policy was inconsistent and who adopted a Centrist position on certain questions.

In February 1916, a group of B.S.P. members founded a newspaper, *The Call*, which played an important part in mustering the internationalists. In April 1916, the party's annual conference, held at Salford, condemned the social-chauvinist position of Hyndman and his supporters, and they left the party.

The British Socialist Party welcomed the October Revolution, and its members played an important part in the British workers' movement in defence of Soviet Russia against the interventionists. In 1919 most of the party's local organisations (98 against 4) voted for affiliation to the Communist International. The B.S.P., together with the Communist



Unity Group, played the leading part in forming the Communist Party of Great Britain. At the First (Unity) Congress in 1920 almost all local B.S.P. organisations entered the Communist Party. p. 69

<sup>28</sup> The "Zimmerwald Left" group was formed by Lenin at the First International Socialist Conference held from September 5 to September 8, 1915, at Zimmerwald in Switzerland. The Lefts from Russia, Germany, Poland, Switzerland, Sweden and Norway joined the Zimmerwald Left. After the Zimmerwald Conference, Lenin and the Bolsheviks established and extended contacts with Left groups in many countries. The leading body of the Zimmerwald Left was its Bureau, headed by Lenin. It published a journal *Vorbote (Herald)* in German; it also organised the translation of many of Lenin's writings into foreign languages and arranged their distribution among workers and soldiers. The Zimmerwald Left struggled against the Kautskian, Centrist majority, and tried to get the Centrists to break with the social-chauvinists, actively oppose the imperialist war and found a Third International. Lenin conducted an extensive correspondence with the Lefts of the world socialist movement and helped them adopt a true internationalist position. By the time the Kienthal Conference was convened in 1916, groups of internationalists had been formed in almost all countries and there was a marked breakaway from the social-chauvinists. The Left was numerically stronger at the Kienthal Conference, and its influence had grown noticeably. It was not, however, a uniform body. There were inconsistent as well as consistent internationalists among the Lefts. The Bolshevik Party alone adopted the only correct and fully consistent position among the Zimmerwald Left. Rosa Luxemburg's erroneous ideas (underestimation of the role of the proletarian party, fear of a split with the opportunists, etc.) were widespread among the Lefts in the West-European countries and hampered the organisational consolidation of the Zimmerwald Left and the work of Lenin and the Bolsheviks to form a Third International. Lenin criticised the errors of the Lefts and also their organisational and ideological weakness. The October Revolution accelerated the consolidation of all revolutionary elements and the formation of Communist parties in capitalist countries, and on that basis the foundation of the Third Communist International in 1919. The Zimmerwald Left, headed by the Bolsheviks, formed the core of the International. p. 70

<sup>29</sup> *Internationale* group, later renamed the Spartacus League, was founded by the German Left Social-Democrats Karl Liebknecht, Rosa Luxemburg, Franz Mehring, Clara Zetkin, and others at the beginning of the First World War. The group played an important role in the history of the German working-class movement. In January 1916, at the national conference of Left Social-Democrats, the group adopted theses on the tasks of international Social-Democracy compiled and tabled by Rosa Luxemburg. The group conducted revolutionary propaganda among the masses against the imperialist war, exposed the annexationist policy of German imperialism, and the treachery of the Social-Democratic leaders. The group however did not free itself of serious errors on important questions of theory and policy; it rejected the principle of the self-determination of nations in the Marxist sense (i.e., up to and including secession and the formation of independent states), denied the possibility of wars of national liberation in the epoch of imperialism and underestimated the role of revolutionary parties. Lenin criticised the errors of the German Lefts in his "The Junius Pamphlet", "The Military Programme of the Proletarian Revolution" and others (see *Collected Works*, Vol. 22 and 23). In 1917 the *Internationale* group entered the



Centrist Independent Social-Democratic Party of Germany, retaining, however, its organisational independence. After the November 1918 revolution in Germany, the group broke away from the Independents and in December of the same year founded the Communist Party of Germany. p. 70

- <sup>30</sup> *Arbeiterpolitik* (*Workers' Policy*)—the legally published weekly issued by the Bremen group of German Left Social-Democrats; it appeared from 1916 to 1919. p. 71

- <sup>31</sup> *Socialist Labour Party of America* was founded in 1876 by the merging of the American sections of the First International, the Social-Democratic Labour Party and a number of U.S. socialist groups. Most of the members were immigrants. The S.L.P. was sectarian in character and never established extensive contacts with the proletarian masses. It displayed an internationalist tendency during the First World War. p. 71

- <sup>32</sup> This refers to the revolutionary minority of the Socialist Party of America (a reformist, opportunist party) founded in 1901. The revolutionary minority adopted an internationalist stand, opposed the First World War, and under the influence of the October Socialist Revolution formed a Left wing which, in 1919, broke away from the Socialist Party and took the initiative in founding the Communist Party of the U.S.A., of which it formed the core.

During the First World War, the Right-wing majority of the Socialist Party of America supported the imperialist war and the policy of the American imperialists. After the split the Socialist Party of America degenerated into a small sectarian organisation. At the beginning of 1957 the Socialist Party merged with the Social-Democratic Federation to form a new organisation. It has no more than 5,000 members and is called the Socialist Party-Social-Democratic Federation. p. 71

- <sup>33</sup> *The Party of the "Tribunists"*—the name given by Lenin to the Social-Democratic Party of Holland, formed in 1909. The Tribunists were at first the Left wing of the Social-Democratic Labour Party of Holland, mustered around *De Tribune*, the newspaper they founded in 1907. In 1909 the Tribunists were expelled from the Social-Democratic Labour Party, and organised an independent party. The Tribunists constituted the Left wing of the working-class movement in Holland, but they were not a consistent revolutionary Marxist party. In 1918 the Tribunists took part in building the Dutch Communist Party.

In 1909 *De Tribune* became the organ of the Social-Democratic Party of Holland and in 1918, of the Communist Party; from the early thirties until 1940 it was published under the name of *Volksdagblad* (*People's Daily*). p. 71

- <sup>34</sup> *The Party of the Young, or the Left*—the Left trend among Swedish Social-Democrats. During the First World War the "Young" took an internationalist stand and adhered to the Zimmerwald Left. In May 1917 they formed the Left Social-Democratic Party of Sweden. The Party's congress in 1919 adopted a decision to join the Communist International. In 1921 the revolutionary wing of the Party founded the Communist Party of Sweden and entered the Communist International. p. 71

- <sup>35</sup> *"Tesnyaki"*—the revolutionary Social-Democratic Labour Party of Bulgaria, founded in 1903 after the split in the Social-Democratic Party. The founder of the Party and its leader was D. Blagoev. In the 1914-18 period the Tesnyaki opposed the imperialist war. In 1919 they entered the Communist International and adopted the name of Communist Party

of Bulgaria, later reorganised into the Bulgarian Workers' Party (Communists). p. 71

<sup>36</sup> *Avanti! (Forward!)*—a daily newspaper, the central organ of the Italian Socialist Party, founded in December 1896. During the First World War the newspaper took an inconsistent internationalist stand and did not break off relations with the reformists. Today the newspaper is still published as the central organ of the Italian Socialist Party. p. 71

<sup>37</sup> This resolution was written by Lenin and tabled at the Cantonal Congress of the Zurich Social-Democratic organisation in the name of Swiss Left Social-Democrats (see *Collected Works*, Vol. 23, pp. 149-151). p. 71

<sup>38</sup> *Die Glocke (The Bell)*—a fortnightly published in Munich and later in Berlin between 1915 and 1925 by the social-chauvinist Parvus (Gelfand), a member of the German Social-Democratic Party and agent of German imperialism. p. 73

<sup>39</sup> *The Kienthal Manifesto* was addressed *To The Peoples Suffering Ruination and Death* by the Second International Conference of the "Zimmerwaldists" held at Kienthal (Switzerland) between April 24 and April 30, 1916. The Manifesto appealed to workers to develop the struggle against the war, for peace without annexations; it called for pressure on socialist parliamentary deputies and demanded that they refuse to support the war policy of the imperialist governments. The Manifesto and the resolution of the Kienthal Conference were a step forward in developing the international movement against war as compared with the decisions of the First International Socialist Conference at Zimmerwald (September 5-8, 1915). The majority of the delegations to the Kienthal Conference, like those at the Zimmerwald Conference, did not support Lenin's slogans on the conversion of the imperialist war into a civil war, on the defeat of one's own imperialist government in the war and on the formation of the Third, Communist International. p. 73

<sup>40</sup> *Die Jugendinternationale (Youth International)*—organ of the International Union of Socialist Youth Organisations that adhered to the Zimmerwald Left; published in Zurich from September 1915 to May 1918. p. 73

<sup>41</sup> *Rabochaya Gazeta (Workers' Gazette)*—central organ of the Menshevik Party published daily in Petrograd from March to November 1917. p. 75

<sup>42</sup> This refers to a meeting of the Executive Committee of the Petrograd Soviet on April 7 (20), 1917, at which the Mensheviks voted in support of the "Liberty Loan" floated by the Provisional Government to defray war expenses.

The Bolsheviks developed a determined struggle against the "Liberty Loan". The Bolshevik group in the Petrograd Soviet, at its meeting on April 10 and 11 (23-24), 1917, compiled a draft resolution for the Soviet to the effect that the bourgeois Provisional Government was prolonging the imperialist war, and that the secret treaties between the allied powers, treaties defining the true aggressive aims of the war, continued in operation. The draft resolution made a most determined protest against the "Liberty Loan". Resolutions against the loan were also adopted by the Urals Regional Conference of the R.S.D.L.P.(B.), the Moscow Committee of the R.S.D.L.P.(B.) and other Bolshevik Party organisations.

The petty-bourgeois parties, the Mensheviks and Socialist-Revolutionaries, who at first wavered in their attitude to the loan, ended up by supporting it. The Executive Committee of the Petrograd Soviet of Workers' and Soldiers' Deputies discussed the question of the loan on

three occasions: April 7 (20), 15 (28) and 22 (May 5), 1917. At the last meeting, a resolution supporting the loan was passed by a majority vote of the Mensheviks and Socialist-Revolutionaries (33 for, 16 against). On that same day, April 22 (May 5), the resolution of the Executive Committee was approved by a general meeting of the Soviet. p. 75

<sup>43</sup> K. Marx and F. Engels, *Selected Works*, Vol. II, Moscow, 1962, pp. 18-37; F. Engels, Preface to *Internationales aus dem Volksstaat (1871-1875)*. p. 76

<sup>44</sup> See K. Marx and F. Engels, *The German Ideology* (Part IV, "Karl Grün", Section 4, "The School of Saint-Simon"), in which Heine's expression is quoted. p. 77

<sup>45</sup> This refers to the *Seventh (April) All-Russia Conference of the R.S.D.L.P.(B.)*, held in Petrograd from April 24 to April 29 (May 7-12), 1917. The Conference was attended by 131 delegates with the right to vote and 18 with voice but no vote, representing a membership of 80,000. This was the Bolshevik Party's first legally held conference in Russia. It had the significance of a Party Congress.

The agenda contained the following items: 1. The current situation (the war and the Provisional Government, etc.); 2. The peace conference; 3. The attitude towards the Soviets of Workers' and Soldiers' Deputies; 4. The revision of the Party Programme; 5. The situation in the International and the tasks of the Party; 6. The union of Social-Democratic internationalist organisations; 7. The agrarian question; 8. The national question; 9. The Constituent Assembly; 10. The organisational question; 11. Reports from the regions; 12. Elections to the Central Committee.

Lenin delivered reports and speeches on all the main points on the Conference agenda, which were based on his April Theses. Kamenev and Rykov spoke against Lenin; they sided with the Mensheviks in declaring that Russia was not ripe for a socialist revolution. Lenin exposed the capitulatory, anti-Party position of Kamenev and Rykov who denied the possibility of the victory of socialism in Russia. He also made a merciless criticism of the views of Pyatakov who opposed the Party policy on the national question and during the war years had, together with Bukharin, adopted a social-chauvinist stand. Pyatakov and Bukharin were opposed to the right of nations to self-determination including secession. In reality this point of view meant that the proletariat would reject the use of the non-Russian reserves of the revolution and thus doomed the revolution to defeat. Lenin roundly condemned the attitude of Zinoviev who spoke in favour of collaboration with the Zimmerwald Left and against the organisation of the new Communist International.

The April Conference unanimously adopted Lenin's draft resolutions on the war, on the attitude towards the Provisional Government, on the current situation, on the revision of the Party Programme, on the agrarian question, on the Soviets, on the national question and others. The Conference elected a Central Committee headed by Lenin. The Conference decisions showed the working class and all working people that the path of struggle for the socialist revolution was the only path that could free them from exploitation, ensure the country a way out of the war and economic ruin, and eliminate the threat of Russia's enslavement by foreign imperialists. The Conference equipped the Party with a plan of struggle for the transition from the bourgeois-democratic revolution to the socialist revolution. p. 80

<sup>46</sup> The resolutions of the Seventh (April) Conference of the R.S.D.L.P.(B.) were published by the Central Committee of the Party as a supple-



ment to *Soldatskaya Pravda* No. 13 on May 3 (16), 1917 with an introduction written by Lenin (see pp. 144-46 of the present volume).

*Soldatskaya Pravda* (*Soldiers' Truth*)—Bolshevik daily that began to appear on April 15 (28), 1917 as the organ of the Military Organisation of the Petrograd Committee of the R.S.D.L.P.(B.), and from May 19 (June 1), 1917 it became the organ of the Military Organisation of the Central Committee of the R.S.D.L.P.(B.). In July 1917, the *Soldatskaya Pravda* and the *Pravda* offices were simultaneously raided and the papers suppressed by the Provisional Government. After the October Revolution the paper continued publication under its old name until March 1918. p. 80

<sup>47</sup> *Pravda* (*The Truth*)—a Bolshevik daily published legally in Petrograd, founded on the initiative of St. Petersburg workers in April 1912.

*Pravda* was a mass workers' newspaper published on funds collected by the workers themselves. An extensive group of worker-correspondents and worker-writers was built up around the newspaper. In one year alone over 11,000 items received from worker-correspondents were published. The average circulation of *Pravda* was 40,000 copies a day but in some months it rose to 60,000 a day.

When Lenin was living abroad he guided the work of *Pravda*, wrote almost daily for it, gave the editors instructions and mustered the Party's best literary forces for it.

*Pravda* was constantly persecuted by the police. During its first year it was confiscated 41 times, the editors were summoned to court 36 times and spent altogether forty-seven and a half months in prison. In the course of two years and three months *Pravda* was eight times suppressed by the tsarist government and each time re-appeared under a new name—*Rabochaya Pravda*, *Severnaya Pravda*, *Pravda Truda*, *Za Pravdu*, *Proletarskaya Pravda*, *Put Pravdy*, *Rabochy*, *Trudovaya Pravda* (respectively: *Workers' Truth*, *Northern Truth*, *Labour Truth*, *For Truth*, *Proletarian Truth*, *The Path of Truth*, *The Worker*, and *Labour's Truth*). On July 8 (21), 1914, shortly before the outbreak of the First World War, the newspaper was finally suppressed.

The publication of *Pravda* was not resumed until after the February Revolution. From March 5 (18), 1917 it began to appear as the Central Organ of the R.S.D.L.P. On April 5 (18) Lenin, on his return to Russia, joined the editorial board and took charge of its work. On July 5 (18) the *Pravda* offices were raided by officer cadets and Cossacks. Between July and October, *Pravda* was persecuted by the Provisional Government and frequently had to change its name, appearing as *Listok Pravdy*, *Proletary*, *Rabochy*, *Rabochy Put* (respectively: *The Pravda Newsheet*, *The Proletarian*, *The Worker*, *The Worker's Path*). Since October 27 (November 9) the paper has appeared under its name of *Pravda*. p. 81

<sup>48</sup> *The first coalition cabinet* was formed on May 5 (18) following the April political crisis, and the names of the Ministers were published on May 6 (19), 1917.

The April political crisis was caused by the Note written by the Cadet Minister of Foreign Affairs, P. N. Milyukov, and sent by the Provisional Government to all the Entente Powers, on April 18 (May 1), 1917. The Note stated that the Provisional Government would honour all the treaties of the tsarist government and that Russia would continue the war until victory was won. The indignation of the workers and soldiers when they learned of Milyukov's Note was expressed in mass demonstrations of protest. At the call of the Bolshevik Party the Petrograd workers ceased work on April 21 (May 4) and demonstrated in the streets. Over 100,000 demonstrators demanded peace. Demonstrations



and meetings of protest were held in Moscow, Kronstadt, the Urals, the Ukraine and elsewhere. The April demonstration led to the April government crisis. Under pressure from the masses, the ministers Milyukov and Guchkov were forced to resign. The government crisis continued until the first coalition cabinet was formed; in addition to bourgeois representatives this new government included the leaders of the parties of compromise—Kerensky and Chernov from the Socialist-Revolutionaries, Tsereteli, Skobelev and others from the Mensheviks. The bourgeois government was saved by the S.R.s and Mensheviks who went over openly to the side of the bourgeoisie. p. 81

- <sup>49</sup> *Rech (Speech)*—a daily newspaper, the central organ of the Cadet Party, published in St. Petersburg from February 1906. Following the February Revolution it supported the home and foreign policy of the Provisional Government and conducted anti-Bolshevik propaganda. On October 26 (November 8), 1917, the paper was suppressed by the Revolutionary Military Committee of the Petrograd Soviet; it appeared under other names until August 1918. p. 93

- <sup>50</sup> *Dyelo Naroda (People's Cause)*—the daily organ of the Socialist-Revolutionary Party, published in Petrograd from March 1917 to June 1918, with frequent changes of name. The publication of the paper was resumed in October 1918 in the town of Samara which was occupied by Czech, whiteguard and S.R. insurrectionists (four issues appeared), and again in Moscow in March 1919 (ten issues appeared). The newspaper was suppressed for counter-revolutionary activities. p. 95

- <sup>51</sup> See K. Marx and F. Engels, *Selected Correspondence*, Moscow, 1965, p. 264. p. 100

- <sup>52</sup> *The Erfurt Programme of the Social-Democratic Party of Germany* was adopted in October 1891 by the Erfurt Congress. It was an improvement on the Gotha Programme (1875); the programme was based on the Marxist postulate of the inevitable collapse of the capitalist mode of production and its replacement by socialism. The programme showed the need for the working class to conduct a political struggle, indicated the leading role of the party in that struggle, etc. There were, however, serious concessions to opportunism in the programme; Engels's "Criticism of the Draft Social-Democratic Programme of 1891" was actually a criticism of the opportunism of the Second International in its entirety since the Erfurt Programme was a sort of model for the parties of the International. The leaders of the German Social-Democratic Party concealed Engels's criticism from the membership, and his most important remarks were ignored when the programme was given its final shape. Lenin considered the greatest drawback of the Erfurt Programme, its cowardly concession to opportunism, to be its omission of the dictatorship of the proletariat. p. 100

- <sup>53</sup> See F. Engels, "Zur Kritik des sozialdemokratischen Programmentwurfs 1891" (Criticism of the Draft Social-Democratic Programme of 1891), *Neue Zeit*, Jg. 20, I. Bd., Stuttgart, 1902, S. 7-8. p. 100

- <sup>54</sup> This refers to the adventurous tactics of a small group of members of the Petrograd Party Committee (Bogdatyev and others) who, in contradiction to the Party line on the peaceful development of the revolution in that period, put forward a slogan calling for the immediate overthrow of the Provisional Government during the April demonstration in 1917. The group's behaviour was condemned by the Central Committee of the R.S.D.L.P.(B.). p. 104

- <sup>55</sup> *Courland*—the old name of the Baltic region to the west and south-west of the Gulf of Riga. p. 110
- <sup>56</sup> *Birzhevka*, the popular name of *Birzheviye Vedomosti* (*Exchange Advertiser*)—a bourgeois daily published in St. Petersburg from 1880 onwards. The name of the paper became a synonym for the lack of principle and corruption of the bourgeois press. The paper was suppressed at the end of October 1917 by the Revolutionary Military Committee of the Petrograd Soviet. p. 113
- <sup>57</sup> *F. Borgbjerg*—a Danish Social-Democrat who came to Petrograd and, in the name of the joint committee of the workers' parties of Denmark, Norway and Sweden, invited Russian socialist parties to participate in a conference in Stockholm on the question of concluding peace. The Executive Committee of the Petrograd Soviet, consisting of Socialist-Revolutionaries and Mensheviks, and then the Soviet itself, decided to take part in the conference and take the initiative in convening it. The Seventh (April) All-Russia Conference of the Bolsheviks, in view of the fact that social-chauvinists were to gather at the conference, made an emphatic protest against participation, and exposed the imperialist character of the conference. The Stockholm socialist conference was not convened. p. 115
- <sup>58</sup> *The question of revising the Party Programme* adopted at the Second Congress of the R.S.D.L.P. in 1903 was raised in Lenin's April Theses (p. 45 of the present volume). By the time of the Seventh (April) All-Russia Conference of the R.S.D.L.P.(B.) Lenin had written his "Proposed Amendments to the Doctrinal, Political and Other Sections of the Programme" which proposed a number of corrections to the old programme of 1903. Lenin made a report on this question at the Conference. The resolution proposed by Lenin and adopted by the Conference indicated the line to be taken in reviewing the Programme and instructed the Central Committee to compile the draft of a new Programme and submit it to the Party Congress for approval. The "Materials Relating to the Revision of the Party Programme" was published in June 1917 as a separate pamphlet, with an introduction by Lenin, for the information of all Party members and discussion by Party organisations (*Collected Works*, Vol. 24, pp. 455-79). p. 123
- <sup>59</sup> K. Marx and F. Engels, "Manifesto of the Communist Party", *Selected Works*, Vol. I, Moscow, 1962, p. 51. p. 123
- <sup>60</sup> "*Bill of the 104*" was a draft of fundamental principles for a land law presented to the First Duma on May 23 (June 5), 1906 and signed by 104 peasant deputies. The Bill envisaged the creation of a national land fund consisting of state, royal, crown and monastery lands, with the addition of private landed estates that exceeded the established labour standard, and the right to land tenure to be restricted to those who tilled the land. Compensation was envisaged for alienated privately owned land. The implementation of the land reform was to be entrusted to local peasant committees elected by universal suffrage. p. 125
- <sup>61</sup> The book burned by the tsarist censor was Lenin's *The Agrarian Programme of Social-Democracy in the First Russian Revolution, 1905-1907*, written at the end of 1907 (*Collected Works*, Vol. 13, pp. 217-431). In 1908 it was included in Part Two of Volume Two of the collection *Twelve Years*. The book was confiscated by the police and destroyed before it left the printing press, only one copy, of which some of the last pages were missing, having survived. The book was not published until 1917 when it appeared under the title: V. Ilyin (N. Lenin), *The Agrarian*

*Programme of Social-Democracy in the First Russian Revolution, 1905-1907* (Petrograd, Zhizn i Znaniye Publishers). p. 125

- <sup>62</sup> This refers to Stolypin's agrarian reform aimed at the establishment of a strong tsarist bulwark of kulaks in the countryside. On November 9 (22), 1906, the tsarist government issued a decree regulating the exit of peasants from the village communes and the granting of title deeds to their lands. The Stolypin Land Law (named after P. A. Stolypin, the then Chairman of the Council of Ministers) gave peasants the right to leave the village communes, to convert their allotments into private property, and to sell their allotments. The village commune was required to grant those leaving it land in the form of a single farmstead. The Stolypin Land Law accelerated the development of capitalism in agriculture and the differentiation of the peasantry; it sharpened the class struggle in the countryside.

Lenin described and gave an appraisal of the Stolypin Land Law in a number of works, especially in his *The Agrarian Programme of Social-Democracy in the First Russian Revolution, 1905-1907*. p. 125

- <sup>63</sup> *Allotment land*—the land allotted to the peasants for their use after the abolition of serfdom in Russia in 1861. The peasants had no right to sell their allotments; the land belonged to the village commune and was subject to periodical redistribution among the commune members. p. 129

- <sup>64</sup> The resolution referred to was passed by the Seventh (April) All-Russia Conference of the R.S.D.L.P.(B.)—"On Borgbjerg's Proposal". p. 137

- <sup>65</sup> *The First All-Russia Congress of Peasants' Deputies* was held in Petrograd from May 4 to May 28 (May 17-June 10), 1917. The Congress was attended by 1,115 delegates from the gubernias and from army units. The Bolsheviks took an active part in the Congress and exposed the imperialist policy of the bourgeois Provisional Government and the collaborationist policy of the Socialist-Revolutionaries and Mensheviks. On May 7 (20), Lenin addressed an open letter to the delegates (*Collected Works*, Vol. 24, pp. 354-56). On May 22 (June 4), Lenin spoke at the Congress on the agrarian question and tabled a draft resolution on that question (*Collected Works*, Vol. 24, pp. 483-505). The pressure brought to bear by the Socialist-Revolutionaries, however, determined the nature of all the Congress decisions. The Congress approved the policy of the Provisional Government and the participation of "socialists" in that government; it also favoured the continuation of the war "to a victorious finish" and an offensive at the front. The Congress opposed the immediate transfer of landed estates to the peasants, and relegated the solution of the land question to the convening of the Constituent Assembly. p. 147

- <sup>66</sup> *The Chief Land Committee* was set up by the Provisional Government in April 1917. Its terms of reference included the collection and processing of data for a land reform, but actually the main purpose of the committee was to struggle against the peasant movement for the seizure of landed estates.

