V. DROBIZHEV

LENIN AS HEAD OF GOVERNMENT

Novosti Press Agency Publishing House

Translated from the Russian
by Arthur SHKAROVSKY

One finds it hard to name a political figure of this 20th century who would be so well-known throughout the world as Lenin is. Some, and they comprise the bulk of mankind, utter his name with affection and respect; others, the negligible minority, cannot think of him but with malicious hate.

What is it that has made some adore Lenin and others hate him? Why to this day does such a furious discussion revolve around his role in history?

Lenin was the leader of the socialist revolution in Russia. For some 30 years he led the Bolshevik Party and for six years was head of the Soviet Government. Every year, indeed month, of his life was packed with events of vast significance.

The keen interest evinced in Lenin is due not only to the social value of the affairs to which he devoted his life. His popularity is also due to his personal traits, those of a fiery revolutionary, eminent scholar and, generally, great yet simple man. He had a distinctive, profound ability for understanding the laws governing social development. His bonds with the people were indissoluble and he was infinitely devoted to their

interests. Finally, he combined the qualities of a theoretician of genius with a remarkable aptitude for practical planning.

Of particular interest in Lenin's life is that period when he headed the Soviet Government. He had to tackle tasks of unprecedented complexity. For the first time in world history a workers' and peasants' state initiated revolutionary transformations in economy, politics and culture. It was necessary to define the forms of social transformation and the tempo of their realisation, and evolve the proper relationship between the working class and the peasantry.

Lenin's practical activities as head of the Soviet Government were decisive for charting the ways and means of socialist construction, for evolving a new style in the functioning of the apparatus of state government.

CHAPTER ONE

THE BOLSHEVIK PARTY BECOMES RUSSIA'S RULING PARTY

Formation of Soviet Government

On the 24th of October 1917 (old style), the bourgeois paper *Novoye Vremya* (New Times) featured a wordy article which said: "Let us presume for the sake of argument that the Bolsheviks will win. Who will govern us then? Perhaps cooks, those connoisseurs of cutlets and steaks? Or firemen? Or, perhaps, stable boys and stokers? Or perhaps nannies will rush to attend meetings of the State Council in intervals between laundering diapers? Who then? Who will these statesmen be? Maybe locksmiths will attend to concerns of the theatre, plumbers will look after diplomacy, and carpenters will see to the post and telegraph? Can this happen? No. Is it possible? No. History itself will imperiously answer this outlandish question for the Bolsheviks." As you see the paper gave a categoric negative to all these questions. History, however, ordained otherwise.

On the 24th of October, when the armed uprising was in full swing, the Central Committee of the Bolshevik Party met to discuss the future socialist government. Lenin proposed forming a new cabinet of People's Commissars.

On the 25th of October, at a meeting of the Petrograd Soviet, Lenin said that Russia would have a Soviet government, "our own organ of power in which the bourgeoisie will have no share whatsoever."

On the 26th of October at a meeting of the Party's Central Committee, the question was debated as to which parties should be represented in the new government. Some people who were sceptical of the Bolshevik Party's ability to direct the transformation of society pressed for the formation of a "homogeneous socialist" government in which the Socialist Revolutionaries, Mensheviks and other parties would be represented.

While Lenin did not deny the possibility of a multi-party government, he said that it was absolutely essential to adopt a revolutionary programme. Turning to the waverers he said: "If there are comrades here who haven't the courage and the will to dare what we dare, let them leave with the rest of the cowards and conciliators! Backed by the workers and soldiers we shall go on."

On the evening of that same day Lenin addressed a meeting of the Second All-Russia Congress of Soviets with a report on power and government. The Central Committee of the Bolshevik Party proposed that the meeting consider a government composed only of representatives of its own party headed by Lenin.

At the time the Bolsheviks did not have people experienced in running the government. Some Party functionaries turned down Lenin's proposal to take seats in the new government on the excuse that they had no experience. In the process of one such conversation Lenin was unable to contain himself and burst out laughing as he asked: "Do you think any of us has had such experience?" The first government was comprised of professional revolutionaries.

In the early hours of the 27th of October, the Congress decided to form a Provisional Workers' and Peasants' Government known as the Council of People's Commissars. The direction of the different aspects of state life was entrusted to commissions whose heads comprised the Council of People's Commissars. V. I. Ulyanov-Lenin was elected head of the Government, A. I. Rykov, People's Commissar of the Interior, V. P. Milyutin was made responsible for agriculture, A. G. Shlyapnikov for labour, a Committee comprised of V. A. Ovseyenko-Antonov, N. V. Krylenko and P. Y. Dybenko for Army and Navy affairs, V. P. Nogin for commerce and industry, A. V. Lunacharsky for education, I. I. Skvortsov-Stepanov for finance, L. D. Bronstein (Trotsky) for foreign affairs, G.I. Oppokov (Lomov) for justice, I.A. Teodorovich, for food, N. P. Avilov (Glebov) for post and telegraph, and I. V. Djugashvili (Stalin) for nationalities affairs. The post of People's Commissar for railways and transport temporarily remained vacant. During that period the Mensheviks and Socialist Revolutionaries instigated an attempt to abolish Soviet power "by peaceful means." Through the all-Russian Executive Committee of the Railwaymen's Union they advocated forming a "homogeneous socialist government" from representatives of all "Soviet parties" up to the "Popular Socialists." Ignoring the decisions of the Second Congress of the Soviets, this body suggested establishing a "plenipotentiary organ of the entire democracy" to which the intended government right up to the Constitutent Assembly would be accountable. These demands were stated in an ultimatum which was presented to the Soviet Government with the stipulation that if it were turned down, the alternative would be a general strike of railwaymen.

These developments unfolded at a time when both on the approaches to Petrograd and inside the city itself a sharp struggle was being waged against White Guard counter-revo-

lution, while in Moscow and in other cities there was stubborn fighting to establish Soviet power. In these circumstances it was most important to win time in order to consolidate Soviet power, bring home to the masses its first decrees, and arouse the masses to defend the revolution.

On the 29th of October the Bolshevik Central Committee met to discuss the above-mentioned ultimatum. It was decided to negotiate in the belief that the composition of the government and the All-Russia Central Executive Committee could be enlarged. The terms for negotiation were obligatory recognition of decisions of the Second Congress of the Soviets and its decrees and also the government's responsibility before the Central Executive Committee as the supreme body of power. A delegation consisting of Kamenev, Sokolnikov and Ryazanov — the last-named from the Central Executive Committee — was appointed to attend these negotiations.

These negotiations distinctly disclosed the anti-Soviet stand of the railwaymen's union and the forces behind it. Matters went so far as to propose replacing Lenin as head of the Council of People's Commissars.

Despite this patently hostile stand, the delegation with Kamenev at its head, violating the Central Committee's directives, agreed to continue negotiations to form a government on the basis of the railwaymen union's platform.

On the 1st of November the Central Committee held an enlarged meeting with Lenin in the chair attended by members of the government, representatives of the Executive Committee of the Petrograd Committee, the military organisation and the trade unions. Kamenev's notification as to the position taken by the delegation at the talks evoked determined protests from the majority present. Noting that the conciliatory parties were negotiating in order to undermine Soviet power, the Central Committee, in view of the already issued Central Executive Committee resolution on negotiations, allowed its repre-

sentatives to take part in them. Now the aim of the talks was to completely expose the policy of the conciliators and terminate attempts to organise a coalition government.

Sustaining a defeat in the Central Committee the opposition, including Kamenov, Zinovyev, Rykov, Milyutin and Nogin, transferred the arena of struggle to the Central Executive Committee. As chairman of this Committee, Kamenev got the Bolshevik faction in it no take a decision which ran counter to the Central Committee line. In response to the Central Committee's categoric demand that Kamenev, Rykov, Zinovyev, Milyutin and Nogin abide by its decision, they declared that they would withdraw from the Central Committee. On that same day People's Commissars Nogin, Rykov, Milyutin and Teodorovich resigned from the government.

On the 7th of November 1917 *Pravda* published a Central Committee Appeal to all Party members and working people which had been drawn up by Lenin. It sternly castigated the deserters and scabs of the Revolution. On the following day the Central Committee decided to recall Kamenev from his post as Chairman of the All-Russia Central Executive Committee. At Lenin's suggestion Y.M. Sverdlov was nominated to this office. Meanwhile the Council of People's Commissars inducted new men. G.I. Petrovsky, who had just come in from the Ukraine, was appointed People's Commissar of the Interior. A.G. Shlikhter was made People's Commissar for agriculture.

The first Soviet People's Commissars had a very difficult time running their respective institutions. Nor did the Council of People's Commissars itself have any experience in the organisation of work. At the outset this body met irregularly; only on the 15th of November was it decided that the People's Commissars reside in the appropriate ministries and confer at Smolny in the evening. From that day on the Council met almost every evening in Lenin's study on the second floor at

Smolny. These meetings usually began between 6 and 8 p.m. and not infrequently went on till long past midnight.

Lacking experience in government administration at the outset many members of the new Soviet cabinet employed methods of agitation and not infrequently issued general declarations instead of precise business-like decisions. Lenin did his utmost to transform the Council into a body providing really effective leadership and functioning precisely and smoothly. He could not stand bombastic declarations. M.N. Skrypnik, Secretary of the Council of People's Commissars, who had seen Lenin close up at Council meetings recollected later: "He looked most prosy when, with a disapproving bored face slightly turned away, he listened to a speaker uttering high-flown revolutionary phrases. More than that, he would look with vexation at a comrade indulging in revolutionary ardour to cover up the inability to take a practical business-like approach."

One day the Council of People's Commissars discussed the question of industrial recovery in Petrograd. The speaker, A.G. Shlyapnikov, painted a tempting picture of industrial development in the capital but no Lenin's plain-spoken questions as to whether factories manufactured nails, whether they had enough raw materials, enough fuel, he could say nothing. Greatly indignant Lenin emphasised that now was not the time to engage in bombastic and illusory schemes. "In this respect we must do practical spade work," Lenin said. "Where do we have the nails, the ploughs, the textiles? And how and with what have you ensured their production for the village?"

At the outset, the People's Commissars used to include on the agenda of Council meetings nearly every aspect of affairs that were the concern of their own commissariats. This naturally overburdened the Council with an immense number of minor affairs which did not call for collective discussion. In mid-December 1917, Lenin drew up a special set of instruc-

tions specifying the procedure for placing items on Council meeting agendas. This document provided clear directions as to what questions could be put before the Council and how they should be prepared for discussion.

Lenin resolutely combated every manifestation of disorganisation in the Council's activities. He paid particular attention to the matter of having the Soviet Government's decisions thoroughly debated and before meetings liked to discuss with the comrades present the resolution that was being drafted.

Great difficulties had to be overcome also in setting up the appropriate apparatus for the Council. V.D. Bonch-Bruyevich was appointed office manager of the Council and N.P. Gorbunov, a young Communist, its secretary. Gorbunov had later the following to say about these first days in his new office. "I had not the slightest notion of what I was to do and generally of secretarial duties. Somewhere I confiscated a typewriter on which it took me quite a long time to bang out papers with two fingers, it being impossible to find a typist. Elsewhere I dug up a room. I began to recruit a staff which at the outset consisted only of myself and then of another two or three people."

However, little by little the apparatus took shape. Lenin demanded of the secretarial workers of the Council precise, diligent and accurate work, often personally showing how one or another assignment could and should be done. He knew how to encourage a novice and showed concern for the staff.

Thanks to Lenin's talent for organisation, he was able within a short space of time to transform the Council of People's Commissars into a smoothly functioning executive top body of the Soviet state.

CHAPTER TWO

FASHIONING THE NEW SOCIETY

Lenin and Popular Creative Endeavour

Lenin regarded stimulation of popular activity and enlistment of the masses in the organisation of government as the key to success in the effort to achieve society's socialist transformation initiated by the October Revolution.

Never before had the workers and peasants been so interested in developing production as now, after taking possession of the factories and the land. Never before had the working people ever taken part in running the state. Now the state was directed by a Party which together with the people had passed through nearly 20 years of grim arduous struggle against tsarism and the bourgeoisie, had demonstrated with the blood of its finest sons its devotion to the people. No wonder the Soviet Government was called a workers' and peasants' government; its doors were wide open to workers, soldiers and peasants.

Time and time again Lenin stressed the importance of the collective experience of the masses for the successful construction of socialism.

"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."

Lenin scathingly criticised all who took a snobbish disdainful attitude to the people, who thought that all they had to do was teach the people. He formulated the following key precepts as to the norms of life for a political figure and statesman in socialist society:

"Living in the *midst* of the people.
Knowing the people's *mood.*
Knowing *everything.*
Understanding the people.
Having the right approach.
Winning the *absolute* trust of the people.

The leaders must not lose touch with the people they lead, the vanguard must not lose touch with the entire army of labour."

Lenin held that to establish bonds with the masses, to study the experience of the people, the Party and state must take advantage first of all of the Soviets and the trade unions which embraced diverse segments of the population, served to rally them together and educate them. They, as Lenin pointed out, comprise "on the whole... a formally non-communist, flexible and relatively wide and very powerful proletarian apparatus, by means of which the Party is closely linked up with the *class* and the *masses,* and by means of which, under the leadership of the Party, the *class dictatorship* is exercised."

Lenin as no one else was able to glean from conversations with visitors the mood of the worker and peasant masses.

The receptionist's secretary — there was such an office in the Council of People's Commissars — I.V. Dukhvensky-Osipov recollected later that the reception office was ever "full of diverse visitors. All wanted to see Vladimir Ilyich and each one wanted to talk only with him personally. Here one could meet a professor, an actor, a student, a Red Guard, a worker, a peasant and even a priest. Whole delegations of factory workers came and there were some peasants from the outlying districts with different requests. Though extremely pressed for time, Lenin allotted special hours to see peasants. They turned up in the reception room of the head of the government, clad in padded jackets and bast shoes, would put their bags on the floor against the wall and excitedly whisper to one another, waiting until invited to see the Chairman of the Council People's Commissars himself. They never waited long. Lenin would kindly greet them and start up a conversation that was equally interesting to both peasants and the head of the government."

The peasant O.I. Chernov who saw Lenin several times recollected those memorable days: "What makes Lenin great? It is this: He listened to me not because he regarded me as some extraordinary personality, but because through me he listened to all the peasants."

The many letters addressed to the Council of People's Commissars were highly instrumental for Lenin's contact with the masses. The mail came piling in. Nevertheless each writer, just as each visitor, received exhaustive explanations on questions that worried him. They would leave satisfied even when it was found that their request could not be granted.

Secretary of the Council of People's Commissars M.N. Skrypnik recalls how she once had to explain to peasant delegates that they were not right in asking to be given beet plant-

ations for sowing wheat. The peasants disagreed with her and asked to be given a chance to talk to Lenin, who would "decide the matter fairly." When they came out they were "indeed intoxicated with this conversation and contact with Bolshevik No. 1. These were people from the black earth belt who were accustomed not to trust urban folk and who were wary of everything. Notwithstanding, Lenin's power of intellect and charm had an overwhelming impact on them." "I saw how enchanted they were with this contact, with the living source of thought of a genius. One of the peasants," Skrypnik adds, "saying good-bye, observed, 'we now have a wise and clever ruler who knows what he is about when it comes to the peasants too'."

This knowledge of the popular mood and the practical experience of socialist construction in the localities was derived not only from personal meetings and conversations but also from newspapers. Lenin began his day as a rule by reading the papers. He scanned numerous Moscow and provincial publications greatly appreciating them as a source of information about popular sentiment, fulfilment of government decisions and local experience and initiative on the part of institutions and individual workers. With exceptional interest he studied peasant letters published in the papers, terming them "genuine human documents."

This living contact with the people, this excellent knowledge of their genuine interests and sentiments enabled him to draft scientifically substantiated political recommendations.

It is interesting to note that socialist nationalisation of the factories began with the enactment of the Decree on Workers' Control. This was not fortuitous. In his report in November 1918 to the 6th All-Russia Extraordinary Congress of Soviets, Lenin said, summing up the path Soviet power had traversed: "We did not decree socialism immediately throughout industry,

because socialism can only take shape and be consolidated when the working class has learned how to run the economy and when the authority of the working people has been firmly established. Socialism is mere wishful thinking without that. That is why we introduced workers' control..."

When the appropriate draft of the Decree on Workers' Control was being worked out in the October days of 1917, some trade union functionaries suggested that Lenin incorporate special paragraphs which would strictly regulate the functions of the organs of workers' control. However, he turned them down, profoundly trusting the creative abilities of the people. He said it was not necessary to limit the initiative of the masses, to place obstacles in the way of the working class. True enough, the Decree on Workers' Control did not furnish any special instructions on how to implement such control and did not regulate the rights and duties of its bodies, on the contrary leaving them a free hand to display their own initiative. What was raised was only the overall task of exercising control in the interests of crushing the sabotage of counter-revolutionary elements and of paving the way for the socialist nationalisation of industry. By introducing workers' control, Lenin said in January 1918, "... 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."

Experience has confirmed how profoundly right Lenin was. The workers approached the organisation of control as true thrifty managers doing all in their power to preserve the property of the entire people and prevent economic catastrophe.

Lenin's Decree on the Land which was drawn up on the basis of peasant mandates and his approach to the solution of the agrarian problem, also portended his faith in the masses, in the people's ability to tackle highly intricate socio-economic problems.

Lenin guided himself by the interests of the masses in the nationalities policy as well. Only granting the right to self-determination to the previously oppressed peoples, nations and nationalities of Russia could rally the working folk around the slogans of the Soviet Government and get them to support social reforms. In one of the first acts of the Soviet Government, the Declaration of the Rights of the Peoples of Russia, which Lenin drew up on the 2nd of November 1917, it was officially announced that the government firmly intended to emancipate immediately all nations and nationalities without exception. This document proclaimed the following underlying principles of Soviet power's nationalities policy: Equality and sovereignty of the peoples of Russia, their right to free self-determination up to secession and the formation of an independent state, the repeal of national, religious privileges and restrictions and the free and unhampered development of national minorities and ethnic groups.

The actual moves taken by the Soviet Government to grant independence to Finland, the Baltic Republics and Poland and to establish equitable relations with the Ukraine, Byelorussia and the other nations all contributed to the successful solution of the enormous historic task of rallying together the peoples making up the Russian empire around the slogans and tasks of the socialist revolution.

The enemies of the proletarian revolution maliciously predicted that the Bolsheviks would fail to hold power for more than a few days as they had no army, no money, no intelligentsia and nobody in the ministries. They consoled themselves by claiming that the "'ordinary people" would fail to cope with the task of organisation and government. However, Lenin and the Bolshevik Party had faith in the organising talent of the working man, in the ability of the people to decisively crush the resistance of exploiters and realise that they were the ruling class. "But the Revolution of October 1917 is strong, vi-

able and invincible," Lenin wrote a mere two months after its victory, "because it *awakens* these qualities, breaks down the old impediments, removes the worn-out shackles, and leads the working people onto the road of independent creation of a new life."

First Reforms

Having taken over political power in the country, the Bolshevik Party set about effecting a programme of social transformations which focused on the nationalisation of the key economic branches, of large-scale industry and the banks. As Lenin emphasised we knew with scientific accuracy that private ownership of the means of production was doomed by history and that the exploiters would inevitably be expropriated but, "... we could not know the forms of transformation or the rate of development of concrete reorganisation."

In one of his speeches in early December 1917, Lenin observed:

"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 Communist Party sought to nationalise the banks and industry gradually, as the necessary conditions matured. Lenin said it was possible to conclude an agreement with the bourgeoisie in order to make full use of their experience in the management of large-scale machine production. He believed that the workers could offer a kind of indemnity to the biggest, talented, organisationally most capable businessmen who were

prepared to serve Soviet power and conscientiously help to set socialist production afoot.

The Bolshevik Party insistently and perseveringly strove to turn to account the experience of bourgeois experts and to win them over to Soviet power. In December 1917 workers in the leather trades opened negotiations with the factory owners concerning the reorganisation of the Central Leather Committee centre for the regulation of production and the allocation of raw materials and leather goods that had been established prior to the October Revolution. After protracted negotiations in which Lenin also took part an agreement was reached to give two-thirds of the seats on this Committee to workers' organisations and a third of the seats to the businessmen.

The example of the leather workers was followed by the textile workers and then by the personnel of sugar refineries. There thus came into being peculiar kinds of organisations which, though operating under the control of Soviet power, included representatives of the bourgeoisie. This was a form of state capitalism.

The objective state of the country at the time dictated the need for state capitalism. The chaos and ruin of the imperialist war, of the criminal system of economic management obtaining under tsarism and the bourgeoisie, the dislocation of the transport network, the financial crisis and the rupture of economic contacts led to disorganisation of even those beginnings of state regulation of economy which were to be observed in Russia before the Revolution.

Lenin regarded state capitalism as a means of combating petty bourgeois elements and of subordinating them to state regulations. "State capitalism," he wrote, "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."

Lenin kept a close eye on attempts to set up state-capitalist institutions and himself took a hand in drafting the charters of these institutions. He emphasised repeatedly that matters were proceeding best where such institutions had already been formed as in the case of the leather, textile and sugar-refinery workers.

In November 1917 the Soviet Government started negotiations with a group of capitalists led by A. P. Meshchersky to organise a trust of engineering and metallurgical plants. The Sormovo-Kolomna trust which practically was owned by Meshchersky, included nearly all Russian locomotive building works as well as the metallurgical plants in Central Russia. Meshchersky's plants employed some 60,000 workers.

When negotiating with this man the Soviet Government presumed that the formation of a state-capitalist trust in the field of transport machine building would serve as a transition measure towards nationalisation of this industry in general and help to immediately tackle the development of locomotive and railway car building. An agreement with the Meshchersky group would provide the Soviet state with a ready apparatus for accounting, supervision and technical administration and would make it possible to turn to good use the technical and managerial abilities of bourgeois experts. Also of no mean importance was Meshchersky's own popularity with the bourgeoisie.

Meshchersky himself recollected later that in November 1917 he was invited to Smolny by the People's Commissar of Labour Shlyapnikov. Present at this first meeting were such leading Soviet economic executives as V. P. Nogin, P. G. Smidovich and Y. Larin. At this conference Meshchersky

received the proposal to draw up a draft of the trust's organisation. Shortly afterward he produced a draft for a large-scale industrial amalgamation to be known as the "Russian National Society of United Metallurgical, Machinery, Mechanical, Shipbuilding, Locomotive and Railway-car building plants."

In this fashion unquestionable success was achieved and an influential group of capitalists expressed readiness to negotiate to co-operate with the Soviet Government; in turn the government consented to the establishment of a state-capitalist trust and to the gradual reorganisation of a leading branch of Russian economy.

In early 1918 Soviet economic agencies had talks with representatives of mill owners with a view to entitling them to grain procurement provided the state grain monopoly was observed.

The Decree on Workers' Control, one of the first legislative acts promulgated by the Soviet Government in industry, proceeded from the premise of gradual social transformations. The prime aim of workers' control over production and distribution was not immediate nationalisation but the provision of conditions for the complete abolition of bourgeois ownership of the means of production in favour of ownership by the entire people.

So in the first few months after the October Revolution the Bolsheviks did allow for a while bourgeois ownership under the control of the proletarian state. "...the state power," Lenin indicated later, "made an attempt to pass, as gradually as possible, breaking up as little of the old as possible, to the new social relations while adapting itself, as much as possible, one may say, to the conditions then prevailing."

However, the original scheme that the Soviet Government had drafted for gradual social reforms was not fated to fully

materialise. The bourgeoisie themselves were to blame. The big factory owners resorted to sabotage and tried to ruin production, meanwhile spending heavily to back up armed counter-revolutionary insurrections. A few days after the victory of the revolution, on the 28th of October 1917, representatives of nearly all the groups of Russian monopoly capital met at the Petrograd society of factory owners to discuss the one and only question: tactics to pursue in the new conditions. Though many people spoker the main idea was to stage a wholesale lock-out as the cardinal means of fighting the revolution. "The only reliable method," one of the speakers said, "which the socialist ministers will fail to cope with is a lock-out."

The bourgeoisie and their main political party of the Cadets eschewed the very possibility of agreement with Soviet power. They thought the revolution of the workers and peasants would collapse the moment they threatened to starve the rebelling slaves with hunger. To the Decree on Workers' Control the businessmen reacted by quitting the factories, looting property and selling their enterprises to foreigners.

The bourgeoisie unleashed a civil war in the country. All anti-Soviet actions were masterminded by the Cadet Party, a big bourgeois Party which had enormous funds and a well-ramified network of local branches at its disposal. All counter-revolutionary revolts and insurrections were connected in one way or another with this Party.

On the 28th of November 1917, the Council of People's Commissars adopted its Decree on the Arrest of the Leaders of the Civil War Against the Revolution. "Members of leading bodies of the Cadet Party, as a party opposing the people, are liable to arrests and trial by revolutionary tribunal," said the Decree.

In such circumstances the Bolshevik Party had to reconsider previously stated plans for social transformations.

After the sabotage of the officials of the State Bank was crushed in mid-November 1917, the Soviet Government presented owners of private banks with an ultimatum which offered them the alternative of either working under the control of the Council of People's Commissars or of getting no more money from the State Bank. The bankers made the gesture of signing the text of the Agreement, hoping that they would be able to continue the old tactics of sabotage; indeed, private banks managed to issue money to pay fictitious bills and also transfer enormous sums to local offices from where they reached the pockets of the ringleaders of counter revolutionary gangs. This policy of sabotage compelled the Soviet Government to retaliate.

On the morning of the 14th of December 1917 Red Guards occupied all private banks. In the evening of the same day Lenin explained at a meeting of the All-Russia Central Executive Committee the purpose of the measures taken by the Soviet Government: "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."

The same thing was true of industry. In the very first days after the victory of the Great October Socialist Revolution worker delegations petitioned the Council of People's Commissars to nationalise their enterprises because the proprietors were guilty of sabotage. I. Morozkin and A. Timofeyev, two workers of the *Likino Manufaktura* textile mills, notified the Council that Smirnov, the proprietor of the mills was sabotaging production and had threatened to lock out several

thousand workers. The delegates asked that the factory be confiscated from the proprietor and made the property of the state.

On the 17th of November 1917, Lenin signed a decree nationalising the *Likino Manufaktura* textile mills — the first decision on nationalisation in industry. This document said that the Council of People's Commissars henceforth declared the *Likino Manufaktura* textile mills the property of the state as it considered the closing down of the mills impermissible. The Council deemed it imperative to have production continue "in the interests of the economy, the broad masses of consumers and the 4,000 workers and their families."

In early December 1917 a workers' delegation from the Boguslavsky mining region in the Urals came to Moscow to ask the Council of People's Commissars to nationalise the enterprises in their neighbourhood as sabotage by the proprietors threatened complete ruin. On the 6th of December the Council discussed a decree to confiscate the property of the joint-stock society of the Boguslavsky mining area and to nationalise these enterprises "because of the refusal of factory managements to obey the Decree of the Council of People's Commissars on the Introduction of Workers' Control over Production". Subsequently the Soviet Government issued a decree nationalising enterprises now in the Simsky mining factory area. Placed in the charge of the state were also such large factories and plants as the enterprises of the Russo-Belgian Metallurgical Society, the 1886 Electrical Lighting Society, the Nevsky Shipbuilding and Mechanics Society, etc. Between November 1917 and March 1918, 836 industrial establishments were made the property of the worker-peasant state.

The bourgeoisie's sabotage and counter-revolutionary actions compelled the Soviet Government to switch to a policy of rupturing old relations faster than originally intended and

considerably expediting the tempo of nationalisation, required the expropriation of the exploiters by methods of a " 'Red Guard' attack on capital."

Experience has shown how false were the positions of the businessmen who back in November 1917 had negotiated with the Soviet authorities. A.P. Meshchersky, for instance, pursued a policy of sabotage while negotiating with the Soviet Government. The board of his society tried to close down factories, secretly take out raw materials and halt production. On the 20th of November 1917 the Moscow Board of the Society of the Kolomna and Sormovo factories circulated among enterprises a special letter signed by Meshchersky proposing that production at all the Society's factories be stopped as of the 10th of December 1917. This letter presented the personnel with the ultimatum that work at the factories would continue only provided all political struggle ended. In the spring of 1919 Meshchersky demanded that the Soviet Government promise to abolish workers' control and no longer supervise the enterprises under his management. At the same time Meshchersky subsidized anti-Soviet insurrections and sabotaged all undertakings of Soviet power.

The attempt to establish state-capitalist enterprises in the engineering industry was abortive. Negotiations with the Meschersky group fully disclosed that influential capitalists were reluctant to come to an agreement with the Soviet state and honestly co-operate within the framework of state capitalism; the preferred to stake on counter-revolutionary insurrections, on the violent overthrow of workers'-peasants' power.

However, even in conditions when the bourgeoisie made it necessary to expedite social transformations, Lenin invariably emphasised the need to avoid hasty, unprepared nationalisation. He demanded that the workers' organisations take a thoughtful approach to the question of nationalisation. "I told every workers' delegation with which I had to deal when

they came to me and complained that their factory was at a standstill," Lenin recollected later about the first days of work in the Council of People's Commissars right after the October Revolution, "you would like your factory to be confiscated. Very well, we have blank forms for a decree ready, they can be signed in a minute. But tell us: have you learned how to take over production and have you calculated what you will produce? Do you know the connection between what you are producing and the Russian and international market? Whereupon it turns out that they have not learned this yet."

In reminiscences about Lenin, G. I. Lomov, a member of the Presidium of the Supreme Economic Council, relates how Lenin had to sign an interminable number of decrees nationalising various factories. However, each time he emphasised that it was far easier to nationalise a factory than to run what had been nationalised and posed most resolutely the question of systematizing administration.

In the very first months after the victory of the socialist revolution, the Soviet Government continued to pave the way for the nationalisation of such leading branches as the metallurgical, oil and coal-mining industries. There were a number of factors that explained this choice of the main trend in Soviet economic policy. Even before the October Revolution Lenin had pointed out that the oil mining and refining industry had to all practical intents already been organised on a state-wide scale. In this field there were all the technical and organisational requisites for nationalisation. The same could be said of the coal-mining and metallurgical industries. Besides, these branches of production played a role of paramount importance in the economy and without their restoration all economic recovery was out of the question.

On the 18th of November 1917 the Council of People's Commissars discussed nationalisation of the Donbas coal industry.

