

■ *Scientific Socialism Series*

V.I. LENIN

On Peaceful Coexistence

Articles and Speeches



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Preface

Ever since its formation the Soviet state has been pursuing the policy of peaceful coexistence.

Peaceful coexistence implies recognition of the possibility that countries with different social and political systems may exist parallel to each other; it is the recognition of the fact that, since new socialist states have emerged and are developing alongside the older, capitalist states, peaceful economic relations can and must be established between them with regular commercial and cultural ties and not a state of "cold", to say nothing of "hot", war; it is the recognition of the fact that all conflicts and disputes that arise between states must be settled by negotiations and not by war. The policy of peaceful coexistence is based on the respect of the right of every nation to choose for itself the social system it prefers. Peaceful coexistence promotes the development of the revolutionary movement of the working class in the capitalist countries and creates conditions for successful struggle by oppressed nations against colonialism, for freedom and independence. The peaceful coexistence of states with different social systems is a specific form of the class struggle in the international arena.

This, in very rough outline, is the policy that has been consistently pursued by the Soviet people and their government for more than fifty years.

The policy of peaceful coexistence was first proclaimed and fully substantiated by Lenin.

If we turn to the articles and pamphlets written by Lenin, to his speeches and to the interviews he gave on the questions of foreign policy in the years immediately following the October Revolution, we shall see that the idea of peaceful

coexistence runs like a scarlet thread through all of them. In those early years of the Soviet state, Lenin and the government he headed made tremendous efforts to establish a sound and enduring peace, to establish a state of peaceful coexistence with the capitalist states. This was not achieved at that time because of the position of the ruling circles of Britain, France and the U.S.A. They did not want peaceful coexistence with socialism but hoped, as Winston Churchill put it in his memoirs, "to strangle the Bolshevik state at its birth"; the direct outcome was the organisation of armed attacks on the young Soviet state for several years in succession. It is common knowledge that all the campaigns organised by Churchill, Clemenceau, Wilson and their underlings ended in shameful defeat although in those years the Soviet Republic was undoubtedly much weaker economically and in the military sense than the mighty Entente powers.

The symposium here presented to the reader does not contain everything Lenin wrote and said about peaceful coexistence. However, even those writings and speeches included in the book, small as it is, will show the reader clearly why the founder of the world's first socialist state considered the policy of peaceful coexistence to be essential, how he formulated the main theses of the policy and what great significance he placed on the struggle to realise the principles of peaceful coexistence in the relations between states with different social and economic systems.

When reading these works it must be borne in mind that they were made at a time when parts of Soviet Russia were still occupied by hostile forces financed and armed by the very powers with whom Lenin desired normal, peaceful relations.

* * *

The symposium opens with the now famous Decree on Peace.

On October 26 (November 8), 1917, the day after state power in Russia had passed into the hands of the workers and peasants, the All-Russia Congress of Soviets, voting on the report made by Lenin, approved the Decree on

Peace; the Decree was an appeal to the peoples and governments of all belligerent countries to conclude an immediate armistice and start negotiations for peace. The Decree was transmitted to the whole world by wireless.

The world war, that gigantic bloody struggle between two rival cliques of imperialists to redivide the colonies and spheres of influence, had entered its fourth year. Millions of people were dying on the battlefields. The economy of the belligerent countries was in a state of collapse, production was falling, food was scarce and hunger had set in. The misfortunes of the ordinary people had reached gigantic proportions and everybody—Russians, Germans, French, Italians, British—all those who had been embroiled in the war, had only one passionate desire: to put an end to the hated war, to establish peace.

And Lenin's Decree on Peace gave expression to this will of the peoples.

The Decree stated that the Soviet Government considered it "the greatest of crimes against humanity" to continue the war that was being fought merely to decide "how to divide among the strong and rich nations the weak nationalities they have conquered". The Soviet Government proposed to all belligerent peoples to conclude immediately a just and democratic peace, that is, a peace without annexations, without the seizure of foreign lands, without the forcible incorporation of weaker peoples and without reparations. The Soviet Government announced that it was not putting these terms forward as an ultimatum and was prepared to examine any other peace proposals made by any of the belligerents.

The Decree on Peace contained the basic principles of the policy of peaceful coexistence that thus became, for the first time in history, the officially declared and consistently pursued policy of a state. The Decree on Peace made known to all peoples and governments that the newly-formed socialist state stood for peace and not for war, that it stood for a durable peace and did not and could not have any aggressive, predatory aims, that it was implacably hostile to any policy of annexation or conquest, that it considered criminal any war pursued for the purpose of seizing the territory of weaker peoples, that it proposed the renunciation of secret diplomacy because treaties kept secret from the

people contained agreements on the conquest of foreign lands and foreign peoples. The Soviet Government gave the first example—it abolished secret diplomacy, announced that all articles on annexations contained in the secret treaties of the tsarist and Provisional governments were “immediately and unconditionally annulled”, and set about the publication of secret treaties.

Thus the first act of the Soviet Government in international affairs formulated the democratic and peaceful principles of its foreign policy.

But what attitude did the imperialist powers display towards the Decree on Peace that proposed a realistic, simple and human way out of the world war, a way that would put an end to the sufferings of the peoples?

They made no answer whatever to the appeal of the Soviet Government and continued the war. The British, German, French and United States imperialists did not wish to discuss peace, for they had not yet finished their own dispute, one that had been paid for in rivers of human blood, over which African colonies Germany would possess and which would go to France and Britain, the dispute on whether the peoples of the Middle East were to be subordinated to the German Krupps or to the Anglo-French-American Armstrongs, Rothschilds and Rockefellers. Powerful imperialist interests demanded the continuation of the war, and these interests acted against the interests of the peoples.

* * *

The policy of peaceful coexistence, the struggle to establish a durable peace on earth is not a “temporary” policy, it is not a “manoeuvre” on the part of the Soviet Government as the imperialists slanderously assert. Peaceful coexistence is a policy that derives necessarily from the entire world outlook of scientific socialism; it is a policy that accords with the fundamental interests of socialist society.

One of the favourite inventions of those who engage in anti-Soviet and anti-communist slander is that the socialist state is nurturing aggressive plans of armed attack on other countries in order to impose the socialist system on them by force.

This is an invention calculated to deceive very ignorant

people, those who have no conception of the real views, theories, practice, plans and intentions of the socialist states. Nothing could be more alien to the entire concept of Marxism-Leninism than the idea that it is possible to introduce socialism by attack from without.

Marxism-Leninism is, first and foremost, a science, and, like all sciences, its practical conclusions are based on a number of cardinal theoretical postulates that have been tested and proved. One of the chief postulates of Marxism-Leninism states: socialism can and does emerge when the essential economic and political conditions for a transition to the new, socialist social system are mature. This is the corner-stone of the doctrine of Marx and Lenin. "Socialism is not the invention of dreamers," wrote Lenin, "but the final aim and necessary result of the development of the productive forces in modern society."

The only power that can carry out a socialist revolution is that of the people of the country concerned, headed by the working class. Only when that working masses in the country itself have realised the need for socialism and have begun their struggle for the transition to socialism can the socialist revolution be put into effect. The idea that the socialist social system can be "introduced" by some outside force, that the socialist revolution can be "imported" into one country from another in the way a bale of cotton is imported is so ridiculous and so alien to the very essence of Marxism-Leninism that one can only express surprise that there are still people who try to put this anti-communist falsification across as a criticism of Marxism.

Marx, Engels and Lenin all returned time and again to this question. Take, for instance, Engels's letter to Kautsky, written on September 12, 1882, in which he said that when the working class of the developed capitalist countries had completed the socialist revolution they would grant the colonies independence. "But as to what social and political phases these countries (the former colonies.—*Ed.*) will then have to pass through before they likewise arrive at socialist organisation, I think we today can advance only rather idle hypotheses," he continued. "One thing alone is certain: *the victorious proletariat can force no blessings of any kind upon any foreign nation without undermining its own victory by so doing.*" (Our italics.—*Ed.*)

Marx, Engels and Lenin invariably decide the question in this and in no other way—by a complete denial of the possibility of “imposing” communism on other nations. Lenin said that people who think such an “imposition” possible are either lunatics or provocateurs.

* * *

Let us return, however, to the events that followed the publication of the Decree on Peace.

As we have said, not one of the imperialist countries replied to the Soviet Government. The proposal to start peace negotiations was rejected.

The Soviet Government, in pursuance of the will of the people, then concluded a peace treaty with Germany. The Soviet people obtained a breathing-space and set about peaceful labour.

The imperialist governments of Britain, France, the U.S.A. and Japan, however, launched a war against the Soviet Republic. They counted on Russia having been exhausted by four years of war with Germany, on economic ruin and hunger having reduced her to such a state that she would not be able to offer any serious resistance to intervention. The Entente mustered the forces of Russian counter-revolution, created “governments” in the north, east and south of Russia from among the Russian landlords and capitalists that the people had turned out, subsidised the anti-Soviet revolt of the Czechoslovak Corps and provided arms for the counter-revolutionary armies led by Denikin, Kolchak, Yudenich and other tsarist generals. At the same time the Entente countries sent their own armies to Russia. British and American troops landed at Murmansk and Archangel in the north of Russia in the spring of 1918. On April 5, 1918, the Japanese landed troops in Vladivostok and in August of that year U.S. troops under General Greves also arrived in Vladivostok. An order issued by the Supreme Council of the Entente on July 2, 1918, was outspoken in defining the aims of the occupation of the Far East. The Allies must “take advantage of an opportunity of gaining control of Siberia since the opportunity may not recur in the future”. In the summer of 1918 British troops made an

attempt to seize Baku and French warships entered the Black Sea and landed troops at Odessa.

Soviet Russia found herself ringed round by enemies and the working people rose solidly in defence of their socialist fatherland.

How the intervention ended is now history. The defeat was absolute. Again and again the imperialists launched campaigns against Soviet Russia and each time they were thrown back. The hungry, ragged, poorly shod and badly equipped Red Army time and again defeated the well-trained, well-armed and equipped armies of the Entente. The interventionists were compelled to withdraw the remnants of their armies from the territory of Soviet Russia. In the spring of 1920 Clemenceau and Churchill made yet another attempt—they succeeded in persuading the Polish Government to launch an attack on Russia. But the Polish campaign ended in the same way as previous campaigns—with the victory of the Soviet Republic.

In this way the Soviet people demonstrated most convincingly that it would be more reasonable for the imperialists—even from the point of view of their own interests—to lay aside their arms and recognise the fact that a new country had emerged in the world, that it existed and would continue to exist, a country in which new, socialist social and economic relations had been established.

The Workers' and Peasants' Government of Russia made many proposals to the Entente countries, before and during the intervention, and after the armies of the Entente had been driven out of Soviet territory, to conclude peace and establish trade relations between the socialist and the capitalist countries. All possibilities for negotiations were used, all channels were explored in an effort to bring the high-handed governments of France, Britain, Japan and the U.S.A. to their senses. On December 5, 1919, the Seventh Congress of Soviets stated in a resolution on world politics that Soviet Russia wished "to live in peace with all peoples and devote all its efforts to internal development so as to put production, transport and government affairs in order on the basis of the Soviet system; this has so far been prevented by the intervention of the Entente and the starvation blockade". This resolution listed the numerous peace proposals that the Soviet Government had made to the Entente countries.

The resolution of the Seventh Congress of Soviets, like all previous peace proposals, was left unanswered.

It is true that the American diplomat, William Bullitt, came to Moscow in March 1919. He said that he had come on the instructions of President Wilson to co-ordinate the terms of a peace treaty with the Soviet Government. A preliminary peace treaty was compiled on the basis of Bullitt's talks with Lenin and Chicherin and Bullitt took it to secure the signatures of the Entente governments. When he returned to Washington, Wilson refused to receive him and his mission ended without achieving anything. Wilson's change of "mood" had a simple explanation; in the spring of 1919, Kolchak's army, armed and financed by the Entente, launched its attack on Soviet Russia, and the American President hoped for the victory of Russian counter-revolution. As further events showed, his hopes were in vain.

Beginning with the autumn of 1920, when internal counter-revolution and foreign intervention had been finally defeated, the Soviet people at last had an opportunity to set about its main task—the rehabilitation of the Russian economy that had been ruined by years of uninterrupted wars, and the building of socialism.

The Soviet Republic had entered a new phase of development. "We have won, not only a breathing-space," said Lenin on November 21, 1920, "we have entered a new period, in which we have won the right to our fundamental international existence in the network of capitalist states." The period in world history had begun when "socialist and capitalist states would exist side by side", a period of the peaceful coexistence of socialist and capitalist countries.

The Soviet people launched the building of a socialist society with the greatest enthusiasm. This was something that would only be possible under conditions of peace, of peaceful coexistence. The Soviet people had no use for war, war could only hold up their progress and prevent the fulfilment of the main task—the building of socialism.

And it was precisely through peaceful labour that the Soviet Republic began to exercise ever greater influence over other countries. The Soviet Republic brought its influence to bear on other nations not by force and not by wars, but by the achievements of peaceful socialist construction that demonstrated the advantages of socialism over

capitalism clearly and convincingly. The greater the achievements of the socialist country in the development of economy and culture, the stronger would be its international prestige. Lenin raised the question of the power of example. More and more people in the world would be convinced by the power of example that it is necessary to go over from a form of society based on exploitation and inequality to a society where there is no exploitation, no poverty, no inequality and no wars. By building socialism we would provide "an example of how it is done"—that is how Lenin presented the question.

"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."

In his closing speech at the Tenth All-Russia Conference of the R.C.P.(B.) on May 28, 1921, Lenin defined the international impact of the socialist revolution in the following way:

"We are now exercising our main influence on the international revolution through our economic policy.... The struggle in this field has now become global. Once we solve this problem, we shall have certainly and finally won on an international scale. That is why for us questions of economic development become of absolutely exceptional importance. On this front, we must achieve victory by a steady rise and progress which must be gradual and necessarily slow."

Peaceful coexistence is not merely the absence of a state of war between states with different social and economic systems; it is also the existence of regular, durable economic and cultural relations between those states. In 1920 Lenin planned a whole programme of economic relations with the West. Commerce came first. Russia needed locomotives and machinery for industry. The West needed raw materials that were available in Russia. The Soviet Government was also prepared to grant industrial concessions to foreign capitalists. The Soviet Government tried to develop economic relations with the capitalist world, undaunted by the fact that the ruling circles of France, Britain and the U.S.A. still

maintained their haughty, high-handed tone. There could be no question of recognising Soviet Russia (as though her existence depended on their recognition!), screamed the press. The imperialists consoled themselves with the dream that an economic blockade, a refusal to trade with Russia would hasten her end.

At the same time they continued to foster plans for a fresh intervention in Soviet Russia. They had been defeated and for the time being had laid down their arms; they were waiting for the time to come when, under more favourable conditions, they would again try to launch a war against the socialist country. Lenin realised that "the deeper and more formidable the communist movement grows, the greater will be the number of new attempts to strangle our Republic". And again Lenin warned: "The capitalists will seek pretexts for going to war."... "The imperialist predators will attack us again if there is the slightest change in the situation." In his report to the Eighth All-Russia Congress of Soviets Lenin said: "The existence of a Soviet Republic alongside of capitalist countries—a Soviet Republic surrounded by capitalist countries—is so intolerable to the capitalists that they will seize any opportunity to resume the war. The peoples are weary of the imperialist war and threaten to make their indignation felt if war continues, but the possibility of the capitalists being able to resume it in a few years is not precluded."

In February 1920 an American newspaper correspondent asked Lenin:

"Has Russia still to fear counter-revolution from without?"

And Lenin answered:

"Unfortunately, it has, for the capitalists are stupid, greedy people. They have made a number of such stupid, greedy attempts at intervention and one has to fear repetitions until the workers and peasants of all countries thoroughly *re-educate* their own capitalists."

Subsequent history proved how correct Lenin's prophecy had been. For many years nazi Germany prepared a war against the Soviet Union, and according to the plans of the German imperialists and of those whose Munich policy helped them, this war was to have destroyed the world's first socialist state. History proved their calculations wrong as it had done so often before. After the Second World War,

instead of the one socialist country, the world socialist system emerged. But the people who stubbornly persist in trying to turn the wheel of history backwards do not heed the lessons of history so that today we again see a handful of maniacs in the imperialist camp trying to launch another world war, a nuclear war this time.

In 1920 and 1921 British and American press correspondents came more and more frequently to Moscow. The chief topic of Lenin's talks with the newspapermen was the problem of peace, peaceful coexistence, the establishment of durable and enduring economic relations between Russia and the capitalist world. The correspondent of the Universal Service asked Lenin what, in his opinion, would be the basis of peace between the Soviet Republic and America.

"Let the American capitalists leave us alone," answered Lenin. "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."

The correspondent then asked what obstacles there were to such a peace.

"None on our part," answered Lenin. "Imperialism on the part of the American (and of any other) capitalists."

In the interviews he gave foreign press correspondents Lenin declared again and again that the Soviet Republic had never attacked anybody and had no intention of so doing, that its aim was peaceful economic development, that it had never interfered in the internal affairs of foreign states and had no intention of so doing. Every one of Lenin's interviews was a magnificent, patient and simple explanation of the basic principles of Soviet foreign policy, an explanation full of sarcasm addressed to the "stupid and greedy capitalists" who still dreamed of attacking the Soviet Republic.

"I know of no reason why a socialist state like ours cannot do business indefinitely with capitalist countries," said Lenin to Lincoln Eyre. "We don't mind taking the capitalist locomotives and farming machinery, so why should they mind taking our socialist wheat, flax and platinum? Socialist grain tastes the same as any other grain, does it not?"

No matter how aggressive circles in the Western states tried to hinder the development of trade relations with Soviet Russia, those relations were extended more and more.

In March 1921 a trade agreement was concluded with Britain. Trade with Germany, Sweden and other countries became more lively. "Russia has sprouted, if one may so express it, a number of fairly regular and permanent commercial relations, missions, treaties, etc.," said Lenin at the Ninth Congress of Soviets. Lenin's policy of peaceful coexistence was in accordance with the most vital and urgent needs of the peoples so that no intrigues on the part of those opposed to that policy could prevent the strengthening of economic relations between Soviet Russia and the capitalist world. Whether you want to or not you will have to trade with us because there exist forces more powerful than your willingness or unwillingness—the economic requirements of your countries. The economic rehabilitation of Western Europe is impossible without trade relations with Russia—such was the import of Lenin's statements in that period.

This truism seemed eventually to have reached the minds of the Entente Supreme Council. At the Cannes Conference in January 1922 the Council adopted a decision to convene an economic and financial conference with Soviet Russia participating.

The Conference opened in Genoa on April 10, 1922.

Lenin was appointed chairman of the Soviet delegation, but he was unable to travel to Genoa and the office of chairman was transferred to G. V. Chicherin who was at that time People's Commissar for Foreign Affairs. Chicherin made a number of proposals to the Conference on the most important questions of international politics and economics. His proposals constituted an extensive programme of the peaceful coexistence of countries with different social and economic systems. On the opening day of the Conference, Chicherin expressed the main idea of peaceful coexistence in the following words:

"While remaining true to the principles of communism, the Russian delegation recognises the fact that in the present epoch, in which the parallel existence of the old system and the nascent new system is possible, economic collaboration between states representing the two systems of property ownership is imperatively necessary for a general economic rehabilitation."

As an appendix to this book we offer the reader a letter written by Chicherin to Lenin shortly before leaving for

Genoa; in this letter Chicherin outlined the main theses to be put forward by the Soviet delegation at Genoa.

These proposals were—the establishment of an international organisation “with all peoples of the world participating on a completely equal footing, on the basis of the declaration of the right to self-determination, the right to complete secession or home rule for all oppressed peoples”, the guarantee “that the Negro and other colonial peoples participate on an equal footing with the European peoples in conferences and commissions and have the right to prevent interference in their internal affairs”; in international organisations “voluntary co-operation and aid for the weak on the part of the strong must be applied without subordinating the former to the latter”. Lastly, the Soviet delegation proposed preventing fresh wars by means of general disarmament.

The governments of France and Britain rejected the Soviet proposals and torpedoed the Conference.

* * *

Today, as in Lenin's lifetime, the Soviet Government is doing everything in its power to achieve a durable peace and eliminate the war danger.

The Twenty-Third Congress of the C.P.S.U., which was held in March-April 1966, pointed out: “The foreign policy of the Soviet Union, together with that of other socialist countries, is aimed at securing favourable international conditions for the building of socialism and communism; strengthening the unity and cohesion, the friendship and fraternity of the socialist countries; supporting the national liberation movement and maintaining all-round co-operation with the young developing countries; upholding consistently the principle of the peaceful coexistence of states with different social systems, firmly repelling the aggressive forces of imperialism and delivering mankind from the threat of a new world war.”

The Soviet people will continue to fight against all expansionist wars, including wars between capitalist states, and against local wars aimed at suppressing popular liberation movements. It sees its duty to lie in support of the sacred struggle of the oppressed peoples and their just wars of liberation against imperialism.

The danger of a new war lies in imperialism. The imperialists—first and foremost those of the U.S.A., who are the main bulwark of international reaction—are piling up huge quantities of weapons, establishing military bases in all parts of the world and organising aggressive military blocs. In our time a new world war means a thermonuclear war. The war being prepared by the imperialists, a war that would be an unparalleled calamity for all mankind, a war that would mean the death of hundreds of millions of people, must be prevented at all costs. It must not be allowed to begin—such is the central feature of Soviet foreign policy.

Can another world war be prevented? The answer is in the affirmative—a new world war can be prevented thanks to the existence of the powerful camp of peace and socialism that is conducting an untiring struggle for peace. There are no classes, no groups, no individuals in the socialist countries that are interested in war. Foreigners who visit the Soviet Union, even those opposed to socialism, have to admit that there are no champions of war in that country, that the Soviet people are for peace.

The war can be prevented because the influence on world affairs of the socialist countries and the countries of Asia, Africa and Latin America that have recently freed themselves from colonial and semi-colonial dependence is growing stronger, and because more and more millions of people in all countries are joining the peace movement. The evergrowing superiority of the forces of socialism over the forces of imperialism, of the forces of peace over the forces of war instils hope into the peoples that the war plans of the imperialists, directed against mankind, will not be realised. “A vast *peace zone* has taken shape on earth,” says the Programme of the C.P.S.U., and the forces that go to make up that peace zone are struggling courageously, selflessly and ever more actively to check the imperialists—they are struggling for general and complete disarmament.

The signing by many states of the nuclear non-proliferation treaty in 1968-69 is a major step towards averting the threat of thermonuclear war and upholding peace.

The wars waged by American imperialists against the Asian, Latin American and African peoples fighting for their liberation from the colonial and semi-colonial yoke arouse indignation among progressive forces the world over. The

infamous war of U.S. imperialism against the heroic people of Vietnam, the Israeli aggression, financed and backed by U.S. imperialism, against the Arab countries in the summer of 1967, the unceasing raids and atrocities of the Israeli militarists against the civilian Arab population—these are only some of the crimes perpetrated by U.S. imperialists in recent years. The heroic fight of the oppressed peoples for freedom and independence is supported by the socialist countries and all the forces of democracy, peace and socialism throughout the world, and no brutalities of American imperialism can reverse the trend of events and reimpose the colonial yoke on the peoples now winning their independence.

The ideas of Lenin, that great humanist and profoundly wise statesman who was able to see into the future with amazing foresight, enter into the struggle today. A knowledge of those ideas will lend strength to those who stand for peace, for the prevention of nuclear wars, and for socialism whose victory throughout the world will deliver mankind from wars for all time.

* * *

The translations are taken from the English edition of Lenin's *Collected Works* prepared by Progress Publishers, Moscow. Changes have been made in accordance with the fifth Russian edition.

■
*Report on Peace
Delivered at the Second All-Russia
Congress of Soviets of Workers'
and Soldiers' Deputies¹*

October 26 (November 8), 1917

■

The question of peace is a burning question, the painful question of the day. Much has been said and written on the subject, and all of you, no doubt, have discussed it quite a lot. Permit me, therefore, to proceed to read a declaration which the government you elect should publish.

Decree on Peace

The workers' and peasants' government, created by the Revolution of October 24-25 and basing itself on the Soviets of Workers', Soldiers' and Peasants' Deputies, calls upon all the belligerent peoples and their governments to start immediate negotiations for a just, democratic peace.

By a just or democratic peace, for which the overwhelming majority of the working class and other working people of all the belligerent countries, exhausted, tormented and racked by the war, are craving—a peace that has been most definitely and insistently demanded by the Russian workers and peasants ever since the overthrow of the tsarist monarchy—by such a peace the government means an immediate peace without annexations (i.e., without the seizure of foreign lands, without the forcible incorporation of foreign nations) and without indemnities.

The Government of Russia proposes that this kind of peace be immediately concluded by all the belligerent nations, and expresses its readiness to take all the resolute measures now, without the least delay, pending the final ratification of all

the terms of such a peace by authoritative assemblies of the people's representatives of all countries and all nations.

In accordance with the sense of justice of democrats in general, and of the working classes in particular, the government conceives the annexation or seizure of foreign lands to mean every incorporation of a small or weak nation into a large or powerful state without the precisely, clearly and voluntarily expressed consent and wish of that nation, irrespective of the time when such forcible incorporation took place, irrespective also of the degree of development or backwardness of the nation forcibly annexed to the given state, or forcibly retained within its borders, and irrespective, finally, of whether this nation is in Europe or in distant, overseas countries.

If any nation whatsoever is forcibly retained within the borders of a given state, if, in spite of its expressed desire—no matter whether expressed in the press, at public meetings, in the decisions of parties, or in protests and uprisings against national oppression—it is not accorded the right to decide the forms of its state existence by a free vote, taken after the complete evacuation of the troops of the incorporating or, generally, of the stronger nation and without the least pressure being brought to bear, such incorporation is annexation, i.e., seizure and violence.

The government considers it the greatest of crimes against humanity to continue this war over the issue of how to divide among the strong and rich nations the weak nationalities they have conquered, and solemnly announces its determination immediately to sign terms of peace to stop this war on the terms indicated, which are equally just for all nationalities without exception.