The Chief Land Committee consisted of the leading members of the Ministry of Agriculture and other officials appointed by the government, representatives of gubernia land committees and of political parties. Most of the members were Cadets and Socialist-Revolutionaries. Following the October Revolution, the Chief Land Committee struggled against the implementation of Lenin's Decree on Land and was dissolved by order of the Council of People's Commissars in December 1917. p. 151

- <sup>67</sup> *Volost*—the smallest administrative division in tsarist Russia; the volost formed part of the uyezd and the uyezd part of the gubernia. p. 155



- <sup>68</sup> The daily newspaper *Izvestia (News)* was founded on February 28 (March 13), 1917 as the organ of the Petrograd Soviet of Workers' and Soldiers' Deputies and bore that name. When the Central Executive Committee of the Soviets of Workers' and Soldiers' Deputies was set up at the First All-Russia Congress of Soviets the newspaper was adopted as its official organ and from August 1 (14), 1917, issue No. 132, bore the names of both the Central Executive Committee and the Petrograd Soviet. From issue 184 of September 29 (October 12) it was the organ of the Central Executive Committee alone and became known as *Izvestia TsIK (News of the Central Executive Committee)*. Throughout this period the paper was in the hands of the Mensheviks and Socialist-Revolutionaries and conducted a fierce struggle against the Bolshevik Party. From October 27 (November 9), 1917, following the Second All-Russia Congress of Soviets, *Izvestia* became the official organ of the Soviet Government. When the All-Russia Central Executive Committee and the Council of People's Commissars moved from Petrograd to Moscow in March 1918, the offices of the paper were also transferred to Moscow. p. 166
- <sup>69</sup> *The First All-Russia Congress of Soviets of Workers' and Soldiers' Deputies* was held in Petrograd from June 3 to June 24 (June 16 to July 7), 1917; over 1,000 delegates were present. The Bolsheviks, who at that time constituted a minority in the Soviets, sent 105 delegates. Most of the delegates supported the Mensheviks and Socialist-Revolutionaries. Points on the Congress agenda were: the attitude to the Provisional Government, the war, preparations for the Constituent Assembly, and others. Lenin spoke at the Congress on the attitude to the Provisional Government on June 4 (17) and on the war on June 9 (22) (*Collected Works*, Vol. 25, pp. 15-42). The Bolsheviks put forward their own resolutions on all the main points. They exposed the imperialist character of the war and the ruinous nature of collaboration with the bourgeoisie, and demanded the transfer of all power to the Soviets. The Congress decisions were in favour of supporting the Provisional Government; they approved the offensive of Russian troops that was being prepared at the front and were against the transfer of power to the Soviets. The Congress elected a Central Executive Committee which existed until the Second Congress of Soviets and in which the Mensheviks and Socialist-Revolutionaries had an overwhelming majority. p. 167
- <sup>70</sup> K. Marx and F. Engels, *Selected Correspondence*, Moscow, 1965, p. 395. p. 169
- <sup>71</sup> This refers to the decisions of the Seventh (April) All-Russia Conference of the R.S.D.L.P.(B.). p. 170
- <sup>72</sup> *Novaya Zhizn (New Life)*—a Menshevik daily published in Petrograd from April 1917. It was the organ of a group of Social-Democrats known as the "internationalists" which included Martov's Menshevik supporters and individual intellectuals of a semi-Menshevik persuasion. Up to October 1917 the newspaper's attitude towards the government was one of wavering opposition—it wavered from opposition to the Provisional Government, to opposition to the Bolsheviks. Following the October Revolution the newspaper took a stand hostile to Soviet power and was suppressed by the government in July 1918. p. 173
- <sup>73</sup> The British Government issued a passport to Ramsay MacDonald, leader of the Independent Labour Party, to visit Russia at the invitation of the Menshevik leaders. The visit never took place. p. 173
- <sup>74</sup> *The Manifesto of the Petrograd Soviet of Workers' and Soldiers' Deputies, "To the Peoples of the World"*, was adopted at a meeting of the Soviet on March 14 (27), 1917, and on the next day was published in the national



newspapers. The Socialist-Revolutionary and Menshevik leaders of the Soviet were forced to adopt the Manifesto by the pressure of the revolutionary masses who demanded an end to the war. The Manifesto called on the working people of the belligerent countries to take action for peace. It did not, however, expose the annexationist character of the war or propose any practical measures of struggle for peace, and in essence justified the continuation of the war by the Provisional Government.

p. 174

<sup>75</sup> In May and June 1917, Italian troops occupied Albania and British and French troops occupied a number of Greek cities. During the First World War the northern and central parts of Persia (Iran) were occupied by Russian and the southern parts by British troops.

p. 174

<sup>76</sup> This declaration was made by the bureau of the Bolshevik group and the bureau of the united Internationalist Social-Democrats at the First All-Russia Congress of Soviets; it contained a demand that priority at the Congress be given to the question of the offensive being prepared by the Provisional Government. It stated that the offensive was demanded by the imperialist magnates and that counter-revolutionary circles in Russia expected in this way to concentrate power in the hands of military-diplomatic and capitalist groups and strike a blow at the revolutionary struggle for peace and at the positions won by Russian democracy. The declaration warned the working class, the army and the peasants of the danger facing the country and called upon the Congress to oppose counter-revolutionary attacks immediately.

p. 174

<sup>77</sup> The demonstration referred to was organised by the Bolshevik Party and was held in Petrograd on June 18 (July 1), 1917. The Central Committee of the Party had originally appointed June 10 (23), 1917 as the day for the demonstration. It was intended that the demonstration should reveal to the First All-Russia Congress of Soviets the will of the Petrograd workers and soldiers who demanded the transfer of all power to the Soviets. The Mensheviks and S.R.s opposed the demonstration while it was in the course of preparation. On June 9 (22) they succeeded in getting a session of the Congress to pass a decision prohibiting the demonstration. The Central Committee of the Bolshevik Party submitted to the Congress decision and cancelled the demonstration; it was postponed to June 18 (July 1), the day appointed by the Congress. The Mensheviks and S.R.s hoped to conduct the demonstration under anti-Bolshevik slogans. On June 18 (July 1) about 500,000 Petrograd workers and soldiers turned out for the demonstration. The majority supported the revolutionary slogans of the Bolshevik Party, only a small group carrying the slogans of the parties of compromise calling for confidence in the Provisional Government. The demonstration showed the growing revolutionary spirit of the people and the greatly increasing influence and prestige of the Bolshevik Party. At the same time it showed the complete failure in Petrograd of the petty-bourgeois parties of compromise and of the Provisional Government.

p. 177

<sup>78</sup> The Cadet ministers Shingaryov, Manuilov and Shakhovskoi resigned from the Provisional Government on July 2 (15), 1917. This article was first published unsigned in *Proletarskoye Dyelo* on July 15 (28), 1917.

*Proletarskoye Dyelo* (*Proletarian Cause*)—the daily newspaper of the Bolshevik group in the Kronstadt Soviet of Workers' and Soldiers' Deputies that was published in 1917 in place of the Kronstadt Bolshevik newspaper *Golos Pravdy* (*Voice of Truth*), suppressed by the Provisional Government in July.

p. 180

<sup>79</sup> This article was published in *Listok Pravdy* which appeared on July 6 (19), 1917 after the *Pravda* offices had been raided on the previous day

by officer cadets and Cossacks. *Listok Pravdy* also carried the following articles of Lenin's—"Foul Slander by Ultra-Reactionary Newspapers and Alexinsky", "Slander and Facts", "Close to the Truth", "A New Dreyfus Case?" (*Collected Works*, Vol. 25). p. 182

<sup>80</sup> The political crisis referred to was the demonstration in Petrograd that took place on July 3 and 4 (16-17), 1917; this demonstration was an expression of the profound political crisis then obtaining in Russia. On July 3 (16) a demonstration against the Provisional Government began spontaneously in the Vyborg district of the city. The first to demonstrate was the First Machine-Gun Regiment which was then joined by other army units and by factory workers. The demonstration threatened to grow into an armed revolt against the Provisional Government.

The Bolshevik Party was at that time against armed action because it considered the revolutionary crisis to be still immature; the army and the provinces were not prepared to support an uprising in the capital. A meeting of the Central Committee, held jointly with the Petrograd Committee and the Military Organisation of the R.S.D.L.P.(B.) at 4 p. m. on July 3 (16), decided to refrain from taking action. A similar decision was adopted by the Second Petrograd City Conference of Bolsheviks that was in session at the same time. Delegates left the conference for the factories and the districts to hold back the masses from taking action. But the movement had already begun and it was impossible to stop it.

In view of the temper of the masses, the Central Committee, jointly with the Petrograd Committee and the Military Organisation, late that evening decided to participate in the demonstration in order to give it a peaceful and organised character. Lenin was not in Petrograd at the time. He was informed of the events and came to Petrograd on the morning of July 4 (17). Over half a million people turned out for the demonstration of July 4 (17), which carried the main Bolshevik slogan "All Power to the Soviets!"

Detachments of officers and officer cadets, with the knowledge and consent of the Menshevik and S.R. Central Executive Committee, were sent against the demonstration; they opened fire on the peaceful worker and soldier demonstrators. Counter-revolutionary troops were called from the front to crush the revolutionary movement.

On the night of July 4 (17), the Bolshevik Central Committee decided to call off the demonstration. Late that night Lenin went to the *Pravda* offices to examine the current issue of the paper, and half an hour after he had left, the offices were raided by officer cadets and Cossacks. The Mensheviks and S.R.s actually proved to be the accomplices in this counter-revolutionary terrorism. After breaking up the demonstration they attacked the Bolshevik Party jointly with the bourgeoisie. The Bolshevik newspapers *Pravda*, *Soldatskaya Pravda* and others were suppressed by the Provisional Government. Mass arrests, searches and raids began. The revolutionary units of the Petrograd garrison were withdrawn from the city and dispatched to the front.

After the July events, state power passed entirely into the hands of the counter-revolutionary Provisional Government, the Soviets being merely an impotent appendage of the government. The dual power had come to an end. The peaceful period of the revolution was over. The Bolsheviks were faced with the task of organising an insurrection to overthrow the Provisional Government by force and establish Soviet power. p. 182

<sup>81</sup> *Zhivoye Slovo (Living Word)*—daily newspaper of vulgar Black-Hundred type, published from 1916 onwards in Petrograd; in 1917 it advocat-

ed violence against the Bolsheviks; it appeared until the October Revolution. p. 183

- <sup>82</sup> *The Union for the Liberation of the Ukraine*—a bourgeois nationalist organisation that came into being in 1914 at the beginning of the First World War. The Union banked on Germany crushing tsarist Russia and had as its aim the separation of the Ukraine from Russia and the establishment of a bourgeois-landowner Ukrainian monarchy as a German protectorate, which would have meant making the Ukraine a colony of German imperialism. p. 183

- <sup>83</sup> The Congress referred to was the Second Congress of the R.S.D.L.P., held first in Brussels and continued in London from July 17 (30) to August 10 (23), 1903. p. 184

- <sup>84</sup> *Black Hundreds*—monarchist gangs formed by the tsarist police to fight against the revolutionary movement. The Black Hundreds assassinated revolutionaries, attacked progressive intellectuals and organised anti-Jewish pogroms. p. 188

- <sup>85</sup> This article was first published in the magazine *Rabotnitsa* No. 7 for 1917. *Rabotnitsa* (*The Working Woman*)—an organ of the Central Committee of the R.S.D.L.P.(B.) devoted to questions of work among women; it was founded on Lenin's initiative. It was published legally in St. Petersburg from February to June 1914, after which its publication ceased and was renewed in May 1917. The magazine was published until January 1918. The editors were A. I. Ulyanova (Yelizarova), K. I. Nikolayeva, K. N. Samoilova, A. M. Kollontai, V. M. Velichkina (Bonch-Bruyevich), L. N. Stahl, P. F. Kudelli. p. 190

- <sup>86</sup> On July 7 (20), 1917, after the rout of the July demonstration, the Provisional Government ordered Lenin's arrest. That day a meeting was held in the apartment of a Bolshevik worker, S. Y. Alliluyev, at which Lenin, Orjonikidze, Elena Stasova and others were present. The meeting decided that Lenin should not appear before the court of the counter-revolutionary Provisional Government. This decision saved Lenin. It later became known that officer cadets had been ordered by the authorities to waylay Lenin and kill him. The Communist Party kept its leader hidden deep underground, and from his hiding place Lenin continued to lead the Party and the proletariat. p. 191

- <sup>87</sup> This article was first published in the Kronstadt Bolshevik newspaper *Proletarskoye Dyelo* (*Proletarian Cause*) No. 6 on August 2 (July 20), 1917, under the title "The Political Sentiment". To prevent the Provisional Government suppressing the paper, the editors replaced the words "armed uprising" by "decisive struggle". In the Fourth edition of the *Collected Works* the article was published according to the manuscript and the original text restored. p. 193

- <sup>88</sup> *Sotsial-Demokrat*—an illegal newspaper, Central Organ of the R.S.D.L.P., published from February 1903 to January 1917. A total of 58 issues appeared. The first issue appeared in Russia but the publication was then transferred to Paris and later to Geneva. The Editorial Board of the Central Organ was made up, according to a decision of the Central Committee of the R.S.D.L.P., of representatives of the Bolsheviks, Mensheviks and Polish Social-Democrats. The real leader of the Editorial Board was Lenin.

*Sotsial-Demokrat* printed more than eighty articles and notes by Lenin. On the Editorial Board Lenin carried on a struggle for a consistent Bolshevik line. Some of the editors (Kamenev and Zinoviev) adopted a conciliatory attitude towards the liquidators and attempted to sabotage the application of Lenin's policy. The Mensheviks Martov and Dan,



members of the Editorial Board, sabotaged the work of the Central Organ and also openly supported liquidationism in their factional newspaper *Golos Sotsial-Demokrata* (*Voice of the Social-Democrat*). Lenin's implacable struggle against the liquidators caused Martov and Dan to leave the Editorial Board in June 1911. Lenin was editor of *Sotsial-Demokrat* from December 1911.

At the beginning of the First World War (1914-18), Lenin succeeded in re-starting the publication of the newspaper after an interval of a year. Issue No. 33 of *Sotsial-Demokrat* appeared on November 1, 1914 with a manifesto of the Central Committee of the R.S.D.L.P., written by Lenin. Lenin's wartime articles in the paper played an important part in the struggle for the implementation of the strategy and tactics of the Bolshevik Party on questions of war, peace and revolution, in exposing overt and covert social-chauvinists, and in mustering the internationalist elements of the world working-class movement. p. 196

<sup>89</sup> *Pravda* bulletin—published in German in Stockholm from June to November 1917 under the title of *Russische Korrespondenz "Prawda"*. The publisher was a group abroad representing the Central Committee of the R.S.D.L.P.(B.). The bulletin was also published in French. p. 197

<sup>90</sup> The Menshevik-S.R. Central Executive Committee of Soviets, on the demand of the Bolshevik group, set up a commission to investigate the disgusting slander of Lenin published in the reactionary newspaper *Zhivoye Slovo* (*Living Word*). Immediately the Provisional Government started its investigation of the accusations made against the Bolsheviks, the Commission of Enquiry set up by the Central Executive Committee wound up its work and on July 9 (22) published an announcement in *Izvestia of the Petrograd Soviet of Workers' and Soldiers' Deputies* to the effect that it was "discontinuing its activity and putting the evidence collected by it at the disposal of a government committee". At a joint meeting of the Central Executive Committee of the Soviets of Workers' and Soldiers' Deputies and the Executive Committee of the All-Russia Congress of Peasants' Deputies, held on July 13 (26), the Mensheviks and S.R.s pushed through a resolution declaring Lenin's avoidance of the court impermissible, and demanding that persons against whom judicial indictments had been presented should be banned from participation in the work of the Central Executive Committee of Soviets.

Protests against the slander of Lenin were made by the Petrograd and Moscow Conferences of the R.S.D.L.P.(B.), the Regional Conference of the R.S.D.L.P.(B.) of the South-Western Area, the Baku and Siberian Conferences of the R.S.D.L.P.(B.) and others. Protests against the slander of Lenin were published in all national and local Bolshevik newspapers and also in special leaflets issued by the Petrograd Committee of the R.S.D.L.P.(B.), the Moscow Committee and the Moscow Regional Bureau of the R.S.D.L.P.(B.) and many local Bolshevik Party organisations. p. 197

<sup>91</sup> In 1894, Dreyfus, a Jewish officer of the French General Staff, was sentenced to life imprisonment by a court martial on a clearly fictitious charge of espionage and high treason. The persecution of Dreyfus was inspired by reactionary French militarists and was used by reactionary circles in France to incite anti-Semitism and to attack the republican regime and democratic liberties. When socialists and prominent bourgeois democrats (Emile Zola, Jean Jaurès, Anatole France and others) launched a campaign in 1898 for a review of the Dreyfus case, it immediately became a political issue and split the country into two camps—republicans and democrats on one side and the bloc of royalists, clericals, anti-Semites and nationalists on the other. In 1899 Dreyfus was pardoned and released under



pressure of public opinion, but it was not until 1906 that the Court of Cassation found him not guilty and reinstated him in the army.

Lenin said that the Dreyfus affair was "one of the thousands and thousands of dishonest intrigues of the reactionary militarists". p. 197

<sup>92</sup> *Novoye Uremya* (*New Times*)—a daily newspaper published in St. Petersburg from 1868 to 1917; it belonged to different publishers at different times and changed its policy on several occasions. At first it was moderately liberal but in 1876 it became the organ of reactionary circles of the nobility and the bureaucracy. From 1905 onwards it was the organ of the Black Hundreds. Following the February bourgeois-democratic revolution in 1917 the newspaper gave full support to the counter-revolutionary policy of the bourgeois Provisional Government and conducted a savage campaign against the Bolsheviks. It was suppressed by the Revolutionary Military Committee on October 26 (November 8), 1917. Lenin called *Novoye Uremya* a typical example of the venal press. p. 198

<sup>93</sup> *The Beilis case*—the trial of the Jew Beilis in 1913 in Kiev, organised by the tsarist government for provocative purposes. Beilis was accused of the ritual murder of a Christian boy Yushchinsky (actually the murder was organised by the Black Hundreds). By staging this trial the tsarist government attempted to foster anti-Semitism and organise anti-Jewish pogroms to divert the masses from the revolutionary movement that was growing stronger in the country. The trial was the cause of strong social protest, and in a number of towns there were workers' demonstrations. Beilis was acquitted by the court. p. 198

<sup>94</sup> K. Marx and F. Engels, *Selected Works*, Vol. II, Moscow, 1962, p. 319. p. 203

<sup>95</sup> *The Contact Commission* was set up by the Menshevik and S.R. Executive Committee of the Petrograd Soviet of Workers' and Soldiers' Deputies on March 8 (21), 1917 to establish contact with the Provisional Government, "influence" it and "control" its activities. In reality the Contact Commission helped implement the bourgeois policy of the Provisional Government and tried to hold back the working-class masses from the active revolutionary struggle for the transfer of state power to the Soviets. The members of the Contact Commission were N. S. Chkheidze, Y. M. Steklov, N. N. Sukhanov, V. N. Filippovsky, and M. I. Skobelev (they were later joined by V. M. Chernov and I. G. Tsereteli). It was reported in *Izvestia of the Petrograd Soviet of Workers' and Soldiers' Deputies* No. 44 on April 18 (May 1), 1917, that the Contact Commission had been dissolved on account of the enlargement of the Bureau of the Executive Committee of the Petrograd Soviet and its functions handed over to the Bureau. p. 214

<sup>96</sup> *The Kornilov revolt* was a counter-revolutionary conspiracy organised by the Russian bourgeoisie in August 1917. The conspiracy was headed by the tsarist general Kornilov. The conspirators, relying on the higher officers of the army, hoped, with the aid of the officer cadets and Cossack units, to seize revolutionary Petrograd, smash the Bolshevik Party, disband the Soviets and establish a military dictatorship in the country. Answering the call of the Bolshevik Central Committee the Petrograd workers and the revolutionary soldiers and sailors suppressed the Kornilov revolt. Under pressure from the masses the Provisional Government was forced to order Kornilov's arrest and to indict him and his accomplices for mutiny. The attempt by the bourgeoisie and the landowners to crush the revolution failed. After the defeat of the Kornilov revolt, the prestige of the Bolshevik Party among the masses grew rapidly; the Bol-

- shevisation of the Soviets throughout the country began. The Bolsheviks again issued the slogan "All Power to the Soviets!" p. 221
- <sup>97</sup> *Rabochy (The Worker)*—Central Organ of the Bolshevik Party, a daily newspaper that appeared from August 25 (September 7) to September 2 (15), 1917, in place of *Pravda*, suppressed by the Provisional Government. Twelve issues appeared. p. 225
- <sup>98</sup> Frederick Engels, *Émigré Literature. II. The Programme of the Blanquist Commune Émigrés*. p. 226
- <sup>99</sup> K. Marx and F. Engels, *Selected Correspondence*, Moscow, 1965, p. 470. p. 226
- <sup>100</sup> *Ministerial tactics* (ministerialism, ministerial socialism or Millerandism)—the opportunist tactics of socialist participation in bourgeois reactionary governments. The term was coined in 1899 when the French Socialist Millerand joined the bourgeois government of Waldeck-Rousseau. p. 230
- <sup>101</sup> When the question of forming a new government after the defeat of the Kornilov revolt was raised, the Mensheviks and S.R.s passed a decision not to enter the government jointly with the Cadets. The government crisis was resolved by the formation of a directorate of five (Kerensky, Tereshchenko, Verkhovsky, Verderevsky and Nikitin). Although the directorate did not include an official representative of the Cadets it was formed as the result of agreements with them behind the scenes. At a meeting of the All-Russia Central Executive Committee on September 2 (15), 1917, the Mensheviks and S.R.s passed a decision to support the directorate and thus helped the landowners and capitalists to retain power in their hands. p. 230
- <sup>102</sup> Lenin intended the "Draft Resolution on the Present Political Situation" to be tabled at the plenary meeting of the Central Committee of the Bolshevik Party that should have been held on September 3 (16), 1917 by a decision of the Central Committee. Only a narrow meeting of the Central Committee was held on that day, and the draft was not discussed. The minutes of the Central Committee of the R.S.D.L.P.(B.) for that period have been preserved and published, but no mention is made of Lenin's draft having been discussed by the plenary meeting. p. 231
- <sup>103</sup> *The Sixth Congress of the R.S.D.L.P.(B.)*, held in Petrograd from July 26 to August 3 (August 8-16), 1917, was semi-legal. It was attended by 157 delegates with the right to vote and 110 delegates with voice but no vote; together they represented 240,000 Party members. Lenin directed the work of the Congress from his place of hiding at Lake Razliv, maintaining contact with Petrograd through special emissaries appointed by the Central Committee for that purpose. Lenin's theses "The Political Situation", his article "On Slogans" and others were the basis for the Congress decisions. Lenin took part in elaborating and writing the drafts of the most important resolutions. The Congress unanimously elected Lenin its honorary chairman.
- The Congress agenda contained the following items: (1) Report of the Organising Bureau; (2) Report of the Central Committee; (3) Reports from the Localities; (4) The Current Situation: a. The War and the International Situation, b. The Political and Economic Situation; (5) Revision of the Programme; (6) The Organisational Question; (7) The Elections to the Constituent Assembly; (8) The International; (9) The Unification of the Party; (10) The Trade Union Movement; (11) Elections; (12) Miscellaneous. The Congress also discussed the question of Lenin appearing before the court.

The Congress heard the political report of the Central Committee and the report on the political situation which were read by Stalin on the instructions of the Central Committee. Lenin's pointers formed the basis for the resolution on the political situation. This resolution contained an appraisal of the political situation obtaining in the country after the July events and outlined the Party's political line in the new stage of the revolution. The Congress recognised that the peaceful development of the revolution had come to an end and that state power in the country was factually in the hands of the counter-revolutionary bourgeoisie. Following Lenin's advice, the Congress temporarily withdrew the slogan "All Power to the Soviets!" because the Soviets under the leadership of the Mensheviks and S.R.s had been turned into an appendage of the counter-revolutionary Provisional Government. The temporary withdrawal of the slogan, however, did not mean that the Soviets were altogether rejected as a state form of the dictatorship of the proletariat. The Congress issued the slogan of struggle for the complete abolition of the dictatorship of the counter-revolutionary bourgeoisie and the winning of power by the proletariat in alliance with the poor peasantry by means of insurrection.

The Congress rejected the anti-Lenin proposals put forward by Preobrazhensky who denied the possibility of the victory of a socialist revolution in Russia and asserted that only in the event of a proletarian revolution in the West would it be possible to direct Russia on to the socialist path. The Congress also rejected Bukharin's statement in opposition to the Party's course towards a socialist revolution; Bukharin claimed that the peasantry had formed a bloc with the bourgeoisie and would not follow the working class.

The Congress resolutions laid particular stress on the Lenin postulate that the alliance of the proletariat and the poor peasantry was an important condition for the victory of the socialist revolution. "It is only the revolutionary proletariat that can accomplish this task—a task set by the new upswing—provided it is supported by the peasant poor," says the resolution on "The Political Situation" (see *C.P.S.U. in Resolutions and Decisions of Congresses, Conferences and Plenary Sessions of the Central Committee*, Part I, 1954, p. 376 [in Russian]).

