

LENIN

Speeches
at Party
Congresses
(1918-1922)





W. H. Wood (Senior)

Workers of All Countries, Unite!

Lenin

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at Party Congresses
(1918-1922)**

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В. И. Ленин

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Contents

	Page
EXTRAORDINARY SEVENTH CONGRESS OF THE R.C.P.(B.),	
<i>March 6-8, 1918</i>	7
Political Report of the Central Committee, March 7 . . .	7
Reply to the Debate on the Political Report of the Central Committee, March 8	31
Resolution on War and Peace	39
Report on the Review of the Programme and on Changing the Name of the Party, March 8	41
EIGHTH CONGRESS OF THE R.C.P.(B.), <i>March 18-23, 1919</i> .	55
Speech Opening the Congress, March 18	55
Report of the Central Committee, March 18	58
Report on the Party Programme, March 19	78
Speech Closing the Debate on the Party Programme, March 19	100
Report on Work in the Countryside, March 23	111
Speech Closing the Congress, March 23	129
NINTH CONGRESS OF THE R.C.P.(B.), <i>March 29-April 5, 1920</i>	134
Opening Speech, March 29	134
Report of the Central Committee, March 29	136
Reply to the Discussion on the Report of the Central Com- mittee, March 30	156
Speech on Economic Development, March 31	166
Speech on the Co-operatives, April 3	174
Speech Closing the Congress, April 5	179
TENTH CONGRESS OF THE R.C.P.(B.), <i>March 8-16, 1921</i> . .	186
Speech at the Opening of the Congress, March 8	186
Report on the Political Work of the Central Committee of the R.C.P.(B.), March 8	189
Summing-Up Speech on the Report of the C.C. of the R.C.P.(B.), March 9	212

Speech on the Trade Unions, March 14	229
Report on the Substitution of a Tax in Kind for the Surplus- Grain Appropriation System, March 15	234
Summing-Up Speech on the Tax in Kind, March 15	249
Report on Party Unity and the Anarcho-Syndicalist Devia- tion, March 16	259
Summing-Up Speech on Party Unity and the Anarcho- Syndicalist Deviation, March 16	267
Speech in Closing the Congress, March 16	272
ELEVENTH CONGRESS OF THE R.C.P.(B.), March 27-April 2, 1922	280
Speech in Opening the Congress, March 27	280
Political Report of the Central Committee of the R.C.P.(B.), March 27	282
Closing Speech on the Political Report of the Central Com- mittee of the R.C.P.(B.), March 28	330
Speech in Closing the Congress, April 2	345
<i>Name Index</i>	<i>349</i>

Extraordinary Seventh Congress of the R.C.P.(B.)

March 6-8, 1918

Political Report of the Central Committee March 7

A political report might consist of an enumeration of measures taken by the Central Committee; but the essential thing at the present moment is not a report of this kind, but a *review of our revolution as a whole*; that is the only thing that can provide a truly Marxist substantiation of all our decisions. We must examine the whole preceding course of development of the revolution and ascertain why the course of its further development has changed. There have been turning-points in our revolution that will have enormous significance for the world revolution. One such turning-point was the *October Revolution*.

The first successes of the February Revolution* were due to the fact that the proletariat was followed, not only by the masses of the rural population, but also by the bourgeoisie. Hence the easy victory over tsarism, something we had failed to achieve in 1905. The spontaneous formation of Soviets of Workers' Deputies in the February Revolution was a repetition of the experience of 1905—we had to proclaim the principle of Soviet power. The masses learned the tasks of the revolution from their own experience of the struggle. The events of April 20-21** were a peculiar combination of

* The bourgeois-democratic revolution of February 27, 1917 overthrew tsarism and established dual power in the country: the bourgeois Provisional Government and the Soviets of Workers' and Soldiers' Deputies.—*Ed.*

** On April 20-21, 1917, the workers and soldiers of Petrograd staged a demonstration in protest against the continuation of the imperialist war by the Provisional Government. As a result of the demonstration Milyukov, the Constitutional-Democrats' leader, was withdrawn from the government and a coalition government was formed in which Mensheviks and Socialist-Revolutionaries took part.—*Ed.*

demonstrations and of something in the nature of armed uprising. This was enough to cause the fall of the bourgeois government. Then began the long period of the collaboration policy, which stemmed from the very nature of the petty-bourgeois government that had come to power. The July events* could not then establish the dictatorship of the proletariat—the masses were still not prepared for it. That was why not one of the responsible organisations called upon them to establish it. But as a reconnoitring operation in the enemy's camp, the July events were of enormous significance. The Kornilov revolt** and the subsequent events served as practical lessons and made possible the October victory. The mistake committed by those who even in October wished to divide power*** was their failure to connect the October victory with the July days, with the offensive, with the Kornilov revolt, etc., etc., events which caused the millions of the common people to realise that Soviet power had become inevitable. Then followed our triumphal march

* Lenin refers here to the demonstration in Petrograd of July 3-4 (16-17), 1917. Spontaneous demonstrations against the Provisional Government began on July 3. At that time the Bolshevik Party was against armed action because it considered that the revolutionary crisis had not yet matured. But seeing that the demonstration had started, the Bolsheviks decided to take part in it in order to ensure it was properly organised and peaceful. Over 500,000 people participated in the demonstration of July 4, which was conducted under the main slogan of the Bolsheviks, "All Power to the Soviets!"

With the knowledge and consent of the Menshevik and Socialist-Revolutionary Central Executive Committee detachments of officers were sent out against the workers and soldiers. The demonstration was put down and mass arrests, searches and pogroms began.

After the July days the counter-revolutionary Provisional Government took over complete control of the country.—*Ed.*

** A counter-revolutionary conspiracy organised in August 1917 by the Russian bourgeoisie and landowners and led by the tsarist general Kornilov. On August 25 Kornilov withdrew troops from the front and sent them against Petrograd. In response to a Bolshevik appeal the masses rose against Kornilov and the revolt was quickly crushed.—*Ed.*

*** Lenin refers here to the defeatist position taken up by L. B. Kamenev, G. Y. Zinoviev, A. I. Rykov and certain other members of the Party Central Committee and the Soviet Government, who after the October Socialist Revolution supported the Socialist-Revolutionary and Menshevik demands for the setting-up of a "homogeneous socialist government" (i.e., a government with Menshevik and S.R. participation).—*Ed.*

throughout Russia, accompanied by a universal desire for peace. We know that we cannot achieve peace by a unilateral withdrawal from the war. We pointed to this as far back as the April Conference.* In the period from April to October, the soldiers clearly realised that the policy of collaboration was prolonging the war and was leading to the savage, senseless attempts of the imperialists to start an offensive and to get still more entangled in a war that would last for years. That was the reason why it was necessary at all costs to adopt an active policy of peace as quickly as possible, why it was necessary for the Soviets to take power into their own hands, and abolish landed proprietorship. You know that the latter was upheld not only by Kerensky but also by Avksentyev, who even went so far as to order the arrest of the members of the Land Committees. The policy we adopted, the slogan of "Power to the Soviets", which we instilled into the minds of the majority of the people, enabled us, in October, to achieve victory very easily in St. Petersburg, and transformed the last months of the Russian revolution into one continuous triumphal march.

Civil war became a fact. The transformation of the imperialist war into civil war, which we had predicted at the beginning of the revolution, and even at the beginning of the war, and which considerable sections of socialist circles treated sceptically and even with ridicule, actually took place on October 25, 1917, in one of the largest and most backward of the belligerent countries. In this civil war the overwhelming majority of the population proved to be on our side, and that is why victory was achieved with such extraordinary ease.

The troops who abandoned the front carried with them wherever they went the maximum of revolutionary determination to put an end to collaboration; and the collaborationist elements, the whiteguards and the landowners' sons found themselves without support among the population. The

* *The April (Seventh) All-Russia Conference of the R.S.D.L.P.(B.)*, held in Petrograd on April 24-29 (May 7-12), 1917, was the first legal Bolshevik conference which ranked as a Party Congress. It defined the Party's line on all basic questions of the revolution and set up as the Party's main goal the campaign for the development of the bourgeois-democratic revolution into a socialist revolution.—*Ed.*

war against them gradually turned into a victorious triumphal march of the revolution as the masses of the people and the military units that were sent against us came over to the side of the Bolsheviks. We saw this in Petrograd, on the Gatchina front, where the Cossacks, whom Kerensky and Krasnov tried to lead against the Red capital, wavered; we saw this later in Moscow, in Orenburg and in the Ukraine. A wave of civil war swept over the whole of Russia, and everywhere we achieved victory with extraordinary ease precisely because the fruit had ripened, because the masses had already gone through the experience of collaboration with the bourgeoisie. Our slogan "All Power to the Soviets", which the masses had tested in practice by long historical experience, had become part of their flesh and blood.

That is why the Russian revolution was a continuous triumphal march in the first months after October 25, 1917. As a result of this the difficulties which the socialist revolution immediately encountered, and could not but encounter, were forgotten, were pushed into the background. One of the fundamental differences between bourgeois revolution and socialist revolution is that for the bourgeois revolution, which arises out of feudalism, the new economic organisations are gradually created in the womb of the old order, gradually changing all the aspects of feudal society. The bourgeois revolution faced only one task—to sweep away, to cast aside, to destroy all the fetters of the preceding social order. By fulfilling this task every bourgeois revolution fulfils all that is required of it; it accelerates the growth of capitalism.

The socialist revolution is in an altogether different position. The more backward the country which, owing to the zigzags of history, has proved to be the one to start the socialist revolution, the more difficult is it for that country to pass from the old capitalist relations to socialist relations. New incredibly difficult tasks, organisational tasks, are added to the tasks of destruction. Had not the popular creative spirit of the Russian revolution, which had gone through the great experience of the year 1905, given rise to the Soviets as early as February 1917, they could not under any circumstances have assumed power in October, because success depended entirely upon the existence of available organisational forms of a movement embracing millions. The

Soviets were the available form, and that is why in the political sphere the future held out to us those brilliant successes, the continuous triumphal march, that we had; for the new form of political power was already available, and all we had to do was to pass a few decrees, and transform the power of the Soviets from the embryonic state in which it existed in the first months of the revolution into the legally recognised form which had become established in the Russian state—i.e., into the Russian Soviet Republic. The Republic was born at one stroke; it was born so easily because in February 1917 the masses had created the Soviets even before any party had managed to proclaim this slogan. It was the great creative spirit of the people, which had passed through the bitter experience of 1905 and had been made wise by it, that gave rise to this form of proletarian power. The task of achieving victory over the internal enemy was an extremely easy one. The task of creating the political power was an extremely easy one because the masses had created the skeleton, the basis of this power. The Republic of Soviets was born at one stroke. But two exceedingly difficult problems still remained, the solution of which could not possibly be the triumphal march we experienced in the first months of our revolution—we did not doubt, we could not doubt, that the socialist revolution would be later confronted with enormously difficult tasks.

First, there was the problem of internal organisation, which confronts every socialist revolution. The difference between a socialist revolution and a bourgeois revolution is that in the latter case there are ready-made forms of capitalist relationships; Soviet power—the proletarian power—does not inherit such ready-made relationships, if we leave out of account the most developed forms of capitalism, which, strictly speaking, extended to but a small top layer of industry and hardly touched agriculture. The organisation of accounting, the control of large enterprises, the transformation of the whole of the state economic mechanism into a single huge machine, into an economic organism that will work in such a way as to enable hundreds of millions of people to be guided by a single plan—such was the enormous organisational problem that rested on our shoulders. Under the present conditions of labour this problem could not possibly

be solved by the "hurrah" methods by which we were able to solve the problems of the Civil War. The very nature of the task prevented a solution by these methods. We achieved easy victories over the Kaledin revolt and created the Soviet Republic in face of a resistance that was not even worth serious consideration; the course of events was predetermined by the whole of the preceding objective development, so that all we had to do was say the last word and change the sign-board, i.e., take down the sign "The Soviet exists as a trade union organisation", and put up instead the sign "The Soviet is the sole form of state power"; the situation, however, was altogether different in regard to organisational problems. In this field we encountered enormous difficulties. It immediately became clear to everyone who cared to ponder over the tasks of our revolution that only by the hard and long path of self-discipline would it be possible to overcome the disintegration that the war had caused in capitalist society, that only by extraordinarily hard, long and persistent effort could we cope with this disintegration and defeat those elements aggravating it, elements which regarded the revolution as a means of discarding old fetters and getting as much out of it for themselves as they possibly could. The emergence of a large number of such elements was inevitable in a small-peasant country at a time of incredible economic chaos, and the fight against these elements that is ahead of us, that we have only just started, will be a hundred times more difficult, it will be a fight which promises no spectacular opportunities. We are only in the first stage of this fight. Severe trials await us. The objective situation precludes any idea of limiting ourselves to a triumphal march with flying banners such as we had in fighting against Kaledin. Anyone who attempted to apply these methods of struggle to the organisational tasks that confront the revolution would only prove his bankruptcy as a politician, as a socialist, as an active worker in the socialist revolution.

The same thing awaited some of our young comrades who were carried away by the initial triumphal march of the revolution, when it came up against the second enormous difficulty—the international question. The reason we achieved such an easy victory over Kerensky's gangs, the reason we so easily set up our government and without the

slightest difficulty passed decrees on the socialisation of the land and on workers' control, the reason we achieved all this so easily was a fortunate combination of circumstances that protected us for a short time from international imperialism. International imperialism, with the entire might of its capital, with its highly organised war machine, which is a real force, a real stronghold of international capital, could not, under any circumstances, under any conditions, live side by side with the Soviet Republic, both because of its objective position and because of the economic interests of the capitalist class embodied in it, because of commercial connections, of international financial relations. In this sphere a conflict is inevitable. This is the greatest difficulty of the Russian revolution, its greatest historical problem—the need to solve international problems, the need to evoke a world revolution, to effect the transition from our strictly national revolution to the world revolution. This problem confronts us in all its incredible difficulty. I repeat, very many of our young friends who regard themselves as Lefts have begun to forget the most important thing: why in the course of the weeks and months of the enormous triumph after October we were able so easily to pass from victory to victory. And yet this was due only to a special combination of international circumstances that temporarily shielded us from imperialism. Imperialism had other things to bother about besides us. And it seemed to us that we, too, had other things to bother about besides imperialism. Individual imperialists had no time to bother with us, solely because the whole of the great social, political and military might of modern world imperialism was split by internecine war into two groups. The imperialist plunderers involved in this struggle had gone to such incredible lengths, were locked in mortal combat to such a degree, that neither of the groups was able to concentrate any effective forces against the Russian revolution. These were the circumstances in which we found ourselves in October. It is paradoxical but true that our revolution broke out at so fortunate a moment, when unprecedented disasters involving the destruction of millions of human beings had overtaken most of the imperialist countries, when the unprecedented calamities attending the war had exhausted the nations, when in the fourth year of the war the belligerent countries had reached an

impasse, a parting of the ways, when the question arose objectively—could nations reduced to such a state continue fighting? It was only because our revolution broke out at so fortunate a moment as this, when neither of the two gigantic groups of plunderers was in a position immediately either to hurl itself at the other, or to unite with the other against us; our revolution could (and did) take advantage only of a situation such as this in international political and economic relations to accomplish its brilliant triumphal march in European Russia, spread to Finland and begin to win the Caucasus and Rumania. This alone explains the appearance of Party functionaries, intellectual supermen, in the leading circles of our Party who allowed themselves to be carried away by this triumphal march and who said we could cope with international imperialism; over there, there will also be a triumphal march, over there, there will be no real difficulties. This was at variance with the objective position of the Russian revolution which had merely taken advantage of the setback of international imperialism; the engine that was supposed to bear down on us with the force of a railway train bearing down on a wheelbarrow and smashing it to splinters, was temporarily stalled—and the engine was stalled because the two groups of predators had clashed. Here and there the revolutionary movement was growing, but in all the imperialist countries without exception it was still mainly in the initial stage. Its rate of development was entirely different from ours. Anyone who has given careful thought to the economic prerequisites of the socialist revolution in Europe must be clear on the point that in Europe it will be immeasurably more difficult to start, whereas it was immeasurably more easy for us to start; but it will be more difficult for us to continue the revolution than it will be over there. This objective situation caused us to experience an extraordinarily sharp and difficult turn in history. From the continuous triumphal march on our internal front, against our counter-revolution, against the enemies of Soviet power in October, November and December, we had to pass to a collision with real international imperialism, in its real hostility towards us. From the period of the triumphal march we had to pass to a period in which we were in an extraordinarily difficult and painful situation, one which certainly could

not be brushed aside with words, with brilliant slogans—however pleasant that would have been—because in our disorganised country we had to deal with incredibly weary masses, who had reached a state in which they could not possibly go on fighting, who were so shattered by three years of agonising war that they were absolutely useless from the military point of view. Even before the October Revolution we saw representatives of the masses of the soldiers, not members of the Bolshevik Party, who did not hesitate to tell the bourgeoisie the truth that the Russian army would not fight. This state of the army has brought about a gigantic crisis. A small-peasant country, disorganised by war, reduced to an incredible state, has been placed in an extremely difficult position. We have no army, but we have to go on living side by side with a predator who is armed to the teeth, a predator who still remains and will continue to remain a plunderer and is not, of course, affected by agitation in favour of peace without annexations and indemnities. A tame, domestic animal has been lying side by side with a tiger and trying to persuade the latter to conclude a peace without annexations and indemnities, although the only way such a peace could be attained was by attacking the tiger. The top layer of our Party—intellectuals and some of workers' organisations—has been trying in the main to brush this prospect aside with phrases and such excuses as "that is not the way it should be". This peace was too incredible a prospect for them to believe that we, who up to now had marched in open battle with colours flying and had stormed the enemy's positions with "hurrahs", could yield and accept these humiliating terms. Never! We are exceedingly proud revolutionaries, we declare above all: "The Germans cannot attack."