At the same time the government declares that it does not regard the above-mentioned peace terms as an ultimatum; in other words, it is prepared to consider any other peace terms, and insists only that they be advanced by any of the belligerent countries as speedily as possible, and that in the peace proposals there should be absolute clarity and the complete absence of all ambiguity and secrecy.

The government abolishes secret diplomacy, and, for its part, announces its firm intention to conduct all negotiations quite openly in full view of the whole people. It will proceed immediately with the full publication of the secret treaties

endorsed or concluded by the government of landowners and capitalists from February to October 25, 1917. The government proclaims the unconditional and immediate annulment of everything contained in these secret treaties insofar as it is aimed, as is mostly the case, at securing advantages and privileges for the Russian landowners and capitalists and at the retention, or extension, of the annexations made by the Great Russians.

Proposing to the governments and peoples of all countries immediately to begin open negotiations for peace, the government, for its part, expresses its readiness to conduct these negotiations in writing, by telegraph, and by negotiations between representatives of the various countries, or at a conference of such representatives. In order to facilitate such negotiations, the government is appointing its plenipotentiary representative to neutral countries.

The government proposes an immediate armistice to the governments and peoples of all the belligerent countries, and, for its part, considers it desirable that this armistice should be concluded for a period of not less than three months, i.e., a period long enough to permit the completion of negotiations for peace with the participation of the representatives of all peoples or nations, without exception, involved in or compelled to take part in the war, and the summoning of authoritative assemblies of the representatives of the peoples of all countries for the final ratification of the peace terms.

While addressing this proposal for peace to the governments and peoples of all the belligerent countries, the Provisional Workers' and Peasants' Government of Russia appeals in particular also to the class-conscious workers of the three most advanced nations of mankind and the largest states participating in the present war, namely, Great Britain, France and Germany. The workers of these countries have made the greatest contributions to the cause of progress and socialism; they have furnished the great examples of the Chartist movement in England, a number of revolutions of historic importance effected by the French proletariat, and, finally, the heroic struggle against the Anti-Socialist Law in Germany and the prolonged, persistent and disciplined work of creating mass proletarian organisations in Germany, a work which serves as a model to the workers of the whole world. All these examples of proletar-

ian heroism and historical creative work are a pledge that the workers of the countries mentioned will understand the duty that now faces them of saving mankind from the horrors of war and its consequences, that these workers, by comprehensive, determined, and supremely vigorous action, will help us to conclude peace successfully, and at the same time emancipate the labouring and exploited masses of our population from all forms of slavery and all forms of exploitation.

The workers' and peasants' government, created by the Revolution of October 24-25 and basing itself on the support of the Soviets of Workers', Soldiers' and Peasants' Deputies, must start immediate negotiations for peace. Our appeal must be addressed both to the governments and to the peoples. We cannot ignore the governments, for that would delay the possibility of concluding peace, and the people's government dare not do that; but we have no right not to appeal to the peoples at the same time. Everywhere there are differences between the governments and the peoples, and we must therefore help the peoples to intervene in questions of war and peace. We will, of course, insist upon the whole of our programme for a peace without annexations and indemnities. We shall not retreat from it; but we must not give our enemies an opportunity to say that their conditions are different from ours and that therefore it is useless to start negotiations with us. No, we must deprive them of that advantageous position and not present our terms in the form of an ultimatum. Therefore the point is included that we are willing to consider any peace terms and all proposals. We shall consider them, but that does not necessarily mean that we shall accept them. We shall submit them for consideration to the Constituent Assembly which will have the power to decide what concessions can and what cannot be made. We are combating the deception practised by governments which pay lip-service to peace and justice, but in fact wage annexationist and predatory wars. No government will say all it thinks. We, however, are opposed to secret diplomacy and will act openly in full view of the whole people. We do not close our eyes to difficulties and never have done. War cannot be ended by refusal, it cannot be ended by one side. We are proposing an armistice for three months, but shall not reject a shorter

period, so that the exhausted army may breathe freely, even if only for a little while; moreover, in all the civilised countries national assemblies must be summoned for the discussion of the terms.

In proposing an immediate armistice, we appeal to the class-conscious workers of the countries that have done so much for the development of the proletarian movement. We appeal to the workers of Britain, where there was the Chartist movement, to the workers of France, who have in repeated uprisings displayed the strength of their class-consciousness, and to the workers of Germany, who waged the fight against the Anti-Socialist Law and have created powerful organisations.

In the Manifesto of March 14,² we called for the overthrow of the bankers, but, far from overthrowing our own bankers, we entered into an alliance with them. Now we have overthrown the government of the bankers.

The governments and the bourgeoisie will make every effort to unite their forces and drown the workers' and peasants' revolution in blood. But the three years of war have been a good lesson to the masses—the Soviet movement in other countries and the mutiny in the German navy, which was crushed by the officer cadets of Wilhelm the hangman. Finally, we must remember that we are not living in the depths of Africa, but in Europe, where news can spread quickly.

The workers' movement will triumph and will pave the way to peace and socialism. (*Prolonged applause.*)

Izvestia No. 208, October 27, 1917,
and *Pravda* No. 171, November 10
(October 28), 1917

Collected Works, Vol. 26,
pp. 249-53

■

*Concluding Speech Following
the Discussion on the Report on Peace
Delivered at the Second All-Russia
Congress of Soviets of Workers'
and Soldiers' Deputies*

October 26 (November 8), 1917

■

I shall not touch on the general character of the declaration. The government which your Congress sets up may amend unessential points.

I shall vigorously oppose lending our demand for peace the form of an ultimatum. An ultimatum may prove fatal to our whole cause. We cannot demand that, since some insignificant departure from our demands on the part of the imperialist governments would give them the opportunity of saying that it was impossible to enter into negotiations for peace because of our irreconcilability.

We shall send out our appeal everywhere, it will be made known to everybody. It will be impossible to conceal the terms proposed by our workers' and peasants' government.

It will be impossible to hush up our workers' and peasants' revolution, which has overthrown the government of bankers and landowners.

The governments may not reply to an ultimatum; they will have to reply to the text as we formulate it. Let everyone know what their governments have in mind. We do not want any secrets. We want a government to be always under the supervision of the public opinion of its country.

What will the peasant of some remote province say if, owing to our insistence on ultimatums, he will not know what another government wants? He will say: Comrades, why did you rule out the possibility of any peace terms being proposed? I would have discussed them, I would have examined them, and would then have instructed my representatives in the Constituent Assembly how to act. I am prepared to fight by revolutionary methods for just terms if the governments do not agree, but there might be such

terms for some countries that I would be prepared to recommend their governments to go on fighting by themselves. The full realisation of our ideas depends solely on the overthrow of the entire capitalist system. This is what the peasant might say to us, and he would accuse us of being excessively uncompromising over trifles, when for us the main thing is to expose all the vileness, all the baseness of the bourgeoisie and of its crowned and uncrowned hangmen at the head of the government.

We should not and must not give the governments an opportunity of taking refuge behind our uncompromising attitude and of concealing from the peoples the reason why they are being sent to the shambles. This is a tiny drop, but we should not and must not reject this drop, which will wear away the stone of bourgeois conquest. An ultimatum would make the position of our opponents easier. But we shall make all the terms known to the people. We shall confront all the governments with our terms, and let them give an answer to their people. We shall submit all peace proposals to the Constituent Assembly for decision.

There is still another point, comrades, to which you must pay the most careful attention. The secret treaties must be published.³ The clauses dealing with annexations and indemnities must be annulled. There are various clauses, comrades—the predatory governments, you know, not only made agreements between themselves on plunder, but among them they also included economic agreements and various other clauses on good-neighbourly relations.

We shall not bind ourselves by treaties. We shall not allow ourselves to be entangled by treaties. We reject all clauses on plunder and violence, but we shall welcome all clauses containing provisions for good-neighbourly relations and all economic agreements; we cannot reject these. We propose an armistice for three months; we choose a lengthy period because the peoples are exhausted, the peoples long for a respite from this bloody shambles that has lasted over three years. We must realise that the peoples should be given an opportunity to discuss the peace terms and to express their will with parliament participating, and this takes time. We demand a lengthy armistice, so that the soldiers in the trenches may enjoy a respite from this nightmare of constant slaughter; but we shall not reject proposals for a shorter

armistice; we shall examine them, and it is incumbent upon us to accept them, even if we are offered an armistice of a month or a month and a half. Nor must our proposal for an armistice have the form of an ultimatum, for we shall not give our enemies an opportunity of concealing the whole truth from the peoples, using our irreconcilability as a pretext. It must not be in the form of an ultimatum, for a government is criminal that does not desire an armistice. If we do not put our proposal for an armistice in the form of an ultimatum, we shall thereby show the peoples that the governments are criminal, and the peoples will not stand on ceremony with such criminals. The objection is raised that by not resorting to an ultimatum we are displaying weakness, but it is time to cast aside all bourgeois cant when speaking of the strength of the people. According to the bourgeois conception, there is strength when the people go blindly to the slaughter in obedience to the imperialist governments. The bourgeoisie admit a state to be strong only when it can, by the power of the government apparatus, hurl the people wherever the bourgeois rulers want them hurled. Our idea of strength is different. Our idea is that a state is strong when the people are politically conscious. It is strong when the people know everything, can form an opinion of everything and do everything consciously. We need not fear to tell the truth about fatigue, for what state today is not tired, what nation does not talk about it openly? Take Italy, where, owing to this tiredness, there was a prolonged revolutionary movement demanding the termination of the slaughter. Are there not mass demonstrations of workers in Germany that put forward a demand for the termination of the war? Was it not fatigue that provoked the mutiny in the German navy that was so ruthlessly suppressed by that hangman, Wilhelm, and his hirelings? If such things are possible in so disciplined a country as Germany, where they are beginning to talk about fatigue and about putting an end to the war, we need not fear to say the same openly, because it is the truth, equally true both of our country and of all the belligerent and even non-belligerent countries.

■ *Wireless Message*

TO ALL REGIMENTAL, DIVISIONAL, CORPS, ARMY
AND OTHER COMMITTEES, TO ALL SOLDIERS
OF THE REVOLUTIONARY ARMY AND SAILORS
OF THE REVOLUTIONARY NAVY

■

On the night of November 7 the Council of People's Commissars sent a wireless message to Commander-in-Chief Dukhonin⁴ ordering him immediately and formally to propose an armistice to all the belligerent countries, both Allied and those hostile to us.

This message was received at Field Headquarters on November 8 at 5.05 a.m. Dukhonin was ordered to keep the Council of People's Commissars constantly informed of the progress of the negotiations and to sign the armistice agreement only after it had been approved by the Council of People's Commissars. Simultaneously, a similar proposal to conclude an armistice was formally submitted to all the plenipotentiary representatives of the Allied countries in Petrograd.

Not having received a reply from Dukhonin by the evening of November 8, the Council of People's Commissars empowered Lenin, Stalin and Krylenko to ascertain the causes of the delay from Dukhonin over the direct line.

The conversation lasted from 2 a.m. to 4.30 a.m. on November 9.⁵ Dukhonin made numerous attempts to evade giving an explanation of his conduct and a precise reply to the orders of the government, but when Dukhonin was given a categorical order to enter immediately into formal negotiations for an armistice, he refused to obey. Thereupon, in the name of the Government of the Russian Republic, on behalf of the Council of People's Commissars, Dukhonin was informed that he was dismissed from his post for refusing to obey government orders and for conduct that entailed untold hardships for the working people of all countries and especially for the armies. At the same time,

Dukhonin was ordered to continue his duties pending the arrival of a new Commander-in-Chief or a person empowered by the latter to take over from Dukhonin. Ensign Krylenko has been appointed the new Commander-in-Chief.

Soldiers, the cause of peace is in your hands! Do not allow the counter-revolutionary generals to frustrate the great cause of peace, place them under guard in order to avert acts of summary justice unworthy of a revolutionary army and to prevent these generals from escaping the trial that awaits them. Maintain the strictest revolutionary and military order.

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.

Do everything possible to keep us informed of every step in the negotiations. The Council of People's Commissars is alone authorised to sign the final armistice agreement.

Soldiers, the cause of peace is in your hands! Maintain vigilance, restraint and energy, and the cause of peace will triumph!

In the name of the Government of the Russian Republic

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

N. Krylenko,
People's Commissar for War
and Commander-in-Chief

Written on November 9 (22), 1917

Published in the newspaper
Rabochy i Soldat No. 20,
November 9 (22), 1917

Collected Works, Vol. 26,
pp. 311-12

■
*From a Speech at the First All-Russia
Congress of the Navy*

November 22 (December 5), 1917

Minutes
■

“I shall now touch on the question of war. We have started a resolute struggle against the war brought on by the clash of robbers over their spoils. Until now all parties have spoken of this struggle but have not gone beyond words and hypocrisy. Now the struggle for peace is on. It is a difficult struggle. It is highly naïve to think that peace can be easily attained, and that the bourgeoisie will hand it to us on a platter as soon as we mention it. Those who ascribed this view to the Bolsheviks were cheating. The capitalists are embroiled in a life and death struggle over the share-out of the booty. One thing is clear: to kill war is to defeat capital, and Soviet power has started the struggle to that end. We have published and will continue to publish secret treaties. We are not going to be deterred in this by anyone’s anger or slander. The bourgeois gentlemen are beside themselves because the people see why they have been driven to the slaughter. They threaten Russia with the prospect of another war, in which she will find herself isolated. But we are not going to be deterred by the bourgeoisie’s fierce hatred for us and for our peace movement. It will be quite futile for them to try to incite the peoples against each other in this fourth year of the war. They are sure to fail. It is not only in this country, but in all the belligerent countries that the struggle against the imperialist government at home is welling up. There has been an open mutiny in the navy even in Germany, which the imperialists tried for decades to turn into an armed camp with the entire government machine geared to stamping out the slightest sign of popular discontent. To understand the significance of this mutiny, one has to be aware that police reprisals in Germany are unparal-

leled. But revolution is not made to order; it results from an outburst of mass indignation. Whereas it was quite easy to drive out a band of nitwits, like Romanov and Rasputin,⁶ it is immensely more difficult to fight against the organised and strong clique of German imperialists, both crowned and uncrowned. But we can and have to work hand in hand with the revolutionary class of working people in all countries. That is the path the Soviet Government has taken by making public the secret treaties and showing that the rulers of all countries are brigands. That is not propaganda by word but by deed." (*Stormy applause.*)

In conclusion the speaker dealt with the question of the peace talks⁷ and said:

"When the Germans gave an evasive reply to our demand not to transfer any troops to the Western and Italian fronts, we broke off the talks and shall resume them in a little while. And when we do tell this to the world, no German worker will remain ignorant of the fact that the peace talks had been broken off through no fault of ours. In the hypothetical case of the German working class siding with their government of imperialist plunderers and confronting us with the need to continue the war, the Russian people—who have always shed blood without a murmur, and have done the will of an oppressive government when quite ignorant of its aims and purposes—will undoubtedly throw their weight into the struggle with so much more courage and vigour when it came to fighting for socialism and freedom threatened with the bayonets of the world bourgeoisie. But we put our trust in the international solidarity of the working masses, who will surmount every obstacle and barrier in the struggle for socialism." (*Stormy applause.*)

■
*Letter to Colonel Robins*⁸

May 14, 1918

■
To Colonel Robins

Dear Mr. Robins:

I enclose the preliminary plan of our economic relations with America.⁹ This preliminary plan was elaborated in the Council of Export Trade in our Highest Council of National Economy.

I hope this preliminary can be useful for you in your conversation with the American Foreign Office and American Export Specialists.

With best thanks,

Yours truly,
Lenin

First published in 1920
in English in the book *Russian-American Relations. March 1917-March 1920. Documents and Papers*. New York, p. 204

Collected Works, Vol. 44,
p. 87

■
Answers
*to an American Journalist's Questions*¹⁰
■

I answer the five questions put to me on condition of the fulfilment of the written promise that my answers will be printed in full in over a hundred newspapers in the United States of America.

1. The governmental programme of the Soviet Government was not a reformist, but a revolutionary one. Reforms are concessions obtained from a ruling class that retains its rule. Revolution is the overthrow of the ruling class. Reformist programmes, therefore, usually consist of many items of partial significance. Our revolutionary programme consisted properly of one general item—removal of the yoke of the landowners and capitalists, the overthrow of their power and the emancipation of the working people from those exploiters. This programme we have never changed. Some partial measures aimed at the realisation of the programme have often been subjected to change; their enumeration would require a whole volume. I will only mention that there is one other general point in our governmental programme which has, perhaps, given rise to the greatest number of changes of partial measures. That point is—the suppression of the exploiters' resistance. After the Revolution of October 25 (November 7), 1917 we did not close down even the bourgeois newspapers and there was no mention of terror at all. We released not only many of Kerensky's ministers, but even Krasnov who had made war on us. It was only after the exploiters, i.e., the capitalists, had begun developing their resistance that we began to crush that resistance systematically, applying even terror. This was the proletariat's response to such actions of the bourgeoisie as the conspiracy with the capitalists of Germany, Britain,

Japan, America and France to restore the rule of the exploiters in Russia, the bribery of the Czechoslovaks with Anglo-French money, the bribery of Mannerheim, Denikin and others¹¹ with German and French money, etc. One of the latest conspiracies leading to "a change"—to put it precisely, leading to increased terror against the bourgeoisie in Petrograd—was that of the bourgeoisie, acting jointly with the Mensheviks and Socialist-Revolutionaries; their conspiracy concerned the surrender of Petrograd, the seizure of Krasnaya Gorka by officer-conspirators, the bribing by British and French capitalists of employees of the Swiss Embassy and of many Russian employees, etc.

2. The activities of our Soviet Republic in Afghanistan, India and other Moslem countries outside Russia are the same as our activities among the numerous Moslems and other non-Russian peoples inside Russia. We have made it possible, for instance, for the Bashkirian people to establish an autonomous republic within Russia, we are doing everything possible to help the independent, free development of every nationality, the growth and dissemination of literature in the native language of each of them, we are translating and propagandising our Soviet Constitution which has the misfortune to be more pleasing to more than a thousand million inhabitants of the earth who belong to colonial, dependent, oppressed, underprivileged nations than the constitutions of the West-European and American bourgeois-"democratic" states that perpetuate private property in land and capital, i.e., strengthen the oppression of the working people of their own countries and of hundreds of millions of people in the colonies of Asia, Africa, etc., by a small number of "civilised" capitalists.

3. As far as the United States and Japan are concerned, our first political objective is to repulse their shameless, criminal, predatory invasion of Russia that serves only to enrich their capitalists. We have many times made solemn proposals of peace to both these countries, but they have not even answered us and continue to make war on us, helping Denikin and Kolchak,¹² plundering Murmansk and Archangel, ruining and laying waste to, especially, Eastern Siberia, where the Russian peasants are offering heroic resistance to the capitalist bandits of Japan and the United States of America.

We have one further political and economic objective in respect of all peoples—including those of the United States and Japan—fraternal alliance with the workers and all working people of all countries without exception.

4. We have, on many occasions, given a precise, clear and written exposition of the terms upon which we agree to conclude peace with Kolchak, Denikin and Mannerheim—for instance to Bullitt¹³ who conducted negotiations with us (and with me personally in Moscow) on behalf of the United States Government, in a letter to Nansen,¹⁴ etc. It is not our fault that the governments of the United States and other countries are afraid to publish those documents in full and that they hide the truth from the people. I will mention only our basic condition; we are prepared to pay all debts to France and other countries provided there is a real peace and not peace in words alone, i.e., if it is formally signed and ratified by the governments of Great Britain, France, the United States, Japan and Italy—Denikin, Kolchak, Mannerheim and the others being mere pawns in the hands of those governments.

5. More than anything else I should like to state the following to the American public:

Compared to feudalism, capitalism was an historical advance along the road of “liberty”, “equality”, “democracy” and “civilisation”. Nevertheless capitalism was, and remains, a system of *wage-slavery*, of the enslavement of millions of working people, workers and peasants, by an insignificant minority of modern slave-owners, landowners and capitalists. Bourgeois democracy, as compared to feudalism, has changed the form of this economic slavery, has created a brilliant screen for it, but has not, and could not, change its essence. Capitalism and bourgeois democracy are wage-slavery.

The gigantic progress of technology in general, and of means of transport in particular, and the tremendous growth of capital and banks have resulted in capitalism becoming mature and overmature. It has outlived itself. It has become the most reactionary hindrance to human progress. It has become reduced to the absolute power of a handful of millionaires and multimillionaires who send whole nations into a bloodbath to decide whether the German or the Anglo-French group of plunderers is to obtain

the spoils of imperialism, power over the colonies, financial "spheres of influence" or "mandates to rule", etc.

During the war of 1914-18 tens of millions of people were killed or mutilated for that reason and for that reason alone. Knowledge of this truth is spreading with indomitable force and rapidity among the working people of all countries, the more so because the war has everywhere caused unparalleled ruin, and because interest on war debts has to be paid *everywhere*, even by the "victor" nations. What is this interest? It is a tribute of thousands of millions to the millionaire gentlemen who were kind enough to allow tens of millions of workers and peasants to kill and maim one another to settle the question of the division of profits by the capitalists.

The collapse of capitalism is inevitable. The revolutionary consciousness of the masses is everywhere growing; there are thousands of signs of this. One small sign, unimportant, but impressive to the man in the street, is the novels written by Henri Barbusse (*Le Feu*, *Clarté*) who was a peaceful, modest, law-abiding petty bourgeois, a philistine, a man in the street, when he went to the war.

The capitalists, the bourgeoisie, can at "best" put off the victory of socialism in one country or another at the cost of slaughtering further hundreds of thousands of workers and peasants. But they cannot save capitalism. The *Soviet Republic* has come to take the place of capitalism, the Republic which gives power to the working people and only to the working people, which entrusts the proletariat with the guidance of their liberation, which abolishes private property in land, factories and other means of production, because this private property is the source of the exploitation of the many by the few, the source of mass poverty, the source of predatory wars between nations, wars that enrich only the capitalists.

The victory of the world Soviet republic is certain.

A brief illustration in conclusion: the American bourgeoisie are deceiving the people by boasting of the liberty, equality and democracy of their country. But neither this nor any other bourgeoisie nor any government in the world can accept, it is afraid to accept, a contest with our government on the basis of real liberty, equality and democracy; let us suppose that an agreement ensured our government

and any other government freedom to exchange . . . pamphlets published in the name of the government in any language and containing the text of the laws of the given country, the text of its constitution, and an explanation of its superiority over the others.

Not one bourgeois government in the world would dare conclude such a peaceful, civilised, free, equal, democratic treaty with us.

Why? Because all of them, with the exception of Soviet governments, keep in power by the oppression and deception of the masses. But the great war of 1914-18 exposed the great deception.

Lenin

July 20, 1919

Pravda No. 162,
July 25, 1919

Collected Works, Vol. 29,
pp. 515-19

■
To the American Workers
■

Comrades,

About a year ago, in my letter to the American workers¹⁵ (dated August 20th, 1918) I exposed to you the situation in Soviet Russia and the problems facing the latter. That was before the German revolution. The events which since took place in the world's history proved how right the Bolsheviks were in their estimation of the imperialist war of 1914-18 in general and of the Entente imperialism in particular. As for the Soviet power it has become familiar and dear to the minds and hearts of the working masses of the whole world. Everywhere the working people, in spite of the influence of the old leaders with their chauvinism and opportunism penetrating them through and through, become aware of the rottenness of the bourgeois parliaments and of the necessity of the Soviet power, the power of the working people, the dictatorship of the proletariat, for the sake of the emancipation of humanity from the yoke of capital. And Soviet power will win in the whole world, however furiously, however frantically the bourgeoisie of all countries rages and storms. The bourgeoisie inundates Russia with blood, waging war upon us and inciting against us the counter-revolutionaries, those who wish the yoke of capital to be restored. The bourgeoisie inflicts upon the working masses of Russia unprecedented sufferings through the blockade and through the help it gives to counter-revolution, but we have already defeated Kolchak and we are carrying on the war against Denikin with the firm assurance of our coming victory.

N. Lenin

September 23, 1919

* * *

I am often asked whether those American opponents of the war against Russia—not only workers, but mainly bourgeois—are right who expect from us, after peace is concluded, not only resumption of trade relations, but also the possibility of receiving concessions in Russia. I repeat once more that they are right. A durable peace would be such a relief to the working people of Russia that they would undoubtedly agree to certain concessions being granted. The granting of concessions under reasonable terms is desirable also for us, as one of the means of attracting into Russia, during the period of the coexistence side by side of socialist and capitalist states, the technical help of the countries which are more advanced in this respect.

N. Lenin

September 23, 1919

Published in English on
December 27, 1919 in the
magazine *Soviet Russia*
No. 30

Collected Works, Vol. 30,
pp. 38-39

■
*Answers to Questions Put by a CHICAGO DAILY
NEWS Correspondent*

October 5, 1919
■

I beg to apologise for my bad English. I am glad to answer your few questions.

1. What is the present policy of the Soviet Government on the question of peace?
2. What, in general outline, are the peace terms put forward by Soviet Russia?

Our peace policy is the former, that is, we have accepted the peace proposition of Mr. Bullitt.¹⁶ We have never changed our peace conditions (question 2), which are formulated with Mr. Bullitt.

We have many times officially proposed peace to the Entente before coming of Mr. Bullitt.

3. Is the Soviet Government prepared to guarantee absolute non-intervention in the internal affairs of foreign states?

We are willing to guarantee it.

4. Is the Soviet Government prepared to prove that it represents the majority of the Russian people?

Yes, the Soviet Government is the most democratic government of all governments in the world. We are willing to prove it.

5. What is the position of the Soviet Government in respect of an economic understanding with America?

We are decidedly for an economic understanding with America—with all countries, but *especially* with America.

If necessary we can give you the full text of our peace conditions as formulated by our government with Mr. Bullitt.

Wl. Oulianoff (N. Lenin)

Published in the *Chicago Daily News*
No. 257, October 27, 1919

Collected Works, Vol. 30,
pp. 50-51

■ *Draft Resolution Presented to the Eighth
All-Russia Conference of the R.C.P.(B.)
on the Question of Foreign Policy*¹⁷ ■

The Russian Socialist Federative Soviet Republic wishes to live in peace with all peoples and devote all its efforts to internal development so as to put production, transport and government affairs in order on the basis of the Soviet system; this has so far been prevented by the intervention of the Entente and the starvation blockade.