In January 1918 the Council issued a decree nationalising the merchant and river fleets.

When endorsing decrees nationalising factories and plants the Council invariably demanded of the workers of the enterprises in question that they assume definite obligations as regards the organisation of management and production. These obligations included such points as: "...to raise the productivity of all enterprises and operations; to submit an account to the People's Commissar of Commerce and Industry at least once a fortnight; to establish full order and labour discipline at enterprises; to have all products duly recorded and allocated according to the plan issued by the People's Commissariat of Commerce and Industry."

In the spring of 1918 Lenin put before the Soviet Government and the masses new tasks of learning how to administer nationalised enterprises. In that same period decisions were taken to nationalise whole industries such as transport machine-building, the sugar industry, etc.

The question of nationalising the oil industry was raised at a meeting of the Council of People's Commissars on the 9th of February 1918 in a draft calling for the organisation of publicly owned oil-fields. The Supreme Economic Council was authorised to draw up a plan for the nationalisation of the oil industry. The respective decree was worked out over several months with attention concentrated on establishment of bodies of control and management, enlistment of bourgeois experts and guaranteeing of the continuous operation of the fields.

On the 20th of June 1918, the Council of Peoples' Commissars endorsed the decree nationalising the industry. At Lenin's insistence the decree contained a special clause making all offices responsible for the preservation of the property of oil enterprises.

After extensive preparatory work and nationalisation of a number of key industries, there naturally rose the question of completing the nationalisation of the country's entire basic industry.

On the 28th of June 1918 V. I. Milyutin, a member of the Presidium of the Supreme Economic Council, put before the Council of People's Commissars a draft decree for the nationalisation of basic industry. This draft was unanimously approved. It stipulated that the bulk of joint-stock companies and societies, large enterprises in the mining, metallurgical, metal-working, textile, electrical, lumber, wood-working, tobacco, rubber, glass, ceramics, leather, cement and other industries were made the property of the entire people and were to be administered by the Soviet State. The Presidium of the Supreme Economic Council was invested with powers of nationalising still other enterprises.

The decree on the nationalisation of all of basic industry did not mean that it at once became the property of the Soviet State. Extensive organisational work had to be done to take possession of the factories and plants in actual fact and to start managing them properly. Hence, this decree provided for leaving enterprises temporarily under the old proprietors or managements making them accountable to the Soviet state for the preservation and proper operation of the respective enterprises. This was to continue until the Supreme Economic Council specially decided to place one or another enterprise in charge of the appropriate state agency.

In appraising the significance of the decree nationalising basic industry, Lenin wrote that in conformity with the long-stipulated plan lenghty preparatory work for nationalisation had been carried out. Approved on the 28th June was a Decree eagerly awaited by the masses of the Russian people. Under the said decree most joint-stock companies and associa-

tions and also a number of large enterprises and plants of national importance were made the property of the Soviet Republic. In this way a key plank in the Bolshevik Party's platform — that of the nationalisation of industry — was carried through.

Land to the Peasants

In the early hours of the 27th of October 1917, the Second All-Russia Congress of the Soviets of Workers' and Soldiers' Deputies endorsed the Decree on Land that Lenin had proposed. A cardinal aspect of national life, whose solution the Provisional Government and petty bourgeois parties had kept putting off under various pretexts, was raised by the Bolshevik Party on the very first day it assumed power.

"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," Lenin said in his report on the agrarian question. The draft provided for the immediate abolition of landlord ownership. As a directive in carrying out agrarian reforms Lenin proposed incorporating in the Decree a peasant mandate on the land drawn up on the basis of 242 local peasant mandates. Some Bolsheviks were embarrassed by the question that in a number of provisions the Decree on Land reflected the programmatic demands of the Socialist Revolutionaries, while the mandate itself was completely Socialist Revolutionary. To these doubts Lenin replied as follows: "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."

On the 30th of October 1917, on behalf of the Council of People's Commissars Lenin signed a wireless message "Calling Everyone!" which spoke of the formation of the new government and of its determination to crush the resistance of counter-revolution. The appeal of the Council of People's Commissars to the people wound up with the notification that the Second Congress of Soviets had proposed initiating peace negotiations and had declared the immediate transfer of all landlord estates into the hands of the peasant deputies. The Decree on Land was published in the papers and broadcast. Thousands of propagandists left for the countryside.

In his recollections V. D. Bonch-Bruyevich related that when drafting the Decree on Land Lenin had said: "Let them now try to take the land away from the peasants! The peasants will now be with us and the dictatorship of the proletariat will become firm and invincible."

As the upshot of the realisation of the Decree on Land the peasants were delivered from the varied forms of feudal exploitation and received gratis more than 150 million hectares; they were also freed of the annual payment of lease-hold fees to estate owners, to the sum of 700 million roubles, and from a debt of around 3,000 million roubles to the Land Bank. Moreover the peasants expropriated tools and equipment to the sum of roughly 300 million roubles that had previously belonged to the landlords.

Carrying further the Decree on Land, on the 9th of February 1918 the Council of People's Commissars and the All-Russia Central Executive Committee enacted a law nationalising the land. At Lenin's insistence this law incorporated a number of important paragraphs intended to promote socialist forms of farming. Under the Law of February 9th the land was apportioned out among the peasants either on the basis of a work rate, that is according to the number of able-bodied

persons in a family, or according to a consumer rate, that is according to the number of dependents in the family.

After the peasants got the land and the tasks of abolishing feudal survivals were resolved, a new phase of socialists transformations started in the countryside. In the summer of 1918 a blow was struck at the kulaks, the biggest exploiting class in the village.

In its policy the Soviet Government proceeded from the premise that full economic liquidation of the kulaks was possible only on the basis of collectivising all peasant farms, in so far as small commodity production would remain a social nutritive medium for the kulaks. However, the extremely acute character of the class struggle in the countryside necessitated a decisive offensive against the kulaks long before the creation of conditions for wholesale collectivisation. Still at the time of the partitioning of landlord estates the kulaks had tried might and main to obstruct the proper implementation of the land reform and grabbed the best plots. All eyewitnesses of the spontaneous anarchic ransacking of landed estates noted that the kulaks had grabbed tools and equipment. Peasants in the Orel province said that on looting the landed estates the kulaks had intimated to the peasants that they would not have the wherewithal to pay for and feed a good cow and would be well advised to surrender the animals to the Kulaks. The poor peasants agreed to that and the rich peasants acquired the seized property and land for a song.

In the spring of 1918 the kulaks began an offensive against the revolution. They stowed away grain, preferring to let it rot rather than surrender it. Not content with organising a ring of hunger around proletarian centres, the kulaks engineered armed revolts. The Soviet Government called upon the working class and the poorest peasants to take determined action and fight the kulaks. In an appeal to the workers, Lenin wrote: "These spiders have grown fat a the expense of the

peasants ruined by the war, at the expense of the starving workers. These leeches have sucked the blood of the working people and grown richer as the workers in the cities and factories starved. These vampires have been gathering the landed estates into their hands; they continue to enslave the poor peasants.

"Ruthless war on the kulaks! Death to them! Hatred and contempt for the parties which defend them — the Right Socialist Revolutionaries!"

Lenin regarded the grain question as the crucial issue at the time. The struggle for grain was a struggle for socialism. Grain was necessary to keep the working class alive, to enable factories and plants to operate, to supply the Red Army, to support the hungry village poor. Meanwhile the counter-revolutionary elements sought to capitalise on food difficulties in order to throttle the revolution with the hand of hunger and topple Soviet power.

On the 9th of May 1918 the All-Russia Central Executive Committee issued a Decree on the Organisation of Food Supplies. As Lenin noted this decree had three main ideas and slogans. These were: to centralise food supplies, unite the proletariat and organise the village poor. This was necessary to realise the basic principles of the Soviet state, and strengthen the positions of the proletariat in the countryside.

On the same day Lenin signed a draft resolution of the Council of People's Commissars to mobilise the workers to fight hunger. Lenin regarded the mass worker detachments being sent to the countryside to bring back grain as a tangible force that could help the village poor in the struggle against the kulaks, crush black marketeering and speculation and prevent subversion of the state grain monopoly. He termed the sending of workers to the rural areas a crusade by front-ranking workers to consolidate local organs of power, assist Soviet

power in accounting and control and in the directing of the village poor.

On the 1st of June 1918, the All-Russia Central Executive Committee issued a Decree on the Organisation of the Village Poor and the Supplying of Them with Grain, Staples and Agricultural Implements.

The Mensheviks and Socialist Revolutionaries came out against the emergency policy of the People's Commissariat of Food and tried to represent this undertaking of the Bolshevik Party as the beginning of armed struggle by the towns and cities against the villages. Komkov, one of the leaders of the Left-wing Socialist Revolutionaries, stated at the 5th All-Russia Congress of Soviets that the food detachments and Poor Peasants Committees would be evicted from the villages. Replying to Komkov and his supporters, Lenin said: "It is false to say that this is a fight against the peasantry! ...we are not even fighting the middle peasant, let alone the poor peasant. All over Russia, the middle peasants have only the smallest surpluses of grain... Before the revolution their life was one of unrelieved want and oppression. Our policy towards these middle peasants is one of agreement."

Lenin paid particular attention to the formation of food detachments comprised of Petrograd or Moscow workers, since they were the most class-conscious and had the greatest revolutionary experience.

Within literally a few weeks the Soviet state organised a mass workers' crusade into the countryside. In 1918 a total of some 60,000 workers were enlisted in the food detachments. They were mostly from Petrograd, Moscow, Nizhni Novgorod, Tula, Ivanovo-Voznesensk and Yaroslavl.

The food detachment workers gave a considerable boost to revolutionary propaganda in the village. They explained to the toiling peasants the need to have their own organisation of the village poor and proved that the urban proletariat and

rural proletarians and semi-proletarians shared common interests. They explained to the poor peasants the sum and substance of the grain monopoly and the food dictatorship. They helped to consolidate in the village those bodies of the proletarian dictatorship known as the poor peasants committees made up of the poorest peasants and farm labourers. With the support of these bodies the workers enlisted the help of the middle peasantry. Lenin said: "The formation of the Poor Peasants' Committees in the rural districts was the turning point; it showed that the urban working class... had progressed from this to the much more difficult and historically more noble and truly socialist task — that of carrying the enlightening socialist struggle into the rural districts, and reaching the minds of the peasants as well."

The work done by the food detachments and the Poor Peasants' Committees served to undermine the economic influence of the kulaks in the rural areas and got the middle peasants to side with the Soviets.

Cultural Achievements to Serve People

After the victory of the Great October Socialist Revolution the bourgeoisie tried to discredit the new Soviet power by circulating the monstrous slander that Russian culture was being destroyed. A few days after the armed uprising the bourgeois paper *Volya Naroda* (Will of the People) featured a dispatch reporting the destruction of the Winter Palace. "The unconceivably senseless but steady, seemingly preconceived orgy of destruction continued for several hours," the paper claimed. "It is estimated that roughly 500 million roubles worth of historic treasures were destroyed in the Winter Palace," it added.

On the 29th of October 1917, *Pravda,* organ of the Central Committee of the Bolshevik Party, noted, citing this bit of inflammatory falsehood: "In actual fact according to a document certified by a notary public and presented to six American newsmen who went into the Winter Palace and who were there for several hours, no violence, no ruin and looting occurred in the Winter Palace; meanwhile the Americans expressed their admiration for the revolutionary sailors and soldiers." One of the six, incidentally was John Reed, author of the book *Ten Days that Shook the World.*

Together with the storming columns of workers, Red Guards and sailors, John Reed and his comrades entered the Winter Palace. He recollects that when some of the Red Guards tried to break open crates with their gun butts to get out carpets, curtains, linen and chinaware somebody shouted: "Comrades! Don't touch anything! Don't take anything! This is the property of the People!" Immediately twenty voices were crying: 'Stop! Put everything back! Don't take anything! Property of the People.' Many hands dragged the spoilers down. Damask and tapestry were snatched from the arms of those who had them; two men took away the bronze clock. Roughly and hastily the things were crammed back in their cases, and self-appointed sentinels stood guard. It was all utterly spontaneous. Through corridors and up staircases the cry could be heard growing fainter and fainter in the distance, 'Revolutionary discipline! Property of the People'..." At once sentinels were posted at all the exits to search the people coming out. All the property in the Winter Palace was being registered. The effort displayed by the workers, soldiers to preserve historic valuables displayed a salient feature of the socialist revolution.

In May 1918 Lenin said: "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, prac-

tical 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."

In tackling the problem of making use of the old culture the Communist Party was motivated by the principles and tenets that Lenin evolved. He taught that the building of socialism must be started on the cultural and economic basis bequeathed by capitalism and with the help of people who had been educated in the old society. "We must take the entire culture that capitalism left behind," Lenin said, "and build socialism with it. We must take all its science, technology, knowledge and art. Without these we shall be unable to build communist society. But this science, technology and art are in the hands and in the heads of the experts." The claim made that the working class could accomplish its tasks without employing the experts of the bourgeois school was one that Lenin called ignorant, self-opinionated prejudice on the part of the bacward segment of the working people.

Much has been written in bourgeois literature abroad as to how "ruthlessly," "mercilessly" Bolsheviks repressed the Russian intelligentsia. However, these claims are not anywhere near reality at all. On the contrary, Soviet power showed the utmost humanity towards the hostile segment of intelligentsia, a fact that was admitted even by the Communist Party's ideological adversaries. In a book published in Prague in 1921 under the title of the *Change of Landmarks,* Bobrishchev-Pushkin, one of the leaders of the bourgeois intelligentsia, said:

"The entire dose of liberty originally given the intelligentsia was all the time used for what is juridically termed the desire to overthrow the existing state system. What government would tolerate that? But the Soviet Government did tolerate that and for a long time."

The proletarian revolution cleaved the Russian intelligentsia into two camps. One segment, fewer in number but nevertheless the most progressive segment, understood what progressive changes in Russia's destiny would be wrought by the new social system and devoted their knowledge and experience to serving Soviet power.

Among the first to ardently support Soviet power was the world-famous natural scientist Klement Arkadyevich Timiryazev. A short while before his death he told his doctor Veisbrod, a member of the Communist Party: "I always sought to serve humanity and I am glad that at this crucial moment for me I see you, a representative of the Party that indeed serves humanity. I trust in the Bolsheviks who are implementing Leninism and I am sure that they are working for the happiness of the people and will bring them to happiness. I was always yours and always with you. Convey to Vladimir Ilyich my admiration of the brilliant way in which he has resolved global issues of theory and practice. I consider it a great good fortune for me to be his contemporary and a witness of his glorious activity. I bow my head to him and I want everybody to know that."

Meanwhile for the poet Vladimir Mayakovsky the question of whether to accept the revolution or not did not exist. "It's my revolution," he at once declared. That fine Russian poet Alexander Blok also accepted the revolution at once. When asked by a bourgeois newsman whether the intelligentsia would co-operate with the Bolsheviks, Blok at once replied without the slightest hesitation or reservation that they

could and must. Those splendid Russian theatrical personalities E. Vakhtangov and V. Meyerhold also accepted the October Revolution without any reservations. Along with eminent cultural personalities, scientists, artists and writers, thousands of "rank and file" intellectuals, doctors, school teachers, agronomists, artists and actors at once devoted themselves to Soviet power. A. V. Lunacharsky said "we can list with gratitude scores of great names and indicate hundreds, perhaps even thousands, of modests workers who at once or more or less soon but quite sincerely volunteered to work for the defence and construction of the new socialist Fatherland."

The fact that a definite segment of the intelligentsia sided with the revolution was no chance thing. Their fidelity to the finest, truly democratic ideals induced many scientists, writers and artists to break with old world outlooks and make the liberation of the people their goal in life and work. Many representatives of the progressive intelligentsia came to realise that the Bolsheviks truly expressed and defended the interests of the working people.

However, the bulk of the bourgeois intelligentsia adopted a position of animosity to Soviet power and embarked upon sabotage and strikes. This was not fortuitous either. Many intellectuals had close links with the bourgeoisie and nobility, came of this stock, occupied a privileged position in society, were materially well-off and looked at many things through the eyes of their employers. No small number of representatives of the intelligentsia were members of counter-revolutionary parties. They declared war on the workers' and peasants' government and sabotaged all the measures taken by Soviet power.

Lenin wrote in this connection: "The sabotage was started by the intelligentsia and the government officials, the bulk of whom are bourgeois and petty bourgeois... It was inevitable that the workers and peasants should be enraged by the sabo-

tage of the intelligentsia, and if anybody is to 'blame' for this, it can only be the bourgeoisie and their willing and unwilling accomplices.

"Had we 'incited' anybody against the 'intelligentsia,' we would have deserved to be hanged for it. Far from inciting the people against the intelligentsia, we, on the contrary, in the name of the Party, and in the name of the government, urged the necessity of creating the best possible working conditions for the intelligentsia."

There began a persistent, protracted, never-ending struggle on the part of the Bolshevik Party to end the sabotage of the intelligentsia, to win the intelligentsia over to the side of the victorious people. In the process of this struggle punitive measures had to be taken with respect to certain segments of the intelligentsia. However, they were employed with special caution. On the 17th of December 1919 the Presidium of the Vecheka [Security organs — *Ed.*] issued a special order which said that "an expert should be arrested only when it has been established that the aim of his work is to overthrow Soviet power. However, one must not be arrested only for being an aristocrat at one time in the past and employer and exploiter." "We prize everyone who wants to work", Lenin emphasised.

The method of coercion could not become either the sole or main means of securing co-operation with Soviet power from the old intelligentsia. "...it is foolish to imagine that we can solve the problem of organising a new science and technology for the development of the communist society by violence alone."

The plans for the country's economic transformation had a decisive impact in changing the world outlook of the bourgeois intelligentsia. The stupendous schemes for tapping and using Russia's natural productive forces evoked the creative thought of experts and won them over to the new authority. In a letter addressed to Lenin, N. P. Gorbunov, Head of the

Department of Science and Technology under the Supreme Economic Council, described the following interesting episode which took place in November 1918: "After yesterday's conference on the Kara Bugaz and on the role of Baku and the entire Caspian region as a world centre for a future chemical industry, professors who had specially come in from Petrograd for the session stayed on for quite some time with me to discuss in lively enthusiastic tones their new jobs, their new plans and afterwards, totally engrossed, went off home not along the pavement but right in the middle of the road. They themselves are beginning to wax enthusiastic and when this happens they begin to fire their sceptical colleagues. I know our scientists, I must say I have never seen anything like this before."

Each new day brought more and more confirmation of Lenin's idea that, "the engineer's way to communism is different from that of the underground propagandist and the writer, he is guided along by the evidence of his own science, so that the agronomist, the forestry expert, etc., each have their own path to tread towards communism."

Lenin's personal activity was most instrumental in getting the intelligentsia to take a new approach to events. In the very first days after the October Revolution Lenin displayed great concern regarding the enlistment of experts. P. A. Kazmin, an eminent authority in the flour industry, recollects that literally a few days after the victory of the armed uprising he had occasion to meet Lenin. He was asked: "Tell me please to what extent can we rely on your engineering fraternity? What about active counter-revolutionary activity?" When he heard Kazmin's reply, Lenin observed: "Win over the engineers, comrade Kozmin, to Smolny. Without engineers and experts we shall be lost. We shall treat everybody, who volunteers to work better than the capitalists. Then they will understand that they are doing a grand job."

Lenin played a tremendous role in enlisting former officers and generals to join the Red Army. He kept an attentive eye on the activities of old experts, gave them advice and took their advice as well. M.D. Bonch-Bruyevich, a former general of the tsarist army, who sided with the revolution recollected later: "We, old military experts, are indebted to Lenin more than to anyone else for the fact that from the very beginning of the revolution we shared with the people their difficult and thorny road."

Lenin paid exceptional attention to those representatives of the intelligentsia who, though by no means accepting Bolshevik positions, persistently sought their own place in the revolution. Characteristic in this sense is the interest he showed in the lot of the writer Ivan Volny.

This man, a former Socialist Revolutionary, took an active part in the struggle against Soviet power. However, being well familiar with the life of the peasant and having closely observed life in the countryside, Volny realised that the Socialist Revolutionaries could not give the village toiler what Soviet power could. He became disillusioned. However, the local authorities did not trust the writer and put him under arrest several times. On learning of Volny's arrest, Lenin sent a wire to the proper authority: "To the Orel Gubernatorial Executive Committee with a Duplicate to the Malo-Arkhangelsk district Executive Committe dated April 12, 1919. The writer Ivan Volny has been put under arrest. His comrade Gorky implores that the greatest caution be shown in impartial inquiry. Could he be released under proper surveillance? Please telegraph. Chairman of the Council of People's Commissars. Lenin."

Gorky himself relates that Lenin showed him Volny's telegram which said: "I've been arrested again, tell them to let me out." Lenin added: "I read his book and I found it very much to my liking. There is a man for you who, I felt immediately from the first few words, understands the inevitability

of mistakes and is not sore and does not kick up a row because of personal affront. But he has been put under arrest I think for the third time now."

At Lenin's orders, Volny was again released. The moment he came out of jail the writer went to Moscow and straight from the railway station to the Kremlin where he was received by Lenin. V.D. Bonch-Bruyevich, the office manager of the Council of People's Commissars, who was present at this meeting, relates the following : "Lenin got up from the table and gave Ivan Volny a firm handshake, meeting him in a most friendly manner. They talked for more than two hours about everything that he had seen. Volny described in a calm and epic manner both the good things and the bad things. He hid nothing and gave everything as it was.

" 'There is real life for you, not life on paper," Lenin said musingly. He also interested himself in the writer's plans: 'What are you going to do now?'

" 'I would like to roam around Russia, take a look at the Volga and describe everything that is remarkable.'

" 'That's a good thing,' Lenin said, 'If you really want to roam and travel about Russia we will give you a protective certificate to all authorities so that no obstacles be put in your way, so that, on the contrary you be assisted. There you will collect material and later perhaps will write a story about our revolutionary times.'

"Ivan Volny was very excited and thanked Lenin for everything."

The conversation that Volny had with Lenin did not end there. After extensive travels around Russia, he indeed wrote a number of works which showed that he had sincerely joined in the effort to fashion a new life.

The struggle that the Bolshevik Party waged against the "Leftist" pseudo-revolutionary attempts of certain writers and artists to destroy and discard the old culture contributed sig-

nally to the modification of the political outlook of many representatives of the intelligentsia. Lenin invariably emphasised the need to struggle against all who sought to cast off the art of the past. In a conversation with Klara Zetkin he had this to say: "Why should we turn our back on what is truly beautiful and to refuse it as a point of departure only because it is 'old'? Why should we worship for the purposes of further development the new as if it were an idol which we must obey only because it is 'new'?"

The Soviet Government launched a wide-scale campaign to protect the material and culturel heritage. On the 9th of December 1917 the Council of People's Commissars met with Lenin in the chair to discuss among other matters that of allocating 15,000 roubles to the People's Commissariat of Education for the needs of the department in charge of former palaces and museums. At the meeting itself Lenin signed the corresponding decision. Throughout 1918 despite the Civil War that had already begun, the Soviet Government found it possible to allocate 12.5 million roubles to publish the classics, provide more than 800,000 roubles to maintain the public library and give 150,000 roubles for the Rumyantsev Museum in Moscow. The Commission on International Exchanges in scientific and art publications was given 5,000 roubles and the Committee in charge of icon paintings got around 50,000 roubles. Considerable sums were allotted also to the Russian Museum, the Hermitage, the Commission on Art History and other establishments.

The revolution put into the hands of the people invaluable cultural treasures, palaces, museums, relics of architecture and art and picture galleries. However, it was not enough to take control over these treasures, it was also necessary to save them from destruction and to organise a well-conceived system of preservation. Back in November 1917 the Soviet Government was advised of the intention of the former owners

of the Marble Palace in Petrograd to take out artistic treasures. Lenin at once dispatched a special order to the People's Commissariat of Labour in which he said: "Tell the owners of the Marble Palace that the sale and taking of all property of an artistic character from the Palace is prohibited."

In replies to many inquiries from peasants as to what to do with the property of the former landed estates, Lenin said that the district 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."

In the spring of 1918 it was learned that Princess E.P. Meshcherskaya had attempted to sell abroad a highly valuable 15th century Italian painting *The Madonna and Infant* by an artist of the Botticelli school. This question was raised at the Council of People's Commissars which adopted a special decision: "This painting is to be sequestered and recognised as the property of the Russian Socialist Federative Republic, and placed in the charge of one of the national Museums of the Russian Soviet Socialist Federative Republic." This prompted the idea of raising the more general question of enacting a special law against all such actions on the part of former owners of art treasures. On the 19th of September 1918 Lenin signed a Decree of the Council of People's Commissars on the Prohibition of the Export of Artistic and Antique Objects.

Lenin did not only pay exceptional attention to the matter of preserving art objects from plunder but also took care to have damaged old buildings and relics of antiquity restored. As soon as the Soviet Government moved to Moscow, Lenin inspected all the monuments in the Moscow Kremlin and already on the 17th of May 1918 wrote to P.D. Malkov, the commandant of the Kremlin: "I propose that you urgently

have restoration work done on the Vladimir Gates [the Kremlin tower which overlooks the Museum of History], authorising someone of the architects to present the estimates and supervise the job."

From the very outset of its activity to effect Russia's revolutionary renascence, the Bolshevik Party showed itself to be carrier and continuer of the cultural traditions of the Russian and other peoples inhabiting Russia, as a sincere and steadfast champion of the cultural accomplishments of human genius.

To End the War

By October 1917, when the first imperialist war was in its fourth year, the slogan of peace was one of the most popular burning issues of the day. Even when the war was in full swing, Lenin said, when asked what the Bolsheviks would do if they took over power: "...We would propose peace to all the belligerents on condition that freedom is given to the colonies and all peoples that are dependent, oppressed and deprived of rights." And now having become the country's ruling party the Bolsheviks honoured their pledges. The Decree on Peace was the first edict of Soviet power. It proclaimed universal, just, democratic peace without annexations and indemnities. It contained practical proposals to conclude a three months' truce in order to negotiate peace.

The decree that Lenin formulated included a clause that the Soviet Government does not look upon its peace programme as an ultimatum. "An ultimatum," Lenin said at the Second Congress of the Soviets, "may prove fatal to our whole cause... 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... An ultimatum would make the position of our opponents easier." The Soviet Government declared that it was vital to annul all secret compacts and treaties of the tsarist and Provisional Governments and to make their texts widely public.

At 10.35 p.m. on the 26th of October, Lenin's Decree on Peace was put to the vote.

John Reed who attended this meeting of the Second Congress describes the atmosphere there in the following manner: "One delegate dared to raise his hand against but the sudden sharp outburst around him brought it swiftly down... Unanimous. Suddenly by common impulse we found ourselves on our feet, mumbling together into the smooth lifting unison of the *Internationale*."

Tormented and wracked, Russia needed peace. Peace was the most cherished desire of the working classes, who find conquest and the oppression of other peoples alien to them. Peace was needed to consolidate the gains of the October Revolution, to win breathing space for economic recovery and implementation of socialist transformations.

The people acclaimed the news with vast enthusiasm. On the 9th of November 1917, *Pravda* wrote: "You may sigh with relief, comrade soldiers, as the end to your anguish is in sight. Acclaim the coming peace, comrade workers! It is the guarantee of restoration of the ravaged economy.

"Comrade peasants, peace will bring back to the villages your brothers and sons.

"Long live Democratic Peace! Down with all who try to obstruct it and prolong the criminal war."

The Decree on Peace was more than just a pratical programme of action in the foreign policy pursued by the Soviet Government. It formulated the cardinal principles of the socialist state's foreign policy, principles that are based on proletarian internationalism, the idea of peaceful coexistence of

states with different political and social systems, the recognition of equality to all nations, respect for their sovereignty and non-interference in their internal affairs.

Annulment of the tsarist government's clandestine treaties was not just a plain declaration.

One after another *Pravda* published the texts of these documents. This was an important way of enlisting the broad masses throughout the country in the effort for peace, in the struggle against imperialist governments. Information about this leaked into the Western press to become a major factor making for popular interference in the "holy of holies" of the activities of the imperialist governments.

The Soviet government launched an extensive campaign of propaganda for the conclusion of peace. Bolshevik papers and special leaflets were circulated in the Austrian and German armies. In mid-November 1917 the Council of People's Commissars adopted a special appeal which Lenin addressed to the German soldiers. The Soviet Government urged the fighting men of this recently hostile country "to support us with every effort in this struggle for immediate peace and socialism as only socialism can give the working classes in all countries a just and firm peace and heal all the wounds inflicted upon humanity by this criminal war."

The Soviet Government appealed time and again to the Entente and US governments to jointly start negotiations with Germany and Austria-Hungary. The Bolshevik Party sought to conclude universal peace, not a separate peace with Germany. It was the Entente and US governments (who stubbornly ignored all the peace bids from revolutionary Petrograd) who were to blame for the Council of People's Commissars having to initiate separate negotiations with Germany. In these circumstances the Council of People's Commissars decided to make it incumbent upon General Dukhonin, Commander-in-Chief of the Russian Army, to propose an imme-

diate armistice to the German Army. When Dukhonin flatly refused to obey, the Council of People's Commissars dismissed him from the post of Commander-in-Chief and appointed N.V. Krylenko in his stead. At the same time Lenin sent a wireless message to all military units. "The wireless message to all" was the name given to one of these first appeals of the Soviet Government to the soldiers "...The cause of peace is in your hands," Lenin addressed the soldiers. "...Let the regiments at the front immediately elect representatives to start formal negotiations for an armistice with the enemy. The Council of People's Commissars authorises you to do this."

On the 11th of November N.V. Krylenko and A.A. Ioffe, Member of the Central Committee of the Bolshevik Party, set out for the Northern front to enter into direct negotiations with the German Government. In the process of these initial talks an understanding was reached on a truce and a place was appointed, namely the city of Brest-Litovsk, where negotiations were to be continued. On the 15th of November, Soviet newspapers published the government's appeal to the governments and peoples of all the belligerents to join in these negotiations.

Thus did the Soviet Government start its long and weary effort to conclude universal peace. However, very shortly it became clear that the German Government had consented to these talks for its own, far from peace-loving aims. When the Soviet delegation put forward such armistice terms as a ban on all strategic troop movements from one front to another, a six-months' truce on all fronts, etc., peace proposals were sharply rejected by the German delegates. The talks had to be called off and were resumed only ten days later.