This was the first argument with which these people consoled themselves. History has now placed us in an extraordinarily difficult position; in the midst of organisational work of unparalleled difficulty we shall have to experience a number of painful defeats. Regarded from the world-historical point of view, there would doubtlessly be no hope of the ultimate victory of our revolution if it were to remain alone, if there were no revolutionary movements in other countries. When the Bolshevik Party tackled the job alone,

it did so in the firm conviction that the revolution was maturing in all countries and that in the end—but not at the very beginning—no matter what difficulties we experienced, no matter what defeats were in store for us, the world socialist revolution would come—because it is coming; would mature—because it is maturing and will reach full maturity. I repeat, our salvation from all these difficulties is an all-Europe revolution. Taking this truth, this absolutely abstract truth, as our starting-point, and being guided by it, we must see to it that it does not in time become a mere phrase, because every abstract truth, if it is accepted without analysis, becomes a mere phrase. If you say that every strike conceals the hydra of revolution, and he who fails to understand this is no socialist, you are right. Yes, the socialist revolution looms behind every strike. But if you say that every single strike is an immediate step towards the socialist revolution, you will be uttering perfectly empty phrases. We have heard these phrases “every blessed time in the same place” and have got so sick and tired of them that the workers have rejected these anarchist phrases, because undoubtedly, clear as it is that behind every strike there looms the hydra of socialist revolution, it is equally clear that the assertion that every strike can develop into revolution is utter nonsense. Just as it is indisputable that all the difficulties in our revolution will be overcome only when the world socialist revolution matures—and it is maturing now everywhere—it is absolutely absurd to declare that we must conceal every real difficulty of our revolution today and say: “I bank on the international socialist movement—I can commit any piece of folly I please.” “Liebknecht will help us out, because he is going to win, anyhow.” He will create such an excellent organisation, he will plan everything beforehand so well that we shall be able to take ready-made forms in the same way as we took the ready-made Marxist doctrine from Western Europe—and maybe that is why it triumphed in our country in a few months, whereas it has been taking decades to triumph in Western Europe. Thus it would have been reckless gambling to apply the old method of solving the problem of the struggle by a triumphal march to the new historical period which has set in, and which has confronted us, not with feeble Kerensky and Kornilov, but with an international predator—

the imperialism of Germany, where the revolution has been maturing but has obviously not yet reached maturity. The assertion that the enemy would not dare attack the revolution was such a gamble. The situation at the time of the Brest negotiations* was not yet such as to compel us to accept any peace terms. The objective alignment of forces was such that a respite would not have been enough. It took the Brest negotiations to show that the Germans would attack, that German society was not so pregnant with revolution that it could give birth to it at once; and we cannot blame the German imperialists for not having prepared that outbreak by their conduct, or, as our young friends who regard themselves as Lefts say, for not having created a situation in which the Germans could not attack. When we tell them that we have no army, that we were compelled to demobilise—we were compelled to do so, although we never forgot that a tiger was lying beside our tame, domestic animal—they refuse to understand. Although we were compelled to demobilise we did not for a moment forget that it was impossible to end the war unilaterally by issuing an order to stick the bayonets in the ground.

Generally speaking, how is it that not a single trend, not a single tendency, not a single organisation in our Party opposed this demobilisation? Had we gone mad? Not in the least. Officers, not Bolsheviks, had stated even before October that the army could not fight, that it could not be kept at the front even for a few weeks longer. After October this became obvious to everybody who was willing to recognise the facts, willing to see the unpleasant, bitter reality and not hide, or pull his cap over his eyes, and make shift with proud phrases. We have no army, we cannot hold it. The best thing we can do is to demobilise it as quickly as possible. This is the sick part of the organism, which has suffered incredible torture, has been ravaged by the privations of a war into which it entered technically unprepared, and from which it has emerged in such a state that it succumbs to panic at every attack. We cannot blame these people who have experienced

* I.e., negotiations over the conclusion of the Brest Peace. The treaty was signed at Brest-Litovsk in March 1918 between Soviet Russia and Germany and its terms were extremely harsh for Russia. After the November 1918 revolution in Germany it was annulled.—*Ed.*

incredible suffering. In hundreds of resolutions, even in the first period of the Russian revolution, the soldiers have said quite frankly: "We are drowning in blood, we cannot go on fighting." One could have delayed the end of the war artificially, one could have committed the frauds Kerensky committed, one could have postponed the end for a few weeks, but objective reality broke its own road. This is the sick part of the Russian state organism which can no longer bear the burden of the war. The quicker we demobilise the army, the sooner it will become absorbed by those parts that are not so sick and the sooner will the country be prepared for new severe trials. That is what we felt when we unanimously, without the slightest protest, adopted the decision—which was absurd from the point of view of foreign events—to demobilise the army. It was the proper step to take. We said that it was a frivolous illusion to believe that we could hold the army. The sooner we demobilised the army, the sooner would the social organism as a whole recover. That is why the revolutionary phrase, "The Germans cannot attack", from which the other phrase ("We can declare the state of war terminated. Neither war nor the signing of peace.") derived, was such a profound mistake, such a bitter overestimation of events. But suppose the Germans do attack? "No, they cannot attack." But have you the right to risk the world revolution? What about the concrete question of whether you may not prove to be accomplices of German imperialism when that moment comes? But we, who since October 1917 have all become defencists, who have recognised the principle of defence of the fatherland, we all know that we have broken with imperialism, not merely in word but in deed; we have destroyed the secret treaties,* vanquished the bourgeoisie in our own country and proposed an open and honest peace so that all the nations may see what our intentions really are. How could people who seriously uphold the position of defending the Soviet Republic agree to this gamble, which has already produced results? And this is a fact, because the

* The reference is to the publication by the Soviet Government of the secret diplomatic papers and secret treaties between the tsarist government (and later the bourgeois Provisional Government) of Russia and the governments of Britain, France, Italy, Japan, Austria-Hungary and other imperialist powers.—*Ed.*

severe crisis which our Party is now experiencing, owing to the formation of a "Left" opposition within it, is one of the gravest crises the Russian revolution has experienced.

This crisis will be overcome. Under no circumstances will it break the neck of our Party, or of our revolution, although at the present moment it has come very near to doing so, there was a possibility of it. The guarantee that we shall not break our neck on this question is this: instead of applying the old method of settling factional differences, the old method of issuing an enormous quantity of literature, of having many discussions and plenty of splits, instead of this old method, events have provided our people with a new method of learning things. This method is to put everything to the test of facts, events, the lessons of world history. You said that the Germans could not attack. The logic of your tactics was that we could declare the state of war to be terminated. History has taught you a lesson, it has shattered this illusion. Yes, the German revolution is growing, but not in the way we should like it, not as fast as Russian intellectuals would have it, not at the rate our history developed in October—when we entered any town we liked, proclaimed Soviet power, and within a few days nine-tenths of the workers came over to our side. The German revolution has the misfortune of not moving so fast. What do you think? Must we reckon with the revolution, or must the revolution reckon with us? You wanted the revolution to reckon with you. But history has taught you a lesson. It is a lesson, because it is the absolute truth that without a German revolution we are doomed—perhaps not in Petrograd, not in Moscow, but in Vladivostok, in more remote places to which perhaps we shall have to retreat, and the distance to which is perhaps greater than the distance from Petrograd to Moscow. At all events, under all conceivable circumstances, if the German revolution does not come, we are doomed. Nevertheless, this does not in the least shake our conviction that we must be able to bear the most difficult position without blustering.

The revolution will not come as quickly as we expected. History has proved this, and we must be able to take this as a fact, to reckon with the fact that the world socialist revolution cannot begin so easily in the advanced countries as the revolution began in Russia—in the land of Nicholas

and Rasputin, the land in which an enormous part of the population was absolutely indifferent as to what peoples were living in the outlying regions, or what was happening there. In such a country it was quite easy to start a revolution, as easy as lifting a feather.

But to start without preparation a revolution in a country in which capitalism is developed and has given democratic culture and organisation to everybody, down to the last man—to do so would be wrong, absurd. There we are only just approaching the painful period of the beginning of socialist revolutions. This is a fact. We do not know, no one knows, perhaps—it is quite possible—it will triumph within a few weeks, even within a few days, but we cannot stake everything on that. We must be prepared for extraordinary difficulties, for extraordinarily severe defeats, which are inevitable because the revolution in Europe has not yet begun, although it may begin tomorrow; and when it does begin, then, of course, we shall not be tortured by doubts, there will be no question about a revolutionary war, but just one continuous triumphal march. That is to come, it will inevitably be so, but it is not so yet. This is the simple fact that history has taught us, with which it has hit us very painfully—and it is said a man who has been thrashed is worth two who haven't. That is why I think that now history has given us a very painful thrashing, because of our hope that the Germans could not attack and that we could get everything by shouting "hurrah!", this lesson, with the help of our Soviet organisations, will be very quickly brought home to the masses all over Soviet Russia. They are all up and doing, gathering, preparing for the Congress, passing resolutions, thinking over what has happened. What is taking place at the present time does not resemble the old pre-revolutionary controversies, which remained within narrow Party circles; now all decisions are submitted for discussion to the masses, who demand that they be tested by experience, by deeds, who never allow themselves to be carried away by frivolous speeches, and never allow themselves to be diverted from the path prescribed by the objective progress of events. Of course, an intellectual, or a Left Bolshevik, can try to talk his way out of difficulties. He can try to talk his way out of such facts as the absence of an army and the failure of the

revolution to begin in Germany. The millions-strong masses—and politics begin where millions of men and women are; where there are not thousands, but millions, that is where serious politics begin—the masses know what the army is like, they have seen soldiers returning from the front. They know—that is, if you take, not individual persons, but real masses—that we cannot fight, that every man at the front has endured everything imaginable. The masses have realised the truth that if we have no army, and a predator is lying beside us, we shall have to sign a most harsh, humiliating peace treaty. That is inevitable until the birth of the revolution, until you cure your army, until you allow the men to return home. Until then the patient will not recover. And we shall not be able to cope with the German predator by shouting “hurrah!”; we shall not be able to throw him off as easily as we threw off Kerensky and Kornilov. This is the lesson the masses have learned without the excuses that certain of those who desire to evade bitter reality have tried to present them with.

At first a continuous triumphal march in October and November—then, suddenly, in the space of a few weeks, the Russian revolution is defeated by the German predator; the Russian revolution is prepared to accept the terms of a predatory treaty. Yes, the turns taken by history are very painful. All such turns affect us painfully. When, in 1907, we signed the incredibly shameful internal treaty with Stolypin, when we were compelled to pass through the pigsty of the Stolypin Duma* and assumed obligations by signing scraps of monarchist paper,** we experienced what we are experiencing now but on a smaller scale. At that time, people who were among the finest in the vanguard of the revolution said (and they too had not the slightest doubt that they were right), “We are proud revolutionaries, we believe in

* *The Duma*—the representative body which the tsarist government was forced to convene as a result of the 1905 revolution. Although formally a legislative body, the Duma had no real power. Elections to it were not direct, equal or universal.—*Ed.*

** This refers to the signed oath of loyalty to the tsar obligatory for deputies of the Third Duma. Since refusal to take this oath meant losing their platform in the Duma that was vital for mobilising the proletariat for revolutionary struggle, the Social-Democrat deputies signed the oath along with the rest of the Duma members.—*Ed.*

the Russian revolution, we will never enter legal Stolypin institutions." Yes, you will, we said. The life of the masses, history, are stronger than your protestations. If you won't go, we said, history will compel you to. These were very Left people and after the first turn in history nothing remained of them as a group but smoke. Just as we proved able to remain revolutionaries, proved able to work under terrible conditions and emerge from them, so shall we emerge now because it is not our whim, it is objective inevitability that has arisen in an utterly ruined country, because in spite of our desires the European revolution dared to be late, and in spite of our desires German imperialism dared to attack.

Here one must know how to retreat. We cannot hide the incredibly bitter, deplorable reality from ourselves with empty phrases; we must say: God grant that we retreat in what is half-way good order. We cannot retreat in good order, but God grant that our retreat is half-way good order, that we gain a little time in which the sick part of our organism can be absorbed at least to some extent. On the whole the organism is sound, it will overcome its sickness. But you cannot expect it to overcome it all at once, instantaneously; you cannot stop an army in flight. When I said to one of our young friends, a would-be Left, "Comrade, go to the front, see what is going on in the army", he took offence at this proposal. He said, "They want to banish us so as to prevent our agitating here for the great principles of a revolutionary war." In making this proposal I really had no intention whatever of banishing factional enemies; I merely suggested that they go and see for themselves that the army had begun to run away in an unprecedented manner. We knew that even before this, even before this we could not close our eyes to the fact that the disintegration of the army had gone on to such an unheard-of extent that our guns were being sold to the Germans for a song. We knew this, just as we know that the army cannot be held back, and the argument that the Germans would not attack was a great gamble. If the European revolution is late in coming, gravest defeats await us because we have no army, because we lack organisation, because, at the moment, these are two problems we cannot solve. If you are unable to adapt yourself, if you are not inclined to crawl on your belly in the mud, you are not a

revolutionary but a chatterbox; and I propose this, not because I like it, but because we have no other road, because history has not been kind enough to bring the revolution to maturity everywhere simultaneously.

The way things are turning out is that the civil war has begun as an attempt at a clash with imperialism, and this has shown that imperialism is rotten to the core, and that proletarian elements are rising in every army. Yes, we shall see the world revolution, but for the time being it is a very good fairy-tale, a very beautiful fairy-tale—I quite understand children liking beautiful fairy-tales. But I ask, is it proper for a serious revolutionary to believe in fairy-tales? There is an element of reality in every fairy-tale. If you told children fairy-tales in which the cock and the cat did not converse in human language they would not be interested. In the same way, if you tell the people that civil war will break out in Germany and also guarantee that instead of a clash with imperialism we shall have a field revolution on a world-wide scale,* the people will say you are deceiving them. In doing this you will be overcoming the difficulties with which history has confronted us only in your own minds, by your own wishes. It will be a good thing if the German proletariat is able to take action. But have you measured it, have you discovered an instrument that will show that the German revolution will break out on such-and-such a day? No, you do not know that, and neither do we. You are staking everything on this card. If the revolution breaks out, everything is saved. Of course! But if it does not turn out as we desire, if it does not achieve victory tomorrow—what then? Then the masses will say to you, you acted like gamblers—you staked everything on a fortunate turn of events that did not take place, you proved unfitted for the situation that actually arose instead of the world revolution, which will inevitably come, but which has not yet reached maturity.

* The term "*field revolution on a world-wide scale*" was used by V. V. Obolensky (N. Osinsky), which he explained thus: "Revolutionary war, as a field civil war, cannot resemble in character the regular military actions of national armies when they are carrying out strategic operations. . . . Military action assumes the character of guerrilla warfare (analogous to barricade fighting) and is mixed with class agitation."—*Ed.*

A period has set in of severe defeats, inflicted by imperialism, which is armed to the teeth, upon a country which has demobilised its army, which had to demobilise. What I predicted has come to pass; instead of the Brest peace we have a much more humiliating peace, and the blame for this rests upon those who refused to accept the former peace. We knew that through the fault of the army we were concluding peace with imperialism. We sat at the table beside Hoffmann and not Liebknecht—and in doing so we assisted the German revolution. But now you are assisting German imperialism, because you have surrendered wealth valued at millions in guns and shells; and anybody who had seen the state—the incredible state—of the army could have predicted this. Everyone of integrity who came from the front said that had the Germans made the slightest attack we should have perished inevitably and absolutely. We should have fallen prey to the enemy within a few days.

Having been taught this lesson, we shall overcome our split, our crisis, however severe the disease may be, because an immeasurably more reliable ally will come to our assistance—the world revolution. When the ratification of this Peace of Tilsit,* this unbelievable peace, more humiliating and predatory than the Brest peace, is spoken of, I say: certainly, yes. We must do this because we look at things from the point of view of the masses. Any attempt to apply the tactics applied internally in one country between October and November—the triumphant period of the revolution—to apply them with the aid of our imagination to the progress of events in the world revolution, is doomed to failure. When it is said that the respite is a fantasy, when a newspaper called *Kommunist***—from the word “Commune”, I suppose—when this paper fills column after column with attempts to refute the respite theory, I say that I have lived through quite a lot of factional conflicts and splits and so I

* *The Peace Treaty of Tilsit* signed in July 1807 between France and Prussia imposed harsh and humiliating terms on Prussia. She lost large territories and had to pay an indemnity of 100 million francs. She also pledged to reduce her army to 40,000 men, to provide auxiliary troops on Napoleon's demand and to cease trade with Britain.—*Ed.*

** *Kommunist*—a daily newspaper, mouthpiece of “Left Communists” published in Petrograd from March 5 to 19, 1918.—*Ed.*

have a great deal of experience; and I must say that it is clear to me that this disease will not be cured by the old method of factional Party splits because events will cure it more quickly. Life is marching forward very quickly. In this respect it is magnificent. History is driving its locomotive so fast that before the editors of *Kommunist* bring out their next issue the majority of the workers in Petrograd will have begun to be disappointed in its ideas, because events are proving that the respite is a fact. We are now signing a peace treaty, we have a respite, we are taking advantage of it the better to defend our fatherland—because had we been at war we should have had an army fleeing in panic which would have had to be stopped, and which our comrades cannot and could not stop, because war is more powerful than sermons, more powerful than ten thousand arguments. Since they did not understand the objective situation they could not hold back the army, and cannot do so. This sick army infected the whole organism, and another unparalleled defeat was inflicted upon us. German imperialism struck another blow at the revolution, a severe blow, because we allowed ourselves to face the blows of imperialism without machine-guns. Meanwhile, we shall take advantage of this breathing-space to persuade the people to unite and fight, to say to the Russian workers and peasants: "Organise self-discipline, strict discipline, otherwise you will have to remain lying under the German jackboot as you are lying now, as you will inevitably have to lie until the people learn to fight and to create an army capable, not of running away, but of bearing untold suffering." It is inevitable, because the German revolution has not yet begun, and we cannot guarantee that it will come tomorrow.

That is why the respite theory, which is totally rejected in the flood of articles in *Kommunist*, is advanced by reality. Everyone can see that the respite is a fact, that everyone is taking advantage of it. We believed that we would lose Petrograd in a few days when the advancing German troops were only a few days' march away, and when our best sailors and the Putilov workers,* notwithstanding all their great enthusiasm, remained alone, when incredible chaos and

* Those employed at the Putilov Works in Petrograd.—Ed.

panic broke out, which compelled our troops to flee all the way to Gatchina, and when we had cases of positions being recaptured that had never been lost—by a telegraph operator, arriving at the station, taking his place at the key and wiring, “No Germans in sight. We have occupied the station.” A few hours later I received a telephone communication from the Commissariat of Railways informing me, “We have occupied the next station. We are approaching Yamburg. No Germans in sight. Telegraph operator at his post.” That is the kind of thing we had. This is the real history of the eleven days’ war.* It was described to us by sailors and Putilov workers, who ought to be brought to the Congress of Soviets. Let them tell the truth. It is a frightfully bitter, disappointing, painful and humiliating truth, but it is a hundred times more useful, it can be understood by the Russian people.