The workers' and peasants' government has made repeated peace proposals to the Entente powers—the message from the People's Commissariat of Foreign Affairs to the American representative, Mr. Poole, on August 5, 1918; to President Wilson on October 24, 1918; to all Entente governments through representatives of neutral countries on November 3, 1918; a message from the Sixth All-Russia Congress of Soviets on November 7, 1918; Litvinov's Note in Stockholm to all Entente representatives on December 23, 1918; then there were the messages of January 12, January 17 and February 4, 1919, and the draft treaty drawn up jointly with Bullitt on March 12, 1919; and a message through Nansen on May 7, 1919.

The Seventh Congress of Soviets fully approves these many steps taken by the Council of People's Commissars and the People's Commissariat of Foreign Affairs, once more confirms its lasting desire for peace and again proposes to the Entente powers, Britain, France, the United States of America, Italy and Japan, individually and collectively, to begin immediately negotiations on peace; the Congress instructs the All-Russia Central Executive Committee, the

Council of People's Commissars and the People's Commissariat of Foreign Affairs to continue this peace policy systematically (or: to continue this peace policy systematically, taking all appropriate measures to ensure its success).

Written on December 2, 1919

First published in 1932

Collected Works, Vol. 30,
pp. 191-92

■
*From the Report
of the All-Russia Central Executive Committee
and the Council of People's Commissars
to the Seventh All-Russia Congress of Soviets*

December 5, 1919

■

Comrades, from what I have said about our international successes it follows—and, I think, it is not necessary to dwell at length on this—that we must repeat our peace proposal in a manner that is calm and business-like to the maximum degree. We must do this because it is a proposal we have made many times, and each time we gained something in the eyes of every educated man, even if he was our enemy, that made him blush with shame. That was the case when Bullitt came here, was received by Comrade Chicherin, talked with him and with me, and when we concluded a preliminary agreement on peace in the course of a few hours. And he assured us (those gentlemen like to boast) that America is everything, and who would worry about France in face of America's strength? But when we signed the agreement the French and British ministers did this. (*Lenin makes an expressive gesture with his foot. Laughter.*) Bullitt was left with a useless piece of paper and he was told, "Who would have thought you were naïve and foolish enough to believe in the democracy of Britain and France?" (*Applause.*) The result is that in the same issue I read the full text of the agreement with Bullitt in French—and it was published in all the British and American newspapers. The result is that they are showing themselves to the whole world to be either rogues or infants—let them take their choice! (*Applause.*) All the sympathies even of the petty bourgeoisie, even of those bourgeois who have any sort of an education and who recall how they once fought their own tsars and kings, are on our side, because we signed the hardest possible peace terms in a business-like manner and said, "The price of the blood of our workers and soldiers is too high

for us; we shall pay you businessmen a heavy tribute as the price of peace; we consent to a heavy tribute to preserve the lives of our workers and peasants." That is why I think there is no reason for us to dwell long on this, and in conclusion I shall read a draft resolution¹⁸ that will express, in the name of the Congress of Soviets, our unwavering desire to pursue a policy of peace. (*Applause.*)

Short newspaper report published in
Pravda No. 274, December 6, 1919

Collected Works, Vol. 30,
pp. 221-22

■
*In Reply to Questions Put by Karl Wiegand,
Berlin Correspondent
of Universal Service*¹⁹
■

1. Do we intend to attack Poland and Rumania?

No. We have declared most emphatically and officially, in the name of the Council of People's Commissars and the All-Russia Central Executive Committee, our peaceful intentions. It is very much to be regretted that the French capitalist government is instigating Poland (and presumably Rumania, too) to attack us. This is even mentioned by a number of American radios from Lyons.

2. What are our plans in Asia?

They are the same as in Europe: peaceful coexistence with all peoples; with the workers and peasants of all nations awakening to a new life—a life without exploiters, without landowners, without capitalists, without merchants. The imperialist war of 1914-18, the war of the capitalists of the Anglo-French (and Russian) group against the German-Austrian capitalist group for the partition of the world, has awakened Asia and has strengthened there, as everywhere else, the urge towards freedom, towards peaceful labour and against possible future wars.

3. What would be the basis of peace with America?

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.

4. What are the obstacles to such a peace?

None on our part; imperialism on the part of the American (and of any other) capitalists.

5. What are our views of the deportation of Russian revolutionaries from America?

We have accepted them. We are not afraid of revolutionaries here in this country. As a matter of fact, we are not afraid of anybody, and if America is afraid of a few more hundred or thousand of its citizens, we are ready to begin negotiations with a view to receiving any citizens whom America thinks dangerous (with the exception of criminals, of course).

6. What possibilities are there of an economic alliance between Russia and Germany?

Unfortunately, they are not great. The Scheidemanns are bad allies. We stand for an alliance with all countries without exception.

7. What are our views upon the allied demand for the extradition of war criminals?

If we are to speak seriously on this matter of war guilt, the guilty ones are the capitalists of all countries. Hand over to us all your landed proprietors owning more than a hundred hectares and capitalists having a capital of more than 100,000 francs, and we shall educate them to useful labour and make them break with the shameful, base and bloody role of exploiters and instigators of wars for the partition of colonies. Wars will then soon become absolutely impossible.

8. What would be the influence of peace with Russia upon the economic conditions in Europe?

Exchange of machinery for grain, flax and other raw materials—I ask, can this be disadvantageous for Europe? Clearly, it cannot be anything but beneficial.

9. What is our opinion regarding the future development of the Soviets as a world force?

The future belongs to the Soviet system all the world over. The facts have proved it. One has only to count by quarterly periods, say, the growth in the number of pamphlets, books, leaflets and newspapers standing for or sympathising with the Soviets published in any country. It cannot be otherwise. Once the workers in the cities, the workers, landless peasants and the handicraftsmen in the villages as well as the small peasants (i.e., those who do

not exploit hired labour)—once this enormous majority of working people have understood that the Soviet system gives all power into their hands, releasing them from the yoke of landlords and capitalists—how could one prevent the victory of the Soviet system all over the world? I, for one, do not know of any means of preventing it.

10. Has Russia still to fear counter-revolution from without?

Unfortunately, it has, for the capitalists are stupid, greedy people. They have made a number of such stupid, greedy attempts at intervention and one has to fear repetitions until the workers and peasants of all countries thoroughly *re-educate* their own capitalists.

11. Is Russia ready to enter into business relations with America?

Of course she is ready to do so, and with all other countries. Peace with Estonia, to whom we have conceded a great deal, has proved our readiness, for the sake of business relations, to give even industrial concessions on certain conditions.

February 18, 1920

V. Ulyanov (N. Lenin)

Published on February 21, 1920 in the
New York Evening Journal
No. 12671

Collected Works, Vol. 30,
pp. 365-67

■ *In Reply to Questions*
*Put by a Correspondent of the DAILY EXPRESS*²⁰
■

1. What is our attitude towards the raising of the blockade?

We consider it a big step forward. The possibility is being opened for us to pass from a war that was forced on us by the capitalist governments of the Entente to peaceful reconstruction. This is of the greatest importance to us. Straining all our efforts towards the restoration of the economic life of the country, ruined first by the war between capitalists over the Dardanelles and the colonies, then by the war of the capitalists of the Entente and Russia against the workers of Russia, we are now, among other measures, working out, with the aid of a number of scientists and experts, a plan of electrification of the whole country. This plan is to be realised over a period of many years. The electrification will rejuvenate Russia. Electrification based on the Soviet system will mean the complete success of the foundations of communism in our country—foundations of a cultured life, without exploiters, without capitalists, without landlords, without merchants.

The raising of the blockade will help to accomplish Russia's electrification.

2. What influence will the Allies' decision to cease offensive action have on the offensive actions of the Soviet power?

The Allies, together with their allies and their lackeys—Kolchak, Denikin, and the capitalists of the surrounding countries—have attacked us. We did not attack anyone. We concluded peace with Estonia even at the cost of material sacrifices.

We are impatiently waiting to see the Allies' "decision" supported by their *deeds*, but the story of the Versailles

Peace and of its consequences, unfortunately, indicates that in most cases the Allies' words disagree with their deeds and the decisions remain scraps of paper.

3. Is the present *status quo* satisfactory from the standpoint of Soviet policy?

Yes, because every *status quo* in politics is a transition from old forms to new ones. The present *status quo* is, from many points of view, a transition from war to peace. Such a change is desirable to us for this reason, and insofar do we consider the *status quo* satisfactory.

4. What are our aims in connection with the cessation of hostilities on the part of the Allies?

Our aims, as already mentioned, are peaceful economic building. A detailed plan of it, on the basis of electrification, is being at present worked out by a committee of scientists and technicians—or rather, by a number of committees—in accordance with the resolution of the February (1920) session of the All-Russia Central Executive Committee.

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Published on February 23, 1920
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Collected Works, Vol. 30,
pp. 368-69

■
Interview with Lincoln Eyre,
Correspondent of the American Newspaper
*THE WORLD*²¹
■

Allies Playing "Chess Game"

Of the Allies' reported decision to lift the blockade²² Lenin said:

It is hard to see sincerity behind so vague a proposal, coupled as it seems to be with preparations to attack us afresh through Poland. At first glance the Supreme Council's proposition looks plausible enough—the resumption of commercial relations through the medium of the Russian co-operatives. But the co-operatives do not any longer exist, having been linked up with our Soviet distribution organs. Therefore what is meant when the Allies talk of dealing with the co-operatives? Certainly it is not clear.

Therefore I say that closer examination convinces us that this Paris decision is simply a move in the Allied chess game the motives of which are still obscure.

Lenin paused a moment, then added with a broad grin:

Far obscurer, for instance, than Marshal Foch's intended visit to Warsaw.

I asked if he deemed the probability of a Polish offensive serious (it must be recalled that in Russia the talk was of a drive by the Poles against the Bolsheviks, not vice versa).

Beyond doubt, Lenin replied. Clemenceau and Foch are very, very serious gentlemen, and the one originated and the other is going to carry out this offensive scheme. It is a grave menace, of course, but we have faced graver ones. It does not cause us fear so much as disappointment that the Allies should still pursue the impossible. For a Polish offensive can no more settle the Russian problem for them

than did Kolchak's and Denikin's. Poland has many troubles of her own, remember. And it is obvious that she can get no help from any of her neighbours, including Rumania.

Yet peace seems nearer than before, I suggested.

Yes, that's true. If peace is a corollary of trade with us, the Allies cannot avoid it much longer. I have heard that Millerand, Clemenceau's successor, expresses willingness to envisage commercial relations with the Russian people. Perhaps this heralds a change of front among the French capitalists. But Churchill is still strong in England, and Lloyd George, who probably wants to do business with us, dare not risk an open rupture with the political and financial interests supporting the Churchill policy.

United States Oppresses Socialists

And America?

It is hard to see clearly what is going on there. Your bankers seem to fear us more than ever. At any rate, your Government is instituting more violently repressive measures not only against the Socialists but against the working class in general than any other Government, even the reactionary French. Apparently it is persecuting foreigners. And yet, what would America be without her foreign workers? They are an absolute necessity to your economic development.

Still, some American manufacturers appear to have begun to realise that making money in Russia is wiser than making war against Russia, which is a good sign. We shall need American manufactures—locomotives, automobiles, etc.—more than those of any other country.

And your peace terms?

It is idle to talk further about them, Lenin returned emphatically. All the world knows that we are prepared to make peace on terms the fairness of which even the most imperialistic capitalists could not dispute. We have reiterated and reiterated our desire for peace, our need for

peace and our readiness to give foreign capital the most generous concessions and guarantees. But we do not propose to be strangled to death for the sake of peace.

I know of no reason why a socialist state like ours cannot do business indefinitely with capitalist countries. We don't mind taking the capitalist locomotives and farming machinery, so why should they mind taking our socialist wheat, flax and platinum. Socialist grain tastes the same as any other grain, does it not? Of course, they will have to have business relations with the dreadful Bolsheviks, that is, the Soviet Government. But it should not be harder for American steel manufacturers, for instance, to deal with the Soviets than it was for them to deal with Entente governments in their war-time munition deals.

Europe Dependent on Russia

That is why this talk of reopening trade with Russia through co-operatives seems to us insincere, or at least, obscure—a move in a game of chess rather than a frank, straightforward proposition that would be immediately grasped and acted upon. Moreover, if the Supreme Council really means to lift the blockade, why doesn't it tell us of its intentions? We are without official word from Paris. What little we know is derived from newspaper dispatches picked up by our wireless. . . .

The statesmen of the Entente and the United States do not seem to understand that Russia's present economic distress is simply a part of the world's economic distress. Until the economic problem is faced from a world standpoint and not merely from the standpoint of certain nations or a group of nations, a solution is impossible. Without Russia, Europe cannot get on her feet. And with Europe prostrate, America's position becomes critical. What good is America's wealth if she cannot buy with it that which she needs? America cannot eat or wear the gold she has accumulated, can she? She can't trade profitably, that is on a basis that will be of real value to her, with Europe until Europe is able to give her the things she wants in exchange for that which she has to give. And Europe cannot give her those things until she is on her feet economically.

World Needs Russian Goods

In Russia we have wheat, flax, platinum, potash and many minerals of which the whole world stands in desperate need. The world must come to us for them in the end, Bolshevism or no Bolshevism. There are signs that a realisation of this truth is gradually awakening. But meanwhile not only Russia but all Europe is going to pieces, and the Supreme Council still indulges in tergiversation. Russia can be saved from utter ruin and Europe too, but it must be done soon and quickly. And the Supreme Council is so slow, so very slow. In fact, it has already been dissolved, I believe, in favour of a Council of Ambassadors, leaving nothing settled and with only a League of Nations²³ which is non-existent, still-born, to take its place. How can the League of Nations possibly come to life without the United States to give it backbone!

I inquired as to whether the Soviet Government was satisfied with the military situation.

Very much so, Lenin replied promptly. The only symptoms of further military aggression against us are those I spoke of in Poland. If Poland embarks on such an adventure, there will be more suffering on both sides, more lives needlessly sacrificed. But even Foch could not give the Poles victory. They could not defeat our Red Army even if Churchill himself fought with them.

Here Lenin threw back his head and laughed grimly. Then he went on in a graver vein:

We can be crushed, of course, by any one of the big Allied powers if they can send their own armies against us. But that they dare not do. The extraordinary paradox is that weak as Russia is compared with the Allies' boundless resources, she has not only been able to shatter every armed force, including British, American and French troops that they have managed to send against her, but to win diplomatic and moral victories as well over the cordon sanitaire countries. Finland refused to fight against us. We have peace with Estonia, and peace with Serbia* and

* This was an error in the newspaper text. Serbia was not at war with Soviet Russia. Apparently Lenin spoke of Latvia.—*Ed.*

Lithuania is at hand. Despite material inducements offered to and sinister threats made against these small countries by the Entente, they preferred to establish pacific relations with us.

Internal Situation Hopeful

This assuredly demonstrates the tremendous moral force we hold. The Baltic states, our nearest neighbours, appreciate that we alone have no designs against their independence and well-being.

And Russia's internal situation?

It is critical but hopeful. With spring the food shortage will be overcome to the extent at least of saving the cities from famine. There will be sufficient fuel then too. The reconstruction period is under way, thanks to the Red Army's stupendous performances. Now parts of that army are transformed into armies of labour, an extraordinary phenomenon only possible in a country struggling toward a high ideal. Certainly it could not be done in capitalist countries. We have sacrificed everything to victory over our armed antagonists in the past; and now we shall turn all our strength to economic rehabilitation. It will take years, but we shall win out in the end.

When do you think communism will be complete in Russia? The question was a poser, I thought, but Lenin replied immediately.

We mean to electrify our entire industrial system through power stations in the Urals and elsewhere. Our engineers tell us it will take ten years. When the electrification is accomplished it will be the first important stage on the road to the communist organisation of public economic life. All our industries will receive their motive power from a common source, capable of supplying them all adequately. This will eliminate wasteful competition in the quest of fuel, and place manufacturing enterprise on a sound economic footing, without which we cannot hope to achieve a full measure of interchange of essential products in accordance with communist principles.

Incidentally, in three years we expect to have 50,000,000 incandescent lamps burning in Russia. There are 70,000,000 in the United States, I believe, but in a land where electricity is in its infancy more than two-thirds of that number is a very high figure to achieve. Electrification is to my mind the most momentous of the great tasks that confront us.

Scores Socialist Leaders

At the close of our talk Lenin delivered himself, not for publication, however, of some cutting criticism of certain Socialist leaders in Europe and America which revealed his lack of faith in the ability or even the desire of these gentry to promote world revolution effectively. He evidently feels that Bolshevism will come to pass in spite of, rather than because of, the "official" chieftains of socialism.

The World No. 21368,
February 21, 1920

Collected Works, Vol. 42,
pp. 175-80

Our Foreign and Domestic Position and the Tasks of the Party

FROM A SPEECH DELIVERED TO THE MOSCOW
GUBERNIA CONFERENCE OF THE R.C.P.(B.)

November 21, 1920

Thus a glance at our international position as a whole will show that we have achieved tremendous successes and have won, not only a breathing-space but something much more significant. By a breathing-space we understand a brief period during which the imperialist powers have had many opportunities to renew in greater force the war against us. Today, too, we do not underestimate the danger and do not deny the possibility of future military intervention by the capitalist countries. It is essential for us to maintain our military preparedness. However, if we cast a glance at the conditions in which we defeated all attempts made by the Russian counter-revolutionaries and achieved a formal peace with all the Western states, it will be clear that we have something more than a breathing-space: we have entered a new period, in which we have won the right to our fundamental international existence in the network of capitalist states. Domestic conditions have not allowed a single powerful capitalist state to hurl its army against Russia; this has been due to the revolution having matured within such countries, preventing them from overcoming us as quickly as they might have done. There were British, French and Japanese armies on Russian territory for three years. There can be no doubt that the most insignificant concentration of forces by these three powers would have been quite enough to win a victory over us in a few months, if not in a few weeks. We were able to contain that attack only on account of the demoralisation among the French troops and the unrest that set in among the British and Japanese. We have made use of this divergence of imperialist interests all the time. We defeated the

interventionists only because their interests divided them, thereby enhancing our strength and unity. This gave us a breathing-space and rendered impossible the complete victory of German imperialism at the time of the Peace of Brest-Litovsk.

These dissensions have become more aggravated of late, especially because of the project of an agreement on concessions with a group of American capitalist sharks, with the toughest of them, headed by a multimillionaire who expects to form a group of multimillionaires. We know that almost all reports from the Far East bear witness to the extreme resentment felt in Japan over the conclusion of this agreement, although so far there has been no agreement, but only the draft of one. Japanese public opinion, however, is already seething, and today I read a communication which said that Japan is accusing Soviet Russia of wanting to set Japan against America.

We have correctly appraised the intensity of the imperialist rivalry and have told ourselves that we must make systematic use of the dissension between them so as to hamper their struggle against us. Political dissension is already apparent in the relations between Britain and France. Today we can speak, not merely of a breathing-space, but of a real chance of a new and lengthy period of development. Until now we have actually had no basis in the international sense. We now have this basis, the reason being the attitude of the smaller powers that are completely dependent on the Great Powers both in the military and in the economic sense. It now appears that, despite the pressure brought to bear by France, Poland has signed a peace with us. The Polish capitalists have a hate of Soviet power; they crush the most ordinary strikes with unparalleled ferocity. They want war with Soviet Russia more than anything else, yet they prefer to make peace with us rather than carry out the conditions set by the Entente. We see that the imperialist powers dominate the whole world although they comprise an insignificant part of the world's population. The fact that a country has appeared that for three years has resisted world imperialism has considerably changed the international situation; the minor powers—and they form the majority of the world's population—are therefore all inclined to make peace with us.

The entry of the socialist country into trade relations with capitalist countries is a most important factor ensuring our existence in such a complex and absolutely exceptional situation.

I have had occasion to observe a certain Spargo, an American social-chauvinist close to our Right Socialist-Revolutionaries and Mensheviks, one of the leaders of the Second International and member of the American Socialist Party, a kind of American Alexinsky,²⁴ and author of a number of anti-Bolshevik books, who has reproached us—and has quoted the fact as evidence of the complete collapse of communism—for speaking of transactions with capitalist powers. He has written that he cannot imagine better proof of the complete collapse of communism and the break-down of its programme. I think that anybody who has given thought to the matter will say the reverse. No better proof of the Russian Soviet Republic's material and moral victory over the capitalists of the whole world can be found than the fact that the powers that took up arms against us because of our terror and our entire system have been compelled, against their will, to enter into trade relations with us in the knowledge that by so doing they are strengthening us. This might have been advanced as proof of the collapse of communism only if we had promised, with the forces of Russia alone, to transform the whole world, or had dreamed of doing so. However, we have never harboured such crazy ideas and have always said that our revolution will be victorious when it is supported by the workers of all lands. In fact, they went half-way in their support, for they weakened the hand raised against us, yet in doing so they were helping us.

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Present Work*. Published by the
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pp. 412-14

■

*From a Speech Delivered at a Meeting
of Activists of the Moscow Organisation
of the R.C.P.(B.)*

December 6, 1920

■

I now go over to the economics. When we were speaking of Germany we came up to the question of economics. Germany cannot exist from the economic standpoint following the Peace of Versailles; neither can all the defeated countries, such as Austria-Hungary in her former boundaries, for although parts of that country now belong to the victor states, she cannot exist under the Treaty of Versailles. These countries form, in Central Europe, a vast group with enormous economic and technical might. From the economic standpoint they are all essential to the restoration of the world economy. If you carefully read and re-read the Decree on Concessions of November 23,²⁵ you will find that we stress the significance of the world economy, and we do so intentionally. That is undoubtedly correct. For the world economy to be restored, Russian raw materials must be utilised. You cannot get along without them—that is economically true. It is admitted even by a bourgeois of the first water, a student of economics, who regards things from a purely bourgeois standpoint. That man is Keynes, author of *The Economic Consequences of the Peace*. Vanderlip, who has travelled all over Europe as a financial magnate, also admits that the world economy cannot be restored because it appears that there is very little raw material available in the world, it having been dissipated in the war. He says that Russia must be relied on. And Russia now comes forward and declares to the world: we undertake to restore the international economy—here is our plan. That is sound economics. During this period Soviet government has grown stronger; not only has it grown stronger, but it has advanced a plan for the

restoration of the entire world economy. The rehabilitation of the international economy by means of a plan of electrification is scientifically sound. With our plan we shall most certainly attract the sympathy, not only of all the workers but of sensible capitalists as well, regardless of the fact that in their eyes we are "those terrible Bolshevik terrorists", and so forth. Our economic plan is therefore correct; when they read this plan, all the petty-bourgeois democrats will swing over towards us, for while the imperialists have already fallen out among themselves, here is a plan to which engineers and economists can offer no objection. We are entering the field of economics and are offering the world a positive programme of construction; we are opening up prospects based on economic considerations, prospects which Russia regards not as a selfish plan to destroy the economies of other lands, as was the rule in the past, but as a way to restore those economies in the interests of the whole world.

We are shifting the question to the anti-capitalist plane. We say that we undertake to build the whole world on a rational economic foundation; there can be no doubt that this idea is a correct one. There can be no doubt that if we set to work properly, with modern machinery and the help of science, the whole world economy can be restored at once.

We are conducting a kind of industrial propaganda when we say to the master class: "You capitalists are useless; while you are going to rack and ruin, we are building in our own way; so don't you think, gentlemen, it is time to come to terms with us?" To which all the capitalists of the world will have to reply, though grudgingly: "Yes, perhaps it is. Let us sign a trade agreement."

The British have already made a draft and sent it to us. It is under discussion. New times are setting in. Their war schemes have miscarried and they now have to fight in the economic field. We fully understand that. We never imagined that with the fighting over and the advent of peace, the capitalist wolf would lie down with the socialist lamb. No, we did not. Yet the fact that you have to fight us in the economic field is a tremendous step forward. We have presented you with a world programme by re-

garding concessions from the standpoint of the world economy. That is indisputable from the viewpoint of economics. No engineer or agronomist who has anything to do with the national economy will deny that. Many capitalists say there cannot be a stable system of capitalist states without Russia. Yet we have advanced such a programme in the capacity of builders of a world economy based on a different plan. That is of tremendous propaganda value. Even if they do not sign a single concession—which I regard as quite possible—even if the sole outcome of all this talk of concessions will be a certain number of Party meetings and decrees, without a single concession being granted, we shall still have gained something. Besides advancing a plan of economic reconstruction, we are winning over all states that have been ruined by the war. At the congress of the Third, Communist International I said that the whole world is divided into oppressed and oppressor nations. The oppressed nations constitute not less than seventy per cent of the population of the earth. To these the Peace of Versailles has added another hundred or hundred and fifty million people.

We now stand, not only as representatives of the proletarians of all countries but as representatives of the oppressed peoples as well. A journal of the Communist International recently appeared under the title of *Narody Vostoka*. It carries the following slogan issued by the Communist International for the peoples of the East: "Workers of all countries and all oppressed peoples, unite!" "When did the Executive Committee give orders for slogans to be modified?" one of the comrades asked. Indeed, I do not remember that it ever did. Of course, the modification is wrong from the standpoint of the *Communist Manifesto*, but then the *Communist Manifesto* was written under entirely different conditions. From the point of view of present-day politics, however, the change is correct. Relations have become tense. All Germany is seething; so is all of Asia. You have read how the revolutionary movement is developing in India. In China there is a fierce hatred of the Japanese, and also of the Americans. In Germany there is such seething hatred of the Entente as can only be understood by those who have seen the hatred of the German workers for their own capitalists. As a result, they have

made Russia the immediate representative of the entire mass of the oppressed population of the earth; the events are teaching the peoples to regard Russia as a centre of attraction. A Menshevik newspaper in Georgia recently wrote: "There are two forces in the world: the Entente and Soviet Russia." What are the Mensheviks? They are people who trim their sails to the wind. When we were weak internationally, they cried, "Down with the Bolsheviks!" When we began to grow stronger, they cried, "We are neutral!" Now that we have beaten off the enemies, they say, "Yes, there are two forces."