Negotiations dragged on and meanwhile an unusually sharp debate over the question of the conclusion of the peace treaty developed inside the Bolshevik Party. Lenin's realistic policy of peace was at once opposed by the pseudo-revolutionary position of the "Left Communists." Some of the func-

tionaries in the Bolshevik Party failed to understand the complex tangle of events and to discern in the concrete situation at the time the formidable danger imperilling the Soviet republic. They thought that in battle with the external enemy Soviet power would be able to win victories as great as those scored over the enemies at home.

Bukharin, Lomov, Uritsky, Bubnov and others claimed that any agreements between the proletarian state and the imperialists would signify betrayal of the international revolutionary movement. They advocated revolutionary war. In practice this could only mean an armed collision between Germany and Soviet Russia which, at that time, did not have in effect even an army of its own, since the old tsarist army was combat-weary, did not want to fight and could not fight. Meanwhile a new army still had to be formed. This war could have been fatal for the revolution; all the gains of the revolution could have been lost.

Trotsky, who was authorised shortly afterwards to head the Soviet delegation to the Brest-Litovsk Peace Conference, was for declaring the war over, demobilising the army, but not concluding a peace treaty. For the politically naïve this proposal might have seemed tempting. The declaration of demobilisation and termination of war was considered the practical conclusion of peace while the refusal to sign the peace treaty itself created the pretence of evading the humiliating terms attached. Trotsky's proposal was based on lack of faith in the powers of the working class of Russia, in its ability to bring the socialist revolution to its victorious consummation.

In his view only a world revolution could save Soviet power. The refusal to conclude peace with Germany would result in the continuation of a war which Russia would have to fight from an extremely disadvantageous position. Thus, to all practical intents the attitude that Trotsky took linked up with the position of the "Left Communists."

The bourgeois and petty bourgeois parties exerted tremendous pressure on the Soviet Government. The Cadets, the Mensheviks, the Socialist Revolutionaries launched in their newspapers and periodicals a furious campaign of slander against the Soviet government.

Meanwhile the difficult complex negotiations continued in Brest-Litovsk. On the 27th of January 1918 the German delegation demanded an explicit answer as to whether Soviet Russia would agree to sign a peace treaty provided Poland, Lithuania, part of Latvia, Estonia and Byelorussia, that had been occupied by German forces in the process of the First World War, were surrendered and also provided it agreed to pay an indemnity of 8,000 million roubles in gold. Trotsky had a definite directive from the Government to sign the peace treaty should an ultimatum be presented. Roughly a month after the events described Lenin recalled his conversation with Trotsky: "...it was agreed between us that we would hold out until the Germans presented an ultimatum and then we would give way... I proposed quite definitely that peace be concluded."

The next day after the Germans presented their ultimatum, Lenin cabled to Trotsky: "You know our standpoint." However, the latter in spite of Lenin's clear directives, in effect rejected the German ultimatum by declaring at the conference: "We shall not sign the peace treaty, will not fight and will demobilise the army." In response the German Government announced the termination of the truce and the resumption of hostilities. German forces crossed the frontline and thrust into the Russian hinterland.

On the evening of the 17th of February 1918 the Central Committee convened a special meeting and together with the Council of People's Commissars conferred throughout the whole day of the 18th of February. The events at the front called for urgent measures. The Russian Army was practically incapable

of putting up any resistance. The front crumbled and the Germans seized stocks of munitions and supplies that were close to the frontline.

At the meeting of the Council of People's Commissars and the Central Committee of the Party there stood the one and only question of immediate peace. "This thing has gone so far that continued sitting on the fence will inevitably ruin the revolution... We cannot afford to wait, which would mean consigning the Russian revolution to the scrap heap," Lenin declared.

At 5 a.m. on the 19th of February the Council of People's Commissars wired to the German Government a declaration of the Soviet Government's preparedness to sign peace on the terms that had been offered at Brest-Litovsk. The German Command's reply was received only on the 23rd of February. But now the peace terms offered were far more cruel and humiliating. The Germans demanded the right to keep not only the territories they had captured previously but also the territories occupied in the process of the offensive started on the 18th of February. On the evening of the 23rd of February *Pravda* published a special evening issue with Lenin's article "Peace or War." "The bitter truth," Lenin wrote, "has now revealed itself with such terrible clarity that it is impossible not to see it... Let everyone know: he who is against an immediate, even though extremely onerous peace, is endangering Soviet power."

Lenin cast all his weight and authority onto the scales of the struggle for concluding an immediate peace treaty. For the first time in the history of his Party and state activity, Lenin went so far as to declare he would resign if his proposals were not accepted. At the Central Committee meeting he said: "I have not the slightest hesitation. I put the ultimatum not in order to withdraw it. I don't want revolutionary phrases." On the 24th of February by a vote of seven against four with

four abstentions the Central Committee adopted Lenin's proposal for the immediate acceptance of the German peace terms.

The Central Committee decision was subsequently endorsed by the All-Russia Central Executive Committee. Finally signed on the 3rd of March 1918 was a peace treaty which went down in history as the Brest Peace. "It is incredibly, unprecedentedly hard to sign an unfortunate, immeasurably severe, infinitely humiliating peace when the strong has the weak by the throat," Lenin wrote then. "...The future, in spite of all trials, is ours."

Between the 6th and 8th of March, 1918 the question of the ratification of the Brest Peace Treaty was discussed at the 7th Emergency Congress of the Party and in mid-March the fourth Emergency All-Russia Congress of the Soviets ratified this document.

The experience of Lenin's struggle against the doctrinaire adventuristic concepts of the "Left Communists" and Trotsky is convincing proof that ability to compromise with the enemy in the interests of the Revolution is as necessary as the ability to organise and mount an offensive.

The conclusion of the Brest peace gave the Soviet government a respite to concentrate on the cardinal tasks of the socialist revolution, those of nationalising industry, effecting socialist reforms in agriculture, and raising the cultural standards of the entire population. However, the respite was all too brief. While the Soviet republic was negotiating peace the Entente and US governments accused the Bolsheviks of betraying the Entente's interests. Seeking to continue hostilities on the Russian-German front, the ruling circles of the Entente countries hoped to throttle the revolution with the hands of the soldiers of Kaiser Germany. When this ruse fell through, the troops of the Entente countries and the USA themselves entered the arena.

Already on the 21st of February 1918, J. Francis, the American Ambassador in Russia, telegraphed to US Secretary of State Robert Lansing that he most positively insisted on the

necessity of taking Vladivostok under their control and of placing Murmansk and Archangelsk under British and French control. He said that history had shown that the Russians could not undertake major movements and score big victories if not under foreign influence and direction. It was the time, he said, for the allies to act.

On the 15th of March the Prime Ministers and Foreign Secretaries of the Entente countries conferred in London and announced non-recognition of the Brest Peace. Also discussed was the question of intervention in the North and East of the Soviet Republic. Already on the 16th of March 1918, on behalf of the Prime Ministers of France, Italy and Britain, British Foreign Secretary Arthur J. Balfour called on the US President to effect allied intervention in Eastern Russia and to get Japanese forces to take part.

In early April Japanese forces landed in the Soviet Far East; meanwhile British forces landed in Archangelsk, and the French army disembarked in the South. In May 1918 the Czech Corps rebelled over a vast territory and the forces of domestic counter-revolution reared their heads. War stood forth as question No. 1 in the country's life. The Soviet Government was obliged to concentrate all its attention and enlist all the working people and all the Party in the defense of the socialist republic by armed force.

CHAPTER THREE

LENIN HEADS THE DEFENCE OF THE SOCIALIST REPUBLIC

War Questions take Priority in Soviet Government Activities

In a speech to a joint Session of the All-Russia Central Executive Committee on the 29th of June 1918, Lenin said: "The whole question of the existence of the Russian Socialist Federative Soviet Republic, the whole question of the Russian socialist revolution has been reduced to a question of war."

In the summer of 1918 it was the Eastern Front that was the key sector. The situation there was made more complex after the betrayal of the Left-wing Socialist Revolutionary Myravyov, the Commander of the Front, who, under the pretext of switching formations to the Russian-German Front, tried to lead them against Moscow. The wavering among the Siberian middle peasantry and Muravyov's anti-Soviet revolt facilitated the operations of the interventionists and White Guards. By mid-July 1918 the enemy had seized a considerable portion of Siberia, the Urals and the Volga Basin. Urgent measures were needed to put down counter-revolution. On the 20th of July 1918, Lenin cabled to Petrograd the demand that as many class-conscious factory workers as possible in that city be mobilised at once to reinforce the Eastern Front. On

the 29th of July the Central Committee met specially to discuss the situation on that front. The resolution adopted said that the "question of the destiny of the Revolution now hangs in the balance on the Volga and in the Urals." Such prominent Party functionaries as V.V. Kuibyshev, S.I. Gusev, I.K. Shternberg, F.I. Goloshchekin, and J.J. Latsis among others were sent to direct military and party work there.

Assessing the role of the Communists working in the front lines, Lenin observed that the army which generals had interminably betrayed, an army which was infinitely weary, "with the coming of our comrades, the Communists, the workers, is beginning to win victories, is beginning to display revolutionary enthusiasm in the struggle against the world bourgeoisie."

Lenin personally supervised the moving up of replenishments to the front. On the 10th of August 1918 he sent a special order to the Supreme Military Council in which he pointed out: "I believe it essential to reinforce the Eastern Front in every possible way. I propose to the Supreme Military Council that it draft a plan for transferring from the Western Front as many units as possible. This plan must be carried through at the shortest order. All combat-worthy units must go. Railways will be ordered to immediately let through all front formations and will make every preparation to accept and transport new formations." At Lenin's orders a force of four destroyers was sent in early August from the Baltic Sea through the Mariinsky system of waterways to reinforce the Volga military flotilla. By the 7th of August three of the destroyers had arrived at Kazan on the Eastern Front and gone into action at once.

Very shortly there was a turn in the tide of war on the Eastern Front. Soviet forces had not only halted the enemy advance but had themselves switched to a counter-offensive.

At this crucial time for the Soviet republic, on the 30th of August 1918 an attempt was made on Lenin's life. However literally a few days later, though his wounds had yet not healed, Lenin returned to direct the Soviet people's struggle against the interventionists. On hearing of the setback in the Soviet offensive on Kazan, he at once sent a cable there which sais: "Amazed and alarmed by delay in operation against Kazan, especially, if rightly told, you have artillery to pound enemy." On the 10th of September Kazan was freed and on the 12th Simbirsk. The Red Army men of the 1st Army which had taken part in the operations to liberate Simbirsk reported to Lenin: "Dear Vladimir Ilyich, the taking of your home town is our reply to one of your wounds; the taking of Samara will be our reply to your second wound." To this Lenin replied: "The capture of Simbirsk, my home town, is a wonderful tonic, the best treatment for my wounds. I feel a new lease of life and energy. Congratulations to the Red Army men on their victory and on behalf of all the working people thanks for all their sacrifices."

The plan of the interventionists, to destroy Soviet power with the aid of the Czechoslovak Corps and kulak insurrections, ended in a complete fiasco by the winter of 1918. The victory scored by the Soviet forces on the Eastern Front was in effect the first acid test and martial triumph for the newly organised Red Army. Fully displayed in the process of struggle against the interventionists and White Guards was Lenin's style of the direction of national defence, his ability to mobilise millions of working folk to repulse the enemy, his unfailing attention to reinforce army morale, his ability to single out the focal point of struggle and concentrate on it, and his concrete operational direction of combat operations.

By the autumn of 1918 the centre of gravity in the Civil War had shifted from East to South. Lenin promptly revealed the emergent changes in the political and military situation

then. On the 22nd of October 1918, addressing a joint session of the All-Russia Central Executive Committee, the Moscow Soviet and the factory trade union committees, Lenin said:

"..A new danger has appeared, a danger which has not yet fully developed and is not yet fully apparent, a danger which the British and French imperialists are plotting surreptitiously and which we must clearly realise so as to open the people's eyes to it through their leaders. For although it is true the British and French have not achieved any great successes in Siberia or in Archangel — in fact they have suffered a number of setbacks — they are now directing their efforts for an attack on Russia from the South, either through the Dardanelles and the Black Sea, or else overland, through Bulgaria and Rumania."

The Soviet state now concentrated its military effort on the Southern front. By early 1919 the Red Army had the overall numerical superiority in the field. In the process of a counter-offensive mounted on the Southern Front, White Guard troops were put to rout and the Ukraine was freed from occupation. Interventionist armies began to crumble under the blows of Soviet armies and also under the impact of revolutionary propaganda. In April 1919 a mutiny flared up in the French Navy. The British and French governments were compelled to withdraw their troops from the South of the Soviet Republic.

Meanwhile hostilities continued on the Eastern Front, where the command of the counter-revolutionary forces sought to bring together armies operating in Siberia and in the Urals with interventionist and the White Guard forces in the North. The establishment of a common front in the North-East would enable counter-revolution to supply its armies in Siberia through Archangel and would provide conditions for mounting an offensive on Moscow. Precisely with this aim in view,

large military formations were deployed against Perm. Despite heroic resistance the Red Army was forced to pull back.

Lenin watched developments on the Eastern Front with great alarm. On the 12th of December 1918, he cabled to the Revolutionary Military Council of the Republic: "Perm is in danger. I deem it necessary to send reinforcements there. Petrograd can provide regiments of Soviet troops of whom there are two there, or others, as the Revolutionary Military Council sees fit." On the same day Lenin again cabled to the Revolutionary Military Council: "Afraid we have forgotten the Urals. Put pressure on Vatsetis [at the time Commander-in-Chief of the Armed Forces of the Russian Federation — *Ed.*] and see whether he is being energetic enough in furnishing Perm and the Urals with reinforcements." After Soviet units left Perm, the Central Committee of the Party and the Council of Defence sent a special commission led by Stalin and Dzerzhinsky to the Eastern Front. Lenin intently followed the activities of the Commission which he directed. "I beg both of you," he cabled to Dzerzhinsky and Stalin, "to personally supervise on the spot execution of the measures scheduled, otherwise there is no guarantee of success."

By the spring of 1919 the Soviet state had scored considerable military and political achievements on the Civil War fronts. The Volga Basin, the Ukraine, the Crimea, a considerable portion of the Don area and other regions had been liberated from the interventionists and White Guard forces. These triumphs caused great alarm in the enemy camp, and in the spring of 1919, under a plan drafted by the military staff of the Entente, a new joint campaign was mounted against the Soviet Republic. This time Admiral Kolchak's White Guard army was the main shock force. In the South was Denikin's Army, in the West the Armies of Yudenich and the Polish gentry and in the North the armies of Miller. British, French, American and Japanese troops were inside

Russia. The governments of these countries provided the Russian White Guard armies with munitions and other supplies; in 1919 alone Kolchak, according to far from complete data, received some 700,000 rifles, more than 3,000 machine guns, 530 artillery pieces, 30 aircraft, several hundred million cartridges and other military materiel.

Massing all forces, Kolchak initiated an offensive on the Eastern Front. "Kolchak... is now bringing up all his reserves against us, his gangs of volunteer White Guards are of imposing dimensions, and he is receiving the assistance of Britain and America in the form of vast quantities of arms and munitions," Lenin said in April 1919.

The Eastern front again became the key front, the quarter from which the danger to the socialist republic was greatest. On the 10th of April 1919, Lenin drafted the Party theses on the situation on the Eastern Front, which on the next day were endorsed by the Central Committee. "Kolchak's victories on the Eastern Front are creating an extremely grave danger for the Soviet Republic. Our efforts must be exerted to the utmost to crush Kolchak," this document said. Fresh reinforcements were rushed to the Eastern Front. Sent, too, was the cream of the Party membership to lead the struggle against Kolchak.

Lenin made a titanic effort to organise resistance and mobilise the people to rout the enemy. On the 3rd of April he reported on the Soviet Republic's internal and international situation at an emergency Plenary Meeting of the Moscow Soviet. On the 11th he reported at a Plenary meeting of the All-Union Central Council of Trade Unions on the tasks facing the trade unions in connection with the mobilisation of forces for the Eastern Front. Four days later he addressed the first Moscow Soviet commanding officer training courses. On the 16th of April he appealed to Moscow railwaymen to do all in their power to assist the Red Army. The next day he attended a conference of factory committees and trade unions

of Moscow held to discuss tasks before the city's proletariat in connection with the Kolchak offensive.

Lenin's speeches and his direct appeals to the working folk were of tremendous importance. After his speech at the conference of Moscow factory trade union committees and trade unions, one of the workers, M. Vinogradov, addressed a note to the platform. "Comrades," he wrote, "Kolchak is attacking us. Are we to really yield our workers' and peasants' power to this former servitor of the tsar? Can't we rebuff him? We must do that. This power for which we paid with the blood of workers and peasants cost us dearly. Though 50, I will leave my wife and children, take up a gun and join the young ranks of the Red Army to defend my power with my own blood." It was precisely the support given to Soviet power by the millions of working people that Lenin saw as the earnest of the invincibility of the revolution. "We are now entering the most difficult, the most trying period, and we must act like revolutionaries," Lenin said on the 3rd of April 1919. "We must recruit our forces from the masses of the working people."

Nationwide mobilisation enabled reinforcements to be rushed to the Eastern Front at short order. Between the 1st and 21st of April 1919, 67,000 men arrived at the Eastern Front. Prominent Party functionaries and commanding officers, among them G. I. Akulov-Teodorovich, A. K. Safonov, V. Y. Korolev, V. K. Blyukher, V. P. Lebedev, etc., were appointed to top posts.

On the 23rd of April the Red Army mounted a counter-offensive on the Eastern Front. The Soviet frontal assault, together with partisan action in the enemy rear, paved the way for Kolchak's defeat. Lenin closely followed developments, believing it essential to expedite the offensive. "If we do not win the Urals before winter, I consider that the revolution will inevitably perish. Strain all your energies," he wrote to

members of the Revolutionary Military Council of the Eastern Front.

At the crucial moment of the Red Army offensive against Kolchak, Trotsky, then Chairman of the Revolutionary Military Council of the Republic, ordered the troops of the Eastern Front to switch to defensive action. He claimed it was essential to move part of the forces deployed on the Eastern Front to the Southern Front where at the time a campaign was mounting against Denikin. Had this order been carried out, Kolchak would have been able to re-deploy his forces, reinforce his rear and again mount an offensive which would have nullified the immense effort of the entire country. The Soviet Republic would have found itself in still more desperate straits. Learning of this decision, Lenin demanded a detailed report from the high command on the situation at the front. From a comprehensive assessment of the situation Lenin concluded that Trotsky's order was more than an error, that it was fundamentally dangerous for the Republic. On the 15th of June the Central Committee issued a directive at a special meeting to proceed with a decisive offensive on the Eastern Front. In keeping with this Central Committee decision, on the 20th of June Lenin cabled to the Revolutionary Military Council of the Front the following message: "...The *offensive* against the Urals must not be weakened, it must definitely be intensified, speeded up, strengthened with reinforcements. *Telegraph what measures you are taking.*"

S. S. Kamenev, then Commander of the Eastern Front, recollecting later the role Lenin played in deciding this cardinal strategic issue of the Civil War wrote: "The temporary setbacks on the Southern front and the weakness displayed in this connection by the high command almost thwarted the firm implementation of the plan of operation Vladimir Ilyich had supplied. Placed before him was an operational question of exceptional importance. The difficulty of taking a proper

decision was aggravated by the fact that not only the commander-in-chief but also Trotsky, Chairman of the Revolutionary Military Council of the Republic, were for abandoning a further offensive against Kolchak and, as soon as the Belaya River was reached, they intended to begin an immediate transfer of Red Army units from the Eastern Front to the Southern Front. In plain words they wanted to go back on the decision Lenin had taken to finish with Kolchak first."

By late June the counter-offensive launched by the Southern group of the Eastern Front had developed into an overall offensive on this front. The Urals was freed; White Guard forces rolled back into the Siberian hinterland. The men, commanders and political workers of the Eastern Front sent a letter to Lenin in which they said: "Dear comrade, our tried and tested true leader, you asked us to take the Urals by winter and we have carried out your battle order. The Urals is ours. Now we will regain Siberia. It is not the first time that we at your command fight a numerically superior enemy. But we always win because we are strong in our faith in the rightness of our struggle, in the triumph of the revolution. There rang out your mighty voice to halt the overweening enemy and not surrender to him the main nerve centre of the Soviet-Russian organism: the Volga. We repulsed him and the hordes of Siberian counter-revolution crashed against our resistance. We then switched to an offensive and chased the enemy away from the Volga Basin. Now we are chasing him further into Siberia and beyond the Urals."

In the spring and summer of 1919 the Southern Front was, along with the Eastern Front, a sector of exceptionally great importance. While the Red Army was fighting bloody battles against Kolchak, in the South Denikin's White Guards massed forces. Weakened by earlier heavy fighting, Soviet troops on the Southern Front sustained one setback after another.

In early July 1919 Denikin issued what was called the "Moscow Directive." He announced as his ultimate purpose the capture of Moscow, capital of Soviet Russia. He had no doubt that he would be able to carry out his plan because, as he observed later, Soviet power had never been in such desperate straits as in the summer of 1919.

However, again life demonstrated the fallacy of the calculations of the enemies of Soviet power. The White Guard generals built their reckonings chiefly on an analysis of military factors. They failed to take into account the strength of the Soviet state, its potential. "Victory in war," Lenin pointed out, "goes to the side whose people has greater reserves, greater sources of strength and greater endurance... We have more of them because we can draw, and for a long time will continue to draw, more and more deeply upon the workers and the working peasants, upon those classes which were oppressed by capitalism and which everywhere form the overwhelming majority of the population."

On the 3rd of July 1919 the Central Committee of the Party held a Plenary Meeting to discuss defence of the Soviet Republic. It decided at Lenin's suggestion that I. I. Vatsetis be replaced as Supreme commander-in-chief by S. S. Kamenev who had revealed his brilliant organisational capabilities and military talent on the Eastern Front.

On the 8th of July the Central Committee endorsed Lenin's appeal to all Party organisations "All Out for the Fight against Denikin!" This appeal provided a comprehensive assessment of the obtaining situation and revealed the full depth of the danger threatening the Soviet Republic. "This is one of the most critical, probably even the most critical moment for the socialist revolution..." the appeal said. Lenin urged concentrating all the forces of the workers and peasants "...to repulse Denikin's onslaught and defeat him, without

checking the Red Army's victorious advance into the Urals and Siberia."

Lenin appealed directly to the masses of workers and soldiers to mobilise all forces to crush Denikin. On the 15th of July he delivered a fiery harangue at a conference of Red Army men of Moscow's Khodynsky camps. In his recollections, A. F. Myasnikov, a functionary of the Moscow Party Committee, describes the impression Lenin's speech made on him:

"A large Red Army conference many thousands strong, and of no Party affiliation, which consisted of hungry tattered Red Army men, whose mood naturally was not at all rosy, was convened at the Khodynsky camps. The situation had to be explained to this mass of Red Army men in a true revolutionary fashion. The comrades from the Moscow Committee asked Lenin to speak there and we obtained his consent. One must note that as a rule he never refused to speak in working class neighbourhoods to Party people or Red Army men and on the list of propagandists of the Moscow Committee he was considered naturally the most valuable speaker. The audience knew that Comrade Lenin was to speak that day and they gave him a warm welcome. Many of the Red Army men were listening to him for the first time. That evening he was at his best. Apparently the mass of people had fired his enthusiasm and he was totally engrossed by the events. He delivered a long report of more than an hour on the international and domestic situation of Soviet Russia which at once caused a definite turn in the tide of the mood of his many thousands of listeners. His speech was accepted and taken to heart. At the end this non-Party conference gave Comrade Lenin an ovation."

Under Lenin's direct leadership a plan for the rout of Denikin was worked out in the summer of 1919. According to the strategy evolved, the main blow was to be dealt by the 9th and 10th Armies from the neighbourhood of Tsaritsyn

against Novo-Cherkassk. These armies were at the time the most combat-worthy and it was easiest to reinforce them. Moreover, were these armies to mount a successful offensive a blow would be struck at Denikin's rear. At the same time provisions were made for mounting a counter-offensive on the Southern Front in early August. However, its beginning was temporarily relayed because of the bungling of the command of the Southern Front. Denikin managed to thrust further and further into Soviet Russia. Meanwhile Mamontov's cavalry corps, breaking through the Red Army front, emerged into the rear of Soviet forces. The situation was growing increasingly desperate.

At this juncture Lenin drew attention to the need of organising a deeply echeloned defence on the Southern approaches to Moscow. This was to incorporate a whole series of undertakings, the digging of trenches, and the setting up of barbed wire entanglements. Red Guard units were formed of local workers and peasants. At the time Lenin engaged not only in the handling of strategic matters but even took an interest in tactical questions and methods of fighting the White Guards.

On the 13th of October 1919, Denikin managed to capture Orel. The White Guards now thought the days of the Soviet Republic were numbered. There indeed existed the very real danger that the enemy might take Tula, that key arsenal of the Red Army. At the same time Yudenich intensified operations on the Petrograd Front. On the 15th of October he captured Luga in an attempt to cut off communications between Petrograd and Moscow.

The Soviet Republic was going through an extremely critical time. In her reminiscences N. K. Krupskaya wrote: "The latter half of 1919 was much more difficult than the first. This especially applied to September, October and the beginning of November. The victories of the Whites encouraged the enemy who had been lying in hiding. At the end of November

a counter-revolutionary organization connected with Yudenich and subsidised by the Entente was discovered in Petrograd.

"All the time that Denikin and Yudenich were winning, Vladimir Ilyich received a lot of anonymous letters of a threatening character, some of them with caricatures.

"Famine and poverty were rife."

Lenin kept a constant eye on developments at the fronts and personally heard reports on the situation there. He sent prominent government and Party functionaries, his closest comrades-in-arms, to various areas in the South to assess the situation and organise resistance to the enemy. He paid particular attention to reinforcing the defences of Tula. A. V. Lunacharsky was sent to this city; he helped local Party and government agencies to organise the city's defences. Shortly afterwards Lunacharsky returned to Moscow and went to see Lenin to inform him of his impressions. "Lenin," he recollected later, "naturally had a marvellous understanding of the extreme gravity of the situation at the time. After he had heard me out his face seemed to grow a little dark, he frowned and without looking at me said: 'Yes, the Tula fortified area is a serious matter and there the approaches to Moscow must be defended. It is very important to prevent the population from becoming demoralised. It is necessary not only to have serious control to prevent treachery from creeping in but it is also essential to promptly sustain a feeling of optimism. Don't you think, Anatoly Vasilyevich, that it would be best for you to return to Tula at once? You know, so that they do not feel neglected there. Tell them, the military people, the workers and the town-folk, about the overall political situation and try to infuse them with greater cheer. I would like you to return, only if Denikin rolls back'."

Everyone who could be mobilised, even some of the officer trainees guarding the Kremlin, were sent out to repulse Denikin. N. I. Podvoisky, a top military leader of the Soviet Repub-

lic, ordered P. D. Malkov, then commandant of the Kremlin, to dispatch most of the officer trainees to the front, to Orel, to fight Denikin. The latter asked Lenin to revise Podvoisky's decision, arguing that the Kremlin guard was small as it was, and that if most of the officer trainees were sent away the Kremlin would be left almost unguarded. Lenin heard Malkov out and then said: "If Denikin comes up to Moscow, even a good guard around the Kremlin will not help and will not save the Republic. We must send the officer trainees to the front right now when the fate of the Revolution there hangs in the balance."

In late October the Red Army scored its first successes on the Southern Front. On the 20th of October, it freed Orel and on the 24th of October, Voronezh. These victories were of immense political and military importance signifying the beginning of the rout of Denikin's armies. "The victories at Orel and Voronezh," Lenin said on the 24th of October, "where the pursuit of the enemy continues, show that here, as on the Petrograd Front, the turning point has been reached. We must ensure that our offensive will develop from a petty, partial attack into a gigantic mass offensive that will bring us to final victory."

Along with the armies of the Southern Front the troops of the South-Eastern Front also mounted an offensive and soon liberated Tsaritsyn. General Yudenich was defeated at Petrograd. Such was the inglorious end of the second interventionist White Guard campaign against the young socialist republic.

As the result of the victories gained in the field the Soviet republic obtained a respite. In a speech at the 7th Congress of Soviets on the 5th of December 1919 Lenin furnished a comprehensive analysis of the two years of Civil War and showed why the backward, ruined and war-weary Soviet Republic had defeated first German imperialism and then the

forces of domestic counter-revolution and the interventionists. "From the point of view of a simple calculation of the forces involved, from the point of view of military assessment of these forces, it really is a miracle, because the Entente was and continues to be immeasurably stronger than we are," Lenin emphasised. "Nevertheless, the year under review is noteworthy most of all for our having won a tremendous victory, so great a victory that I think we may say without exaggeration that our *main difficulties are already behind us.*"

Though the main phase of the Civil War was indeed already behind, many more heavy trials befell the Soviet Republic. In 1920 it had to resist the Polish offensive and the armies of Wrangel which had entrenched themselves in the Crimea.

Pilsudski's government had long nurtured plans of a great Poland which would incorporate Lithuania, Byelorussia and the Ukraine and extend "from sea to sea." Pilsudski's interventionist strivings were exploited by the French, US and British governments. France gave particularly great assistance to Poland. In the spring of 1920 alone it provided the Pilsudski government with nearly 1,500 artillery pieces, 350 airplanes, 2,700 machines-guns, nearly 330,000 rifles, 800 lorries and much other matériel. The French marshal Foch was appointed commander-in-chief of the Polish Army. Tadeusz Kutrzeba, a prominent general of bourgeois-landlord Poland, noted in his book *The 1920 Kiev Campaign* that militarily France's aid in the struggle against the Soviets was as full as possible and consisted mainly of supplies of combat equipment.

Meanwhile the British Government constantly informed Wrangel of its moves to protect White Guard forces in the Crimea. In April 1920 the British Admiral Seymour told Wrangel that the British Government was prepared to dis-

patch ships to take all action necessary to protect armies in the Crimea and prevent a Soviet invasion.

The Soviet Government repeatedly appealed to the Polish Government to start peace talks in order to avert bloodshed. However, all its proposals were turned down by the Polish side. On the 25th of April 1920 Pilsudski launched an offensive and on the 7th of May took Kiev. At the same time Wrangel tried to strike a blow from the South.