One of the first questions discussed by the Congress was that of whether Lenin should appear before the court. In his concluding speech on the political report of the Central Committee, Stalin spoke in favour of Lenin appearing before the court provided there was a guarantee of the safety of Lenin's person and a democratically organised court. He proposed a resolution to that effect. "It is not clear at the moment," said Stalin, "who is in power. There is no guarantee that if they (Lenin and Zinoviev.—*Ed.*) are arrested they will not be subjected to brute force. Things will be different if the trial is held on democratic lines and it is guaranteed that they will not be torn to pieces. When we asked the Central Executive Committee about this, they replied: 'We don't know what may happen.' So long as the situation is not clear and a covert struggle is going on between the nominal and the real authority, there is no point in the comrades appearing before the authorities. If, however, power is wielded by an authority which can safeguard our comrades against violence and is fair-dealing at least to some extent ... they shall appear." (*Minutes of the Sixth Congress of the R.S.D.L.P.(B.)*, August 1917, 1958, pp. 27 and 28 [in Russian]). This presentation of the question derived from an incorrect assessment of state power as then obtaining in the country, and from the acceptance of the possibility of a bourgeois court being "honest". G. K. Orjonikidze spoke at the Congress on the question of Lenin appearing before the court; he insisted that Lenin should under no circumstances be handed over to the investigating authorities.



F. E. Dzerzhinsky, N. A. Skrypnik and others spoke against Lenin appearing before the court. Dzerzhinsky said that they should state, clearly and definitely, that the comrades who had advised Lenin not to allow himself to be arrested had done well. They had to explain to comrades that they did not trust the Provisional Government and the bourgeoisie, and that they would not give up Lenin until justice triumphed, that is, until that shameful court ceased to exist.

In favour of Lenin appearing before the court (on condition that his personal safety was guaranteed, that the investigation would be public and that representatives of the Central Executive Committee of the Soviets participated in it) were V. Volodarsky, I. Bezrabortny (D. Z. Manuilsky) and M. Lashevich, who proposed their own resolution.

The collective discussion of the question by the Sixth Congress led to the unanimous adoption of a resolution against Lenin's appearance in court; the resolution expressed its "emphatic protest against the outrageous persecution of revolutionary proletarian leaders by the public prosecutors, spies and police", and sent greetings to Lenin.

The report on the organisational work of the Central Committee was delivered by Y. M. Sverdlov. He stated that in the three months that had elapsed since the Seventh (April) All-Russia Conference, the membership of the Party had been trebled (from 80,000 to 240,000), and that the number of Party organisations had grown from 78 to 162. The Congress then heard 19 reports from local organisations. These all spoke of the tremendous work that was being done by the local Bolshevik organisations and of the growing prestige of the Bolsheviks among the masses of working people.

The Sixth Congress discussed and approved the economic platform of the Bolshevik Party, which envisaged the following revolutionary measures: the nationalisation and centralisation of the banks, the nationalisation of big industrial enterprises, the confiscation of landed estates and the nationalisation of all the land in the country, the establishment of workers' control over production and distribution, the establishment of proper exchange between town and country, etc.

The Congress approved the new Party Rules. The first clause of the Rules, the clause defining membership, was enlarged to include the requirement that Party members submit to all Party decisions; for the first time new members joining the Party required two recommendations from Party members and had to be approved by a general meeting of a Party organisation. The new Rules stressed that the structure of all Party organisations was that of democratic centralism. Party congresses were to be convened every year and plenary meetings of the Central Committee were to be held not less than once in every two months.

The Congress confirmed the decision of the Seventh (April) Conference on the need to review the Party Programme in the way laid down by that Conference. The Congress decided that it would be necessary to call a special congress in the near future to elaborate a new Programme and instructed the Central Committee of the Party and all Party organisations to arrange an extensive discussion of the review of the Party Programme before the new congress.

In the resolution on "Youth Leagues" the Congress recognised as one of the urgent tasks of the day that of assisting the foundation of socialist working-class youth organisations and instructed Party organisations to devote the maximum attention to work in that field. The question of the trade union movement was discussed; the Congress criticised the theory of trade union neutrality and showed that the trade unions were vitally interested in continuing the revolution to its consummation, and that they could carry out the tasks confronting the working class of Russia only



on the condition that they remained militant class organisations recognising the political leadership of the Bolshevik Party.

The Sixth Congress of the Bolshevik Party subordinated all its resolutions to the main purpose—the preparation of the proletariat and poor peasantry for an armed uprising, for the victory of the socialist revolution. The manifesto issued by the Congress appealed to all working people, to all the factory workers, soldiers and peasants of Russia to muster their forces and prepare for the decisive struggle with the bourgeoisie under the banner of the Bolshevik Party. The Congress elected a Central Committee whose members included V. I. Lenin, Y. A. Berzin, A. S. Bubnov, F. E. Dzerzhinsky, A. M. Kollontai, V. P. Milyutin, M. K. Muranov, V. P. Nogin, Y. M. Sverdlov, F. A. Sergeyev (Artyom), J. V. Stalin, M. S. Uritsky, and S. G. Shahumyan. p. 231

- <sup>104</sup> *The "Savage Division"* was formed from volunteers from among the mountain peoples of the North Caucasus during the First World War. General Kornilov tried to use the Savage Division as the striking force of the troops he sent against revolutionary Petrograd. p. 233

- <sup>105</sup> *The All-Russia Democratic Conference* was called by the Mensheviks and S.R.s for the purpose of easing the growing revolutionary upsurge. The date appointed for it was September 12 (25) but it was postponed and held in Petrograd from September 14 to September 22 (September 27 to October 5), 1917. The conference was attended by representatives of the petty-bourgeois parties, the compromising Soviets, trade unions, Zemstvos, commercial and industrial circles and military units. The Democratic Conference set up a Pre-parliament (Provisional Council of the Republic) with the aid of which the Mensheviks and S.R.s hoped to check the revolution and lead the country on to the path of bourgeois parliamentarism.

The Central Committee of the Bolsheviks decided to boycott the Pre-parliament and had to overcome the resistance of Kamenev and other capitulators who supported participation. The Bolsheviks exposed the treacherous activities of the Pre-parliament and prepared the masses for the armed uprising. p. 244

- <sup>106</sup> *Kit Kitych* (literally, Whale Whaleson)—the nickname of *Tit Titych*, a rich merchant, a character in A. Ostrovsky's comedy *Shouldering Another's Troubles*. Lenin gave capitalist tycoons the name of Kit Kitych. p. 244

- <sup>107</sup> *Svobodnaya Zhizn* (*Free Life*)—a Menshevik newspaper, published in Petrograd from September 2 (15) to September 8 (21), 1917 in place of *Novaya Zhizn* (*New Life*) which had been temporarily suppressed. p. 264.

- <sup>108</sup> *Junkers*—aristocratic Prussian landowners. p. 269

- <sup>109</sup> This refers to the victory of the Bolsheviks in the Soviets—in Petrograd on August 31 (September 13) and in Moscow on September 5 (18), 1917. p. 275

- <sup>110</sup> Lenin wrote *The State and Revolution* in August and September 1917, when he was in hiding. The need for such a theoretical work was mentioned by Lenin in the second half of 1916. It was then that he wrote his note on "The Youth International" (see V. I. Lenin, *Collected Works*, Vol. 23, pp. 163-66), in which he criticised Bukharin's anti-Marxist position on the question of the state and promised to write a detailed article on the Marxist attitude to the state. In a letter to A. M. Kollontai on February 17 (N. S.), 1917, he said that he had almost got ready material on that question (see V. I. Lenin, *Collected Works*, Vol. 35, p. 286). This material was written in a small hand in a blue-covered notebook headed "Marxism on the State". In it he had collected quotations from the works of Marx

and Engels, and extracts from books by Kautsky, Pannekoek and Bernstein with his own critical notes, conclusions and generalisations.

When Lenin left Switzerland for Russia in April 1917, he feared arrest by the Provisional Government and left the manuscript of "Marxism on the State" behind. When in hiding after the July events, Lenin wrote in a note:

"Entre nous, if I am knocked off, I ask you to publish my notebook 'Marxism on the State' (it got held up in Stockholm). It is bound in a blue cover. All the quotations from Marx and Engels are collected there, also those from Kautsky against Pannekoek. There are a number of remarks, notes and formulas. I think a week's work would be enough to publish it. I consider it important because not only Plekhanov, but Kautsky, too, is *confused*..." When Lenin received his notebook from Stockholm, he used the material he had collected as a basis for his masterly book *The State and Revolution*.

According to Lenin's plan, *The State and Revolution* was to have consisted of seven chapters, but he did not write the seventh, "The Experience of the Russian Revolutions of 1905 and 1917", and only a detailed plan has remained. In a note to the publisher Lenin wrote that if he "was too slow in completing this, the seventh, chapter, or should it turn out to be too bulky, the first six chapters should be published separately, as Book One".

The name F. F. Ivanovsky is shown on the first page of the manuscript as that of the author. Lenin intended to publish the book under that pseudonym, otherwise the Provisional Government would have confiscated it. The book, however, was not printed until 1918, when there was no longer any need for the pseudonym. The second edition appeared in 1919; Lenin added to Chapter II a new section "The Presentation of the Question by Marx in 1852" for this edition. p. 283

- 111 F. Engels, *The Origin of the Family, Private Property and the State* (K. Marx and F. Engels, *Selected Works*, Vol. II, Moscow, 1962, pp. 318-19).

On pp. 292, 293-97 of the present volume Lenin quotes from the same book by Engels (*ibid.*, pp. 319-22). p. 290

- 112 F. Engels, *Anti-Dühring*, Moscow, 1959, pp. 386-87.

On pp. 300-01 of the present volume Lenin quotes from the same book by Engels (*ibid.*, pp. 253-54). p. 298

- 113 Karl Marx, *The Poverty of Philosophy*, Moscow, 1966, pp. 149-51. p. 301

- 114 K. Marx and F. Engels, *Selected Works*, Vol. I, Moscow, 1962, pp. 21-65. p. 301

- 115 K. Marx and F. Engels, *Selected Works*, Vol. II, Moscow, 1962, pp. 18-48. *The Gotha Programme* was the Programme of the Socialist Workers' Party of Germany adopted in 1875 at the Congress in Gotha when the two hitherto existing socialist parties in Germany were united—the Eisenachers (led by August Bebel and Wilhelm Liebknecht, ideologically influenced by Marx and Engels) and the Lassalleans. The Programme suffered from eclecticism and was opportunist because on important questions the Eisenachers made concessions to the Lassalleans and adopted Lassallelean formulations. Marx and Engels subjected the draft of the Gotha Programme to a destructive criticism, and regarded it as a big step backward as compared with the Eisenach Programme of 1869. p. 301

- 116 Karl Marx, *The Poverty of Philosophy*, Moscow, 1966, p. 151. p. 302

- 117 K. Marx and F. Engels, *Selected Works*, Vol. I, Moscow, 1962, pp. 45, 53. p. 303

- <sup>118</sup> K. Marx, *The Eighteenth Brumaire of Louis Bonaparte* (K. Marx and F. Engels, *Selected Works*, Vol. I, Moscow, 1962, pp. 332-33).  
On p. 309 of the present volume Lenin quotes Engels's Introduction to the Third Edition of the same work (*ibid.*, pp. 245-46). p. 306
- <sup>119</sup> *Die Neue Zeit* (*New Times*)—the theoretical journal of the Social-Democratic Party of Germany, published in Stuttgart from 1883 to 1923. Up to October 1917 it was edited by Karl Kautsky, after 1917 by H. Cunow. Some of the writings of Marx and Engels were first published in *Die Neue Zeit*—"Critique of the Gotha Programme" by Marx, "Criticism of the Draft Social-Democratic Programme of 1891" by Engels and others. Engels gave regular advice to the editors and frequently criticised them for permitting deviations from Marxism in the journal. Leading figures in the German and the international working-class movements contributed to the journal at the turn of the century—August Bebel, Wilhelm Liebknecht, Rosa Luxemburg, Franz Mehring, Clara Zetkin, Georgi Plekhanov, Paul Lafargue and others. In the late nineties, after the death of Engels, the journal began the regular publication of articles by revisionists, including a series of articles by Eduard Bernstein, "Problems of Socialism", which opened the campaign of the revisionists against the Marxists. During the First World War the journal occupied a Centrist position, in reality supporting the social-chauvinists. p. 310
- <sup>120</sup> K. Marx and F. Engels, *Selected Correspondence*, Moscow, 1965, pp. 69-70. p. 310
- <sup>121</sup> K. Marx and F. Engels, *Selected Works*, Vol. I, Moscow, 1962, p. 22. p. 312
- <sup>122</sup> K. Marx and F. Engels, *Selected Correspondence*, Moscow, 1965, pp. 262-63. p. 313
- <sup>123</sup> K. Marx, *The Civil War in France* (K. Marx and F. Engels, *Selected Works*, Vol. I, Moscow, 1962, pp. 516-20).  
On pp. 318-19, 323, 325-26 of the present volume Lenin quotes the same book of Marx's (*ibid.*, pp. 522, 519-22). p. 316
- <sup>124</sup> F. Engels, *The Housing Question* (K. Marx and F. Engels, *Selected Works*, Vol. I, Moscow, 1962, pp. 570-71).  
On pp. 328-29 of the present volume Lenin quotes the same article (*ibid.*, pp. 629, 613). p. 328
- <sup>125</sup> The articles referred to are "Political Indifferentism" by Marx and "On Authority" by Engels.  
On pp. 330-32 of the present volume Lenin again refers to these same articles. p. 329
- <sup>126</sup> K. Marx and F. Engels, *Selected Correspondence*, Moscow, 1965, pp. 293-94. p. 333
- <sup>127</sup> Engels criticised the errors in the Erfurt Programme in his article "Criticism of the Draft Social-Democratic Programme of 1891".  
On pp. 335-40 of the present volume Lenin quotes the same work. p. 335
- <sup>128</sup> *The Anti-Socialist Law* was promulgated in Germany in 1878 by the Bismarck government in the struggle against the working-class and socialist movement. The law prohibited all organisations of the Social-Democratic Party, mass workers' organisations and the working-class press; socialist literature was confiscated; during the years in which the law was operative about 350 Social-Democratic organisations were broken up, some 900 Social-Democrats were banished from Germany, 1,500 were imprisoned, and hundreds of newspapers, magazines and non-periodical publications were banned. Persecution and repression, however, did not



smash the Social-Democratic Party, and its activity was re-cast to suit the conditions of illegal existence; the Party newspaper *Der Sozial-Demokrat* was published abroad and congresses were held regularly (in 1880, 1883 and 1887); inside Germany underground Social-Democratic organisations and groups rapidly took shape and were headed by an underground Central Committee. The Party worked in the underground but made extensive use of legal possibilities to strengthen ties with the masses, and its influence grew; the number of votes cast for Social-Democratic candidates for election to the Reichstag was more than trebled between 1878 and 1890. Marx and Engels rendered the German Social-Democrats tremendous aid. The Anti-Socialist Law was annulled in 1890 under pressure of the mass working-class movement that continued to grow stronger and stronger. p. 336

<sup>129</sup> This refers to the unification of Germany carried out by the Prussian ruling classes "from above" by means of the "blood and iron" policy, by diplomatic intrigues and wars. The war between Prussia and Austria in 1866 resulted in the foundation of the North-German Union, and the Franco-Prussian war of 1870-71 led to the foundation of the German Empire. p. 338

<sup>130</sup> This refers to Engels's Introduction to Karl Marx's *The Civil War in France* (K. Marx and F. Engels, *Selected Works*, Vol. I, Moscow, 1962, pp. 473-85).

On pp. 341-42, 343, 344 of the present volume Lenin quotes from the same Introduction (*ibid.*, pp. 475, 479, 483-85). p. 341

<sup>131</sup> K. Marx, *Critique of the Gotha Programme* (K. Marx and F. Engels, *Selected Works*, Vol. II, Moscow, 1962, p. 32).

On pp. 349, 354, 355, 356 of the present volume Lenin quotes from the same work (*ibid.*, pp. 32-33, 23, 24). p. 349

<sup>132</sup> N. G. Pomyalovsky described the life of students of religious seminaries in Russia in *Sketches of Seminary Life*. p. 358

<sup>133</sup> *The Hague Congress of the First International* took place from September 2 to September 7, 1872. It was attended by Marx and Engels; 65 delegates were present. The items on the agenda were: the rights of the General Council, the political activity of the proletariat, and others. The entire proceedings of the Congress developed into a sharp struggle against the Bakuninists. The Congress adopted a decision to extend the rights of the General Council. On the question of the "Political Activity of the Proletariat" the Congress decision said that the proletariat must organise its own political party to ensure the triumph of the social revolution and that its great purpose was to win political power. At this Congress Bakunin and Guillaume were expelled from the International as disruptive elements and the organisers of a new anti-proletarian party. p. 363

<sup>134</sup> *Zarya (The Dawn)*—a Marxist scientific and political journal published in Stuttgart in 1901 and 1902 by the editors of *Iskra (The Spark)*. Three issues appeared, one of them a double number: No. 1 in April 1901 (actually it appeared on March 23 [N. S.]), No. 2-3 in December 1901 and No. 4 in August 1902. The purpose of the journal was outlined in the draft announcement of *Iskra* and *Zarya*, which Lenin wrote in Russia. In 1902, at the time of differences and conflicts among the editors of *Iskra* and *Zarya*, Plekhanov proposed separating the journal from the newspaper (so that he would remain the editor of *Zarya*), but the proposal was not accepted and the editorial board remained a single one for both publications.



Zarya criticised international and Russian revisionism and defended the theoretical fundamentals of Marxism. p. 364

- <sup>135</sup> The congress referred to was the *Fifth World Socialist Congress of the Second International*, held in Paris from September 23 to September 27, 1900. The Russian delegation numbered 24 (of whom 13 were Social-Democrats). Of the six credentials to the Congress granted the Emancipation of Labour group, four were obtained through Lenin (three from the Urals *Sotsial-Demokrat* group, and one from the Ufa group). At the Congress the Social-Democrats split into two groups—the majority, headed by B. N. Krichevsky, and the minority, headed by G. V. Plekhanov. On the basic question, “The Winning of Political Power and Alliances with Bourgeois Parties”, that had arisen because of Millerand’s participation in the counter-revolutionary Waldeck-Rousseau government, the majority voted in favour of Kautsky’s elastic resolution, and the minority—Plekhanov, Axelrod, Zasulich and Koltsov—in favour of Guesde’s resolution that condemned Millerandism.

The Paris Congress decided to set up the International Socialist Bureau (ISB) from representatives of the socialist parties of all countries with a secretariat in Brussels. The Congress decision said that representatives in the ISB, elected by the delegations, would have to be confirmed by the party organisations of the countries concerned; until confirmation they would be regarded as temporary. p. 364

- <sup>136</sup> *Sozialistische Monatshefte* (*Socialist Monthly*)—the chief organ of the German opportunists and an organ of international opportunism, published in Berlin from 1897 to 1933. During the First World War its policy was social-chauvinist. p. 374

- <sup>137</sup> Lenin’s two letters, *The Bolsheviks Must Assume Power and Marxism and Insurrection*, were discussed at a meeting of the Central Committee of the Bolshevik Party on September 15 (28), 1917. Kamenev opposed the directives on the armed uprising contained in these historic letters and proposed to conceal them from the Party and destroy all copies of them. Kamenev’s proposal was rejected. The Central Committee circulated Lenin’s letters among the biggest Party organisations. p. 377

- <sup>138</sup> The dates mentioned refer to the following events: May 6 (19) was the day on which the composition of the first coalition Provisional Government was announced; on August 31 (September 13) the Petrograd Soviet of Workers’ and Soldiers’ Deputies adopted a Bolshevik resolution demanding the formation of a Soviet Government; September 12 (25) was the date announced by the Menshevik and S. R. Central Executive Committee of the Soviets of Workers’ and Soldiers’ Deputies and the Executive Committee of the All-Russia Soviet of Peasants’ Deputies for the convocation of the Democratic Conference. The Conference was held in Petrograd from September 14 to September 22 (September 27–October 5), 1917. p. 377

- <sup>139</sup> The Provisional Government announced the convocation of a Constituent Assembly in its declaration of March 2 (15), 1917; elections to the Assembly were appointed for September 17 (30), 1917. The Provisional Government, however, delayed the convocation of the Assembly and announced the postponement of the elections until November 12 (25), 1917. The Constituent Assembly was opened by the Soviet Government on January 5 (18), 1918 in Petrograd. The Assembly refused to discuss the “Declaration of Rights of the Working and Exploited People” and to approve the decrees of the Second Congress of Soviets on peace, the land and the transfer of power to the Soviets, and by a decision of the All-Russia Central Executive Committee was dissolved on January 6 (19), 1918. p. 378

- <sup>140</sup> *Parliamentary cretinism* was the name given by Lenin to the faith placed

by the opportunists in the omnipotence of the parliamentary system of government and their belief that the parliamentary struggle was the only or, under all conditions, the chief form of political struggle. p. 382

- <sup>141</sup> *The Alexandrinsky Theatre* in Petrograd, where the meetings of the Democratic Conference were held.

*The Peter and Paul Fortress* on the River Neva opposite the tsar's Winter Palace was used as a prison for political offenders; it contained a huge arsenal and was an important strategic point in Petrograd. p. 384

- <sup>142</sup> Sections I, II, III and V of *The Crisis Has Matured* were published in *Rabochy Put* No. 30 on October 7 (20), 1917. The manuscript of only Chapters V and VI has been found, that of Chapter IV is lost.

*Rabochy Put (Workers' Path)*—Central Organ of the Bolshevik Party published daily from September 3 (16) to October 26 (November 8), 1917 in place of *Pravda*, suppressed by the Provisional Government. *Pravda* has been published under its own name since October 27 (November 9), 1917. p. 385

- <sup>143</sup> The officer Dubasov spoke at a meeting of the Petrograd Soviet on September 22 (October 5), 1917. p. 388

- <sup>144</sup> *Russkiye Vedomosti (Russian Recorder)*—a newspaper founded in Moscow in 1863; it expressed the views of the moderately liberal intelligentsia. In the eighties and nineties democratic writers (M. Y. Saltykov-Shchedrin, G. I. Uspensky, V. G. Korolenko and others) contributed to it; the newspaper also published the writings of the liberal Narodniks. From 1905 onwards the newspaper became the organ of the Right wing of the bourgeois Cadet Party. Lenin said that *Russkiye Vedomosti* combined in a peculiar manner "right Cadetism and Narodnik overtones" (*Collected Works*, Vol. 19, p. 135). In 1918, *Russkiye Vedomosti* was suppressed, together with other counter-revolutionary periodicals. p. 388

- <sup>145</sup> This refers to the position of Trotsky, Kamenev, Zinoviev and an insignificant group of their supporters. Trotsky did not dare come out openly against the uprising and proposed waiting for the Congress of Soviets. At the meeting of the Petrograd Soviet on September 20 (October 3), 1917 he announced that the question of power would be decided only by the Congress of Soviets. He blurted out to the enemy the date of the insurrection appointed by the Central Committee of the Bolshevik Party. On Lenin's proposal the uprising began before the opening of the Second All-Russia Congress of Soviets. The Congress of Soviets took over power from the Petrograd Soviet. p. 390

- <sup>146</sup> *Lieberdants*—the ironical nickname under which the Menshevik leaders Lieber and Dan and their supporters became known after an article by Demyan Bedny had appeared in the Moscow Bolshevik newspaper *Sotsial-Demokrat* (No. 141, August 25 [September 7], 1917) under the heading "Lieberdants". p. 390

- <sup>147</sup> This article was published in the journal *Prosveshcheniye* No. 1-2 in October 1917. *Prosveshcheniye (Education)*—a Bolshevik theoretical monthly published legally in St. Petersburg from December 1911. The magazine was launched on Lenin's suggestion when the tsarist government suppressed the Bolshevik magazine *Mysl (Thought)* that had been published in Moscow. Lenin guided the work of *Prosveshcheniye* from abroad; the magazine printed his articles "Fundamental Problems of the Election Campaign", "Results of the Elections", "Critical Remarks on the National Question", "The Right of Nations to Self-Determination", etc. The editorial board included M. A. Savelyev, M. S. Olminsky and A. I. Yelizarova. The literary section was edited by Maxim Gorky. The circulation reached 5,000.