One may dream about the field revolution on a world-wide scale, for it will come. Everything will come in due time; but for the time being, set to work to establish self-discipline, subordination before all else, so that we can have exemplary order, so that the workers for at least one hour in twenty-four may train to fight. This is a little more difficult than relating beautiful fairy-tales. This is what we can do today; in this way you will help the German revolution, the world revolution. We do not know how many days the respite will last, but we have got it. We must demobilise the army as quickly as possible, because it is a sick organ; meanwhile, we will assist the Finnish revolution.**

Yes, of course, we are violating the treaty; we have violated it thirty or forty times. Only children can fail to

* Lenin is evidently referring to the period between the launching of the German offensive, on February 18, and the arrival of the Soviet delegation in Brest-Litovsk, on February 28, 1918. The German offensive continued until March 3, the day the peace treaty was signed.—*Ed.*

** The revolution started on January 27, 1918, in response to an appeal from the leaders of the Social-Democratic Party of Finland. It deposed Svinhufvud’s bourgeois government and the workers took power into their own hands. On January 29, a revolutionary Finnish government was set up—the Council of People’s Representatives. However, the revolution was victorious only in the south of the country. The Svinhufvud government entrenched itself in the north, where all counter-revolutionary forces were concentrated. As a result of the intervention by the German armed forces on May 2, 1918, the Finnish revolution was crushed.—*Ed.*

understand that in an epoch like the present, when a long painful period of emancipation is setting in, which has only just created and raised the Soviet power three stages in its development—only children can fail to understand that in this case there must be a long, circumspect struggle. The shameful peace treaty is rousing protest, but when comrades from *Kommunist* talk about war they appeal to sentiment and forget that the people are clenching their fists with rage, are "seeing red". What do they say? "A class-conscious revolutionary will never live through this, will never submit to such a disgrace." Their newspaper bears the title *Kommunist*, but it should bear the title *Szlachcic** because it looks at things from the point of view of the *szlachcic* who, dying in a beautiful pose, sword in hand, said: "Peace is disgraceful, war is honourable." They argue from the point of view of the *szlachcic*; I argue from the point of view of the peasant.

If I accept peace when the army is in flight, and must be in flight if it is not to lose thousands of men, I accept it in order to prevent things from getting worse. Is the treaty really shameful? Why, every sober-minded peasant and worker will say I am right, because they understand that peace is a means of gathering forces. History knows—I have referred to it more than once—the case of the liberation of the Germans from Napoleon after the Peace of Tilsit. I deliberately called the peace a Peace of Tilsit although we did not undertake to do what had been stipulated in that treaty, we did not undertake to provide troops to assist the victor to conquer other nations—things like that have happened in history, and will happen to us if we continue to place our hopes in the field revolution on a world-wide scale. Take care that history does not impose upon you this form of military slavery as well. And before the socialist revolution is victorious in all countries the Soviet Republic may be reduced to slavery. At Tilsit, Napoleon compelled the Germans to accept incredibly disgraceful peace terms. That peace had to be signed several times. The Hoffmann of those days—Napoleon—time and again caught the Germans violating the peace treaty, and the present Hoffmann will catch us at it. Only we shall take care that he does not catch us soon.

* *Szlachcic*—a Polish nobleman.—Ed.

The last war has been a bitter, painful, but serious lesson for the Russian people. It has taught them to organise, to become disciplined, to obey, to establish a discipline that will be exemplary. Learn discipline from the Germans; for, if we do not, we, as a people, are doomed, we shall live in eternal slavery.

This way, and no other, has been the way of history. History tells us that peace is a respite for war, war is a means of obtaining a somewhat better or somewhat worse peace. At Brest the relation of forces corresponded to a peace imposed upon the one who has been defeated, but it was not a humiliating peace. The relation of forces at Pskov corresponded to a disgraceful, more humiliating peace; and in Petrograd and Moscow, at the next stage, a peace four times more humiliating will be dictated to us. We do not say that the Soviet power is only a form, as our young Moscow friends have said,* we do not say that the content can be sacrificed for this or that revolutionary principle. We do say, let the Russian people understand that they must become disciplined and organised, and then they will be able to withstand all the Tilsit peace treaties. The whole history of wars of liberation shows that when these wars involved large masses liberation came quickly. We say, since history marches forward in this way, we shall have to abandon peace for war, and this may happen within the next few days. Everyone must be prepared. I have not the slightest shadow of doubt that the Germans are preparing near Narva, if it is true that it has not been taken, as all the newspapers say; if not in Narva, then near Narva, if not in Pskov, then near Pskov, the Germans are grouping their regular army, making ready their railways, to capture Petrograd at the next jump. And this beast can jump very well. He has proved that. He will jump again. There is not a shadow of doubt about that. That is why we must be prepared, we must not brag, but must be able to take advantage of even a single day of respite, because we can take advantage of even one day's respite to evacuate Petrograd, the capture of which will cause unprecedented suffering to hundreds of thousands of our proletarians. I say again that I am ready to sign, and that I consider it my duty

* This is a reference to the resolution adopted by the Moscow Regional Bureau of the R.S.D.L.P. on February 24, 1918.—Ed.

to sign, a treaty twenty times, a hundred times more humiliating, in order to gain at least a few days in which to evacuate Petrograd, because by that I will alleviate the sufferings of the workers, who otherwise may fall under the yoke of the Germans; by that I facilitate the removal from Petrograd of all the materials, gunpowder, etc., which we need; because I am a defencist, because I stand for the preparation of an army, even in the most remote rear, where our present, demobilised, sick army is being healed.

We do not know how long the respite will last—we will try to take advantage of the situation. Perhaps the respite will last longer, perhaps it will last only a few days. Anything may happen, no one knows, or can know, because all the major powers are bound, restricted, compelled to fight on several fronts. Hoffmann's behaviour is determined first by the need to smash the Soviet Republic; secondly, by the fact that he has to wage war on a number of fronts, and thirdly, by the fact that the revolution in Germany is maturing, is growing, and Hoffmann knows this. He cannot, as some assert, take Petrograd and Moscow this very minute. But he may do so tomorrow, that is quite possible. I repeat that at a moment when the army is obviously sick, when we are taking advantage of every opportunity, come what may, to get at least one day's respite, we say that every serious revolutionary who is linked with the masses and who knows what war is, what the masses are, must discipline the masses, must heal them, must try to arouse them for a new war—every such revolutionary will admit that we are right, will admit that any disgraceful peace is proper, because it is in the interests of the proletarian revolution and the regeneration of Russia, because it will help to get rid of the sick organ. As every sensible man understands, by signing this peace treaty we do not put a stop to our workers' revolution; everyone understands that by concluding peace with the Germans we do not stop rendering military aid; we are sending arms to the Finns, but not military units, which turn out to be unfit.

Perhaps we will accept war; perhaps tomorrow we will surrender even Moscow and then go over to the offensive; we will move our army against the enemy's army if the necessary turn in the mood of the people takes place. This turn is developing and perhaps much time is required, but it will

come, when the great mass of the people will not say what they are saying now. I am compelled to accept the harshest peace terms because I cannot say to myself that this time has arrived. When the time of regeneration arrives everyone will realise it, will see that the Russian is no fool; he sees, he will understand that for the time being we must refrain, that this slogan must be carried through—and this is the main task of our Party Congress and of the Congress of Soviets.

We must learn to work in a new way. That is immensely more difficult, but it is by no means hopeless. It will not break Soviet power if we do not break it ourselves by utterly senseless adventurism. The time will come when the people will say, we will not permit ourselves to be tortured any longer. But this will take place only if we do not agree to this adventure but prove able to work under harsh conditions and under the unprecedentedly humiliating treaty we signed the other day, because a war, or a peace treaty, cannot solve such a historical crisis. Because of their monarchic organisation the German people were fettered in 1807, when after several humiliating peace treaties, which were transformed into respites to be followed by new humiliations and new infringements, they signed the Peace of Tilsit. The Soviet organisation of the people makes our task easier.

We should have but one slogan—to learn the art of war properly and put the railways in order. To wage a socialist revolutionary war without railways would be rank treachery. We must produce order and we must produce all the energy and all the strength that will produce the best that is in the revolution.

Grasp even an hour's respite if it is given you, in order to maintain contact with the remote rear and there create new armies. Abandon illusions for which real events have punished you and will punish you more severely in the future. An epoch of most grievous defeats is ahead of us, it is with us now, we must be able to reckon with it, we must be prepared for persistent work in conditions of illegality, in conditions of downright slavery to the Germans; it is no use painting it in bright colours, it is a real Peace of Tilsit. If we are able to act in this way, then, in spite of defeats, we shall be able to say with absolute certainty—victory will be ours. (*Applause.*)

**Reply to the Debate
on the Political Report
of the Central Committee
March 8**

Comrades, let me begin with some relatively minor remarks, let me begin from the end. At the end of his speech Comrade Bukharin went so far as to compare us to Petlyura. If he thinks that is so, how can he remain with us in the same party? Isn't it just empty talk? If things were really as he said, we should not, of course, be members of the same party. The fact that we are together shows that we are ninety per cent in agreement with Bukharin. It is true he added a few revolutionary phrases about our wanting to betray the Ukraine. I am sure it is not worth while talking about such obvious nonsense. I shall return to Comrade Ryazanov, and here I want to say that in the same way as an exception that occurs once in ten years proves the rule, so has Comrade Ryazanov chanced to say a serious word. (*Applause.*) He said that Lenin was surrendering space to gain time. That is almost philosophical reasoning. This time it happened that we heard from Comrade Ryazanov a serious phrase—true it is only a phrase—which fully expresses the case; to gain time I want to surrender space to the actual victor. That and that alone is the whole point at issue. All else is mere talk—the need for a revolutionary war, rousing the peasantry, etc. When Comrade Bukharin pictures things as though there could not be two opinions as to whether war is possible and says—“ask any soldier” (I wrote down his actual words)—since he puts the question this way and wants to ask any soldier, I'll answer him. “Any soldier” turned out to be a French officer that I had a talk with.* That French officer

* The officer referred to is the Comte de Lubersac with whom Lenin talked on February 27, 1918.—*Ed.*

looked at me, with anger in his eyes, of course—had I not sold Russia to the Germans?—and said: “I am a royalist, I am also a champion of the monarchy in France, a champion of the defeat of Germany, so don’t think I support Soviet power—who would, if he was a royalist?—but I favour your signing the Brest Treaty because it’s necessary.” That’s “asking any soldier” for you. Any soldier would say what I have said—we had to sign the Brest Treaty. If it now emerges from Bukharin’s speech that our differences have greatly diminished, it is only because his supporters have concealed the chief point on which we differ.

Now that Bukharin is thundering against us for having demoralised the masses, he is perfectly correct, except that it is himself and not us that he is attacking. Who caused this mess in the Central Committee?—You, Comrade Bukharin. (*Laughter.*) No matter how much you shout “No”, the truth will out; we are here in our own comradely family, we are at our own Congress, we have nothing to hide, the truth must be told. And the truth is that there were three trends in the Central Committee. On February 17 Lomov and Bukharin did not vote. I have asked for the record of the voting to be reproduced and copies made so that every Party member who wishes to do so can go into the secretariat and see how people voted—the historic voting of January 21, which shows that they wavered and we did not, not in the least; we said, “Let us accept the Brest peace—you’ll get nothing better—so as to prepare for a revolutionary war.” Now we have gained five days in which to evacuate Petrograd. Now the manifesto signed by Krylenko and Podvoisky has been published*; they were not among the Lefts, and Bukharin insulted them by saying that Krylenko had been “dragged in”, as though we had invented what Krylenko reported. We agree in full with what they said; that is how matters stand, for it was these army men who gave proof of what I had said; and you dismiss the matter by saying the Germans won’t attack. How can this situation be compared with October, when the

* The reference is to the appeal of the People’s Commissariat for Military Affairs, which called upon all workers and peasants of the Soviet Republic to take up voluntary military training. This was necessary because under the terms of the peace treaty with Germany the Russian army was to be completely demobilised.—*Ed.*

question of equipment did not arise? If you want to take facts into consideration, then consider this one—that the disagreement arose over the statement that we cannot start a war that is obviously to our disadvantage. When Comrade Bukharin began his concluding speech with the thunderous question “Is war possible in the near future?” he greatly surprised me. I answer without hesitation—yes, it is possible, but today we must accept peace. There is no contradiction in this.

After these brief remarks I shall give detailed answers to previous speakers. As far as Radek is concerned I must make an exception. But there was another speech, that of Comrade Uritsky. What was there in that speech apart from Canossa, “treachery”, “retreated”, “adapted”? What is all this about? Haven’t you borrowed your criticism from a Left Socialist-Revolutionary* newspaper? Comrade Bubnov read us a statement submitted to the Central Committee by those of its members who consider themselves very Left-wing and who gave us a striking example of a demonstration before the eyes of the whole world—“the behaviour of the Central Committee strikes a blow at the international proletariat”. Is that anything but an empty phrase? “Demonstrate weakness before the eyes of the whole world!” How are we

* *Left Socialist-Revolutionaries* (Left S.R.s) officially formed a party at their First All-Russia Congress held on November 19-28 (December 2-11), 1917. Until then, they had constituted the Left wing of the Socialist-Revolutionary Party (a petty-bourgeois party founded at the end of 1901—the beginning of 1902).

Anxious to maintain their influence among the peasants, the Left S.R.s decided to co-operate with the Bolsheviks and were given posts on various boards of the People’s Commissariats. However, they disagreed with the Bolsheviks on the basic issues of the construction of socialism and opposed the dictatorship of the proletariat. In January-February 1918 the Central Committee of the Left S.R. Party launched a campaign against the conclusion of the Brest Peace Treaty, and after it was signed and ratified in March 1918 the Left S.R.s withdrew from the Council of People’s Commissars but remained on the boards of the People’s Commissariats and in local government bodies. In July 1918 their Central Committee instigated the assassination of the German Ambassador in Moscow in the hope of provoking war between Soviet Russia and Germany, and raised an armed revolt against Soviet power. After the suppression of the revolt the Fifth All-Russia Congress of Soviets passed a resolution expelling from the Soviets all Left S.R.s who shared the views of their leadership.—*Ed.*

demonstrating? By proposing peace? Because our army has run away? Have we not proved that to begin war with Germany at this moment, and not to accept the Brest peace, would mean showing the world that our army is sick and does not want to give battle? Bubnov's statement was quite empty when he asserted that the wavering was entirely of our making—it was due to our army's being sick. Sooner or later, there had to be a respite. If we had had the correct strategy we should have had a month's breathing-space, but since your strategy was incorrect we have only five days—even that is good. The history of war shows that even days are sometimes enough to halt a panic-stricken army. Anyone who does not accept, does not conclude this devilish peace now, is a man of empty phrases and not a strategist. That is the pity of it. When Central Committee members write to me about "demonstrations of weakness", "treachery", they are writing the most damaging, empty, childish phrases. We demonstrated our weakness by attempting to fight, at a time when the demonstration should not have been made, when an offensive against us was inevitable. As for the peasants of Pskov, we shall bring them to the Congress of Soviets to relate how the Germans treat people, so that they can change the mood of the soldier in panic-stricken flight and he will begin to recover from his panic and say, "This is certainly not the war the Bolsheviks promised to put an end to, this is a new war the Germans are waging against Soviet power." Then recovery will come. But you raise a question that cannot be answered. Nobody knows how long the respite will last.

Now I must say something about Comrade Trotsky's position. There are two aspects to his activities; when he began the negotiations at Brest and made splendid use of them for agitation, we all agreed with Comrade Trotsky. He has quoted part of a conversation with me, but I must add that it was agreed between us that we would hold out until the Germans presented an ultimatum, and then we would give way. The Germans deceived us—they stole five days out of seven from us.* Trotsky's tactics were correct as long

* According to the terms of the armistice concluded on December 2 (15), 1917 at Brest-Litovsk between the Soviet Government and the powers of the Quadruple Alliance (Germany, Austria-Hungary, Bulgaria and Turkey), either side could renew hostilities at seven days'

as they were aimed at delaying matters; they became incorrect when it was announced that the state of war had been terminated but peace had not been concluded. I proposed quite definitely that peace be concluded. We could not have got anything better than the Brest peace. It is now clear to everybody that we would have had a month's respite and that we would not have lost anything. Since history has swept that away it is not worth recalling, but it is funny to hear Bukharin say, "Events will show that we were right." I was right because I wrote about it back in 1915—"We must prepare to wage war, it is inevitable, it is coming, it will come." But we had to accept peace and not try vain blustering. And because war is coming, it was all the more necessary to accept peace, and now we are at least making easier the evacuation of Petrograd—we have made it easier. That is a fact. And when Comrade Trotsky makes fresh demands, "Promise not to conclude peace with Vinnichenko", I say that under no circumstances will I take that obligation upon myself. If the Congress accepts this obligation, neither I, nor those who agree with me, will accept responsibility for it. It would mean tying our hands again with a formal decision instead of following a clear line of manoeuvre—retreat when possible, and at times attack. In war you must never tie yourself down with formal decisions. It is ridiculous not to know the history of war, not to know that a treaty is a means of gathering strength—I have already mentioned Prussian history. There are some people who are just like children, they think that if we have signed a treaty we have sold ourselves to Satan and have gone to hell. That is simply ridiculous when it is quite obvious from the history of war that the conclusion of a treaty after defeat is a means of gathering strength. There have been cases in history of one war following immediately after another, we have all forgotten that, we see that the old war is turning into. . . . * If you like, you can bind yourselves for ever with formal decisions and then hand over all the responsible posts to the Left Socialist-Revolutionaries. We shall not accept responsibility for it. There is not

notice. The German military command infringed this condition by launching an offensive along the whole front on February 18, two days after denouncing the armistice.—*Ed.*

* Several words are missing in the verbatim report.—*Ed.*

the least desire for a split here. I am sure that events will teach you—March 12 is not far away, and you will obtain plenty of material.*

Comrade Trotsky says that it will be treachery in the full sense of the word. I maintain that that is an absolutely wrong point of view. To demonstrate this concretely, I will give you an example: two men are walking together and are attacked by ten men, one fights and the other runs away—that is treachery; but suppose we have two armies of a hundred thousand each and there are five armies against them; one army is surrounded by two hundred thousand, and the other must go to its aid; knowing that the other three hundred thousand of the enemy are ambushed to trap it, should the second army go to the aid of the first? It should not. That is not treachery, that is not cowardice; a simple increase in numbers has changed all concepts, any soldier knows this; it is no longer a personal concept. By acting in this way I preserve my army; let the other army be captured, I shall be able to renew mine, I have allies, I shall wait till the allies arrive. That is the only way to argue; when military arguments are mixed up with others, you get nothing but empty phrases. That is not the way to conduct politics.

We have done everything that could be done. By signing the treaty we have saved Petrograd, even if only for a few days. (The secretaries and stenographers should not think of putting that on record.) The treaty requires us to withdraw our troops from Finland, troops that are clearly no good, but we are not forbidden to take arms into Finland. If Petrograd had fallen a few days ago, the city would have been in a panic and we should not have been able to take anything away; but in those five days we have helped our Finnish comrades—how much I shall not say, they know it themselves.

The statement that we have betrayed Finland is just a childish phrase. We helped the Finns precisely by retreating before the Germans in good time. Russia will never perish just because Petrograd falls, Comrade Bukharin is a thou-

* March 12 was the provisional date for the convocation of the Extraordinary Fourth Congress of Soviets to discuss the ratification of the peace treaty. The Congress met on March 14-16, 1918.—*Ed.*

sand times right in that, but if we manoeuvre in Bukharin's way we may ruin a good revolution. (*Laughter.*)

We have not betrayed either Finland or the Ukraine. No class-conscious worker would accuse us of this. We are helping as best we can. We have not taken one good man away from our army and shall not do so. You say that Hoffmann will catch us—of course he may, I do not doubt it, but how many days it will take him, he does not know and nobody knows. Furthermore, your arguments about his catching us are arguments about the political alignment of forces, of which I shall speak later.