This imperilled the rear of Soviet forces on the South-Western Front, compelling the Soviet command to throw in some of the reserves intended for operation against the White Guard Polish forces.

The Soviet state again had to strain every muscle to defend its independence. At Lenin's proposal Communists were mobilised to reinforce the armies fighting the Polish forces and Wrangel. The workers of the biggest proletarian centres formed new military units.

On the 5th of May 1920 Moscow sent Red Army units to the Western Front and to mark the occasion, a parade of the troups of the Moscow garrison was held on Theatre Square. Here Lenin made a speech in which he said: "All of us here today should pledge ourselves, give a solemn promise that we shall stand as one man so as not to allow a victory of the Polish magnates and capitalists." The speech Lenin made before Red Army units setting off for the front was very brief, but most impressive, mostly by virtue of its simplicity. S. S. Kamenev, who listened to this speech said it "accorded with what everybody had in mind at the time. It was uttered by our Lenin who was so near to us, so dear and understandable to every Red Army man and everyone present. I retain unforgettable memories of this meeting and I suppose that everyone there felt the same. I well remember the entire picture and the mood. To understand the enthusiasm, the admiration with

which Lenin was welcomed by the soldiers and the workers, who were seeing them off, one really should have been there."

Besides replenishing Red Army units with Communists and factory workers, the Soviet Government took decisive action to improve supplies. Large formations from other sectors were also transferred to this area. The First Mounted Army, under S. M. Budyanny and K. Y. Voroshilov, undertook a very arduous and lengthy journey from the Caucasus to the Western Front.

Lenin personally followed the amassing of forces on the Western Front. On the 12th of May 1920 he sent a cable to the Revolutionary Military Council of the Caucasian Front which said: "Divisions that the High Command has ordered west must arrive without snags and delay. Keep an eye personally on this and take steps so that on the way the divisions do not decrease in men..."

Thanks to the measures taken, Pilsudski's forces were crushed. The Red Army entered Poland and deployed at the walls of Warsaw. At this juncture the Pilsudski government begged for peace and a peace treaty with Poland was signed in Riga on the 20th of October 1920. The fact that the war against bourgeois-landlord Poland — that main shock force of the Entente's third campaign — had ended, now allowed the Soviet Republic to mobilise all its resources to crush Wrangel.

There were intensive Soviet troop concentrations on the Southern Front. New divisions were formed and the First Mounted Army was switched to this sector. Appointed Commander of the Front was that tried and tested Bolshevik and outstanding General Mikhail Frunze. The Central Committee directed that the Crimea be freed before the onset of winter.

On the 20th of December, before leaving for the Southern Front, Frunze met Lenin. Lenin told him that the main task was to avoid a winter campaign. "We have no right to doom

the people to the horrors and sufferings of still one more winter campaign and I hope," he said in conclusion, "that Baron Wrangel's lot will be no better than that of Admiral Kolchak."

In October 1920 Wrangel's forces in the Dnieper area were crushed. Keeping track of developments, Lenin warned the command of the Southern Front not to overestimate its achievement. On the 6th of October he sent Frunze a telegram in which he wrote: "Having received exultant telegrams from Gusev and yourself [at the time Gusev was a member of the Revolutionary Military Council of the Southern Front — *Ed.*] I am afraid of excessive optimism. Remember that at all costs you must enter the Crimea on the heels of the enemy. Prepare as carefully as possible, and check whether all efforts for taking the Crimea have been studied."

Wrangel was sure the Crimea was impregnable. The Crimea is joined to the mainland by the Perekop Isthmus and on this isthmus powerful defensive fortifications had been erected. In the view of foreign experts, Perekop was unassailable. The White Guard papers boasted: "We are waiting for the enemy to smash his head against our impregnable might." However, on the 7th of November 1920 Soviet forces stormed Perekop and by mid-November the Crimea was fully liberated.

The victory over Wrangel was noted in a special decision of the Council of Labour and Defence taken at Lenin's initiative which said: "Thanks to the selfless gallantry of the troops of the Southern Front and their heroic effort, the Crimea has been liberated, Wrangel has been hurled into the sea and his forces completely and finally dispersed. The country at last can rest from the three years of Civil War imposed upon it by the White Guards, begin to heal the countless wounds inflicted upon it and engage in the restoration of the economy that has been badly ravaged over these years."

The remnants of interventionist troops in Soviet territory were destroyed in 1922, when the Soviet Far East was liberated.

A great miracle had occurred. A ruined, tormented country had vanquished a far mightier coalition of many capitalist countries plus the forces of domestic counter-revolution. Explaining its nature, Lenin wrote: "A miracle took place because the workers and peasants rose against the attack of the landowners and capitalists in such force that even powerful capitalism was in danger."

Economic Mobilisation for War

The damage inflicted upon Russia by the First World War and the Civil War ranged between 39,000 and 50,000 million gold roubles. The damage to the transport network alone amounted to more than 3,000 million gold roubles. The White Guards and interventionists sank nearly all of Russia's river fleet, ruined thousands of locomotives and blew up nearly 3,500 railway bridges. They destroyed the gold and platinum mines in the Urals in Siberia, flooded pits in the Donbas and oil wells, burned the oil derricks, looted the equipment at peat cuttings and set fire to the stocked briquettes of peat. Russia's biggest glass-making factory was blown up. Tobacco and sugar-cane plantations were devastated and ready produce was shipped abroad.

The national pig iron output had dropped from 231,800,000 poods in 1916 to 6,900,000 poods in 1918. After the Donbas was liberated from Denikin, not a single blast furnace there was operative. Consumer production had fallen off still more drastically. Soviet Russia's textile mills were cut

off from the cotton-growing areas in Central Asia. Sugar refineries had to all practical intents come to a standstill.

Urban residents experienced a drastic shortage not only of food but also of fuel. For lack of fuel, factories, plants, railways and other enterprises stood idle; at still-functioning factories and offices and in homes, temperatures were often sub-zero. Water mains and sewerage were completely out of order, bath houses did not function and a great toll of life, both adults and children, was taken by various epidemics. Indeed, the number of typhus cases drastically mounted — more than 2 million between the 1st of November 1918 and 1st of January 1920.

In his speech at the 8th All-Russia Party Conference on the 2nd of December 1919 Lenin set three goals. Though simple, they presented a formidable challenge at the time. These were: the effort for grain, for fuel, and against lice. "Our third problem" Lenin said, "is that of the fight against lice, against the lice that carry typhus. Typhus among a population that is exhausted by hunger, is ill, has no bread, soap or fuel, may prove a calamity that will prevent our tackling any sort of socialist development."

More than once did Lenin note the terrifying difficulties which the young Soviet Republic had to contend with in during the war of liberation against the combined forces of the White Guards and interventionists. He noted that for Russia's workers and peasants the intervention and Civil War had spelled "calamities, privation, sacrifice and intense want on a scale unparalleled in world history." An incredible effort was needed to overcome the hunger and epidemics, get transport and war industries to function and provide the population and the Red Army with everything required.

At Lenin's suggestion, the All-Russia Central Executive Committee declared the Soviet Republic a war camp. All political, economic and cultural affairs in the country were

regeared to serve the war effort. "...once things have led to war," Lenin pointed out, "everything must be subordinated to the war effort; the entire internal life must be subordinated to wartime needs; the slightest hesitation on this score is inexcusable."

On the 30th of November 1918 the All-Russia Central Executive Committee decided to form a Council of Workers' and Peasants' Defence and to mobilise all forces and resources to repulse intervention. The Executive Committee's resolution said also that in conditions of "world plunder, brigandage and violence only one country is at the moment a true bastion of working class independence, a bulwark for the weak and oppressed nations, a fortress for the social revolution. This is Soviet Russia."

The Council of Defence had to integrate government activities to mobilise all resources in the interests of defence, turn the country into a war camp, institute war-time regimentation of food supplies, transport and the munitions industry and take steps to further reinforce centralised administration and state discipline. The Council was invested with full power for mobilising the rear for wartime needs. This was an emergency body of proletarian dictatorship which wartime had brought into being. Between the 1st of December 1918 and the 27th of February 1920 the Council of Workers' and Peasants' Defence held 101 meetings, of which all but two were attended by Lenin.

Despite the conditions of extreme chaos and hunger the Bolshevik Party drafted and effected a system of emergency measures which subsequently came to be known as "war communism."

The Soviet Republic proved able to start production of essentials for the prosecution of war. With the country's main coal-producing centre in the Donbas occupied by the enemy,

a desperate effort was made to obtain other fuels. Never before had so much peat and firewood been cut in the country as then.

The bulk of skilled labour was concentrated at entreprises producing for the Red Army. These enterprises also took on workers from factories that were closed down. Despite the terrible chaos, the railway workers were, on the whole, able to cope with the needs for the fronts.

Meanwhile enterprises in the light industry met the minimum Red Army requirements for clothing. In the two years of 1919 and 1920, the personnel of the textile and garments industry provided upwards of 5,600,000 trench coats, four million pairs of summer uniforms and more than 10 million pairs of footwear.

Particular attention was paid to the functioning of enterprises manufacturing military material.

In December 1918 Lenin raised the task of expanding arms and munitions production and sketched a concrete plan for the expansion of the Tula cartridge factory, where it was proposed to increase cartridge production from between 16 and 20 million pieces in December 1918 to 35 million in July 1919. On the 11th of July 1919, the Presidium of the Tula Metal Workers Union cabled Lenin that they would give the "socialist vow to die if necessary, in order to defeat the imperialists at home and abroad." They provided, before the Civil War ended, as many rifles and cartridges as the government ordered. When the Order of the Red Banner of Labour was constituted in December 1920, the first decoration went to the Tula Armoury.

Lenin kept in touch with what was being done by the Tula armoury workers. Having received a message of greetings from the metal workers union, he sent a cable in which he wholeheartedly acclaimed their decision to step up the manufacture of munitions and also asked them to report "monthly, by post

or by messenger, exactly what actual successes are being achieved on all your decisions."

The Izhevsk munition workers did their best to emulate the Tula workers. By January 1919 the Izhevsk plant had boosted production to 1,000 rifles daily. On learning of this the Council of Defence sent a cable, signed by Lenin, expressing gratitude to the Izhevsk workers for their support to the Red Army.

On the 13th of May 1919, the Council of Defence after hearing a special report by Lenin concerning cartridges, adopted a decision as to ways and means of boosting output at the Tula, Podolsk, Simbirsk and several other cartridge factories. To effect this decision a special commissioner was sent to the Simbirsk plant. In a cable to that plant, Lenin wrote: "Comrade Kirill Orlov, extraordinary commissioner for the Tula plants, is dispatched by the Council of Defence to the Simbirsk cartridge factory to thoroughly investigate its operation and take steps to urgently step up cartridge manufacture. The factory management and also all government offices, trade union and military and railway authorities are hereby ordered to render Comrade Orlov every possible assistance."

Meanwhile the revolutionary Military Council of the Eastern Front was instructed: "To meet with the maximum of energy and expedition all demands to intensify production at the Simbirsk cartridge factory which Comrade Orlov or the factory management may make."

In the summer and autumn of 1918 the Soviet Government, in its plans for provisioning the cities and Red Army, believed the necessary grain could be obtained by taxing the peasantry. On the 30th of October 1918, the All-Russia Central Executive Committee adopted a special Decree concerning the Imposition on Peasant Economies of a Tax in Kind in the Form of Requisitioning Part of Agricultural Produce. The Decree on the Tax in Kind was made public but it was

impossible to realise it at the moment. The operating system of grain procurement could not properly provide the Red Army and the workers of the defence industry and transport in conditions of a sanguinary war.

On the 11th of January 1929, the Soviet Government enacted its Decree on the Food Surplus Appropriation System. Under this decree a state monopoly and centralised procurements of grain and several other foods were instituted. In the process of the struggle against the interventionists and the White Guards, the state monopoly was extented to staples, which implied a ban on private marketing of food. The surplus appropriation system, which violated the traditional economic link via markets between town and country, was one of those temporary emergency measures of the Soviet Government without which it would have been impossible to save the revolution and ensure victory over the interventionists and the White Guards.

Though the Civil War called for great sacrifices from the peasant, it was realised that alliance with the working class and victory over the White Guard and interventionist forces represented the one and only way to a better life.

Undaunted by the chaos in industry the Soviet stade did all it could to provide the peasant with at least a minimum quantity of commodities and implements needed. In 1919 a total of 212,000 ploughs and harrows, some two million scythes and sickles and some 80,000 farm machines were dispatched to the countryside. At rallies and meetings Communist Party members explained to the peasants that though Soviet power had hardly any stocks of goods at the moment, it would not remain in debt and would help them out after the war was over.

The middle peasants saw for themselves that the Communists would not let them be imposed upon. Returning from the countryside in the summer of 1919 N.V. Krylenko, whom

the Central Committee of the Bolshevik Party had sent to the Vladimir Gubernia (Province), said that the peasants were accepting in good grace the Bolshevik policy vis-à-vis the countryside and were proud that Lenin had such high praise for the middle peasantry. "As soon as one began to talk to a middle peasant," he said, "the peasant would pull out of his pocket a well-fingered leaflet, with Lenin's speech at the 8th Party Congress in which it was said that we should learn from the middle peasant and poke it under one's nose and say: 'Now there Lenin says that you have to learn from us.' "

The millions of newspapers, leaflets and appeals disseminated in the countryside and the propaganda conducted by Communists enabled the Bolshevik Party to wield still greater authority with the peasants, who responded in a increasingly favourable way to the tasks facing the Soviet Government and took a more and more vigorous part in the effort to fashion the new life and protect the gains of the October Revolution. "Our idea is that a state is strong when the people are politically conscious," Lenin pointed out. "It is strong when the people know everything, can form an opinion of everything and do everything consciously."

This awareness of the peasant masses was manifest both during the hostilities and during the operation of the food surplus appropriation scheme. Peasants fought in the ranks of the Red Army and in partisan formations. They not only met the requisitioning quota but not infrequently sent still more provisions for the starving workers. Thus, in February 1919 a Congress of the poor peasants in Sarapul district in Vyatka Gubernia (Province) sent the workers of Moscow and Petrograd 8,000 poods of grain. After receiving the delegation that escorted the grain train, Lenin wrote to the Moscow Soviet: "This exploit is so remarkable that it is quite deserving of particular salutation."

The food surplus appropriation system enabled the country to obtain its minimum grain requirements. Whereas between November 1917 and August 1918, a total of 30 million poods was procured, between the 1st of August 1918 and the 1st of August 1919, a total of 111 million poods was already collected, and the following year 220 million poods. Giving the figures of the People's Commissariat of Food as to grain procurements in 1917-19, Lenin wrote: "These figures speak clearly of a slow but steady improvement in the state of affairs from the point of view of the victory of communism over capitalism."

It goes without saying that the food surplus appropriation system and food supply policy that operated during the Civil War in Russia did not change the economic substance of small commodity production in the country. It was precisely for this reason that Lenin spoke of: " 'war' communism versus proper economic relations."

The pressing tasks of combating the cold, hunger, chaos in transport and also of properly supplying the Red Army with provisions and material called for tackling economic problems with "revolutionary rapidity, revolutionary vigour and military determination."

By early 1919 there was an acute need to introduce universal labour conscription. Transport and the defence industry could have come to a standstill had this not been done. In January 1920 a Decree "concerning the Procedure for Universal Labour Conscription was enacted." The able-bodied population could be induced to perform various types of work for fuel industries, food supplies, agriculture, etc. Employees of temporarily closed enterprises were dispatched to priority branches of the economy.

The Soviet state mobilised workers and peasants for the labour front with the direct support of the bulk of the working class.

Though the workers suffered from hunger and cold they saw that the factories and plants were no longer owned by the old bosses, that the Soviet authorities were placing the best houses at the disposal of the workers for clubs, crèches and kindergartens, and that despite the stiff food rationing it was the workers, Red Army men and children whose requirements were given priority attention.

A remarkable manifestation of mass initiative and heroism in the rear was the communist *subbotnik* (from the Russian "Subbota" for Saturday). This was voluntary unpaid work after hours. The movement was started off by the railwaymen of the marshalling yards of the Moscow-Kazan railway.

The spark that triggered off this qualitatively new movement to boost labour productivity came from what Lenin said at an emergency Plenary Session of the Moscow Soviet on the 3rd of April 1919. Among the people present was I.E. Burkalov, a deputyy of the Moscow Soviet who was Chairman of the Party cell and Commissar at the Moscow marshalling yards. When he came back from the Plenary Meeting he called the Communist Party members at the marshalling yards together and told them that Lenin had asked for help. Several days later a Party meeting was held at the marshalling yards and it was decided that all Party members should come to work on the night shift on Saturday, the 12th of April, to repair three locomotives.

In the absence of locomotives the marshalling yards could not send out two troop trains bound for urgent reinforcement of the Eastern Front. The Party members worked throughout April 12th and throughout the night. By 9 a.m. next morning they had the locomotives ready and the troop trains went off. On the 7th of May 1919, a general meeting of Communists and sympathisers of the Moscow-Kazan railway decided to work overtime on Saturday, May 10, and introduce these communist Saturdays until Kolchak was defeated. Though ex-

hausted by malnutrition and strenuous labour the communist railwaymen of Moscow showed everyone what work in a real revolutionary manner meant.

Lenin dedicated to the Communist Subbotniks a special article which he called *The Great Beginning*. This article enthused and inspired hundreds of thousands of fighters for communism, providing them with a clear perspective of the great cause they had initiated. Lenin regarded the first *Subbotnik* as a source of that insuperable movement which would bring communism closer and make it invincible. As he said, "it is the beginning of a revolution that is more difficult, more tangible, more radical and more decisive, than the overthrow of the bourgeoisie, for it is a victory over our own conservatism, indiscipline, petty-bourgeois egoism, a victory over the habits left as a heritage to the worker and peasant by accursed capitalism. Only when *this* victory is consolidated will the new social discipline, socialist discipline, be created; then and only then will a reversion to capitalism become impossible, will communism become really invincible."

The conditions of war communism gradually induced a growing trend towards the proletarian state's organisation of production and distribution along the following lines: the peasants turned in food surpluses to the state either without remuneration or partly in exchange for industrial goods; all industrial production was concentrated in the hands of the Soviet state and administered along lines of strict centralisation; food was apportioned out on the basis of a class rationing system; private trade was prohibited; the state gave the working people food and staple consumer goods almost free of charge ; and finally monetary circulation gave way to barter.

Taken all around, these economic measures of the Soviet Government which had to be applied because of the terribly difficult situation in order to mobilise everything for defence,

comprised a definite system which has gone down in history as "war communism."

Some Western historians are inclined to represent the policy of "war communism" as an attempt on the part of the Bolshevik Party to realise its programmatic demands for direct socialist construction. By identifying the Bolshevik Party's programme of socialist construction with the policy of "war communism" they thereby seek to denigrate the very idea of socialism.

The policy of "war communism" was induced by the extremely difficult plight in which the country found itself at the time. In 1921 Lenin emphasised that the system applied during the period of intervention and Civil War "...was dictated by war and not by economic requirements, considerations or conditions. There was no other way out..."

This policy made it possible not only to defend the great gains of the October Revolution but also to appreciably expand and consolidate the socialist sector of the economy. The policy of "war communism" was an historical necessity. "...until now we have been living in the conditions of a savage war that imposed an unprecedented burden on us and left us no choice but to take wartime measures in the economic sphere as well."

However, when the war ended the limitations of this policy, its incongruity and disparity with the new conditions of national development became evident. Continuation of the policy of "war communism" only impeded economic recovery and dislocated the alliance between the working class and peasantry.

CHAPTER FOUR

TRANSITION FROM WAR TO PEACE

Lenin Analyses Peasants' Demands

In late 1920 the main emphasis in the work of the Communist Party and Soviet Government shifted increasingly from military matters to economic problems. "Everything for the economy!" became the central slogan of the day. Lenin foresaw that the initiated transition from war to peace was an extremely difficult undertaking that would "call for new methods, a different deployment and use of forces, a different emphasis, a new psychological approach," and so on.

A serious factor making the situation in the country all the more complex and the tackling of economic recovery all the more difficult was the peasants' dissatisfaction with food surplus appropriation system.

After the Civil War ended the mood and mentality of the millions upon millions of peasants changed drastically. While the war was still on and while the people, arms in hand, were defending the gains of the socialist revolution the peasantry tolerated the food surplus appropriation system. By surrendering grain to the workers and Red Army men the peasants

thereby guaranteed themselves againts the restoration of the feudal land-owning system in the countryside.

However, by now the war was over and in late 1920 it was already clear that the food surplus appropriation system as an extreme form of economic co-operation between the state and the peasantry, one dictated by the Civil War, was behind the times. In letters and in statements from delegates the peasants raised more and more insistently the point that this system was unbearable and that it was absolutely essential to help them. "Please, give us a quota," the peasants wrote proposing a tax instead of the surplus appropriation system.

In December 1920 V. Krivoshchekov, chief of the Omsk Gubernatorial (Provincial) land department, presented to the Central Committee of the Party a report on "Measures to Strengthen and Promote Agriculture in Siberia" in which he said that "to increase the crop area and provide the peasant masses with economic incentives, it is essential to define and publicise in advance the grain requisitioning quota for each district as a definite tax in grain from each *dessiatina* (about 2.5 acres). To sustain the economic incentive in the case of large crop areas and also to boost the crop area it is necessary to leave at the full disposal of the peasant (without the right to take them out along the railway) all surpluses after he has fulfilled the food requisitioning quota and has laid in enough seed for next year's harvest." In November-December 1920, Lenin thoroughly analysed peasant letters, received many delegates from outlying villages, attended meetings of peasants and sought a way out of the situation.

In December 1920 at the 8th All-Russia Congress of Soviets Lenin asked M. I. Kalinin to arrange for him to meet non-Party peasants delegated to this Congress. He was greatly impressed and recorded everything they said. He himself circulated this record later to all the members of the Central Committee of the Party and the People's Commissariats.

"We've got to provide the peasants with an incentive," he wrote noting the gist of the speech made by the spokesmen for the peasants from the Kostroma Gubernia. In his summing up statement on the report of the All-Russia Central Executive Committee and Council of People's Commissars at the 8th Congress of Soviets, Lenin said on the 23rd of December 1920: "Yesterday I had the pleasure of being present — regrettably, for only a short while — at a small private conference of non-Party peasant delegates to our Congress and I learned a great deal from their discussion."

Literally a few days later Lenin wrote his *Notes on the Tasks of Economic Construction* which opened with the following point: "Attitude to peasantry: tax plus bonuses."

By analysing the mood of the broad peasant masses and of Party and Government functionaries, Lenin was able to draw the proper and correct conclusion as to the basic trend in economic policy which the Soviet State had to pursue in the new conditions. He realised that it was necessary to replace the surplus appropriation system by a tax and award the peasants bonuses for better results in labour. It was necessary now to correctly re-orient the Party and Government and persuade them that it was essential to carry out the contemplated measures. It was necessary to overcome the inertia of notions regarding ways and means of building socialism that had been engendered by the practice of "war communism."

On the 8th of February 1921 Lenin presented to the Politbureau of the Central Committee a *Preliminary Draft of Theses concerning the Peasants* whose very first point already said: "Satisfy the wish of the non-Party peasants for the substitution of a tax in kind for the surplus appropriation system (the confiscation of surplus grain stocks)." However whereas the need to introduce a tax had been quickly realised by the entire Party the question of how the peasant could use the grain surpluses left at his disposal provoked sharp debates.

A most consistent advocate of preserving methods of economic management based on direct barter (without money,) was Bukharin. He maintained that the existence of a free market, of commodity relations was incompatible with the socialist character of the Soviet system.

While a debate was going on inside the Party as to the new forms of relations with the peasantry, there occurred something that compelled the Soviet Government to expedite the measures slated. The peasantry began to openly express discontent. The alliance between the working class and peasantry that had formed during the Civil War and intervention, an alliance of a military and political nature, was now inadequate. The enemies of Soviet Government lost no time in capitalising on the situation and in various parts of the country kulak counter-revolutionary insurrections flared up. Thus, in a number of districts in the Tambov and Voronezh provinces there operated gangs whose ring-leader was Antonov, a Socialist Revolutionary. Kulak revolts also broke out in the Volga Basin and in Siberia.

The enemies now resorted to new tactics in their struggle against the Soviet state. They realised that it was already impossible to get the bulk of the peasants to go against Soviet power, which had won trust of all the working masses. The old slogan of "Down with the Soviets!" was replaced by a new one "For the Soviets but without Communists!". This new tactic of the class enemy was perhaps most strikingly expressed in the Kronstadt mutiny which erupted in March 1921. Its masterminds were able to win over a considerable proportion of the sailors among whom were many newly-inducted peasants. The mutineers captured several warships of the Baltic Navy and the first-class Kronstadt fortress. The Soviet Government took decisive action to suppress the mutiny.

In the early hours of the 17th of March, Red Army troops attacked the fortress across the ice of the Gulf of Finland. Despite steady fire from 150 big guns of both the fortress and warships and from 100 machine-guns, Red Army lines irresistibly thrust forward. On the 18th of March, in the morning the mutineers surrendered. Thus did the Soviet Republic regain Kronstadt.

Describing the substance of the Kronstadt mutiny, Lenin said: "The peasantry had to save the state by accepting the surplus-grain appropriations without remuneration, but it can no longer stand the strain. That is why there is confusion and vacillation in its midst, and this is being taken into account by the capitalist enemy, who says: 'All it needs is a little push, and it will start snowballing.' That is the meaning of the Kronstadt events in the light of the alignment of class forces in the whole of Russia and on the international scale."

The 10th Party Congress which opened on the 8th of March 1921 decided to replace the food surplus appropriation system with a food tax. At this Congress Lenin made several reports and speeches all of which were subordinated to the one central idea of the imperative need to overcome methods of government that obtained under "war communism."

Lenin pointed out that as the upshot of the Soviet Government's agrarian policy landlordism had been abolished in the countryside and there had been a sharp drop in the number of kulaks and the number of poor peasants. The key issue facing the Party now was to satisfy the middle peasantry which comprised the bulk of the village population. "Any communist who thought the economic basis, the economic roots, of small farming could be reshaped in three years," Lenin pointed out, "was, of course, a dreamer. We need not conceal the fact that there were a good many such dreamers among us. Nor is there anything particularly bad in this. How could one start a socialist revolution in a country like ours without dreamers?

It will take generations to remould the small farmer, and recast his mentality and habits. The only way to solve this problem of the small farmer — to improve, so to speak, his mentality — is through the material basis, technical equipment, the extensive use of tractors and other farm machinery and electrification on a mass scale."

Lenin insistently emphasised that the small farmer must have an incentive, an impetus that would accord with his economic basis. Meanwhile a small peasant economy needs free trade. Having decided to substitute a food tax for the surplus-grain appropriation system the 10th Congress of the Communist Party also sanctioned free trade, within local limits. On the closing day of the Congress, the 16th of March, the Presidium of the All-Russia Central Executive Committee held a meeting to approve the decision to replace the food surplus appropriation arrangement by a tax and on the next day, the 17th of March 1921, this decision was published by all leading Soviet newspapers. The Presidium urged the peasantry to "start sowing with the conviction that the product of their strenuous effort will not only help the workers' and peasants' state but will also improve their own situation. The tax will enable the peasantry to use surpluses left over after paying the tax, for exchange for articles necessary in peasant farming."

Shortly afterwards the Council of People's Commissars endorsed two decrees determining the size of the food tax and also authorising free trade and the buying and selling of agricultural produce, thus regulating the Party policy in practice. In place of the 423 million poods of grain products, that were to be stocked up in 1920-1921 under the food surplus appropriation system, the Soviet Government introduced a food tax quota that was much less — 240 million poods — provided the crop was an average one. The peasants were

allowed to exchange their grain surpluses for manufactured goods.

Though it had announced the introduction of a food tax, the Soviet Government still had to tackle the issue of the degree to which it could allow a free market and monetary circulation to develop. The resolution of the 10th Party Congress introducing the tax in kind said: "Exchange is to be allowed within the limits of local economic circulation." At the time no experience had yet been accumulated in relations with the peasantry on these new economic foundations and Lenin bluntly noted at the Congress in respect to this clause in the resolution: "What does it mean, what limits are there to this exchange, how is it all to be implemented? Anyone who expects to get the answer at this Congress will be disappointed. We shall find the answer in our legislation; it is our task to lay down the principle to be followed and provide the slogan." After the Congress Lenin again brought up the question as to "what are these limits?" having in mind the extent to which trade could be allowed saying: "Experience will show."

"Experience will show" is most likely an expression that embodies one of the basic rules which Lenin adhered to in his activity as a statesman. Life soon showed that hopes of using commodity exchange (barter) were untenable and unrealistic.

Already in October 1921 news was received from the Tula Gubernia that the practice of agricultural produce procurement had from the very beginning revealed that it was necessary to have money as the most successful medium for such procurement. The range of commodities offered was inadequate and therefore commodity barter could not yield satisfactory results. Similar news was also received from the other provinces.

The Communist Party paid close heed to this local experience and by the summer of 1921 drew the appropriate con-

clusions. The task of a broader transition to monetary circulation was raised sharply in August 1921. In the mandate to the Council of People's Commissars *On the Implementation of the Beginnings of the New Economic Policy,* which Lenin wrote, it was said that measures must be taken "to promote state and co-operative commodity exchange; going over, wherever possible and advantageous to a monetary form of circulation."

In October 1921, speaking at the 7th Moscow Gubernatorial (Regional) Party Conference, Lenin urged Communists to learn to understand commercial relations and trade. This was not correctly understood by all Party and economic executives. One delegate to the Conference declared that in prison they were not taught to trade and they did not need "commercial calculations." Lenin replied as follows: "There are lots of things that we did not learn in prison, but which we had to learn after the revolution; and we learned them very well. I think it is our duty to learn to understand commercial relations and trade; and we shall begin to learn this, and finally master it, when we begin to talk about it without beating about the bush."

The introduction of the food tax in place of the surplus appropriation system, and definition of the forms of economic contact between the working class and peasantry through the medium of trade and monetary circulation represented the core of the New Economic Policy.