The magazine was suppressed by the tsarist government on the eve of the First World War, in June 1914. The publication was renewed in the autumn of 1917 but only one double issue appeared; it contained Lenin's articles "Can the Bolsheviks Retain State Power?" and "Revision of the Party Programme". p. 393

- 148 This incident took place at a meeting of the First All-Russia Congress of Soviets of Workers' and Soldiers' Deputies on June 4 (17), 1917. During a speech by Tsereteli, a Menshevik Minister of the Provisional Government, who asserted that there was no political party in Russia that would consent to take full state power into its hands, Lenin announced from his seat that there was such a party, meaning the Bolshevik Party. p. 396
- 149 These lines are from N. A. Nekrasov's poem "Blessed Is the Gentle Poet". p. 400
- 150 The "lady with many good points" was a character from Gogol's *Dead Souls*. p. 401
- 151 *Bulygin Duma*—a consultative "representative institution" which the tsarist government promised to convene in 1905. The draft law on the institution of a consultative State Duma and instructions for elections to it were elaborated by a special commission under the chairmanship of Minister of the Interior Bulygin and published on August 6 (19), 1905. The Bolsheviks announced and conducted an active boycott of the Bulygin Duma. The government did not succeed in convening the Duma—it was swept away by the general political strike in October. p. 401
- 152 *Znamya Truda (The Banner of Labour)*—a Left S. R. daily that began publication on August 23 (September 5), 1917 as the organ of the Petrograd Committee of the Socialist-Revolutionaries. After the First All-Russia Congress of the Left S.R.s it became their central organ; it was suppressed in July 1918, at the time of the Left S. R. anti-Soviet revolt. p. 402
- 153 *Volya Naroda (The Will of the People)*—a daily newspaper, organ of the Right wing of the S.R.s published in Petrograd in 1917; closed down in November 1917; it later appeared under other names and was finally suppressed in February 1918. p. 404
- 154 K. Marx and F. Engels, *Selected Correspondence*, Moscow, 1965, pp. 262-63. p. 419
- 155 *The Man in a Muffler*—the hero of a story of the same name by A. P. Chekhov; he was a man of limited outlook who feared all initiative and everything new. p. 419
- 156 These were the "virtues" of Molchalin, a character from A. S. Griboyedov's comedy *Wit Works Woe*, a sycophant and careerist. p. 431
- 157 The dates refer to the following events: February 28 (March 13) was the date of the February bourgeois-democratic revolution in Russia; November 29 (December 12) was the date on which the Constituent Assembly was expected to meet—the Provisional Government had appointed November 28 (December 11), 1917 for the convocation of the Assembly. p. 434
- 158 In October 1917, the Smolny Institute was the headquarters of the Bolshevik Central Committee and the Revolutionary Military Committee of the Petrograd Soviet. Smolny became the general staff of the revolution. The Second All-Russia Congress of Soviets was held in the Assembly Hall of the Smolny Institute on October 25, 26 and 27 (November 7, 8 and 9), 1917. p. 434



- <sup>159</sup> This letter was discussed at a meeting of the Petrograd Committee on October 5 (18), 1917. It was also discussed by the Moscow Committee of the Bolshevik Party and at a meeting of leading Party officials in Moscow. Lenin's letter was given the full support of the Petrograd and Moscow Bolshevik organisations. The theses it contained were taken as a guide. p. 435
- <sup>160</sup> Lenin here refers to the revolutionary acts of sailors of the German Fleet in July and August 1917 that began under the direct influence of the Russian revolution. On May 31 the sailors of the *Prinz-Regent Luitpold* started a kind of hunger strike. The disturbance spread quickly to other vessels. Seaman Reichpietsch from the *Friedrich der Grosse* headed the movement. By the beginning of August the sailors' organisation had 4,000 members. Open revolutionary acts began on the vessels. On August 2, 400 sailors from the *Prinz-Regent Luitpold* went ashore to release by force their stoker comrades who had been arrested for striking. On August 16 there was a revolt on the *Westphalia*, where the stokers refused to work. The revolutionary acts in the German Fleet were brutally suppressed—the leaders of the movement, Reichpietsch and Köbis, were shot and other active participants in the movement were sentenced to long terms of penal servitude. p. 435
- <sup>161</sup> This refers to the all-Russia railwaymen's strike; the railwaymen demanded an increase in wages from the Provisional Government. The strike began during the night of September 23-24 (October 6-7) and ended on the night of September 26 (October 9), 1917, when the Provisional Government made partial concessions. p. 435
- <sup>162</sup> *The Congress of Soviets of Soldiers' Deputies of the Northern Region*, called by a decision of the Central Committee of the Bolshevik Party, was held in Petrograd from October 11 to October 13 (24-26), 1917. The Petrograd Soviet took an active part in organising the Congress and sent a delegation of thirty to it. The Menshevik-S.R. Central Executive Committee announced that the Congress was a private meeting and recalled its delegates. Some 23 Soviets were represented, including those of Petrograd, Moscow, Kronstadt, Revel and Helsingfors. Of the 94 delegates at the Congress, 51 were Bolsheviks. The agenda contained the following items: (1) Reports from Local Soviets; (2) The Current Political Situation; (3) The Military and Political Situation in the Country; (4) The Land Question; (5) The All-Russia Congress of Soviets; (6) The Constituent Assembly; (7) The Organisational Question. The Congress elected an Executive Committee of the Northern Region with 17 members—11 of them Bolsheviks. Lenin addressed a letter to the Congress: "Letter to the Bolshevik Comrades Attending the Congress of Soviets of the Northern Region" (see pp. 439-44 of the present volume). The decisions of the Congress called on the masses to rise up in arms; the Congress played an important agitational and organisational role in preparing the uprising. p. 437
- <sup>163</sup> Frederick Engels, "Revolution and Counter-Revolution in Germany", Section XVII. p. 438
- <sup>164</sup> The workers of Turin (Italy) declared a general strike against the war in August 1917. The strike and street demonstrations lasted three days and were suppressed only when martial law was declared in the city. p. 439
- <sup>165</sup> In an attempt to prevent the armed uprising of the workers and soldiers at all costs, Kerensky's Provisional Government and the counter-revolutionary army generals, acting in concert with French and British imperialists, intended to surrender Petrograd to the Germans early in October 1917 and thereby stifle the revolution. In connection with this the Provisional Government planned its transfer to Moscow at a meeting held on October



- 4 (17). The October insurrection prevented the implementation of the plan. p. 442
- <sup>166</sup> The historic meeting of the Central Committee of the Party on October 10 (23), 1917 was devoted to the immediate preparation of an armed uprising. The capitulators, Kamenev and Zinoviev, spoke and voted against Lenin's resolution. At this meeting Trotsky did not vote against the resolution on the armed uprising. He did, however, insist that the uprising should not begin before the Second Congress of Soviets which meant postponing the uprising, sabotaging it and warning the Provisional Government that it would take place. The Central Committee defeated the capitulators. Lenin's resolution was accepted by 10 votes against 2 and became a directive for the entire Bolshevik Party. A Political Bureau of the Central Committee, headed by Lenin, was set up for the political guidance of the uprising. p. 445
- <sup>167</sup> At a meeting of the Central Committee on October 10 (23) Y. M. Sverdlov, speaking on item three of the agenda, "Minsk and the Northern Front", reported that an uprising in Minsk was technically possible and that Minsk offered to assist Petrograd by the dispatch of a revolutionary corps to that city. p. 446
- <sup>168</sup> The extended meeting of the Party Central Committee on October 16 (29) was held at the Lesnovsky District Council, of which M. I. Kalinin was chairman. Zinoviev and Kamenev opposed the insurrection at this meeting. The treacherous behaviour of the capitulators was sharply criticised by Lenin.  
 Lenin's resolution was adopted by 19 votes against 2 with 4 abstaining. At a closed meeting the Central Committee set up a Revolutionary Military Centre whose members were A. S. Bubnov, F. E. Dzerzhinsky, Y. M. Sverdlov, J. V. Stalin and M. S. Uritsky. p. 448
- <sup>169</sup> This letter and also the "Letter to the Central Committee of the R.S.D.L.P.(B.)" (see pp. 454-57 of the present volume) were discussed at a meeting of the Bolshevik Central Committee on October 20 (November 2), 1917. The Central Committee condemned the actions of the strike-breakers Kamenev and Zinoviev. They were forbidden to make any statements against the decisions of the Central Committee and its planned line of action. Kamenev was removed from the Central Committee. p. 451
- <sup>170</sup> This refers to the "Letter to Comrades" published on October 19, 20 and 21 (November 1, 2 and 3), 1917 in the newspaper *Rabochy Put* Nos. 40, 41 and 42 (see *Collected Works*, Vol. 26). In this article Lenin exposed the groundless nature of the arguments of the traitors to the revolution Kamenev and Zinoviev who opposed the armed uprising. p. 453
- <sup>171</sup> After writing this letter to the Central Committee of the R.S.D.L.P.(B.) on the evening of October 24 (November 6) with a demand to start the armed uprising immediately, Lenin late at night made his way illegally to the Smolny Institute and took the general leadership of the uprising into his own hands. p. 459
- <sup>172</sup> This manifesto was issued at 10 a. m. on October 25 (November 7), 1917, was published in the newspaper *Rabochy i Soldat* that same day and passed on to other newspapers for publication. p. 461
- <sup>173</sup> *The Revolutionary Military Committee of the Petrograd Soviet* was set up on October 12 (25), 1917 on the instructions of the Central Committee of the Bolshevik Party. The RMC worked under the direct leadership of the Central Committee of the Party and in close contact with the Bolshevik military organisation took charge of the formation of contingents of the

Red Guard and the arming of the workers. The main purpose of the RMC was the preparation of the armed uprising in accordance with the directives of the Bolshevik Central Committee. The RMC carried out extensive work in preparing forces for the October Revolution. The guiding core of the RMC was the Party Revolutionary Military Centre set up at the extended meeting of the Central Committee on October 16 (29), whose activities were under the daily supervision of Lenin. After the Soviet Government was formed at the Second Congress of Soviets, the RMC, acting under the instructions of the Council of People's Commissars, became the chief body for the struggle against the counter-revolution and the maintenance of revolutionary law and order. As the Soviet apparatus grew stronger, the RMC gradually handed over its functions to the People's Commissariats as they were organised. The Revolutionary Military Committee was abolished on December 5 (18), 1917. p. 461

- <sup>174</sup> *Rabochy i Soldat (Worker and Soldier)*—an evening newspaper, organ of the Petrograd Soviet of Workers' and Soldiers' Deputies; published from October 17 (30), 1917 to February 1918. p. 461
- <sup>175</sup> *The Second All-Russia Congress of Soviets of Workers' and Soldiers' Deputies* opened on October 25 (November 7), 1917, at 10.45 p.m. in the Smolny Institute. Of the 649 delegates, 390 were Bolsheviks. A total of 318 provincial Soviets was represented and delegates from 241 of them came to the Congress with Bolshevik mandates. The Mensheviks, Right S.R.s and Bund members walked out of the Congress immediately after its opening, refusing to recognise the socialist revolution. The Congress approved Lenin's manifesto, "To Workers, Soldiers and Peasants!" which announced the transfer of state power to the Soviets (see pp. 465-66 of the present volume). The main questions discussed at the Congress were: the formation of the Soviet Government and the approval of the Decree on Peace and the Decree on Land. Lenin reported on these questions. The Second Congress of Soviets approved the decrees and formed the first Soviet Government—the Council of People's Commissars, with Lenin as its chairman. The Congress elected the All-Russia Central Executive Committee with 101 members, among whom 62 were Bolsheviks and 29 were Left S.R.s. The Congress was closed on October 26 (November 8), 1917. p. 463
- <sup>176</sup> This refers to the Central Executive Committee elected at the First All-Russia Congress of Soviets (June 16-July 7, 1917); the majority of its members were Mensheviks and S.R.s. p. 465
- <sup>177</sup> On March 14 (27), 1917, a meeting of the Petrograd Soviet of Workers' and Soldiers' Deputies adopted the manifesto "To the Peoples of the World". p. 470
- <sup>178</sup> *Izvestia Userossiiskogo Soveta Krestyanskikh Deputatov (News of the All-Russia Council of Peasants' Deputies)*—a daily newspaper, the official organ of the Council of Peasants' Deputies published in Petrograd from May to December 1917; expressed the views of the Right wing of the S.R.s. p. 475
- <sup>179</sup> *Crown lands* belonged to members of the tsar's family. *Factory lands* were granted to factory owners by the state for allotment to peasants who worked in the factories for the land they received. *Entailed lands* were big inherited estates that passed undivided from father to son or to the senior male member of the family by right of primogeniture. p. 475
- <sup>180</sup> *Draft Regulations on Workers' Control (The Law on Workers' Control)* were taken as the basis for the draft decree elaborated by the People's

Commissariat of Labour and published with addenda and amendments in *Pravda* No. 178 on November 3 (16), 1917. On November 14 (27) the draft decree on workers' control was discussed at a meeting of the All-Russia Central Executive Committee and was adopted with insignificant amendments. The next day the draft was discussed by the Council of People's Commissars. It was published in *Izvestia TsIK* No. 227 on November 16, 1917 under the heading "Regulations on Workers' Control". p. 481

<sup>181</sup> *Vikzhel—the All-Russia Executive Committee of the Railwaymen's Trade Union*—elected at the First All-Russia Inaugural Congress of Railwaymen in Moscow, August 1917. The Executive Committee included 41 members of whom 14 were S.R.s, 6 Mensheviks, 3 Popular Socialists and 11 non-party. After the October Revolution the Railwaymen's Committee became one of the centres of anti-Soviet activity. On October 29 (November 11), 1917, it passed a resolution on the need to form a government of all "socialist" parties. Negotiations on this between the Railwaymen's Committee and the Central Committee of the Bolshevik Party began that same day. According to the directives given by Lenin and the Central Committee, the negotiations were to serve as "diplomatic cover for military operations". Kamenev and Sokolnikov behaved treacherously during the negotiations and agreed with the Vikzhel's demand to create a "socialist" government which was to include, in addition to the Bolsheviks, representatives of the counter-revolutionary parties of S.R.s and Mensheviks. The treacherous policy of Kamenev and Sokolnikov was supported by Nogin, Milyutin and Rykov. On November 2 (15), the Central Committee of the Bolshevik Party adopted a resolution tabled by Lenin that rejected agreement with those counter-revolutionary parties and declared Kamenev and Zinoviev to be strike-breakers of the revolution. Kamenev, Zinoviev, Rykov, Nogin and Milyutin voted against the resolution. p. 483

<sup>182</sup> *Committee of Salvation (Committee of Public Safety)*—was the united organ of the counter-revolution; it was formed at the Moscow City Council on October 25 (November 7) and on November 2 (15), 1917 it capitulated to the Revolutionary Military Committee. p. 488

<sup>183</sup> Lenin wrote this "Reply" in response to numerous inquiries from peasants addressed to the Council of People's Commissars. The "Reply" was typewritten in a number of copies and signed by Lenin; it was handed out to the peasant emissaries from the localities. p. 490

<sup>184</sup> In view of the influence of the Left S.R.s among the peasant masses, at the Second Congress of Soviets the Bolsheviks proposed that they join the Soviet Government; the Left S.R.s refused but under pressure of the peasant masses they entered into a formal agreement with the Bolsheviks, and in November 1917 their representatives joined the Council of People's Commissars. The Left S.R.s used their posts in the government bodies for anti-popular purposes. At the time the Brest Peace Treaty was signed they opposed it and as a sign of protest walked out of the Council of People's Commissars but continued to work in the local government bodies. In the summer of 1918, when the Committees of Poor Peasants were organised and the class struggle took on a sharper turn, the Left S.R.s, who expressed the interests of the kulaks, organised a counter-revolutionary revolt for the purpose of overthrowing Soviet power. After the suppression of the revolt, the Fifth All-Russia Congress of Soviets decided to exclude the Left S.R.s from the Soviets. p. 492

<sup>185</sup> *The Extraordinary All-Russia Congress of Soviets of Peasants' Deputies* was held in Pctrograd from November 10 to November 25 (November



23 to December 8), 1917. The Congress delegates included 110 Left S.R.s, 40 Bolsheviks, 15 Bolshevik sympathisers (Ukrainians), 50 S.R.s of the Right and Centre, and 40 non-party delegates. The old Right S.R. Executive Committee of Soviets of Peasants' Deputies made an unsuccessful attempt to prevent the Congress on the eve of its opening.

Despite the efforts of the Right S.R. Executive Committee to split the Congress, and despite the wavering of the Left S.R.s, it took the same stand on the question of state power as the Second All-Russia Congress of Soviets of Workers' and Soldiers' Deputies. Lenin spoke at the Congress on the agrarian question and on the statement made by the representative of the Railwaymen's Committee and also made a concluding speech on the agrarian question. The Congress adopted the resolution drafted by Lenin.

The provisional Executive Committee elected by the Congress merged with the All-Russia Central Executive Committee; on November 15 (28) there was a joint meeting of the Central Executive Committee, the Extraordinary Congress of Soviets of Peasants' Deputies and the Petrograd Soviet; this meeting passed a resolution approving the Decree on Peace, the Decree on Land and the Decree on Workers' Control. The Congress decided to convene the Second All-Russia Congress of Peasants' Deputies on November 25 (December 8), 1917. p. 496

<sup>186</sup> The idea of creating the *Supreme Economic Council* (SEC), the first proletarian body to engage in planning and managing socialist economy, was put forward on the day after the October Revolution. A meeting under the chairmanship of Lenin was held in Smolny on October 26 or 27 (November 8 or 9) which decided to create a leading general economic body for the Soviet state. The name "Economic Council" first appeared in a plan drawn up at that meeting. On November 15 (28) the Council of People's Commissars appointed a commission to plan the organisation of the SEC. The Bolshevik group in the All-Russia Central Executive Committee discussed the question of organising the SEC and decided to turn it into a militant organ of workers' dictatorship and give it legislative powers. On December 1 (14) this question was discussed in its final form at a meeting of the All-Russia Central Executive Committee. The Left S.R.s tabled amendments increasing representation in the peasant section of the SEC and subordinating it, not to the Council of People's Commissars, as the Soviet plan required, but to the All-Russia Central Executive Committee. Lenin spoke against these amendments. They were rejected by a majority vote. The decree was published in its final form on December 5 (18), 1917 and was signed by Lenin and others.

The decree stated that the SEC was entrusted with the planning of the economy and state finances. In the first period of the revolution, the programme of action for the SEC was Lenin's "Draft Decree on the Nationalisation of the Banks and on Measures Necessary for Its Implementation" (see pp. 514-16 of the present volume).

With the development of Soviet economy, the volume of work, the functions and the nature of the activities of the SEC changed to comply with the new tasks of socialist construction. Lenin regarded the SEC as of great importance in the work of socialist construction and stated that "the apparatus of the type of the Supreme Economic Council is destined to grow, to develop and become strong, performing all the main activities of organised society" (see p. 722 of the present volume). p. 503

<sup>187</sup> *The Ukrainian Central Rada* was a bourgeois nationalist organisation established in Kiev in April 1917 at a congress of Ukrainian bourgeois and petty-bourgeois parties and groups. The Chairman of the Rada was M. Grushevsky and his deputy was V. Vinnichenko; Petlyura, Yefremov and other nationalists were members of the Rada. Following the victory



of the October Revolution, the Rada declared itself the supreme organ of the "Ukrainian People's Republic" and launched an open struggle against Soviet power. Certain foreign powers, relying on the Rada, attempted to create a centre in the Ukraine for the struggle against the proletarian revolution. The Central Rada helped the whiteguard generals of the Don and Kuban in their struggle against Soviet power and disarmed the Soviet regiments and the Red Guard. In the manifesto of the Council of People's Commissars addressed to the Ukrainian people (it was written by Lenin on December 3 [16], 1917), the counter-revolutionary, anti-Soviet activities of the Rada were exposed (see *Collected Works*, Vol. 26). In December 1917 and January 1918 there were armed revolts against the counter-revolutionary Rada throughout the Ukraine, and Soviet power was established. In January 1918 Soviet troops launched an offensive in the Ukraine and on the 26th of that month (February 8) occupied Kiev, putting an end to the rule of the bourgeois Rada.

p. 508

- <sup>188</sup> *The Decree on the Nationalisation of the Banks* was approved by the All-Russia Central Executive Committee on December 14 (27), 1917, simultaneously with the decree on the review of the contents of the bank vaults; the decree was published in *Izvestia VTsIK* No. 252 on December 15, 1917.

p. 511

- <sup>189</sup> Lenin submitted this draft to the Supreme Economic Council for its approval in mid-December 1917. It was first published in the journal *Narodnoye Khozyaistvo* No. 11, in November 1918.

*Narodnoye Khozyaistvo* (*The Economy*)—organ of the Supreme Economic Council, published from March 1918 to December 1922.

p. 514

- <sup>190</sup> K. Marx and F. Engels, *Selected Correspondence*, Moscow, 1965, p. 297.

p. 523

- <sup>191</sup> Said by Mephistopheles in Goethe's *Faust*, Part I, Scene 4—Faust's Study.

p. 523

- <sup>192</sup> Lenin submitted this Declaration to a meeting of the All-Russia Central Executive Committee on January 3 (16), 1918. The text of the Declaration, with some amendments, was unanimously approved. On January 4 (17) the Declaration was published in *Pravda* No. 2. On January 5 (18) the Bolshevik group submitted it in the name of the Soviet Government to the Constituent Assembly. The counter-revolutionary Assembly, however, refused to discuss it, and the Bolshevik group walked out. On January 12 (25), 1918 the Declaration was confirmed by the Third All-Russia Congress of Soviets and subsequently became part of the Constitution of the R.S.F.S.R.

p. 525

- <sup>193</sup> On December 6 (19), 1917, the Finnish Diet passed the Declaration of Finland's Independence. On December 18 (31), Svinhufvud, Head of the Finnish Government, addressed a request to V. I. Lenin, Chairman of the Council of People's Commissars, to recognise the independence of Finland. That same day the Soviet Government acceded to Finland's request and was the first to recognise Finland's independence. The All-Russia Central Executive Committee approved the decision of the Council of People's Commissars by accepting, on December 22, 1917 (January 4, 1918), the "Declaration of the Revolutionary Government on the Recognition of Finland's Independence".

p. 526

- <sup>194</sup> The Soviet Government made its proposal to the Persian Government on the joint elaboration of a plan to withdraw Russian troops from Persia in the second half of December 1917. By March 1918 all Russian troops had been withdrawn.

p. 526

- <sup>195</sup> *The Decree on Turkish Armenia* was discussed at a meeting of the Council of People's Commissars on December 23, 1917 (January 5, 1918) and confirmed by the Council on December 29, 1917 (January 11, 1918). The Decree was published in *Pravda* No. 227 on December 31, 1917 (January 13, 1918). The population of the territory of Turkish Armenia that had been occupied by Russian troops during the First World War was granted the right to self-determination, up to and including secession. In February 1918, Turkish troops again seized Turkish Armenia, thus preventing the population from availing themselves of the right to self-determination. p. 526
- <sup>196</sup> The day referred to was January 5 (18), 1918, the day on which the Constituent Assembly opened. The meeting was held in the Taurida Palace. p. 528
- <sup>197</sup> This draft was examined at a meeting of the Council of People's Commissars on January 6 (19), 1918. Lenin prepared his "Theses for a Decree on the Dissolution of the Constituent Assembly" for this meeting and they were read and then voted on point by point; all the points were accepted without amendments. The Draft Decree on the Dissolution of the Constituent Assembly, written by Lenin that same day, was based on these theses. The Decree was approved by the All-Russia Central Executive Committee during the night of January 6-7 (19-20), 1918 and published in *Izvestia TsIK* No. 5 on January 7, 1918. p. 530
- <sup>198</sup> Lenin read these *Theses* at a joint meeting of the Central Committee of the Party and the Bolshevik delegates to the Third Congress of Soviets on January 8 (21), 1918. The Central Committee of the Party adopted them on February 23 (N. S.), 1918. When the *Theses* were published Lenin wrote the introduction to them and added the heading "On the History of the Question of the Unfortunate Peace".

The Communist Party and the Soviet Government started an active campaign for peace from the first days of the October Revolution. In the Decree on Peace, adopted on October 26 (November 8) at the Second All-Russia Congress of Soviets, the Soviet Government proposed to all belligerent countries to begin immediate negotiations on the conclusion of a just democratic peace without annexations and indemnities. The imperialist countries of the Entente (Britain, France, the U.S.A. and others) refused to accept the Soviet proposal. Because of the urgent necessity to ensure a way out of the war for Russia, the Soviet Government decided to begin peace negotiations with Germany and Austria-Hungary. The negotiations were opened at Brest-Litovsk on November 20 (December 3), 1917; an armistice agreement was signed on December 2 (15). During the negotiations it became clear that the German imperialists intended to impose on Soviet Russia an annexationist and humiliating peace. They tried to get control of Poland, Lithuania and parts of Latvia and Byelorussia that were occupied by their troops and, with the aid of bourgeois nationalists, to cut the Ukraine off from Soviet Russia.

The young Soviet Republic was at that time in an extremely difficult position. Economic ruin in the country, the masses tired of the war, the collapse of the front—all this made a peaceful respite essential. The respite, furthermore, was necessary to consolidate Soviet power, to suppress the resistance of the deposed exploiting classes inside the country, and to create the new Red Army, an army that would be capable of defending the country against imperialist invaders. The question of peace was a question of life and death for the Soviet Republic. Lenin, therefore, insisted on the immediate conclusion of peace, despite the harsh conditions.

All counter-revolutionaries, from the Mensheviks and S.R.s to the whiteguards, were against the conclusion of peace. In this they had allies in Trotsky and Bukharin; the latter at that time headed an anti-Party

group of those who called themselves Left Communists; they concealed their politics behind Leftist phrases and demanded the continuation of the war. Trotsky, as chairman of the Soviet delegation at Brest, violated the directives of the Central Committee and informed the German representatives that the Soviet Republic refused to conclude peace on the terms offered by Germany and at the same time declared that the Soviet Republic would not continue fighting and would demobilise its army.

On January 28 (February 10), 1918 the peace negotiations were broken off. The Germans, taking advantage of Trotsky's declaration, launched an offensive along the entire front, thus violating the armistice. Their troops advanced rapidly into the interior of the country. The Soviet Republic was in great danger. Lenin made the imperative demand that the conditions of the German ultimatum be immediately accepted. But on February 22, the German imperialists presented the Soviet Government with a fresh ultimatum, the terms of which were much harsher than those of the first. Even these conditions were accepted by the Soviet Government.

On March 3, 1918 the Brest-Litovsk Peace Treaty was concluded between the Soviet Republic on one side and Germany, Austria-Hungary, Bulgaria and Turkey on the other. Under the Brest-Litovsk Treaty Latvia, Estonia and Poland were annexed to Germany and the Ukraine became a separate state dependent on Germany. In addition to this the Soviet Republic had to pay Germany considerable indemnities.

The Seventh Congress of the R.C.P.(B.) was called on March 6, 1918, for a final decision on the question of peace with Germany; the Congress approved Lenin's policy on the question of the Brest Peace and passed a decision to the effect that the Peace Treaty with Germany signed by the Soviet Government must be ratified.

On March 15, 1918, the Fourth Extraordinary All-Russia Congress of Soviets ratified the Brest-Litovsk Treaty.

After the November Revolution in Germany and the defeat of the German imperialists the terms of the treaty with Germany lost all significance. On November 13, 1918, the All-Russia Central Executive Committee annulled the Brest-Litovsk Treaty. p. 532

199 *Lifland*—the former name of the southern part of the Baltic area.