In the concessions decree we come forward, on behalf of all humanity, with an economically irreproachable programme for the restoration of the world's economic forces by utilising all raw materials, wherever they are to be found. What we consider important is that there should be no starvation anywhere. You capitalists cannot eliminate it; we can. We are speaking for seventy per cent of the population of the earth. This is sure to exert an influence. Whatever comes of the project, no exception can be taken to it from the angle of economics. The economic aspect of concessions is important, regardless of whether they are signed or not.

As you see, I have been obliged to make a rather long introduction and to demonstrate the advantages of concessions. Of course, concessions are important to us also as a means of obtaining commodities. That is unquestionably true, but the chief thing is the political aspect. By the time the Congress of Soviets meets you will receive a book of six hundred pages—the plan for the electrification of Russia. This plan has been devised by the leading agronomists and engineers. We cannot expedite its realisation without the help of foreign capital and means of production. But if we want assistance, we must pay for it. So far, we have been fighting the capitalists, and they said that they would either strangle us or compel us to pay up twenty thousand millions. However they are in no position to strangle us, and we shall not pay the debts. For the time being we are enjoying a certain respite. As long as we are in need of economic assistance we are willing to pay you—that is the way we put the matter, and any other way would be economically unsound. Russia is in a

state of industrial ruin; she is ten times or more worse off than before the war. Had we been told three years ago that we would be fighting the entire capitalist world for three years, we would not have believed it. But now we shall be told that to restore the economy, with only one-tenth of the pre-war national wealth, is a still more difficult task. And indeed it is more difficult than fighting. We could fight with the help of the enthusiasm of the working-class masses and the peasants, who were defending themselves against the landowners. At present it is not a question of defence against the landowners, but of restoring economic life along lines the peasants are not accustomed to. Here victory will not depend on enthusiasm, dash, or self-sacrifice, but on day-by-day, monotonous, petty and workaday effort. That is undoubtedly a more difficult matter. Where are we to procure the means of production we need? To attract the Americans, we must pay: they are men of business. And what are we to pay with? With gold? But we cannot throw gold about. We have little gold left. We have too little even to cover the programme of electrification. The engineer who drew up the programme has estimated that we need at least a thousand and one hundred million rubles of gold to carry it out. We do not have such a stock of gold. Neither can we pay in raw materials, because we have not yet fed all our own people. When, in the Council of People's Commissars, the question arises of giving 100,000 poods of grain to the Italians, the People's Commissar for Food gets up and objects. We are bargaining for every trainload of grain. Without grain we cannot develop foreign trade. What then shall we give? Rubbish? They have enough rubbish of their own. They say, let us trade in grain; but we cannot give them grain. We therefore propose to solve the problem by means of concessions.

I pass to the next point. Concessions create new dangers. I shall mention what I said at the beginning of my speech, namely, that an outcry is going up from the rank and file, from the working-class masses: "Don't yield to the capitalists; they are clever and crafty." It is good to hear that, because it is a sign of the development of that vast mass which will fight the capitalists tooth and nail. There are some sound ideas in the articles of Comrade

Stepanov, which he planned on pedagogical lines (first set forth all the arguments against concessions, and then say that they must be accepted; but certain readers, before they get to the good part, may stop reading, convinced that concessions are unnecessary); but when he says that we must not give concessions to Britain because that will mean some Lockhart coming here, I cannot agree. We coped with him at a time when the Cheka was still in its infancy, not as effective as it is now. If we cannot catch spies after three years of war, then all that can be said is that such people should not undertake to run the state. We are solving far more difficult problems. For instance, there are at present 300,000 bourgeois in the Crimea. These are a source of future profiteering, espionage and every kind of aid to the capitalists. However, we are not afraid of them. We say that we shall take and distribute them, make them submit, and assimilate them.

To say after this that foreigners who will be attached to the various concessions will be a danger to us, or that we shall not be able to keep an eye on them, is ridiculous. Why, then, should we have started the whole business? Why, then, should we have undertaken to run the state? The task here is purely one of organisation, and it is not worth dwelling on at length.

It would, of course, be a great mistake to think that concessions imply peace. Nothing of the kind. Concessions are nothing but a new form of warfare. Europe waged war on us, and now the war is shifting to a new sphere. Previously, the war was conducted in a field in which the imperialists were infinitely stronger than we were—the military field. If you count the number of cannon and machine-guns they have and the number we have, the number of soldiers their governments can mobilise and the number our government can mobilise, then we certainly ought to have been crushed in a fortnight. Nevertheless, we held our own in this field, and we undertake to continue the fight and are going over to an economic war. We definitely stipulate that next to a concession area, a concession square of territory, there will be our square, and then again their square; we shall learn from them how to organise model enterprises by placing what is ours next to theirs. If we are incapable of doing that, there

is no use talking about anything. Operating up-to-date equipment nowadays is no easy matter, and we have to learn to do so, learn it in practice. That is something that no school, university or course will teach you. That is why we are granting concessions on the chequer-board system. Come and learn on the job.

We shall get a tremendous economic gain from concessions. Of course, when their dwelling areas are created they will bring capitalist customs along with them and will try to demoralise the peasantry. We must be on the alert and exercise our communist counter-influence at every step. That too is a kind of war, a duel between two methods, two political and economic systems—the communist and the capitalist. We shall prove that we are the stronger. We are told: “Very good, you have held your own on the external front; well, start construction, go ahead and build, and we shall see who wins...” 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. We have no machinery; the war has impoverished us and deprived Russia of her economic resources. Yet we do not fear this duel, because it will be advantageous to us in all respects.

That, too, will be a war in which we will not yield an inch. This war will be to our advantage in every respect; the transition from the old war to this new one will also be of advantage, to say nothing of the fact that there is a certain indirect guarantee of peace. At the meeting which was so poorly reported in *Pravda*, I said that we had passed from war to peace, but that we had not forgotten that war will return. While capitalism and socialism exist side by side, they cannot live in peace: one or the other will ultimately triumph—the last obsequies will be observed either for the Soviet Republic or for world capitalism. This is some respite from war. The capitalists will seek pretexts for going to war. If they accept our proposal and agree to concessions, that will be harder for them. On the one hand, we shall have the best conditions

in the event of war; on the other hand, those who want to go to war will not agree to take concessions. The existence of concessions is an economic and political argument against war. States that might go to war with us will not be able to do so if they take concessions. This will bind them. We set such a high value by this that we shall not be afraid to pay, the more so that we shall be paying from the means of production that we cannot develop. For Kamchatka we shall pay in terms of 100,000 poods of oil, taking only two per cent for ourselves. If we do not pay up we shall not get even two poods. This is an exorbitant price, but while capitalism exists we cannot expect a fair price from it. Yet the advantages are beyond doubt. From the angle of the danger of a collision between capitalism and Bolshevism, it can be said that concessions are a continuation of the war, but in a different sphere. Each step of the enemy will have to be watched. Every means of administration, supervision, influence and action will be required. And that is also warfare. We have fought a much bigger war; in this war we shall mobilise even larger numbers of people than in the preceding. In this war all working people will be mobilised to a man. They will be told and given to understand: "If capitalism does this or that, you workers and peasants who have overthrown the capitalists must do no less. You must learn!"

I am convinced that the Soviets will overtake and outstrip the capitalists and that our gain will not be a purely economic one. We shall get the miserable two per cent—very little indeed, yet it is something. But then we shall be getting knowledge and training; no school or university is worth anything without practical knowledge. You will see from the map appended to the pamphlet Comrade Milyutin will show you that we are granting concessions principally in the outlying regions. In European Russia there are 70,000,000 dessiatines of northern forest land. About 17,000,000 dessiatines are being set aside for concessions. Our timber enterprises are mapped out checkerwise: these forests are in West Siberia and in the Far North. We have nothing to lose. The principal enterprises are located in West Siberia, whose wealth is immense. We cannot develop a hundredth part of it in ten years. However, with the help of foreign capitalists, by letting

them have, say, a single mine, we shall be able to work our own mines. In granting concessions, we do the choosing of the locations.

How are the concessions to be organised as regards supervision? They will try to demoralise our peasantry, our masses. A small master by his very nature, the peasant is inclined to freedom of trade, something we consider criminal. That is a matter for the state to combat. Our task here is to contrapose the socialist system of economy to the capitalist system. That, too, will be a war in which we shall have to fight a decisive battle. We are suffering from a tremendous crop failure, lack of fodder and loss of livestock, yet at the same time vast areas of land are uncultivated. In a few days a decree will be issued providing that every effort be exerted to achieve the largest possible sowing of crops and the greatest possible improvement of agriculture.

Next, we have a million dessiatines of virgin soil which we cannot bring under the plough because we have not enough draught animals and implements, whereas with tractors this land can be ploughed to any depth. It is therefore to our advantage to let out this land on lease. Even if we surrender half of the produce, or even three-quarters, we shall be the gainers. That is the policy we are guided by, and I can say that our actions must be guided, not only by economic considerations and the trend of the world economy, but also by profound political considerations. Any other approach to the matter would be short-sighted. If it is a question of whether concessions are economically advantageous or disadvantageous, the reply is that the economic advantages are beyond dispute. Without concessions, we shall not be able to carry out our programme and the electrification of the country; without them, it will be impossible to restore our economic life in ten years; once we have restored it we shall be invincible to capital. Concessions do not mean peace with capitalism, but war in a new sphere. The war of guns and tanks yields place to economic warfare. True, it also holds out new difficulties and new dangers, but I am certain that we shall overcome them. I am convinced that if the question of concessions is posed in this way, we shall easily be able to convince the vast majority of the Party com-

rades of the necessity of concessions. The instinctive apprehension I have spoken of is a good and healthy sentiment, which we shall convert into a driving force that will secure us a more rapid victory in the impending economic war.

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*Report on Concessions Delivered
to the R.C.P.(B.) Group
at the Eighth Congress of Soviets*

December 21, 1920
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Comrades, I think you have made a fully correct decision by preferring the discussion on concessions to be held first in the Party group. To the best of our knowledge, the question of concessions has everywhere aroused considerable concern and even anxiety, not only in Party circles and among the working-class masses but also among the masses of the peasantry. All comrades have pointed out that, since the decree of November 23 of this year, the questions most frequently raised and the written questions submitted at most meetings held on a variety of subjects have dealt with concessions, and the general tone of the questions, as well as of talk on the subject, has been one of apprehension: we have driven out our own capitalists, and now we want to admit others. I believe that this apprehension, this widespread interest in concessions—displayed, not only by Party comrades but by many others—is a good sign, which shows that in three years of incredibly hard struggle the workers' and peasants' state power has become so strong and our experience of the capitalists has become so fixed in the mind that the broad masses consider the workers' and peasants' state power stable enough to manage without concessions; they also consider their lesson learnt well enough to avoid any deals with the capitalists unless there is a dire necessity to do so. This sort of supervision from below, this kind of apprehension emanating from the masses, and this kind of anxiety among non-Party circles show the highly vigilant attention that is being paid to relations between us and the capitalists. I believe that on this score we should

absolutely welcome this apprehension as revealing the temper of the masses.

Yet I think that we shall come to the conclusion that, in the question of concessions, we cannot be guided by this revolutionary instinct alone. When we have analysed all aspects of the question we shall see that the policy we have adopted—the policy of offering concessions—is the correct one. I can tell you briefly that the main subject of my report—or rather the repetition of a talk I had very recently in Moscow with several hundred leading executives, because I have not prepared a report and cannot present it to you—the main subject of this talk is to offer proof of two premises: first, that any war is merely the continuation of peacetime politics by other means, and second, that the concessions which we are giving, which we are forced to give, are a continuation of war in another form, using other means. To prove these two premises, or rather to prove only the second because the first does not require any special proof, I shall begin with the political aspect of the question. I shall dwell on those relations existing between the present-day imperialist powers, which are important for an understanding of present-day foreign policy in its entirety, and of our reasons for adopting this policy.

The American Vanderlip sent a letter to the Council of People's Commissars in which he said that the Republicans, members of the Republican Party of America, the party of the banking interests, which is linked with memories of the war against the Southern States for liberation, were not in power at the time. He wrote this before the November elections, which he hoped the Republicans would win (they have won them) and have their own president in March. The Republicans' policy, he went on, would not repeat the follies that had involved America in European affairs, they would look after their own interests. American interests would lead them to a clash with Japan, and they would fight Japan. It might interest you to know, he went on, that in 1923 the U.S. navy would be stronger than Britain's. To fight, they needed control of oil, without which they could not wage a modern war. They not only needed oil, but also had to take steps to ensure that the enemy did not get any. Japan

was in a bad way in that respect. Somewhere near Kamchatka there is an inlet (whose name he had forgotten) with oil deposits, and they did not want the Japanese to get that oil. If we sold them that land, Vanderlip could vouch that the Americans would grow so enthusiastic that the U.S. would immediately recognise our government. If we offered a concession, and did not sell them the land, he could not say that they would refuse to examine the project, but he could not promise the enthusiasm that would guarantee recognition of the Soviet Government.

Vanderlip's letter is quite outspoken; with unparalleled cynicism he outlines the point of view of an imperialist who clearly sees that a war with Japan is imminent, and poses the question openly and directly—enter into a deal with us and you will get certain advantages from it. The issue is the following: the Far East, Kamchatka and a piece of Siberia are *de facto* in the possession of Japan insofar as her troops are in control there, and circumstances made necessary the creation of a buffer state, the Far Eastern Republic. We are well aware of the unbelievable sufferings that the Siberian peasants are enduring at the hands of the Japanese imperialists and the atrocities the Japanese have committed in Siberia. The comrades from Siberia know this; their recent publications have given details of it. Nevertheless, we cannot go to war with Japan and must make every effort, not only to put off a war with Japan but, if possible, to avert it because, for reasons known to you, it is beyond our strength. At the same time Japan is causing us tremendous losses by depriving us of our links with world trade through the Pacific Ocean. Under such conditions, when we are confronted with a growing conflict, an imminent clash between America and Japan—for a most stubborn struggle has been going on for many decades between Japan and America over the Pacific Ocean and the mastery of its shores, and the entire diplomatic, economic and trade history of the Pacific Ocean and its shores is full of quite definite indications that the struggle is developing and making war between America and Japan inevitable—we return to a situation we were in for three years: we are a Socialist Republic surrounded by imperialist countries that are far stronger than us in the military sense, are using every means

of agitation and propaganda to increase hatred for the Soviet Republic, and will never miss an opportunity for military intervention, as they put it, i.e., to strangle Soviet power.

If, remembering this, we cast a glance over the history of the past three years from the point of view of the international situation of the Soviet Republic, it becomes clear that we have been able to hold out and have been able to defeat the Entente powers—an alliance of unparalleled might that was supported by our whiteguards—only because there has been no unity among these powers. We have so far been victorious only because of the most profound discord among the imperialist powers, and only because that discord has not been a fortuitous and internal dissension between parties, but a most deep-seated and ineradicable conflict of economic interests among the imperialist countries which, based on private property in land and capital, cannot but pursue a predatory policy which has stultified their efforts to unite their forces against the Soviets. I take Japan, who controlled almost the whole of Siberia and could, of course, have helped Kolchak at any time. The main reason she did not do so was that her interests differ radically from those of America, and she did not want to pull chestnuts out of the fire for U.S. capital. Knowing this weakness, we could of course pursue no other policy than that of taking advantage of this enmity between America and Japan so as to strengthen ourselves and delay any possibility of an agreement between Japan and America against us; we have had an instance of the possibility of such an agreement: American newspapers carried the text of an agreement between all countries who had promised to support Kolchak.²⁶

That agreement fell through, of course, but it is not impossible that an attempt will be made to restore it at the first opportunity. The deeper and more formidable the communist movement grows, the greater will be the number of new attempts to strangle our Republic. Hence our policy of utilising the discord among the imperialist powers so as to hamper an agreement or to make one temporarily impossible. This has been the fundamental line of our policy for three years; it necessitated the conclusion of the Peace of Brest-Litovsk, as well as the signing, with

Bullitt, of a peace treaty and an armistice agreement most disadvantageous to us. This political line of conduct enjoins us to grasp at a proposal on the granting of concessions. Today we are giving America Kamchatka, which in any case is not actually ours because it is held by Japanese troops. At the moment we are in no condition to fight Japan. We are giving America, for economic exploitation, a territory where we have absolutely no naval or military forces, and where we cannot send them. By doing so we are setting American imperialism against Japanese imperialism and against the bourgeoisie closest to us, the Japanese bourgeoisie, which still maintains its hold on the Far Eastern Republic.

Thus, our main interests were political at the concessions negotiations. Recent events, moreover, have shown with the greatest clarity that we have been the gainers from the mere fact of negotiations on concessions. We have not yet granted any concessions, and shall not be able to do so until the American president takes office, which will not be before March; besides, we reserve the possibility of renouncing the agreement when the details are being worked out.

It follows, therefore, that in this matter the economic interest is secondary, its real value lying in its political interest. The contents of the press we have received goes to show that we have been the gainers. Vanderlip himself insisted that the concessions plan should be kept secret for the time being, until the Republican Party had won the elections. We agreed not to publish either his letter or the entire preliminary draft. However, it appeared that such a secret could not be kept for long. No sooner had Vanderlip returned to America than exposures of various kinds began. Before the elections Harding was candidate for the presidency; he has now been elected. The selfsame Harding published in the press a denial of the report that he was in touch with the Soviets through Vanderlip. That denial was categorical, almost in the following words: I don't know Vanderlip and recognise no relations with the Soviets. The reason behind this denial is quite obvious. On the eve of the elections in bourgeois America, it might have meant losing several hundred thousand votes for Harding to become known as a supporter of an agree-

ment with the Soviets, and so he hastened to announce in the press that he did not know any Vanderlip. As soon as the elections were over, however, information of a quite different kind began to come in from America. In a number of newspaper articles Vanderlip came out in full support of an agreement with the Soviets and even wrote in one article that he compared Lenin to Washington. It turns out, therefore, that in the bourgeois countries we have propagandists for an agreement with us, and have won these propagandists from among representatives of exploiters of the worst type, such as Vanderlip, and not in the person of the Soviet ambassador or among certain journalists.

When I told a meeting of leading executives what I am now telling you, a comrade just back from America, where he had worked in Vanderlip's factories, said he had been horrified; nowhere had he seen such exploitation as at Vanderlip's factories. And now in the person of this capitalist shark we have won a propagandist for trade relations with Soviet Russia, and even if we do not get anything except the proposed agreement on concessions we shall still be able to say that we have gained something. We have received a number of reports, secret ones, of course, to the effect that the capitalist countries have not given up the idea of launching a new war against Soviet Russia in the spring. We have learnt that preliminary steps are being taken by some capitalist states, while white-guard elements are, it may be said, making preparations in all countries. Our chief interest therefore lies in achieving the re-establishment of trade relations, and for that purpose we need to have at least a section of the capitalists on our side.

In Britain the struggle has been going on for a long time. We have gained by the mere fact that among those who represent the worst capitalist exploitation we have people who back the policy of restoring trade relations with Russia. The agreement with Britain—a trade agreement—has not yet been signed. Krasin is now actively negotiating it in London. The British Government has submitted its draft to us and we have presented our counterdraft, but all the same we see that the British Government is dragging out the negotiations and that there is

a reactionary military group hard at work there which is hindering the conclusion of trade agreements and has so far been successful. It is our prime interest and prime duty to support anything that can strengthen the parties and groups working for the conclusion of this agreement with us. In Vanderlip we have gained such a supporter, not by mere chance or because Vanderlip is particularly enterprising or knows Siberia very well. The causes here lie much deeper and are linked with the development of the interests of British imperialism, which possesses a huge number of colonies. This rift between American and British imperialism is deep, and it is our imperative duty to base ourselves on it.

I have mentioned that Vanderlip is particularly knowledgeable in respect of Siberia. When our talks were coming to a close, Comrade Chicherin pointed out that Vanderlip should be received because it would have an excellent effect on his further actions in Western Europe. Of course, the prospect of talking to such a capitalist shark was not of the pleasantest, but then I had had to talk very politely, by way of duty, even to the late Mirbach, so I was certainly not afraid of a talk with Vanderlip. It is interesting that when Vanderlip and I exchanged all sorts of pleasantries and he started joking and telling me that the Americans are an extremely practical people and do not believe what they are told until they see it with their own eyes, I said to him, half in banter: "Now you can see how good things are in Soviet Russia and you can introduce the same in America." He answered me, not in English but in Russian: "Mozhet byt."* "Why, you even know Russian?" He answered: "A long time ago I travelled five thousand versts through Siberia and the country interested me greatly." This humorous exchange of pleasantries with Vanderlip ended by his saying as he was leaving, "Yes, it is true Mr. Lenin has no horns and I must tell that to my friends in America." It would have seemed simply ridiculous had it not been for the further reports in the European press to the effect that the Soviets are a monster no relations can be established with. We were given an opportunity to throw into that swamp a

* Perhaps.—*Ed.*

stone in the person of Vanderlip, who favours the re-establishment of trade relations with us.

There has not been a single report from Japan that has not spoken of the extraordinary alarm in Japanese commercial circles. The Japanese public say that they will never go against their own interests, and are opposed to concessions in Soviet Russia. In short, we have a terrific aggravation of the enmity between Japan and America and thus an undoubted slackening of both Japanese and American pressure on us.

At the meeting of executives in Moscow where I had to mention the fact, the following question was asked. "It appears," one of the comrades wrote, "that we are driving Japan and America to war, but it is the workers and peasants who will do the fighting. Although these are imperialist powers, is it worthy of us socialists to drive two powers into a war against each other, which will lead to the shedding of workers' blood?" I replied that if we were really driving workers and peasants to war that would be a crime. All our politics and propaganda, however, are directed towards putting an end to war and in no way towards driving nations to war. Experience has shown sufficiently that the socialist revolution is the only way out of eternal warfare. Our policy, therefore, is not that of involving others in a war. We have not done anything justifying, directly or indirectly, a war between Japan and America. All our propaganda and all our newspaper articles try to drive home the truth that a war between America and Japan would be just as much an imperialist war as the one between the British and the German groups in 1914, and that socialists should think, not of defending their respective countries but of overthrowing the power of the capitalists; they should think of the workers' revolution. Is it the correct policy for us to use the discord between the imperialist bandits to make it more difficult for them to unite against us, who are doing everything in our power to accelerate that revolution, but are in the position of a weak socialist republic that is being attacked by imperialist bandits? Of course, it is the correct policy. We have pursued that policy for four years. The Treaty of Brest-Litovsk was the chief expression of this policy. While the German imperialists were offering

resistance, we were able to hold out even when the Red Army had not yet been formed, by using the contradictions existing between the imperialists.

Such was the situation in which our concessions policy in respect to Kamchatka emerged. This type of concession is quite exceptional. I shall speak later of the way the other concessions are taking shape. For the moment I shall confine myself to the political aspect of the question. I want to point out that the relations between Japan and America show why it is to our advantage to offer concessions or to use them as an inducement. Concessions presume some kind of re-establishment of peaceful agreements, the restoration of trade relations; they presume the possibility for us to begin direct and extensive purchases of the machinery we need. We must turn all our efforts to achieving this. That has not yet been done.

The comrade who has asked about the resumption of trade relations with Britain wants to know why the signing of the agreement with that country has been held up. My answer is that it is being delayed because the British Government is hesitant. Most of the trade and industrial bourgeoisie in Britain are in favour of relations being resumed and clearly realise that any action for war means taking enormous risks and speeding up the revolution. You will remember that during our drive on Warsaw the British Government presented us with an ultimatum, threatening to order its navy to sail against Petrograd. You will remember that Councils of Action²⁷ sprang up all over Britain at the time and the Menshevik leaders of the British working class declared that they were against war and would not permit one. On the other hand, the reactionary section of the British bourgeoisie and the military clique at court are in favour of the war continuing. The delay in signing the trade agreement must undoubtedly be ascribed to their influence. I shall not go into all the details of these trade relations with Britain, or of this agreement on trade relations with Britain, because it would take me too far afield. This delicate problem had recently to be very thoroughly discussed by the Central Committee of the Party. We have returned to it again and again, and our policy in this matter has been marked by the greatest degree of accommodation. Our aim now is to obtain a trade agreement with Britain so as to start more regular trade and

be able to buy as soon as possible the machinery necessary for our extensive plan to rehabilitate the national economy. The sooner we do this the greater will be the basis ensuring our economic independence of the capitalist countries. At present, after having burnt their fingers in the armed invasion of Russia, they cannot think of an immediate resumption of the war. We must seize the opportunity and bend every effort to achieve trade relations even at the cost of maximum concessions, for we cannot for a moment believe in lasting trade relations with the imperialist powers; the respite will be temporary. The experience of the history of revolutions and great conflicts teaches us that wars, a series of wars, are inevitable. The existence of a Soviet Republic alongside of capitalist countries—a Soviet Republic surrounded by capitalist countries—is so intolerable to the capitalists that they will seize any opportunity to resume the war. The peoples are weary of the imperialist war and threaten to make their indignation felt if war continues, but the possibility of the capitalists being able to resume it in a few years is not precluded. That is why we must exert every effort to utilise the opportunity, since it exists, and conclude trade agreements. I can say the following here (this is not for the record). I think that we shall ultimately emerge on top as a result of our firm stand that the Communist International is not a governmental institution. That is the more probable for the British bourgeoisie having to realise the ridiculousness of rising up against the Third International. The Third International was formed in March 1919. Its Second Congress was held in July 1920, following which the terms proposed in Moscow were made publicly known in all countries. An open struggle is going on for admission to the Communist International. The organisational foundations for the formation of Communist parties exist everywhere. In these circumstances, any attempt to present us seriously with an ultimatum that we get rid of the Communist International is inexcusable. However, the emphasis laid on the matter shows where the shoe pinches and what displeases them in our policy. Even without that, we have known what it is in our policy that is not to their liking. The East is another question that can be spoken of at a Party meeting, and is alarming Britain. The latter wants us to give assurances that we will do nothing against Britain's interests in the East. We are

willing and ready to give such an undertaking. As an example I might mention that the Congress of Peoples of the East, a communist congress, took place, not in the R.S.F.S.R. but in Baku, in the independent republic of Azerbaijan. The British Government will have no reason to accuse us of doing anything against British interests. In their ignorance of our Constitution, they sometimes confuse the Azerbaijan Republic with the Russian Soviet Republic. Our laws are definite and precise on that score, and it will be easy to refute the false interpretations of the British ministers. However, there are still differences on this subject, and Krasin is engaged with the ministers in talks on these two sore points.