Summing up in the Central Committee report, delivered at the 11th Party Congress the results of the initial experience gained in the implementation of the New Economic Policy Lenin said: "...The problem of the New Economic Policy, the fundamental, decisive and overriding problem, is to establish a link between the new economy that we have begun to create (very badly, very clumsily, but have nevertheless begun to

create, on the basis of an entirely new, socialist economy, of a new system of production and distribution) and the peasant economy, by which millions and millions of peasants obtain a livelihood."

New Methods of Government

During the Civil War the Soviet Government apparatus was geared to tackling tasks of national defence. Centralisation of the entire matter of government and the transfer of some categories of factory and office workers to a military footing as well as the widely practiced system of militarised commanding in the approach to a number of economic problems were all inevitable and justified in the conditions of a bitter war. However, with the war over, the question rose of modifying methods of administration to accord with the new conditions of life in the country.

This problem of the forms and methods of state administration came up for heated discussion inside the Bolshevik Party. Trotsky and his supporters maintained that it was necessary to sustain army methods in state activity. They proposed that the trade unions be considered an element of the state apparatus, in which military discipline should be imposed. With total disregard for the working man, Trotsky claimed that "column-dodging is common, a rule, and man is a rather lazy animal." He demanded that the entire labour force could be "transferred from place to place and allocated like soldiers."

On the other hand, some functionaries in the trade unions like M. P. Tomsky and A. G. Shlyapnikov, to mention two, proposed that all economic administration be placed in the hands of the trade unions, which they felt were most interested in the restoration of the war-ravaged economy.

In November 1920, at the 5th All-Russia Conference of Trade Unions Trotsky proposed enforcing military discipline in the trade unions, which, he said, should be changed from an independent public organisation of the working people into a machinery for the administration of the state. In this Trotsky and his supporters were upheld by Bukharin, who formed a so-called buffer group to bring Trotsky and the Party to terms. Instead of combating Trotsky's theories — their realisation could well have driven a wedge between the ruling party and the broad working masses, spelling disaster for Soviet power — Bukharin proposed keeping peace with Trotsky. In effect the position of Bukharin's group implied direct support for Trotsky and his partisans, being, as Lenin put it, the worst and most pernicious factionalism.

Besides Trotsky, M. P. Tomsky, A. G. Shlyapnikov, A. M. Kollontai and some other functionaries also joined in the discussion to form a group known as the "Workers' Opposition." Their demands were best expressed in the booklet that A. Kollontai published on the eve of the 10th Party Congress. In this booklet titled *The Workers' Opposition* she suggested, first, setting up a body for economic management from among the producers themselves-to be called the Congress of Producers," second, that the running of some industries be made the responsibility of the appropriate trade unions, and, third, that no appointments to executive posts in the economy be made without the consent of the trade unions. Proceeding from these principles Myasnikov, one of the members of the "Workers' Opposition" faction, suggested at a meeting of Communists in Petrograd that workers' councils be established at the factories and enterprises to control all of the economy. This would have inevitably brought about economic chaos. The attitude that Communists took to this proposal can be gauged from the fact that Myasnikov's speech was interrupted

by remarks of "Enough!", the meeting categorically rejecting his plans for workers' councils.

The "Workers' Opposition" regarded the trade unions, which, as they maintained, should unite all working folk regardless of political convictions, as the dominant organisation of the working class.

The second blunder made by the "Workers' Opposition" was their failure to understand the difference between socialist property and group-owned property. Socialism proclaims public ownership of the means of production. In such conditions it is the state and its agencies that dominate in the administration of socialist property. Only in such conditions are the advantages of large-scale centralised economy manifest and the rapid growth of social production ensured. Legalisation of group ownership of factories and plants, though presumably most democratic at a cursory glance, really spells anarchy, dislocates production ties and nullifies the advantages of socialism.

The differences between the "Workers' Opposition" and the Party developed into programmatic divergencies. "We have 'developed,' " Lenin wrote, "from small differences to syndicalism which implies a complete rupture with communism and an immediate break with the party, should the party prove not healthy and strong enough to cure this disease rapidly and radically."

At a first glance it seemed that the question of the place and role of the trade unions in the Soviet state was being discussed. Actually at stake were methods for administering the socialist state in times of peace, and the relations between the Soviet state and the working masses, between the Party and the people.

Lenin and his supporters drafted a resolution of the 10th Party Congress on the role and tasks of the trade unions which is known as the "platform of the Ten." This document gener-

alised the experience of government accumulated in preceding years. It claimed that the successful realisation of the tasks of socialist construction "is attainable only provided there are powerful trade unions of unanimous will and resolve that exist as mass organisations open to all proletarians despite their different level of class awareness." Lenin's platform pointed out that "the cardinal role of the trade unions in Soviet Russia remained that of being a 'school of communism.' " Disclosing the fallacy of the platform of the "Workers' Opposition," Lenin indicated first of all that syndicalism undermined the leading role of the Party and the proletarian state.

The Congress categorically rejected Trotskyite proposals. Nor did the demands of the "Workers' Opposition" receive any support. The resolution "Concerning the Anarcho-Syndicalist Deviation in our Party," which the Party adopted at its 10th Congress vehemently condemned the theory and practice of syndicalism. The Congress not only denounced the demands of the Trotskyites and the "Workers' Opposition" but also formulated key conclusions as to the principles underlying the organisation of Party life. The resolution "On Party Unity," drafted by Lenin and adopted by the Congress, stated that to ensure strict discipline inside the Party the Central Committee could, in the event of violation of Party discipline, resort to all Party penalties to the point of expulsion from membership. The Congress found it necessary to wage relentless, systematic struggle against anarcho-syndicalist ideas and declared dissemination of these ideas incompatible with membership in the Russian Communist Party.

In the process of the trade union discussion Lenin formulated cardinal tenets as to the guiding principles of state administration under socialism.

Central among these was assertion of the leading role of the Communist Party in all fields of social life. The Com-

munist Party as the supreme form of organisation of the proletariat pooled the efforts of the entire people and the activities of all state agencies, trade unions and other public organisations. However, the Party, Lenin continued, could not exercise its role of leader by means of coercion. The approach to the masses should be based on persuasion. Only this could help raise the millions of working folk to conscious creative activity. Otherwise socialist revolution is doomed to fail. "The greater the scope and extent of historical events, the greater is the number of people participating in them, and, contrariwise, the more profound the change we wish to bring about, the more must we rouse an interest and an intelligent attitude towards it, and convince more millions and tens of millions of people that it is necessary."

Lenin pointed out that one of the greatest dangers to the Communist Party was that of detachment from the working masses. In his report "On the Role of Tasks of the Trade Unions in the Conditions of the New Economic Policy," which he delivered at the 10th Party Congress, he said: "Just as the very best factory with the best motors and first-class machines will be forced to remain idle if the transmission belts from the motors to the machines are damaged, so our work of socialist construction must meet with inevitable disaster if the trade unions — the transmission belts from the Communist Party to the masses — are badly fitted or function badly."

Finally of great importance was Lenin's conclusion as to the need to widen the field for initiative and independent action by the broadest working class masses provided the agencies of state administration and one-man leadership in production were further enhanced. A harmonious combination of planned centralised administration of economy coupled with the participation of millions of workers, peasants and intellectuals comprises the gist of the principle of democratie centralism in the activities of the socialist state.

Thus, in acute struggle Lenin upheld basic principles of government under socialism. The determination of the forms and methods of government represented a cardinal integral element in the implementation of the policy of transition from war to peace. The task was now to re-gear all echelons of the state apparatus to work in the new conditions by relying on the already accumulated experience of socialist construction and by taking the drafted theoretical tenets as a guide.

When Soviet Russia first embarked upon peaceful economic development, an intensive search was conducted to evolve proper methods of government. Addressing the 9th Congress of Soviets in the autumn of 1921, Lenin said that the central task in the first year of peace was to switch to the New Economic Policy and "adjust our legislation and administrative apparatus to it."

One of the first moves to improve the machinery of government was to reorganise the Council of Defence into the Council of Labour and Defence. According to the relevant statute which was approved by the 8th All-Russia Congress of Soviets, this Council enjoyed the status of a commission of the Council of People's Commissars. It comprised the People's Commissars of Military Affairs, Labour, Communications, Land and Food, the Workers' and Peasants' Inspection and also the Chairman of this Supreme Economic Council, and the Chairman of the Central Statistical Board. The Council of Labour and Defence was to introduce a consolidated economic plan, supervise its implementation and direct all the People's Commissariats concerned with economic matters. Lenin was made its Chairman.

Basic agencies of the Council were the regional, gubernatorial, and district economic conferences whose task was to coordinate the functions of local economic agencies.

It was not easy to oust the old "war communism" methods of government. Many local executives were unable to display

the necessary latitude in tackling economic problems. In April 1921 the Secretary of the Kharkov Gubernatorial Party Committee wrote to Lenin that the habits and methods to which a number of responsible comrades had become accustomed in the years of the Civil War were so firmly rooted in their mentality that this involuntarily reflected in their attitude to the new policy. This was particularly true of the work of economic agencies. The heads of food offices and economic councils did all they could to minimize the importance of the resolutions of the 10th Party Congress. This concluding sentence particularly attracted Lenin's attention and he underscored it.

Not only in Kharkov but also in a number of other places some functionaries failed to comprehend the policy which the 10th Party Congress had adopted in order to enhance the initiative of local agencies and democratic principles at all echelons of government.

On the other hand, there were cases of parochial sentiment — as expressed in the failure to observe the directives issued by central bodies. In these circumstances it was essential to draft a uniform approach to the matter of tackling key problems of socialist construction and to equip both central and local bodies of power with a document that would exhaustively characterise the overall tasks of economic advancement. Lenin personally undertook to draft a document of this nature.

In April 1921 he evolved a concrete programme for the practical activity of local economic conferences, which came to be known as the Council of Labour and Defence Mandate. It was issued to local Soviet offices.

Lenin maintained that the economic conferences should direct the attention of all bodies of government to economic matters and should co-ordinate their economic effort. Emphasised in the Mandate was the fact that the transition to the New Economic Policy held great prospects for giving full play to the initiative of the masses in the matter of economic reco-

very. The document also formulated the basic principles of the work of the state apparatus in the new conditions. This implied the combination of purposeful leadership from the top with broad initiative from the masses, the study and use of local experience by the central bodies, publicity, the systematic accountability of all bodies of government.

The Mandate not only explained the immediate priority tasks for boosting labour productivity and developing the country's productive forces but also pointed to the prospects in store for the country. Only by restoring the economy, Lenin wrote, can we lay the foundation for "implementing our great electrification plan, which will result in the restoration of our large-scale industry and transport to such proportions and on such a technical basis that we shall overcome starvation and poverty once and for all."

Having drafted the Mandate, Lenin organised its wide-scale discussion. The respective draft was brought up for consideration several times at meetings of the Council of People's Commissars and Council for Labour and Defence. It was also debated at the 4th All-Russia Congress of the Economic Councils and at the 4th All-Russia Congress of the Trade Unions, as well as at a special session of the All-Russia Central Executive Committee and in the commission which this committee had established for the purpose. Lenin personally attended nearly all these meetings, evincing extreme interest in having the document he had drafted properly discussed.

G.V. Tsyporovich, a leading economic executive recollected how the Mandate was discussed in a commission of the All-Russia Central Executive Committee. "Functionaries from the localities took part in the discussion. There were no objections from anyone to anything of substance; but many wondered whether they would be able to study economic affairs with such systematic thoroughness as the draft Mandate required, in the absence of the necessary facilities in the localities and

considering the weakness of the planning apparatus. Lenin was noticeably concerned as he attached great importance to the Mandate. He did his best when the vote was taken on the various clauses and sections to have nothing deleted. He would rush to lift his hand as if afraid that the slightest hesitation would damage the document. I had the impression that Lenin looked upon this document as a major methodological achievement."

The Mandate and Resolution of the Council of Labour and Defence on the Accountability of Local Agencies were endorsed in the summer of 1921. The state apparatus now had at its disposal an extremely valuable document defining the immediate tasks and prospects ahead in economic advancement and government. However, to draw up this guiding document was not enough; it was also important to intently follow the process of economic construction in the localities and summarise each successful move made in the restoration of the productive forces. "The work in the localities is constantly providing us with a great deal of very encouraging material," Lenin told the delegates of the 3rd Session of the All-Russia Central Executive Committee in May 1921. "What we really lack is the ability to publicise the best examples."

When in the autum of 1921 the local economic conferences, in conformity with the Mandate began to render public accounts of their activity, Lenin arranged for a thorough analysis of then by the central bodies. V.A. Smolyaninov, assistant office manager of the Council of People's Commissars and Council of Labour and Defence, was repeatedly instructed by Lenin to keep a strict eye on the receipt of materials from the local agencies, notify him of the activities of the economic conferences or draw up on their basis brief summaries according to a special plan. Time and again Lenin stressed to the State Planning Commission, Central Statistical Board and editorial offices of the newspaper *Ekonomicheskaya Zhizn*

(Economic Life) the imperative necessity of studying the accounts and employing the results in practical work. He raised the question of analysing these accounts as soon as the Mandate was adopted, urging *Ekonomicheskaya Zhizn* to publish periodically, at least twice a year, summaries based on the analysis of the accounts. Meanwhile the Central Statistical Board had to present every month to the Council of People's Commissars its opinion on the state of economic affairs. Lenin reposed particular hopes in the paper *Ekonomicheskaya Zhizn*. He wanted it to be a militant organ that would not only furnish the correct information but also analyse it. At his suggestion the paper started a column titled "In the localities" and V.A. Smolyabinov was appointed its editor.

On Lenin's assignment the office management of the Council of People's Commissars drew up in January 1922 a list of responsible executives and Communists who were to get all the accounts and reports from the localities.

A cardinal requisite for accomplishing the new tasks before the Soviet state was not only the job of improving the activity of the local agencies but also that of consolidating the centralised state apparatus. Lenin suggested organising a state commission for overall planning under the Council of Labour and Defence. He drew up the original draft of the resolution on this body and a tentative list of members, and spoke on the matter twice at meetings of the Council of Labour and Defence. On the basis of his report, the Council of People's Commissars endorsed on the 22nd of February 1921 a statute on the State Planning Commission. On the 1st of April 1921, two days before the Presidium of the new State Planning Commission held its first meeting, Lenin wrote *The Fundamental Statute of the Organisation of the Planning Commission under the Council of Labour and Defence* which defined the functions of the State Planning Commission Presidium and alsa fixed the number of sections and subcomissions. In this

document Lenin pointed out that the Chairman of the State Planning Commission should direct the work of the Presidium under the instructions of the Chairman of the Council for Labour and Defence. This paragraph was implemented consistently, to the letter. Lenin briefed G.M. Krzhizhanovsky, the Chairman of the Presidium of the State Planning Commission, in detail as to the main trends to be followed in the work of the commission.

Lenin's directives provided the basis for drawing up fuel, food and export plans and also the industrial production programmes for the second half of 1921.

Summing up the results of the first year of the New Economic Policy in a report to the 9th Congress of Soviets of the Russian Federation in December 1921, Lenin pointed out that the paramount attainment of the year was the fact that "...our planning bodies have not wasted their time, that the moment is approaching when we shall be fulfilling our plan."

Lenin regarded the workers of the planning agencies as more than simply planners. He said that they should answer with their heads "for the rational consumption of fuel and grain, for the maximum stocking of both items, for maximum delivery, for economising fuel... for economising food... for increasing productivity of labour, etc..."

Lenin maintained that the State Planning Commission should work in close contact with the Central Statistical Board as only on the basis of authentic statistical information was it possible to draft realistic and feasible plans.

Concern for improving the entire system of planning is evident in Lenin's notes *On the Investment of the State Planning Commission with Legislative Functions* which he dictated in December 1922. He proposed enhancing the jurisdiction of the State Planning Commission, of extending its powers in matters of state. The head of the Soviet Government held that successful planning largely depended on the correct recruit-

ment of leading functionaries and executives for the State Planning Commission. As Lenin wrote, the Chairman of the State Planning Commission must be "a man who, on the one hand, has scientific education, namely, either technical or agronomic, with decades of experience in practical work in the field of technology or of agronomics. I think, this man must possess not so much the qualities of an administrator as broad experience and the ability to enlist the services of other men."

Lenin decisively resisted attempts to tackle economic planning by administrative order. Planning should be based, he said, on a strictly scientific foundation that would rule out all voluntaristic, subjective decisions. In his article *Better Fewer, but Better,* Lenin wrote: "We must show sound scepticism for too rapid progress, for boastfulness, etc. Nothing will be achieved... by doing things in a rush, by assault, by vim or vigour, or in general, by any of the best human qualities."

Before the apparatus of government Lenin placed the task of getting "...learning really... become part of our very being, that it shall actually and fully become a constituent element of our social life."

The intensification and enhancement of centralised planning at the inception of peaceful economic construction went hand in hand with the improvement of the entire system of economic management, especially the running of industry. The organisation of industry did not conform to the tasks of the New Economic Policy. The economic executive agencies of the Soviet state were obliged to directly administer a vast multitude of most diverse types of enterprises. In 1920 the Supreme Economic Council had under it upwards of 37,000 state-owned enterprises; over 68 per cent of them belonged to a minor category with only one to 15 workers.

Obliged to administer such a host of sundry enterprises state agencies naturally fractionalized forces and extremely limited resources, failing to concentrate on vital priority tasks

of industrial recovery. It was necessary to leave direcly under state control only a relatively small number of large-scale enterprises in the key industries, and modify the very approach to the tasks of management.

In the Mandate of the Council of People's Commissars concerning the implementation of the principles of the New Economic Policy, which was adopted in early August 1921, a large stride forward was made towards eliminating superfluous centralisation in economic management. Many minor enterprises were leased out to co-operatives and even private individuals. The Mandate put enterprises on an economic cost accounting basis.

Lenin had intended to devote a special article entitled *The Commercial Approach* to economic cost-accounting and in late 1921 drew up a plan for it. He demonstrated the substance of a commercial approach under socialism. The sum total of tasks in this respect was to find the consumer in the person of the working man, gratify his needs and calculate and look for advantage in the interests of the popular consuption. This provision clearly emphasises the difference between economic cost-accounting under capitalism and the commercial approach under socialism — which is to gratify the needs of the consumer. For this it is necessary to administer economy skilfully, and to advantage.

Some critics of the socialist mode of economic management claim it is inefficient as it supposedly denies profit, a commercial approach to the matter. However, this is a profound error. The market with its characteristic commodity relations, money and profits operates under socialism as well. However, in a society where there is public ownership and state-wide planning, there is none of that capitalist market anarchy with its devastating consequences while the profits netted go to benefit the entire people.

Lenin associated cost-accounting with the need to achieve speedy recovery in large-scale industry. "The transfer of state enterprises to the so-called profit basis," he wrote, "is inevitable and inseparably connected with the New Economic Policy; in the near future this is found to become the predominant, if not the sole, form of state enterprise."

In his report to the 9th All-Russia Congress of Soviets in December 1921 Lenin urged learning proper economic management, the profitable organisation of production. He castigated every attempt to dismiss this task. It was necessary to realise, he said, that the great political revolution effected must be culminated by slow, difficult and arduous economic work. He warned against hasty economic reorganisations as there were, he said, "... a tremendous number of enthusiasts who want to rebuild in any kind of way, and these reconstructions lead to calamities of a kind which I have never known in all my life."

In the summer of 1921 the Council of People's Commissars passed a resolution to invest state enterprises with broader powers as regards financing and the use of material resources. Enterprises could now independently change the purpose of allocations within the limits of the sum fixed. To stimulate particularly important work and individual workers, factory managements could use part of the wages fund. Enterprises were also given more leeway in market operations.

Introduction of the principles of cost-accounting on a profit basis resulted firstly in improvement in the system of pricing and in the growth of inner-industrial accumulations.

In early 1922 G.Y. Sokolnikov, the People's Commissar of Finance, told Lenin that some trusts would shortly find themselves without money because of poor operation, and, in this connection, raised the question of possible additional subsidies for them. Lenin gave this answer: "I think that trusts and factories have been founded on a self-supporting basis

precisely in order that they themselves should be responsible and, moreover fully responsible, for their enterprises working without a deficit... If, after setting up trusts and enterprises on a self-supporting basis, we do not prove able by business-like, mercantile methods fully to protect our interests, we shall turn out to be complete idiots."

To enunciate the policy of introducing cost-accounting on a profit basis was not enough; it was necessary to get this carried out in practice. At the same time many economic executives had very hazy notions even of the very term.

Effective cost-accounting is unthinkable without a scientifically grounded price policy. Meanwhile the Supreme Economic Council had for a long time determined the cost price of industrial output by old methods depending on the importance of one or another item for the economy and not on the amount of labour spent to produce the item in question. The Council of People's Commissars put before the Supreme Economic Council, the People's Commissariat of Finance, the State Planning Commission the task of evolving a correct and proper system of price formation and of approximating the price to the actual cost of the item.

Recognition of the operation of the law of value under socialist construction was reflected in the attitude to economic relations in agriculture by the introduction of the food tax instead of the grain surplus appropriation system, and in industry by the transfer of state enterprises to a cost-accounting basis. Such were the two closely interconnected aspects of the New Economic Policy.

In view of the development of commodity-money relations the Soviet Government was faced with the task of adopting the necessary measures to improve the functioning of financial and trade agencies. At Lenin's suggestion a financial committee of the Central Committee of the Party and the Council of People's Commissars was founded in the spring of 1921.

Then in May 1922 a commission on internal trade was formed under the Council of Labour and Defence with the obligation to draft the respective decrees.

Lenin gave considerable attention to the work of the People's Commissariat of Finance. In October 1921 at his proposal the Politbureau of the Central Committee adopted the resolution to "recruit at short order a group of persons with extensive practical experience in capitalist trade so as to advise on matters of monetary circulation."

Lenin painstakingly and most circumstantially explained the measures that needed to be taken to promote trade and consolidate the rate of the rouble. Thus in January 1922 answering a letter from the Deputy of the People's Commissar of Finance Lenin categorically opposed the erroneous provisions contained in the letter as to the tasks before the People's Commissariat. "I cannot agree with you," he wrote "that work should centre on the restructuring of the budget. It should focus on trade and restoration of the rouble. Pivotal currently is trade and primarily internal trade and then external trade; in connection with trade and on the basis of trade, we must restore the rouble. We must give all our attention to that. To take a *practical* approach to that matter is the dominant, fundamental and vital thing."

The State Bank was called upon to play a highly instrumental role in promoting trade. Lenin maintained that the Soviet state needed a state bank of a type that would be a hundred times more intimately associated with trade than the most commercial of the state banks under capitalism. "Our state bank," he wrote, "must have a network of commercial agents beginning from the top (something like a travelling bank inspector for commercial affairs, who would control a turnover running into thousands of millions of roubles) to the small and smallest commercial agents."

The structural set-up of the Supreme Economic Council was also altered in the first few years of the New Economic Policy. The transition to this policy called for the fundamental reorganisation of industrial management. V.V. Kuibyshev, a leading Soviet statesman, wrote summing up in 1926 the activities of the Supreme Economic Council: "The 1921-23 period put forward the top priority task of establishing a commodity bond between state industry and the market, the task of the speediest restoration and revitalisation of industrial units as exchange enterprises. It was in furtherance of this vital task that the apparatus of the Supreme Economic Council then focused fully on expediting the starting up of the principal industrial enterprises as enterprises of a commercial type."

In 1921 the Supreme Economic Council set up five departments; for organisational and administrative affairs, for production and technical affairs, for supplies, for account and statistics, and for financial affairs. The list alone shows the desire to bring the apparatus closer to the task of ensuring the profitable operation of industrial enterprises. By the close of 1920, 16 industrial sectoral divisions were set up in place of the 52 that had existed within the apparatus of the Supreme Economic Council.

The Soviet Government changed the wage system. Piece rates were introduced in place of the Civil War arrangement of keeping wages down to one level. Lenin took a direct hand in drafting the "basic provisions on the question of tariffs" which were approved by the Central Committee of the Communist Party and the Central Council of Trade Unions. Questions of the tarification of labour came up for consideration several times at meetings of the Council of People's Commissars. Lenin noted at the time that a wrong tariff policy inadvisably restricted the wages of some categories of workers, placing absolutely artificial limits in the way of boosting labour productivity. Tariff rates were so much the same that the

bulk of the workers no longer had any urge to raise skills and do intricate and at times manually arduous jobs.

Lenin gave particular attention to the matter of improving the People's Commissariat of Agriculture. He made it his constant concern to enlist capable peasants enjoying prestige and authority for active work in the agricultural offices. An apposite instance is his letter of the 1st of March 1921 to the People's Commissariat of Agriculture about a non-Party peasant, I.A. Chekunov. Noting that Chekunov sympathised with the Communists and was taking a vigorous hand in overcoming the shortcomings in the activities of local bodies of Soviet Government, Lenin advised the Commissariat to go about setting up a council of toiling peasants and at once appoint Chekunov as the Commissariats's commissioner for the organisation of institutions of this nature.

Improvement of the style and methods of government to suit the new conditions of peaceful economic advancement represented a cardinal aspect of Lenins's activities between 1921 and 1923. In his theoretical work and practical activity as head of the state Lenin equipped the Soviet state with a clear perspective in socialist construction.

CHAPTER FIVE

LENIN'S PLAN FOR SOCIALIST CONSTRUCTION

Lenin Drafts Plans for the Country's Industrialisation

The October Revolution triumphed in a country that is one of the world's richest in minerals and manpower, and has the largest territory of all. Nevertheless, it was one of the world's most backward countries. In the spring of 1921 Lenin wrote: "Look at the map of the RSFSR. There is room for dozens of large civilised states in those vast areas which lie to the north of Vologda, the south-east of Rostov-on-Don and Saratov, the south of Orenburg and Omsk, and the north of Tomsk. They are a realm of patriarchalism, and semi- and downright barbarism. And what about the peasant backwoods of the rest of Russia, where scores of versts of country track, or rather of trackless country, lie between the villages and railways, i.e., the material link with the big cities, large-scale industry, capitalism and culture? Isn't that also an area of wholesale patriarchalism, Oblomovism, and semi-barbarism?"

The enemies of the Soviet people predicted the inevitable demise of the young republic; they did not believe in the audacious schemes for socialist construction. Winston Churchill forecast that in Soviet Russia all forms of life would fall into

complete decline, that socialist and communist theories would completely collapse. Robert Silton of the *New York Times* published in 1919 a book called *The Agony of Russia,* in which he wrote that Bolshevism was incapable of creating, that, on the contrary, it brought only destruction. Economically he said, continuation of the Soviet régime is impossible, politically it is absurd.

Even well intentioned Western observers could not conceive the country's likely economic and political renascence. On the 6th of October 1920, Lenin received at the Kremlin the celebrated British science-fiction writer H.G. Wells. "Lenin," Wells wrote later, "who like a good orthodox Marxist denounces all 'Utopians,' has succumbed at last to a Utopia, the Utopia of the electricians... Can one imagine a more courageous project in a vast flat land of forests and illiterate peasants, with no water power, with no technical skill available, and with trade and industry at the last gasp?...

"I cannot see anything of the sort happening in this dark crystal of Russia, but this little man at the Kremlin can; he sees the decaying railways replaced by a new electric transport, sees new roadways spreading throughout the land, sees a new and happier communist industrialism arising again."

The cardinal plank in Lenin's plan for socialist construction was to build up a large-scale machine industry as the material foundation for the new society, organise economic co-operation between the workers and peasants, bring together industry and agriculture on a uniform socialist basis, reorganise production and distribution of material values, effect a cultural revolution, promote the creative initiative of the masses in every possible way, and also enlist the masses in the administration of the economy and of the entire state.

The key link in Lenin's scheme for socialism was to industrialise the country as the prime requisite for the Soviet state's

economic independence and the technical re-equipment of the entire economy.

Lenin said: "a large-scale machine industry capable of reorganizing agriculture is the only material basis that is possible for socialism."

Socialist industrialisation naturally called for a tremendous material outlay. There rose before the Bolshevik Party the problem of where to get the money for recovery and modernisation of old factories and the building of new ones. The Soviet state was prepared to ask the governments of the big Western powers for loans and concrete moves in this direction were made; however, the Soviet Republic did not receive any tangible help from abroad. Only domestic resources created by the effort of the workers, peasants and intelligentsia could provide the finances for socialist industrialisation.

Lenin regarded the income netted by the nationalised industry, banks, and home and foreign trade as the primary sources of accumulation. He emphasised the need to continually improve technology, introduce in production the latest achievements of science and progressive forms of labour organisation, steadily reduce production costs, raise the profitability of enterprises and build up inter-industrial accumulations. He called for the greatest austerity in order to develop a large-scale machine industry and undertake electrification, which in his view was to become the foundation for industry. That is why he so insistently pressed for the elaboration and approval of a plan for the country's electrification.

On the 26th of December 1919, he asked the eminent scientist and Communist G.M. Krzhizhanovsky, his comrade-in-arms in the revolutionary movement, to publish in the press an article that would popularise electrification. Krzhizhanovsky did this. In *Pravda* he published an article entitled "The Tasks of the Electrification of Industry." Lenin highly commended it.

"Magnificent," he said, "we need *several* such articles." He also advised inviting power industry specialists to popularise the need for electrification. At Lenin's suggestion, on the 23rd of March 1920 the Council of People's Commissars decided to set up a special State Commission for the Electrification of Russia known as GOELRO. Krzhizhanovsky was appointed its chairman. Lenin took a direct hand in all its activities. He made the acquaintance of the Commission members and had a good notion of the roles each played in doing this complex and highly responsible job.

Lenin suggested dividing the plan into a minimum programme and a maximum programme. The first was to provide for the recovery and proper use of operating power stations, the second called for the construction of "new power stations and electric transmission lines." At the very first meeting of GOELRO on the 17th of February 1920, Krzhizhanovsky informed the gathering of Lenin's request to tell the prospective planners that "the electrification commission will be a cardinal state agency and will receive the most intensive backing from state authority."

Lenin authorised GOELRO to begin by drawing up a scientifically grounded plan for the construction of crucial power stations and by planning such construction for roughly 10 years ahead. "Comrade Lenin believes," Krzhizhanovsky told the gathering, "that these power stations will determine all of our economic activity and tie in the work of all production agencies — which is essential to achieve an integrated economic programme. Hence all industrial destinies of Russia are linked up with the strict implementation of a plan for electrification." He wound up his introductory speech at this first meeting as follows: "The Council of People's Commissars has the most optimistic hopes and its chairman is concerned in a very warm and probing way with all work on electrification.