*Estland*—the former name of the northern part of Estonia. p. 536

200 *The Moscow Regional Bureau of the R.S.D.L.P.(B.)* in 1917 and at the beginning of 1918 united the Party organisations of the central industrial area of Russia which included the following gubernias: Moscow, Yaroslavl, Tver, Kostroma, Vladimir, Voronezh, Smolensk, Nizhni-Novgorod, Tula, Ryazan, Tambov, Kaluga and Orel. In the period when the Party was struggling for the conclusion of the Brest Peace, the leadership of the Moscow Regional Bureau was temporarily seized by the Left Communists (Bukharin, Osinsky, Lomov, Stukov, Sapronov, Mantsev, Yakovleva and others). On December 28, 1917 (January 10, 1918), the Bureau passed a schismatic resolution of non-confidence in the Central Committee and demanded the cessation of the peace negotiations with Germany and the continuation of the war. p. 539

201 The Congress opened on January 10 (23), 1918. At the Congress there were delegates from 317 Soviets of Workers', Soldiers' and Peasants' Deputies and from 110 army, corps and divisional committees. The total number of delegates was 707. Three days later the Congress was joined by the representatives of more than 250 Soviets of Peasants' Deputies participating in the Third All-Russia Congress of Soviets of Peasants' Deputies that opened on January 13 (26). The Bolshevik delegates to the Congress numbered 441. The report on the work of the All-Russia Central Executive



Committee was delivered by Sverdlov and that on the activities of the Council of People's Commissars by Lenin; Lenin also made a concluding speech on the report and on the closing of the Congress. The Congress accepted a motion tabled by the Bolshevik group approving in full the policy of the All-Russia Central Executive Committee and the Council of People's Commissars.

On January 12 (25), 1918 the Congress approved Lenin's "Declaration of Rights of the Working and Exploited People".

During the Congress the number of delegates continually increased; at the closing session 1,587 delegates with the right to vote were present. The Congress elected the All-Russia Central Executive Committee of 306 members. The Congress closed on January 18 (31), 1918. p. 541

202 This refers to the negotiations between the All-Russia Leather Workers' Union and the leather manufacturers which began in the first half of 1917. The Union demanded greater representation for workers on the Central Leather Committee and its reorganisation on democratic lines. As a result of the negotiations the Committee was reorganised and workers obtained two-thirds of the votes. At the beginning of April 1918 a telegram signed by Lenin was sent to all Soviets on the democratisation of all local bodies under the Central Leather Committee and making all decisions of the Central Leather Committee and local committees obligatory for the leather industry. p. 553

203 See the letter from Marx to Engels of February 12, 1870. p. 554

204 The strike of Austrian workers broke out in January 1918 in connection with the Brest-Litovsk negotiations. The slogans of the strikers were for the conclusion of a general peace and the improvement of food conditions for workers.

In Vienna, Budapest and other cities, Soviets of Workers' Deputies arose spontaneously. The Soviets were made use of by the opportunist leaders of the Social-Democratic Party to suppress the revolutionary strike movement. p. 554

205 When the German High Command announced the cessation of the armistice and the renewal of a state of war from February 18, Lenin, at a meeting of the Central Committee on the evening of February 17, 1918, proposed the immediate opening of fresh negotiations with Germany for the conclusion of peace. Lenin's proposal was rejected by 6 votes to 5.

On February 18, the question of concluding peace was again discussed at a meeting of the Central Committee of the Party. Trotsky and Bukharin persisted in their criminal policy of supporting the continuation of the war. Lenin's proposal to send a wireless message to the German Government agreeing to sign a peace treaty on the Brest-Litovsk terms was accepted only in the evening at a second session. The draft message was thereupon written by Lenin and confirmed by the meeting of the Central Committee of the Bolshevik Party and sent to Berlin during the night of February 18-19 in the name of the Council of People's Commissars. p. 556

206 This manifesto was adopted by the Council of People's Commissars on February 21, 1918 and published in the name of the Council on February 22 in *Pravda* and *Izvestia TsIK*; it was also published as a separate leaflet. Lenin wrote the manifesto on the occasion of the breakdown of the Brest-Litovsk negotiations and the beginning of the German imperialist offensive. German troops had occupied a number of Soviet towns and threatened Petrograd.

The appeal of the Party and the Soviet Government aroused the revolutionary masses for the struggle against the German imperialists.



- The rapidly formed units of the young Red Army heroically repulsed the attacks of the German occupants, who were defeated at Narva and Pskov. The advance of German troops on Petrograd was halted. p. 557
- <sup>207</sup> The first and the last two paragraphs of this document were written by Sverdlov, the remainder by Lenin. p. 559
- <sup>208</sup> The insurrection marking the beginning of the revolution in Finland broke out in the middle of January 1918 in the southern industrial part of the country and embraced a number of important centres—Helsingfors, Vyborg and others. It was preceded by the November political general strike that began on October 31 (November 13), 1917 and lasted a week; it was headed by the Central Workers' Revolutionary Council. On January 15 (28), 1918, the Finnish Red Guard occupied the capital, Helsingfors, where, on January 16 (29), the revolutionary government was set up; it was known as the Council of People's Representatives (or Commissars) of Finland. Svinhufvud's bourgeois government appealed to the Swedish and German bourgeoisie for help. They consolidated their position in the northern part of the country, organised contingents of whiteguard kulaks, and with the support of Swedes, Germans and Russian White officers launched an offensive against the south at the end of January. In May, after three months of fierce civil war, the workers' revolution in Finland was put down with the aid of a German expeditionary force 20,000 strong. p. 562
- <sup>209</sup> A joint meeting of the Bolshevik and Left S.R. groups of the All-Russia Central Executive Committee was held on the evening of Saturday, February 23, 1918, to discuss the acceptance of the new German peace terms. Lenin spoke in favour of acceptance, Trotsky's supporters against it. No resolution on the peace question was passed at this meeting. During the night of February 23-24 a Plenary Meeting of the All-Russia Central Executive Committee was held to discuss the question of peace. Lenin delivered a report on the new German peace terms (see *Collected Works*, Vol. 27). The Mensheviks, Right and Left S.R.s and Anarchist-Communists opposed the conclusion of peace. The resolution accepting the German terms, proposed by the Bolsheviks, was adopted by 116 votes to 85, with 26 abstentions. Most of the Left Communists did not take part in the voting, having left the hall at the time the vote was taken. The leaders of the Left Communists and Trotsky's supporters voted against the conclusion of peace.
- The speech of the Left S.R. Steinberg which Lenin mentions was not published. p. 563
- <sup>210</sup> The question of evacuating the government from Petrograd to Moscow in connection with the February offensive of the Germans was discussed by the Council of People's Commissars on February 26, 1918. Lenin drafted the evacuation order here published during that meeting. The final decision to transfer the capital to Moscow was made at the Extraordinary Fourth All-Russia Congress of Soviets in March 1918. p. 566
- <sup>211</sup> The resolution referred to was adopted by the Moscow Regional Bureau of the R.S.D.L.P.(B.) that had been temporarily seized by the Left Communists at the time of the Party's struggle for the Brest Peace; by the spring of 1918 the Bureau was actually playing the role of an anti-Party factional centre. The splitting, anti-Soviet resolution Lenin speaks of was adopted at a meeting of a small part of the Bureau after the Central Committee of the Party had decided to accept the new peace terms proposed by the Germans. p. 567
- <sup>212</sup> This refers to the voting on the question of peace with Germany at a joint

meeting of the Central Committee of the Party and Party officials on January 21 (February 3), 1918. Lenin, Sergeyev (Artyom) and others voted in favour of concluding peace, the Left Communists Obolensky (Osinsky) and Stukov voted against it being permissible to engage in negotiations and sign treaties with the imperialists. Most of the Left Communists, however, adopted a dual position at the voting; they admitted the possibility of concluding peace "in general" between socialist and imperialist states, but at the same time they voted against concluding peace with Germany. p. 570

- <sup>213</sup> *The Extraordinary Seventh Congress of the R.C.P.(B.)* was held in Petrograd from March 6 to 8, 1918. It was attended by 46 delegates with the right to vote and 58 with voice but no vote. The delegates represented over 170,000 Party members; at the time of the Congress the total membership of the Party was about 300,000. A large number of organisations did not have time to send delegations because of the hurry with which the Congress was convened or because some regions of Soviet Russia were temporarily occupied by the Germans.

The Congress was called urgently to settle the question of peace. Lenin delivered a report on war and peace. The Trotsky group and the Left Communists submitted their own theses, Bukharin delivering their report. The Congress accepted Lenin's resolution on the Brest Peace by 30 votes against 12, with 4 abstentions. The Congress condemned the treacherous policy of Trotsky and Bukharin and the attempt of the Left Communists to continue their splitting tactics at the very Congress. The Left Communists and Trotsky's group were defeated. The Party was able to get the country out of the imperialist war and gain a respite for the organisation of the Red Army and for socialist construction. In November 1918, the Brest Treaty was annulled.

The Congress discussed the question of reviewing the Programme and changing the name of the Party; Lenin delivered a report on this question. On Lenin's proposal, the Congress decided to change the name of the Party from Russian Social-Democratic Labour Party (Bolsheviks) to Russian Communist Party (Bolsheviks)—R.C.P.(B.). A commission was appointed to elaborate the new Party Programme with Lenin as its chairman. The rough draft compiled by Lenin was taken as the starting point. At the time of the elections to the central bodies of the Party, the Left Communists—Bukharin, Lomov, Uritsky and Bubnov, who had announced their intention of resigning from the Central Committee prior to the Congress—refused to participate in the elections or be members of the Central Committee. Lenin spoke at the Congress and roundly condemned the behaviour of the Left Communists. The Congress demanded that they cease the splitting activities that threatened the unity of the Party.

The Seventh Congress of the R.C.P.(B.) was of great historic importance. It achieved the withdrawal of Soviet Russia from the war and brought peace to the peoples of Russia. It laid down the priority tasks of the Party in the sphere of socialist construction. It condemned the disorganising activities of Trotsky and the Left Communists that disrupted the unity of the Party and undermined the dictatorship of the proletariat; the Congress mustered the Party on the basis of Lenin's policy. p. 575

- <sup>214</sup> This refers to the capitulating policy of Kamenev, Zinoviev, Rykov and others who demanded, in the first days of the October Revolution, the formation of a "homogeneous socialist government" with the participation of the counter-revolutionary parties of Mensheviks and S.R.s. p. 577
- <sup>215</sup> This refers to Trotsky's statement on January 28 (February 10), 1918, at the time of the negotiations with the German High Command at Brest-Litovsk. p. 585

- <sup>216</sup> The "scraps of paper" referred to were the oath of allegiance to the tsar signed by deputies to the Third State Duma on the opening day, November 1 (14), 1907. A deputy who refused to sign was regarded as having resigned from the Duma. Since refusal to take the oath meant the loss of the Duma as a platform essential for the mobilisation of the proletariat in the revolutionary struggle, the Social-Democrat deputies signed it together with other Duma deputies. p. 588
- <sup>217</sup> The term "field revolution" was used by V. V. Obolensky (N. Osinsky) in his "Theses on the Question of War and Peace" written for the meeting of the Central Committee of the Party on January 21 (February 3), 1918 and published on March 14 in the Left Communist newspaper *Kommunist* No. 8. In explanation of the term Obolensky wrote: "Revolutionary war, as a field civil war, cannot resemble in character regular military actions of national armies when they are carrying out strategic operations.... Military actions assume the character of guerrilla warfare (analogous to barricade fighting) and are mixed with class agitation." p. 589
- <sup>218</sup> *The Peace of Tilsit* was concluded by Napoleonic France with Russia and Prussia in July 1807, following the campaign of 1806-07. The terms of the Peace of Tilsit were extremely harsh and humiliating for Prussia. In addition to the loss of a considerable part of her territory (all possessions to the West of the Elbe among them), Prussia was actually an occupied country since the withdrawal of French troops depended on the payment of indemnities to the extent of 100 million francs.  
 Lenin compared the Brest Peace with the Peace of Tilsit. p. 590
- <sup>219</sup> *Kommunist*—a daily newspaper, organ of the Left Communist faction, published in Petrograd in March 1918 as the "organ of the St. Petersburg Committee and St. Petersburg Area Committee of the R.S.D.L.P." The publication of the newspaper was stopped by a decision of the Petrograd City Party Conference held on March 20, 1918. The Conference stated that the policy of the Petrograd Committee, expressed in the columns of the factional newspaper *Kommunist*, was profoundly erroneous and could not in any way be regarded as the policy of the Petrograd organisation of the Communist Party. The Conference declared that the organ of the Petrograd Party organisation was *Petrogradskaya Pravda* and not *Kommunist*. p. 590.
- <sup>220</sup> *The Putilov Works*—a big heavy-industry plant in Petrograd. p. 591
- <sup>221</sup> Lenin apparently refers here to the period between the beginning of the German offensive, February 18, and the arrival of the Soviet delegation at Brest-Litovsk, February 28, 1918. The German offensive actually lasted 14 days, from February 18 to March 3, the day the peace treaty was signed. p. 591
- <sup>222</sup> This refers to the anti-Party resolution passed by the Moscow Regional Bureau of the R.S.D.L.P.(B.) that was temporarily in the hands of the Left Communists; the resolution was passed at a meeting of part of the Bureau on February 24, 1918. Lenin examines and criticises this resolution in his article "Strange and Monstrous" (see pp. 567-73 of the present volume). p. 593
- <sup>223</sup> Lenin refers here to a talk with Comte de Lubersac, a representative of the French Military Mission to Russia, in February 1918. p. 596
- <sup>224</sup> The Manifesto of the People's Commissariat for Military Affairs appealed for universal, voluntary military training that was necessary owing to the complete demobilisation of the Russian army under the terms of the peace treaty with Germany. The Manifesto was published in *Izvestia UTsIK* No. 40, on March 5, 1918. p. 597



- <sup>225</sup> *Canossa*—a castle in Northern Italy. In 1077 the German Emperor Henry IV, having been defeated by Pope Gregory VII, was forced to announce his repentance and to kneel before the gates of the castle in the robes of a penitent for three days in order to have his title of emperor restored and not to suffer excommunication from the church. Thus the expression "go to Canossa" implies to repent, to ask for pardon, to humiliate oneself in face of an enemy. p. 597
- <sup>226</sup> According to the terms of the armistice concluded on December 2 (15), 1918 at Brest-Litovsk between the Soviet Government and the powers of the Quadruple Alliance (Germany, Austria-Hungary, Bulgaria and Turkey), military operations could be recommenced by either of the contracting parties after a warning of seven days had been given. The German imperialists, in contravention of the agreement, announced the resumption of hostilities on February 16, i.e., only two days before the offensive began. p. 598
- <sup>227</sup> According to the Brest Treaty signed on March 3, 1918, the Soviet Government was obliged to conclude peace with the counter-revolutionary Ukrainian Rada established in Kiev in April 1917 by a bloc of Ukrainian bourgeois and petty-bourgeois nationalist parties headed by V. K. Vin-nichenko. At the time of the peace negotiations between the Soviet Government and the Germans, the Rada sent its own delegation to Brest-Litovsk. As a result of the struggle that developed in the Ukraine between the Rada and the Soviet Government of the Ukraine, formed in December 1917, the Rada was deposed. On January 27 (February 9), after Soviet power was established in Kiev, the Rada, behind the backs of the Soviet delegation, concluded a separate peace with the Germans under which they supplied the Germans with Ukrainian grain, coal and other raw materials, and obtained in return military aid against Soviet power. The power of the Rada was re-established in the Ukraine with the aid of German troops and under German protection. The Ukraine, betrayed by the Rada, in reality became a colony of German imperialism.
- The negotiations between the Soviet Government and the Rada, imposed by the Brest Treaty, did not take place. On April 29, 1918, the Rada was deposed by German armed forces and replaced by the monarchist government of Hetman Skoropadsky.
- Negotiations between the Soviet Republic and Skoropadsky's government began on May 23; an armistice was signed on June 14, 1918. p. 599
- <sup>228</sup> *March 12* was the date on which it was assumed that the Extraordinary Fourth All-Russia Congress of Soviets would be convened to ratify the peace treaty. p. 599
- <sup>229</sup> *Resolution on War and Peace*, adopted by the Seventh Congress of the Party, was not, by a decision of the Congress, published at that time and first appeared in print in the daily newspaper *Kommunar* (*The Communist*) on January 1, 1919, published in Moscow by the Central Committee, R.C.P.(B.) from October 9, 1918 to March 5, 1919. p. 602
- <sup>230</sup> At the Congress, Zinoviev opposed Lenin's proposal not to publish the resolution on war and peace. Zinoviev's proposal was not accepted; the Congress approved Lenin's addendum by a majority vote. p. 604
- <sup>231</sup> *The question of the review of the Party Programme* was discussed at the Seventh All-Russia (April) Conference (see p. 123 of the present volume) and was also on the agenda of the Sixth Congress of the R.S.D.L.P.(B.). The Sixth Congress confirmed the decision of the April Conference to revise the Programme and instructed the Central Committee to organise a broad discussion on programmatic questions. In the summer and autumn



of 1917 a theoretical discussion developed inside the Party. The Central Committee, after holding a number of discussions on the Programme, set up, at its meeting on October 5 (18), 1917, a commission headed by Lenin to elaborate the Party Programme for the next Party Congress which it was expected would be held in the autumn of 1917. Lastly, by a decision of the Central Committee of January 24 (February 6), 1918, the elaboration of the Programme was entrusted to a new commission under Lenin's chairmanship. Lenin wrote his "Rough Outline of the Draft Programme" that supplemented his "Proposed Amendments to the Doctrinal, Political and Other Sections of the Programme" that had been written in 1917. The "Rough Outline" was distributed among the delegates to the Seventh Congress as material for discussion. The Congress, however, did not discuss the Programme in detail, but entrusted the final draft to a special commission headed by Lenin. The main theses for the review of the Programme were contained in Lenin's resolution, which the Congress adopted. The Party Programme in its final form was approved only in March 1919 by the Eighth Congress of the R.C.P.(B.).

p. 605

<sup>232</sup> Lenin raised *the question of changing the Party's name* as early as 1914, at the beginning of the First World War (see *Collected Works*, Vol. 21). Lenin gave the reasons for the need to change the Party's name in his April Theses, in the pamphlet "The Tasks of the Proletariat in Our Revolution" and in a number of other writings and speeches in 1917 (see pp. 45, 75-79, 345-46 of the present volume and *Collected Works*, Vol. 24). This question was not discussed either at the April Conference of the R.S.D.L.P.(B.) in 1917 or at the Sixth Congress of the Party (end of July-beginning of August 1917), and only at the Seventh Party Congress was the decision taken to change the name of the Party in accordance with Lenin's report.

p. 605

<sup>233</sup> Lenin here quotes from Engels's letter to Bebel, March 18-28, 1875, on the Gotha Programme (see K. Marx and F. Engels, *Selected Correspondence*, Moscow, 1965, p. 293).

p. 605

<sup>234</sup> The symposia were: "Materials Relating to the Revision of the Party Programme", edited and with an introduction by N. Lenin, Petrograd, Priboi Publishers, 1917 (see *Collected Works*, Vol. 24, pp. 455-79), and "Materials Relating to the Revision of the Party Programme", Moscow, published by the Regional Bureau of the Moscow Industrial Area of the R.S.D.L.P., 1917. Lenin criticised the opportunist views expressed in the Moscow symposium in his article "Revision of the Party Programme" (see *Collected Works*, Vol. 26).

p. 606

<sup>235</sup> *Spartak (Spartacus)*—a weekly published by the Moscow Regional Bureau, the Moscow Committee and (from No. 2) the Moscow Area Committee of the R.S.D.L.P.(B.); it was published, with interruptions, from May 20 (June 2) to October 29 (November 11), 1917.

p. 606

<sup>236</sup> Lenin quotes from Engels's *Introduction to Borkheim's Pamphlet "In Memory of the Arch-Patriots of 1806-07"* written December 15, 1887.

p. 607

<sup>237</sup> *The Chemnitz Congress of the German Social-Democratic Party* was held from September 15 to September 21, 1912; it passed a resolution "On Imperialism" which stated that the politics of the imperialist states were "barefaced policy of robbery and aggression" and called upon the Party "to fight with redoubled energy against imperialism until it is overthrown".

During the First World War the leaders of the Second International treacherously contravened the decisions of world socialist congresses, including the decisions made at Chemnitz.

See also Note 3 about the Basle Congress.

p. 610

<sup>238</sup> It was decided to publish the Decree on Land in foreign languages at the beginning of 1918. The law was published in English in Petrograd in February 1918. See "Decree on Land" in the book *Decrees Issued by the Revolutionary People's Government*, Vol. 1, Petrograd, February 1918, pp. 2-6. p. 615

<sup>239</sup> During the election to the Central Committee at the Seventh Party Congress the Left Communists headed by Bukharin refused to enter the Central Committee. The Congress demanded that the Left Communists cease the splitting activities which threatened the unity of the Party. On Lenin's proposal, the Congress, expecting the Left Communists to get over their mistakes, included their representatives in the composition of the Central Committee. Nevertheless, they demonstratively refused to participate in the work of the Central Committee and did not start work, despite the subsequent decisions and peremptory demands of the Central Committee. Lenin gave his appraisal of the splitting activities of the Left Communists after the Seventh Congress in his "Comment on the Behaviour of the 'Left Communists'" (see *Collected Works*, Vol. 27, p. 202). p. 617

<sup>240</sup> This article and "Left-Wing' Childishness and the Petty-Bourgeois Mentality" (see pp. 682-705 of the present volume) were together published in a separate pamphlet in May 1918 under the title of *The Chief Task of Our Day* with the following introductory note by Lenin:

"This pamphlet contains two newspaper articles—from *Izvestia* of March 12, 1918 and from *Pravda* of May 9, 10 and 11, 1918. The two articles approach the theme expressed in the title from different angles.

"Moscow, May 17, 1918. *The author.*"

p. 618

<sup>241</sup> Lenin's epigraph is taken from Nekrasov's poem "Who Lives Well in Russia?" p. 618

<sup>242</sup> This Congress was held in Moscow between March 14 and 16, 1918; it was convened for the purpose of ratifying the Brest Peace Treaty. A meeting of the Bolshevik group at the Congress was held the day before, and Lenin reported to the group on the Brest Treaty. A preliminary vote on the question by the group gave the following results: for Lenin's resolution to ratify the treaty 453, against 36, abstentions 8.

The Fourth Congress was attended (according to the verbatim report) by 1,232 delegates with the right to vote, of whom 795 were Bolsheviks, 283 Left S.R.s and others. The Congress discussed the ratification of the Peace Treaty, the transfer of the capital to Moscow, elections. Lenin delivered a report on the ratification of the Treaty; Kamkov, on behalf of the Left S.R.s, delivered a report against the ratification. The Congress, voting by name, passed Lenin's motion on ratification; votes cast for the motion—784, against—261, abstentions—115, among them the Left Communists who made a special declaration to the Congress giving their motives for abstaining.