In July, when Poland was threatened with utter defeat, and the Red Army was about to crush her, the complete text of an agreement was presented by Britain, which in effect said that we had to declare as a matter of principle that we would not carry on official propaganda or do anything contrary to British interests in the East. That was to be laid down at a subsequent political conference, but at the moment they were concluding a definite trade agreement. They asked whether we would like to sign it. We replied that we would. Today we say again that we will sign such an agreement. The political conference will specify Britain's interests in the East. We also have certain interests in the East, and we shall set them forth in detail when the need arises. Britain cannot say outright that she is abandoning her July proposal and so she is dragging things out and concealing from her own people the truth about the negotiations. The outcome of the negotiations is uncertain and we cannot guarantee that an agreement will be signed. The very powerful court and military circles in Britain are opposed to the agreement. We are, however, proposing maximum concessions, and we believe it to be in our interests to sign a trade pact and purchase with all possible dispatch some of the essentials for the restoration of the railways (i.e., locomotives), for the rehabilitation of industry, and for electrification. This is more important to us than anything else. If we achieve that, we shall become so strong in a few years that even, if the worst comes to the worst and there is armed intervention in a few years' time, it will fail because we shall be stronger than we are now. The line we in the Central Committee are following is one of maximum concessions to Britain. If these

gentlemen think they will catch us breaking promises, we declare that our government will not carry on any official propaganda and that we have no intention of infringing on any of Britain's interests in the East. If they hope to derive some advantage from this, let them try; we shall not be the losers.

I now come to the question of the relations between Britain and France. These are confused. On the one hand, Britain and France belong to the League of Nations and are obliged to act jointly; on the other hand, whenever any tension arises they fail to do so. When Comrade Kamenev was in London conducting negotiations together with Krasin, this became quite obvious. France was in favour of supporting Poland and Wrangel, but the British Government declared it would not support France. Concessions are more acceptable to Britain than to France, which still aspires to get her debts paid back, while in Britain capitalists with any business sense no longer think about it. From that angle, too, it is to our advantage to use the dissension between Britain and France, and we must therefore insist on the political proposal of concessions to Britain. We now have a draft agreement on timber concessions in the Far North. Since there is no political unity between Britain and France, our position imposes on us the duty of even incurring a certain risk, if only we succeed in hampering a military alliance between Britain and France against us. A new war that Britain and France will support against us will be an immense burden on us (even if it ends, as the war with Wrangel has done, in our complete victory); it will hinder our economic development and worsen the condition of the workers and peasants. We must therefore be ready to do whatever involves the least loss. Obviously, the losses from concessions are negligible compared with those that would arise from a delay in our economic development and the loss of thousands of workers and peasants that would ensue were we unable to withstand the alliance of the imperialists. Negotiations on concessions with Britain are one of the means of standing up to their alliance. That is the political aspect of the issue.

Last, the final aspect of the matter is the attitude of Britain and the entire Entente to Germany. If we exclude America, Germany is the most advanced country. In the development of electricity her technical level is even higher than

America's. The conditions obtaining in Germany in consequence of the Treaty of Versailles make her existence impossible. Because of that situation it is natural for Germany to be prompted towards an alliance with Russia. When the Russian troops were approaching Warsaw, all Germany was seething. An alliance between Russia and Germany, a country that has been strangled, a country that is able to set gigantic productive forces in motion—this situation has led to a political mix-up in Germany: the German Black Hundreds sympathise with the Russian Bolsheviks in the same way as the Spartacus League does. This can well be understood because it derives from economic causes, and is the basis of the entire economic situation and of our foreign policy.

While we stand alone and the capitalist world is strong, our foreign policy consists, on the one hand, in our having to utilise disagreements (to vanquish all the imperialist powers would, of course, be a most pleasant thing, but for a fairly long time we shall not be in a position to do so). On the one hand, our existence depends on the presence of radical differences between the imperialist powers, and, on the other, on the Entente's victory and the Peace of Versailles having thrown the vast majority of the German nation into a situation it is impossible for them to live in. The Peace of Versailles has created a situation in which Germany cannot even dream of a breathing-space, or of not being plundered, of not having the means of subsistence taken away from her, of her people not being doomed to starvation and extinction; Germany cannot even dream of any of these things, so that, naturally, her only means of salvation lies in an alliance with Soviet Russia, a country towards which her eyes are therefore turning. They are furiously opposing Soviet Russia; they detest the Bolsheviks, and shoot down their own Communists in the manner of real whiteguards. The German bourgeois government has an implacable hatred of the Bolsheviks, but such is its international position that, against its own desires, the government is driven towards peace with Soviet Russia. That, comrades, is the second corner-stone of our international policy, our foreign policy; it is to show peoples that are conscious of the bourgeois yoke that there is no salvation for them without the Soviet Republic. Since the Soviet Republic withstood the onslaught of the imperialists for three years, this goes to show that one country, and that country

alone, has been successful in hurling back this imperialist yoke. That country has been called a country of "robbers", "plunderers", "bandits", Bolsheviks, etc.—let that be so, but still it is impossible to improve the economic situation without that country.

In a situation such as this, the question of concessions acquires still another aspect. The pamphlet I have in my hands is the Decree on Concessions of November 23. It will be distributed to all members of the Congress. We intend to publish this pamphlet abroad, in several languages. It is our immediate object to do everything possible to arouse interest in concessions among the population of the greatest number of countries, to interest those countries that are the most oppressed. The divergence of interests between Japan and America is very great. They are unable to agree between themselves over China, a number of islands, etc. The divergence of interests between Germany and the Entente is of another kind. Germany's existence has been made impossible by the conditions in which the Entente has placed her. People are dying there because the Entente has been requisitioning their motors and their cattle. Such a situation urges Germany towards a rapprochement with Soviet Russia. I do not know the details of the treaty between Germany and the Entente, but in any case the treaty is known to ban direct trade relations between Germany and Soviet Russia. When we arranged for the purchase of German locomotives, that was done through the agency of Sweden. Germany will hardly be able to restore direct trade relations with us before April 1921. However, progress in restoring our trade relations with Germany is more rapid than with the Entente. The conditions of existence in Germany are compelling the German people as a whole, including the Black Hundreds and the capitalists, to seek relations with Soviet Russia. Germany is already linked with us by certain trade relations. These links can become closer inasmuch as we are offering Germany agricultural concessions. It is therefore clear that we must advance concessions as an economic method, even irrespective of the measure in which we are able to put the project into effect. The interest in concessions is so obvious that even if we do not succeed in granting a single concession, or none of our agreements are put into effect (and even that is quite possible)—even in that case we shall still have

gained something, and we still have to pursue our policy because by so doing we make it more difficult for the imperialist countries to attack us.

Irrespective of this, we must tell all the oppressed peoples that a handful of countries are overtly or covertly, consciously or unconsciously, strangling other peoples—this derives from the Treaty of Versailles—and these peoples are turning to us for help, and are becoming more and more aware of the economic necessity of an alliance with Soviet Russia against international imperialism. Agricultural concessions, therefore, are of a wider scope than the old bourgeois concessions; they are different from the old capitalist concessions. They remain capitalist in character inasmuch as we tell the German capitalists to bring so many tractors into our country, in exchange for which we shall give them so much excellent virgin land and grain. We are attracting capital with the prospect of tremendous profits. In this respect the concessions are a purely capitalist undertaking, but they acquire an immeasurably greater significance because Germany as a nation, Austria and other countries cannot exist because they need aid in food and because the entire people, irrespective of whether the capitalists make a profit of a hundred or two hundred per cent, can, despite anti-Bolshevik prejudices, see that the Bolsheviks are establishing completely different international relations which make it possible for all oppressed peoples to rid themselves of the imperialist yoke. That is why our successes of the last three years will lead to still greater successes in foreign policy during the coming year. Our policy is grouping around the Soviet Republic those capitalist countries which are being strangled by imperialism. That is why our concessions proposal has more than a capitalist significance; that is why it is a hand held out, not only to the German capitalists with the offer, "Bring us hundreds of tractors and make as much as three hundred per cent on each ruble if you like"; it is a hand held out to oppressed peoples, an alliance of the oppressed masses, which is a factor in the future proletarian revolution. The doubts and fears that still exist in the advanced countries, which assert that Russia could risk a socialist revolution because she is a vast country with her own means of subsistence while they, the industrial countries of Europe, cannot do so because they have no allies—these doubts and fears are groundless.

We say: "You now have an ally, Soviet Russia." Since we are granting concessions, this will be an alliance that will consolidate the alliance against world imperialism. This is a postulate that must not be lost sight of, it justifies our concessions policy and proves the need to grant concessions.

And now for several purely economic considerations. I shall now go on to these considerations and read out the stipulations of the law, although I hope that the comrades present here have read the law of November 23. I shall, however, remind you briefly that it says that concessionaires shall be paid with part of the products, that when special technical improvements have been introduced, we are prepared to offer trade advantages, and that the term of concessions will be more or less prolonged, depending on the volume and character of the expenditures involved. We guarantee that property invested in an enterprise shall not be confiscated or requisitioned.

Without such a guarantee owners of private capital and private property will not, of course, enter into relations with us. The question of courts, which was at first raised in the draft agreement, was subsequently removed, since we saw that this was not to our advantage. Thus the judicial authority on our territory remains in our hands. In the event of a dispute, the issue will be settled by our judges. This will be not requisitioning but the lawful exercise of jurisprudence by our judicial bodies.

The fifth clause in the agreement deals with the code of labour laws. In the original draft of the agreement, which was discussed with Vanderlip, provision was made for the withdrawal of the application of the labour code in localities inhabited by underdeveloped tribes, we cannot say which. In such places no code of labour laws is possible. The labour code was to be replaced in such areas by a special agreement on guarantees for the workers.

In the final clause we guarantee the concessionaire against any unilateral changes. Without this guarantee, there can, of course, be no question of granting concessions. The question of what is meant by non-unilateral changes has, however, been left open. That will depend on the text of the agreement on each individual concession. Arbitration may be possible through some of the neutral powers. This is a point that may lead to differences, and leaves a certain latitude in

determining the actual terms of a concession. It should, incidentally, be pointed out that in the capitalist countries the Menshevik leaders of the working class are considered reliable people. They enter bourgeois governments, and it is very difficult for bourgeois governments to challenge such mediators or arbitrators as the Mensheviks or social-traitors of the European countries. Experience has shown, however, that when any serious tension arises, the American and European Mensheviks behave just like the Russian Mensheviks do, i.e., they do not know how to behave, and are obliged to yield to the pressure of the revolutionary masses, though they themselves remain opposed to the revolution. The question remains open; we shall not decide it in advance.

From the terms that I have read out to you, you will see that economic relations between the capitalist concessionaires and the Socialist Republic are far from stable or durable. It is obvious that a capitalist who retains private property and exploitation relations cannot be anything but a foreign body in a socialist republic. Hence one of the main themes in my report: concessions are a continuation of war by other means. I shall deal with that in detail in a moment, but first I want to mention the three main forms or kinds of the concessions.

In this pamphlet we have given a list of the chief concessions; the comrades from the Supreme Council of the National Economy who provided the material for the pamphlet and edited it, have appended maps showing these objects. These maps show that the concessions fall into three main groups—first, timber concessions in the Far North, second, agricultural concessions, and third, mining concessions in Siberia.

Our economic interest in timber concessions in the Far North of European Russia is obvious; there are tens and even hundreds of millions of dessiatines of forest land which we are quite unable to exploit because we lack the railways, the means of production and the possibility of providing the workers there with food, but which could be exploited by a country that owns a big merchant fleet and could fell and saw timber properly and export it in tremendous quantities.

If we want to trade with foreign countries—and we do want to, because we realise its necessity—our chief interest is in obtaining as quickly as possible, from the capi-

talist countries, the means of production (locomotives, machinery, and electrical equipment) without which we cannot more or less seriously rehabilitate our industry, or perhaps may even be unable to do so at all, because the machinery needed by our factories cannot be made available. It is with the motive of extra profit that we must attract the capitalist. He will get surplus profit—well, let him have that surplus profit; we shall obtain the fundamentals that will help strengthen us; we shall stand firmly on our own feet, and shall win in the economic field. We shall have to pay up if we want to get the best machinery, etc. What are we to pay with? We still dispose of gold reserves totalling several millions. You will see from the special plan for the electrification of Russia, drawn up for several decades, that this plan, together with the additional work for the rehabilitation of industry, will involve an approximate expenditure of something like 17,000 million gold rubles. Electrification alone will require the direct expenditure of more than 1,000 million rubles in gold. We cannot cover this with our gold reserves; it is extremely undesirable and dangerous for us to export foodstuffs because we have not got sufficient for our own industry, and yet this need has to be met. In this case there is no concession project economically more suitable for us than the forests of the Far North which cover an enormous area, and where the timber is rotting away and a total loss because we are economically unable to exploit these timber reserves. Timber, however, is of tremendous value on the world market. Besides, the Far North is also convenient politically because it is an outlying border area. This concession is convenient to us both politically and economically, and we must make the best possible use of it. At the Moscow Conference I have told you about, Milyutin said that negotiations with Britain about concessions in the north of European Russia are progressing. There are several scores of millions of dessiatines of standing timber there. If we grant three or five million dessiatines disposed chequerwise, we shall get an opportunity to derive advantage from up-to-date enterprises, an opportunity to learn, by stipulating that our technicians take part in the work; we shall thus gain a lot and make it difficult for capitalist powers that enter into deals with us to take part in military action against us, because war cancels everything, and should one break out we shall get

possession of all the buildings, installations and railways. Any possible action against us by new Kolchaks, Denikins and others will not be made the easier.

The second type is agricultural concessions. With the exception of West Siberia with its vast expanses of excellent land, inaccessible to us because of its great distance from railways, there are in European Russia and along the River Ural alone (our Commissariat of Agriculture has taken the necessary steps and has calculated the amount of land we cannot cultivate, which is no less than 3,000,000 dessiatines along the River Ural, abandoned by entire Cossack villages as a result of the victorious culmination of the Civil War) excellent lands that must be brought under the plough, but which we cannot cultivate because of the shortage of draught animals and our weakened productive forces.

The state farms of the Don Region have about 800,000 dessiatines which we cannot cultivate; to cultivate this land we shall need a tremendous number of draught animals or entire tractor columns that we cannot put on the fields, while some capitalist countries, including those that urgently need foodstuffs—Austria, Germany and Bohemia—could put tractors to work and obtain excellent wheat in good season. We do not know to what extent we shall be able to carry that out. At present we have two tractor plants functioning, in Moscow and Petrograd, but in consequence of the difficult conditions that obtain they cannot produce tractors in large numbers. We could ease the situation by purchasing a greater number of tractors. Tractors are the most important means of effecting a radical change in the old farming methods and of extending the area cultivated. By such concessions we shall show a large number of countries that we are able to develop the world economy on a gigantic scale.

If our propaganda and our proposal do not meet with success, and if our proposal is not accepted, we shall still reap an advantage that is not only political but socialist as well. What is going on in the capitalist world is not only a waste of wealth, but madness and a crime, for in some countries there is a food surplus that cannot be sold because of currency revolutions, since money has depreciated in a number of countries that have suffered defeat. Huge stocks of foodstuffs are rotting away, while tens of millions of people in countries like Germany are actually starving. This

absurdity, this crime of capitalism, is becoming obvious to all capitalist countries and to the small countries that surround Russia. To the capitalist countries the Soviet Republic says: "We have hundreds of thousands of dessiatines of excellent land that can be ploughed with tractors; you have the tractors, the petrol and the trained technicians; we propose to all peoples, including the peoples of the capitalist countries, to make the rehabilitation of the economy and the salvation of all peoples from hunger their main object." If the capitalists do not understand this, it is an argument demonstrating the corruption, madness and criminal nature of the capitalist system. That will be of more than mere propaganda value: it will be a communist call for revolution, for it shows beyond doubt that capitalism is falling apart and cannot satisfy the people's needs, a fact that is more and more penetrating into the consciousness of all peoples. An insignificant minority of imperialist countries are growing rich, while a large number of other countries are actually on the verge of ruin. The world economy needs reorganisation, and the Soviet Republic comes forward with a plan of reconstruction, with the following incontestable business-like and realisable proposal: "You are starving under capitalism, despite the fabulous wealth of machinery. We can solve the crisis by bringing together your machinery and our raw materials, but the capitalists are in the way. We have proposed to them that they should accept our offer, but they are holding back and wrecking our plan." That is the second type of concession, the agricultural or tractor type.

Mining concessions are the third type. These are indicated on the map of Siberia, with details of each area in which concessions are being considered. Siberia's mineral wealth is literally boundless, and at best, even given significant progress, we cannot exploit even a hundredth part of it for many years. The minerals are to be found in conditions that demand the best machinery. There are such products as copper ore, which the capitalists need badly for their electrical industry because it is in such short supply. It is possible to rehabilitate the world economy and improve the world's technology if they enter into regular relations with us.

It is, of course, more difficult to implement these concessions, i.e., they present greater difficulties than timber or agricultural concessions do. As far as agricultural con-

cessions are concerned, it is only a matter of a brief working period with tractors being used. Timber concessions are also easier, especially as they concern an area we cannot avail ourselves of; but mining concessions are frequently at no great distance from the railways, frequently in densely populated areas. Here the danger is serious and we shall weigh the pros and cons very carefully to see whether or not they should be granted; we shall do so on definite terms, for there is no doubt that concessions are a new kind of war. The capitalists are coming to us to wage a new kind of war—the very existence of the capitalists is in itself a war against the socialist world surrounding them. Capitalist enterprises in a socialist state are in the economic sense a war for freedom of trade, against the policy of compulsory deliveries, a war for private property against a republic that has abolished that property. On this economic basis there develop a variety of relationships (similar to the hostility between the Sukharevka market²⁸ and our institutions). We may be told that we are closing down the Sukharevka black market but opening up a number of other “Sukharevkas” by letting the capitalists in. We have not closed our eyes to this, and say: if we have been victorious till now, if we were victorious when our enemies used every means to disrupt our enterprises, when there was disruption from within combined with that from without, then we must surely be able to deal with such things, to keep an eye on them when they are in certain limited areas and there are definite conditions and relations. We have practical experience of the struggle against military espionage and against capitalist sabotage. We fought against them when they were under cover in our own institutions; surely we shall be able to handle them when the capitalists have been let in according to a definite list and under definite conditions. We know, of course, that they will try to break these conditions, and we shall combat such infractions. But, comrades, concessions on a capitalist foundation mean war. Until we have overthrown capital in other countries, and while capital is much stronger than we are, its forces can be sent against us at any time and it can start another war against us. For this reason we have to make ourselves stronger, and to do that we must develop large-scale industry and get our transport going. In carrying this out, we are taking a risk; here we

again have relations of warfare, of struggle, and if they try to undermine our policy, we shall fight them. It would be grossly mistaken to think that a peaceful agreement on concessions is a peaceful agreement with capitalists. It is an agreement concerning war, but an agreement that is less dangerous to us, besides being less burdensome for the workers and peasants, less burdensome than at the time when the best tanks and guns were being thrown into action against us; we must therefore use all methods, and, at the cost of economic concessions, develop our economic forces and facilitate our economic rehabilitation. The capitalists will, of course, not honour their agreements, say comrades who are afraid of concessions. It is quite impossible, of course, to be sure that the capitalists will honour agreements. It will be a war, and war is the ultimate argument, which in general remains an argument entering the relations of the socialist republic.

War threatens us at any hour. We are conducting peace negotiations with Poland, and there is every chance that peace will be concluded, or at least, to be more exact, the vast majority of chances are that peace will be concluded. There is no doubt, however, that the Savinkovs²⁹ and the French capitalists are working to prevent the treaty from being signed. To the capitalists war is possible tomorrow if not today, and they would willingly start a war today if they had not learnt something from three years' experience. Concessions constitute a certain risk; they are a loss; they are the continuation of war. There is no doubt of this, but it is a war that is more to our advantage. When we have obtained a certain minimum of the means of production, locomotives and machines, then we shall be different, in the economic sense, from what we have been till now, and the imperialist countries will be still less dangerous to us.

We have been told that the concessionaires will create exclusive conditions for their workers, and supply them with better clothes, better footwear, and better food. That will be their propaganda among our workers, who are suffering privation and will have to suffer privation for a long time to come. We shall then have a socialist republic in which the workers are poverty-stricken and next to it a capitalist island, in which the workers get an excellent livelihood. This apprehension is frequently voiced at our Party meetings. Of

course, there is a danger of that kind, and it shows that concessions are a continuation of war and do not constitute peace. We have, however, experienced far greater deprivations and have seen that workers from capitalist countries nevertheless come to our country, knowing that the economic conditions awaiting them in Russia are far worse; surely, then, we ought to be able to defend ourselves against such propaganda with counter-propaganda; surely we should be able to show the workers that capitalism can, of course, provide better conditions for certain groups of its workers, but that this does not improve the conditions of the rest of the workers. And lastly, why is it that at every contact with bourgeois Europe and America we, not they, have always won? Why is it that to this day it is they who fear to send delegations to us, and not we to them? To this day we have always managed to win over to our side at least a small part of the delegations, despite the fact that such delegations consisted in the main of Menshevik elements, and that they were people who came to us for short periods. Should we be afraid of being unable to explain the truth to the workers?! We should be in a bad way if we had such fears, if we were to place such considerations above the direct interest which is a matter of the greatest significance as far as concessions are concerned. The position of our peasants and workers remains a difficult one. It must be improved. We cannot have any doubt on that score. I think we shall agree that the concessions policy is a policy of continuation of the war, but we must also agree that it is our task to ensure the continued existence of an isolated socialist republic surrounded by capitalist enemies, to preserve a republic that is infinitely weaker than the capitalist enemies surrounding it, thereby eliminating any possibility of our enemies forming an alliance among themselves for the struggle against us, and to hamper their policies and not give them an opportunity to win a victory. It is our task to secure for Russia the necessary machinery and funds for the restoration of the economy; when we have obtained that, we shall stand so firmly on our own feet that no capitalist enemies can overawe us. That is the point of view which has guided us in our policy on concessions, the policy I have outlined.

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*From the Report on the Work of the Council
of People's Commissars Delivered
to the Eighth All-Russia Congress
of Soviets*

December 22, 1920

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It is with far greater assurance and determination that we can now set about a task that is dear to us, an essential task, one that has long been attracting us—that of economic development. We can do so with the assurance that the capitalist tycoons will not find it as easy to frustrate this work as in the past. Of course, we must be on our guard. In no case can we say that we are already guaranteed against war. It is not because of the absence of formal peace treaties that we are still without that guarantee. We are very well aware that the remnants of Wrangel's army have not been destroyed, that they are lying low close at hand, that they are under ward and tutelage, and are being re-formed with the aid of the capitalist powers. We know that the whiteguard Russian organisations are working actively to re-create certain military units and, together with Wrangel's forces, to prepare them for a new onslaught on Russia at a favourable moment.

That is why we must maintain our military preparedness under all circumstances. Irrespective of the blows already struck at imperialism, we must keep our Red Army in a state of combat readiness at all costs, and increase its fighting efficiency. The release of a certain section of the army and its rapid demobilisation does not, of course, militate against this. We rely on the tremendous experience gained by the Red Army and its leaders during the war to enable us now to improve its quality. And we shall see to it that although the army is reduced we shall retain a cadre whose maintenance will not entail an undue burden on the Republic, while at the same time, with the reduction in the number of effectives, we

shall be in a better position than before, in case of need, to mobilise and equip a still larger military force.

We are certain that all the neighbouring states, which have already lost a great deal by supporting the white-guard conspiracies against us, have learnt the hard lesson of experience and have duly appreciated our conciliatory spirit, which was generally considered as weakness on our part. Three years of experience have no doubt shown them that, while we are persistently striving for peace, we are prepared from the military point of view. Any attempt to start a war against us will mean, to the states involved, that the terms they will get following such a war will be worse than those they could have obtained without a war or prior to it. This has been proved in respect of several countries. This is an achievement we shall not forego, one that will not be forgotten by any of the powers surrounding us or in political contact with Russia. Thanks to this, our relations with neighbouring countries are steadily improving. You know that a final peace has been signed with a number of states bordering on the Western frontiers of Russia. These were part of the former Russian Empire, and the Soviet Government has unequivocally recognised their independence and sovereignty, in conformity with the fundamental principles of our policy. Peace on such a basis has every chance of being far more durable than is to the liking of the capitalists and certain West-European states.

As regards the Latvian Government, I must say that at one time there was a danger of our relations becoming strained, so much so that the idea even arose of severing diplomatic relations. But the latest report from our representative in Latvia indicates that a change of policy has already taken place, and that many misunderstandings and legitimate causes of dissatisfaction have been removed. There is good reason to hope that in the near future we shall have close economic ties with Latvia, which will naturally be even more useful to us in our trade with Western Europe than Estonia and the other states bordering on the R.S.F.S.R.

I must also say, comrades, that during this year our policy in the East has been very successful. We must welcome the formation and consolidation of the Soviet Repub-

lics of Bokhara, Azerbaijan and Armenia, which have not only recovered their complete independence, but have placed the power of government in the hands of the workers and peasants. These republics are proof and corroboration of the fact that the ideas and principles of Soviet government are understood and immediately applicable, not only in the industrially developed countries, not only in those which have a social basis like the proletariat, but also in those which have the peasantry as their basis. The idea of peasants' Soviets has triumphed. The peasants' power has been assured: they own the land and the means of production. The friendly relations between the peasant Soviet Republics and the Russian Socialist Republic have already been consolidated by the practical results of our policy.