Now that I have explained why I am absolutely unable to accept Trotsky's proposal—you cannot conduct politics in that way—I must say that Radek has given us an example of how far the comrades at our Congress have departed from empty phrases such as Uritsky still sticks to. I certainly cannot accuse him of empty phrases in that speech. He said, "There is not a shadow of treachery, not a shadow of disgrace, because it is clear that you retreated in the face of overpowering military force." That is an appraisal that destroys Trotsky's position. When Radek said, "We must grit our teeth and prepare our forces," he was right—I agree with that in full—don't bluster, grit your teeth and make preparations.

Grit your teeth, don't bluster and muster your forces. The revolutionary war will come, there is no disagreement on this; the difference of opinion is on the Peace of Tilsit—should we conclude it or not? The worst of it is that we have a sick army, and the Central Committee, therefore, must have a firm line and not differences of opinion or the middle line that Comrade Bukharin also supported. I am not painting the respite in bright colours; nobody knows how long it will last and I don't know. The efforts that are being made to force me to say how long it will last are ridiculous. As long as we hold the main lines we are helping the Ukraine and Finland. We are taking advantage of the respite, manoeuvring and retreating.

The German worker cannot now be told that the Russians are being awkward, for it is now clear that German and Japanese imperialism is attacking—it will be clear to everybody; apart from a desire to strangle the Bolsheviks, the

Germans also want to do some strangling in the West, everything is all mixed up, and in this war we shall have to and must be able to manoeuvre.

With regard to Comrade Bukharin's speech, I must say that when he runs short of arguments he puts forward something in the Uritsky manner and says, "The treaty disgraces us." Here no arguments are needed; if we have been disgraced we should collect our papers and run, but, although we have been "disgraced", I do not think our position has been shaken. Comrade Bukharin attempted to analyse the class basis of our position, but instead of doing so told us an anecdote about a deceased Moscow economist. When you discovered some connection between our tactics and food speculation—this was really ridiculous—you forgot that the attitude of the class as a whole, the class, and not the food speculators, shows that the Russian bourgeoisie and their hangers-on—the *Dyelo Naroda* and *Novaya Zhizn** writers—are bending all their efforts to goad us on to war. You do not stress that class fact. To declare war on Germany at the moment would be to fall for the provocation of the Russian bourgeoisie. That is not new because it is the surest—I do not say absolutely certain, because nothing is absolutely certain—the surest way of getting rid of us today. When Comrade Bukharin said that events were on their side, that in the long run we would recognise revolutionary war, he was celebrating an easy victory since we prophesied the inevitability of a revolutionary war in 1915. Our differences were on the following—would the Germans attack or not; that we should have declared the state of war terminated; that in the interests of revolutionary war we should have to retreat, surrendering territory to gain time. Strategy and politics prescribe the most disgusting peace treaty imaginable. Our differences will all disappear once we recognise these tactics.

* *Dyelo Naroda* (People's Cause)—a newspaper of the Socialist-Revolutionary Party published irregularly and under various names from March 1917 to March 1919.

Novaya Zhizn (New Life)—a newspaper that appeared in Petrograd from April 1917 to July 1918. Grouped around it were Mensheviks who called themselves internationalists.—Ed.

Resolution on War and Peace

The Congress recognises the necessity to confirm the extremely harsh, humiliating peace treaty with Germany that has been concluded by Soviet power in view of our lack of an army, in view of the most unhealthy state of the demoralised army at the front, in view of the need to take advantage of any, even the slightest, possibility of obtaining a respite before imperialism launches its offensive against the Soviet Socialist Republic.

In the present period of the era that has begun, the era of the socialist revolution, numerous military attacks on Soviet Russia by the imperialist powers (both from the West and from the East) are historically inevitable. The historical inevitability of such attacks at a time when both internal, class relations and international relations are extremely tense, can at any moment, even immediately, within the next few days, lead to fresh imperialist aggressive wars against the socialist movement in general and against the Russian Socialist Soviet Republic in particular.

The Congress therefore declares that it recognises the primary and fundamental task of our Party, of the entire vanguard of the class-conscious proletariat and of Soviet power, to be the adoption of the most energetic, ruthlessly determined and Draconian measures to improve the self-discipline and discipline of the workers and peasants of Russia, to explain the inevitability of Russia's historic advance towards a socialist, patriotic war of liberation, to create everywhere soundly co-ordinated mass organisations held together by a single iron will, organisations that are capable of concerted,

valorous action in their day-to-day efforts and especially at critical moments in the life of the people, and, lastly, to train systematically and comprehensively in military matters and military operations the entire adult population of both sexes.

The Congress considers the only reliable guarantee of consolidation of the socialist revolution that has been victorious in Russia to be its conversion into a world working-class revolution.

The Congress is confident that the step taken by Soviet power in view of the present alignment of forces in the world arena was, from the standpoint of the interests of the world revolution, inevitable and necessary.

Confident that the working-class revolution is maturing persistently in all belligerent countries and is preparing the full and inevitable defeat of imperialism, the Congress declares that the socialist proletariat of Russia will support the fraternal revolutionary movement of the proletariat of all countries with all its strength and with every means at its disposal.

**Report on the Review
of the Programme and on Changing
the Name of the Party
March 8**

Comrades, as you know, a fairly comprehensive Party discussion on changing the name of the Party has developed since April 1917 and the Central Committee has therefore been able to arrive at an immediate decision that will probably not give rise to considerable dispute—there may even be practically none at all; the Central Committee proposes to you that the name of our Party be changed to the Russian Communist Party, with the word “Bolsheviks” added to it in brackets. We all recognise the necessity for this addition because the word “Bolshevik” has not only acquired rights of citizenship in the political life of Russia but also throughout the entire foreign press, which in a general way keeps track of events in Russia. It has already been explained in our press that the name “Social-Democratic Party” is scientifically incorrect. When the workers set up their own state they realised that the old concept of democracy—bourgeois democracy—had been surpassed in the process of the development of our revolution. We have arrived at a type of democracy that has never existed anywhere in Western Europe. It has its prototype only in the Paris Commune,* and Engels said with regard to the Paris Commune that it was not a state in the proper sense of the word.** In short, since the working people themselves are undertaking to

* *The Paris Commune*—the first dictatorship of the proletariat, the first working-class revolutionary government the world had ever seen, which was set up after the proletarian revolution in Paris in 1871 and existed for 72 days—from March 18 to May 28, 1871.—*Ed.*

** See Engels's letter to August Bebel of March 18-28, 1875.—*Ed.*

administer the state and establish armed forces that support the given state system, the special government apparatus is disappearing, the special apparatus for a certain state coercion is disappearing, and we cannot therefore uphold democracy in its old form.

On the other hand, as we begin socialist reforms we must have a clear conception of the goal towards which these reforms are in the final analysis directed, that is, the creation of a communist society that does not limit itself to the expropriation of factories, the land and the means of production, does not confine itself to strict accounting for, and control of, production and distribution of products, but goes farther towards implementing the principle "From each according to his ability, to each according to his needs". That is why the name of Communist Party is the only one that is scientifically correct. The objection that it may cause us to be confused with the anarchists was immediately rejected by the Central Committee on the grounds that the anarchists never call themselves simply Communists but always add something to that name. In this respect we may mention the many varieties of socialism, but they do not cause the confusion of the Social-Democrats with social-reformers, or national socialists, or any similar parties.

On the other hand, the most important argument in favour of changing the name of the Party is that up to now the old official socialist parties in all the leading European countries have still not got rid of their intoxication with social-chauvinism and social-patriotism that led to the complete collapse of European official socialism during the present war, so that up to now almost all official socialist parties have been a real hindrance to the working-class revolutionary socialist movement, a real encumbrance to it. And our Party, which at the present time undoubtedly enjoys the greatest sympathy of the masses of the working people of all countries—our Party must make the most decisive, sharp, clear and unambiguous statement that is possible to the effect that it has broken off connections with that old official socialism for which purpose a change in the name of the Party will be the most effective means.

Further, comrades, the much more difficult question was that of the theoretical part of the Programme and of its

practical and political part. As far as the theoretical part of the Programme is concerned, we have some material—the Moscow and Petrograd symposia on the review of the Programme, which have been published; the two main theoretical organs of our Party, *Prosveshcheniye* published in Petrograd, and *Spartak** published in Moscow, have carried articles substantiating certain trends in changing the theoretical part of the Programme of our Party. In this sphere we have a certain amount of material. Two main points of view are to be seen which, in my opinion, do not diverge, at any rate radically, on matters of principle; one point of view, the one I defended, is that we have no reason to reject the old theoretical part of our Programme, and that it would be actually incorrect to do so. We have only to add to it an analysis of imperialism as the highest stage of the development of capitalism and also an analysis of the era of the socialist revolution, proceeding from the fact that the era of the socialist revolution has begun. Whatever may be the fate of our revolution, of our contingent of the international proletarian army, whatever may be the future complications of the revolution, the objective situation of the imperialist countries embroiled in a war that has reduced the most advanced countries to starvation, ruin and barbarity, that situation, in any case, is hopeless. And here I must repeat what Frederick Engels said thirty years ago, in 1887, when appraising the probable prospects of a European war. He said that crowns would lie around in Europe by the dozen and nobody would want to pick them up; he said that incredible ruin would fall to the lot of the European countries, and that there could be only one outcome to the horrors of a European war—he put it this way—“either the victory of the working class or the creation of conditions that would make that

* *Prosveshcheniye* (Enlightenment)—a Bolshevik theoretical monthly published legally in St. Petersburg from December 1911. On the eve of the First World War, in June 1914, it was banned by the tsarist government. In the autumn of 1917 publication was resumed, but only one, double, issue appeared.

Spartak (Spartacus)—a journal, organ of the Moscow Committee of the R.S.D.L.P. published in Moscow from May 20 (June 2) to October 29 (November 11), 1917.—*Ed.*

victory possible and necessary".* Engels expressed himself on this score with exceptional precision and caution. Unlike those people who distort Marxism and offer their belated pseudo-philosophising about socialism being impossible in conditions of ruin, Engels realised full well that every war, even in an advanced society, would create not only devastation, barbarity, torment, calamities for the masses, who would drown in blood, and that there could be no guarantee that it would lead to the victory of socialism; he said it would be "either the victory of the working class or the creation of conditions that would make that victory possible and necessary", i.e., that there was, consequently, the possibility of a number of difficult stages of transition in view of the tremendous destruction of culture and the means of production, but that the result could be only the rise of the working class, the vanguard of all working people, and the beginning of its taking over power into its own hands for the creation of a socialist society. For no matter to what extent culture has been destroyed, it cannot be removed from history; it will be difficult to restore but no destruction will ever mean the complete disappearance of that culture. Some part of it, some material remains of that culture will be indestructible, the difficulties will be only in restoring it. There you have one point of view—that we must retain the old Programme and add to it an analysis of imperialism and of the beginning of the social revolution.

I expressed that point of view in the draft Programme that I have published. Another draft was published by Comrade Sokolnikov in the Moscow symposium. The second point of view has been expressed in our private conversations, in particular by Comrade Bukharin, and by Comrade V. Smirnov in the press, in the Moscow symposium. This point of view is that the old theoretical part of our Programme should be completely or almost completely eliminated and replaced by a new part that does not analyse the development of commodity production and capitalism, as the present Programme does, but analyses the contemporary, highest stage of capital-

* Lenin is giving an account of *Introduction to Borkheim's Pamphlet "In Memory of the German Arch-Patriots of 1806-1807"* written by Engels on December 15, 1887.—Ed.

ist development—imperialism—and the immediate transition to the epoch of the social revolution. I do not think that these two points of view diverge radically and in principle, but I shall defend my point of view. It seems to me that it would be theoretically incorrect to eliminate the old programme that analyses the development from commodity production to capitalism. There is nothing incorrect in it. That is how things were and how they are, for commodity production begot capitalism and capitalism led to imperialism. Such is the general historical perspective, and the fundamentals of socialism should not be forgotten. No matter what the further complications of the struggle may be, no matter what occasional zigzags we may have to contend with (there will be very many of them—we have seen from experience what gigantic turns the history of the revolution has made, and so far it is only in our own country; matters will be much more complicated and proceed much more rapidly, the rate of development will be more furious and the turns will be more intricate when the revolution becomes a European revolution)—in order not to lose our way in these zigzags, these sharp turns in history, in order to retain the general perspective, to be able to see the scarlet thread that joins up the entire development of capitalism and the entire road to socialism, the road we naturally imagine as straight, and which we must imagine as straight in order to see the beginning, the continuation and the end—in real life it will never be straight, it will be incredibly involved—in order not to lose our way in these twists and turns, in order not to get lost at times when we are taking steps backward, times of retreat and temporary defeat or when history or the enemy throws us back—in order not to get lost, it is, in my opinion, important not to discard our old, basic Programme; the only theoretically correct line is to retain it. Today we have reached only the first stage of transition from capitalism to socialism here in Russia. History has not provided us with that peaceful situation that was theoretically assumed for a certain time, and which is desirable for us, and which would enable us to pass through these stages of transition speedily. We see immediately that the Civil War has made many things difficult in Russia, and that the Civil War is interwoven with a

whole series of wars. Marxists have never forgotten that violence must inevitably accompany the collapse of capitalism in its entirety and the birth of socialist society. That violence will constitute a period of world history, a whole era of various kinds of wars, imperialist wars, civil wars inside countries, the intermingling of the two, national wars liberating the nationalities oppressed by the imperialists and by various combinations of imperialist powers that will inevitably enter into various alliances in the epoch of tremendous state-capitalist and military trusts and syndicates. This epoch, an epoch of gigantic cataclysms, of mass decisions forcibly imposed by war, of crises, has begun—that we can see clearly—and it is only the beginning. We therefore have no reason to discard everything bearing on the definition of commodity production in general, of capitalism in general. We have only just taken the first steps towards shaking off capitalism altogether and beginning the transition to socialism. We do not know and we cannot know how many stages of transition to socialism there will be. That depends on when the full-scale European socialist revolution begins and on whether it will deal with its enemies and enter upon the smooth path of socialist development easily and rapidly or whether it will do so slowly. We do not know this, and the programme of a Marxist party must be based on facts that have been established with absolute certainty. The power of our Programme—the programme that has found its confirmation in all the complications of the revolution—is in that alone. Marxists must build up their programme on this basis alone. We must proceed from facts that have been established with absolute certainty, facts that show how the development of exchange and commodity production became a dominant historical phenomenon throughout the world, how it led to capitalism and capitalism developed into imperialism; that is an absolutely definite fact that must first and foremost be recorded in our Programme. That imperialism begins the era of the social revolution is also a fact, one that is obvious to us, and about which we must speak clearly. By stating this fact in our Programme we are holding high the torch of the social revolution before the whole world, not as an agitational speech, but as a new Programme that says to the peoples of Western Europe, “Here is what you and we have gathered

from the experience of capitalist development. This is what capitalism was, this is how it developed into imperialism, and here is the epoch of the social revolution that is beginning, and in which it is our lot to play, chronologically, the first role." We shall proclaim this manifesto before all civilised countries; it will not only be a fervent appeal but will be substantiated with absolute accuracy and will derive from facts recognised by all socialist parties. It will make all the clearer the contradiction between the tactics of those parties that have now betrayed socialism and the theoretical premises which we all share, and which have entered the flesh and blood of every class-conscious worker—the rise of capitalism and its development into imperialism. On the eve of imperialist wars the congresses at Chemnitz and Basle passed resolutions defining imperialism, and there is a flagrant contradiction between that definition and the present tactics of the social-traitors.* We must, therefore, repeat that which is basic in order to show the working people of Western Europe all the more clearly what we accuse their leaders of.

Such is the basis which I consider to be the only theoretically correct one on which to build a programme. The abandoning of the analysis of commodity production and capitalism as though it were old rubbish is not dictated by the historical nature of what is now happening, since we have not gone farther than the first steps in the transition from capitalism to socialism, and our transition is made more intricate by features that are specific to Russia and do not exist in most civilised countries. And so it is not only possible but inevitable that the stages of transition will be different in Europe;

* *Chemnitz Congress of the German Social-Democrats* held September 15-21, 1912, adopted a resolution "On Imperialism" calling on the working class "to fight with redoubled energy against imperialism".

Basle Extraordinary International Socialist Congress (November 24-25, 1912) unanimously passed a manifesto calling on the workers of all countries to wage a resolute struggle for peace. The manifesto recommended that if imperialist war broke out the socialists should utilise the economic and political crisis resulting from the war to promote struggle for a socialist revolution.

During the imperialist war of 1914-18, the Social-Democratic leaders in the West-European countries adopted a social-chauvinist stand and sided with their imperialist governments in violation of the decisions of the international socialist congresses.—*Ed.*

it would be theoretically incorrect to turn all attention to specific national stages of transition that are essential to us but may not be essential in Europe. We must begin with the general basis of the development of commodity production, the transition to capitalism and the growth of capitalism into imperialism. In this way we shall occupy and strengthen a theoretical position from which nobody without betraying socialism can shift us. From this we draw the equally inevitable conclusion—the era of the social revolution is beginning.

We draw this conclusion without departing from our basis of definitely proved facts.

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

to Finland, a country that is different in every respect, where there are no Soviets but where there is, at any rate, a new type of power, proletarian power. This is, therefore, proof of what is theoretically regarded as indisputable—that Soviet power is a new type of state without a bureaucracy, without police, without a regular army, a state in which bourgeois democracy has been replaced by a new democracy, a democracy that brings to the fore the vanguard of the working people, gives them legislative and executive authority, makes them responsible for military defence and creates state machinery that can re-educate the masses.