The Congress decided to transfer the capital to Moscow and elected a Central Executive Committee of 200 members. The instructions for the transfer were drawn up by Lenin. p. 623

<sup>243</sup> This draft resolution was read at the Extraordinary Fourth All-Russia Congress of Soviets by Y. M. Sverdlov and was adopted by the Congress. It was an answer to a message from President Woodrow Wilson of the U.S.A. in which he tried to prevent Soviet Russia from concluding peace with Germany. p. 625

- <sup>244</sup> This refers to the statement made by the officer Dubasov at a meeting of the Pctrograd Soviet on September 22 (October 5), 1917. Lenin mentioned this statement in his article "The Crisis Has Matured" (see p. 388 of the present volume). p. 635
- <sup>245</sup> Lenin's *The Immediate Tasks of the Soviet Government* was entitled "Theses on the Tasks of the Soviet Government in the Present Situation" in the manuscript. When he started work on the article, Lenin drew up plans of several variants. The first draft was dictated to a stenographer on March 28, 1918 (see *Collected Works*, Vol. 27). Then Lenin rewrote the "Theses" and they were discussed at a meeting of the Central Committee on April 26, 1918. The Central Committee approved them and decided to publish them in the form of an article in *Pravda* and *Izvestia UTsIK* and also as a separate pamphlet; the same meeting of the Central Committee instructed Lenin to report to a meeting of the All-Russia Central Executive Committee on "The Immediate Tasks of the Soviet Government" and to prepare a shorter variant of the "Theses" in the form of a resolution (see pp. 678-80 of the present volume).  
 "The Immediate Tasks of the Soviet Government" was of great historical significance. It contained a concrete plan, scientifically substantiated, for the reorganisation of the country's economy and outlined the basic principles of the economic policy of the proletarian state in the period of transition from capitalism to socialism. p. 643
- <sup>246</sup> An order by the Council of People's Commissars, published on November 18 (December 1), 1917, placed the maximum monthly salary of People's Commissars at 500 rubles. At the request of the People's Commissariat of Labour, the Council of People's Commissars shortly after this issued another order permitting higher salaries for highly qualified scientists and engineers. p. 655
- <sup>247</sup> *The Decree on Consumers' Co-operative Societies* was adopted by the Council of People's Commissars on April 10 and approved by the All-Russia Central Executive Committee on April 11, 1918; it was published in *Pravda* No. 71 on April 13 (March 31) and in *Izvestia UTsIK* No. 75 on April 16, 1918, signed by Vl. I. Ulyanov (Lenin), Chairman of the Council of People's Commissars. Lenin made a number of amendments to the draft decree; items 11, 12 and 13 were written by him in their entirety. p. 660
- <sup>248</sup> This refers to the "Instructions on Labour Discipline, Adopted by the All-Russia Central Council of Trade Unions" and published in the journal *Narodnoye Khozyaistvo* No. 2, April 1918. p. 663
- <sup>249</sup> This refers to the decree of the Council of People's Commissars "On Centralisation of Management, Protection of Roads and the Improvement of Their Carrying Capacity". The draft of the decree was first submitted to the Council of People's Commissars on March 18, 1918 and then passed on to a special commission for its further elaboration. It was proposed that the commission be guided by the following suggestions made by Lenin when examining the draft: (1) Greater centralisation; (2) The appointment of responsible executives at each local centre, the choice to be made by railwaymen's organisation; (3) Strict fulfilment of all their instructions; (4) Unlimited powers to be granted security forces in maintaining order; (5) Measures to take an immediate inventory of rolling stock and places where it is located; (6) Measures to establish a technical department; (7) Fuel. The draft was examined a second time at a meeting of the Council of People's Commissars on March 21. Lenin made amendments and addenda to the draft submitted, wrote Clause 2 of



the Decree and edited it in its final form. The Decree was approved by the Council of People's Commissars on March 23, 1918 and published on March 26, 1918 over the signature of V. Ulyanov (Lenin), Chairman of the Council of People's Commissars. p. 670

- 250 *Uporyod* (Forward)—a Menshevik daily, organ of the committees of the Moscow organisation and the Central Region of the R.S.D.L.P. (Mensheviks); from April 2, 1918 it was the organ of the Menshevik Central Committee, published in 1917 and 1918; at the end of April 1918 it was suppressed for counter-revolutionary activity. p. 671
- 251 *Nash Vek* (*Our Age*)—one of the names under which *Rech* (*Speech*), the central organ of the Cadet Party, was published. p. 671
- 252 Quoted from Engels's *Anti-Dühring* (see *Anti-Dühring*, Moscow, 1962, p. 389). p. 675
- 253 *The Six Theses* were accepted at a meeting of the Central Committee of the Party on May 3, 1918. Lenin delivered a report on "The Immediate Tasks of the Soviet Government" at a meeting of the All-Russia Central Executive Committee on April 29, 1918. The propositions contained in the report were approved by the Executive Committee; the Presidium of the Executive Committee jointly with Lenin, as the reporter, was entrusted with the final editing. Lenin summarised in these six theses the basic postulates developed in his article "The Immediate Tasks of the Soviet Government" and in his report on the same question. The "Theses" were published as an appendix to Lenin's pamphlet "The Immediate Tasks of the Soviet Government" printed in two editions in 1918 and also in the "Minutes of the Meetings of the All-Russia Central Executive Committee, Fourth Convocation" in 1920. p. 678
- 254 Lenin wrote this draft plan in response to the message addressed to the Council of People's Commissars by the Academy of Sciences at the end of March 1918 proposing to draw scientists into the work of studying the country's natural resources. The Academy's proposal was discussed at a meeting of the Council of People's Commissars on April 12, 1918; it was decided to "accept the proposal" and "recognise the need to finance relevant work by the Academy". The decision of the Council stressed the task "of the systematic solution of the problem of correctly locating industry in the country and of the most rational use of economic resources". p. 681
- 255 *Kommunist*—the weekly organ of the anti-party group of Left Communists, published in Moscow from April 20 to June 1918; four issues appeared. p. 682
- 256 *Nozdryov*—a character from Gogol's *Dead Souls* who was self-confident, coarse and false. p. 686
- 257 Lenin here refers to K. Clausewitz's book *On War*. p. 688
- 258 See Frederick Engels, *The Peasant Question in France and Germany* (K. Marx and F. Engels, *Selected Works*, Vol. II, Moscow, 1958, p. 438). p. 696
- 259 From an epigram by V. L. Pushkin. p. 702
- 260 Lenin wrote the draft of these *Theses* on May 10, 1918; they were approved in their final form by the Central Committee on May 13, 1918. Using the *Theses* Lenin, on the instructions of the Central Committee, that same day delivered a report to the Moscow City Party Conference. The Conference accepted the *Theses* in the form of a resolution by a majority vote.



Lenin developed the *Theses* more fully in a report on foreign policy he made on May 14 to a joint meeting of the All-Russia Central Executive Committee and the Moscow Soviet. That same day the *Theses on the Present Political Situation* were approved by the Moscow City Party Conference and on May 15 by the Moscow Regional Conference of the R.C.P.(B.) following Lenin's report on the current situation (see *Collected Works*, Vol. 27). p. 706

<sup>261</sup> The Congress was held in Moscow in May 1918, and was attended by representatives of regional, gubernia and uyezd commissariats of labour, labour exchanges, sick benefit societies, regional unions of insurance societies, the All-Russia Central Council of Trade Unions and other organisations, altogether about 600 delegates. The Congress discussed the reports of the People's Commissariat of Labour, the improvement of labour productivity and labour discipline, and the situation in industry. Lenin spoke on the question of improving labour productivity and labour discipline. The Congress passed a resolution on labour discipline in which it was decided to set up local bureaux for the regulation of wages and work quotas; it also adopted a statute on labour protection. p. 717

<sup>262</sup> *The First All-Russia Congress of Economic Councils* was held from May 26 to June 4, 1918; it was attended by 104 delegates with the right to vote and 148 with voice but no vote; 70 per cent of the delegates were Bolsheviks. The Congress was convened to settle the most important question of the day—that of methods of organising the economy under the conditions of developing civil war. The Left Communists, the S.R.s and Mensheviks at the Congress opposed Lenin's plan for the organisation of the economy and centralised economic management. The Congress, however, adopted the Bolshevik resolutions by a majority vote. The Congress considered it necessary to go over to universal nationalisation, extending it not only to the basic branches of industry, but also to big commercial enterprises. The Congress passed a decision on the management of nationalised enterprises, and on the exchange of commodities between town and country, adopted a draft plan for the reorganisation of the Supreme Economic Council, and elaborated measures to improve labour productivity and labour discipline. p. 722

<sup>263</sup> In 1861 serfdom was abolished in Russia. p. 727

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## NAME INDEX



## A

**ABRAMOVICH** (*Rein*), *Rafail Abramovich* (1880-1963)—one of the leaders of the Bund, a Jewish petty-bourgeois nationalist organisation. After the October Socialist Revolution Abramovich opposed the Bolsheviks, advocated the establishment of a coalition government with Mensheviks and Socialist-Revolutionaries participating, and came out against the Brest Peace; in 1920 emigrated to Germany.—495

**ADLER**, *Friedrich* (1879-1960)—an Austrian Social-Democratic leader; in 1916 assassinated the Austrian Prime Minister Stürgkh as a protest against the war. Upon his release from prison in 1918, Adler adopted a hostile attitude towards the October Socialist Revolution.—71, 72, 385

**ADLER**, *Victor* (1852-1918)—one of the founders of the Austrian Social-Democratic Party; later, one of the reformist leaders of the Second International. During the First World War adopted a Centrist position, preached "peace between classes", and opposed working-class revolutionary actions.—69

**ALEXANDER I** (1777-1825)—Russian Emperor (1801-25).—136, 640

**ALEXEYEV**, *Mikhail Vasilyevich* (1857-1918)—tsarist general; after the February revolution in 1917 became Supreme Commander-in-Chief and later military adviser to the Provisional Government. After the October Socialist Revolution, one of the chief organisers of the counter-revolution.—234, 280, 562

**ALEXINSKY**, *Grigory Alexeyevich* (b. 1879)—Russian Social-Democrat; became an otzovist after the defeat of the 1905-07 revolution and demanded that the Social-Democratic deputies be recalled from the State Duma; subsequently went over to the counter-revolutionary camp. After the October Socialist Revolution a White émigré.—182, 183, 184, 185, 191, 197, 198, 199, 431

**AUILOU** (*Glebov*), *N. P.* (1887-1942)—member of the Bolshevik Party from 1904; following the October Socialist Revolution entered the first Soviet Government as People's Commissar of Posts and Telegraphs.—478

**AUKSENTYEV**, *Nikolai Dmitriyevich* (1878-1943)—one of the Right Socialist-Revolutionary leaders; after the February revolution in 1917 was a member of the Executive Committee of the Petrograd Soviet of Workers' and Soldiers' Deputies and Chairman of the Executive Committee of the All-Russia Council of Peasants' Deputies. In July-August 1917, he was Minister of the Interior in the Kerensky government. Following the October Socialist Revolution he became one of the organisers of counter-revolutionary anti-Soviet actions; subsequently became a White émigré.—272, 295, 320, 398, 440, 474, 531, 578



**AXELROD, Pavel Borisovich** (1850-1928)—Social-Democrat; one of the founders of the Emancipation of Labour group, the first Russian Marxist organisation; after the Second Congress of the R.S.D.L.P. in 1903 became a Menshevik. During the First World War he was a Centrist and took part in the Zimmerwald and Kienthal conferences where he joined the Right wing. Following the February 1917 revolution Axelrod supported the bourgeois Provisional Government; his attitude towards the October Socialist Revolution was hostile; while living abroad favoured an armed intervention against Soviet Russia.—69

## B

**BAGRATION, Dmitry Petrovich** (b. 1863)—general of the tsarist army; follower of Kornilov.—280

**BAKUNIN, Mikhail Alexandrovich** (1814-1876)—Russian revolutionary and publicist; participant in the 1848-49 Revolution in Germany; Narodnik and anarchist theoretician; was violently hostile to Marxism in the First International; at the Hague Congress (1872) Bakunin was expelled from the First International for his splitting activities.—324, 334, 363

**BAZAROV (Rudnev), Vladimir Alexandrovich** (1874-1939)—man of letters, economist and philosopher. In the years of reaction (1907-10) criticised Marxist philosophy from the standpoint of subjective idealism. In 1917 was an editor of the Menshevik newspaper *Novaya Zhizn* (*New Life*); opposed the October Socialist Revolution.—173, 416, 417, 418, 456

**BEBEL, August** (1840-1913)—one of the founders and an outstanding leader of the German Social-Democratic Party and of the Second International; actively opposed revisionism and reformism in the German working-class movement.—333, 334, 335, 347, 348, 351

**BEILIS, Mendel** (b. 1873). In 1913

the tsarist government instituted proceedings against Beilis, a Jew, on the false charge of the ritual murder of a Christian boy. The trial was a striking demonstration of the chauvinist, anti-Semite and pogrom politics of the tsarist government that were greatly intensified on the eve of the First World War, in the period of a new revolutionary upsurge in Russia. In a number of towns the workers organised protest demonstrations. Beilis was acquitted by the court.—198

**BELINSKY, Vissarion Grigoryevich** (1811-1848)—Russian revolutionary democrat, literary critic and publicist; a materialist philosopher.—519

**BELORUSSOU, Alexei Stanislavovich (Belevsky)** (1859-1929)—bourgeois publicist and politician. In 1918 wrote a number of slanderous articles against the Soviet Government.—666

**BERGER, Victor** (1860-1929)—American extremely Right socialist; one of the founders of the Socialist Party of America. In 1916 came out in active support of American imperialism in its struggle against Mexico; an enemy of the communist movement; opposed American recognition of the U.S.S.R.—68

**BERKENHEIM, Alexander Moiseyevich** (1880-1932)—Socialist-Revolutionary; in 1917 was a member of the Moscow City Council.—398

**BERNATSKY, Mikhail Vladimirovich** (b. 1876)—Russian politician, economist, Finance Minister in the Kerensky Provisional Government and later in the whiteguard governments of Denikin and Wrangel; subsequently, a White émigré.—250

**BERNSTEIN, Eduard** (1850-1932)—one of the leaders of the opportunist wing in German Social-Democracy, ideologist of revisionism. In 1896-98 Bernstein published, in *Neue Zeit* (*New Times*), a series of articles entitled "Problems of Socialism", issued later (1899) as a separate book, in

- which he openly opposed the basic tenets of revolutionary Marxism, the theory of the socialist revolution, the dictatorship of the proletariat, and the inevitability of transition from capitalism to socialism.—317, 323, 324, 325, 364, 365, 368, 370, 372, 380
- BISMARCK, Otto** (1815-1898)—Prince, monarchist, Prussian statesman; Chancellor of the German Empire (1871-90); effected unification of Germany by force under Prussian hegemony.—295
- BISSOLATI, Leonida** (1857-1920)—one of the founders of the Italian Socialist Party; headed its Right wing. During the First World War became a social-chauvinist.—68, 319
- BLANC, Louis** (1811-1882)—French petty-bourgeois socialist, historian; denied that class antagonisms are irreconcilable under capitalism, opposed the proletarian revolution. During the French revolution in February 1848 entered the Provisional Government. Blanc's compromise tactics helped the bourgeoisie to divert the workers from the revolutionary struggle.—61, 278, 528
- BLANQUI, Louis Auguste** (1805-1881)—outstanding French revolutionary, utopian communist; headed several secret revolutionary societies. Blanqui spent over thirty-six years in prison. He attempted to seize power with the aid of a small group of revolutionary conspirators and failed to understand the decisive role of mass organisation in the revolutionary struggle. Although Marx, Engels and Lenin highly appreciated Blanqui's services to the revolutionary cause, they sharply criticised his mistakes and the futility of his conspiratorial tactics.—50, 58, 97, 112, 226, 329, 364, 380
- BOBRINSKY, Vladimir Alexeyevich** (b. 1868)—Russian monarchist, big landowner and sugar manufacturer.—251
- BOGAYEUSKY, Mitrofan Petrovich** (1881-1918)—one of the leaders of the counter-revolution on the Don in 1917-18. Early in March 1918 was arrested by the Soviet authorities and sentenced to death.—649, 653, 673, 700
- BORGBJERG, Frederik** (1866-1936)—Danish Social-Democrat, opportunist; came to Russia in 1917 to propose the convocation of an international socialist conference.—115, 137
- BOURDERON, Albert** (b. 1858)—French socialist, factory worker; during the First World War was one of the Left-wing leaders of the French trade unions. Bourderon later swung to the Right and justified socialist participation in the bourgeois government.—71, 73
- BRACKE, Wilhelm** (1842-1880)—German Social-Democrat, one of the founders and leaders of the Social-Democratic Workers' Party of Germany (Eisenachers) (1869), was close to Marx and Engels.—333, 347
- BRANTING, Karl Hjalmar** (1860-1925)—reformist leader of the Social-Democratic Party of Sweden, one of the leaders of the Second International.—68, 319, 374
- BRESHKOUSKAYA** (*Breshko-Breshkovskaya, Yekaterina Konstantinovna*) (1844-1934)—one of the organisers and leaders of the Socialist-Revolutionary Party; belonged to its extreme Right wing. In 1917 she supported the bourgeois Provisional Government. After the October Revolution actively opposed the Soviet government; from 1919, a White émigré.—287, 404, 405, 415, 426, 427, 441
- BRIAND, Aristide** (1862-1939)—French statesman and diplomat, several times Prime Minister and Foreign Minister, held other ministerial posts. In 1910 Briand used armed force against the railwaymen's general strike.—409
- BRONSTEIN**. See *Trotsky, Lev*
- BUBLIKOV, Alexander Alexandrovich** (b. 1875)—an engineer, championed the interests of the big merchants and industrialists; advocated a policy of coalition between the bourgeoisie and the Mensheviks and Socialist-Revolutionaries.

tionaries. Following the October Socialist Revolution went abroad.—244, 257

**BUBNOU, Andrei Sergeyevich** (1883-1940)—Party leader and statesman, Bolshevik from 1903. In October 1917 was a member of the Political Bureau of the Central Committee and the Party Revolutionary Military Centre that directed the armed uprising. During the Brest negotiations Bubnov joined the "Left Communists"; subsequently held responsible Party and government posts.—597, 598

**BUCHANAN, George William** (1854-1924)—diplomat, British Ambassador to Russia (1910-18). Following the October Socialist Revolution tried to organise a plot against the Soviet Government.—35, 440

**BUKHARIN, Nikolai Ivanovich** (1888-1938)—member of the R.S.D.L.P. from 1906. During the First World War opposed Lenin on questions of imperialism, the state, and the right of nations to self-determination. In 1917 he maintained that the victory of the socialist revolution was impossible in Russia. After the October Socialist Revolution repeatedly opposed the general Party line; in 1918 headed the anti-Party group of "Left Communists"; during the discussion on the trade unions (1920-21) supported Trotsky; from 1928, was one of the leaders of the Right deviation in the Party. In 1937 was expelled from the Party for his anti-Party activities.—596, 597, 598, 600, 601, 607, 696, 698, 700, 704, 705

**BULYGIN, Alexander Grigoryevich** (1851-1919)—tsarist Minister of the Interior and big landowner. In August 1905, acting on the tsar's instructions, directed the drafting of a bill to convene a consultative State Duma for the purpose of weakening the revolutionary movement. The Bulygin Duma was never convened, it was swept away by the revolution of 1905-07.—401, 422, 427

## C

**CARLESON, Carl** (1865-1929)—Swedish socialist, during the First World War adopted an internationalist stand.—71

**CAVAIGNAC, Louis Eugène** (1802-1857)—French general and politician; War Minister from May 1848; brutally crushed the June uprising of Paris workers in 1848.—193, 203, 204, 341, 667, 692

**CHAIKOVSKY, Nikolai Vasilyevich** (1850-1926)—Narodnik; after the February 1917 revolution joined the Right Socialist-Revolutionaries. In 1918-19 Chaikovsky was a member of the Archangel white-guard government supported by the British interventionists. After the rout of the interventionists and counter-revolutionaries in the north of Russia Chaikovsky emigrated.—398

**CHERNOU, Viktor Mikhailovich** (1876-1952)—one of the leaders and theoreticians of the Socialist-Revolutionary Party. After the February 1917 revolution was Minister for Agriculture in the Provisional Government; organiser of severe repressive measures against peasants who seized landed estates. After the October Socialist Revolution Chernov was one of the organisers of anti-Soviet revolts. In 1920 emigrated abroad where he continued his anti-Soviet activities.—81, 82, 155, 180, 181, 193, 194, 203, 204, 210, 216, 217, 235, 244, 258, 263, 270, 279, 280, 287, 295, 296, 320, 344, 358, 374, 381, 382, 404, 407, 422, 426, 528, 529, 531, 537, 549, 554, 631, 632, 634, 636, 638, 649, 667, 699

**CHERNYSHEVSKY, Nikolai Gavrilovich** (1828-1889)—Russian revolutionary democrat, utopian socialist, materialist philosopher, writer and literary critic, leader of the Russian revolutionary-democratic movement of the 1860s.—676

**CHKHEIDZE, Nikolai Semyonovich** (1864-1926)—one of the Menshevik leaders, a Centrist during the First World War. After the February



- 1917 revolution Chkheidze actively supported the bourgeois Provisional Government. Following the October Socialist Revolution became Chairman of the Constituent Assembly of Georgia. When Soviet power was established in Georgia (1921) he became a White émigré.—32, 33, 37, 38, 44, 46, 49, 50, 57, 59, 68, 69, 70, 75, 93, 95, 105, 111, 119, 183, 185, 549
- CHKHENKELI, Akaky Ivanovich* (b. 1874)—Georgian Social-Democrat, Menshevik.—32, 37
- CLAUSEWITZ, Karl* (1780-1831)—Prussian general and military theoretician, best known for his book *On War*.—688
- CORNELISSEN, Ch.*—Dutch anarchist-syndicalist, one of Kropotkin's followers.—358

## D

- DAN, Fyodor Ivanovich* (1871-1947)—a Menshevik leader, a social-chauvinist during the First World War. After the February 1917 revolution was a member of the Executive Committee of the Petrograd Soviet, where he supported the bourgeois Provisional Government. Following the October Socialist Revolution actively fought against Soviet power. In 1922 was exiled from the country for his counter-revolutionary activity.—203, 270, 390, 391, 407, 457, 474, 539, 700
- DANTON, Georges Jacques* (1759-1794)—prominent leader of the French bourgeois revolution of the end of the eighteenth century; lawyer.—431, 438
- DAVID, Eduard* (1863-1930)—one of the Right-wing leaders of the German Social-Democrats, revisionist; during the First World War David took a social-chauvinist stand.—33, 70, 287, 319, 374
- DOBROLYUBOV, Nikolai Alexandrovich* (1836-1861)—Russian revolutionary democrat, outstanding literary critic, materialist philosopher.—676
- DREYFUS, Alfred* (1859-1935)—a Jewish officer of the French Gen-

- eral Staff, sentenced to life imprisonment in 1894 by court martial on a false charge of high treason. Dreyfus was rehabilitated in 1906 as a result of the struggle waged for a number of years by French progressive forces to have the case reconsidered.—197, 198
- DÜHRING, Eugen* (1833-1921)—German philosopher and economist; his views were an eclectic mixture of idealism and vulgar materialism and were subjected to annihilating criticism in Engels's classic work *Anti-Dühring*.—298, 300
- DUTOV, Alexander Ilyich* (1864-1921)—colonel of the General Staff of the tsarist army, ataman of the Orenburg Cossack army. In 1917-20 organised a number of counter-revolutionary acts against Soviet power in the Urals.—653, 672, 673, 715
- DYBENKO, Pavel Yefimovich* (1889-1938)—Soviet military leader and statesman; active participant in the October Socialist Revolution. On November 8, 1917 Dybenko entered the Council of People's Commissars as member of the Committee for Military and Naval Affairs; subsequently held responsible posts.—478
- DZERZHINSKY, Felix Edmundo-vich* (1877-1926)—well-known revolutionary, Communist; outstanding leader of the Communist Party and of the Soviet state.—137, 458

## E

- ENGELS, Frederick* (1820-1895)—47, 62, 75, 76, 77, 89, 101, 169, 203, 226, 288, 289, 290, 292, 293, 294, 295, 296, 297, 298, 299, 300, 301, 302, 303, 307, 309, 312, 327, 329, 330, 331, 332, 333, 334, 335, 336, 337, 338, 339, 340, 341, 342, 343, 344, 345, 346, 347, 348, 351, 356, 358, 361, 363, 364, 365, 366, 426, 554, 607, 675

## F

- FEOFILAKTOV, A. Y.*—Left Socialist-Revolutionary. After the



October Socialist Revolution, delegate to the Extraordinary Congress of Soviets of Peasants' Deputies and member of the Collegium of the People's Commissariat of Agriculture.—501

*FURSTENBERG.* See *Hanecki, Yakub*

## G

*GAGARIN, A. U.*—tsarist general actively supporting Kornilov's counter-revolutionary revolt in August 1917.—280

*GEGECHKORI, Yevgeny Petrovich* (b. 1879)—Menshevik; chairman of the counter-revolutionary government in the Transcaucasus (from November 1917); later, Minister of Foreign Affairs and Deputy Chairman of the Georgian Menshevik government; White émigré after the establishment of Soviet power in Georgia in 1921.—653, 654, 668, 672, 673

*GHE, Alexander* (1879-1919)—anarchist; during the First World War was an internationalist and as such opposed the anarchist defencists; following the October Socialist Revolution supported Soviet power and was a member of the All-Russia Central Executive Committee.—358, 695, 700

*GOLDENBERG, Joseph Petrovich* (1873-1922)—Russian Social-Democrat, Bolshevik. During the First World War Goldenberg joined the defencists, Plekhanov's followers; in 1920 rejoined the R.C.P.(B.).—46, 47

*GORTER, Herman* (1864-1927)—Dutch Left socialist, one of the founders of the newspaper *De Tribune*; subsequently became a Communist; in 1919 Gorter left the communist movement.—71

*GOTZ, Abram Rafailovich* (1882-1940)—one of the Socialist-Revolutionary leaders; organiser of terrorist acts and armed struggle against Soviet power.—653, 654, 668, 672, 673

*GRAÛE, Jean* (1845-1919)—French petty-bourgeois socialist; an anarchist theoretician.—358

*GREULICH, Herman* (1842-1925)—one of the founders of the Swiss Social-Democratic Party, leader of its Right wing; during the First World War was a social-chauvinist; opposed the affiliation of the Left wing of the Swiss Social-Democratic Party to the Communist International.—73

*GRIMM, Robert* (1881-1958)—Swiss Social-Democrat, one of the organisers of the Zimmerwald Conference; in 1917 entered into an alliance with the social-chauvinists.—69, 73

*GUCHKOV, Alexander Ivanovich* (1862-1936)—big Russian capitalist, organiser and leader of the Octobrist Party. Following the February 1917 revolution Guchkov was Minister of the Army and Navy in the first bourgeois Provisional Government; advocated continuation of the war to a "victorious end". In August 1917 Guchkov took part in organising Kornilov's revolt; after the October Socialist Revolution fought against Soviet power; a White émigré.—32, 35, 36, 38, 39, 53, 57, 58, 59, 81, 91, 94, 96, 97, 105, 121, 130, 217

*GUESDE, Jules* (1845-1922)—one of the founders and leaders of the Socialist Party of France and of the Second International. Prior to the First World War Guesde headed the Party's Left revolutionary wing; on the outbreak of the war Guesde entered the bourgeois government of France.—68, 287

*GUOZDYOU, Kuzma Antonovich* (b. 1883)—Menshevik; social-chauvinist during the First World War; member of the coalition Provisional Government.—33, 34, 37, 38, 39, 387, 468

## H

*HAASE, Hugo* (1863-1919)—one of the Social-Democratic leaders of Germany, Centrist; deputy to the Reichstag (1897-1907 and 1912-18). In April 1917 Haase, together with Karl Kautsky and others,