We can also welcome the forthcoming signing of a treaty with Persia, friendly relations with whom are assured by the fact that the fundamental interests of all peoples suffering from the yoke of imperialism coincide.

We must also note that friendly relations with Afghanistan, and still more so with Turkey, are being steadily established and strengthened. As for the latter power, the Entente countries have done everything they could to render impossible any more or less normal relations between her and the West-European countries. This circumstance, coupled with consolidation of the Soviets, is steadily strengthening the alliance and the friendly relations between Russia and the oppressed nations of the East, despite the bourgeoisie's resistance and intrigues and the continuing encirclement of Russia by bourgeois countries. The chief factor in politics today is the violence being used by the imperialists against peoples which have not had the good fortune to be among the victors; this world policy of imperialism is leading to closer relations, alliance and friendship among all the oppressed nations. The success we have achieved in this respect in the West as well, in relation to more Europeanised states, goes to show that the present principles of our foreign policy are correct and that the improvement in our international position rests on a firm basis. We are confident that, by continuing our peace policy and by making concessions (and we must do so if we wish to avoid war), the basic line of our policy

and the fundamental interests which stem from the very nature of imperialist policy will come into their own and will make it more and more imperative for the R.S.F.S.R. to establish closer relations with a growing number of neighbouring states, despite the intrigues and machinations of the imperialists, who, of course, are always capable of provoking a quarrel between us and some other state. Such relations are our guarantee that we shall be able to devote ourselves whole-heartedly to economic development and that we shall be able, for a longer period, to work calmly, steadfastly and confidently.

I must add that negotiations for the conclusion of a trade agreement with Great Britain are now under way. Unfortunately, these negotiations have been dragging out much longer than we would wish, but we are not at all to blame for that. When, as far back as July—at the moment the Soviet troops were achieving their greatest successes—the British Government officially submitted to us the text of an agreement assuring the establishment of trade relations, we replied by giving our full consent, but since then the conflict of the various trends within the British Government and the British state has held this up. We see how the British Government is vacillating, and is threatening to sever relations with us and immediately to dispatch warships to Petrograd. We have seen all this, but at the same time we have seen that, in reply to this threat, Councils of Action have sprung up all over Great Britain. We have seen how, under pressure from the workers, the most extreme adherents of the opportunist trend and their leaders have been obliged to resort to this quite “unconstitutional” policy, one that they had themselves condemned a short while before. It appears that, despite the Menshevik prejudices which have hitherto prevailed in the British trade union movement, the pressure brought to bear by the working people and their political consciousness have become strong enough to blunt the edge of the imperialists’ bellicose policy. Continuing our policy of peace, we have taken our stand on the proposals made by the British Government in July. We are prepared to sign a trade agreement at once; if it has not yet been signed, the blame rests wholly with those trends and tendencies in British ruling circles that are anxious to frustrate the trade agree-

ment and, against the will of the majority, not only of the workers but even of the British bourgeoisie, want a free hand to attack Soviet Russia again. That is their affair.

The longer this policy is pursued by certain influential circles in Great Britain, by financial and imperialist circles there, the more it will aggravate the financial situation, the longer it will delay the semi-agreement which has now become essential between bourgeois Britain and the Soviet Republic, and the nearer it will bring the imperialists to a situation that will oblige them to accept a full agreement, not merely a semi-agreement.

Comrades, I must say that this trade agreement with Great Britain is connected with one of the most important questions in our economic policy, that of concessions. One of the important acts passed by the Soviet government during the period under review is the law on concessions of November 23, this year. You are, of course, all familiar with the text of this law. You all know that we have now published additional material, from which delegates to the Congress of Soviets can obtain full information on this question. We have published a special pamphlet containing, not only the text of the decree but also a list of the chief concessions we are offering: agricultural, timber and mining. We have taken steps to make the published text of this decree available in the West-European countries as early as possible, and we hope that our concessions policy will also be a practical success. We do not in the least close our eyes to the dangers this policy presents to the Socialist Soviet Republic, a country that, moreover, is weak and backward. While our Soviet Republic remains the isolated borderland of the capitalist world, it would be absolutely ridiculous, fantastic and utopian to hope that we can achieve complete economic independence and that all dangers will vanish. Of course, as long as the radical contrasts remain, the dangers will also remain, and there is no escaping them. What we have to do is to get firmly on our feet in order to survive these dangers; we must be able to distinguish between big dangers and little dangers, and incur the lesser dangers rather than the greater.

We were recently informed that, at a Congress of Soviets of Arzamas Uyezd in Nizhni-Novgorod Gubernia, a

peasant, not a member of the Party, said on the subject of concessions: "Comrades, we are delegating you to the All-Russia Congress and declare that we peasants are prepared to endure hunger and cold and do our duty for another three years, but don't sell Mother Russia in the form of concessions." I heartily welcome such sentiments, which are very widespread. I think it is highly indicative that during these three years the masses of non-Party working people—not only industrial workers but peasants as well—have acquired the political and economic experience which enables and compels them to value their liberation from the capitalists above all else, which compels them to exercise redoubled caution and to treat with extreme suspicion every step that involves the possibility of new dangers of the restoration of capitalism. Of course, we give the greatest consideration to all declarations of this kind, but we must say that there is no question of selling out Russia to the capitalists. It is a question of concessions; any concessions agreement is limited to a definite period and by definite terms. It is hedged around with all possible guarantees, by guarantees that have been carefully considered and will be considered and discussed with you again and again, at the present Congress and at various other conferences. These temporary agreements have nothing to do with any selling out. There is not a hint in them of selling Russia. What they do represent is a certain economic concession to the capitalists, the purpose of which is to enable us, as soon as possible, to secure the necessary machinery and locomotives without which we cannot effect the restoration of our economy. We have no right to neglect anything that may, in however small a measure, help us to improve the conditions of the workers and peasants.

We must do all we possibly can to bring about the rapid restoration of trade relations, and negotiations are at present being carried on in a semi-legal framework. We are ordering locomotives and machines in far from adequate numbers, but we have begun to order them. When we conduct these negotiations officially, the possibilities will be vastly expanded. With the aid of industry we shall achieve a great deal, and in a shorter period; but even if the achievements are very great, the period will cover

years, a number of years. It must be borne in mind that although we have now gained a military victory and have secured peace, history teaches us that no big question has ever been settled, and no revolution accomplished, without a series of wars. And we shall not forget this lesson. We have already taught a number of powerful countries not to wage war on us, but we cannot guarantee that this will be for long. The imperialist predators will attack us again if there is the slightest change in the situation. We must be prepared for it. Hence, the first thing is to restore the economy and place it firmly on its feet. Without equipment, without machinery obtained from capitalist countries, we cannot do this rapidly. And we should not grudge the capitalist a little extra profit if only we can effect this restoration. The workers and peasants must share the sentiments of those non-Party peasants who have declared that they are not afraid to face sacrifice and privation. Realising the danger of capitalist intervention, they do not regard concessions from a sentimental point of view, but as a continuation of the war, as the transfer of the ruthless struggle to another plane; they see in them the possibility of fresh attempts on the part of the bourgeoisie to restore the old capitalism. That is splendid; it is a guarantee that not only the organs of Soviet power but all the workers and peasants will make it their business to keep watch and ward over our interests. We are, therefore, confident that we shall be able to place the protection of our interests on such a basis that the restoration of the power of the capitalists will be totally out of the question even in carrying out the concessions agreements; we shall do everything to reduce the danger to a minimum, and make it less than the danger of war, so that it will be difficult to resume the war and easier for us to restore and develop our economy in a shorter period, in fewer years (and it is a matter of a good many years).

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of Soviets. Verbatim Report*

Collected Works, Vol. 31,
pp. 489-95

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*From a Speech in Closing
the Tenth All-Russia Conference of the R.C.P.(B.)*

May 28, 1921
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The current international situation is such that some sort of a temporary, unstable equilibrium, but equilibrium for all that, has been established; it is the kind of equilibrium under which the imperialist powers have been compelled to abandon their desire to hurl themselves at Soviet Russia, despite their hatred for her, because the disintegration of the capitalist world is steadily progressing, unity is steadily diminishing, while the onslaught of the forces of the oppressed colonies, which have a population of over a thousand million, is increasing from year to year, month to month, and even week to week. But we can make no conjectures on this score. We are now exercising our main influence on the international revolution through our economic policy. The working people of all countries without exception and without exaggeration are looking to the Soviet Russian Republic. This much has been achieved. The capitalists cannot hush up or conceal anything. That is why they so eagerly catch at our every economic mistake and weakness. The struggle in this field has now become global. Once we solve this problem, we shall have certainly and finally won on an international scale. That is why for us questions of economic development become of absolutely exceptional importance. On this front, we must achieve victory by a steady rise and progress which must be gradual and necessarily slow.

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Collected Works, Vol. 32,
pp. 436-37

The Home and Foreign Policy of the Republic

FROM THE REPORT OF THE ALL-RUSSIA CENTRAL
EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE AND THE COUNCIL
OF PEOPLE'S COMMISSARS TO THE NINTH ALL-RUSSIA
CONGRESS OF SOVIETS

December 23, 1921

Comrades, what I have just said is perfectly clear and comprehensible to you, and you could not expect anything else from anyone reporting to you on our policy. You know that such, and no other, is our policy. But, unfortunately, there are now two worlds: the old world of capitalism, that is in a state of confusion but which will never surrender voluntarily, and the rising new world, which is still very weak, but which will grow, for it is invincible. This old world has its old diplomacy, which cannot believe that it is possible to speak frankly and forthrightly. This old diplomacy thinks there must be a trap of some sort here. (*Applause, laughter.*) When this economically and militarily all-powerful old world sent us—that was some time ago—Bullitt, a representative of the United States Government, who came to us with the proposal that we should conclude peace with Kolchak and Denikin on terms that were most unfavourable to us—we said that we held so dear the blood of the workers and peasants shed for so long in Russia that although the terms were extremely unfavourable we were prepared to accept them, because we were convinced that the forces of Kolchak and Denikin would disintegrate from within. We said this quite frankly, with the minimum of diplomatic subtlety, and so they concluded that we must be trying to dupe them. And Bullitt, who had held these friendly, round-table conversations with us, was met with reproach and compelled to resign as soon as he got home. I am surprised that he has not yet been thrown into gaol, in keeping with the imperialist custom, for secretly sympathising with the Bolsheviks. (*Laughter,*

applause.) But the upshot was that we, who at that time had proposed peace to our disadvantage, obtained peace on much more favourable terms. That was something of a lesson. I know that we can no more learn the old diplomacy than we can remould ourselves; but the lessons in diplomacy that we have given since then and that have been learned by the other powers must have had some effect; they must have remained in the memory of some people. (*Laughter*.) Hence, our straightforward statement that our workers and peasants prized above all the blessings of peace, but that there were limits to the concessions they were prepared to make to preserve it, was taken to mean that they had not for a moment, not for a second, forgotten the hardships they had suffered in the imperialist war and the Civil War. This reminder, which I am sure this Congress, and the whole mass of workers and peasants, all Russia, will endorse and express—this reminder will surely have some effect and play a certain role, no matter how the powers take it, no matter what diplomatic ruse their old diplomatic habits make them suspect.

This, comrades, is what I think must be said about our international situation. A certain unstable equilibrium has been reached. Materially—economically and militarily—we are extremely weak; but morally—by which, of course, I mean not abstract morals, but the alignment of the real forces of all classes in all countries—we are the strongest of all. This has been proved in practice; it has been proved not merely by words but by deeds; it has been proved once and, if history takes a certain turn, it will, perhaps, be proved many times again. That is why we say that having started on our work of peaceful development we shall exert every effort to continue it without interruption. At the same time, comrades, be vigilant, safeguard the defence potential of our country, strengthen our Red Army to the utmost, and remember that we have no right to permit an instant's slackening where our workers and peasants and their gains are concerned. (*Applause*.)

Comrades, having thus briefly outlined the most essential features of our international position, I shall now deal with the manner in which economic relations are be-

ginning to shape out in our country and in Western Europe, in the capitalist countries. The greatest difficulty here is that without definite relations between us and the capitalist countries we cannot have stable economic relations. Events very clearly show that neither can the capitalist countries have them. But today we are not in an altruistic mood. We are thinking more of how to continue in existence when other powers are hostile to us.

But is the existence of a socialist republic in a capitalist environment at all conceivable? It seemed inconceivable from the political and military aspects. That it is possible both politically and militarily has now been proved; it is a fact. But what about trade? What about economic relations? Contacts, assistance, the exchange of services between backward, ruined agricultural Russia and the advanced, industrially-developed group of capitalist countries—is all this possible? Did they not threaten to surround us with a barbed wire fence so as to prevent any economic relations with us whatever? “War did not scare them, so we shall reduce them by means of a blockade.”

Comrades, during the past four years we have heard so many threats, and such terrible ones, that none of them can frighten us any more. As for the blockade, experience has shown that it is an open question as to who suffers from it most, the blockaded or the blockaders. Experience has shown beyond doubt that during this first year, on which I am able to report as a period of a relatively elementary respite from direct brute force, we have not been recognised, we have been rejected, and relations with us have been declared non-existent (let them be recognised as non-existent by the bourgeois courts), but they nevertheless exist. I deem it my right to report to you that this is, without the slightest exaggeration, one of the main results achieved in 1921, the year under review.

I do not know whether the report of the People's Commissariat of Foreign Affairs to the Ninth Congress of Soviets has been, or will be, distributed to you today. In my opinion, the defect in this report is that it is too bulky and is difficult to read right through. But, perhaps, this is my own failing, and I have no doubt that the overwhelming majority of you, as well as all those who are interested in politics, will read it, even if not immediately.

Even if you do not read it all, but only glance through its pages, you will see that Russia has sprouted, if one may so express it, a number of fairly regular and permanent commercial relations, missions, treaties, etc. True, we are not yet recognised *de jure*. This is still important, because the danger of the unstable equilibrium being upset, the danger of new attempts at invasion has, as I have said, increased; the relations, however, are a fact.

In 1921—the first year of trade with foreign countries—we made considerable progress. This was partly due to the improvement in our transport system, perhaps the most important, or one of the most important sectors of our economy. It is due also to our imports and exports. Permit me to quote very brief figures. All our difficulties, our most incredible difficulties—the burden of these difficulties, the most crucial feature of them—lie in fuel and food, in the peasant economy, in the famine and calamities that have afflicted us. We know very well that all this is bound up with the transport problem. We must discuss this, and all comrades from the localities must know and repeat it over and over again to all their comrades there that we must strain every nerve to overcome the food and fuel crisis. It is from this that our transport system suffers, and transport is the material instrument of our relations with foreign countries.

The organisational improvements in our transport system over the past year are beyond doubt. In 1921 we transported by river much more than in 1920. The average run per vessel in 1921 was 1,000 pood-versts as compared with 800 pood-versts in 1920. We have definitely made some progress in organisation. I must say that for the first time we are beginning to obtain assistance from abroad. We have ordered thousands of locomotives, and we have already received the first thirteen from Sweden and thirty-seven from Germany. It is a very small beginning, but a beginning, nevertheless. We have ordered hundreds of tank cars, about 500 of which arrived here in the course of 1921. We are paying a high, an exorbitant price for these things, but still it shows that we are receiving the assistance of the large-scale industry of the advanced countries; it shows that the large-scale industry of the capitalist countries is helping us to restore our econ-

omy, although all these countries are governed by capitalists who hate us heart and soul. All of these capitalists are united by governments which continue to make statements in their press about how matters stand with the *de jure* recognition of Soviet Russia, and about whether or not the Bolshevik Government is a legitimate one. Lengthy research revealed that it is a legitimate government, but it cannot be recognised. I have no right to conceal the sad truth that we are not yet recognised, but I must tell you that commercial relations are nevertheless developing.

All these capitalist countries are in a position to make us pay through the nose; we pay more for the goods than they are worth; but for all that, they are helping our economy. How did that happen? Why are they acting against their own inclinations and in contradiction to what they are constantly asserting in their press? And this press is more than a match for ours in respect of circulation, and the force and venom with which it attacks us. They call us criminals, and all the same they help us. And so it turns out they are bound up with us economically. It turns out as I have already said, that our calculations, made on a grand scale, are more correct than theirs. This is not because they lack people capable of making correct calculations—they have far more than we have—but because it is impossible to calculate properly when one is heading for destruction. That is why I would like to supplement my remarks with a few figures to show how our foreign trade is developing. I shall quote only very brief figures that are easy to remember. In three years—1918, 1919 and 1920—our total imports amounted to a little over 17,000,000 poods; in 1921 they amounted to 50,000,000 poods, that is to say, three times the total amount imported in the three preceding years. Our exports in the first three years totalled 2,500,000 poods; in 1921 alone, they amounted to 11,500,000 poods. These figures are infinitesimally, miserably, ridiculously small; any well-informed person will at once say that they are indicative of poverty. And that is what they do indicate. But for all that, it is a beginning. And we, who have experienced direct attempts to crush us, who for years have been hearing threats that everything will be done to prevent any relations with us as long as we remain what

we are, nevertheless see that something has proved more potent than these threats. We see that their forecast of economic development was wrong and ours was right. We have made a start, and we must now exert all our efforts to continue this development without interruption. We must make it our primary concern, giving it all our attention.

I shall give you another little illustration of the progress we made in 1921. In the first quarter of 1921 imports amounted to about 3,000,000 poods, in the second quarter to 8,000,000 poods, in the third quarter to 24,000,000 poods. So we are making progress. These figures are infinitesimally small, but they nevertheless show a gradual increase. We see how they grew in 1921, which was a year of unprecedented difficulties. You know what that calamity, the famine, cost us, what incredible difficulties it is still causing on the farms, in industry and in our life generally. But although our country has been devastated by war, has suffered tremendous hardship as a result of all the wars and of the rule of tsars and capitalists, we are now on the road that offers us a prospect of improvement, in spite of the unceasing hostility towards us. That is the main factor. That is why, when we read recently about the Washington Conference,³⁰ when we heard the news that the countries hostile to us would be obliged to convene a second conference next summer and to invite Germany and Russia to discuss the terms of a genuine peace, we said that our terms are clear and definite; we have formulated them, we have published them. How much hostility shall we encounter? We have no illusions about that; but we know that the economic position of those who blockaded us has proved to be vulnerable. There is a force more powerful than the wishes, the will and the decisions of any of the governments or classes that are hostile to us. That force is world general economic relations, which compel them to make contact with us. The farther they proceed in this direction the more extensive and rapid will be the development of what in today's report for 1921 I have been able to indicate to you only by some scanty figures.

The International and Domestic Situation of the Soviet Republic

FROM A SPEECH DELIVERED AT A MEETING OF THE COMMUNIST
GROUP AT THE ALL-RUSSIA CONGRESS OF METALWORKERS

March 6, 1922

Of course, comrades, you all know that Genoa³¹ remains in the forefront of the problems of our international politics. I am not very sure that it does so legitimately, for when we say "Genoa" we mean the Conference that everybody long ago heard about, the Conference that was to have taken place in Genoa, Italy. The preparations for it had been almost completed; but now, unfortunately, the situation is so indefinite that nobody knows (and I am afraid that even the initiators and organisers themselves do not know) whether there is much chance of its taking place or not. At all events, we must say to ourselves, and to all those who have any interest in the destiny of the workers' and peasants' republic, that our position on this question, that is, on the question of the Genoa Conference, has been absolutely firm from the very beginning, and remains so. It is not our fault if certain people lack not only firmness but even the most elementary determination, the most elementary ability to carry out their own plans. From the very beginning we declared that *we welcomed Genoa and would attend it*. We understood perfectly well and did not in the least conceal the fact that we were going there as merchants, because trade with capitalist countries (as long as they have not entirely collapsed) is absolutely essential to us; we realised that we were going to Genoa to bargain for the most proper and most advantageous and politically suitable terms for this trade, and nothing more. This is by no means a secret to those capitalist countries whose governments drew up the first plan for the Genoa Conference and got it going. Those countries know perfectly well that the list of commercial

agreements linking us with different capitalist states is growing longer and longer, that the number of practical transactions is increasing, and that we are now discussing in the greatest detail a huge number of joint Russian and foreign commercial projects between the most diverse combinations of foreign countries and various branches of our industry. Thus, the capitalist states are well aware of the practical basis of what is mainly to be discussed at Genoa. And this basis has a superstructure consisting of all sorts of political talk, assumptions and projects, but we must realise that it is only a little one, largely artificial, designed and erected by those who are interested in it.

It goes without saying that during the more than four years' existence of Soviet power we have acquired sufficient practical experience (apart from the fact that we are already quite familiar with it in theory) to enable us to appraise correctly the diplomatic game the gentlemen who represent the bourgeois countries are today playing according to all the rules of the obsolete art of bourgeois diplomacy. We know perfectly well what lies at the bottom of this game; we know that it is trade. *The bourgeois countries must trade with Russia*; they know that unless they establish some form of economic relations their disintegration will continue in the way it has done up to now. Notwithstanding all their magnificent victories, notwithstanding the endless boasting with which they fill the newspapers and telegraph services of the whole world, their economy is falling to pieces. And after more than three years of effort, after their great victories, they cannot cope with the very simple task of restoring the old, let alone building anything new, and are still racking their brains over the problem of how to get together and form some combination of three, four, or five (the number is so large, you see, that it is frightfully difficult to reach an agreement) so as to be able to trade.

I can understand that Communists need time to learn to trade, and I know that those who are learning will be making the crudest of mistakes for several years; but history will forgive them because they are entirely new to the business. For this purpose we must make our thinking more flexible, and must discard all communist, or rath-

er Russian, Oblomovism,³² and much more besides. But it is strange for representatives of bourgeois countries to have to learn the trading business all over again, after they have been engaged in it for hundreds of years, and when the whole of their social life is based upon it. Incidentally, it should not seem so strange to us. For a long time we have been saying, and we always knew, that their appraisal of the imperialist war was less correct than ours. They appraised it from what they could see directly in front of them, and three years after their tremendous victories they still cannot find a way out of the situation.

We Communists said that our appraisal of the war was more profound and correct; that its contradictions and its disasters would have a far broader impact than the capitalist countries imagined. And, looking at the bourgeois victor countries from outside, we said: they will recall our forecast and our appraisal of the war and its consequences more than once. The fact that they do not understand the simplest things does not surprise us. But we nevertheless say, "We must trade with the capitalist countries as long as they exist." We shall negotiate with them as merchants; and the fact we can do so is proved by the increasing number of trade agreements we are signing and negotiating with them. But we cannot publish them until they are signed. From the commercial point of view we, of course, have to agree when a capitalist merchant comes to us and says, "This deal must remain between ourselves until the negotiations are completed." We, however, know how many agreements are in course of preparation—the list alone fills several pages, and it includes scores of practical proposals that have been discussed in detail with important financial groups. Of course, the gentlemen representing the bourgeois countries gathering at Genoa are as well aware of this as we are; whatever the position may be as regards other matters, contacts between these governments and their capitalist firms have, of course, been maintained. Even they are not so terribly lax as not to know of this.

Since in foreign telegrams we are continually reading statements which create the impression that they do not know exactly what will take place at Genoa, that they have something new up their sleeve, that they want to as-

tonish the world by submitting new terms to Russia, permit me to say to them (and I hope I shall have the opportunity of saying it to Lloyd George personally, at Genoa): "You will not surprise anyone by this, gentlemen. You are businessmen, and you know your job well. We are only just learning to trade and are still clumsy at it. But we have tens and hundreds of agreements and draft agreements, which show how we trade and what transactions we conduct or shall conduct, and on what terms." And we smile quietly to ourselves when we read in the newspapers all sorts of reports—published for the purpose of scaring someone—to the effect that they intend to put us to some sort of test. 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. We have been threatened with the guns of the Allied powers that rule almost the whole world. *We were not frightened by those threats. Please, gentlemen, European diplomats, do not forget that.*

We are not in the least concerned about maintaining our diplomatic prestige, the good name to which the bourgeois states attach so much importance. Officially, we shall not even talk about it. But we have not forgotten it. Not one of our workers, not one of our peasants has forgotten, can forget, or ever will forget that he fought in defence of the workers' and peasants' government against the alliance of all those very powerful states that supported the intervention. We have a whole collection of treaties which those countries concluded with Kolchak and Denikin over a number of years. They have been published; we are familiar with them and the whole world is familiar with them. What is the use of playing hide-and-seek and pretending that we have all become Simple Simons? Every peasant and every worker knows that he fought against those countries, and that they failed to vanquish him. And if you gentlemen, who represent the bourgeois governments, care to amuse yourselves, to waste your paper (of which you have ever so much more than you need) and your ink, and to overload your cables and radio stations with messages announcing to the whole world: "We shall put Russia to the test", we shall see who comes off best. We have already been put to the test, not the test of words, not the test

of trade, not the test of money, but the test of the bludgeon. And in view of the severe, bleeding and painful wounds inflicted on us, we have earned that it be said of us—not by ourselves, but by our enemies—"A man who has been beaten is worth two who have not."

We have earned this on the field of battle. As far as trade is concerned, it is a pity that we Communists are not being thrashed enough, but I trust that this defect will be made good in the near future with equal success.

I said that I hope to discuss these subjects with Lloyd George personally, in Genoa, and to tell him that *it is no use trying to frighten us with such trivialities* because it will only damage the prestige of those who try it. I hope that I shall not be prevented from doing this by ill health, which during the past few months has prevented me from taking a direct part in political affairs, and which totally incapacitates me for the Soviet duties which I have been appointed to perform. I have reason to believe that I shall be able to return to my duties within a few weeks. *But will three or four of them succeed within the next few weeks in reaching an agreement on what they have informed the world they are already agreed upon? I am not sure about that.* I even dare assert that nobody in the world is sure about it, and what is more, that they themselves are not sure, because when these victorious powers, which rule the whole world, gathered at Cannes³³ after numerous preliminary conferences—the number of these conferences is infinite, and even the European bourgeois press is jeering—they could not say definitely what they wanted.