In Russia this has scarcely begun and has begun badly. If we are conscious of what is bad in what we have begun we shall overcome it, provided history gives anything like a decent time to work on that Soviet power. I am therefore of the opinion that a definition of the new type of state should occupy an outstanding place in our Programme. Unfortunately we had to work on our Programme in the midst of governmental work and under conditions of such great haste that we were not even able to convene our commission, to elaborate an official draft programme. What has been distributed among the delegates is only a rough sketch, and this will be obvious to everyone. A fairly large amount of space has been allotted in it to the question of Soviet power, and I think that it is here that the international significance of our Programme will make itself felt. I think it would be very wrong of us to confine the international significance of our revolution to slogans, appeals, demonstrations, manifestos, etc. That is not enough. We must show the European workers exactly what we have set about, how we have set about it, how it is to be understood; that will bring them face to face with the question of how socialism is to be achieved. They must see for themselves—the Russians have started on something worth doing; if they are setting about it badly we must do it better. For that purpose we must provide as much concrete material as possible and say what we have tried to create that is new. We have a new type of state in Soviet power; we shall try to outline its purpose and structure, we shall try to explain why this new type of democracy in which there is so much that is chaotic and irrational, to explain what makes up its living spirit—the transfer of power to the working

people, the elimination of exploitation and the machinery of suppression. The state is the machinery of suppression. The exploiters must be suppressed, but they cannot be suppressed by police, they must be suppressed by the masses themselves, the machinery must be linked with the masses, must represent them as the Soviets do. They are much closer to the masses, they provide an opportunity to keep closer to the masses, they provide greater opportunities for the education of those masses. We know very well that the Russian peasant is anxious to learn; and we want him to learn, not from books, but from his own experience. Soviet power is machinery, machinery that will enable the masses to begin right away learning to govern the state and organise production on a nation-wide scale. It is a task of tremendous difficulty. It is, however, historically important that we are setting about its fulfilment, and not only from the point of view of our one country; we are calling upon European workers to help. We must give a concrete explanation of our Programme from precisely that common point of view. That is why we consider it a continuation of the road taken by the Paris Commune. That is why we are confident that the European workers will be able to help once they have entered on that path. They will do what we are doing, but do it better, and the centre of gravity will shift from the formal point of view to the concrete conditions. In the old days the demand for freedom of assembly was a particularly important one, whereas our point of view on freedom of assembly is that nobody can now prevent meetings, and Soviet power has only to provide premises for meetings. General proclamations of broad principles are important to the bourgeoisie: "All citizens have freedom to assemble, but they must assemble in the open, we shall not give them premises." But we say: "Fewer empty phrases, and more substance." The palaces must be expropriated—not only the Taurida Palace, but many others as well—and we say nothing about freedom of assembly. That must be extended to all other points in the democratic programme. We must be our own judges. All citizens must take part in the work of the courts and in the government of the country. It is important for us to draw literally all working people into the government of the state. It is a task of tremendous difficulty. But socialism cannot be implemented by a minority,

by the Party. It can be implemented only by tens of millions when they have learned to do it themselves. We regard it as a point in our favour that we are trying to help the masses themselves set about it immediately, and not to learn to do it from books and lectures. If we state these tasks of ours clearly and definitely we shall thereby give an impetus to the discussion of the question and its practical presentation by the European masses. We are perhaps making a bad job of what has to be done, but we are urging the masses to do what they have to. If what our revolution is doing is not accidental (and we are firmly convinced that it is not), if it is not the product of a Party decision but the inevitable product of any revolution that Marx called "popular", i.e., a revolution that the masses themselves create by their slogans, their efforts and not by a repetition of the programme of the old bourgeois republic—if we present matters in this way, we shall have achieved the most important thing. And here we come to the question of whether we should abolish the difference between the maximum and minimum programmes. Yes and no. I do not fear this abolition, because the viewpoint we held in summer should no longer exist. I said then, when we had not yet taken power, that it was "too soon", but now that we have taken power and tested it, it is not too soon. In place of the old Programme we must now write a new Programme of Soviet power and not in any way reject the use of bourgeois parliamentarism. It is a utopia to think that we shall not be thrown back.

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

It is obvious that we cannot elaborate a programme at the moment. We must work out its basic premises and hand them over to a commission or to the Central Committee for the elaboration of the main theses. Or still more simply—the

elaboration is possible on the basis of the resolution on the Brest-Litovsk Conference, which has already provided theses.* Such a definition of Soviet power should be given on the basis of the experience of the Russian revolution, and followed by a proposal for practical reforms. I think it is here, in the historical part, that mention should be made that the expropriation of the land and of industrial enterprises has begun. Here we shall present the concrete task of organising distribution, unifying the banks into one universal type and converting them into a network of state institutions covering the whole country and providing us with public book-keeping, accounting and control carried out by the population itself and forming the foundation for further socialist steps. I think that this part, being the most difficult, should be formulated as the concrete demands of our Soviet power—what we want to do at the moment, what reforms we intend to carry out in the sphere of banking policy, the organisation of production, the organisation of exchange, accountancy and control, the introduction of labour conscription, etc. When we are able to, we shall add what great or small measures or half-measures we have taken in that direction. Here we must state with absolute precision and clarity what has been begun and what has not been completed. We know full well that a large part of what has been begun has not been completed. Without any exaggeration, with full objectivity, without departing from the facts, we must state in our Programme what we have done and what we want to do. We shall show the European proletariat this truth and say, this must be done, so that they will say, such-and-such things the Russians are doing badly but we shall do them better. When this urge reaches the masses the socialist revolution will be invincible. The imperialist war is proceeding before the eyes of all people, a war that is nothing but a war of plunder. When the imperialist war exposes itself in the eyes of the world and becomes a war waged by all the imperialists against Soviet power, against socialism, it will give the proletariat of the West yet another push forward. That must be revealed, the war must be described as an alliance of the imperialists against the socialist movement. These are

* See pp. 39-40.—*Ed.*

the general considerations that I think should be shared with you, and on the basis of which I now make the practical proposal to exchange basic views on that question and then, perhaps, elaborate a few fundamental theses here on the spot, and, if that should be found difficult, give up the idea and hand the question of the Programme over to the Central Committee or to a special commission that will be instructed, on the basis of the material available and of the shorthand or secretaries' detailed reports of the Congress, to draw up a Programme for the Party, which must immediately change its name. I am of the opinion that we can do this at the present time, and I think everybody will agree that with our Programme in the editorially unprepared state in which events found it, there is nothing else we can do. I am sure we can do this in a few weeks. We have a sufficient number of theoreticians in all the trends of our Party to obtain a programme in a few weeks. There may be much that is erroneous in it, of course, to say nothing of editorial and stylistic inaccuracies, because we have not got months in which to settle down to it with the composure that is necessary for editorial work.

We shall correct all these errors in the course of our work in the full confidence that we are giving Soviet power an opportunity to implement the Programme. If we at least state precisely, without departing from reality, that Soviet power is a new type of state, a form of the dictatorship of the proletariat, that we present democracy with different tasks, that we have translated the tasks of socialism from a general abstract formula—"the expropriation of the expropriators"—into such concrete formulas as the nationalisation of the banks and the land, that will be an important part of the Programme.

The land question must be reshaped so that we can see in it the first steps of the small peasantry wanting to take the side of the proletariat and help the socialist revolution, see how the peasants, for all their prejudices and all their old convictions, have set themselves the practical task of the transition to socialism. This is a fact, although we shall not impose it on other countries. The peasantry have shown, not in words but by their deeds, that they wish to help and are helping the proletariat that has taken power to put social-

ism into effect. It is wrong to accuse us of wanting to introduce socialism by force. We shall divide up the land justly, mainly from the point of view of the small farm. In doing this we give preference to communes and big labour co-operatives. We support the monopolising of the grain trade. We support, the peasantry have said, the confiscation of banks and factories. We are prepared to help the workers in implementing socialism. I think a fundamental law on the socialisation of the land should be published in all languages. This will be done, if it has not been done already.* That is an idea we shall state concretely in the Programme—it must be expressed theoretically without departing one single step from concretely established facts. It will be done differently in the West. Perhaps we are making mistakes, but we hope that the proletariat of the West will correct them. And we appeal to the European proletariat to help us in our work.

In this way we can work out our Programme in a few weeks, and the mistakes we make will be corrected as time goes on—we shall correct them ourselves. Those mistakes will be as light as feathers compared with the positive results that will be achieved.

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* Early in 1918, the Bureau of International Revolutionary Propaganda attached to the People's Commissariat for Foreign Affairs began publishing the Decree on Land in foreign languages. It was published in English in the book *Decrees Issued by the Revolutionary People's Government*, Vol. 1, Petrograd, February 1918.—Ed.

Eighth Congress of the R.C.P.(B.)

March 18-23, 1919

Speech Opening the Congress

March 18

Comrades, our first words at this Congress must be dedicated to Comrade Yakov Mikhailovich Sverdlov. Comrades, as many people said at his funeral today, Yakov Mikhailovich Sverdlov was, for the Party as a whole and for the entire Soviet Republic, the principal organiser, but he was much more valuable for our Party Congress and much closer to it. We have lost a comrade who devoted his last days entirely to this Congress. His absence will affect the whole course of our proceedings, and this Congress will feel it with exceptional acuteness. Comrades, I propose that we honour his memory by rising. (*All rise.*)

Comrades, we are opening our Party Congress at a very difficult, complicated and peculiar stage in the Russian and in the world proletarian revolution. In the first period after the October Revolution the forces of the Party and of the Soviet government were almost entirely absorbed by the tasks of direct defence, of offering direct resistance to our enemies, the bourgeoisie at home and abroad, who could not reconcile themselves to the idea that the socialist republic could exist for any length of time. We nevertheless gradually began to consolidate our position and the tasks of construction, organisational tasks, began to come to the fore. I think that this work of construction and organisation should be the keynote of our Congress. The programme problems which, from the standpoint of theory present a big difficulty and are in the main problems of our development, and those that have a special place on the Congress agenda—the organisational question, the question of the Red Army and, particu-

larly, the question of work in the countryside—all require us to focus and concentrate our attention on the main question, which is a very difficult but gratifying one for socialists to grapple with, namely, the question of organisation. It must be particularly emphasised here that one of the most difficult problems of communist development, in a country of small peasant farms, one that we must deal with right now, is *the problem of our attitude towards the middle peasants.*

Comrades, it was natural that in the first period, when we had to fight for the Soviet Republic's right to existence, this question should not have been pushed into the foreground on an extensive scale. The relentless war against the rural bourgeoisie and the kulaks gave prominence to the organisation of the rural proletariat and semi-proletariat. But by its next step the Party, which wants to lay the sound foundations of communist society, must take up the task of correctly defining our attitude towards the middle peasants. This is a problem of a higher order. We could not present it on an extensive scale until we had made secure the basis for the existence of the Soviet Republic. This problem is a more complicated one and it involves defining our attitude towards a numerous and strong section of the population. This attitude cannot be defined simply by the answer—struggle or support. As regards the bourgeoisie our task is defined by the words "struggle", "suppression", and as regards the rural proletariat and semi-proletariat our task is defined by the words "our support", but this problem is undoubtedly more complicated. On this point, the socialists, the best representatives of socialism in the old days, when they still believed in the revolution and faithfully adhered to its theory and ideals, talked about *neutralising the peasantry*, i.e., making the middle peasants a social stratum which, if it did not actively help the proletarian revolution, at least would not hinder it, that would remain neutral and not go over to the side of our enemies. This abstract, theoretical formulation of the problem is quite clear but is inadequate. We have reached the stage of socialist development when we must draw up definite and detailed rules and regulations which have been tested by practical experience in the rural districts to guide us in our efforts to place our relations with the middle

peasants *on the basis of a firm alliance* and so preclude the possibility of a repetition of those mistakes and blunders we have repeatedly made in the past. These blunders estranged the middle peasants from us, although we of the Communist Party, the leading party, were the first who helped the Russian peasants to throw off the yoke of the landowners and establish real democracy, which gave us every ground for counting on their complete confidence. This is not the type of problem that calls for ruthless, swift suppression and attack, it is more complicated. But I shall allow myself to say confidently that after our twelve months of preliminary work we shall be able to cope with this problem.

A few words about our international situation. Comrades, you are all, of course, aware that the founding of the Third, Communist International in Moscow is an event of the greatest significance insofar as our position in the world is concerned. We still have confronting us a vast, real and well-armed military force—all the strongest powers of the world. Nevertheless, we can confidently say to ourselves that what outwardly seems to be a gigantic force, and which physically is immeasurably stronger than we are, has been shaken. It is no longer a force. It no longer has its former stability. Therefore there is nothing utopian in our aim and in the task we set ourselves—to be victorious in the struggle against this giant. On the contrary, although we are now artificially cut off from the whole world, the newspapers every day report the growth of the revolutionary movement in all countries. Moreover, we know, we see, that this growing movement is assuming the Soviet form. And this is a guarantee that in establishing the Soviet government we discovered the *international, world form of the dictatorship of the proletariat*. We are firmly convinced that the proletariat all over the world has taken this path of struggle, the creation of these forms of proletarian rule, the rule of the workers and of the working people in general, and that no power on earth can halt the progress of the world communist revolution towards the world Soviet republic. (*Prolonged applause.*)

Comrades, permit me now on behalf of the Central Committee of the Russian Communist Party to declare the Eighth Congress open and proceed to the election of the presidium.

Report of the Central Committee March 18

(Stormy prolonged applause. Cries of "Long live Ilyich!" "Long live Comrade Lenin!")

Comrades, permit me to begin with the political report of the Central Committee. To present a report on the Central Committee's political activities since the last Congress is tantamount to presenting a report on the whole of our revolution; and I think that everybody will agree that not only is it impossible for one individual to perform such a task in so short a time, but that it is, in general, beyond the powers of one individual. I have therefore decided to confine myself to those points which, in my opinion, are particularly important in the history of what our Party was called upon to do during this period and in the light of our present tasks. I must say that at a time like this I find it beyond my powers to devote myself exclusively to history, to reviewing the past without bearing in mind the present and the future.

To begin with foreign policy, it goes without saying that the outstanding features here were our relations with German imperialism and the Brest peace. I think it is worth while dwelling on this question, because its importance is not merely historical. I think that the proposal the Soviet government made to the Allied powers, or, to put it more correctly, our government's consent to the well-known proposal for a conference to be held on Princes Islands*—I

* The Princes Islands Conference was planned by Lloyd George and Wilson and was to be attended by representatives of all governments existing on the territory of Russia; its purpose was to elaborate measures to stop the Civil War. On February 4, 1919, the Soviet Govern-

think that this proposal, and our reply, reflect, in some respects, and in important respects at that, the relations with imperialism that we established at the time of the Brest peace. That is why I think it important to deal with the history of this matter in view of the rapidity with which events are occurring.

When the Brest peace was decided on, the Soviet system and even Party development were still in the initial stages. You know that at that time our Party as a whole still possessed too little experience to determine, even approximately, how fast we should travel the path we had chosen. The chaotic conditions that, as you know, we had to take over from the past made it extremely difficult at the time to survey events and obtain an exact picture of what was going on. Moreover, our extreme isolation from Western Europe and all other countries deprived us of the objective material necessary to assess the possible rapidity or the ways in which the proletarian revolution in the West would develop. This complex situation made the question of the Brest peace a matter of no little dissension in the ranks of our Party.

But events have proved that this enforced retreat before German imperialism, which had taken cover behind an extremely oppressive, outrageous and predatory peace, was the only correct move in the relations between the young socialist republic and world imperialism (one half of world imperialism). At that time we, who had just overthrown the landowners and the bourgeoisie in Russia, had absolutely no choice but to retreat before the forces of world imperialism. Those who condemned this retreat from the point of view of a revolutionary were actually supporting a fundamentally wrong and non-Marxist position. They had forgotten the conditions, the long and strenuous process of development of the Kerensky period, and the enormous preparatory work done in the Soviets before we reached the stage when, in October, after the severe July defeats, after the Kornilov revolt, the vast mass of working people was at last ready

ment consented to take part in the conference. But Kolchak, Denikin and other counter-revolutionary governments refused to participate in the conference because they hoped to strangle the Soviet Republic by force of arms. As a result, the conference did not take place.—*Ed.*

and determined to overthrow the bourgeoisie, and when the organised material forces necessary for this purpose had become available. Naturally, anything like this was then out of the question on an international scale. In view of this, the fight against world imperialism had this aim—to continue the work of disintegrating imperialism and of enlightening and uniting the working class, which had everywhere begun to stir, but whose actions have still not become completely definite.

Hence, the only correct policy was the one we adopted in respect of the Brest peace, although, of course, at the time, that policy intensified the enmity of a number of petty-bourgeois elements, who are not by any means necessarily hostile to socialism under all conditions, or in all countries. In this respect history offered us a lesson which we must learn thoroughly, for there can be no doubt that we shall often be called upon to apply it. This lesson is that the attitude the party of the proletariat should adopt towards the petty-bourgeois democratic parties, towards those elements, strata, groups and classes which are particularly strong and numerous in Russia, and which exist in all countries, constitutes an extremely complex and difficult problem. Petty-bourgeois elements vacillate between the old society and the new. They cannot be the motive force of either the old society, or the new. On the other hand, they are not bound to the old society to the same degree as the landowners and the bourgeoisie. Patriotism is a sentiment bound up with the economic conditions of life of precisely the small proprietors. The bourgeoisie is more international than the small proprietors. We came up against this fact during the period of the Brest peace, when the Soviet government set a higher value on the world dictatorship of the proletariat and the world revolution than on all national sacrifices, burdensome as they were. This compelled us to enter into a violent and ruthless clash with the petty-bourgeois elements. At that time a number of those elements joined forces with the bourgeoisie and the landowners against us, although, subsequently, they began to waver.

The question that several comrades have raised here as to our attitude towards the petty-bourgeois parties is dealt with extensively in our programme and will, in fact, crop up in

the discussion of every point of the agenda. In the course of our revolution this question has ceased to be an abstract and general one, and has become concrete. At the time of the Brest peace our duty as internationalists was at all costs to help the proletarian elements to strengthen and consolidate their positions and this drove the petty-bourgeois parties away from us. After the German revolution, as we know, the petty-bourgeois elements again began to vacillate. Those events opened the eyes of many who, as the proletarian revolution was maturing, had assessed the situation from the point of view of the old type of patriotism, and had assessed it not only in a non-socialist way, but, in general, incorrectly. At the present time, owing to the difficult food situation and the war which we are still waging against the Entente,* a wave of vacillation is again sweeping through the petty-bourgeois democrats. We have been obliged to reckon with these vacillations before; but now we must all learn a tremendously important lesson, namely, that situations never repeat themselves in exactly the same form. The new situation is far more complex. It can be properly assessed, and our policy will be correct, if we draw on the experience of the Brest peace. When we consented to the proposal for a conference on Princes Islands we knew that we were consenting to an extremely harsh peace. On the other hand, however, we now know better how the tide of proletarian revolution is rising in Western Europe, how unrest is changing into conscious discontent, and how the latter is giving rise to a world, Soviet, proletarian movement. At that time we were groping, guessing when the revolution in Europe might break out—we presumed, on the basis of our theoretical conviction, that the revolution must take place—but today we have a number of facts showing how the revolution is maturing in other countries and how the movement began. That is why, in

* *The Entente*—a bloc of imperialist powers (Britain, France and tsarist Russia) that was formed early in the twentieth century and was opposed to the imperialist powers of the Triple Alliance (Germany, Austria-Hungary and Italy). During the First World War (1914-18) the United States, Japan and other countries joined this bloc. After the Great October Socialist Revolution its principal members—Britain, France, the U.S.A. and Japan—inspired, organised and took part in the armed intervention against Soviet Russia.—*Ed.*

relation to Western Europe, in relation to the Entente countries, we have, or shall have, to repeat a good deal of what we did at the time of the Brest peace. It will be much easier for us to do this now that we have the experience of Brest. When our Central Committee discussed the question of participating in a conference on Princes Islands together with the Whites—which in fact amounted to the annexation of all the territory the Whites then occupied—this question of an armistice did not evoke a single voice of protest among the proletariat; and that also was the attitude of our Party. At any rate, I did not hear of any dissatisfaction, or indignation, from any quarter. The reason for this was that our lesson in international politics had borne fruit.