- founded the Independent Social-Democratic Party of Germany.—69, 70
- HANECKI, Yakub* (1879-1937)—one of the Social-Democratic leaders of Poland and Lithuania.—71, 184, 185, 196
- HARTSTEIN (Levi, Paul)* (1883-1930)—German Left Social-Democrat, member of the Spartacus League. During the First World War Hartstein adopted an internationalist stand; when the Communist Party of Germany was formed Hartstein joined it; was expelled from the Party in 1921 for factional activities.—73
- HEGEL, Georg Wilhelm Friedrich* (1770-1831)—classic German philosopher, objective idealist; elaborated idealist dialectics; ideologist of the German bourgeoisie.—290, 298
- HEILMANN, Ernst* (1881-1940)—German Right Social-Democrat; during the First World War adopted an extremely chauvinist stand.—73
- HENDERSON, Arthur* (1863-1935)—British politician and one of the Right leaders of the Labour Party. During the world imperialist war of 1914-18 Henderson became a social-chauvinist; was several times member of the British Government (1915-31).—319
- HEROSTRATUS*—the Greek who burned down the Temple of Diana at Ephesus (356 B.C.), one of the Seven Wonders of the World, in order to achieve immortal fame.—323, 364
- HILLQUIT, Morris* (1869-1933)—one of the founders of the reformist Socialist Party of the U.S.A.; Centrist during the First World War.—69
- HINDENBURG, Paul von* (1847-1934)—German general, monarchist; Commander-in-Chief of the German army (1916-17); President of Germany (from 1925); yielded power to Hitler in 1933.—196, 262, 638
- HOFFMANN, Max* (1869-1927)—German general; represented imperialist Germany at Brest-Litovsk during the second period of peace negotiations (end of December 1917-January 28 [February 10], 1918).—589, 592, 593, 600
- HÖGLUND, Karl Z.* (1884-1956)—leader of the Left wing of the Social-Democratic and the youth movement of Sweden. During the First World War Höglund adopted an internationalist stand; joined the Zimmerwald Left group and conducted extensive anti-war propaganda; one of the leaders of the Swedish Communist Party (1917-24); in 1924 was expelled from the Comintern for opportunism.—71
- HOHENZOLLERN.* See *Wilhelm II*
- HUYSMANS, Camille* (b. 1871)—Belgian politician, member of the Bureau of the Belgian Socialist Party. In 1904-19 was Secretary of the International Socialist Bureau of the Second International; adopted a Centrist position.—73
- HYNDMAN, Henry Mayers* (1842-1921)—one of the founders of the British Socialist Party, leader of its Right wing, opportunist; in 1916 was expelled from the party for propaganda in favour of the imperialist war. Hyndman adopted a hostile attitude to the October Revolution and supported the intervention against Soviet Russia.—68, 287

## I

*ISUU, Joseph Andreyevich* (1878-1920)—prominent Menshevik, man of letters.—701, 704

## J

*JAURÈS, Jean* (1859-1914)—one of the prominent leaders of the French socialist movement; founder and editor of *l'Humanité*; leader of the Right opportunist wing of the French Socialist Party. Despite this, Jaurès fought actively against militarism. He was killed by a hired assassin of the imperialists on the eve of the First World War.—364, 374

*JORDANIA, Noi Nikolayevich* (1870-1953) — Social-Democrat; leader of the Caucasian Mensheviks; head of the Georgian counter-revolutionary Menshevik government (1918-21); White émigré from 1921.—124, 405

*JUGASHVILI (Stalin), Joseph Vissarionovich* (1879-1953)—182, 183, 479

## K

*KALEDIN, Alexei Maximovich* (1861-1918)—tsarist general, ataman of the Don Cossack army. Following the October Socialist Revolution Kaledin headed the counter-revolutionary revolt in the Don area against the Soviets.—279, 280, 466, 483, 495, 508, 529, 541, 546, 547, 548, 562, 580, 581, 715

*KAMENEV, Lev Borisovich (Rosenfeld)* (1883-1936)—took part in the Russian Social-Democratic movement from 1901. After the Second Congress of the R.S.D.L.P. (1903) Kamenev joined the Bolsheviks. During the period of reaction (1907-10) his attitude to the liquidators, otzovists and Trotskyites was that of conciliation. Following the February revolution in 1917 he opposed Lenin's April Theses and the Party's course towards the socialist revolution. In October 1917, together with Zinoviev, betrayed the Central Committee decision to start an armed uprising. After the October Socialist Revolution repeatedly opposed the Leninist policy of the Party; in 1925 was an organiser of the "New Opposition"; in 1926 was prominent in the anti-Party Trotsky-Zinoviev bloc. In 1934 Kamenev was expelled from the Party for his anti-Party activities.—104, 105, 203, 451, 454, 455, 456, 457, 458, 483, 493, 494

*KAMKOV, B. D. (Katz)* (1885-1938)—one of the leaders of the Left Socialist-Revolutionary Party; took part in organising the assassination of Mirbach, the German Ambassador to Soviet Russia, and in the Left Socialist-Revolution-

aries' revolt in July 1918 in Moscow; later emigrated.—492

*KARELIN, U. A.* (1891-1938)—one of the founders of the Left Socialist-Revolutionary Party; one of the leaders of the Left Socialist-Revolutionaries' revolt in July 1918.—492, 695, 700

*KAUTSKY, Karl* (1854-1938)—one of the leaders and theoreticians of the German Social-Democratic Party and of the Second International; ideologist of Centrism; subsequently became a renegade from Marxism and bitter enemy of the Soviet Union.—45, 46, 49, 62, 63, 69, 70, 72, 73, 76, 288, 290, 291, 294, 301, 303, 306, 307, 311, 313, 317, 319, 324, 334, 335, 342, 363, 364, 365, 366, 367, 368, 369, 370, 371, 372, 373, 374, 501

*KERENSKY, Alexander Fyodorovich* (1881-1970)—Socialist-Revolutionary; head of the bourgeois Provisional Government (from July 1917); pursued the anti-popular policy of continuing the imperialist war, allowing the big bourgeoisie and landowners to retain power, and suppressing the revolution. After the October Socialist Revolution, a White émigré.—32, 33, 36, 38, 54, 57, 67, 81, 95, 168, 185, 192, 193, 204, 213, 214, 215, 217, 218, 223, 224, 225, 230, 234, 250, 252, 254, 257, 263, 264, 265, 266, 270, 275, 280, 281, 295, 340, 377, 378, 381, 387, 388, 389, 402, 403, 404, 405, 408, 420, 421, 422, 423, 428, 433, 434, 436, 440, 441, 442, 443, 447, 452, 456, 459, 466, 480, 486, 488, 495, 506, 531, 545, 546, 548, 562, 564, 578, 581, 584, 585, 627, 629, 632, 634, 636, 638, 649, 650, 651, 653, 661, 662, 665, 672, 696, 699, 700, 712, 714, 717, 718

*KISHKIN, Nikolai Mikhailovich* (1864-1930)—a leader of the Cadet Party; on the eve of the October Socialist Revolution was appointed dictator of Petrograd to fight the Bolsheviks. Following the Revolution Kishkin waged an active struggle against Soviet power.—390, 397, 404, 422, 649

*KLEBOUSKY, Wladyslaw* (1860-



- 1921)—general; Commander-in-Chief of the Northern front (from May 1917), supporter of Kornilov.—234, 280
- KOLB, Wilhelm** (1870-1918)—German Social-Democrat, revisionist.—374
- KONOVALOU, Alexander Ivanovich** (b. 1875)—big textile manufacturer; Minister of Trade and Industry in the Kerensky Provisional Government.—397
- KORNILOU, Lavr Georgievich** (1870-1918)—tsarist general, monarchist. Commander of the Petrograd Military Area (from March 1917); Supreme Commander-in-Chief (July-August 1917); headed the counter-revolutionary revolt in August 1917. Following the October Socialist Revolution Kornilov headed the whiteguard Volunteer Army.—221, 222, 223, 225, 229, 231, 232, 233, 234, 235, 250, 253, 262, 270, 279, 280, 281, 381, 382, 387, 396, 406, 408, 420, 421, 422, 423, 428, 430, 432, 433, 440, 441, 442, 443, 447, 448, 459, 466, 480, 483, 488, 489, 494, 495, 545, 562, 577, 584, 587, 627, 659, 661, 662, 665, 668, 672, 673, 713, 718, 720
- KOSTROU.** See *Jordania, Noi*
- KOZLOUSKY, M.** (1876-1927)—Polish Social-Democrat and later a Bolshevik.—184, 185, 196
- KRASNOU, Pyotr Nikolayevich** (1869-1947)—tsarist general; one of the leaders of the Kornilov revolt in August 1917. In November 1917 was in command of the troops despatched by Kerensky against Petrograd. In 1918-19 was leader of the White Cossack army on the Don. In 1919 Krasnov fled to Germany where he continued his counter-revolutionary anti-Soviet activities.—578, 653
- KROPOTKIN, Pyotr Alexeyevich** (1842-1921)—one of the prominent leaders and theoreticians of the Russian anarchists. During the First World War Kropotkin adopted a social-chauvinist stand.—358, 373
- KRYLENKO, Nikolai Vasilyevich** (1885-1940)—Bolshevik from 1904; a prominent Soviet statesman; took an active part in the revolutionary movement; was repeatedly arrested and exiled; active participant in the October Revolution. On November 8, 1917 Krylenko entered the Council of People's Commissars as member of the Army and Navy Committee and later was appointed Supreme Commander-in-Chief; from 1918 worked in the Soviet judiciary.—478, 534, 597
- KUGELMANN, Ludwig** (1830-1902)—German Social-Democrat, physician by profession; took part in the 1848-49 revolution in Germany; member of the First International. Between 1862 and 1874 Kugelmann corresponded with Marx, who lived in London, informing him of the state of affairs in Germany.—313
- KUSKOVA, Yekaterina Dmitrievna** (1869-1958)—Russian bourgeois publicist, champion of Economism in the Russian Social-Democratic movement. Subsequently she adopted the standpoint of the Cadet Party; after the October Socialist Revolution became an enemy of Soviet power. In 1922 Kuskova was exiled and became active among the White émigrés.—398

## L

- LASSALLE, Ferdinand** (1825-1864)—German petty-bourgeois socialist, founder of the General German Workers' Union which played a big role in the working-class movement. At the same time Lassalle and his followers adopted an opportunist stand on major political questions, for which they were sharply criticised by Marx and Engels.—345, 347, 348, 353, 354, 355
- LAZZARI, Constantino** (1857-1927)—prominent in the Italian socialist movement. In 1882 took part in founding the Italian Workers' Party and in 1892 the Italian Socialist Party (I.S.P.); General Secretary of the I.S.P. (1912-19).—71



- LEDEBOUR, Georg** (1850-1947)—one of the leading German Social-Democrats, deputy to the Reichstag; Centrist. In 1917 Ledebour took part in founding the Independent Social-Democratic Party of Germany.—69, 70
- LEGIEN, Karl** (1861-1920)—leader of the opportunist wing of the German trade union movement. During the First World War adopted a social-chauvinist stand.—70, 287, 319, 321, 374
- LENIN, N.** See *Lenin, Vladimir Ilyich*.—221, 379, 384, 434, 436, 444, 453, 502, 643, 705, 716
- LENIN, Vladimir Ilyich** (1870-1924)—46, 84, 183, 184, 185, 189, 196, 198, 225, 422, 445, 448, 449, 450, 454, 478, 480, 483, 485, 486, 487, 489, 491, 492, 499, 540, 596, 696
- LENSCH, Paul** (1873-1926)—German Social-Democrat; during the First World War adopted an extremely chauvinist stand.—269
- LIEBER (Goldmann, Mikhail Isaakovich)** (1880-1937)—one of the leaders of the Bund, a Jewish nationalist organisation; Menshevik after the Second Congress of the R.S.D.L.P. (1903). During the First World War adopted a social-chauvinist stand. Following the February bourgeois-democratic revolution Lieber was member of the Executive Committee of the Petrograd Soviet of Workers' and Soldiers' Deputies; supported the bourgeois Provisional Government. Lieber adopted a hostile attitude towards the October Socialist Revolution; subsequently resigned from politics.—390, 391, 407, 457, 700
- LIEBKNECHT, Karl** (1871-1919)—outstanding leader of the German and international working-class movement; one of the founders of the Communist Party of Germany; in January 1919 was assassinated by counter-revolutionaries.—70, 71, 75, 98, 101, 173, 385, 439, 560, 563, 565, 589, 635
- LIEBKNECHT, Wilhelm** (1826-1900)—prominent figure in the German and international working-class movement; one of the founders and leaders of the German Social-Democratic Party and of the Second International.—334, 336
- LINDHAGEN, Carl** (1860-1946)—Swedish Social-Democrat; during the First World War (1914-18) was an internationalist; member of the Swedish Communist Party (1917-21); in 1921 was expelled for opposing the decisions of the Second Congress of the Comintern.—71
- LOMOU.** See *Oppokov*
- LONGUET, Jean** (1876-1938)—one of the reformist leaders of the French Socialist Party and of the Second International; during the First World War (1914-18) adopted a social-chauvinist stand.—46, 69
- LORIOT, Fernand** (1870-1930)—French socialist; during the First World War Lorient adopted an internationalist stand.—71
- LOUIS BONAPARTE (Napoleon III)** (1808-1873)—Emperor of France (1852-70).—218, 281, 305, 306, 692
- LUNACHARSKY, Anatoly Vasilyevich** (1875-1933)—prominent Soviet statesman and man of letters; People's Commissar for Education (1917-29); wrote a number of books on art and literature.—478
- LUXEMBURG, Rosa** (1871-1919)—outstanding figure in the German, Polish and international working-class movement; Left-wing leader of the Second International; one of the founders of the Communist Party of Germany; held erroneous views on a number of theoretical and political questions, in particular, on the national question. In January 1919 was assassinated by counter-revolutionaries.—47, 71, 135, 369
- LUOU, Georgi Yevgenyevich** (1861-1925)—big Russian landowner, monarchist, member of the First Duma; Prime Minister of the bourgeois Provisional Government (March-July 1917).—32, 35, 38, 39, 43, 53, 55, 56, 63, 94, 180
- LYAKHOV, Vladimir Platonovich** (1869-1918)—tsarist colonel, commander of the Cossack brigade

which (from 1906) was in the service of the Persian Shah and was used to suppress the Persian revolution in 1905-11.—171

## M

*MACDONALD, James Ramsay* (1866-1937)—British politician, one of the founders and leaders of the Independent Labour Party and of the Labour Party; conducted an extremely opportunist policy and preached the theory of class collaboration and the gradual development of capitalism into socialism. Prime Minister of a number of Labour governments.—46, 69, 173

*MACLEAN, John* (1879-1923)—prominent figure in the British labour movement; during the First World War (1914-18) MacLean adopted an internationalist stand and conducted a vigorous anti-war propaganda; was one of the leaders of the British Socialist Party.—71, 173, 385

*MACMAHON, Marie Edme Patrice Maurice* (1808-1893)—reactionary French general and politician; in 1871 was in command of the troops which suppressed the Paris Commune with unheard-of brutality; President of France (1873-79).—229

*MAKLAKOV, Vasily Alexeyevich* (b. 1870)—landowner, deputy to the Second, Third and Fourth Dumas; member of the Cadet Central Committee. After the February 1917 revolution Maklakov was ambassador of the bourgeois Provisional Government to France; later, a White émigré.—171

*MARKOV, Nikolai Yevgenyevich* (b. 1876)—big landowner, active member of the Union of the Russian People, a Black-Hundred organisation; leader of the extreme Right group in the Third and Fourth Dumas; emigrated after the February revolution.—161, 162, 197

*MARTOV, L. (Tsederbaum, Yuli Osipovich)* (1873-1923)—Menshevik leader. During the First World

War adopted a Centrist stand. After the October Socialist Revolution became an enemy of Soviet power; in 1920 emigrated.—69, 74, 230, 406, 487, 495, 665, 666, 667, 676

*MARX, Karl* (1818-1883)—47, 63, 71, 75, 76, 77, 89, 99, 100, 105, 115, 123, 169, 288, 289, 290, 291, 296, 298, 300, 301, 302, 303, 304, 305, 306, 307, 308, 310, 311, 312, 313, 314, 315, 317, 318, 319, 321, 323, 324, 325, 326, 327, 329, 330, 332, 333, 334, 337, 338, 339, 340, 343, 345, 347, 348, 349, 350, 353, 354, 355, 356, 358, 359, 363, 364, 365, 366, 367, 368, 370, 371, 372, 373, 378, 380, 383, 405, 406, 419, 430, 431, 437, 438, 523, 554, 613, 667, 668, 696, 697, 698

*MASLOU, Pyotr Pavlovich* (1867-1946)—Russian Social-Democrat, Menshevik; wrote a number of works on the agrarian question in which he tried to revise the basic propositions of Marxist political economy. During the First World War adopted a social-chauvinist stand. Following the October Socialist Revolution resigned from politics and engaged in pedagogical and scientific work.—124

*MEHRING, Franz* (1846-1919)—prominent figure in the German labour movement, one of the leaders and theoreticians of the Left wing of German Social-Democracy; historian, publicist and literary critic. Together with Karl Liebknecht, Rosa Luxemburg, and others, founded the Communist Party of Germany.—310

*MERRHEIM, Alphonse* (1881-1925)—French trade unionist; on the outbreak of the First World War adopted an internationalist stand but subsequently defected to social-chauvinism.—71, 73

*MIKHAILOUSKY, Nikolai Konstantinovich* (1842-1904)—Russian sociologist, publicist, literary critic and prominent theoretician of liberal Narodism; waged a bitter struggle against the Marxists.—292

*MILLERAND, Alexandre Etienne* (1859-1943)—French reactionary politician; socialist in the nineties;

- in 1899 betrayed the cause of socialism and entered the reactionary bourgeois government of France.—364
- MILYUKOV, Pavel Nikolayevich** (1859-1943)—one of the organisers of the Cadet Party and its leader. After the February 1917 revolution was Minister of Foreign Affairs of the bourgeois Provisional Government; advocated the imperialist policy of continuing the war to a "victorious end"; in August 1917 took an active part in preparing the counter-revolutionary Kornilov revolt. Following the October Socialist Revolution, a White émigré; one of the organisers of the counter-revolution and military intervention against the Soviet state.—31, 32, 35, 36, 37, 38, 39, 58, 59, 74, 84, 95, 97, 105, 110, 119, 130, 137, 171, 174, 190, 197, 199, 224, 250, 270
- MILYUTIN, Vladimir Pavlovich** (1884-1938)—Russian Social-Democrat, man of letters and economist. After the Second Congress of the R.S.D.L.P. (1903) Milyutin joined the Mensheviks; from 1910 was member of the Bolshevik Party. Following the October Socialist Revolution Milyutin was appointed People's Commissar of Agriculture, but on November 17, 1917, together with Nogin and others, withdrew from the Council of People's Commissars.—225, 449, 478, 493
- MODIGLIANI, Vittorio Emanuele** (1872-1947)—a leader of the extreme Right wing of the Italian Socialist Party.—69
- MONTESQUIEU, Charles** (1689-1755)—French historian and writer, ideologist of constitutional monarchy.—325
- MÜLLER, Gustav** (b. 1860)—Swiss Social-Democrat, opportunist.—73
- MÜNZENBERG, Wilhelm** (1889-1940)—one of the founders of the communist youth movement in Germany; Secretary of the International Socialist, and later Communist, Youth League (1914-21).—73
- N**
- NAPOLEON I, Bonaparte** (1769-1821)—Emperor of France (1804-14 and 1815).—136, 218, 281, 306, 342, 571, 572, 592, 620, 633, 637, 638, 639, 640
- NAPOLEON III.** See *Louis Bonaparte*
- NEKRASOV, Nikolai Vissarionovich** (b. 1879)—Cadet, Minister of Railways in the bourgeois Provisional Government.—250
- NICHOLAS I (Romanov)** (1796-1855)—Emperor of Russia (1825-55).—58
- NICHOLAS II (Romanov)** (1868-1918)—the last Emperor of Russia (1894-1917).—34, 53, 58, 94, 95, 108, 113, 118, 120, 136, 165, 170, 210, 212, 217, 564, 586, 629, 634, 712, 714, 718
- NICHOLAS THE BLOODY.** See *Nicholas II*
- NIKITIN, A. M.** (b. 1876)—Menshevik, Minister in Kerensky's bourgeois Provisional Government.—387, 389, 408, 422
- NOGIN, Viktor Pavlovich** (1878-1924)—Soviet Party leader and statesman; member of the R.S.D.L.P. from 1898. After the February revolution in 1917 Nogin was Chairman of the Moscow Soviet of Workers' Deputies. At the Second All-Russia Congress of Soviets, October 26 (November 7), 1917, was elected People's Commissar of Trade and Industry. He disagreed with the decision of the C.C. of the R.S.D.L.P.(B.), which opposed the formation of a coalition government with Mensheviks and Socialist-Revolutionaries participating, and withdrew from the Party Central Committee and the Council of People's Commissars on November 17. Subsequently he acknowledged his errors; from 1922 directed the textile industry.—478, 493
- O**
- OPPOKOV (Lomov), G. I.** (1888-1938)—member of the R.S.D.L.P. from 1903, Bolshevik. After the



February 1917 revolution was member of the Moscow Committee of the R.S.D.L.P.(B.). Became People's Commissar of Justice after the October Socialist Revolution. At the time of the Brest Peace was one of the "Left Communists". Deputy Chairman of the Supreme Economic Council (1918-21); subsequently, Deputy Chairman of the U.S.S.R. State Planning Commission.—478, 597

*OSINSKY (Obolensky), Valerian Valerianovich* (1887-1938)—economist and man of letters, Chairman of the Supreme Economic Council (1917-18). During the conclusion of the Brest Peace, "Left Communist"; active member of the opportunist "Democratic Centralism" group (1920-21).—702

*OUSEYENKO (Antonov, Antonov-Ouseyenko), Vladimir Alexandrovich* (1884-1938)—Soviet military leader, an active participant in the October Socialist Revolution. On November 8, 1917 entered the Council of People's Commissars as a member of the Army and Navy Committee; subsequently was engaged in important military work.—478

## P

*PALCHINSKY, Pyotr Ioakimovich* (d. 1930)—engineer, organiser of the Coal Syndicate; Deputy Minister of Trade and Industry in Kerensky's bourgeois Provisional Government (1917); inspired sabotage by industrialists.—216, 262, 263, 279, 280, 295, 296

*PANINA, S. U.*—member of the Central Committee of the Cadet Party; Deputy Minister in Kerensky's bourgeois Provisional Government.—211

*PANNEKOEK, Anton* (1873-1960)—Dutch Social-Democrat; in 1907 was one of the founders of the newspaper *De Tribune*, organ of the Left wing of the Dutch Social-Democratic Labour Party. During the First World War adopted an internationalist stand; took part in publishing the magazine *Vorbote (Herald)*, theoretical

organ of the Zimmerwald Left. From 1918 to 1921 Pannekoek was member of the Communist Party of Holland; adopted an ultra-Left, sectarian position; in 1921 left the Communist Party and soon retired from politics.—71, 369, 370, 371, 372

*PARUUS (Gelfand, Alexander Lazarevich)* (1869-1924)—participant in the Russian and German Social-Democratic movement; during the First World War was an extreme chauvinist and agent of German imperialism.—73, 196

*PEREUEVZEV, Pavel Nikolayevich*—lawyer, Minister of Justice in the bourgeois Provisional Government; in July 1917 published false documents compromising the Bolsheviks, fabricated by the renegade Alexinsky.—191, 198, 199, 431

*PESHEKHONOV, Alexei Vasilyevich* (1867-1933)—bourgeois publicist, one of the leaders of the petty-bourgeois party of Popular Socialists from 1906. After the February 1917 revolution was Minister of Food in the bourgeois Provisional Government; after the October Socialist Revolution Peshekhonov fought against Soviet power; from 1922, a White émigré.—216, 235, 262, 263, 264, 279, 280, 281, 410, 427, 428

*PETER I* (1672-1725)—Tsar of Russia (1682-1721); Emperor (1721-25).—694

*PETLYURA, S. U.* (1877-1926)—Ukrainian bourgeois nationalist leader; secretary-general for army affairs in the counter-revolutionary Ukrainian Central Rada (1917). During the foreign military intervention and Civil War was one of the counter-revolutionary leaders in the Ukraine. Early in 1918 re-established, with the help of the Germans, the Central Rada, which had been dispersed by the workers of Kiev. In November 1918 joined the Directory (the Ukrainian nationalist government, 1918-19) of which he later became the head. Towards the end of 1919 he concluded a military alliance with Poland and