Pravda No. 54,
March 8, 1922

Collected Works, Vol. 33,
pp. 212-17

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*From the Political Report
of the Central Committee of the R.C.P.(B.)
to the Eleventh Congress of the R.C.P.(B.)*

March 27, 1922

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(*Applause.*) Comrades, permit me to start the political report of the Central Committee from the end and not from the beginning of the year. The political question most discussed today is Genoa. But since a great deal has already been said on the subject in our press, and since I have already said what is most essential to it in my speech on March 6, which has been published, I would ask you to permit me to refrain from going into details unless you particularly wish me to do so.

On the whole you know everything about Genoa, because much has been written about it in the newspapers—in my opinion too much, to the detriment of the real, practical and urgent requirements of our work of construction in general, and of our economic development in particular. In Europe, in all bourgeois countries, of course, they like to occupy people's minds, or stuff their heads, with all sorts of trash about Genoa. On this occasion (I would say not only on this occasion) we are copying them, and copying them far too much.

I must say that in the Central Committee we have taken very great pains to appoint a delegation of our best diplomats (we now have a fair number of Soviet diplomats, which was not the case in the early period of the Soviet Republic). The Central Committee has drawn up sufficiently detailed instructions for our diplomats at the Genoa Conference; we spent a long time discussing these instructions and considered and reconsidered them several times. It goes without saying that the question here is, I shall not say of war, because that term is likely to be misunderstood, but at all events one of rivalry. In the bour-

geois camp there is a very strong trend, much stronger than any other, that wants to wreck the Genoa Conference. There are trends which greatly favour the Genoa Conference and want it to meet at all costs. The latter have now gained the upper hand. Lastly, in all bourgeois countries there are trends which might be called pacifist trends, among which should be included the entire Second and Two-and-a-Half Internationals. It is this section of the bourgeoisie which is advocating a number of pacifist proposals and is trying to concoct something in the nature of a pacifist policy. As Communists we have definite views about this pacifism which it would be superfluous to expound here. Needless to say, we are going to Genoa not as Communists, but as merchants. We must trade, and they must trade. We want the trade to benefit us; they want it to benefit them. The course of the issue will be determined, if only to a small degree, by the skill of our diplomats.

Insofar as we are going to Genoa as merchants it is obviously by no means a matter of indifference to us whether we shall deal with those people from the bourgeois camp who are inclined to settle the problem by war, or with those who are inclined towards pacifism, even the worst kind of pacifism, which from the communist viewpoint will not stand the slightest criticism. It would be a bad merchant, indeed, if he were unable to appreciate this distinction, and, by shaping his tactics accordingly, achieve practical aims.

We are going to Genoa for the practical purpose of expanding trade and of creating the most favourable conditions for its successful development on the widest scale. But we cannot guarantee the success of the Genoa Conference. It would be ridiculous and absurd to give any guarantees on that score. I must say, however, that, weighing up the present possibilities of Genoa in the most sober and cautious manner, I think that it will not be an exaggeration to say that we shall achieve our object.

Through Genoa, if the other parties in the negotiations are sufficiently shrewd and not too stubborn; bypassing Genoa if they take it into their heads to be stubborn. But we shall achieve our goal!

The fact of the matter is that the most urgent, pressing and practical interests that have been sharply revealed in

all the capitalist countries during the past few years call for the development, regulation and expansion of trade with Russia. Since such interests exist, we may argue, we may quarrel, we may disagree on specific combinations—it is highly probable that we shall have to disagree—this fundamental economic necessity will, nevertheless, after all is said and done, make a way for itself. I think we can rest assured of that. I cannot vouch for the date; I cannot vouch for success; but at this gathering we can say with a fair amount of certainty that regular trade relations between the Soviet Republic and all the capitalist countries in the world are certain to continue developing. When I come to it in another part of my report I shall mention the hitches that may possibly occur; but I think that this is all that need be said on the question of Genoa.

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Collected Works, Vol. 33,
pp. 263-65

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*Draft Decision
of the All-Russia Central Executive Committee
on the Report of the Delegation
to the Genoa Conference*
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The All-Russia Central Executive Committee's draft resolution on Joffe's report should be drawn up approximately as follows:

1. The delegation of the All-Russia Central Executive Committee has carried out its task correctly in upholding the full sovereignty of the R.S.F.S.R., opposing attempts to force the country into bondage and restore private property, and in concluding a treaty with Germany.³⁴

2. The international political and economic situation is characterised by the following features.

Political: the absence of peace and the danger of fresh imperialist wars [Ireland, India, China, and others; worsening of relations between Britain and France, between Japan and the United States, *etc., etc.* ((in greater detail))].

3. Economic: the "victor" countries, exceedingly powerful and enriched by the war (=by plunder), have not been able to re-establish even the former capitalist relations three and a half years after the war [currency chaos; non-fulfilment of the Treaty of Versailles and the impossibility of its fulfilment; non-payment of debts to the United States, *etc., etc.* (in greater detail)].

4. Therefore, Article One of the Cannes resolutions,³⁵ by recognising the *equality* of the two *property systems* (capitalist or private property, and communist property, *so far* accepted only in the R.S.F.S.R.), is thus compelled to recognise, even if only indirectly, the collapse, the bankruptcy of the first property system and the inevitability of its coming to an *agreement* with the second, on terms of equality.

5. The other articles of the Cannes terms, as well as the

memoranda, etc., of the powers at Genoa, are in contradiction to this and are, therefore, still-born.

6. True equality of the two property systems—if *only as a temporary state, until such time as the entire world abandons* private property and the *economic chaos* and wars engendered by it for the higher property system—is found only in the Treaty of Rapallo.

The All-Russia Central Executive Committee, therefore: welcomes the Treaty of Rapallo as the only correct way out of the difficulties, chaos and danger of wars (as long as there remain two property systems, one of them as obsolete as capitalist property);

recognises *only* this type of treaty as normal for relations between the R.S.F.S.R. and capitalist countries;

instructs the Council of People's Commissars and the People's Commissariat of Foreign Affairs to pursue a policy along these lines;

instructs the Presidium of the All-Russia Central Executive Committee to confirm it by agreement with all republics that are in federal relations with the R.S.F.S.R.;

instructs the People's Commissariat of Foreign Affairs and the Council of People's Commissars to permit deviations from the Rapallo-type treaty only in exceptional circumstances that gain very special advantages for the working people of the R.S.F.S.R., etc.

Written on May 15 or 16, 1922

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Collected Works, Vol. 33,
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■
*Interview Given to Michael Farbman,
OBSERVER and MANCHESTER GUARDIAN
Correspondent*
■

1. *Question.* The anti-Russian press describes Herriot's³⁶ reception in Moscow and the Franco-Russian negotiations as a definite change in Soviet Russia's foreign policy.

Is that true? Is it true that Russia regards British policy in the Middle East as a challenge and is ready to conclude an agreement with France directed against Britain?

Answer. I consider it absolutely incorrect to describe Herriot's reception in Moscow and the Franco-Russian negotiations as a change, even a slight one, in Soviet Russia's policy in general, or as being anti-British in particular. We certainly value very highly both Herriot's reception in Moscow and the step taken towards a rapprochement with France or towards negotiations with her, which have now become possible, probable and, I should like to believe, essential. Any rapprochement with France is something we very much desire, especially in view of the fact that Russia's commercial interests imperatively demand closer relations with this strong continental power. But we are convinced that this rapprochement does not in the least imply that some change must necessarily take place in our policy towards Britain. We believe fully friendly relations with both powers to be quite possible, and that is our aim. We believe that the development of commercial relations will inevitably go a very long way towards achieving this aim. We believe that the interests of Britain and France, rightly understood, will likewise operate in that direction. We believe that the mutual interests of both Britain and France, insofar as they have points of contact with Russia, do not under any circumstances contain elements of inevitable hostility between Britain and France. On the contrary, we even think

that peaceful and friendly relations between these powers and Russia are a guarantee (I am almost prepared to say—the strongest guarantee) that peace and friendship between Britain and France will last a long time, and that all possible, and under present circumstances probable, differences between France and Britain will most speedily and truly find a happy solution.

2. *Question.* Is not the virtual termination of the Greco-Turkish War, a war supported by Britain, an opportune moment for the conclusion of an Anglo-Russian agreement?

Answer. Of course, the termination of the Greco-Turkish War, which had Britain's support, is a factor that, to a certain extent, improves the chances of an Anglo-Russian agreement being concluded. We looked for such an agreement even before that war ended and shall now continue to seek it with the utmost energy. True, some of the problems connected with the termination of that war are objects of our disagreement with Britain. But, first of all, the peace which has followed the Greco-Turkish War is in our opinion such an advantage to international politics as a whole that we hope for an improvement in the general conditions under which they are conducted, thanks to the Greco-Turkish peace. Secondly, we do not consider the differences between Britain and ourselves to be in any way insurmountable. On the contrary, we expect that, with the Middle East problem entering various stages, the near future will show us to what extent we are right in hoping that the end of the Greco-Turkish War will also be the end of the conflicts and differences which placed that war in the forefront of international politics. We are doing everything in our power to make the end of that war also the end of all friction and disagreement with Britain, and we hope that the interests of the British Government will rise on this occasion, too, above any promptings and the frequently insincere utterances of the anti-Russian press.

3. *Question.* Do you consider Russia's participation in the eastern question³⁷ a matter of prestige alone, or do you proceed exclusively from Russia's real interests? Does the Russian Government agree to the French proposal to permit Russia's participation in only that part of the Conference that will decide the question of the Straits?

Answer. I consider Russia's participation in the settlement of the Middle East question to have nothing to do with prestige. I hope that our international politics as a whole over a period of five years have shown completely that we are quite indifferent to questions of prestige and that we are incapable of putting forward any demand whatsoever or of worsening the real chances of peace between states solely on account of prestige. I am confident that in no other country are the masses so indifferent to prestige and even so prepared to treat the question of prestige as such with happy ridicule. We are of the opinion that modern diplomacy will rapidly come to regard questions of prestige precisely in this way.

Our Middle East policy is a matter of Russia's most real, immediate and vital interest and of the interest of a number of states federated with her. If all these states did not succeed in getting their demand to participate in the Middle East Conference satisfied, there would remain a huge mass of elements of hostility, conflict and discontent; their non-participation would involve such difficulties in purely commercial affairs between Eastern Europe on the one hand, and all other states on the other, that either there would remain no grounds whatever for peaceful coexistence or that such existence would be extraordinarily difficult.

The Russian Government, therefore, is not satisfied with the proposal from Paris to allow Russia to participate only in that part of the Conference which will settle the problem of the Straits. We are of the opinion that such a limitation would inevitably lead to a number of very practical, immediate inconveniences, in particular economic inconveniences, from which France and Britain would themselves suffer, most probably in the near future.

4. *Question.* What is the Russian programme for the solution of the Straits problem?

Answer. Our Straits programme (still only approximate, of course) contains, among other things, the following:

First, the satisfaction of Turkey's national aspirations. We consider this essential, and not only in the interests of national independence. Our five years' experience in settling the national question in a country that contains a tremendous number of nationalities such as could hardly be found

in any other country, gives us the full conviction that under such circumstances the only correct attitude to the interests of nations is to meet those interests in full and provide conditions that exclude any possibility of conflicts on that score. Our experience has left us with the firm conviction that only exclusive attention to the interests of various nations can remove grounds for conflicts, can remove mutual mistrust, can remove the fear of any intrigues and create that confidence, especially on the part of workers and peasants speaking different languages, without which there absolutely cannot be peaceful relations between peoples or anything like a successful development of everything that is of value in present-day civilisation.

Secondly, our programme includes the closing of the Straits to all warships in times of peace and of war. This is in the direct commercial interests of all powers, not only of those whose territory is in the immediate vicinity of the Straits, but of all others, too. It must be remembered that all over the world there has been an inordinate amount of pacifist talk, an unusual number of pacifist phrases and assurances, and even vows against war and against peace, although there is usually little preparedness on the part of the majority of states, especially on the part of the modern civilised states, to take any realistic steps, even the most simple, to ensure peace. On this, and on similar questions, we should like to see a minimum of general assurances, solemn promises and grandiloquent formulas, and the greatest possible number of the simplest and most obvious decisions and measures that would certainly lead to peace, if not to the complete elimination of the war danger.

Thirdly, our programme on the Straits includes complete freedom of commerce by sea. After what I have said above I do not think it at all necessary to explain this point or make it more concrete.

5. *Question.* Would the Russian Government agree to the League of Nations controlling the Straits if the League were to include in its composition Russia, Turkey, Germany and the United States?

Or would Russia insist on the establishment of a special commission to control the Straits?

Answer. We are, of course, opposed to the League of Nations, and I do not think that it is only our economic and political system with its specific features that accounts

for our negative attitude towards the League; the interests of peace, regarded from the point of view of the concrete conditions of modern international politics in general, also fully justify that negative attitude. The League of Nations bears so many marks of its world war origin, it is so intimately bound up with the Versailles Treaty and is so marked by the absence of anything resembling the establishment of the real equality of rights between nations, anything resembling a real chance of their peaceful coexistence, that I think our negative attitude to the League can be appreciated and does not stand in need of further comment.

6. *Question.* Does the refusal to ratify the agreement with Urquhart³⁸ mean a victory of the "Left Communists"? What are the objective conditions which would make possible a resumption of negotiations and the ratification of the agreement with Urquhart?

Answer. The question of concluding an agreement with Urquhart was raised by our government when I was ill and was unable to take part in affairs of state. Therefore I am not yet fully informed of all the details of this matter. Nevertheless I can assert quite definitely that there is not, nor can there now be, any question of a victory for the Left Communists. I know this from my direct observation of the course of government affairs.

The fact of the matter is that Britain's act of injustice, expressed in her unwillingness to admit us to the Conference, was so unexpected, aroused such indignation in Russia and so firmly united not only the Right with the Left Communists but also united the huge mass of the non-Party population of Russia, the workers and peasants, that things did not and could not reach the point of disagreement between the Left and Right Communists.

The reason given for our rejection of the Urquhart agreement was a direct expression, one may say, not only of the general Party sentiment but of that of the entire people, i.e., the sentiment of the entire mass of the workers and peasants.

The resumption of negotiations and the subsequent ratification of an agreement with Urquhart depend primarily on the elimination of the flagrant injustices committed against Russia by Britain in curtailing her right to participate in the Middle East Conference. As far as the concrete terms submitted to us by Urquhart are concerned, I

have not yet had time to look into this matter in sufficient detail, and can only say that the government has decided to let the supporters and opponents of this agreement have their say in our press as soon as possible, in order to obtain, from the most objective and motivated discussion, material for the overall verification of all the pros and cons and for a decision on the issue in a manner that best accords with Russia's interests.

7. *Question.* To what extent are the accusations of the anti-Russian press in Britain justified when they assert that the recent arrests of industrialists in Moscow signify the end of the New Economic Policy and a reversion to the policy of nationalisation and confiscation?

Answer. As to your question concerning the accusations made against us in the British anti-Russian press that "Moscow industrialists" were being arrested, I must say that I have today just read in our newspaper (*Izvestia*) an item headed "Arrests of Black Marketeers". None other than Comrade Z. B. Katsnelson, chief of the Economic Division of the State Political Administration, tells us in this article that there was no question of arrests of industrialists, and that "rumours circulated by enemies of Soviet power, both within the R.S.F.S.R. and abroad, that the arrests are infringements on the freedom to trade are actually nothing but *nonsensical* inventions that have the definite counter-revolutionary intent of disrupting the economic relations that are being established with Western Europe".

Indeed, those arrested were exclusively profiteers on the so-called black market and our authorities are in possession of evidence establishing connection between these black-market currency profiteers and certain employees of foreign missions in Moscow. This evidence shows not only the sale of platinum and of gold bars but also the *organisation of contraband shipments of these valuables abroad*.

From this you can see how absolutely unfounded are the rumours that we are putting an end to the New Economic Policy and how utterly false are the accusations made by the anti-Russian press in Britain, which is trying by the most unheard-of distortion and deception to present our policy in a false light. Actually, there has never been any mention in any government circles whatsoever of discontinuing the New Economic Policy and returning to the old. Incidentally,

the whole work of the government during the session of the All-Russia Central Executive Committee now in progress is aimed at obtaining the widest possible legislative sanction for what is known as the New Economic Policy, so as to eliminate all possibility of any deviation from it.

October 27, 1922

Pravda No. 254,
November 10, 1922

Collected Works, Vol. 33,
pp. 383-89

■
From the Article
"Better Fewer, but Better"
■

The general feature of our present life is the following: we have destroyed capitalist industry and have done our best to raze to the ground the medieval institutions and landed proprietorship, and thus created a small and very small peasantry, which is following the lead of the proletariat because it believes in the results of its revolutionary work. It is not easy for us, however, to keep going until the socialist revolution is victorious in more developed countries merely with the aid of this confidence, because economic necessity, especially under NEP, keeps the productivity of labour of the small and very small peasants at an extremely low level. Moreover, the international situation, too, threw Russia back and, by and large, reduced the labour productivity of the people to a level considerably below pre-war. The West-European capitalist powers, partly deliberately and partly unconsciously, did everything they could to throw us back, to utilise the elements of the Civil War in Russia in order to spread as much ruin in the country as possible. It was precisely this way out of the imperialist war that seemed to have many advantages. They argued somewhat as follows: "If we fail to overthrow the revolutionary system in Russia, we shall, at all events, hinder its progress towards socialism." And from their point of view they could argue in no other way. In the end, their problem was half-solved. They failed to overthrow the new system created by the revolution, but they did prevent it from at once taking the step forward that would have justified the forecasts of the socialists, that would have enabled the latter to develop the productive forces with enormous speed, to develop all the potentialities which, taken together, would have pro-

duced socialism; socialists would thus have proved to all and sundry that socialism contains within itself gigantic forces and that mankind had now entered into a new stage of development of extraordinarily brilliant prospects.

The system of international relationships which has now taken shape is one in which a European state, Germany, is enslaved by the victor countries. Furthermore, owing to their victory, a number of states, the oldest states in the West, are in a position to make some insignificant concessions to their oppressed classes—concessions which, insignificant though they are, nevertheless retard the revolutionary movement in those countries and create some semblance of “class truce”.

At the same time, as a result of the last imperialist war, a number of countries of the East, India, China, etc., have been completely jolted out of the rut. Their development has definitely shifted to general European capitalist lines. The general European ferment has begun to affect them, and it is now clear to the whole world that they have been drawn into a process of development that must lead to a crisis in the whole of world capitalism.

Thus, at the present time we are confronted with the question—shall we be able to hold on with our small and very small peasant production, and in our present state of ruin, until the West-European capitalist countries consummate their development towards socialism? But they are consummating it not as we formerly expected. They are not consummating it through the gradual “maturing” of socialism, but through the exploitation of some countries by others, through the exploitation of the first of the countries vanquished in the imperialist war combined with the exploitation of the whole of the East. On the other hand, precisely as a result of the first imperialist war, the East has been definitely drawn into the revolutionary movement, has been definitely drawn into the general maelstrom of the world revolutionary movement.

What tactics does this situation prescribe for our country? Obviously the following. We must display extreme caution so as to preserve our workers’ government and to retain our small and very small peasantry under its leadership and authority. We have the advantage that the whole world is now passing to a movement that must give rise to a world

socialist revolution. But we are labouring under the disadvantage that the imperialists have succeeded in splitting the world into two camps; and this split is made more complicated by the fact that it is extremely difficult for Germany, which is really a land of advanced, cultured, capitalist development, to rise to her feet. All the capitalist powers of what is called the West are pecking at her and preventing her from rising. On the other hand, the entire East, with its hundreds of millions of exploited working people, reduced to the last degree of human suffering, has been forced into a position where its physical and material strength cannot possibly be compared with the physical, material and military strength of any of the much smaller West-European states.

Can we save ourselves from the impending conflict with these imperialist countries? May we hope that the internal antagonisms and conflicts between the thriving imperialist countries of the West and the thriving imperialist countries of the East will give us a second respite as they did the first time, when the campaign of the West-European counter-revolution in support of the Russian counter-revolution broke down owing to the antagonisms in the camp of the counter-revolutionaries of the West and the East, in the camp of the Eastern and Western exploiters, in the camp of Japan and the U.S.A.?

I think the reply to this question should be that the issue depends upon too many factors, and that the outcome of the struggle as a whole can be forecast only because in the long run capitalism itself is educating and training the vast majority of the population of the globe for the struggle.

In the last analysis, the outcome of the struggle will be determined by the fact that Russia, India, China, etc., account for the overwhelming majority of the population of the globe. And during the past few years it is this majority that has been drawn into the struggle for emancipation with extraordinary rapidity, so that in this respect there cannot be the slightest doubt what the final outcome of the world struggle will be. In this sense, the complete victory of socialism is fully and absolutely assured.

But what interests us is not the inevitability of this complete victory of socialism, but the tactics which we, the Russian Communist Party, we, the Russian Soviet Govern-

ment, should pursue to prevent the West-European counter-revolutionary states from crushing us. To ensure our existence until the next military conflict between the counter-revolutionary imperialist West and the revolutionary and nationalist East, between the most civilised countries of the world and the Orientally backward countries which, however, comprise the majority, this majority must become civilised. We, too, lack enough civilisation to enable us to pass straight on to socialism, although we do have the political requisites for it. We should adopt the following tactics, or pursue the following policy, to save ourselves.

We must strive to build up a state in which the workers retain the leadership of the peasants, in which they retain the confidence of the peasants, and by exercising the greatest economy remove every trace of extravagance from our social relations.

We must reduce our state apparatus to the utmost degree of economy. We must banish from it all traces of extravagance, of which so much has been left over from tsarist Russia, from its bureaucratic capitalist state machine.

Will not this be a reign of peasant limitations?

No. If we see to it that the working class retains its leadership over the peasantry, we shall be able, by exercising the greatest possible thrift in the economic life of our state, to use every saving we make to develop our large-scale machine industry, to develop electrification, the hydraulic extraction of peat, to complete the Volkhov Power Project,³⁹ etc.

In this, and in this alone, lies our hope. Only when we have done this shall we, speaking figuratively, be able to change horses, to change from the peasant, muzhik horse of poverty, from the horse of an economy designed for a ruined peasant country, to the horse which the proletariat is seeking and must seek—the horse of large-scale machine industry, of electrification, of the Volkhov Power Station, etc.

Written on March 2, 1923

Pravda No. 49,
March 4, 1923
Signed: *N. Lenin*

Collected Works, Vol. 33,
pp. 498-501

APPENDIX

■
*Lenin's Marginal Notes on a
Letter from G. V. Chicherin*
■

TO COMRADE LENIN

March 10, 1922

Esteemed Vladimir Ilyich:

I earnestly request you to read through the proposals made below and let me have your instructions. We have to put forward "a broad pacifist programme", that is one of the most important elements of our forthcoming act⁴⁰; we have not, however, got one. We have only the separate fragmentary points in the first directives of the Central Committee. I am here making a first attempt to approach the task.

The chief difficulty is that the present international political and economic forms serve as permanent fig-leaves covering the predatory acts of the imperialists; in particular, these forms serve as a weapon against us. The League of Nations is simply a tool of the Entente, which has already used it against us. You have yourself pointed out that arbitration between the bourgeois and Soviet states is impossible; nevertheless arbitration is an indispensable weapon in the pacifist arsenal. The internationalisation of the Chinese-Eastern Railway is a euphemism for its alienation from us and from China and its seizure by the Entente. A foreign bank of issue in Russia and the introduction of the dollar into Russia, like the introduction of a universal single gold unit in general, would be the most effective weapon for complete economic bondage to America.

We have to introduce something new into the customary modern international forms to prevent those forms from being turned into a tool of imperialism. This new something is provided by our experience and our creative activity as well as by the creative action of life itself in the process of the growing ruin and break-up of the imperialist world. The world war has resulted in the intensification of the liberation movement of all oppressed and colonial peoples. World states are coming undone at the seams. Our international programme must bring all oppressed colonial peoples into the international scheme. The right of all peoples to secession or to home

rule must be recognised. The African Conference of 1885 resulted in the horrors of the Belgian Congo, because the European powers at that conference indulged in philanthropy towards the Negroes and that philanthropy turned out to be a fig-leaf covering the most barbaric exploitation. The novelty of our international scheme must be that the Negro and other

1) colonial peoples participate on an equal footing with the
true! European peoples in conferences and commissions and have the right to prevent interference in their internal affairs.

- 2) Another novelty is the obligatory participation of working-class organisations. The demand for trade unions to take part in a future European congress was very popular in British working-class literature during the world war. We have actually realised this by including three members of the All-Russia Central T.U.C. in our delegation. We must lay down that one-third of the votes in the international organisation we are going to propose should belong to the working-class organisations represented in each delegation. These two novelties, however, are not sufficient to protect the oppressed peoples and downtrodden countries from the domination of the imperialists because the upper stratum of the colonial peoples may well be puppets in the same way as treacherous labour leaders are. The inclusion of these two opens up the way for future struggles. Working-class organisations will be confronted with the task of struggling for the liberation of the colonial peoples, for aid to the Soviet power and against imperialist depredation. The leaders, however, will try to betray them. Therefore another thing to be established is the principle of
- 3) non-intervention on the part of international conferences or congresses in the internal affairs of various peoples. Voluntary co-operation and aid for the weak on the part of the strong must be applied without subordinating the former to the latter.

As a result we have a very bold and completely new proposal—A WORLD CONGRESS with all peoples of the world participating on a completely equal footing, on the basis of the declaration of the right to self-determination, the right to complete secession or home rule for all oppressed peoples, and also with the participation of working-class organisations to the extent of one-third of the entire congress. The purpose of the congress will not be compulsion of the minority but

- 4) complete agreement. The congress will help by its moral
pre- authority. In practice it will set up technical commissions for
cise- the implementation of our extensive economic programme of
(world-wide rehabilitation.