Insofar as concerns the petty-bourgeois elements, the problem facing the Party has not yet been fully solved. On a number of questions, in fact on all the questions on the agenda, we have, during the past year, laid the foundation for a correct solution of this problem, particularly in relation to the middle peasants. In theory we agree that the middle peasants are not our enemies, that they need special treatment, and that in their case the situations will vary in accordance with numerous circumstances attending the revolution, in particular, the answer to the question "For or against patriotism?" For us such questions are of second-rate importance, even of third-rate importance; but the petty bourgeoisie is completely blinded by them. Furthermore, all these elements waver in the struggle and become absolutely spineless. They do not know what they want, and are incapable of defending their position. Here we need extremely flexible and extremely cautious tactics, for sometimes it is necessary to give with one hand and take away with the other. The petty-bourgeois elements and not we are to blame for this, for they cannot make up their minds. We can see this in practice now. Only today we read in the newspapers what the German Independents,* who possess such strong forces as

* I.e., members of the *Independent Social-Democratic Party of Germany*—a Centrist party that was founded in April 1917. The Independents advocated unity with the social-chauvinists and were eventually even to reject the class struggle as such. At the Halle Congress in October 1920 a split took place in this party and a considerable number of members joined the Communist Party of Germany in December 1920.

Kautsky and Hilferding, have set out to attain. You know that they wanted to incorporate the workers' councils in the constitution of the German democratic republic, i.e., marry the Constituent Assembly* to the dictatorship of the proletariat. From our point of view this is such a mockery of common sense in our revolution, the German revolution, the Hungarian revolution and the maturing Polish revolution, that we can only express our amazement. It must be said that such vacillating elements are to be found in the most advanced countries. Educated, well-informed, intelligent people, even in such an advanced capitalist country as Germany are sometimes a hundred times more muddle-headed and hysterical than our backward petty bourgeoisie. In this there is a lesson for Russia in respect of the petty-bourgeois parties and the middle peasants. For a long time we shall have a difficult, double problem. For a long time these parties are bound to take one step forward and two steps back because their economic status compels them to do so, and because their acceptance of socialism is not due to a definite conviction that the bourgeois system is worthless. We cannot expect them to be loyal to socialism, and it would be absurd to rely on their socialist convictions. They will support socialism only when they are convinced that there is no other way out, when the bourgeoisie is finally defeated and smashed.

I am unable to give you a systematic summary of the experience of the past year and have glanced at the past only in

Right-wing elements formed a separate party and retained the name of Independent Social-Democratic Party of Germany, which existed until 1922.—*Ed.*

* *The Constituent Assembly*, which the bourgeois Provisional Government had repeatedly promised to convene, was finally convened only by the Soviet Government on January 5, 1918. The elections to it were conducted according to the lists drawn up prior to the October Socialist Revolution and did not reflect the new alignment of forces after the revolution; Right-wing Socialist-Revolutionaries and Mensheviks received the bulk of the seats.

When the counter-revolutionary majority refused to accept the Declaration of Rights of Working and Exploited People submitted by the Soviet Government and to endorse the Decree on Land and the Decree on Peace adopted by the Soviet power, the All-Russia Central Executive Committee decided to dissolve the Constituent Assembly, which was duly done on January 6 (19), 1918.—*Ed.*

the light of what is required for our policy tomorrow and the day after. The chief lesson is that we must be extremely cautious in our attitude towards the middle peasants and the petty bourgeoisie. The experience of the past demands it, we know it from the experience of Brest. We shall have to change our line of conduct very often, and this may appear strange and incomprehensible to the casual observer. "How is that?" he will say. "Yesterday you were making promises to the petty bourgeoisie, while today Dzerzhinsky announces that the Left Socialist-Revolutionaries and the Mensheviks* will be stood against the wall. What a contradiction!" Yes, it is a contradiction. But the conduct of the petty-bourgeois democrats themselves is contradictory: they do not know where to sit, and try to sit between two stools, jump from one to the other and fall now to the right and now to the left. We have changed our tactics towards them, and whenever they turn towards us, we say "Welcome" to them. We have not the slightest intention of expropriating the middle peasants; we certainly do not want to use force against the petty-bourgeois democrats. We say to them, "You are not a serious enemy. Our enemy is the bourgeoisie. But if you join forces with them, we shall be obliged to apply the measures of the proletarian dictatorship to you, too."

I shall now deal with questions of internal development, briefly touch on the main features which characterise our political experience and sum up the political activities of the Central Committee during this period. These political activities of the Central Committee manifested themselves daily in questions of immense importance. Were it not for the fact that we worked together so well and so harmoniously, as I have already told you, we would not have been able to act as we did, we would not have been able to solve these urgent problems. As to the question of the Red Army, which is now rousing so much discussion, and which stands as a special

* *Mensheviks*—an opportunist petty-bourgeois trend in Russian Social-Democracy. After the victory of the bourgeois-democratic revolution in February 1917 the Mensheviks and Socialist-Revolutionaries became members of the bourgeois Provisional Government; they supported its imperialist policies and fought against the growing proletarian revolution. After the October Socialist Revolution they organised and took part in plots and revolts against Soviet power.—*Ed.*

item on the agenda of this Congress, we adopted a host of minor, individual decisions which the Central Committee of our Party submitted to and got carried in the Council of People's Commissars and the All-Russia Central Executive Committee. A still larger number of important individual assignments were made by the respective People's Commissars, all of which systematically and consistently pursued one common line.

The organisation of a Red Army was an entirely new question which had never been dealt with before, even theoretically. Marx once said that it is to the credit of the Paris Communards that they carried into effect decisions which were not borrowed from some preconceived theories, but were dictated by actual necessity.* Marx said this about the Communards in a somewhat ironical vein because there were two predominant trends in the Commune—the Blanquists and the Proudhonists**—and both were compelled to act contrary to their doctrines. We, however, acted in conformity with the tenets of Marxism. At the same time, the political activities of the Central Committee in each concrete case were determined entirely by what was absolutely indispensable. We were often obliged to feel our way. This will be strongly emphasised by any historian capable of presenting an in-

* See Marx and Engels, *Selected Works*, Vol. 1, Moscow, 1962, pp. 481-82.—*Ed.*

** *Blanquists*—supporters of a trend in the French socialist movement headed by Louis Auguste Blanqui (1805-1881), an outstanding revolutionary and a prominent exponent of French utopian communism. As Lenin wrote, Blanquists expected "that mankind will be emancipated from wage slavery, not by the proletarian class struggle, but through a conspiracy hatched by a small minority of intellectuals" (*Collected Works*, Vol. 10, p. 392). They did not take into account the concrete situation necessary for an uprising to be victorious and paid too little heed to contacts with the people.

Proudhonists—adherents of petty-bourgeois socialism hostile to Marxism, as expounded by the French anarchist Proudhon. While criticising big capitalist property, Proudhon dreamed of perpetuating small private property and proposed setting up "people's" and "exchange" banks with the aid of which workers could allegedly purchase their own instruments of labour, become handicraftsmen and ensure the fair marketing of their products. He failed to appreciate the historic role of the proletariat, opposed the class struggle, the proletarian revolution and the dictatorship of the proletariat, and denied the necessity of the state.—*Ed.*

tegrated picture of the activities of the Central Committee of the Party and of the Soviet government during the past year. This fact becomes all the more striking when we try to embrace our past experience in a single glance. But this did not deter us in the least even on October 10, 1917, when the question of seizing power was decided. We did not doubt that we should have to experiment, as Comrade Trotsky expressed it. We undertook a task which nobody in the world has ever attempted on so large a scale.

This is also true of the Red Army. When the war drew to a close the army began to break up, and many people thought at the time that this was a purely Russian phenomenon. But we see that the Russian revolution was in fact the dress rehearsal, or one of the rehearsals, for the world proletarian revolution. When we discussed the Treaty of Brest, when the question of peace arose early in January 1918, we did not yet know when, and in which other countries, armies would begin to disintegrate. We proceeded from experiment to experiment; we endeavoured to create a volunteer army, feeling our way, testing the ground and experimenting to find a solution to the problem in the given situation. And the nature of the problem was clear. Unless we defended the socialist republic by force of arms, we could not exist. A ruling class would never surrender its power to an oppressed class. And the latter would have to prove in practice that it is capable not only of overthrowing the exploiters, but also of organising its self-defence and of staking everything on it. We have always said that there are different kinds of wars. We condemned the *imperialist* war, but we did not reject *war in general*. Those who accused us of being militarists were hopelessly muddled. And when in the report of the Berne Conference of yellow socialists I read that Kautsky had said that the Bolsheviks had introduced not socialism but militarism, I smiled and shrugged my shoulders. As if there was ever a big revolution in history that was not connected with war! Of course not! We are living not merely in a state, but *in a system of states*, and it is inconceivable for the Soviet Republic to exist alongside of the imperialist states for any length of time. One or the other must triumph in the end. And before that end comes there will have to be a series of frightful collisions between the

Soviet Republic and the bourgeois states. If the ruling class, the proletariat, wants to hold power, it must, therefore, prove its ability to do so by its military organisation. How was a class which had hitherto served as cannon-fodder for the military commanders of the ruling imperialist class to create its own commanders? How was it to solve the problem of combining the enthusiasm, the new revolutionary creative spirit of the oppressed and the employment of the store of the bourgeois science and technology of militarism in their worst forms without which this class would not be able to master modern technology and modern methods of warfare?

Here we were faced with a problem which a year's experience has now summed up for us. When we included the question of bourgeois specialists in the revolutionary programme of our Party, we summed up the Party's practical experience in one of the most important questions. As far as I remember, the earlier teachers of socialism, who foresaw a great deal of what would take place in the future socialist revolution and discerned many of its features, never expressed an opinion on this question. It did not exist for them, for it arose only when we proceeded to create a Red Army. That meant creating an army filled with enthusiasm out of an oppressed class which had been used as mere cannon-fodder, and it meant compelling that army to utilise all that was most coercive and abhorrent in what we had inherited from capitalism.

This contradiction, with which we are faced in connection with the Red Army, faces us in every organisational field. Take the question which engaged our attention most of all, namely, the transition from workers' control to workers' management in industry. Following the decrees and decisions passed by the Council of People's Commissars and local Soviet authorities—all of which contributed to our political experience in this field—actually the only thing left for the Central Committee to do was to sum up. In a matter like this it was scarcely able to give a lead in the true sense of the word. One has only to recall how clumsy, immature and casual were our first decrees and decisions on the subject of workers' control of industry. We thought that it was an easy matter; practice showed that it was necessary to build, but

we gave no answer whatever to the question as to *how* to build. Every nationalised factory, every branch of nationalised industry, transport, and particularly railway transport—that most striking example of highly centralised capitalist machinery built on the basis of large-scale engineering, and most vital for the state—all embodied the concentrated experience of capitalism, and created immense difficulties for us.

We are still far from having overcome these difficulties. At first we regarded them in an entirely abstract way, like revolutionary preachers, who had absolutely no idea of how to set to work. There were lots of people, of course, who accused us—and all the socialists and Social-Democrats are accusing us today—of having undertaken this task without knowing how to finish it. But these accusations are ridiculous, made by people who lack the spark of life. As if one can set out to make a great revolution and know beforehand how it is to be completed! Such knowledge cannot be derived from books and our decision could spring only from the experience of the masses. And I say that it is to our credit that amidst incredible difficulties we undertook to solve a problem with which until then we were only half familiar, that we inspired the proletarian masses to display their own initiative, that we nationalised the industrial enterprises, and so forth. I remember that in Smolny* we passed as many as ten or twelve decrees at one sitting. That was an expression of our determination and desire to stimulate the spirit of experiment and initiative among the proletarian masses. We now have experience. Now, we have passed, or are about to pass, from workers' control to workers' management of industry. Instead of being absolutely helpless as we were before, we are now armed with experience, and as far as this is possible, we have summed it up in our programme. We shall have to discuss this in detail when we deal with the question of organisation. We would not have been able to do this work had we not had the assistance and collaboration of the comrades from the trade unions.

* *Smolny*—the building of the former Smolny Institute in Petrograd, the seat of the Soviet Government until March 1918 when it moved to Moscow.—*Ed.*

In Western Europe the situation is different. There our comrades regard the trade unions as an evil, because they are commanded so completely by yellow representatives of the old type of socialism that the Communists do not see that much advantage is to be gained from their support. Many West-European Communists, even Rosa Luxemburg, are advocating the dissolution of the trade unions. That shows how much more difficult this problem is in Western Europe. In this country we could not have held out for a single month had it not been for the support of the trade unions. In this we have the experience of a vast amount of practical work, which enables us to set to work to solve extremely difficult problems.

Take the question of the specialists which faces us at every turn, which arises in connection with every appointment, and which the leaders of our economy, and the Central Committee of the Party, are continually having to face. Under existing conditions the Central Committee of the Party cannot perform its functions if it adheres to hard and fast forms. If we could not appoint comrades able to work independently in their particular fields, we should be unable to function at all. It was only thanks to the fact that we had organisers like Yakov Sverdlov that we were able to work under war conditions without a single conflict worth noting. And in this work we were obliged to accept the assistance offered us by people who possessed knowledge acquired in the past.

In particular, take the administration of the War Department. We could not have solved that problem had we not trusted the General Staff and the big specialists in organisation. There were differences of opinion among us on particular questions, but fundamentally, there was no room for doubt. We availed ourselves of the assistance of bourgeois experts who were thoroughly imbued with the bourgeois mentality, who were disloyal to us, and will remain disloyal to us for many years to come. Nevertheless, the idea that we can build communism with the aid of pure Communists, without the assistance of bourgeois experts, is childish. We have been steeled in the struggle, we have the forces, and we are united; and we must proceed with our organisational work, making use of the knowledge and experience of those experts. This is an indispensable condition, without which

socialism cannot be built. Socialism cannot be built unless we utilise the heritage of capitalist culture. The only material we have to build communism with is what has been left us by capitalism.

We must now build in a practical way, and we have to build communist society with the aid of our enemies. This looks like a contradiction, an irreconcilable contradiction, perhaps. As a matter of fact, this is the only way the problem of building communism can be solved. And reviewing our experience, glancing at the way this problem confronts us every day, surveying the practical activities of the Central Committee, it seems to me that, in the main, our Party has found a solution to this problem. We have encountered immense difficulties, but this was the only way the problem could be solved. The bourgeois experts must be hemmed in by our organised, constructive and united activities so that they will be compelled to fall in line with the proletariat, no matter how much they resist and fight at every step. We must set them to work as a technical and cultural force so as to preserve them and to transform an uncultured and barbarian capitalist country into a cultured, communist country. And it seems to me that during the past year we have learned how to build, that we have taken the right road, and shall not now be diverted from this road.

I should also like to deal briefly with the food question and the question of the countryside. Food has always been our most difficult problem. In a country where the proletariat could only assume power with the aid of the peasantry, where the proletariat had to serve as the agent of a petty-bourgeois revolution, our revolution was largely a *bourgeois* revolution until the Poor Peasants' Committees* were set up, i.e., until the summer and even the autumn of 1918. We are not afraid to admit that. We accomplished the October Revolution so

* These Committees, set up in June 1918, were to take stock of the food reserves in the peasant holdings, ascertain the kulaks' grain surpluses, provide food for the poor peasants and distribute farm implements and manufactured goods. In practice, the activity of the Poor Peasants' Committees embraced all aspects of work in rural areas where they became organs of the dictatorship of the proletariat. Late in 1918, after they had fulfilled the tasks entrusted to them, the Poor Peasants' Committees were merged with the volost and village Soviets.
—Ed.

easily because the peasants as a whole supported us and fought the landowners for they saw that as far as they were concerned we would go the limit, because we were giving legal effect to what the Socialist-Revolutionary newspapers had been printing, to that which the cowardly petty bourgeoisie had promised, but could not carry out. But from the moment the Poor Peasants' Committees began to be organised, our revolution became a *proletarian* revolution. We were faced with a problem which even now has not been fully solved, and it is extremely important that we have put it on a practical footing. The Poor Peasants' Committees were a transition stage. The first decree on their organisation was passed by the Soviet government on the recommendation of Comrade Tsyurupa, who at that time was in charge of food affairs. We have to save the non-agricultural population that was tormented by hunger. That could be done only with the aid of Poor Peasants' Committees, which were proletarian organisations. And only when the October Revolution began to spread to the rural districts and was consummated, in the summer of 1918, did we acquire a real proletarian base; only then did our revolution *become a proletarian revolution in fact*, and not merely in our proclamations, promises and declarations.

We have not yet solved the problem that faces our Party of creating the necessary forms of organisation of the rural proletariat and semi-proletariat. Recently, I visited Petrograd and attended the First Congress of Farm Labourers of Petrograd Gubernia. I then saw how we were feeling our way in this matter, but I think that progress will undoubtedly be made. I must say that the principal lesson we learned from our work of political leadership in the past year was that we must find organisational support in this field. We took a step in this direction when we formed the Poor Peasants' Committees, held new elections to the Soviets and revised our food policy, where we had encountered immense difficulties. In those outlying parts of Russia which are now becoming Soviet—the Ukraine and the Don region—this policy may have to be modified. It would be a mistake to draw up stereotyped decrees for all parts of Russia; it would be a mistake for the Bolshevik Communists, the Soviet officials in the Ukraine and the Don, to apply these decrees to other regions wholesale,

without discrimination. We shall meet with no few peculiar situations; we shall under no circumstances bind ourselves to uniform patterns; we shall not decide once and for all that our experience, the experience of Central Russia, must be applied in its entirety to every region. We have only just taken up the problems of real development; we are only just taking the first steps in this direction. An immense field of work is opening before us.

I said that the first decisive step the Soviet government took was to create the Poor Peasants' Committees. This measure was carried out by our food supply officials and was dictated by necessity. But in order to complete our tasks we must have something more than temporary organisations like these Committees. Alongside the Soviets we have the trade unions, which we are using as a school for training the backward masses. The top layer of workers who actually administered Russia during the past year, who bore the brunt of the work in carrying out our policy, and who were our mainstay—this layer in Russia is an extremely thin one. We have become convinced of that, we are feeling it. If a future historian ever collects information on the groups which administered Russia during these seventeen months, on how many hundreds, or how many thousands of individuals were engaged in this work and bore the entire, incredible burden of administering the country—nobody will believe that it was done by so few people. The number was so small because there were so few intelligent; educated and capable political leaders in Russia. This layer was a thin one in Russia, and in the course of the recent struggle it overtaxed its strength, became overworked, did more than its strength allowed. I think that at this Congress we shall devise practical means of utilising ever new forces on a mass scale in industry and—what is more important—in the rural districts, of enlisting in Soviet activities workers and peasants who are on, or even below, the average level. Without their assistance on a mass scale further activities, I think, will be impossible.