- in 1920 took part in the Polish attack on the Ukraine. After the establishment of Soviet power in the Ukraine lived as a counter-revolutionary émigré abroad. Assassinated in Paris, May 1926.—596
- PFLÜGER, Paul** (b. 1865)—Swiss Social-Democrat, opportunist; during the First World War adopted a social-chauvinist stand.—73
- PLATTEN, Fritz** (1883-1942)—Swiss Left socialist and subsequently a Communist; attended the Zimmerwald and Kienthal conferences; joined the Zimmerwald Left group. Platten took an active part in founding the Communist Party of Switzerland and the Communist International.—74
- PLEKHANOV, Georgi Valentinovich** (1856-1918)—outstanding leader of the Russian and international working-class movement, first propagandist of Marxism in Russia, founder of the Emancipation of Labour group, the first Russian Marxist organisation. After the Second Congress of the R.S.D.L.P. (1903) became a Menshevik. During the First World War was a social-chauvinist. Plekhanov adopted a negative attitude towards the October Socialist Revolution but did not take part in the struggle against Soviet power.—33, 38, 39, 46, 47, 49, 62, 63, 67, 68, 70, 74, 76, 98, 101, 116, 135, 189, 248, 269, 270, 277, 280, 287, 312, 314, 319, 321, 324, 358, 362, 363, 374, 404, 426, 428, 452
- PODVOISKY, Nikolai Ilyich** (1880-1948)—prominent leader of the Communist Party and of the Soviet state. Member of the Petrograd Committee of the R.S.D.L.P.(B.) and leader of the Military Organisation of the Party's Central Committee (1917). During the preparations for the October armed uprising and during the uprising itself he was Chairman of the Revolutionary Military Committee in Petrograd. Following the October Socialist Revolution was a member of the Collegium of the People's Commissariat of Military Affairs, People's Commissar for the Army and Navy of the Ukraine. During the last years Podvoisky was engaged in propaganda and literary work.—597
- POKROUSKY, Mikhail Nikolayevich** (1868-1932)—historian, politician, academician; member of the R.S.D.L.P. from 1905; Deputy People's Commissar of Education (1918-32). During the conclusion of the Brest Peace, "Left Communist".—700
- POLOUTSEV, P. A.** (b. 1874)—general, Commander-in-Chief of the Petrograd Military Area in the summer of 1917; during the July days directed the suppression of the revolutionary movement and the raid on *Pravda*, the Central Organ of the Bolsheviks.—185
- POMYALOUSKY, Nikolai Gerasimovich** (1835-1863)—Russian writer of the latter half of the 19th century; author of the book *Sketches of Seminary Life* in which he gave a true picture of the horrible school conditions of the children of the small clergy, the urban poor, etc.—358, 705
- POTRESOV, Alexander Nikolayevich** (1869-1934)—one of the Menshevik leaders. In the period of reaction (1907-10) was an ideologist of liquidationism. During the First World War Potresov was a social-chauvinist. Following the October Socialist Revolution, a White émigré, enemy of Soviet power.—32, 33, 34, 37, 38, 39, 67, 70, 75, 249, 277, 280, 287, 374
- PRESSEMANE, Adrien** (1879-1929)—French socialist; Centrist during the First World War.—69
- PRILEZHAYEV, I.**—contributor to the Socialist-Revolutionary newspaper *Dyelo Naroda* (*People's Cause*).—281
- PROKOPOVICH, Sergei Nikolayevich** (1871-1955)—bourgeois economist and publicist, prominent champion of Economism in Russia; member of the Cadet Central Committee (1906); Minister of Food in the bourgeois Provisional

- Government (1917). Following the October Socialist Revolution Prokopovich was exiled from Russia for his counter-revolutionary activities.—250, 408
- PROUDHON, Pierre-Joseph* (1809-1865)—French economist, ideologist of the petty bourgeoisie; one of the founders of anarchism.—323, 324, 328, 329, 330, 333, 345, 363, 364, 370
- PURISHKEVICH, Vladimir Mitrofanovich* (1870-1920)—big landowner, monarchist, reactionary. In the 1905-07 period founded Black-Hundred pogrom organisations to fight the revolutionary movement; one of the organisers of the internal counter-revolution during the foreign military intervention against the Soviet Republic.—494, 495
- PYATAKOV, Georgi Leonidovich* (1890-1937)—member of the Bolshevik Party from 1910; carried on Party work in the Ukraine and abroad. In 1915-17 adopted an anti-Leninist stand on the question of the right of nations to self-determination and on other important questions of Party policy. After the February bourgeois-democratic revolution of 1917 was Chairman of the Kiev Committee of the R.S.D.L.P.(B.); opposed the Party line on the socialist revolution. After the October Socialist Revolution Pyatakov was a member of the Ukrainian Soviet Government and held several other responsible posts. During the Brest Peace negotiations, a "Left Communist". During the discussion in the Party on the trade unions (1920-21) supported Trotsky's platform. In 1927 the 15th Congress of the C.P.S.U.(B.) expelled him from the Party as an active member of the Trotsky opposition; in 1928 was rehabilitated. In 1936 was again expelled from the Party for his anti-Party activities.—135, 136, 137
- Democratic movement of Poland and Germany from 1902; member of the Bolshevik Party from October 1917. During the First World War Radek opposed Lenin on the question of the right of nations to self-determination. Following the October Socialist Revolution repeatedly opposed Party policy; one of the "Left Communist" leaders (1918), active member of the Trotsky opposition (from 1923); in 1936 was expelled from the Party for his anti-Party activities.—71, 73, 396, 597, 600
- RAKITNIKOV, N. I.* (b. 1864)—member of the Socialist-Revolutionary Central Committee; edited several Socialist-Revolutionary newspapers. In 1917 Rakitnikov supported a coalition with the Cadets.—203
- RASPUTIN, Grigory Yefimovich* (1872-1916)—favourite of Nicholas II, the last Emperor of Russia, and of Empress Alexandra Fyodorovna; peasant by birth. He penetrated into court circles as a "clairvoyant" and exercised a strong influence on state affairs. The Rasputin episode vividly demonstrated the moral corruption of ruling circles in tsarist Russia.—32, 586
- RENAUDEL, Pierre* (1871-1935)—one of the opportunist leaders of the French Socialist Party.—68, 287, 319
- RODICHEV, Fyodor Ivanovich* (b. 1856)—big landowner and Zemstvo member, lawyer, one of the Cadet Party leaders, member of the Cadet C.C.; member of the Duma of all convocations; Governor-General of Finland (1917). After the October Socialist Revolution, a White émigré.—136, 137
- RODZYANKO, Mikhail Vladimirovich* (1859-1924)—Russian reactionary politician, one of the Octobrist Party leaders; big landowner; Chairman of the Third and Fourth Dumas. In August 1917 Rodzyanko took a prominent part in the Kornilov revolt. Following the October Socialist Revolution he tried to unite all the counter-

## R

*RADEK, Karl Berngardovich* (1885-1939)—took part in the Social-

- revolutionary forces, to fight Soviet power; later, a White émigré.—224, 452, 453, 456
- ROLAND-HOLST, Henriette** (1869-1952)—Dutch Left socialist and writer; worked to organise women's unions; joined the Left wing of the Dutch Social-Democrats who, from 1907, grouped around the newspaper *De Tribune*. On the outbreak of the First World War she adopted a Centrist stand, then joined the internationalists; took part in publishing the magazine *Vorbote (Herald)*, the theoretical organ of the Zimmerwald Left. From 1918 to 1927 was member of the Communist Party of Holland and worked in the Comintern. In 1927 withdrew from the Communist Party.—71
- ROLOVICH**—member of the Central Food Committee in 1917; represented the interests of private capital.—264
- ROMANOV, Mikhail Alexandrovich** (1878-1918)—Grand Duke, brother of Tsar Nicholas II.—38
- ROMANOV**. See *Nicholas II*
- ROMANOV**—dynasty of Russian tsars and emperors ruling the country between 1613 and 1917. The last tsar, Nicholas II (1868-1918), was overthrown during the February bourgeois-democratic revolution in 1917.—32, 35, 37, 39, 53, 161
- RUBANOVICH, Ilya Adolfovich** (1860-1920)—one of the leaders of the Socialist-Revolutionary Party; during the First World War became a social-chauvinist.—287
- RÜHLE, Otto** (b. 1874)—German Left Social-Democrat, deputy to the Reichstag; in March 1915, together with Karl Liebknecht, voted against the war credits.—70
- RUSANOV, Nikolai Sergeyevich** (b. 1859)—man of letters, author of a number of popular books and pamphlets; one of the founders of the Socialist-Revolutionary Party; in 1917 was member of the Editorial Board of *Dyelo Naroda (People's Cause)*, the Central Organ of the Socialist-Revolutionaries. After the October Socialist Revolution, Rusanov emigrated.—320
- RUSSEL, Williams** (b. 1872)—member of the British Socialist Party; an internationalist during the First World War.—71
- RYABUSHINSKY, Pavel Pavlovich** (b. 1871)—big Moscow capitalist and banker, one of the counter-revolutionary leaders. In August 1917 threatened to strangle the revolution by the "gaunt hand of famine"; was one of the inspirers and organisers of the Kornilov revolt. Following the October Socialist Revolution, Ryabushinsky continued his counter-revolutionary activities from abroad.—244, 529, 545, 546
- RYAZANOV (Goldendach), David Borisovich** (1870-1938)—Social-Democrat, Menshevik. Was accepted into the R.S.D.L.P.(B.) at the Sixth Party Congress in 1917. After the October Revolution belonged to the T.U. leadership. Early in 1918 left the Party for a time because he disagreed with the Brest Peace; adopted an anti-Party position during the discussion on the trade unions and was removed from T.U. work. From 1921 was director of the Marx-Engels Institute. In February 1931 was expelled from the C.P.S.U.(B.) for helping the counter-revolutionary activities of the Mensheviks.—596
- RYKOV, Alexei Ivanovich** (1881-1938)—member of the R.S.D.L.P. from 1899. During the years of reaction (1907-10) Rykov adopted a conciliatory attitude towards the liquidators, Trotskyites and otzovists; after the February 1917 revolution opposed the Party's course towards the socialist revolution. After the October Socialist Revolution he held a number of responsible posts; repeatedly opposed the Party's Leninist policy. In November 1917 favoured the establishment of a coalition government with the Mensheviks and Socialist-Revolutionaries participating. In 1928, together with Bukharin, headed the Right de-



viation in the Party. In 1937 was expelled from the Party for his anti-Party activities.—105, 106, 478, 493

## S

*SAVINKOV, Boris Viktorovich* (1879-1925)—one of the Socialist-Revolutionary Party leaders; waged an active struggle against Soviet power, organised several counter-revolutionary revolts and plots.—480, 495, 653, 654, 668

*SCHEIDEMANN, Philipp* (1865-1939)—one of the leaders of the extreme Right wing of the German Social-Democratic Party; head of the German bourgeois government (February-June 1919); ruthlessly suppressed the labour movement.—33, 68, 70, 74, 269, 287, 319, 321, 374, 676

*SEMBAT, Marcel* (1862-1922)—one of the leaders of the French Socialist Party; during the First World War, a social-chauvinist.—68, 319, 321

*SEMYONOV, G. M.* (1890-1946)—Cossack officer, organiser of the counter-revolution in the Trans-Baikal region, 1918-20.—706

*SERRATI, Giacinto Menotti* (1872-1926)—prominent Italian socialist; in 1924 joined the Italian Communist Party.—71

*SHINGARYOV, Andrei Ivanovich* (1869-1918)—Cadet, leader of the Cadet group in the Third and Fourth Dumas; in 1917 was Minister of Finance in the coalition Provisional Government.—32, 127, 128, 130, 152, 154, 157, 250, 410

*SHLYAPNIKOV, Alexander Gavrilovich* (1885-1943)—member of the R.S.D.L.P. from 1901. After the October Socialist Revolution engaged in trade union work; was a business executive. In 1920-22 organised and led the anti-Party "Workers' Opposition" group. In 1933 was expelled from the Party.—478, 717

*SCHOTMANN, Alexander Vasilyevich* (1880-1939)—factory worker, professional revolutionary, Bolshevik; took an active part in the 1905-07, February 1917 and Oc-

tober Socialist revolutions. After the October Revolution Schotmann was engaged in important economic, Soviet and Party work.—449

*SKOBELEV, Matvei Ivanovich* (1885-1937)—Russian Social-Democrat, Menshevik; during the First World War was a social-chauvinist; Minister of Labour in Kerensky's bourgeois Provisional Government in 1917.—68, 216, 217, 252, 263, 295, 320

*SKOROPIS - YOLTUKHOVSKY, A. F.* (b. 1880)—Ukrainian nationalist.—183, 184

*SKUORTSOV.* See *Skvortsov-Stepanov.*

*SKUORTSOV-STEPANOV, Ivan Ivanovich* (1870-1928)—leading member of the Communist Party, man of letters, historian and economist; active participant in the October Socialist Revolution; after the revolution was engaged in active literary and journalist work.—478, 528

*SMILGA, Ivar Tenisovich* (1892-1938)—member of the Bolshevik Party from 1907. After the October Socialist Revolution represented the R.S.F.S.R. Council of People's Commissars in Finland; member of the Revolutionary Military Council of the Republic, Deputy Chairman of the Supreme Economic Council. During the discussion on the trade unions in 1920-21 Smilga supported Trotsky's platform. In 1927 he was expelled from the Party by the Fifteenth Congress of the All-Union Communist Party (Bolsheviks) as an active member of the Trotsky opposition. In 1930 his Party membership was restored. Subsequently was again expelled from the Party for his anti-Party activities.—151, 155

*SMIRNOV, U. M.* (1887-1937)—member of the Bolshevik Party from 1907; after the October Socialist Revolution, member of the Presidium of the Supreme Economic Council. During the conclusion of the Brest Peace, "Left Communist"; in 1920-21 was an active member of the anti-Party "Democratic Centralism" group;



- in 1923 joined the Trotsky opposition; in 1926 was expelled from the Party for his factional activities.—607
- SMITH** (*Falkner, Maria Natanovna*) (b. 1878)—economist and statistician; in 1917 contributed to *Svobodnaya Zhizn* (*Free Life*), a Menshevik newspaper. After the October Socialist Revolution lectured in several higher educational establishments and wrote several works on statistics.—264
- SNOWDEN**, *Philip* (1864-1937)—British politician, one of the leaders of the Independent Labour Party, opportunist.—69
- SOKOLNIKOV**, *Grigory Yakovlevich* (1888-1939)—member of the R.S.D.L.P. from 1905. After the February 1917 revolution was a member of the Moscow Regional Bureau of the R.S.D.L.P.(B.) and later member of the *Pravda* Editorial Board. After the October Socialist Revolution—People's Commissar for Finance, Deputy Chairman of the State Planning Commission, Deputy People's Commissar for Foreign Affairs. At the 14th Congress of the Communist Party of the Soviet Union (Bolsheviks) (1925) Sokolnikov joined the "New Opposition"; subsequently was a member of the united Trotsky-Zinoviev bloc. In 1936 was expelled from the Party for his anti-Party activities.—458, 607
- SPENCER**, *Herbert* (1820-1903)—English philosopher, psychologist and sociologist, positivist, one of the founders of the so-called organic theory of society. To justify social inequality, Spencer likened human society to an animal organism and applied the biological theory of the struggle for existence to history.—292
- SPIRIDONOVA**, *Maria Alexandrovna* (1884-1941)—an organiser and leader of the Left Socialist-Revolutionary Party. After the October Socialist Revolution Spiridonova opposed the Brest-Litovsk Peace Treaty and other measures by the Soviet Government. In July 1918 she took part in the Left Socialist-Revolutionaries' revolt in Moscow; subsequently retired from politics.—230
- SPIRO**—one of the leaders of the Party of Left Socialist-Revolutionaries; worked in the Ukraine; in 1918 was Commissar Extraordinary on the Rumanian front.—492
- STAUNING**, *Thorwald* (1873-1942)—leader of the Social-Democratic Party of Denmark, reformist; on the outbreak of the First World War entered the government; Prime Minister of Denmark after the war.—68, 71, 319, 374
- STEINBERG**, *Isaac Zakharovich*—lawyer, one of the Left Socialist-Revolutionary leaders; after the October Socialist Revolution was People's Commissar of Justice. An opponent of the Brest Peace, he withdrew from the Council of People's Commissars when it was ratified; subsequently emigrated.—563
- STEKLOV**, *Yuri Mikhailovich* (1873-1941)—Russian Social-Democrat; took part in the Bolshevik publications abroad. After the February revolution in 1917 joined the "revolutionary defencists"; wrote several books on the history of the revolutionary movement.—44, 49, 50, 57, 59, 68, 93
- STIRNER**, *Max (Kaspar Schmidt)* (1806-1856)—German philosopher, one of the ideologists of bourgeois individualism and anarchism; expounded his views in his book *Der Einzige und sein Eigentum* (*The Unique and His Property*); was repeatedly criticised by Karl Marx and Frederick Engels.—363
- STOLYPIN**, *Pyotr Arkadyevich* (1862-1911)—reactionary statesman of tsarist Russia, big landowner; Chairman of the Council of Ministers and Minister of the Interior (1906-11). Stolypin gave his name to a whole period of brutal political reaction (1907-10). He carried out an agrarian reform which was advantageous to the rich kulaks and completely ruined the rural poor.—36, 53, 125, 130, 387, 389, 422, 560, 588, 633
- STROM**, *Fredrick* (1880-1948)—

Swedish Left socialist, Secretary of the Social-Democratic Party (1911-16); subsequently, a Communist; together with Höglund withdrew from the Comintern in 1924.—71

**STRUUE, Pyotr Berngardovich** (1870-1944)—bourgeois economist and publicist; outstanding champion of "legal Marxism" in the nineties; subsequently, one of the Cadet leaders. After the October Socialist Revolution Struve became one of the leaders of the counter-revolution; later a White émigré.—268, 314, 408

**SUMENSON** of Stockholm. Commercial correspondence between Mrs. Sumenson and Hanecki, interpreted as conditional and ciphered, was used as inculpatory evidence against Lenin.—196

**SUERDLOV, Yakov Mikhailovich** (1885-1919)—well-known Russian revolutionary, an outstanding leader of the Communist Party and the Soviet state; Chairman of the All-Russia Central Executive Committee (November 1917-March 1919).—458

## T

**TAYLOR, Frederick Winslow** (1856-1915)—American engineer, founder of the system of labour organisation consisting in the maximum utilisation of the working day. Under capitalism this system is used to intensify the exploitation of the working people.—663, 680, 700, 701

**TEODOROVICH, Ivan Adolfovich** (1875-1940)—Social-Democrat; began his revolutionary activity in 1895. After the Second Congress of the R.S.D.L.P. (1903)—Bolshevik; took an active part in the October Socialist Revolution; after the revolution was engaged in important government work.—58, 478

**TERESHCHENKO, Mikhail Ivanovich** (b. 1888)—Russian capitalist, sugar manufacturer; Minister of Finance and Minister of Foreign Affairs in the bourgeois Provision-

al Government in 1917.—171, 174, 244, 250, 251, 252, 257, 265

**TRÈVES, Claudio** (1868-1933)—leader of the Italian Socialist Party, theoretician of Italian reformism. During the First World War of 1914-18 adopted a Centrist stand.—69, 374

**TRIER, Gerson** (b. 1851)—Danish revolutionary Social-Democrat, internationalist.—71

**TROELSTRA, Pieter** (1860-1930)—one of the founders of the Dutch Social-Democratic Workers' Party and its leader; Chairman of the Party's parliamentary group, opportunist; chauvinist during the First World War.—68

**TROTSKY, Lev Davidovich (Bronstein)** (1879-1940)—a bitter enemy of Leninism, opposed Lenin on all questions of the theory and practice of the socialist revolution. During the First World War adopted a Centrist stand. Upon entering the Bolshevik Party, on the eve of the October Socialist Revolution, he continued his factional activities. In 1918 opposed the conclusion of the Brest Peace. In 1920-21 opposed Lenin's policy concerning the trade unions and the trade union movement. In 1923 headed the opposition elements fighting against the general line of the Party. The Communist Party exposed Trotskyism as a petty-bourgeois deviation in the Party and defeated it both ideologically and organisationally. In 1927 Trotsky was expelled from the Party. In 1929 was exiled abroad for his anti-Soviet activities and then deprived of Soviet citizenship.—74, 422, 454, 478, 539, 598, 599, 600

**TSERETELI, Irakly Georgievich** (1882-1959)—one of the Menshevik leaders; during the First World War adopted a Centrist stand. After the February 1917 revolution Tsereteli entered the bourgeois Provisional Government as Minister of Posts and Telegraphs; after the July events in 1917 became Minister of the Interior. Following the October So-

cialist Revolution Tsereteli headed the anti-Soviet bloc in the Constituent Assembly; was one of the leaders of the counter-revolutionary Menshevik government of Georgia. After the establishment of Soviet power in Georgia (1921) became a White émigré.—43, 44, 49, 50, 57, 59, 68, 69, 70, 75, 81, 82, 93, 95, 111, 119, 180, 181, 183, 185, 194, 203, 204, 216, 217, 244, 263, 270, 279, 287, 295, 296, 320, 321, 341, 344, 381, 388, 396, 401, 407, 408, 415, 421, 423, 426, 432, 528, 529, 549, 554, 631, 632, 636, 700, 701

**TUGAN-BARANOVSKY, Mikhail Ivanovich** (1865-1919)—Russian bourgeois economist, prominent "legal Marxist" in the 1890s, later member of the Cadet Party. After the October Socialist Revolution, the leader of the counter-revolutionary forces in the Ukraine.—355

**TURATI, Filippo** (1857-1932)—reformist leader of the Italian working-class movement; one of the organisers of the Italian Socialist Party (1892) and leader of its Right wing; conducted the policy of class collaboration between the proletariat and the bourgeoisie. During the First World War Turati held a Centrist position.—46, 69, 73, 374

**TURE, Nerman** (b. 1886)—Left Swedish socialist; during the First World War he joined the Zimmerwald Left; later, one of the founders of the Swedish Communist Party.—71

**TURGENEV, Ivan Sergeyevich** (1818-1883)—Russian writer, liberal in politics.—676

**TYSZKA (Jogiches, Léon)** (1867-1919)—a leader of the Polish and German working-class movement; during the First World War was an internationalist; one of the organisers of the Spartacus League; took part in founding the Communist Party of Germany (C.P.G.), Secretary of the C.P.G. Central Committee. In 1919 Tysza was arrested and killed in a Berlin prison.—71

## U

**URITSKY, Moisei Solomonovich** (1873-1918)—active participant in the October Socialist Revolution, member of the Party Revolutionary Military Centre; adopted a wrong attitude towards the Brest Peace, joined the "Left Communists". At the Seventh Congress of the R.S.D.L.P.(B.) (1918) Uritsky was elected candidate member of the Party Central Committee; in 1918 was appointed Chairman of the Petrograd Extraordinary Commission, and as such waged a ruthless struggle against the counter-revolutionaries; assassinated by the Socialist-Revolutionaries on August 30, 1918.—597, 601

## V

**VANDERUELDE, Emile** (1866-1938)—one of the opportunist leaders of the Belgian Workers' Party and of the Second International. At the beginning of the First World War Vandervelde entered the bourgeois government of Belgium.—73, 287, 319, 321, 374

**VERKHOVSKY, Alexander Ivanovich** (1886-1941)—War Minister in the last Provisional Government. Several days before the October Socialist Revolution Verkhovsky withdrew from the government in protest against the continuation of the war; after the revolution worked in the Red Army.—459

**VINNICHENKO, Vladimir Kirillovich** (1880-1951)—Ukrainian writer, bourgeois nationalist; after the February revolution in 1917 was one of the organisers of the counter-revolutionary Ukrainian Rada; in 1918-19, together with Petlyura, headed the nationalist government of the Ukraine serving the interests of German and, later, British and French imperialism. Subsequently, a White émigré.—599, 632

**VLADIMIR ULYANOV (LENIN).** See *Lenin, Vladimir Ilyich*  
**V. M.—IN.** See *Milyutin, Vladimir*



**VOINOU, Ivan Avksentyevich** (1884-1917)—Bolshevik worker, active contributor to the Bolshevik newspapers *Pravda* (*The Truth*) and *Borba* (*Struggle*); was killed by cadets in Petrograd on July 6 (19), 1917 while distributing *Listok Pravdy*.—204

**VOL—Y.** See *Volodarsky, V.*

**VOLODARSKY, V. (Goldstein, Moisei Markovich)** (1891-1918)—Bolshevik; took an active part in the Great October Socialist Revolution; after the revolution was member of the Presidium of the All-Russia Central Executive Committee, Commissar for the Press, Agitation and Propaganda; was treacherously killed in Petrograd by the Socialist-Revolutionaries.—222, 225

## W

**WEBB, Beatrice** (1858-1943) and **Sidney** (1859-1947)—well-known English publicists, reformists; founder members of the Fabian Society; wrote several books on the history and theory of the English labour movement. During the First World War adopted the standpoint of social-chauvinism. After the October Socialist Revolution the Webbs' attitude to the Soviet Union was that of great sympathy.—372

**WEYDEMEYER, Joseph** (1818-1866)—prominent figure in the German and American labour movement, member of the Communist League; took part in the 1848-49 revolution in Germany and the American Civil War (1861-65); friend and comrade-in-arms of Karl Marx and Frederick Engels.—310

**WIJNKOP, David** (1877-1941)—Dutch Communist; one of the founders of the Marxist newspaper *De Tribune*.—71

**WILHELM II (Hohenzollern)** (1859-1941)—German Emperor and King of Prussia (1888-1918).—34, 75, 113, 120, 440, 470, 473, 638

**WILSON, Woodrow** (1856-1924)—American statesman, President of the U.S.A. (1913-21); one of the organisers of the armed intervention against Soviet Russia.—625

## Z

**ZAMYSLOUSKY, Georgi Georgiyevich** (b. 1872)—Russian reactionary politician; a Black-Hundred leader who acted as prosecutor at the trial of Beilis.—197

**ZENZINOU, Vladimir Mikhailovich** (b. 1881)—one of the leaders of the Socialist-Revolutionary Party, member of the Editorial Board of *Dyelo Naroda* (*People's Cause*), the Socialist-Revolutionary Central Organ. After the October Socialist Revolution, a White émigré.—320

**ZINOUIEV, Grigory Yevseyevich (Radomyslsky)** (1883-1936)—joined the Russian Social-Democratic movement in 1901; after the Second Congress of the R.S.D.L.P. (1903) joined the Bolsheviks. During the Stolypin reaction (1907-10) adopted a conciliatory attitude towards the liquidators, otzovists and Trotskyites. During the First World War was an internationalist. In October 1917 Zinoviev, together with Kamenev, betrayed the Party Central Committee's decision to begin an armed uprising; in 1925 was an organiser of the "New Opposition"; in 1926 was a leader of the anti-Party Trotsky-Zinoviev bloc; in 1934 was expelled from the Party for his anti-Party activities.—73, 449, 450, 451, 452, 454, 455, 456, 457, 458, 493, 494





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