We shall receive support in all our ventures. We can and must display vigour and good cheer in promoting our responsible tasks."

A draft of the plan for Russia's electrification was completed in the main by October 1920. In November the government received a report summing up the Commission's activities.

Naturally the Commission had to work with frantic haste to finish the draft within ten months. Whole chapters of the GOELRO plan which added up into quite a bulky volume were rushed straight from the typewriter to printing works. Lenin was an unusually attentive first reader of this effort, requesting that a copy of the proofs be sent him personally.

The GOELRO plan charted a firm policy of building up national heavy industry in Russia. Within the space of 10 years it was planned to double industrial levels as against 1913. Meanwhile metallurgy, engineering, the chemical, fuel, power, building materials industries, in short, the leading branches of production, were to advance at a particularly expeditious rate.

The crux of the scheme was to have all branches of the economy develop on the basis of electricity. The plan consisted of two sections. The first section sketched the prospects for the development of electrical engineering, fuel supplies, transport and farming, the second furnished the calculations and design estimates for economic construction in the country's main economic areas. Though Western Siberia was slated as the farthermost boundary of electrification, the plan even outlined economic development for Eastern Siberia. It noted that the "Angara Basin was one of the most valuable areas of Siberia" because of the vast resources of mineral wealth and water power there. The men who drew up the first long-range plan for the Soviet Republic's economic advancement were firmly convinced that in the future the Angara and its entire neighbourhood would occupy a place of appropriate importance in

Siberia. Lenin emphasised that the GOELRO plan provided the exact calculations as to the resources, the manpower and the volume of building that should be invested to translate it into life.

The GOELRO plan was printed and circulated among all the delegates to the 8th All-Russia Congress of Soviets which met in December 1920 at the Bolshoi Theatre. Here on Lenin's orders illuminated maps were installed to illustrate the GOELRO plan. The Congress discussed Krzhizhanovsky's report and approved the plan submitted.

Lenin made thorough preparations for the discussion of the GOELRO plan at the Congress of Soviets. Several days before the Congress opened he drew up a rough outline of his speech on this score. "A unified economic plan," he wrote, "a great plan. Electrification plus Soviet power means Communism." And this mathematically exact formula had profound significance.

Lenin regarded the electrification plan as one laying the material and technical foundations for the new society. He pointed out that while Soviet power ensured the political aspect of socialist society, enabling the working masses to accomplish all their objectives, the "economic success... can be assured only when the Russian proletarian state effectively controls a huge industrial machine built on up-to-date technology; this means electrification."

Even before the GOELRO scheme was finalised, Lenin suggested setting up a supreme national planning agency whose nucleus would be the team of electrification planners. On the 6th of November 1920, he wrote to Krzhizhanovsky that, "it is GOELRO which should be the single planning organ of the Council of People's Commissars."

He was so intent on this idea that in February 1921 he specially went to the Arkhangelskoye holiday home, where Krzhi-

zhanovsky was under treatment at the time, to once again discuss in detail the matter of setting up a State Planning Commission. There Lenin and Krzhizhanovsky compiled the first list of state planning commission functionaries and discussed its draft statute. Then on the 22nd of February 1921, as already mentioned, the Council of People's of Commissars approved the statute of the State Planning Commission, which going by the GOELRO plan was to draft current and long-range economic programmes.

Though Russia had vast resources of water power, sweeping electrification was totally unthinkable before the socialist revolution.

True G.O. Graftio, I.G. Alexandrov, B.A. Bakhmetyev and other fine Russian engineers had drafted schemes for developing the power resources of the Dnieper and Volkhov Rivers and for building a number of huge thermal power plants. But before 1917 most of these projects were not fated to materialise. Thus, of projects to build hydro-power stations on the Dnieper, Graftio wrote: "I blueprinted the first project for this hydropower station in 1911, spending three years on it. However, it was beyond the powers of the tsarist government to build even one electric station in the territory of this vast state."

Back in 1913 Krzhizhanovsky had suggested building a large hydro-electric power station near Samara on the Volga, but the church hierarchy bristled at the very idea.

However, immediately after the victory of the Great October Socialist Revolution, despite the incredibly grim economic and political situation, the Soviet Republic took initial, practical moves to build electric power stations. Already in May 1918, Lenin signed a decree of the Council of People's Commissars to set up under the Supreme Economic Council a Central Committee on State Construction Projects that was authorised to integrate the construction of factories, power stations

and railways. Construction of the first Shatura, Kashira and Volkhov power stations began, though the builders had only antiquated equipment available and even then it was brought in only from places where it stood idle. All of these projects are associated with Lenin. As early as December 1917 Lenin instructed that a "temporary power station burning peat be built in Shatura" while in January 1918 the Council of People's Commissars decided to prepare for the building of the Volkhov hydro-power station. In the spring of 1919 construction war started of the Kashira power station, which burned coal from pits outside Moscow.

The Shatura power station was opened in great ceremony on the 6th of December 1925 and was named after Lenin. In this connection *Pravda* wrote then: "Of late many commissions and delegations have visited the Shatura station. It has also been visited by foreign scientists and engineers of repute. The unanimous comment shows that we have here a power station which is, in its way, an unexcelled example not only for us but for all industrial development in the West. The most difficult phase of launching electrification while under the storm clouds of war and economic chaos is already behind."

Lenin intently followed the process of construction at the Kashira project helping with material, provisions, etc. At his initiative the Council of People's Commissars and Council of Labour and Defense discussed this construction project several times.

Lenin also paid much attention to the building of the Volkhov station. In September 1921 the government decided to put this project on the priority list. Its history indeed demonstrated the viability of the Soviet system, the people's faith in full economic victory. This project trained a pool of Soviet builders who later put up stations on the Dnieper, the Svir and the Volga. At the same time it acted as a proving range in

tackling many intricate technical tasks of power station construction.

Besides electrification the Soviet Government was keenly interested in the advancement of the engineering industry. At the inception of the New Economic Policy heavy industry could be restored only if the state provided the necessary orders. Particularly acute, for example, was the question of ordering locomotives from Soviet plants, notably the Putilov, Sormovo, Kolomna and other works. Concluded in August 1922 was a "general contract between the People's Commissariat of the Railways and the Supreme Economic Council for the building and repair of locomotives at the Council's plants." This contract called for the building of 508 locomotives and the capital overhauling of another 1,800.

The Council of People's Commissars did intensive work to get going the country's new industries to manufacture tractors, motor vehicles and aircraft and to re-gear part of the war industry to peacetime lines.

On the 14th of September 1921, the Council of Labour and Defence met to discuss the question of motor works. The decision adopted claimed that it was necessary not only to organise the manufacture of spare parts for motor vehicles but also to start making automobiles as such. By the 7th of November 1924 the Moscow AMO motor works had turned out its first ten lorries. Meanwhile tractor targets were determined for the largest Russian engineering plants, the earlier mentioned Putilov and Kolomna plants and the Obukhov works. Launched simultaneously was the manufacture of electrical farm implements. By the second half of September 1922 sixteen sets for electric ploughs had been manufactured.

These were of course very modest figures, but what was important is that these 10 lorries and 16 electric ploughs were made at Soviet plants, to become tangible, noticeable and effective "footprints" of the first steps made by socialist industry.

On the 22nd of October 1922 Lenin attended tryouts of an electric plough at Butyrski hamlet outside Moscow. Documents of the Council of People's Commissars, Council of Labour and Defence and all of Lenin's correspondence on this score show how fervently Lenin wanted to have the electric plough contract met, so as to show the peasantry, at least on a small trial plot the advantages and significance of the new machinery and of electrification for farming.

Lenin's basic policy of giving every boost to heavy industry was distinctly evident in the activities of the Council of People's Commissars. The Soviet state deliberately placed emphasis on heavy industry, on its receiving more resources, than light industry and a constant flow of government contracts. At the 4th Congress of the Comintern in November 1923, Lenin was able to note joyfully the first signs of brisker activity in heavy industry. The Soviet state, he said was striving hard to accumulate resources for heavy industry and practising austerity wherever possible as, "we know that unless we save heavy industry, unless we restore it, we shall not be able to build up an industry at all and without an industry we shall go under as an independent country."

Lenin attached tremendous importance to sophistication of production technologies and to the innovators' movement in industry, transport and farming. He kept an eye on all the inventions proposed, invariably supporting every innovation in science and technology.

He also kept track of foreign technical achievements. Set up under the Council of People's Commissars was a special Commission whose job was to acquire and disseminate foreign literature. As Lenin noted, the prime task of this commission was to have in special libraries in Moscow, Petrograd and the bigger cities in the republic at least one copy of all the latest foreign technical and scientific periodicals and books for

1914-21 in chemistry, physics, electrical engineering, medicine, statistics, economics, etc., and get all periodicals regularly. He said he would assess the entire work of this commission first of all by what it really achieved in this direction. Lenin urged learning "in good time practically and not bureaucratically" European and American technologies and engineering. He maintained that Moscow "should have one specimen of all the most important latest machines: to learn and to teach."

Lenin showed constant interest in the organisation of peat cutting, since, because of the desperate fuel crisis, the result of the flooding of Donbas pits and destruction of oil fields, peat was of particular importance.

Engineer R.E. Klasson had suggested a hydraulic method of peat extraction back in 1914. But again this invention, like many others, got nowhere before the revolution. Only in 1917-19 were the first tests made to extract peat by the Klasson method.

On the 27th of October 1920 Lenin together with scientists, engineers, economic executives, came to the Round Hall of the Kremlin Palace to see a film on the new method of peat extraction. At once after the viewing, Lenin wrote a note to the Presidium of the Supreme Economic Council indicating the exceptional importance of Klasson's invention and the need to take a series of measures to develop it on a statewide scale. Three days later, again at his suggestion, the Council of People's Commissars declared all work in this field "particularly urgent, as being of extraordinary state importance."

A special organisation, Gidrotorf, was set up to run the hydraulic extraction of peat. Lenin demanded that it be provided with adequate funds particularly for buying equipment abroad. In a letter written in March 1922 to its officials, Lenin said: "You, comrades, have got what you need for work. Despite our poverty, you will have more large funds allocated to you, above what you received earlier."

At the 9th Congress of Soviets Lenin could note with gratification that peat extraction was most likely the only field in which prewar levels had been exceeded.

When drafting plans for the country's socialist remaking and directing economic recovery, Lenin invariably concentrated on the economic development of the once backward areas, on the advancement of the productive forces of the Russian socialist republic. He noted that pre-revolutionary Russian economy had suffered from the most disproportionate siting of productive forces. Before the revolution, prominent Russian scientists had set up a body known as the Commission for the Study of Russia's Natural Productive Forces, which was to abolish disparities in the country's development. In an article published in 1915 Academician V.I. Vernadsky, the chairman of this commission said he would like "to know where in Russia we could find or look for tungsten, molybdenum, iron pyrites, sulphur, lead, saltpeter, etc.; I am growing aware of the might granted us by nature, won by the Russian people and impregnated with their blood."

However, considering the political system at the time, balanced rational use of the country's natural resources was out of the question.

In the spring of 1918 the Russian Academy of Sciences offered the Soviet Government to start a systematic study of the natural wealth. Lenin responded at once, believing it advisable to set up a number of commissions of experts in order to draw up a plan for reorganising industry and economically developing Russia. This plan was to incorporate the rational siting of industries from the point of view of the proximity of raw materials and the possibility of spending as little labour as possible on transition from the processing of the raw materials to all subsequent stages — all the way to the finisched product. The Soviet Government placed the necessary

financial resources at the disposal of the Academy of Sciences and rendered it every assistance.

A pertinent instance of Lenin's participation in the effort to open up natural resources is afforded by the story of iron ore prospecting in the neighbourhood of Kursk. In 1919, upon Lenin's directives, the first outline was sketched for unremitting prospecting under P.P. Lazarzev, a prominent scientist. In August 1920 the Council of Labour and Defence adopted a special decision which declared all work "associated with the prospecting of the Kursk magnetic anomaly of particular state importance." In the summer of 1921 the first shafts were sunk in the neighbourhood of the Kursk magnetic anomaly.

However, it took years before the work started in the initial years of Soviet Government yielded fruit. Only in the early 1930s were the Lebedinskoye and Muzhno-Korobkovskoye iron deposits discovered in the region of the Kursk magnetic anomaly. Today, this world's largest iron ore deposit in the heart of Russia is being exploited to the hilt. There has come true what was conceived and initiated many years ago under the personal direction and with the invariable support and assistance of Lenin.

From the very outset of economic recovery, Lenin singled out foreign trade among the host of cardinal political, state and economic aspects of socialist construction as an effective means of assisting the revival and further development of the country's productive forces, as a factor, which could help the Soviet state tackle two tasks: on the one hand, the problem, in part, of accumulation, and on the other, the import of the equipment, machinery and valuable raw materials and semi-manufactures. He regarded these functions of foreign trade as all-important. "The profit from foreign trade runs into hundreds of percent, and we are *beginning* to receive millions and tens of millions. We have *begun* to build up mixed companies,

we have begun to learn to receive *half* of their (monstrous) profits," he wrote to the Central Committee of the Party. "We already see signs of very substantial state profits."

Lenin regarded foreign trade as a source for obtaining new machinery and believed it vital to buy abroad up-to-date equipment.

Lenin vigorously advocated business contacts with the bourgeois, industrially advanced powers. He urged Communists to learn to trade. "...We must make our thinking more flexible and must discard all communist, or rather Russian, Oblomovism..."

Lenin himself displayed the model of a statesman in the field of foreign trade. He directly participated in outlining the principles and practical measures for the implementation of Soviet policy in external economic relations.

"Working in the People's Commissariat of Foreign Trade," I.I. Radchenko, a leading executive in this field recollected later, "I had occasion time and again to see how seriously and thoroughly Vladimir Ilyich concerned himself with everything, even things that appeared remote to him."

Lenin possessed a remarkable faculty for realistic thinking and, having infinite faith in the potentialities of the socialist system and in the inexhaustible powers of the working people, he opposed all who boastfully claimed that "we can beat them at it," especially in the competition with capitalism, which at the time was economically more advanced than Russia. "There is nothing more harmful and catastrophic for communism" he wrote, "than communist bragging that we can do it all ourselves."

Inextricably tied in with Lenin's practices of government were the features of an outstanding theoretician and superb practical organiser. This was most strikingly evident in his approach to industrial management. Having formulated the cardinal tasks for the country's industrial development he not

only sketched the prospects ahead in the transformation of backward agrarian Russia into a mighty industrial power, but also did all in his power in those conditions to bring these prospects nearer, to make them tangible and enable the working masses realise that great goals could be accomplished despite the weary grind of the initial grim years following the Revolution.

Lenin and the Peasantry

The first year of economic recovery was incredibly grim and severe. Fuel was in scarce supply and many factories and plants stood idle. To cap it all drought ruined nearly all crops in the Volga Basin, the Caucasus, the Crimea, part of the Ukraine and the Urals. By the end of 1922, more than 22 million people in these areas were on a starvation diet. Around a million died from hunger.

The Soviet Government mobilised the working people to combat starvation. Hunger relief commissions were organised. The peasants of the afflicted provinces received seed and provisions.

After the drought of 1921 it seemed as if years would be needed before farming got back onto its feet again. But in the very next year it began to confidently and steadily pick up strength, quickly reaching prewar levels. This was the product of the Soviet state's correct policy vis-à-vis the peasantry. Having obtained, in the conditions of the New Economic Policy the necessary material incentives for development and relying on state assistance the peasantry displayed tremendous vigour.

Summing up in 1922 the initial results of the New Economic Policy, Lenin said: "Our aim is to restore the link, to prove to the peasant by deeds that we are beginning with what

is intelligible, familiar and immediately accessible to him, in spite of his poverty, and not with something remote and fantastic from the peasant's point of view. We must prove that we can help him and that in this period, when the small peasant is in the state of appalling ruin, impoverishment and starvation, the Communists are really helping him."

The Communist Party initiated agricultural recovery with measures that were familiar, intelligible and most of all, accessible to the peasant. The peasantry acclaimed with enthusiasm the introduction of the food tax and the measures taken to give economic relief to the rural areas. On the 27th of January 1922, *Pravda* published an article entitled "The 9th Congress of Soviets and the Peasantry" which quoted the following assessment of the Congress by one of its delegates, a peasant. " 'Now that's a Congress!' an elderly peasant representing one of the distant provinces said. 'I'm gladly going home because I can certainly say that I have what to brag about there'."

The decisions the Congress took to help the starving, restore and advance agriculture, introduce co-operative farming, promote electrification and rebuild industry, played a most instrumental role in the life of the socialist republic.

Having drafted the planks of the New Economic Policy Lenin now claimed that it was necessary to concretise this policy on the basis of a study of practical experience. He urged the Party and Soviets not to rigidly keep to any specific directives or rules while these were still not enough facts on economic affairs in the localities and while the actual conditions and needs of the peasants had not been adequately explored and studied. He himself unswervingly abided by this rule.

In a speech at a conference of non-Party delegates to the 9th Congress of Soviets Lenin said: "My business here as I see it is more to listen and take down notes... I am trying to note from where you come and what you mostly complain about. Yes, my job here," he repeated, "is to take the most

copious notes and know what non-Party people think." He thoroughly analysed all the proposals the peasants made ; indeed many were taken into account in the decisions of the 9th Congress of Soviets ; others served as the basis for new legislation after the Congress.

Lenin particularly emphasized the need for acting in the rural areas "as cautiously as possible so as not to hinder the successful development of agricultural production by clumsy interference."

In order to ably direct farming it was necessary to recruit for the state apparatus people who would have close connections with the village, be well familiar with life there and command authority among the peasants.

Shortly after the 10th Party Congress Lenin asked leading executives of the People's Commissariat of Agriculture to recommend peasants for nomination to responsible posts and to provide him with their addresses and biographical particulars. Having received from one of the delegates to the 10th Party Congress some information about his four peasant acquaintances, who at the time were serving in the Red Army, Lenin instructed his secretary: "Put this into a special folder and entitle it 'Recommended non-Party peasants'."

In early 1921 Lenin had the idea of appointing as People's Commissar of Agriculture a peasant who would be well familiar with village life and mores. It took nearly the whole of 1921 to find a suitable candidate. Only in late December was V.G. Yakovenko, a man of peasant stock from the Yeniseisk province, appointed to the post. Lenin had remembered the name since the spring of 1921 when he had read Yakovenko's proposal to replace the surplus-grain appropriation system by a food tax. And Yakovenko indeed made a very successful peasant commissar.

His excellent knowledge of life, his ability to rely in all practical work on peasant experience and his constant contacts

with peasant representatives enabled Lenin to draft scientifically grounded recommendations on how to restore agriculture and consolidate the economic alliance between the workers and the peasantry.

Following the transition to the New Economic Policy and almost right up to the 1921 it had been thought that the basic economic link between town and country would be maintained by commodity exchange through the medium of the state-owned trade network and co-operatives. This form of exchange was indeed the only possible on in the conditions of the first few months of peacetime economic construction. The dislocated financial and monetary system, the reduction of economic relations to relations in kind, and steadily falling value of money did not make for trade. Even then Lenin insistently called for economic assimilation of commodity exchange operations based on a profound study of the market and its relations. "But in order to engage in the exchange of commodities and avoid being beaten in the free market — which means being beaten by unrestricted trade," Lenin said at a food conference on the 16th of June 1921, "you must know it thoroughly, compete with it, fight it with its own weapons, and beat it at its own game, but to be able to do that you must have a thorough knowledge of it."

Lenin nipped in the bud all violations of the principle of the purely voluntary character of commodity exchange operations. In 1921 the consequences of "war communism" methods of economic administration were still felt. Thus the People's Commissariat of Food proposed effecting "compulsory commodity exchange" in Siberia. Its functionaries believed that most decisive action should be taken to discontinue the free exchange of grain products, "even to the extent of closing down all markets and the like, in order to practise wide-scale compulsory exchange." A similar proposal with regard to the

Petrograd province was made by the Petrograd gubernatorial party committee.

On the 9th of July 1921, the Politbureau of the Central Committee of the Party discussed these proposals and the following serious warning was issued to the People's Commissariat of Food. "The People's Commissariat of Food must remember that the new food policy is, according to the decisions of the latest Party conference, a measure that has been introduced in earnest and for a long time ahead." At the same time the decision noted that compulsory commodity exchange conflicted with the principles of the New Economic Policy. Lenin continued to see to it that all relapses into "war communism" methods were cut short.

By the autumn of 1921 experience showed that trading on a money basis was becoming a daily occurrence. Lenin at once took stock of this and in September 1921 declared on this score: "We are behind. Free unrestricted trade is stronger than us." He put up new tasks. These were to look the danger squarely in the eye, proceed from the immutable fact that commodity exchange was no good, note that trade on a money basis was gaining ground, ensure state regulation of buying and selling and of monetary circulation, learn to trade, and, finally, work to get socialist elements to oust capitalist elements in economic competition with private enterprise. He kept day-to-day track of the operation and activities of the consumer co-operatives, always demanding data on the extent of the commodity turnover and systematic information on "how the apparatus for co-operation in Russia is developing." He wanted to know "what serious measures for checking up have been taken by the Central Board of the consumer co-operatives so that our co-operation be indeed a commercial, not bureaucratic, agency." At his initiative there began to be implemented in 1922 a gradual transition from a tax in kind to a tax in cash. Then

same the day in 1924 when the agricultural tax was computed only in terms of cash.

In getting the Party to realise the need to begin with what the peasant could understand and with what was possible at the present moment, Lenin never lost sight of overall socialist perspective. The main objective was by no means to perpetuate petty peasant property but to remake the village along socialist lines and pave the way for the socialist transformation of farming.

Striving to consolidate the bond with peasant economy within the framework of the New Economic Policy, Lenin at the same time paid constant heed to getting the peasantry to appreciate the overall tasks of the proletarian state and open up before them grand vistas for further advance and prosperity.

He maintained that a key task of socialist construction was to transform the millions of small peasant holdings into large-scale collective socialist production. "This," he said, "is one of the most difficult tasks of socialist construction that will confront all capitalist countries."

Lenin was author of the plan to organise a large-scale system of highly-developed collective farming that would deliver the millions of toiling peasants from kulak fetters, poverty and ruin, and steadily raise their material and cultural standards.

Elaborating the prospects for socialist transformations in the village, Lenin proceeded from a proper understanding of peasant mentality. The toiling peasant shared common interests with the proletarian. He could deliver himself from his fetters, poverty and benighted ignorance only if he firmly allied himself with the working class in order to abolish the capitalist mode of production, only if he had the comprehensive help of Soviet power.

Lenin maintained that the introduction of new machinery could, above all, pave the way for socialist reforms in the countryside. No wonder he showed so much attention and interest in supplying the rural areas with new machinery, in developing a national industry for the manufacture of farm machinery, in boosting the productive forces of agriculture. Back in February 1920 when the drafting of the plan for the electrification of Russia was first embarked on, Lenin observed that electrification and organisation of industry on an up-to-date, high technical level should link town and country, "put an end to the division between town and country, make it possible to raise the level of culture... overcome... ignorance, poverty, disease and barbarism," and ensure the material and technical base for the socialist remaking of agriculture.

Lenin noted that the way to overcome the petty bourgeois mentality of the peasant, "to improve, so to speak, his mentality — is through the material basis, technical equipment, the extensive use of tractors and other farm machinery and electrification on a mass scale. This would remake the small farmer fundamentally and with tremendous speed."

However, Lenin distinctly realised the immensely complex and challenging task that the socialist transformation of farming represented. He flatly opposed all who thought this would come about with automatic ease through the simple expedient of employing new machinery — an opinion, incidentally, that was widely current. Thus, N. Osinsky Deputy People's Commissar of Agriculture wrote in late 1921: "Petty farming will disappear painlessly, of its own accord when the horse and manual labour are overridden by the appropriately employed tractor or electrical machine." Technical facilities merely provide the wherewithal for the socialist remaking of agriculture. An immense organizational effort by the Communist Party and Soviet state was called for to realise the available opportunities.

Lenin insistently urged the gradual involvement of the peasantry in socialist construction through a series of transitional forms. In this respect the hardest nut to crack was that of evolving ways and means by which the peasant would come to combine his private interests as a petty producer with his social interests.

Lenin was first to discover these ways and means and give them embodiment in his co-operation plan. He began his article *On Co-operation* which he dictated in January 1923 by reminding that "since the time of the October Revolution... our co-operative movement has become one of great significance."

Some practical workers at first looked upon agricultural co-operation with great scepticism as being co-operation of smallholders. At the 11th Party Conference, D.Z. Manuilsky, the Ukrainian People's Commissar of Agriculture, even noted the danger supposedly emannating from co-operation, as this, he claimed, implied "an organising of the petty bourgeoisie." It was this sort of mood that Lenin had in mind when in his article *On Co-operation* he noted its underestimation by many practical workers, its decrying as being "huckstering" and co-operation of petty commodity producers.

In his article *On Co-operation,* Lenin defined for the first time co-operation as the peasant's highroad to socialism, as the means to achieve the Party's ultimate aims, as that evolved form for economic organisation of peasantry, whereby it would be possible "by means that are the simplest, easiest and most acceptable to the peasant" to effect the transition in the countryside to socialism. A producer's co-operative which affords the peasant the opportunity of correctly combining private personal interests with public interests is such a means.

Lenin taught that the socialist reparterning of small holdings should begin with the simplest forms of co-operation, first in marketing and supply. In the process of the develop-

ment of these type of co-operation the peasant will see from his own experience that collective comradely forms of management are superior and will turn to productive co-operation. "And given social ownership of the means of production, given the class victory of the proletariat over the bourgeoisie, the system of civilised co-operatives is the system of socialism."

Lenin's article *On Co-operation* presented a fundamentally novel approach to the question of the ways of development in agriculture and signified a change in the Party's outlook on co-operation.

Thanks to the correct state policy, agriculture was able to heal the grievous war wounds soon enough. Sown areas under all the main crops increased and by 1925 gross grain returns were in excess of the average for the five years before the war. That year cotton plantations were eight times larger and sugar cane plantations nearly three times larger than in 1922 while the potato crop was 1.5 times bigger than before the war. The 1916 level for the head of cattle was exceeded.

Lenin's Plan for Building up Socialist Culture

Before the October Revolution the ideologists of the bourgeoisie claimed that without a sufficiently high standard of culture the proletariat could not and should not take power, that Russia was not ripe for socialism. History has demonstrated the falsity of these claims.

Arguing the point with the ideologists of the bourgeoisie and the leaders of the petty-bourgeois parties, Lenin raised this question. Where, when and by whom has this level of knowledge required for the victory of the socialist revolution been ascertained? The Communists had no doubt that the establishment of Soviet power would pave the way for the

establishment of a new socialist culture. Lenin emphasised that to achieve genuine progress it was necessary to depose the rule of the capitalists and landlords "and *then*, with the aid of the workers' and peasants' government and the Soviet system, proceed to overtake the other nations."

Lenin saw the main objective of cultural advancement as that of assimilating all the gains of culture, of making culture serve the people. To this end it was necessary to bridge the gap which in the past had lain between the people and culture, to most decisively raise the educational and cultural levels of the working masses, to open up broad vistas for talent from the midst the people, for the full development of the people's creative energies and of society's cultural life.

Lenin could not conceive of the country's cultural development without the direct involvement of the broadest masses. He pointed out that "there is a mighty urge for light and knowledge 'down below', that is to say, among the mass of working people whom capitalism had been hypocritically cheating out of an education... We can be proud that we are promoting and fostering this urge."

Success in cultural development, Lenin emphasised time and again, largely depends on the methods of state administration. From the very outset the Soviet state established new agencies for the direction of the country's cultural life. They were headed by prominent scientists and professional revolutionaries. Appointed as first People's Commissar of Education was A. V. Lunacharsky, a most cultured and erudite man. Collaborating with him were N. K. Krupskaya, an educator, M. N. Pokrovsky, an historian, and O. Y. Schmidt, prominent scientist — to mention only three.

It was not easy to entrench the new culture. Time, extensive resources and effort were needed to overcome the ages-old backwardness.

A concrete plan for effecting the cultural revolution in the Soviet Union was evolved in a number of Lenin's writings, especially in the works produced towards the end of his life. He emphasised repeatedly that socialism was not only a new economic system and political order but also at the same time a new type of culture. He directly associated the cultural revolution with the effort to build up the economic foundations of socialism. He maintained that cultural activity must be directly interconnected with the practical tasks of economic construction. Addressing the 8th All-Russia Congress of Soviets, he pointed out that the implementation of the GOELRO plan directly hinged upon an effort to overcome the cultural backwardness of the masses. He associated the co-operation of agriculture most intimately with the cultural advancement of the toiling peasantry. "Full co-operation," he wrote, "cannot, in fact, be achieved without a cultural revolution."

As Lenin conceived it, the development of socialist culture was a gradual, lengthy process to revamp the social mentality, psychology, awareness, mores, customs of the broad segments of the population, a process of overcoming and erasing the essential distinctions between town and country and between mental and manual labour.

Cultural tasks cannot be accomplished as quickly as, say, tasks of a political and military order. "By its very nature it requires a longer period; and we must adapt ourselves to this longer period," Lenin said in one of his statements, "plan our work accordingly and display the maximum of perseverance and method."

A paramount task before Soviet power in the cultural field was to eradicate illiteracy. As far as literacy went Russia was somewhere at the bottom of the world table. In 1906 the journal *Vestnik Vospitania* (Education Herald) predicted that some 300 years would be needed to achieve universal literacy.

The level of literacy among the peoples in the national outskirts was particularly low. In Central Asia and Kazakhstan the proportion of literate people was somewhere between 0.5 and two per cent while among Azerbaijanians and Armenians only one in 10 could read and write. Many of the nationalities inhabiting Russia did not have any alphabets of their own.

A mass crusade against illiteracy was triggered off by the decree that the Council of People's Commissars took on the 26th of January 1919. Entitled "Concerning the Abolition of Illiteracy Among the Population of the Russian Federation", it was signed by Lenin. "To provide the entire population in the republic with possibilities for conscious participation in the country's political life," the decree said, "the Council of People's Commissars has hereby resolved that the entire population of the Republic of between ages of eight and 50 who can neither read nor write must necessarily become literate in either their native tongue or in Russian at their discretion." This document provided for setting up alongside of the existing schools of the usual type special schools for the instruction of the illiterate. Special centres for the abolition of illiteracy were established throughout the country. Organised in July 1920 on Lenin's initiative was the All-Russia Emergency Commission for the abolition of illiteracy. Similar commissions were set up in the provinces and other administrative divisions.