Since my time has almost expired, I want to say only a few words about our attitude towards the middle peasants. The attitude we should take towards the middle peasants was, in principle, quite clear to us even before the revolution. The task that faced us was to *neutralise* them. At a meeting in

Moscow where the question of our attitude towards petty-bourgeois parties was discussed, I quoted the exact words of Engels, who not only pointed out that the middle peasants were our allies, but also expressed the view that it would be possible, perhaps, to dispense with coercion, with repressive measures even as regards the big peasants. In Russia, this assumption did not prove correct; we were, are, and will be, in a state of open civil war with the kulaks. This is inevitable. We have seen it in practice. But owing to the inexperience of our Soviet officials and to the difficulties of the problem, the blows which were intended for the kulaks very frequently fell on the middle peasants. In this respect we have sinned a great deal, but the experience we have gained will enable us to do everything to avoid this in future. Such is the problem that now faces us not theoretically but practically. You are well aware that the problem is a difficult one. We have no advantages to offer the middle peasant; he is a materialist, a practical man, who demands definite material advantages, which at present we are not in a position to offer and which the country will have to dispense with for, perhaps, many months of a severe struggle that now promises to end in complete victory. But there is a good deal we can do in our practical administrative work—we can improve our administrative machinery and eliminate a host of abuses. The line of our Party, which has not done enough to form a bloc, an alliance, an agreement with the middle peasants, can and must be corrected.

This, in brief, is all I can say at present about the economic and political work of the Central Committee during the past year. I must now very briefly deal with the second part of the duty entrusted to me by the Central Committee—to make the Central Committee report on organisation. This duty could have been performed in the way it should really be performed only by Yakov Mikhailovich Sverdlov, who had been appointed to make the report on this question on behalf of the Central Committee. His unbelievably phenomenal memory, in which he retained the greater part of his report, and his personal acquaintance with the work of organisation in the various localities would have made it possible for him to deliver this report better than anybody else. I am unable to replace him even in one-hundredth part, for in this work we

were obliged to rely, and were absolutely justified in relying, entirely on Comrade Sverdlov, who very often adopted decisions on his own responsibility.

I can give you short excerpts from the written reports now available. The Secretariat of the Central Committee, which was unable to complete its work in time, has most definitely promised that the written reports will be ready for printing next week, that they will be mimeographed and distributed to the Congress delegates. They will supplement the brief, fragmentary remarks which I can make here. In the material of the report available at present in writing, we find, first of all, figures relating to the number of incoming documents: 1,483 in December 1918, 1,537 in January 1919, and 1,840 in February. The distribution of these documents in percentages is given, but I will take the liberty of not reading this. Comrades who are interested will see from the report when distributed that, for instance, 490 persons visited the Secretariat in November. And the comrades who handed me the report say it can be only half the number of visitors the Secretariat dealt with, because dozens of delegates were received daily by Comrade Sverdlov, and more than half of these were probably not Soviet but Party officials.

I must draw attention to the report on the activities of the Federation of Foreign Groups.* I know something of the work in this field only insofar as I have been able to cast a glance at the material on the foreign groups. At first there were seven such groups, now there are nine. Comrades living in purely Great-Russian districts, who have not had the opportunity of becoming directly acquainted with these groups and who have not seen the reports in the newspapers, will please read the excerpts from the newspapers, which I shall take the liberty of not reading in full. I must say that here we see the real foundation of what we have done for the Third International. The Third International was founded in Moscow at a short congress, and Comrade

* *The Federation of Foreign Groups under the C.C., R.C.P.(B.)* was organised in May 1918 as the guiding body for foreign Communists working among former prisoners-of-war in Russia. Their main task was to carry on propaganda and agitation among the prisoners-of-war and the interventionist troops in Russia. The Federation was abolished at the beginning of 1920.—*Ed.*

Zinoviev will make a detailed report on this and on everything proposed by the Central Committee on all questions concerning the International. The fact that we succeeded in doing so much in so short a time at the congress of Communists in Moscow is due to the tremendous preparatory work that was performed by the Central Committee of our Party and by the organiser of the congress, Comrade Sverdlov. Propaganda and agitation were carried on among foreigners in Russia and a number of foreign groups were organised. Dozens of members of these groups were fully acquainted with the main plans and with the guiding lines of general policy. Hundreds of thousands of war prisoners from armies which the imperialists had created solely in their own interests, upon returning to Hungary, Germany and Austria, thoroughly infected those countries with the germs of Bolshevism. And the fact that groups and parties sympathising with us predominate in those countries is due to work which is not visible on the surface and which is only briefly summed up in the report on the organisational activities of the foreign groups in Russia; it constituted one of the most significant features in the activities of the Russian Communist Party as one of the units of the world communist party.

Further, the material handed to me contains data on the reports received by the Central Committee, and the organisations from which they were received. And here our Russian lack of organisational ability stands out in all its shameful wretchedness. Reports were received regularly from organisations in four gubernias, irregularly from fourteen, and isolated reports from sixteen. The gubernias in question are enumerated in the list, which permit me not to read. Of course, this lack of organisational ability, these extreme organisational drawbacks, are very largely, but not entirely, to be explained by the conditions of civil war. Least of all should we use this to hide behind, to excuse and defend ourselves. Organisational activity was never a strong point with the Russians in general, nor with the Bolsheviks in particular; nevertheless, the chief problem of the proletarian revolution is *that of organisation*. It is not without reason that the question of organisation is here assigned a most prominent place. This is a thing we must fight for, and fight

for with firmness and determination, using every means at our disposal. We can do nothing here except by prolonged education and re-education. This is a field in which revolutionary violence and dictatorship can be applied only by way of abuse and I make bold to warn you against such abuse. Revolutionary violence and dictatorship are excellent things when applied in the right way and against the right people. But they cannot be applied in the field of organisation. We have by no means solved this problem of education, re-education and prolonged organisational work, and we must tackle it systematically.

We have here a detailed financial report. Of the various items, the largest is in connection with workers' book publishing and with newspapers: 1,000,000, again 1,000,000 and again 1,000,000—3,000,000; Party organisations, 2,800,000; editorial expenses, 3,600,000. More detailed figures are given in this report, which will be duplicated and distributed to all the delegates. Meanwhile the comrades can get their information from the representatives of the groups. Permit me not to read these figures. The comrades who submitted the reports gave in them what is most important and illustrative—the general results of the propaganda work performed in the sphere of publication. The Kommunist Publishing House released sixty-two books. A net profit of 2,000,000 in 1918 was earned by the newspaper *Pravda*, 25,000,000 copies of which were issued during the year. The newspaper *Bednota* earned a net profit of 2,370,000 and 33,000,000 copies were issued. The comrades of the Organising Bureau of the Central Committee have promised to rearrange the detailed figures they possess in such a way as to give at least two comparable criteria. It will then be clear what vast educational work is being performed by the Party, which for the first time in history is using modern large-scale capitalist printing equipment in the interests of the workers and peasants and not in the interests of the bourgeoisie. We have been accused thousands and millions of times of having violated the freedom of the press and of having renounced democracy. Our accusers call it democracy when the capitalists can buy out the press and the rich can use the press in their own interests. We call that plutocracy and not democracy. Everything that bourgeois culture has

created for the purpose of deceiving the people and defending the capitalists we have taken from them in order to satisfy the political needs of the workers and peasants. And in this respect we have done more than any socialist party has done in a quarter of a century, or in half a century. Nevertheless, we have done far too little of what has to be done.

The last item in the material handed to me by the Bureau concerns circular letters. Fourteen of these were issued, and the comrades who are not acquainted with them, or who are not sufficiently acquainted with them, are invited to read them. Of course, the Central Committee was far from being as active as it should have been in this respect, but you must bear in mind the conditions under which we worked, when we were obliged to give political instructions on a number of questions every day, and only in exceptional, even rare, cases were we able to do so through the Political Bureau or the plenary meeting of the Central Committee. Under such circumstances it was impossible for us to send out frequent political circulars.

I repeat that we, as the militant organ of a militant party, in time of civil war, cannot work in any other way. If we did, it would be only a half-measure, or a parliament, and in the era of dictatorship questions cannot be settled, nor can the Party, or the Soviet organisations, be directed, by parliamentary means. Comrades, now that we have taken over the bourgeois printing-presses and papers the importance of the Central Committee's circular letters is not so great. We send out in the form of circular letters only such instructions as cannot be published, for in our activities, which were conducted publicly in spite of the vast dimensions, underground work nevertheless remained, still remains, and will remain. We were never afraid of being reproached for our underground methods and secrecy, but on the contrary were proud of them. And when we found ourselves in a situation in which, after overthrowing our bourgeoisie, we were faced with the hostility of the European bourgeoisie, secrecy remained a feature of our activities and underground methods a feature of our work.

With this, comrades, I conclude my report. (*Applause.*)

Report on the Party Programme
March 19

(*Applause.*) Comrades, according to the division of subjects agreed on between Comrade Bukharin and myself, it is my task to explain the point of view of the commission on a number of concrete and most disputed points, or points which interest the Party most at the present time.

I shall begin by dealing briefly with the points which Comrade Bukharin touched on at the end of his report as points of dispute among us in the commission. The first relates to the structure of the preamble to the programme. In my opinion, Comrade Bukharin did not quite correctly explain here the reason the majority on the commission rejected all attempts to draw up the programme in such a way that everything relating to the old capitalism would be deleted. By the way Comrade Bukharin spoke he sometimes seemed to imply that the majority on the commission was apprehensive of what might be said about this, apprehensive that they would be accused of insufficient respect for the past. There can be no doubt that when the position of the majority is presented in this way it seems rather ridiculous. But this is very far from the truth. The majority rejected these attempts because they would be wrong. They would not correspond to the real state of affairs. Pure imperialism, without the fundamental basis of capitalism, has never existed, does not exist anywhere, and never will exist. This is an incorrect generalisation of everything that was said of the syndicates, cartels, trusts and finance capitalism, when finance capitalism was depicted as though it had none of the foundations of the old capitalism under it.

That is wrong. It would be particularly wrong for the era of the imperialist war and for the era following the imperialist war. Engels in his time, in one of his reflections on the future war, wrote that it would involve much more severe devastation than that caused by the 'Thirty Years' War*'; that in a large degree mankind would be reduced to savagery, that our artificial apparatus of trade and industry would collapse.** At the beginning of the war the traitor-socialists and opportunists boasted of the tenacity of capitalism and derided the "fanatics or semi-anarchists", as they called us. "Look," they said, "these predictions have not come true. Events have shown that they were true only of a very small number of countries and for a very short period of time!" And now, not only in Russia and not only in Germany, but even in the victor countries, a gigantic collapse of modern capitalism is beginning, a collapse, so gigantic that it frequently removes this artificial apparatus and restores the old capitalism.

When Comrade Bukharin stated that an attempt might be made to present an integral picture of the collapse of capitalism and imperialism, we objected to it in the commission, and I must object to it here. Just try it, and you will see that you will not succeed. Comrade Bukharin made one such attempt in the commission, and himself gave it up. I am absolutely convinced that if anybody could do this, it is Comrade Bukharin, who has studied this question very extensively and thoroughly. I assert that such an attempt cannot be successful, because the task is a wrong one. We in Russia are now experiencing the consequences of the imperialist war and the beginning of the dictatorship of the proletariat. At the same time, in a number of the regions of Russia, cut off from each other more than formerly, we frequently see a regeneration

* *The Thirty Years' War* (1618-48)—the first war to involve the whole of Europe which was the outcome of the contradictions between various groups of European states and which took the form of a struggle between Protestants and Catholics. Germany was the principal battleground, the object of military plunder and aggressive claims of the belligerents. The war ended with the conclusion of the Peace of Westphalia which reaffirmed the political fragmentation of Germany.—Ed.

** See Frederick Engels's *Introduction to Borkheim's Pamphlet "In Memory of the German Arch-Patriots of 1806-1807"*.—Ed.

of capitalism and the development of its early stage. That is something we cannot escape. If the programme were to be written in the way Comrade Bukharin wanted, it would be a wrong programme. At best, it would be a reproduction of all the best that has been said of finance capitalism and imperialism, but it would not reproduce reality, precisely because this reality is not integral. A programme made up of heterogeneous parts is inelegant (but that, of course, is not important), but any other programme would simply be incorrect. However unpleasant it may be, whatever it may lack in proportion, we shall be unable for a long time to escape this heterogeneity, this necessity of constructing from different materials. When we do escape it, we shall create another programme. But then we shall already be living in a socialist society. It would be ridiculous to pretend that things will be then what they are now.

We are living at a time when a number of the most elementary and fundamental manifestations of capitalism have been revived. Take, for instance, the collapse of transport, which we are experiencing so well, or rather so badly, in our own case. This same thing is taking place in other countries, too, even in the victor countries. And what does the collapse of transport mean under the imperialist system? A return to the most primitive forms of commodity production. We know very well what our profiteers or bagmen are. This latter word, I think, has up to now been unknown to foreigners. And now? Speak to the comrades who have arrived for the Congress of the Third International. It turns out that similar words are beginning to appear in both Germany and Switzerland. And this is a category you cannot fit into any dictatorship of the proletariat; you have to return to the very dawn of capitalist society and commodity production.

To escape from this sad reality by creating a smooth and integral programme is to escape into something ethereal that is not of this world, to write a wrong programme. And it is by no means reverence for the past, as Comrade Bukharin politely hinted, which induced us here to insert passages from the old programme. What appeared to be implied was this: the programme was written in 1903 with the participation of Lenin; the programme is undoubtedly a bad one; but

since old people love most of all to recall the past, in a new era a new programme has been drawn up which, out of reverence for the past, repeats the old programme. If it were so, such cranks ought to be laughed at. I assert that it is not so. The capitalism described in 1903 remains in existence in 1919 in the Soviet proletarian republic just because of the disintegration of imperialism, because of its collapse. Capitalism of this kind can be found, for instance, in Samara and in Vyatka gubernias, which are not very far from Moscow. In a period when civil war is rending the country, we shall not soon emerge from this situation, from this profiteering. That is why any other structure of the programme would be incorrect. We must state what actually exists; the programme must contain what is absolutely irrefutable, what has been established in fact. Only then will it be a Marxist programme.

Theoretically, Comrade Bukharin understands this perfectly and says that the programme must be concrete. But it is one thing to understand and another to act upon this understanding. Comrade Bukharin's concreteness is a bookish description of finance capitalism. In reality we have heterogeneous phenomena to deal with. In every agricultural gubernia there is free competition side by side with monopoly industry. Nowhere in the world has monopoly capitalism existed in a whole series of branches without free competition, nor will it exist. To write of such a system is to write of a system which is false and removed from reality. If Marx said of manufacture that it was a superstructure on mass small production,* imperialism and finance capitalism are a superstructure on the old capitalism. If its top is destroyed, the old capitalism is exposed. To maintain that there is such a thing as integral imperialism without the old capitalism is merely making the wish father to the thought.

This is a natural mistake, one very easily committed. And if we had an integral imperialism before us, which had entirely altered capitalism, our task would have been a hundred thousand times easier. It would have resulted in a system in which everything would be subordinated to finance capital alone. It would then only have remained to remove

* See Karl Marx, *Capital*, Vol. I, Moscow, 1965, p. 368.—*Ed.*

the top and to transfer what remained to the proletariat. That would have been extremely agreeable, but it is not so in reality. In reality the development is such that we have to act in an entirely different way. *Imperialism is a super-structure on capitalism*. When it collapses, we find ourselves dealing with the destruction of the top and the exposure of the foundation. That is why our programme, if it is to be a correct one, must state what actually exists. There is the old capitalism, which in a number of branches has grown to imperialism. Its tendencies are exclusively imperialist. Fundamental questions can be examined only from the point of view of imperialism. There is not a single major question of home or foreign policy which could be settled in any way except from the point of view of this tendency. This is not what the programme now speaks about. In reality, there exists a vast subsoil of the old capitalism. There is the super-structure of imperialism, which led to the war, and from this war followed the beginnings of the dictatorship of the proletariat. This is a phase you cannot escape. This fact is characteristic of the very rate of development of the proletarian revolution throughout the world, and will remain a fact for many years to come.

West-European revolutions will perhaps proceed more smoothly; nevertheless, very many years will be required for the reorganisation of the whole world, for the reorganisation of the majority of the countries. And this means that during the present transition period, we cannot escape this mosaic reality. We cannot cast aside this patchwork reality, however inelegant it may be; we cannot cast away one bit of it. If the programme were drawn up otherwise than it has been drawn up, it would be a wrong programme.

We say that we have arrived at the dictatorship. But we must know *how* we arrived at it. The past keeps fast hold of us, grasps us with a thousand tentacles, and does not allow us to take a single forward step, or compels us to take these steps badly in the way we are taking them. And we say that for the situation we are arriving at to be understood, it must be stated how we proceeded and what led us to the socialist revolution. We were led to it by imperialism, by capitalism in its early commodity production forms. All this must be understood, because it is only by reckoning with reality that

we can solve such problems as, let us say, our attitude towards the middle peasants. And how is it, indeed, that there is such a category as a middle peasant in the era of purely imperialist capitalism? It did not exist even in countries that were simply capitalist. If we are to solve the problem of our attitude towards this almost medieval phenomenon (the middle peasants) purely from the point of view of imperialism and the dictatorship of the proletariat, we shall be absolutely unable to make ends meet, and we shall land in many difficulties. But if we are to change our attitude towards the middle peasant—then also have the goodness to say in the theoretical part where he came from and what he is. He is a small commodity producer. And this is the ABC of capitalism, of which we must speak, because we have not yet grown out of it. To brush this aside and say, "Why should we study the ABC when we have studied finance capitalism?" would be highly frivolous.

I have to say the same thing about the *national question*. Here too the wish is father to the thought with Comrade Bukharin. He says that we must not recognise the right of nations to self-determination. A nation means the bourgeoisie together with the proletariat. And are we, the proletarians, to recognise the right to self-determination of the despised bourgeoisie? That is absolutely incompatible! Pardon me, it is compatible with what actually exists. If you eliminate this, the result will be sheer fantasy. You refer to the process of differentiation which is taking place within the nations, the process of separation of the proletariat from the bourgeoisie. But let us see how this differentiation will proceed.

Take, for instance, Germany, the model of an advanced capitalist country whose organisation of capitalism, finance capitalism, was superior to that of America. She was inferior in many other respects, in technical development and production and in the political sphere, but in respect of the organisation of finance capitalism, in respect of the transformation of monopoly capitalism into state monopoly capitalism, Germany was superior to America. She is a model, it would seem. But what is taking place there? Has the German proletariat become differentiated from the bourgeoisie? No! It was reported that the majority of the workers are opposed to Scheidemann in only a few of the large

towns. But how did this come about? It was owing to the alliance between the Spartacists* and the thrice-accursed German Menshevik-Independents, who make a muddle of everything and want to wed the system of workers' councils to a Constituent Assembly! And this is what is taking place in that very Germany! And she, mark you, is an advanced country.