All the projects for a League of Nations or Association

of Nations contain only two types of proposals concerning methods of compulsion to ensure fulfilment of the decisions of an Association of Nations—either the establishment of composite armies with contingents from all states or the investment of a punitive mandate in a certain power or several such powers. In the first case we would have something incompetent because a composite army made up of contingents from numerous countries is of no use. In the second case the League of Nations or Association of Nations is nothing but an excuse to justify fresh conquests by the more influential powers. And so it is essential to eliminate completely the element of compulsion or punitive expeditions and leave to the World Congress only its moral authority, allowing it to be an arena for discussions aimed at reaching agreement. The prevention of war is a matter for arbitration. There are two types of arbitration—the voluntary appeal of the two parties to an arbiter, to The Hague Tribunal, for instance—in such cases the decision of the arbiter is binding—or the second method, an example of which is to be found in the article on arbitration contained in the treaty between Great Britain and the United States according to which, in the event of there being a danger of war, special conciliation commissions are set up to which the two parties must appeal but whose decision is merely advisory although for a definite period, for instance a year, the proceedings of the commissions continue; this second method has as its purpose the postponement of the beginning of military action to enable the passions of both parties to subside in the legally established interval and lessen the conflict. In the first case appeal to the arbiter is not obligatory but decisions are binding. In the second case appeal to the arbiter is obligatory but decisions are not binding, and the parties are bound only for the legally established period.

cor-
rect!

At the present moment we cannot avoid this alternative. The proposed World Congress could take over The Hague Tribunal with its advisory arbitration and other services. We shall, however, consider that the only court of arbitration between a capitalist state and the Soviet state can be that in which an

(5)

equal number of members is appointed by each party so that
half the members will be imperialists and half will be Com-
munists. At the same time we shall propose a general

(6)

reduction of armaments based on the theses we have established
with the Revolutionary Military Council of the Republic;
developing the traditions of the Hague and Geneva conven-
tions we shall propose adding a number of prohibitions to the
rules of war—the abolition of submarines, chemical gases,
mortars, flame-throwers and armed air battles.

5)

6)

7)

- 8) The technical commissions set up by the World Congress will guide the implementation of a broad programme of world-wide rehabilitation. This programme will not be imposed by force. It will be a voluntary proposal that appeals to the advantage of every participant. Aid will be given to the weak.
- 9)

In this way world railways, river and sea routes must be laid down. The internationalisation of those routes will be a matter of gradual development since the compulsion of those who resist will not be allowed. International technical commissions will propose to individual countries economic and technical aid for the creation of super-main lines, for the regulation of traffic on international rivers, for the use of international harbours and for the technical improvement of world sea routes. We shall propose that the capital of the advanced countries should build a super-main line London-Moscow-

- 10) Vladivostok (Peking) and we shall explain that it will open up the incalculable wealth of Siberia for the use of all. In general, aid from the strong for the weak will be the basic principle of world rehabilitation which must be based on economic geography and the planned distribution of resources. A world gold unit can make its appearance only as a result of the improvement of the economically weak countries with the aid of the strong: this improvement is in the interest of all since world ruin affects the strong countries as well, giving rise to unparalleled unemployment, even in America. The strong, by helping the weak, are opening up for themselves markets and sources of raw materials. Proceeding from these premises we shall propose the planned distribution of the gold
- 11) that is at the moment lying idle in the vaults of the American banks. This planned distribution of gold in all countries must be combined with the planned distribution of orders, trade, supplies of scarce materials, in general, with all-round economic aid for the ruined countries. This aid may take
- 12) the form of loans, since under a planned economy the return of the money would begin in a few years. Under this heading we place the Barter Institute plan (Keynes), or the Zentralstelle, or national trade centres. If Germany opposes us by a single Zentralstelle in place of individual merchants it will be bad for us since it would be a means of imposing bad goods on us at high prices. If, however, the Zentralstellen are instruments for the planned, world-wide distribution of es-
- 13) sential commodities and a means of rendering aid to weak countries by the strong, they would be essential components of an extensive programme of economic rehabilitation. The grain sent to us by America is the beginning of the interna-

tional distribution of food. Within the Entente there was a partially planned distribution of fuel during the war; one of the chief elements of the broad programme should be the systematic distribution of oil and coal, but in this case, too, the element of compulsion and repression must be eliminated. The international technical commissions must elaborate, in very general outline, a programme for the planned distribution of fuel and energy resources. All these points, taken together, provide a picture of what is theoretically possible under the bourgeois system, but which in historically conditioned reality will come up against national egoism and the predatory acts of the capitalist oligarchy.

With communist greetings,
Georgi Chicherin

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■
*Letter from V. I. Lenin
to G. V. Chicherin*
■

14. III. 1922

Comrade Chicherin:

I have read your letter of 10/III. I think yours is an excellent exposition of the pacifist programme.

The whole point is to have the skill to expound it and our commercial proposals loudly and clearly *before* the fold-up⁴¹ (if "they" do try to fold it up in haste).

You and our delegation have enough skill to do this.

I think you have made some 13 points (I enclose your letter with my remarks), which are excellent.

We shall have everyone intrigued by saying: "We have a most broad and comprehensive programme!" If they prevent us from making it public, we *shall print* it with our protest.

In every case we make this "little" reservation: we Communists have *our own* communist programme (the Third International); *nevertheless* we consider it to be our duty as *businessmen to support* (even if the odds are 10,000 to 1) the *pacifists in the other*, i.e., bourgeois, camp (taking account of *its* Second and Two-and-a-Half Internationals).

This will be "genteel" and have teeth, and will help to demoralise the enemy.

If we adopt such tactics we shall win out, *even if* Genoa is a failure. We shall *not accept* any unprofitable deal.

With communist greetings,
Yours,
Lenin

14/III.

P.S. Comrade Chicherin:

Why not add even more "genteel" bite and say the following:

We propose (§ 14) abolition of *all* war debts and (§ 15) *revision* (on the basis of the 13 §§) of the Versailles and *all* military treaties,

but not through the majority riding roughshod over the minority, but on the basis of an *agreement*, because *in this case* we are businessmen and *cannot* put forward any other principle *here* than the commercial one! We don't want to have it all our way with the United States through a majority; we are businessmen; we want to *persuade* it!! A *poll of all* the states and *an attempt to persuade* those who do not agree. This is both genteel and unacceptable to the bourgeois. We shall disgrace and humiliate them in a very "genteel" way.

Here is a variant: submission of a minority of countries (in population) to the majority can be proposed *separately* within each of the two camps: the bourgeois and the Soviet (the one recognising private property, and the other not recognising it).

Let us put forward both the project and the variant.

*Les rieurs seront avec nous!**

×)** an additional point: an exemption to be made for smallholders *insofar as* it can be precisely proved that these are not fictitious but actual toiling smallholders.

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* We shall have the last laugh.—*Ed.*

** This symbol is not to be found in the text.—*Ed.*

- ¹ The Congress opened at 10.45 p.m. on October 25 (November 7), 1917, in Petrograd. It was attended by 649 delegates of whom 390 were Bolsheviks. The Congress declared the overthrow of the bourgeois Provisional Government and the transfer of power into the hands of the Soviets of Workers', Soldiers' and Peasants' Deputies. The Congress adopted the Decree on Peace that proposed to all belligerent peoples to begin immediate negotiations for a just and democratic peace; it also adopted the Decree on Land which abolished landed estates and made land the property of the people. The Congress formed the Soviet Government, the Council of People's Commissars, of which Lenin was elected chairman. p. 22
- ² Lenin here refers to the manifesto of the Petrograd Soviet of Workers' and Soldiers' Deputies addressed "To the Peoples of All the World" that was adopted at a meeting of the Soviet on March 14 (27), 1917 (when the Mensheviks and Socialist-Revolutionaries were in the majority). The manifesto said: "We call upon you to throw off the yoke of your semi-absolutism in the same way as the Russian people have cast off the tsarist autocracy; refuse to serve as an instrument of conquest and violence in the hands of the kings, landlords and bankers." The manifesto, adopted under pressure from the revolutionary masses, called upon the working people of the belligerent countries to take action for peace, but it did not expose the predatory nature of the war and in fact justified the continuation of the imperialist war by the bourgeois Provisional Government. p. 26
- ³ *The secret treaties* between tsarist Russia and the imperialist powers were published by the People's Commissariat for Foreign Affairs in December 1917 and early in 1918 in accordance with a decision adopted by the Second All-Russia Congress of Soviets. More than a hundred treaties and other secret documents of the tsarist and Provisional governments were removed from the archives of the former Ministry of Foreign Affairs, deciphered and published. At first they were printed in the newspapers and then published in nine collections. The publication of the secret treaties played an important role in exposing the imperialist nature of the First World War. p. 28

⁴ *Dukhonin*—general of the tsarist army, monarchist; was appointed Chief of Staff to the Supreme Commander-in-Chief by the Provisional Government in September 1917. After the October Socialist Revolution Dukhonin declared himself Supreme Commander-in-Chief and attempted to organise a counter-revolutionary revolt against Soviet power. He was removed from his post for refusing to obey the instructions of the Council of People's Commissars given on November 7 (20), 1917 to cease hostilities for the purpose of starting peace negotiations. p. 30

⁵ The text of the conversation between Army Headquarters and representatives of the Council of People's Commissars by the direct line during the night of November 8-9 (21-22), 1917, was published in the newspaper *Izvestia of the Central Executive Committee* No. 221, November 10, 1917. p. 30

⁶ *Romanov*—Tsar Nicholas II of Russia, dethroned by the February bourgeois-democratic revolution in 1917.

Rasputin—a favourite of Tsar Nicholas II and his wife Alexandra Fyodorovna. He was of peasant stock and came from Tobolsk Gubernia in Siberia; he posed as "clairvoyant" and "healer", penetrated into court circles and exercised considerable influence in state affairs. Rasputin's life and his activities at court were a vivid demonstration of the complete moral collapse of the ruling circles of tsarist Russia. Rasputin was assassinated in December 1916 by a group of monarchists who were indignant at his influence on the tsar. p. 33

⁷ This refers to the peace negotiations between Soviet Russia and Germany that began on November 20 (December 3), 1917 in the town of Brest-Litovsk. On November 22 (December 5) a preliminary agreement was reached to cease hostilities for ten days; on December 2 (15) an agreement on a twenty-eight-day armistice was concluded. On the insistence of the Soviet Government, Germany undertook not to transfer troops from the Russian to the Western Front. p. 33

⁸ *Robins, Raymond*—colonel, public figure in the U.S.A., head of the American Red Cross mission to Russia in 1917-18. Sympathised with Soviet power; met Lenin. In the twenties and thirties spoke in favour of the recognition of the U.S.S.R. and the establishment of diplomatic, economic and cultural relations with it. p. 34

⁹ In 1918 the Soviet Government set about the elaboration of plans to develop trade and economic relations with the capitalist countries. Considerable importance was attached to the development of economic relations with the U.S.A. The Plan for the Development of Economic Relations Between Soviet Russia and the United States of America was elaborated by the Foreign Trade Committee of the Economic Policy Commission of the Supreme Economic Council (dated May 12, 1918); it envisaged the granting of concessions under certain conditions to American businessmen to pay for commodities imported from the U.S.A. The Soviet Government also made efforts to establish economic relations with other countries. Plans to develop trade between Soviet Russia and the capitalist countries were wrecked by the intervention and the economic blockade of Soviet Russia carried out by the Entente countries. p. 34

- ¹⁰ The five questions put to Lenin by the United Press agency were: (1) Has the Russian Soviet Republic introduced any small or big changes into the original government programme of domestic and foreign policy and into the economic programme, when and what changes? (2) What tactics does the Russian Soviet Republic pursue in respect of Afghanistan, India and other Moslem countries outside the frontiers of Russia? (3) What political and economic aims do you pursue in respect of the United States and Japan? (4) On what terms would you be willing to conclude peace with Kolchak, Denikin and Mannerheim? (5) What else would you care to bring to the notice of American public opinion?

The Left socialist magazine *Liberator* published an article in October 1919 under the heading "A Statement and a Challenge" in which it gave Lenin's answer to the fifth question. In an editorial note the magazine stated that the United Press agency had distributed Lenin's answers to the newspapers but had omitted the answer to the fifth question.

p. 35

- ¹¹ *The bribery of the Czechoslovaks with Anglo-French money* refers to the counter-revolutionary actions of the Czechoslovak Army Corps organised by the imperialists of the Entente with the active participation of the Mensheviks and S.R.s.

The Czechoslovak Army Corps was formed by the Provisional Government in 1917 from Czech and Slovak prisoners of war to fight against the Germans. After the October Socialist Revolution the Corps was used by Russian counter-revolutionaries and by Anglo-French imperialism for the struggle against Soviet power. High-ranking officers of the Corps deceived the soldiers into fighting against Soviet power. The attack of the Corps was launched in May 1918. With the help of the Czechoslovaks the whiteguards seized the Volga area, the Urals and later Siberia. A considerable number of Czech and Slovak prisoners of war did not fall for the anti-Soviet and nationalist propaganda conducted by the reactionary officers of the Corps; about 12,000 of them fought in the ranks of the Red Army.

The Volga area was liberated by the Red Army in October 1918. The counter-revolutionary actions of the Czechoslovak Corps were stopped towards the end of 1919 when Kolchak was crushed.

Mannerheim—Finnish reactionary politician, general in the tsarist army up to 1917. In 1918 he commanded the counter-revolutionary Finnish White Army that together with German interventionists suppressed the revolution of the workers in Finland. One of the leaders of the anti-Soviet adventures of the Finnish reactionaries.

Denikin—general of the tsarist army, one of the leaders of the Russian counter-revolution organised by the landlords and bourgeoisie in the 1918-20 period. Was Commander-in-Chief in the offensive of the White armies in the south against Moscow; the White armies were routed.

p. 36

- ¹² *Kolchak*—admiral of the tsarist navy, monarchist. After the October Socialist Revolution, supported by the U.S.A., Britain and France, declared himself supreme ruler of Russia and headed the dictatorship of the landlords and bourgeoisie in the Urals, Siberia and the Far East (end of 1918 to early 1920). Sentenced to death

in February 1920 by the Irkutsk Military Revolutionary Committee and shot.

p. 36

- ¹³ *Bullitt, William*—conducted negotiations with the Soviet Government on peace in March 1919 on the instructions of President Wilson of the U.S.A. The Soviet Government made a number of amendments and addenda to the proposals submitted by the U.S.A. and Britain after which a draft agreement was drawn up. The draft agreement envisaged: the retention of all governments existing in Russia on the territories they occupied, the establishment of trade relations, the right of the Soviet Government to unhindered transport on all railways and the use of all ports belonging to the former Russian Empire, etc. The Soviet Government proposed including in the agreement the following point: *immediately* following the conclusion of the agreement (and not following the demobilisation of the Russian army as the Entente proposed) all foreign troops would be withdrawn from Russia and no further military support would be given to anti-Soviet governments. The Soviet proposals were not accepted by the U.S. and British governments because Kolchak launched an offensive in the spring of 1919 and they hoped for the military defeat of Soviet Russia. Wilson did not receive Bullitt on his return and Lloyd George announced in Parliament that he had not authorised any negotiations with the Bolsheviks.

p. 37

- ¹⁴ This refers to a wireless message sent on May 7, 1919, by G. V. Chicherin, People's Commissar for Foreign Affairs, to Fridtjof Nansen, the famous Arctic explorer and public figure. It was in answer to a message addressed to Lenin by Nansen sent by wireless on May 4, 1919. Nansen proposed the organisation of an international commission to help Russia with food and medicines. He said that the Entente governments were willing to assist the work of the commission on the condition that hostilities ceased in Russia. In his reply to Nansen, Chicherin stated that the Soviet Government would agree to the plan but rejected the Entente's condition which he regarded as an attempt to preserve the counter-revolutionary whiteguard governments in the outlying regions of Russia. The Soviet Government agreed to conduct negotiations on the cessation of hostilities only if all questions connected with the cessation of the intervention and the Civil War were simultaneously discussed. The Entente governments made no reply to the Soviet proposal.

p. 37

- ¹⁵ Lenin's "Letter to American Workers" is contained in Volume 28 of the *Collected Works*.

p. 40

- ¹⁶ See Note 13.

p. 42

- ¹⁷ This conference was held in Moscow from December 2 to December 4, 1919. At the session held on December 2, Lenin put forward a draft resolution on the international situation. The conference approved the draft and Lenin announced it on December 5 in his report to the Seventh All-Russia Congress of Soviets; the Congress accepted it unanimously as a proposal of peace to the Entente countries. The resolution was published in the press on December 6, 1919 and sent to the Entente governments on December 10.

The governments of Britain, France, the U.S.A. and Italy refused to examine the peace proposal of the Seventh Congress of Soviets.

p. 44

¹⁸ See Note 17.

p. 47

¹⁹ The questions were sent to Lenin by wireless from Berlin by a correspondent of the bourgeois *New York Evening Journal*. Lenin's reply, wirelessly to Berlin, was transmitted to New York on February 21, 1920 and published by the newspaper that same evening. The reply was also published in the German communist and socialist press.

p. 48

²⁰ A special correspondent of the London *Daily Express* in Copenhagen requested Lenin to answer four questions. Lenin's reply was received in Copenhagen on February 22 and published by the *Daily Express* the next day.

p. 51

²¹ Lenin's interview with Lincoln Eyre, correspondent of the American newspaper *The World*, took place in mid-February 1920. Lenin spoke English with the correspondent, at first in his office and later in his apartment in the Kremlin. The talk lasted about an hour. The subheadings to the questions that were discussed are here reproduced as they appeared in *The World*.

p. 53

²² An announcement appeared in Soviet newspapers on January 18, 1920 that the Entente governments intended lifting the blockade of Soviet Russia and permitting trade with her. The decision of the Entente Supreme Council dated January 16, 1920 stated that this did not in any way mean a change in the policy of the governments of the Allies towards the Soviet Government.

p. 53

²³ *League of Nations*—an international organisation that existed between the First and Second World Wars. It was founded in 1919 at the Versailles Peace Conference by the victor powers, its Charter being part of the Versailles Treaty. The League was joined by 43 countries, including all the chief imperialist countries with the exception of the U.S.A. The League of Nations became one of the centres organising armed intervention against Soviet Russia. The League did not conduct any effective struggle to support peace and prevent another war. The League ceased to function on the outbreak of the Second World War and was formally liquidated in April 1946.

p. 56

²⁴ *Alexinsky*—a Russian Social-Democrat, who supported the Bolsheviks during the 1905-07 Revolution but later came over to the camp of counter-revolution and slandered Lenin and the Bolsheviks in his articles.

p. 61

²⁵ The Decree of the Council of People's Commissars, "General Economic and Legal Terms for Concessions", was published on November 23, 1920.

p. 62

²⁶ Lenin here refers to a Note sent by the Supreme Council of the Entente to Kolchak on May 26, 1919, in which the governments of France, Britain, Italy, the U.S.A. and Japan declared their readi-

ness to support Kolchak and recognise him as the head of the "All-Russia Government".

p. 75

- ²⁷ On May 10, 1920, shortly after bourgeois Poland, in fulfilment of the instructions of the Entente, launched an attack on Soviet Russia, the London dockers refused to load the *Jolly George* with arms for Poland. Their strike was supported by large numbers of British workers. In August 1920, the Labour Party and the Parliamentary Committee of the Trades Union Council called an Extraordinary National Conference. The Conference adopted a resolution which said in part: The Conference warns the Government that "the whole industrial power of the organised workers will be used to defeat this war", i.e., the war against Soviet Russia.

A National Council of Action was set up by the Conference, and shortly after 250 local Councils of Action were established.

A few days before the Conference opened Lloyd George had demanded that the Red Army cease its offensive on the Polish Front and threatened that the British Fleet would take action if Russia did not comply. The powerful movement of the British workers forced the government to re-examine its bellicose plans. Winston Churchill, one of the chief organisers of the intervention against Soviet Russia, said in his memoirs that "the British Labour Party had developed a violent agitation against any British assistance being given to Poland... Councils of Action were being formed in many parts of Britain. Nowhere among the public was there the slightest comprehension of the evils which would follow a Polish collapse. Under these pressures Mr. Lloyd George was constrained to advise the Polish Government that the Russian terms 'do no violence to the ethnographical frontiers of Poland as an independent state', and if they were rejected, the British Government could not take any action against Russia."

p. 80

- ²⁸ *Sukharevka market* in Moscow from 1917 to 1920 was a centre of black-market speculation; closed by a decision of the Presidium of the Moscow Soviet on December 13, 1920.

p. 92

- ²⁹ *Savinkov*—one of the leaders of Russian counter-revolution during the Civil War (1918-20) and later.

p. 93

- ³⁰ *The Washington Conference* lasted from November 12, 1921 to February 6, 1922. The Conference was called on the initiative of the U.S.A., with Belgium, China, France, Great Britain, Holland, Italy, Japan, Portugal and the U.S.A. participating. The purpose of the Conference was to complete the redivision of the colonial possessions and spheres of influence in the Far East and the Pacific area. The most important decisions of the Conference are contained in the following documents: the four-power treaty (by the U.S.A., Britain, Japan and France) on the protection of "territorial rights" in the Pacific; the nine-power treaty on the principle of "open doors" in China; the five-power treaty (the U.S.A., Britain, Japan, France, Italy) on the "limitation" of naval armaments.

p. 108

- ³¹ *The Genoa Conference* to which Lenin refers was the International Economic Conference held in Genoa, Italy, from April 10 to May 19, 1922. It was attended by representatives of 29 countries, among

them Soviet Russia, Britain, France, Italy, Belgium, Japan and Germany. The U.S.A. sent an observer.

The imperialist powers at the Conference tried to take advantage of Soviet Russia's economic difficulties to impose on her an unequal agreement, the terms of which would put her in bondage to them. They demanded the payment of all tsarist debts, including those of pre-war date, the return of nationalised enterprises to their former foreign owners, etc.

The Soviet delegation rejected the insolent demands of the imperialists and proposed universal disarmament and the annulling of all war debts. The hostile attitude of France and Britain towards Soviet Russia led to the collapse of the Conference. The problems for discussion were referred to a conference of experts which met at The Hague in June and July 1922, but like the Genoa Conference it failed to yield any results.

p. 109

- ³² *Oblomovism*—the combination of laziness, stagnation, inactivity and extreme passivity that marked the character of the landlord Oblomov, the chief figure of I. A. Goncharov's novel of the same name, first published in 1859.

p. 111

- ³³ This refers to the Conference of the Entente Supreme Council held in Cannes (France) from January 6 to January 13, 1922; the Conference decided to call an international economic and financial conference in Genoa (see Note 31).

p. 113

- ³⁴ *The Rapallo Treaty* was concluded between the Soviet and German governments on April 16, 1922, in the town of Rapallo in Italy at the time of the Genoa Conference. The Treaty provided for the establishment of diplomatic relations between the two countries and a mutual repudiation of reparations. The German Government also repudiated the demand for the return of enterprises formerly belonging to Germans that had been nationalised by the Soviet Government. The signing of the Treaty demonstrated the collapse of attempts by the Anglo-French imperialists to create a united front of capitalist countries against Soviet Russia in order to enslave her economically.

p. 117

- ³⁵ The first article of the Cannes resolution (see Note 33) reads as follows: "The nations may not arrogate to themselves the right to dictate to each other the principles by which they organise their internal property regime, their economy and their government. It is for each nation to choose for itself the system it prefers in this respect."

p. 117

- ³⁶ *Edouard Herriot*, a prominent French politician, came to Moscow in September 1922 and had unofficial talks with members of the Soviet Government. Herriot expressed the opinions of those French bourgeois circles that, under the influence of the achievements of Soviet power in rebuilding the economy and the breakdown of attempts at the Genoa Conference to impose an unequal treaty on Russia, were anxious to normalise relations and develop trade between France and the Soviet Republic.

p. 119

- ³⁷ This refers to the conference that was being prepared by Great Britain, France and Italy on questions affecting the Middle East

after the defeat of Anglo-Greek intervention in Turkey. At first the imperialist powers attempted to keep Soviet Russia out of the conference altogether, but were compelled to take into account the growing international prestige of the Soviet state; they announced in a Note dated October 7, 1922 that they would allow the participation of Soviet Russia only in that part that discussed the question of the Black Sea Straits. In a Note dated October 20, 1922, the Soviet Government lodged a protest and then, on November 2, 1922, sent another Note to the "inviting powers" in which it insisted on the participation of the Russian Soviet Federative Socialist Republic, the Ukrainian Soviet Socialist Republic and the Georgian Soviet Socialist Republic in discussions on all questions.

The Middle East Conference opened in Lausanne (Switzerland) on November 20, 1922 and continued until July 24, 1923. The Conference was attended by Great Britain, France, Italy, Japan, Greece, Rumania, Yugoslavia and Turkey. The question of a regime for the Black Sea Straits was discussed with the participation of the R.S.F.S.R., the Ukrainian S.S.R. and the Georgian S.S.R. (represented by a single delegation), and Bulgaria. For the discussion of some questions representatives of Albania, Belgium, Holland, Spain, Portugal, Norway and Sweden were invited.

The Conference ended with the conclusion of a peace treaty between Great Britain, France, Italy, Japan, Greece, Rumania, and Yugoslavia on the one hand and Turkey on the other.

The question of the Black Sea Straits occupied an important place on the Lausanne agenda. The Soviet delegation put forward the proposals formulated by Lenin in this interview; these proposals were not accepted. The Straits Convention adopted by the Lausanne Conference provided for the free passage through the Straits of merchant and naval vessels sailing under any flag at any time. The Soviet Union did not ratify the Convention, regarding it as a contravention of its legal rights and as not guaranteeing the security of the Black Sea countries.

p. 120

³⁸ The preliminary agreement with John Urquhart, a prominent British industrialist, was signed in Berlin on September 9, 1922, by People's Commissar for Foreign Trade Leonid Krasin. The Plenary Meeting of the Central Committee of the R.C.P.(B.) on October 5, 1922, and next day, on October 6, the Council of People's Commissars decided to reject the agreement because of the hostile policy of the British Government towards Soviet Russia and the unequal terms of the agreement.

p. 123

³⁹ *The Volkhov Power Project*—the first big hydroelectric power station in Soviet Russia on the banks of the River Volkhov. Its construction began in 1918 but did not get properly under way until 1921, after the Civil War. The Volkhov Power Station was opened in 1926.

p. 129

⁴⁰ Chicherin refers to the International Economic Conference (the Genoa Conference) held from April 10 to May 19, 1922 in Genoa.

p. 133

⁴¹ The break-up of the International Economic Conference.

p. 138

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