Despite the extremely grim conditions obtaining in those years and the acute shortage of the bare essentials for the organisation of instruction such as primers, paper, ink, pencils, etc., the effort to abolish illiteracy assumed considerable proportions even while the Civil War was on. According to incomplete statistics, by 1920 there were already more than 12,000 centres for the abolition of illiteracy in 41 provinces of Russia. It was not easy for adults to become literate but the millions of workers and peasants thirsted for knowledge

and flocked to the libraries, reading rooms and school rooms and, following with finger the lines of the first Soviet primers read out syllable by syllable: "We are not slaves, no slaves are we." In this way they were taught not only to read but also to comprehend the social import of the revolution.

V. Kuprevich, a Baltic seaman who subsequently became an eminent scientist, gave this account. After the taking of the Winter Palace, he went back home to Byelorussia. At a general meeting the peasants there elected him to be their teacher. When he declined saying that he himself was not very literate, he was simply told: "Now stop dodging the issue, you're literate and must teach our children. It's our power now and you must listen to what the public say."

The question of abolishing illiteracy acquired particular urgency after the Civil War ended. Lenin noted that whereas wholesale illiteracy had not stood in the way of effecting the revolution, of taking power, of crushing the enemies on the battlefield it would be a great stumbling block in the way of economic recovery and socialist construction.

By the mid-thirties illiteracy was already a thing of the past. Remember that the bourgeois periodical claimed it would take 300 years to abolish illiteracy. The Soviet Republic accomplished this incredibly difficult and complex task in 15 years.

Lenin personally directed the reform of secondary and higher education. The Council of People's Commissars passed a decree in conformity with which the school was separated from the church. So ended for all time the tremendous influence the church had wielded in school education. All educational establishments were placed under the People's Commissariat of Education. Co-education was introduced, syllabuses and curricula were revised, the old useless textbooks and manuals were withdrawn and a new orthography was introduced.

A key aspect of the entire school reform was that of training a new pool of school teachers. Lenin always kept in mind the mood and sentiments of school teachers, taking care that they got all they needed. "We," he said, "must systematically step up our efforts to organise the school teachers so as to transform them from the bulwark of the bourgeois system that they still are in all capitalist countries without exception, into the bulwark of the Soviet system, in order, through their agency, to divert the peasantry from alliance with the bourgeoisie and to bring them into alliance with the proletariat." He urged them to "join forces with the entire body of the embattled working people. The task of the new pedagogics was to link up teaching activities with the socialist organisation of society." However without reforming the higher school it was impossible to fully accomplish the task of forming a new Soviet intelligentsia. On the 2nd of August 1918 Lenin signed a decree of the Council of People's Commissars concerning the new admission rules to universities and colleges. He himself edited the draft of the decision, drawing attention in it to the broad opportunities afforded the working people for enrolling in institutions of higher learning. "Priority in enrolment," said this decision, "must unquestionably be given to persons of proletarian and poor peasant stock who should be extensively provided with scholarship grants". On that same 2nd of August, Lenin signed another decree of the Council of People's Commissars as to the rules regulating the admission to institutions of higher education. Now anybody could enrol regardless of citizenship and sex. All previous restrictions were lifted and tuition fees were abolished. For the first time in world history the "children of cooks" had obtained the practical opportunity to learn behind the "sacred walls" of universities and colleges.

The thirst for knowledge among the workers and peasants was indeed unbounded. They flooded the People's Commissariat of Education with letters displaying their yearning to

acquire an education. "I am willing to go hungry and suffer every privation, indeed anything, as long as I am enrolled as a student," N. A. Krasnykh, a peasant, wrote to the Commissariat in 1919. However, this request could not be met at once, as the writer of this letter, like thousands of other workers and peasants, did not have the necessary education to enroll.

It was then that, on the initiative of the Communist Party members, among the student body of the Commercial Institute (now the Plekhanov Institute of the Economy) Workers' Faculties were organised. At these faculties students were given a three-year crash course conforming to the programme of four or five senior years at secondary school. It was not easy for them and life was pretty difficult.

However, the Soviet Government did all in its power to improve their material conditions. Their food rations were equal to those received by cadets of military schools. Special funds were allocated to provide them with more or less adequate housing facilities. The workers' faculties trained the first generation of the new Soviet intelligentsia and by 1923 half the university and college enrolment were workers and peasants.

Progressive scientists ardently acclaimed and gave every support to the workers' faculties. When such a faculty was opened at the Moscow University in 1919 the eminent scholar K. A. Timiryazev addressed its students with the following stirring words of greeting: "Science and democracy, the close alliance of learning and labour were for dozens of years my clarion call. In your gathering here today I see the beginning of the realisation of one of its cardinal manifestations. The worker will indeed develop into a clever creative force when he begins to understand the paramount gains of science; meanwhile science will receive a firm and reliable basis when its destiny will be in the hands of the most enlightened peoples

and not under the control of the tsars and their fawning servitors even though they may style themselves ministers of education, academicians and professors."

The Soviet Government implemented a sweeping programme to reorganise the higher school. At institutions of higher learning the Bolshevik Party brought together all its few professional scientists. Lenin invariably took care to have Marxists scientists properly employed. In the spring of 1920 he instructed his secretaries to look in Kazan for V. V. Adoratsky whom he recommended for scientific and educational work. He wrote of Adoratsky: "I have known him for more than ten years. A most reliable person. A well educated Marxist." In 1921 Lenin recommended that the People's Commissariat of Education recruit the Communist V. F. Gorin-Galkin, who before the revolution had written treatises on philosophy, as a lecturer at Moscow University. On the staff of the social sciences faculty of Moscow University were A. V. Lunacharsky, the eminent economist S. G. Strumilin and the Party publicist and historian V.P. Volgin.

The year 1921 saw the organisation of the Institute of Red Professors for the purpose of training Marxists in political economics, historical materialism, modern history, etc.

Lenin paid particular heed to the higher technical schools which turned out engineers, the need for whom was extremely acute. On the 17th of December 1921, he happened to read a letter from Professor Krug, the Dean of the Electrical Engineering Department of the Moscow Higher Technical School. The professor had asked for new premises for the faculty and also for funds to purchase foreign equipment. Lenin authorised the People's Commissariat of Education to gratify all the stated requests. As a result the Electrical Engineering Faculty received larger premises and also money to purchase equipment.

The Great October Socialist Revolution fundamentally changed the role science played in the life of society, making of it an instrument to consciously and steadily advance material and cultural standards for the benefit of all the working folk. Lenin always emphasised that it was essential to provide the most auspicious conditions for the further promotion of science.

In March 1918 the Academy of Science asked the Soviet Government to enlist scientists in the study of the country's natural wealth. This was a highlight in its history spelling a change in the mentality of many prominent members of the Russian Academy. After reading this document Lenin drew up his "Draft Plan of Scientific and Technical Work" which served as an action programme for the Academy for many years ahead.

Despite the appalling conditions of the Civil War and foreign intervention, hundreds of scientists worked honestly for the common weal. Gorky noted in 1925: "I think that Russian scientists have by their life and work during the years of intervention and blockade given the world a splendid example of stoicism and that history will yet tell the world of this great time."

Notwithstanding the extraordinary privations, the hunger and the economic chaos, the Soviet Government made a tremendous effort to care for scientists. On the 23rd of December 1919 the Council of People's Commissars enacted at Lenin's proposal a Decree concerning Measures to Support the Scientists of the Soviet Republic. It was deemed necessary to introduce special food rations for scientific workers several times larger than the usual ration. To implement this decree the Petrograd Soviet set up a commission for the improvement of the material standards of scientists.

Lenin kept a constant eye on its work and at the Kremlin several times received representatives of scientific institutions

with whom he discussed the organisation of work at research establishments and laboratories. His personal intervention helped many eminent scientists consummate their researches bringing them firmly over to the side of the Soviet state.

In the spring of 1920 the office of the Council of People's Commissars received a letter from the physiologist Ivan Pavlov asking for permission to go abroad to continue research. V. D. Bonch-Bruyevich, the office manager of the Council, showed this application to Lenin. Aware of Pavlov's work, Lenin asked Bonch-Bruyevich to telephone to Petrograd for him and see to it that Pavlov and his laboratory was provided with everyting necessary. Not content with this, he himself wrote to the Chairman of the Petrograd Council: "The celebrated physiologist Pavlov is a great cultural value. In view of this it would be desirable by way of an exception to provide him with extra rations and generally furnish him with more or less comfortable conditions in no way like the others have." Lenin later asked Bonch-Bruyevich time and again how Pavlov was faring. When Pavlov needed money to acquire valuable equipment abroad it was immediately given him. In early 1921 the Council of People's Commissars passed a special Decree concerning the Conditions for Ensuring the Scientific Research of Academician I. P. Pavlov and his Associates. This decree, which Lenin signed, noted the absolutely exceptional scientific services rendered by Pavlov. The Council considered it necessary to improve his material conditions. It was also decided to instruct the State Publishers to put out his scientific works, summing up the results of 20 years of research and also to equip his laboratory better.

Lenin invariably gave hearty support to all beginnings in science, rallying together scientists to tackle large-scale problems of economic importance. As the result of his direct participation, gathered together to draw up the plan for the electrification of Russia and subsequently at the State Planning

Commission were Russia's most eminent scientists; Academicians P. P. Lazarev, and A. Y. Fersman, the prominent electrical engineers I. G. Alexandrov, G. O. Graftio, M. A. Shatelen, and K. A. Krug, V. N. Ipatyev, I. N. Gubkin, A. N. Krylov and other scientists held responsible posts in the state apparatus.

Scholars and scientists highly appreciated Lenin's understanding of the importance of their work. Thus Academician S.F. Oldenburg, secretary of the Russian Academy of Sciences, a man who was very far removed from the ideas of the Bolshevik Party at the time of the revolution spoke with barely restrainable emotion in 1924 of the role that Lenin had played in the Academy's life. He said that Lenin with his characteristic responsiveness and vigour had taken measures to promote science, and "constantly with unfailing attention, despite his tremendous cares deliberately allotted time to look after science, firmly believing it of tremendous importance for life."

S.F. Oldenburg proudly stated that henceforth Russian culture and science were on an absolutely equal footing with the foremost cultures of East and West while "in the social sphere it was with staggering audacity carrying out an experiment that could not fail to have the most profound impact on the destinies of all mankind."

Lenin and the Formation of the USSR

The nationalities question occupied a place of prominence in the activities of the Soviet Government — quite understandable since nearly half of Russia's population were non-Russians who for many decades had languished under the tsarist yoke.

The key to the solution of this extremely complex task was furnished by the nationalities programme of the Bolshevik Party. The Party recognised the right of nations to self-determination right up to secession and the formation of an independent state. The exercise of the right to self-determination and the attainment of full equality became the practical task of the Soviet state from its very inception.

On the 25th of October 1917 in the appeal of the Second All-Russia Congress of Soviets "To the Workers, Soldiers and Peasants!" which Lenin wrote it was declared that Soviet power "will guarantee all the nations inhabiting Russia the genuine right to self-determination." To concretely tackle the practical aspects of the matter a People's Commissariat for Nationalities Affairs was set up and given the objective of realising the Soviet Government's measures to ensure fraternal co-operation among all nationalities.

On the 2nd of November 1917 Lenin signed "The Declaration of Rights of the Peoples of Russia" which legislatively confirmed equality and sovereignty for all nations and their right to free self-determination up to secession and the formation of independent states, and which revoked all national and religious privileges and restrictions.

For the first time in the history of mankind did the government of a multinational state declare intentions of liberating the peoples. It was stated that the shameful policy of setting peoples at loggerheads must give way to a voluntary, honest alliance of all nations.

The practices of the Soviet Government attested to its firm desire of realising the proclaimed principles in order to resolve the nationalities question. In mid-December 1917 representatives of the Finnish Government asked Lenin how the Soviet Government would treat their request for independence. Lenin said it would be satisfied and indeed on the 18th of December 1917 the Council of People's Commissars resolved to ask the

All-Russia Central Executive Committee to recognise the independence of the Finnish Republic. As soon as this decision was taken, Lenin left the government meeting chamber for several minutes to personally hand the text of the decree to the head of the Finnish delegation P. Svinhuvud who was waiting in the next room.

The Communist Party built up the Soviet state on the foundation of a voluntary alliance of free national republics. "We," Lenin wrote even before the October Revolution, "want as wast a state, as close an alliance of the greatest possible number of nations who are neighbours of the Great Russians; we desire this in the interests of democracy and socialism, to attract into the struggle of the proletariat the greatest possible number of nations who are neighbours of the Great Russians; we desire this in the interests of democracy and socialism, to attract into the struggle of the proletariat the greatest possible number of the working people of different nations. We desire proletarian revolutionary unity, unification, and not secession."

The Bolshevik Party elaborated the forms of unifying the peoples and building up the multinational Soviet state. In January 1918 the Third All-Russia Congress of Soviets enunciated the federative principle of the structural set-up of the Soviet state. The Congress endorsed the Declaration of the Rights of the Working and Exploited People which Lenin had written and which said: "The Russian Soviet Republic is established on the principle of a free union of free nations, as a federation of Soviet national republics." In his speech at this Third Congress Lenin noted that it had ushered in a new epoch in world history, that in Russia recognised once and for all was a new state system — a federation of free republics of different nations. "We,' he said, "do not rule by dividing, as ancient Rome's harsh maxim required, but by uniting all the working people with the unbreakable bonds of living interests

and a sense of class. This our union, our new state is sounder than power based on violence which keeps artificial state entities hammered together with lies and bayonets in the way the imperialists want them."

Having received national independence and equality, the peoples of Russia did not want to break away from one another, preferring to remain in one state. The military and political alliance of the peoples of Russia was forged in the crucible of the Civil War. In late 1921, early 1922, at the Genoa an the Hague international conferences there came into being the single diplomatic alliance of Soviet Republics. Eight Republics: the Ukraine, Byelorussia, Azerbaijan, Armenia, Georgia, Bokhara, Khorezm and the Far Eastern Republic invested the government of the Russian Socialist Republic with the powers to represent their interest at the All-European economic conference in Genoa. The creation of the united diplomatic front of the Soviet Republics was a major stride forward in the effort to build up the Soviet federal state.

The transition from war to economic recovery called for further cementation of the Soviet Republics, for joint socialist construction. Their unification movement entered its third phase now, that of economic collaboration, which culminated in the formation of the USSR. Having seen for themselves, from their own experience that economic recovery and socialist construction could be successfully effected only together with the Russian working class, the toiling masses of all the Soviet Republics advocated still closer relations with the RSFSR.

Lenin substantiated the idea of integrating the independent Soviet Republics into one common state alliance. In the summer of 1920 in his *Preliminary Draft Theses on National and Colonial Questions,* he wrote: "without the closest alliance... between the Soviet republics... the productive forces which have been ruined by imperialism cannot be restored and

the well-being of the working people cannot be ensured." He pointed out that an alliance of this nature made it possible to create a single socialist economy that would develop according to a common, uniform plan.

In the spring of 1922 the governments of the Soviet Republics raised the issue of concretising and clarifying the rights of these republics in their relations with the RSFSR, expressing at the same time the desire to unite with the RSFSR into one state.

On the 10th of August 1922, the Politbureau of the Central Committee of the Party decided to set up a commission to prepare for discussion at a Plenary Meeting of the Central Commitee of the Bolshevik Party the question of the relations between the RSFSR and the other independent Soviet Republics. On this commission were J.V. Stalin, V.V. Kuibyshev, G.K. Orjonikidze, Kh. G. Rakovsky, G.Y. Sokolnikov and representatives of Azerbaijan, Georgia, the Ukraine, Byelorussia and the other Soviet Republics.

The draft resolution "On Relations of the RSFSR with the Independent Republics," which the commission drew up, stemmed from the idea of "autonomisation." It was proposed to incorporate the independent republics in the Russian Federation on the basis of autonomy. The draft advised the independent Soviet Republics to join the RSFSR and extend the authority of the Committee, the Council of People's Commissars and the Council of Labour and Defence of the RSFSR to the appropriate central offices of the Soviet Republics making up the RSFSR.

However, this procedure infringed upon the rights of the independent republics.

Though sick and unable to participate in the work of this commission, Lenin thoroughly studied all the material and discussed the matter with Sokolnikov, Stalin, Orjonikidze and members of the Central Committee of the Communist Party

of Georgia, and the leaders of the Soviet government of Armenia. He flatly opposed "autonomisation" which he scathingly criticised. In his letter *The Question of Nationalities or "Autonomisation"* he qualified this idea as a manifestation of great-power chauvinism and a departure from the principles of proletarian internationalism. He emphasised that "the fundamental interest of proletarian solidarity, and consequently of the proletarian class struggle, requires that we never adopt a formal attitude to the national question, but always take into account the specific attitude of the proletarian of the oppressed (or small) nation towards the oppressor (or great) nation."

The idea of autonomisation which infringed upon the sovereignty and independence of the republics was not conducive to promoting confidence among small nations in bigger nations. Hence Lenin suggested another plan for integrating the Soviet republics. He proposed forming a new state, the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics, by unifying the equal independent republics. "We," he wrote in Septembre 1922, "recognise the full equality of the Ukrainian SSR and the others and on an equal footing with them enter a new federation the 'Union of Soviet Republics of Europe and Asia'."

At its Plenary Meeting, the Central Committee discussed the Commissions' proposals and Lenin's remarks. It based its decision on Lenin's suggestion to establish an equal union of all the Soviet Republics, the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics.

Illness prevented Lenin from attending and speaking at this Plenary Meeting. However, he sent the Politbureau of the Central Committee a note in which he said: "I declare war to the death on dominant nation chauvinism... It must be absolutely insisted upon that the Union Central Executive Committee should be presided over in turn by a Russian, Ukrainian, Georgian, etc. Absolutely!"

Following this Plenary Meeting, extensive preparations were conducted in all the republics to form the USSR. On the 10th of December 1922, the 7th All-Ukraine Congress of Soviets opened in Kharkov. Lenin closely followed its work. In a message of greetings he wrote: "I am firmly convinced that the Congress will find the correct solutions for these problems and with all my heart I wish you success in your work." Congresses of Soviets were held in all the Soviet Republics and on the 23rd of December 1922, the 10th All-Russia Congress of Soviets put on the agenda the question of forming the USSR. The Congress unanimously adopted a resolution to unify the Soviet republics particularly emphasising the principle of voluntary association and the equality of the republics, reserving to each the right to freely secede from the USSR. The 1st Congress of Soviets of the USSR opened on the 30th of December 1922. It was attended by 1,214 delegates representing all the nationalities of the united republics. Because of illness, Lenin could not attend, but he was elected honorary chairman. This Congress resolved to unify all the independent socialist republics into one federated state. It adopted a declaration which said that, "Only in the camp of Soviets, only under the dictatorship of the proletariat which has rallied the bulk of the population around itself, has it become possible to eradicate national oppression, create an atmosphere of mutual trust and thus lay the foundations for the fraternal co-operation of nations and peoples."

CHAPTER SIX

LENIN, STATESMAN OF A NEW TYPE

The outstanding characteristic of Lenin as a statesman of a new type was that he based all practical activity on a full knowledge of the laws of social development, on revolutionary Marxist theory. Between 1917 and 1923 he wrote profusely enough to fill the some 15 bulky volumes which make up his Complete Works, and include major theoretical researches as well as speeches and statements.

Lenin formulated cardinal tenets as to the specific features of imperialism. He demonstrated that imperialism creates the material requisites required for the establishment of a socialist system. He enriched Marxist theory with the signal conclusion that it was possible for a socialist revolution to win in one country, taken separately. He contended that in conditions of imperialism a proletarian revolution ought to triumph in a country where the contradictions of the entire capitalist system are most acutely manifest.

From the very outset Lenin paid particular attention to analysing the revolutionary movement among the peasantry. He concluded that the toiling peasantry comprised a loyal ally

of the working class in the struggle against the bourgeoisie and the landlords, and that the worker-peasant alliance could make socialism victorious.

Lenin drafted the plan for socialist construction in the USSR, which incorporated industrialisation, the collectivisation of agriculture, and the cultural revolution. He demonstrated that the ways of solving all these problems were closely interconnected. Without the cultural revolution it was impossible to undertake industrialisation and to establish co-operative farming. In turn, industrialisation supplied the sinews for the organisation of large-scale production in the countryside while the co-operation of peasantry presented the only possible way of building up the necessary stocks for developing industry and supplying the speedily growing urban population with grain and other foodstuffs.

Characteristic of Lenin as a thinker was an acute perception of reality. Like no one else was he able, in tackling cardinal points of theory, to rely on the experience of the broad masses, on the firm foundation of facts.

Because of his profound, analytical mind, Lenin was able to foresee the vistas ahead of the communist movement. A remarkable feature of his genius was his ability to discern the future from the present. He could also spot in the present shoots that would burgeon in the future.

When Lenin was dictating his last articles in 1923, Soviet agriculture was a veritable ocean of scattered private small holdings. However, Lenin foresaw that following collectivisation Soviet Russia would develop into a land of large-scale socialist farming. Though two-thirds of Russia's population were illiterate at the time, Lenin had the vision of full and complete literacy. The Soviet republic was surrounded by armed enemies, but Lenin knew that by virtue of the laws governing social development, the capitalist encirclement would be broken, that the proletarian state need not fear a single

enemy in the world. Gorky explained this specific trait of Lenin's genius as due not only to the power of his cognitive intellect and Marxist theory but also to what the great Russian writer called the "height of a viewpoint which is possible only in the case of that rare ability of looking forward from the present into the future."

A salient feature of Lenin's style of state administration was his ability to always spot the decisive main link in the overall chain of tasks confronting the Bolshevik Party. In the spring of 1921 this was the necessary, economic approach to the peasantry, the search for a new economic policy. Summing up the results of the first year of the New Economic Policy, Lenin emphasised in his report to the 9th Congress of Soviets that the road chosen was the right one. "We," he said, "proved to be correct on the most fundamental issues. Our forecasts and calculations proved to be correct. And again we are gauging them more correctly than ever before and more correctly than other powers." Still further "the path that we have taken is the right one." And finally "this path of ours is the right one." He repeated this time and again in his report to the Congress.

This selfsame feature of Lenin's style as administrator, the ability to detect the main decisive link for every moment, was fully evinced in the Soviet Government's activities on the international scene as well.

Lenin unswervingly upheld the principle of peaceful coexistence of states with different social systems. He maintained that contradictions between capitalism and socialism could and should be resolved not through war but in the process of peaceful economic competition. This would be, he said, a competition in "two methods, two political and economic systems — the communist and the capitalist. We shall prove that we are the stronger... Of course, the task is a difficult one, but we have said, and still say, that socialism has the force of example. Coercion is effective against those who want to restore their

rule. But at this stage the significance of force ends and after that only influence and example are effective. We must show the significance of communism in practice, by example."

The aim of the Soviet Government's activity in foreign policy was to preserve peace and establish business relations with capitalist states.

Lenin paid great attention to the talks held to negotiate a commercial agreement with Britain — which was signed in March 1921. At the same time trade negotiations were conducted with Germany and Italy. At Lenin's initiative the Soviet Government took steps to establish commercial and diplomatic relations with the United States. Asked by an American journalist about the basis for peace with the USA Lenin said: "Let the American capitalists leave us alone. We shall not touch them. We are even ready to pay them in gold for any machinery, tools, etc., useful to our transport and industries. We are ready to pay not only in gold but in raw materials too."

In January 1922 the Supreme Council of the Entente decided in Cannes to convene an international economic conference of European powers in Genoa to which Russia and Germany would also be invited. The respective resolution adopted there claimed that nations could not appropriate the right to dictate to others the system of rule and government and principles of property ownership. Thus was *de facto* recognition extended to socialism's right to coexistence with capitalism on an equal footing. At the same time the Allies advanced absolutely inacceptable terms. They sought a free hand for foreign investment in Russia, recognition of all debts incurred by the tsarist and Provisional governments and reimbursement of all losses sustained by foreign investors in Russia. Notwithstanding, the Soviet Government accepted the invitation to attend the conference, as it sought to avail itself of every possible opportunity to preserve and strengthen peace.

The invitation which the Allies sent the Soviet Government suggested that Lenin should go to Genoa as head of the Soviet delegation. But the Soviet people opposed this, fearing that an attempt might be made on his life. The facts showed that these fears were quite justified. Reports coming in from abroad indicated that Russian counter-revolutionary émigrés were hatching a plot against Lenin's life. Though Lenin was approved as head of the Soviet delegation, he did not go to Genoa. His place was taken by the People's Commissar of Foreign Affairs, G.V. Chicherin, a versatile, erudite and extremely capable diplomat. Still Lenin personally supervised all the preparations made for the conference and took a direct hand in recruiting the delegation and its attending experts. He also drafted a concrete programme of action for the Soviet delegation.

Lenin suggested that at the very beginning the foreign policy platform of the Soviet Government be made clear and that a proposal be tabled for the universal reduction of armaments. The Soviet delegation was instructed not to succumb to intimidation and blackmail or sallies from Western leaders who threatened Soviet Russia with reprisal "We have been threatened often enough, and with much more serious threats than those uttered by the merchant who intends to slam the door after making his last offer," Lenin said on the eve of the Genoa conference. "We have been threatened with the guns of the Allied powers that rule almost the whole word. *We were not frightened by those threats. Please gentlemen, European diplomats, do not forget that.*"

Guided by Lenin's instructions the Soviet delegation consistently strove at Genoa to promote economic contacts between states regardless of their social system. The Soviet Government's declaration, which was read out at the conference, stated: "While holding to the view of the principles of com-

munism, the Russian delegation admits that in the present historical epoch which allows of the parallel existence of the old system and emergent new social system, economic co-operation between states representing these two systems of ownership is imperatively necessary for universal economic recovery." The Soviet delegation expressed readiness to grant concessions to foreign businessmen. However, every attempt the imperialist powers made to impose upon the Soviet state terms of the kind that are put to a vanquished country was categorically rejected. When Western governments demanded that the factories and plants nationalised after the victory of the Great October Socialist Revolution be returned to foreign capitalists and that the Soviet republic refund the debts incurred by the tsarist and Provisional governments, the Soviet delegation, abiding by Lenin's directives, tabled counter-claims. A bill was presented to the Entente governments for the devastation caused by intervention.

The firm yet flexible policy pursued by the Soviet delegation prevented the formation of a united Western front spearheaded against Soviet Russia. In the process of the conference in Rapallo, a town not far from Genoa, a treaty was signed with Germany on the restoration of diplomatic relations, commerce and the reciprocal renunciation of wartime claims. Lenin regarded the Rapallo Treaty as an example for the establishment of equal and mutually advantageous relations between states with different social systems.

"Our road is the right one," Lenin said summing up the results of the foreign policy of the Soviet state. "We stand for peace and accord; however, we are against enslavement and onerous terms. We must tightly grasp the wheel and steer our own course, succumbing to neither flattery nor intimidation." Lenin's activity as statesman presents a model of a consistent, adamant struggle for the happiness of the ordinary people.

Lenin stigmatized and exposed the anti-Party factions and deviations inside the Party. His firmness was ever based on the one and only desire to overcome obstacles and the resistance of enemies and sceptics, win victory for the new social system and new social relationships, and fashion a socialist society in which all exploitation and oppression of man by man would be unknown. Hatred for the enemies was the other side of his hatred for human miseries.

Lenin combined the features of a superb theoretician with those of a splendid practical organiser. He sought to inculcate strict responsibility and observance of firm state discipline in all aspects of the Soviet state apparatus. Back in the spring of 1918 Lenin noted in his *The Immediate Tasks of the Soviet Government* that the Soviet state needed an iron hand and the strictest discipline to overcome all anachy shirking, disorder and disorganisation. He emphasised time and time again one should not confuse what needs to be discussed with what is needed for government. "Hold meetings, but govern without the slightest hesitation; govern with a firmer hand than the capitalist governed before you. If you do not, you will not vanquish him. You must remember that government must be much stricter and much firmer than it was before... In an impoverished country either those who cannot stand the pace will perish, or the workers' and peasants' republic will perish. There is not and cannot be any choice or any room for sentiment. Sentiment is no less a crime than cowardice in wartime. Whoever now departs from order and discipline is permitting the enemy to penetrate our midst."

Lenin taught that the interests of the state as a whole should always come before parochial sentiment and the interests of one or another group of persons. The struggle for state discipline was inextricably bound with the determined effort to overcome and oust manifestations of bureaucracy and red tape in Soviet offices.

A vast number of directives, letters and orders written by Lenin deal with various aspects of the effort to build up a more sophisticated state apparatus.

In a letter to the People's Commissariat of Justice dated the 17th of January 1922, Lenin put forward the demand to "organise the struggle against red tape in a businesslike fashion, according to all the rules of war."

At the 11th Party Congress, he cited an instance of vicious red tape that had evoked his immense disgust and indignation. This concerned the purchase by the Moscow consumers co-op of canned meat from a French firm which had offered to sell the product for Soviet currency. Though the food situation in the country was still desperate, a protracted correspondence began between economic agencies and the People's Commissariat of Foreign Trade as to the purchase of this canned meat. Only when the matter reached the Central Committee of the Party was the money at last found and the canned meat acquired.

Why did the Political Bureau of the Central Committee intervene to buy this canned meat? Lenin asked. "What was lacking? Political power? No. The money was forthcoming, so they had economic as well as political power... When I first heard of the matter I sent the following written proposal to the Central Committee: 'All the officials concerned of the Moscow government departments — except the members of the All-Russia Central Executive Committee who, as you know, enjoy immunity — should be put in the worst prison in Moscow for six hours, and those of the People's Commissariat of Foreign Trade for sixty-six hours.' And then it turned out that no one could say who the culprits were."

In early September 1921 Lenin received a petition from Professor G.O. Graftio, Chief Engineer at the Volkhov hydropower station construction project, indicating cases of red tape that were impeding work. The inquiry instituted by the

People's Commissariat of Justice upon Lenin's orders elucidated that Professor Graftio had kept on demanding, writing, and had personally come to the Supreme Economic Council to press for approval of the programme and for the issue of the required amount of food. However, the offices to which the Volkhov construction project's chief engineer had applied had failed to take any measures to provide the construction project with the necessary material and foodstuffs.

These and several other similar facts obliged Lenin to take under personal control the activities of the People's Commissariat of Justice and its agencies in the drive against red tape and bureaucracy in the state apparatus.

On the 3rd of September 1921, Lenin sent a letter to D.I. Kursky, the People's Commissar of Justice, and to all the members of the Collegium of this Commissariat noting that the Commissariat was combating bureaucracy only for form's sake. He demanded that judges effect stricter supervision in the drive against red tape and that the people's judges and tribunal members of Moscow confer to draft successful measures in this field, that cases of red tape in Moscow necessarily be tried on the spot, that the more striking cases be chosen for this, and that a special circular be issued on the drive against red tape.

Lenin attached great importance to the matter of getting the People's Commissariat of Justice undeviatingly to implement this programme. In late September of the same year he sent this Commissariat material showing that because of red tape on the part of a number of executives of central offices seed procurement assignments had not been fulfilled. In this connection he observed that this was a sufficiently striking case and he suggested that an inquiry be initiated at once.

Lenin believed that all culprits should be penalised for red tape regardless of office or past services. Indicative in this respect is his participation in the inquiry instituted to elucidate the causes of why the assignment issued by the Councils of

People's Commissars to manufacture electric ploughs had not been carried out. Though the government had taken the respective decision in May 1920, the metal department of the Supreme Economic Council, which had been ordered to carry out the decision, displayed intolerable mismanagement, in effect frustrating the fulfilment of a government decision.

This irresponsibility made Lenin indignant and on his initiative the question was discussed three times at meetings of the Council of Labour and Defence. This body adopted Lenin's proposal to arraign the guilty persons. But, notwithstanding, the top executives of the Supreme Economic Council and the People's Commissariat decided to get the Council of Labour and Defence to revoke its decision, since the mistakes had been made by prominent executives who had rendered great services in the past to Soviet power.

When Lenin heard of the request to revoke the Council of Labour and Defence decision, he sent a special letter to People's Commissar of Justice, D.I. Kursky, and Vice-Chairman of the Council of People's Commissars, A.D. Tsyurupa, asking them to prevent the cancellation of the respective decision. "There is no doubt," he wrote, "that the culprits to blame for the red tape are known and, as a matter of principle, it is essential not to leave such cases with bureaucratic offices but to bring them before the public court, not so much as to impose a severe penalty — perhaps a reprimand would suffice — as to give publicity to the case and to shatter the universal conviction that such culprits are never punished."

Lenin maintained that bureaucracy and red tape could be overcome only when the leading executives of the People's Commissariats and departments would wield every available means to this end. He advised that whenever necessary articles should be published in the press to attract the public eye to cases of red tape and bureaucracy and that an effort be made

to get the higher Party and government agencies to take the appropriate decisions.

Highly edifying advice as to how to combat bureaucracy and red tape is furnished in the letter Lenin wrote to I.K. Yezhov, Head of Central Stores Board of the Supreme Economic Council. Trying to justify the unsatisfactory storage of metal and tools Yezhov had complained to the Chairman of the Supreme Economic Council that there were not enough warehouses and that he had been obliged to write a whole "ocean of paper on the score." His note concluded by saying: "I fear that unless Vladimir Ilyich Lenin himself intervenes in this disgraceful case of red tape, affairs will end there, because I have already brought the matter a dozen times or so to what seemed the end and again I see no end." After reading this note which had been referred to him from the Supreme Economic Council, Lenin wrote on the 28th of September, 1921 a letter to Yezhov of the following content: "I am obliged to charge you, too, with red tape: 'We have been shouting for three years,' 'I took the matter through to the end nearly ten times, it seemed' you write. But the whole trouble is that not once did you take the matter through to the end without any 'it seemed'.

"You know the Constitution of the RSFSR and the Rules of the RCP. 'To the end' means up to the session of the All-Russia Executive Committee (if there is no Congress of Soviets). In the Party line, it means the plenary meeting of the Central Committee.

"You have not once taken the matter through to the end...

"You gave up in despair, you did not fight, you did not exhaust all the means of fighting."

Lenin was particularly strict when it came to demanding observance of discipline by leading executives regardless of their office. When he had occasion to announce a reprimand to the Chairman of the Arkhangelsk Gubernatorial Executive

Committee of the Soviet for failing to carry out a government decision, he wrote specially on the score: "If we are to be conscientious in teaching discipline to the workers and peasants, we must necessarily start with ourselves."

Once Lenin happened to learn that the Moscow Party Committee had relaxed control over the activities of the Central housing department of the Moscow Soviet and was not strict enough in demanding fulfilment of its decisions from Communists in high office. On the 18th of March 1922, Lenin sent the Politbureau an angry letter in which he proposed administering a severe reprimand to the Moscow Committee "for being lenient towards Communists." He further wrote: "All gubernatorial committees must be told again that for the slightest attempt to 'influence' judges 'in order to alleviate' the responsability of Communists the Central Committee will apply expulsion from the Party... The courts must punish communists more severely than non-Communists."

Lenin always demanded that each case be carried through to the end. He himself displayed a fine model of unusual insistence in implementing decisions taken.

After the 8th All-Russia Congress of Soviets had adopted the plan for the electrification of Russia, Lenin put forward the task of extensively popularizing this document and of calling the attention of workers, peasants and experts to it. He himself kept an attentive eye on all articles dealing with electrification that appeared in the press. On seeing an article by N.N. Vashkov, Head of the Electrical Engineering Department of the Supreme Economic Council, about the construction of new power stations that was featured in the newspaper *Ekonomicheskaya Zhizn* (Economic Life), he wrote to the author: "I am extremely grateful to you for your article... 'The Electrification of Russia' in *Ekonomicheskaya Zhizn*. It is supremely important for such information to be published from time to time both in *Ekonomicheskaya Zhizn* and in the press gener-

ally." Further Lenin suggested making use of the pending Congress of electrical engineers to collect information as to the state of power stations in the localities.

Several days after his letter to Vaskhov Lenin wrote a note to Krzhizhanovsky asking him to cable to the localities a circular noting the need to have the technical and economic aspects of electrification comprehensively discussed, and requiring that the Congress of electrical engineers be provided with information as to both operating power stations and those under construction.

In the process of this congress, thanks to Lenin's insistence a wealth of data was amassed on the development of electric power engineering in Russia. On its basis engineer V.L. Levi wrote an article "Electricity Supplies in Russia. A General Survey," which was also published in *Ekonomicheskaya Zhizn*. Lenin at once read this article and asked the author to prepare a special booklet on the matter. Going still further he instructed N.P. Gorbunov, Secretary of the Council of People's Commissars, to negotiate the matter with the management of the State Publishing House. Shortly afterwards Levi's booklet was published. The situation was analogous as regards the publication of another book on electrification "Electrification of the RSFSR in View of the Transition Phase of World Economy," written by the talented publicist I.I. Skvortsov-Stepanov.

Incidentally, Lenin had asked Skvortsov-Stepanov several times to write a book about electrification but as the latter could not find the time, the book was held up. Then Lenin wrote to the Central Party Committee suggesting that Skvortsov-Stepanov be sent to a state farm outside Moscow and put on a milk diet so that in the space of four to six weeks, he, without being distracted by other affairs, could complete the work started. He suggested that the state farm be picked through the appropriate Moscow office. And indeed, shortly afterwards Skvortsov-Stepanov produced his book, a fascinat-

ing sketch of the electrification plan. To it Lenin wrote a foreword noting that it would be a very good thing to have a copy of the book at every power station and also to arrange popular lectures and readings about electricity and the electrification of the Russian Federation.

Skvortsov-Stepanov presented the first copy of his book to Lenin with the inscription: "To dear Comrade V.I. Lenin-Ulyanov from the author who was made to do this work by way of ruthless 'coercion' and who unexpectedly found in it his 'calling.' Long live such 'coercion'!"

In this fashion, due to Lenin's insistence, did propaganda for electrification assume a broad scale.

Lenin regarded the proper organisation of the checking-up up on fulfilment as the principal means of striving to improve the functioning of state agencies. He continually emphasised the point of organising control and supervision over the fulfilment of Party and government decisions throughout all his work as Chairman of the Council of People's Commissars. He believed that the agency to do this should be, above all, the Workers' and Peasants' Inspection; he pointed out that the broad masses should be enlisted in its work. He stressed that the organisation of the Workers' and Peasants' Inspection conclusively demonstrated the Bolshevik Party's desire to place the state apparatus under the direct control and supervision of the working people and to attach non-Party workers and peasants to old officials in order to supervise their activity and learn practical government.

"We must pour as many workers and peasants as possible into this apparatus. We shall tackle this job and accomplish it, and thus drive red tape out of our institutions. The broad non-Party masses must keep a check on all government affairs and must themselves learn to govern," Lenin thus defined the tasks of the People's Commissariat of the Workers' and Peasants' Inspection.

Lenin always profoundly concerned himself with all the affairs of the People's Commissariat of the Workers' and Peasants' Inspection and sought ways and means to enhance the standard of work done by the state apparatus. In early July 1921, he asked a former turner, A.A. Korostelev, by then a collegium member of this People's Commissariat, to pick a small team of factory workers, a few honest experts and help the agencies of Moscow economic administration improve the functioning of enterprises. Organised in this fashion under the Commissariat was a commission for the promotion of economic agencies. Lenin intently followed the work done by this commission and constantly supervised the implementation of the assignments given it.

In the last works that he dictated in January-March 1923, his idea of control and supervision was finalised as a plan for reorganising the Workers' and Peasants' Inspection by amalgamating it with an enlarged Party Central Control Commission to establish thereby a qualified, competent body that would be an effective means for genuine control and supervision over the implementation of Party and government assignments.

On the staff of the Council of People's Commissars were special functionaries whose job was to supervise the fulfilment of decisions taken by the government and its head. In 1922 Lenin instructed that a special card be drawn up to register the progress made in the fulfilment of government decisions. He suggested that it incorporate only questions that must be obligatorily answered. He appointed a special man for this job, warning him that he would keep an eye on this work. Whenever it was found that a decision could not be carried out by the deadline fixed, the office in question had to necessarily request an extension before the previously fixed deadline expired. Lenin demanded a fortnightly report, drawn up in la-

conic, telegraph style, on how the check-up on fulfilment was proceeding.

Lenin strove with particular insistence to make everything function according to an organised plan. In his booklet "The Tax in Kind" which he wrote in April 1921, he said: "Our communists still do not have a sufficient understanding of their real duties of administration: they should not strive to do 'everything themselves,' running themselves down and failing to cope with everything, undertaking 20 jobs and finishing none. They should check up on the work of scores and hundreds of assistants, arrange to have their work checked from below, i.e., by the real masses. They should *direct* the work and learn from those who have the knowledge (the specialists) and the experience in organising large-scale productions (the capitalists)."

A salient feature of Lenin's style of government was his exceptionally considerate attitude to the needs and wants of the workers and peasants. By personal example he taught the leaders of the Soviet state to ruthlessly cut short all violations and infringements of the rights and interests of the Soviet citizens and the state.

Once the peasants of a village in the Samara gubernia (province) asked Lenin to help them with grain. This was in January 1922, when there was famine in Russia. Lenin at once sent the following note to the People's Commissariat of Food: "Please expedite the purchase and receipt of grain for the village of Alakayevka in Samara province and assist its representative, the peasant Sergei Frolov, and also expedite the supply of the village with seed for spring sowing.

"Try to arrange this matter and notify me as to what has been done. Lenin."

The peasants received the grain and in a letter of thanks wrote: "Back home in Samara province we representatives will certify to the peasants who sent us that in Moscow real

concern is indeed shown to overcome the great calamity of hunger and that our great leader Comrade Lenin takes close to heart all the needs of the afflicted peasantry."

On the 18th of January 1919 Lenin drafted a special order to the management of the Council of People's Commissars requesting that he be informed of all written complaints and grievances within 24 hours and of all oral grievances within 48 hours. He also demanded strict control and supervision over the implementation of his resolutions concerning these complaints and grievances. Later on, at his injuction a reception room of the Council of People's Commissars was organised outside the Kremlin and all complaints and applications addressed to Lenin were, in conformity with his instructions, referred to this reception office. The secretary of this office was obliged to look into these letters and present a fortnightly summary to Lenin. Lenin conceived the reception office of the People's Commissariat as a body that would establish the closest of contacts with the People's Commissariats and make use of the newspaper *Izvestia of the All Russia Central Executive Committee* to reply to dispatches and the more typical complaints and inquiries.

When Lenin learned that in some cases complaints and applications from the working people, which the reception office of the Council of People's Commissars had sent to leading executives of central institutions, had gone unanswered and that no action was taken on them, he was greatly disgusted with this irresponsible attitude to the matter. In a letter to the executives of central institutions he demanded: "Once and forever... an end must be put to the disgraceful red tape and paper work in your office. The important urgent matters referred to you from the reception office of the Council of People's Commissars by way of decisions taken on numerous complaints and applications addressed to the Council of

People's Commissars and its chairman, go unanswered and without due execution all along the line.

"I suggest that you at once rectify matters. The machinery of the Soviet administration must function accurately, precisely and speedily. It is not only the interests of private persons that suffer from its laxity, but the entire matter of government which assumes an illusory phantom character."

Lenin regarded the formal reference of letters to the appropriate office without any checking up on the progress of fulfilment as bureaucratic "passing of the buck" and expressed dissatisfaction every time he happened to disclose such things.

He was particularly indignant to hear of reprisals taken against someone or other who had complained to the government. Characteristic in this respect is a telegram he sent to the Novgorod Gubernatorial (provincial) Executive Committee in May 1919: "Evidently Bulatov has been arrested for complaining to me. I warn that for this the Chairmen of Gubernatorial (provincial) Executive Committees, the Cheka [Security — *Ed.*] and members of the Executive Committee will be arrested and the request will be made that they be shot. Why did you not immediately reply to my question? Lenin, Chairman of the Council People's Commissars."

Lenin carried on a systematic insistent effort to have revolutionary legal order strictly observed. He inculcated in all government functionaries a feeling of profound respect for the laws and orders of Soviet power, for the Constitution of the socialist republic. Interesting in this respect is his reply to representatives of the Danilov textile mills who, having been denied special rations by the Presidium of the Central Executive Committee, asked Lenin to revise the decision. In his reply to the textile workers Lenin wrote: "Since this question was handled by the Presidium of the All-Russia Central Executive Committee which constitutionally is superior to the Council

of People's Commissars, neither I, as chairman of the Council, nor the Council itself, may change this decision."

In 1919 the People's Commissariat of Justice issued a special booklet entitled *Keep the Laws of the Soviet Republic!* This booklet was prepared in conformity with Lenin's personal instructions and he himself took a hand in editing it. This was a call to the working people to firmly observe the laws enacted by Soviet power. Upon Lenin's orders this small booklet was circulated among all the members of the Council of People's Commissars. He himself always kept it at hand at meetings of the Council and referred to it and reminded the People's Commissars of it.

In upholding revolutionary legality, Lenin demanded the prosecution of office employees who took bribes. Once when he found that the Moscow revolutionary tribunal had sentenced bribe-takers to only six months of prison he asked the Central Committee to put on the agenda of a Politbureau meeting the question of expelling from the Party the judges responsible for so lenient a verdict.

Lenin paid note even to minor mishaps in the functioning of the state apparatus. He himself drafted the Rules on the administering of government offices in which he detailed the procedure for organising the reception of working people. He insisted that every government office display to public view not only inside but also outside its premises, its reception timetable so that it be accessible to all with no need for any special pass. More than once he drew attention to concrete facts of an excessively formal approach in issuing permits to government offices. He believed it essential to allow functionaries of the People's Commissariat of the Workers' and Peasants' Inspection to attend all receptions and to oblige them from time to time to visit reception offices and check up on the roster of complaints and applications received.

Lenin believed the supreme principle of Party and government leadership to be that of a collegiate approach and he abided by this principle in all his activity. He always attached tremendous importance to Party Congresses and conferences and to Plenary Meetings of the Central Committee which he regarded as the personification of the Party's collective thought, of its political and organisational experience. All vital aspects of national life were invariably debated at Party Congresses and Central Committee Plenary Meetings.

Meanwhile he regarded the Central Committee as the supreme collective body of Party and national leadership in between Party Congresses. The Central Committee, he pointed out, incorporates "the activities of all the Soviet and Party institutions and all organisations of the working class," and unifies and directs "the work of the entire Soviet Republic." And further: "No important political or organisational question is decided by any state institution in our Republic without the guidance of the Party's Central Committee."

Despite the authority he commanded Lenin never took personal decisions on matters that came within the competence and jurisdiction of bodies of collegiate leadership. Emphasising the role of the Central Committee as the collective organ of the Party's leadership of the country he noted that only collective decisions of the Central Committee should be implemented by the Secretary of the Committee. He sharply opposed the claim that all matters in the Central Committee were decided by him alone. In his activities in the Council of People's Commissars and the Council of Labour and Defence, he always sought to have cardinal issues collectively discussed and resolved. Whenever the Council of People's Commissars passed, by a majority vote, decisions with which he dissented, he obeyed the decision, or, if the question was of importance in principle, referred it to a superior instance, either the All-

Russia Central Executive Committee or the Central Committee Politbureau.

In reply to a letter from one functionary, Lenin wrote in March 1921 : "You are making a mistake when you repeat time and again that the Central Committee is me. This could have been written only in a highly nervous state because you were run down." In scores of notes to Politbureau members, Central Committee members, People's Commissars and other leading executives, Lenin, taking counsel with them constantly, asked them for their opinions on the decisions adopted. "What are we to do, what are your plans on this score?" Or "If you approve send a copy of this with your note, or if you object drop a couple of lines (or ring) me at once."

While working on his booklet *The Tax in Kind* in which he formulated cardinal tenets as to the peace-time policy in the countryside Lenin took counsel with many of his comrades. N.P. Bryukhanov, Deputy People's Commissar of Food received the following note from him: "Comrade Bryukhanov, I am sending you the MS of my article (and booklet) about the Tax in Kind. It has already been sent to the printers'. If you would like to have a look, read it through before tomorrow and give me your remarks and corrections. Return it to me tomorrow. With communist greetings. Lenin." Over the space of three years Bryukhanov an extremely energetic and firm-willed person, dealt with food matters and it was naturally interesting for Lenin to learn the opinion of one of the most competent authorities on peasant life before allowing his MS to be printed.

"Lenin for us was the supreme authority," G.I. Petrovsky, People's Commissar of the Interior in the first Soviet Government, wrote in his reminiscences. "However, he always encouraged initiative on the part of every People's Commissar, of every functionary who held to his own point of view. We all knew that Vladimir Ilyich would always attentively listen

and admit that one was right provided one could back up one's views with incontrovertible arguments."

Lenin was able to inculcate in all around a feeling of respect for the opinion of the collective, a feeling of responsibility and independent work. T.S. Krivov, one of the members of the Central Control Commission, who was asked to keep an eye on the proper implementation of Party guidance, related how he once had a talk with Lenin on the matter of arraigning a prominent executive of the Moscow organisation who in a speech in a debating club in Moscow had in effect made public a state secret when announcing a decision not meant for publication. Krivov decided to ask for Lenin's advice on this score. After one of the meetings of the Central Committee Politbureau Lenin listened to Krivov, who concluded after setting out the gist of the matter in this way: "We are waiting for you to decide the matter." "For me?" Lenin even raised his head in surprise. "Why me? Am I the Central Control Commission? The Congress elected you and your comrades, so you decide the matter." "But what about your opinion, Vladimir Ilyich." "Now that is quite another thing. I can state my opinion, I think this a disgrace. When you meet, you can take into consideration this opinion as one stated by a Party member but as no more. As for the penalty, I shall say nothing. That wholly comes within the competence of the Control Commission."

Lenin was always keen on cutting the staff of the state apparatus. He always indicated the direct connection between staff inflation and bureaucratic distortions. Time and time again he presented for consideration at meetings of the Council of People's Commissars reports of the Central Statistical Board as to the personnel of state bodies. He drew attention to wasteful spending because of inflated staff. More than once he noted that the Soviet state should be cheap to run. He paid particularly great attention to the matter of reducing the num-

ber of offices and their staff in Moscow. At his suggestion a special commission was even established to take extra offices out of Moscow. In September 1922 Lenin authorised the Deputy Chairman of the Council of People's Commissars to organise a one-day census of all Moscow's office workers. This gave palpably disheartening results showing that despite the numerous commissions on staff reductions the number of government employees in Moscow was in the neighbourhood of 200,000 — though it had been thought that 100,000 would be enough. Experience showed that the question of reducing the government apparatus and of improving its work could be resolved only by lengthy systematic work. "Much effort and skill will be required to improve it," Lenin said of the state apparatus at the 4th session of the All-Russia Executive Committee on the 31st of October 1922. "We have not been able to study this question up to now, but henceforth we must study it in the most comprehensive manner. This will take years and years; we shall have to study hard for years, for the cultural standard of our workers is low, they find it difficult to undertake the new tasks of production... It will take us years and years to secure an improvement in our machinery of state, to raise it — not merely as individuals but as a whole — to higher cultural levels."

In demanding staff cuts in the apparatus of various government offices Lenin first of all implemented this at the Council of People's Commissars itself. He had an extremely modest personal private secretariat as staff goes, which also discharged the functions of the secretariat of the Council of People's Commissars and the Council of Labour and Defence.

He always insistently strove to raise the standard of work of the People's Commissariats and departments and to draft scientifically substantiated quotas for office workers and rules for office work. In his view the People's Commissariat of Workers' and Peasants' Inspection and the Central Statistical Board

had an important role to play in the accomplishment of these tasks. He demanded that the People's Commissariat of Workers' and Peasants' Inspection have "systematically worked out rates of work" which could be applied also to other departments and ensure the systematic rate fixing what functionaries of government offices could do in one or another field. In this he believed it imperatively necessary to study the experience of the most efficient offices in the capitalist countries of Germany, Norway, America "In my opinion, the *most necessary* thing for us is to learn from Europe and America. The main thing is norms (i.e., how many people for such and such a sum total of work)."

As for the Central Statistical Board, Lenin believed it directly behooved this cardinal agency of the Soviet state to analyse the work of the government apparatus from the statistical angle. "It is of course difficult to keep an account of the work of Soviet institutions," he wrote. "But difficulty is not impossibility. If not monthly reports, then reports once every two or three months are absolutely necessary, at least as a start, on 'available personnel' as compared with the prewar staff or that of other departments, other gubernias and so on, with a rational subdivision of all employees into grades (responsible posts, purely office workers, service staff — an approximate list of certain grades)."

As Lenin saw it, the Council of People's Commissars and the leading executives of the People's Commissariats had a role of paramount importance to play in securing more efficient functioning of the government apparatus, in training its workers to govern.

In one of his last letters, Lenin pointed out that to direct government offices it was essential to possess the ability of attracting people and to possess adequate scientific and technical knowledge to check their work. At the same time it was very important to know how to administer, that is to organise

matters from the practical angle and correctly allocate personnel and get all directives undeviatingly carried out. Lenin had all these qualities in full measure and was thus able to efficiently and effectively direct the work of the Council of People's Commissars and all branches of the government apparatus.

Despite the tremendous scope of activity and the inordinate burden of sundry concerns and cares, Lenin was never nervous, irascible, hasty or fussy. He worked calmly and always managed to do everything he had planned. Not one minute was lost. In the morning after breakfasting at home he would turn up at his office always at one and the same time, look through a heap of newspapers and office papers issue instructions to his secretary, receive visitors, chair meetings and invariably go home for dinner at exactly 4 p.m. After dinner and a short rest he would return to his office by 6 o'clock, always brimming with energy, and work there till late at night.

To illustrate, here is is the example of one working day in the life of Lenin, that of the 2nd of February 1921. On that day Lenin attended four meetings — from 11 a.m. to 2 p.m. in the economic commission, and from 2 to 4 p.m. in the Central Committee Politbureau. Incidentally at 3 p.m. while the Politbureau was in session Lenin received a telephone call from the Secretary of the Petrograd Gubernatorial Committee notifying him of the alarming situation in Petrograd as regards the shortage of food and fuel. Lenin sent to Petrograd the following cable: "Yesterday the Council of Defence decided to provide Petrograders with 18 ½ million poods of coal. We shall improve the food situation because today we have decided to provide another two goods trains to carry grain from the Caucasus." Between 6 and 7 p.m. Lenin attended a meeting of the Central Committee Commission on the matter of reorganising the People's Commissariat of Education. At this meeting he received a note from the Secretary asking whether

he could give an audience to one Sokolov, a member of the Siberian Revolutionary Committee, who said he had a very urgent matter to discuss. On the reverse side of this note Lenin wrote: "Good. Today I meet 1) Krzhizhanovsky for one hour and 2) after that Sokolov. Take down his number."

Late in the evening Lenin again attended the Commission of education. On the same day Lenin wrote letters, first, to the director of the Marx and Engels Institute appending the German edition of letters of Marx and Engels and asking him to indicate from where he had taken the emphasised passages from the letters and whether it was possible to acquire all the letters of Marx and Engels from Scheidemann and Co. and assemble in Moscow everything that had been published; second, to N.P. Gorbunov the office manager of the Council of People's Commissars noting the need to assist L.K. Martens, the Soviet representative in America; and third, to the Deputy Chairman of the Minor Council of the People's Commissars about the reports the People's Commissariats had filed with the Council of People's Commissars, on giving attention to the implementation of cardinal decisions.

Also on that same day Lenin read through a letter from the American newswoman Louise Bryant asking for an audience, and also a cable from Rostov-on-Don from the chief of staff of the Caucasian Army reporting a snowstorm in the Caucasus. He read proposals to mobilise miners, to investigate Urals industry and passed notes to the Secretary about M.N. Pokrovsky's attendance at the meeting of the Central Committee Commission on the reorganisation of the People's Commissariat of Education, looked through the report of V.N. Sokolov, a member of the Siberian revolutionary Committee, about land organisation and the food policy in Siberia, approved a protocol of the procedural meeting of the Council of Labour and Defence and also approved and signed the Protocol of the Minor Council of People's Commissars on financial matters,

the Protocol of the Economic Commission, the decision of the Council of People's Commissars and All-Russia Central Executive Committee on how to combat desertion from the army, the decision of the Council of People's Commissars on Polish prisoners of war and the allocation of money for the autonomous Votsk Region, and finally signed a provisional regulation on the issue of bonuses in kind.

All in all throughout the 2nd of February 1921 Lenin signed, read and made marginal notes on at least 40 documents. This does not include the material for the meetings that he chaired. On the same day he received Krzhizhanovsky, Chairman of the State Planning Committee, Vladimirov, Deputy People's Commissar for Finances, Sokolov, a Member of the Siberian Revolutionary Committee, and Comrade Ruzicka, from Czechoslovakia. This was a quite run-of-the-mill working day in Lenin's life as head of the Soviet Government.

Lenin strove to single out in the activities of the Council of People's Commissars the central key problems upon which the country's destinies hinged. However, at the outset he was not always successful in this respect. A vast number of items, sometimes as many as 60, would be included on the agenda of meetings of the Council of People's Commissars, which between 1917 and 1918 were held almost daily. He tried hard to have the Council refer minor matters back to the departments themselves for decision. Also taken off the agenda were questions that were not prepared for discussion. Lenin demanded that every item raised for discussion have appended a brief explanatory note which would set out the gist of the matter, plus a draft decision of the Council of People's Commissars or Council of Labour and Defence plus the opinions of all the departments concerned. These documents were to be circulated in advance among all members of the Council of People's Commissars by the Secretariat. In December 1917 Lenin drafted a resolution demanding that every people's

Commissar raising one or another matter before the Council of People's Commissars present "a preliminary written statement pointing out: *(a)* the gist of the matter in brief which should not be limited to the mere reference that it was about this or that, but which must necessarily state the content; *(b)* what precisely the Council of People's Commissars was to do — give money, say, take one or another resolution and the like, in other words specifying exactly what the person raising the matter wanted to be done; *(c)* whether this question concerned the departments of the other commissars, if so, which precisely, and whether there were any written opinions from them on the score."

Meetings of the Council of People's Commissars could be attended by the People's Commissars themselves and their deputies who, in the absence of the Commissars, could cast a deciding vote. Lenin sought to have no extra people present in order for the meetings to proceed in a business-like fashion and take up the least time possible. He attached tremendous importance to the proper organisation of meetings of the Council of People's Commissars and its commissions, wanting them to indeed provide true schooling in government. He was intolerant of the slightest manifestations of laxity and unpunctuality. When A.I. Rykov failed to turn up at one of the meetings of the Council of Foreign Trade, he received on the same day a brief note from Lenin which read: "This unpunctuality cannot be tolerated at all. Please submit an explanation at once why this happened and what you will do to prevent any future repetition." Another time Lenin administered severe reprimands with warnings to three leading executives that in the event of a repetition the guilty would be tried by court for failing to report at a meeting of one of the commissions of the Council of Labour and Defence.

There took shape in Lenin's time the basic procedure for the consideration of matters at meetings of the Council of

People's Commissars. Furthermore, speakers were given a strictly allotted amount of time which they could not exceed. They had to speak in a concise business like fashion in each case. Generally there prevailed at the Council of People's Commissars an atmosphere in which time seemed to be compressed so many facts, thoughts and decisions were contained in every minute. However, at the same time there was never a sign of bureaucracy or high-handedness. When Lenin was in the chair, meetings of the Council of People's Commissars always proceeded amidst great uplift. The mood was most business-like. All knew that Lenin could not brook meaningless talk and hence all sought to introduce business-like proposals and make the most of the three minutes allotted to each speaker. All gave thought to what they planned to say to provide the mere gist. Everyone felt a responsibility not only for his own job but for the common cause generally. Lenin generated and encouraged this exceptionally comradely amosphere.

Lenin made a signal contribution towards evolving the most rational organisation and methods of work for the apparatus of government in the highly complex conditions obtaining in the initial years of the revolution. While tackling cardinaly tasks of policy he, at the same time, dedicated great energy to the training of employees for the government apparatus, and, by personal example, taught how to govern in a precise, systematic and planned way.

CONTENTS

Printed in Switzerland

1970
COOPERATIVE D'IMPRIMERIE
DU PRE-JEROME
GENEVE
(Switzerland)