Comrade Bukharin says, "Why do we need the right of nations to self-determination?" I must repeat what I said opposing him in the summer of 1917, when he proposed to delete the minimum programme and to leave only the maximum programme. I then retorted, "Don't halloo until you're out of the wood." When we have conquered power, and even then only after waiting a while, we shall do this. We have conquered power, we have waited a while, and now I am willing to do it. We have gone directly into socialist construction, we have beaten off the first assault that threatened us—now it will be in place. The same applies to the right of nations to self-determination. "I want to recognise only the right of the working classes to self-determination," says Comrade Bukharin. That is to say, you want to recognise something that has not been achieved in a single country except Russia. That is ridiculous.

Look at Finland; she is a democratic country, more developed, more cultured than we are. In Finland a process of separation, of the differentiation of the proletariat is taking a specific course, far more painful than was the case with us. The Finns have experienced the dictatorship of Germany; they are now experiencing the dictatorship of the Allied powers. But thanks to the fact that we have recognised

* *Spartacists*—members of a revolutionary organisation of German Left-wing Social-Democrats, the Spartacus group, founded at the beginning of the First World War by Karl Liebknecht, Rosa Luxemburg and others.

In April 1917, the Spartacists were admitted to the Centrist Independent Social-Democratic Party of Germany but retained their organisational independence. In the course of the November 1918 revolution in Germany, this group came to be known as the Spartacus League. On December 14, the League published its programme and broke away from the Independents. At their Inaugural Congress held on December 30, 1918-January 1, 1919, the Spartacists formed the Communist Party of Germany.—*Ed.*

the right of nations to self-determination, the process of differentiation has been facilitated there. I very well recall the scene when, at Smolny, I handed the act to Svinhufvud*—which in Russian means “pighead”—the representative of the Finnish bourgeoisie, who played the part of a hangman. He amiably shook my hand, we exchanged compliments. How unpleasant that was! But it had to be done, because at that time the bourgeoisie were deceiving the people, were deceiving the working people by alleging that the Muscovites, the chauvinists, the Great Russians, wanted to crush the Finns. It had to be done.

Yesterday, was it not necessary to do the same thing in relation to the Bashkirian Republic**? When Comrade Bukharin said, “We can recognise this right in some cases,” I even wrote down that he had included in the list the Hottentots, the Bushmen and the Indians. Hearing this enumeration, I thought, how is it that Comrade Bukharin has forgotten a small trifle, the Bashkirs? There are no Bushmen in Russia, nor have I heard that the Hottentots have laid claim to an autonomous republic, but we have Bashkirs, Kirghiz and a number of other peoples, and to these we cannot deny recognition. We cannot deny it to a single one of the peoples living within the boundaries of the former Russian Empire. Let us even assume that the Bashkirs have overthrown the exploiters and we have helped them to do so. This is possible only when a revolution has fully matured, and it must be done cautiously, so as not to retard by one’s interference that very process of the differentiation of the proletariat which we ought to expedite. What, then, can we do in relation to such peoples as the Kirghiz, the Uzbeks, the Tajiks, the Turkmen, who to this day are under the influence of their mullahs? Here, in Russia, the population, having had

* On December 18 (31), 1917, Lenin presented to Svinhufvud, head of the Finnish bourgeois government, and his Secretary of State, Enckel, the decree of the Council of People’s Commissars recognising the independence of Finland.—*Ed.*

** Lenin refers here to the negotiations, in March 1919, with a Bashkirian delegation on the question of forming an autonomous Bashkirian Soviet Republic. An “Agreement between Central Soviet Power and the Bashkirian Government on the Formation of Autonomous Soviet Bashkiria” was signed on March 20.—*Ed.*

a long experience of the priests, helped us to overthrow them. But you know how badly the decree on civil marriage is still being put into effect. Can we approach these peoples and tell them that we shall overthrow their exploiters? We cannot do this, because they are entirely subordinated to their mullahs. In such cases we have to wait until the given nation develops, until the differentiation of the proletariat from the bourgeois elements, which is inevitable, has taken place.

Comrade Bukharin does not want to wait. He is possessed by impatience: "Why should we? When we have ourselves overthrown the bourgeoisie, proclaimed Soviet power and the dictatorship of the proletariat, why should we act thus?" This has the effect of a rousing appeal, it contains an indication of our path, but if we were to proclaim only this in our programme, it would not be a programme, but a proclamation. We may proclaim Soviet power, and the dictatorship of the proletariat, and express the contempt for the bourgeoisie they deserve a thousand times over, but in the programme we must write just what actually exists with the greatest precision. And then our programme will be incontrovertible.

We hold a strictly class standpoint. What we are writing in the programme is a recognition of what has actually taken place since the time we wrote of the self-determination of nations in general. At that time there were still no proletarian republics. It was when they appeared, and only as they appeared, that we were able to write what is written here: "A federation of states organised after the *Soviet type*." The Soviet type is not yet Soviets as they exist in Russia, but the Soviet type is becoming international. And this is all we can say. To go farther, one step farther, one hair's breadth farther, would be wrong, and therefore unsuitable for a programme.

We say that account must be taken of the stage reached by the given nation on its way from medievalism to bourgeois democracy, and from bourgeois democracy to proletarian democracy. That is absolutely correct. All nations have the right to self-determination—there is no need to speak specially of the Hottentots and the Bushmen. The vast majority, most likely nine-tenths of the population of the

earth, perhaps 95 per cent, come under this description, since all countries are on the way from medievalism to bourgeois democracy or from bourgeois democracy to proletarian democracy. This is an absolutely inevitable course. More cannot be said, because it would be wrong, because it would not be what actually exists. To reject the self-determination of nations and insert the self-determination of the working people would be absolutely wrong, because this manner of settling the question does not reckon with the difficulties, with the zigzag course taken by differentiation within nations. In Germany it is not proceeding in the same way as in our country—in certain respects more rapidly, and in other respects in a slower and more sanguinary way. Not a single party in our country accepted so monstrous an idea as a combination of workers' councils and a Constituent Assembly. And yet we have to live side by side with these nations. Now Scheidemann's party is already saying that we want to conquer Germany. That is of course ridiculous, nonsensical. But the bourgeoisie have their own interests and their own press, which is shouting this to the whole world in hundreds of millions of copies; Wilson, too, is supporting this in his own interests. The Bolsheviki, they declare, have a large army, and they want, by means of conquest, to implant their Bolshevism in Germany. The best people in Germany—the Spartacists—told us that the German workers are being incited against the Communists; look, they are told, how bad things are with the Bolsheviki! And we cannot say that things with us are very good. And so our enemies in Germany influence the people with the argument that the proletarian revolution in Germany would result in the same disorders as in Russia. Our disorders are a protracted illness. We are contending with desperate difficulties in creating the proletarian dictatorship in our country. As long as the bourgeoisie, or the petty bourgeoisie, or even part of the German workers, are under the influence of this bugbear—"the Bolsheviki want to establish their system by force"—so long will the formula "the self-determination of the working people" not help matters. We must arrange things so that the German traitor-socialists will not be able to say that the Bolsheviki are trying to impose their universal system, which, as it were, can be brought into Berlin on Red Army

bayonets. And this is what may happen if the principle of the self-determination of nations is denied.

Our programme must not speak of the self-determination of the working people, because that would be wrong. It must speak of what actually exists. Since nations are at different stages on the road from medievalism to bourgeois democracy and from bourgeois democracy to proletarian democracy, this thesis of our programme is absolutely correct. With us there have been very many zigzags on this road. Every nation must obtain the right to self-determination, and that will make the self-determination of the working people easier. In Finland the process of separation of the proletariat from the bourgeoisie is remarkably clear, forceful and deep. At any rate, things will not proceed there as they do in our country. If we were to declare that we do not recognise any Finnish nation, but only the working people, that would be sheer nonsense. We cannot refuse to recognise what actually exists; it will itself compel us to recognise it. The demarcation between the proletariat and the bourgeoisie is proceeding in different countries in their own specific ways. Here we must act with utmost caution. We must be particularly cautious with regard to the various nations, for there is nothing worse than lack of confidence on the part of a nation. Self-determination of the proletariat is proceeding among the Poles. Here are the latest figures on the composition of the Warsaw Soviet of Workers' Deputies. Polish traitor-socialists—333, Communists—297. This shows that, according to our revolutionary calendar, October in that country is not very far off. It is somewhere about August or September 1917. But, firstly, no decree has yet been issued stating that all countries must live according to the Bolshevik revolutionary calendar; and even if it were issued, it would not be observed. And, secondly, the situation at present is such that the majority of the Polish workers, who are more advanced than ours and more cultured, share the standpoint of social-defencism, social-patriotism. We must wait. We cannot speak here of the self-determination of the working people. We must carry on propaganda in behalf of this differentiation. This is what we are doing, but there is not the slightest shadow of doubt that we must recognise the self-determination of the Polish nation now. That is clear. The Polish proletarian movement

is taking the same course as ours, towards the dictatorship of the proletariat, but not in the same way as in Russia. And there the workers are being intimidated by statements to the effect that the Muscovites, the Great Russians, who have always oppressed the Poles, want to carry their Great-Russian chauvinism into Poland in the guise of communism. Communism cannot be imposed by force. When I said to one of the best comrades among the Polish Communists, "You will do it in a different way", he replied, "No, we shall do the same thing, but better than you." To such an argument I had absolutely no objections. They must be given the opportunity of fulfilling a modest wish—to create a better Soviet power than ours. We cannot help reckoning with the fact that things there are proceeding in rather a peculiar way, and we cannot say: "Down with the right of nations to self-determination! We grant the right of self-determination only to the working people." This self-determination proceeds in a very complex and difficult way. It exists nowhere but in Russia, and, while foreseeing every stage of development in other countries, we must decree nothing from Moscow. That is why this proposal is unacceptable in principle.

I now pass to the other points which I am to deal with in accordance with the plan we have drawn up. I have given the first place to the question of *small proprietors and middle peasants*. In this respect, Clause 47 states:

"With regard to the middle peasants, the policy of the Russian Communist Party is to draw them into the work of socialist construction gradually and systematically. The Party sets itself the task of separating them from the kulaks, of winning them to the side of the working class by carefully attending to their needs, by combating their backwardness with ideological weapons and under no circumstances with measures of suppression, and by striving in all cases where their vital interests are concerned to come to practical agreements with them, making concessions to them in determining the methods of carrying out socialist reforms."

It seems to me that here we are formulating what the founders of socialism have frequently said regarding the middle peasants. The only defect of this clause is that it is not sufficiently concrete. We could hardly give more in a programme. But it is not only questions of programme we

must discuss at the Congress, and we must give profound, thrice-profound consideration to the question of the middle peasants. We have information to the effect that in the revolts which have occurred in some places, a *general plan* is clearly discernible, and that this plan is obviously connected with the military plan of the whiteguards, who have decided on a general offensive in March and on the organisation of a number of revolts. In the presidium of the Congress there is a draft of an appeal in the name of the Congress, which will be reported to you. These revolts show as clear as can be that the Left Socialist-Revolutionaries and a part of the Mensheviks—in Bryansk it was the Mensheviks who worked to provoke the revolt—are acting as actual agents of the whiteguards. A general offensive of the whiteguards, revolts in the villages, the interruption of railway traffic—perhaps it will be possible to overthrow the Bolsheviks in this way? Here the role of the middle peasants stands out especially clearly, forcibly and insistently. At the Congress we must not only lay particular stress on our accommodating attitude towards the middle peasants, but also think over a number of measures, as concrete as possible, which will directly give at least something to the middle peasants. These measures are absolutely essential for self-preservation and for the struggle against all our enemies; they know that the middle peasant vacillates between us and them and they are endeavouring to win him away from us. Our position is now such that we possess vast reserves. We know that both the Polish and the Hungarian revolutions are growing, and very rapidly. These revolutions will furnish us with proletarian reserves, will ease our situation and will to a very large extent reinforce our proletarian base, which is weak. This may happen in the next few months, but we do not know just when. You know that an acute moment has now come and therefore the question of the middle peasants now assumes tremendous practical importance.

Further, I should like to dwell on the question of *co-operation*—that is Clause 48 of our programme. To a certain extent this clause has become obsolete. When we were drafting it in the commission, co-operatives existed in our country, but there were no consumers' communes; a few days later, however, the decree on the merging of all forms of co-operatives

into a single consumers' commune was issued.* I do not know whether this decree has been published and whether the majority of those here present are acquainted with it. If not, it will be published tomorrow or the day after. In this respect, this clause is already out of date, but it nevertheless appears to me that it is necessary, for we all know very well that it is a pretty long way from decrees to fulfilment. We have been toiling and moiling over the co-operatives since April 1918, and although we have achieved considerable success, it is not yet a decisive success. We have at times succeeded in organising the population in the co-operatives to such an extent that in many of the uyezds 98 per cent of the rural population are already so organised. But these co-operatives, which existed in capitalist society, are saturated with the spirit of bourgeois society, and are headed by Mensheviks and Socialist-Revolutionaries, by bourgeois experts. We have not yet been able to establish our authority over them, and here our task remains unaccomplished. Our decree is a step forward in that it creates consumers' communes; it orders that all forms of co-operation all over Russia shall be merged. But this decree, too, even if we carry it into effect entirely, leaves the autonomous sections of workers' co-operatives within the future consumers' communes, because representatives of the workers' co-operatives who have a practical knowledge of the matter told us, and proved it, that the workers' co-operatives, as a more highly developed organisation, should be preserved, since their operations are essential. There were quite a few differences and disputes within our Party over the question of co-operation; there was friction between the Bolsheviks in the co-operatives and the Bolsheviks in the Soviets. In principle, it seems to me that the question should undoubtedly be settled in the sense that this apparatus, the only one for which capitalism paved the way among the people, the only one operating among a rural population still at the level of primitive capitalism, must be

* *The Decree on Consumers' Communes*, passed by the Council of People's Commissars on March 16, 1919, merged all existing co-operatives, in both town and country, into a single consumers' commune embracing the entire local population. All local consumers' communes were grouped together in gubernia unions, while all Unions of Consumers' Communes came under the Central Union of Consumers' Societies.—Ed.

preserved at all costs; it must be developed and must not, under any circumstances, be discarded. The task here is a difficult one because in the majority of cases the leaders of the co-operatives are bourgeois specialists, very frequently real whiteguards. Hence the hatred for them, a legitimate hatred, hence the fight against them. But it must, of course, be conducted skilfully: *we must put a stop to the counter-revolutionary attempts of the co-operators, but this must not be a struggle against the apparatus of the co-operatives.* While getting rid of the counter-revolutionary leaders, we must establish our authority over the apparatus itself. Here our aim is exactly the same as it is in the case of the bourgeois experts, which is another question I should like to refer to.

The question of the *bourgeois experts* is provoking quite a lot of friction and divergences of opinion. When I recently had occasion to speak to the Petrograd Soviet, among the written questions submitted to me there were several devoted to the question of rates of pay. I was asked whether it is permissible in a socialist republic to pay as much as 3,000 rubles. We have, in fact, included this question in the programme, because dissatisfaction on these grounds has gone rather far. The question of the bourgeois experts has arisen in the army, in industry, in the co-operatives, everywhere. It is a very important question of the period of transition from capitalism to communism. We shall be able to build up communism only when, with the means provided by bourgeois science and technology, we make it more accessible to the people. There is no other way of building a communist society. But in order to build it in this way, we must take the apparatus from the bourgeoisie, we must enlist all these experts in the work. We have intentionally explained this question in detail in the programme in order to have it settled radically. We are perfectly aware of the effects of Russia's cultural underdevelopment, of what it is doing to Soviet power—which in principle has provided an immensely higher proletarian democracy, which has created a model of such democracy for the whole world—how this lack of culture is reducing the significance of Soviet power and reviving bureaucracy. The Soviet apparatus is accessible to all the working people in word, but actually it is far from being accessible to all of them, as we all know. And not because the laws

prevent it from being so, as was the case under the bourgeoisie; on the contrary, our laws assist in this respect. But in this matter laws alone are not enough. A vast amount of educational, organisational and cultural work is required; this cannot be done rapidly by legislation but demands a vast amount of work over a long period. This question of the bourgeois experts must be settled quite definitely at this Congress. The settlement of the question will enable the comrades, who are undoubtedly following this Congress attentively, to lean on its authority and to realise what difficulties we are up against. It will help those comrades who come up against this question at every step to take part at least in propaganda work.

The comrades here in Moscow who are representing the Spartacists at the Congress told us that in western Germany, where industry is most developed, and where the influence of the Spartacists among the workers is greatest, engineers and managers in very many of the large enterprises would come to the Spartacists, although the Spartacists have not yet been victorious there, and say, "We shall go with you." That was not the case in our country. Evidently, there the higher cultural level of the workers, the greater proletarianisation of the engineering personnel, and perhaps a number of other causes of which we do not know, have created relations which differ somewhat from ours.

At any rate, here we have one of the chief obstacles to further progress. We must immediately, without waiting for the support of other countries, immediately, at this very moment develop our productive forces. We cannot do this without the bourgeois experts. That must be said once and for all. Of course, the majority of these experts have a thoroughly bourgeois outlook. They must be placed in an environment of comradely collaboration, of worker commissars and of communist nuclei; they must be so placed that they cannot break out; but they must be given the opportunity of working in better conditions than they did under capitalism, since this group of people, which has been trained by the bourgeoisie, will not work otherwise. To compel a whole section of the population to work under coercion is impossible—that we know very well from experience. We can compel them not to take an active part in counter-revolution, we can

intimidate them so as to make them dread to respond to the appeals of the whiteguards. In this respect the Bolsheviks act energetically. This can be done, and this we are doing adequately. This we have all learned to do. But it is impossible in this way to compel a whole section to work. These people are accustomed to do cultural work, they advanced it within the framework of the bourgeois system, that is, they enriched the bourgeoisie with tremendous material acquisitions, but gave them to the proletariat in infinitesimal doses—nevertheless they did advance culture, that was their job. As they see the working class promoting organised and advanced sections, which not only value culture but also help to convey it to the people, they are changing their attitude towards us. When a doctor sees that the proletariat is arousing the working people to independent activity in fighting epidemics, his attitude towards us completely changes. We have a large section of such bourgeois doctors, engineers, agronomists and co-operators, and when they see in practice that the proletariat is enlisting more and more people to this cause, they will be conquered *morally*, and not merely be cut off from the bourgeoisie politically. Our task will then become easier. They will then of themselves be drawn into our apparatus and become part of it. To achieve this, sacrifices are necessary. To pay even two thousand million for this is a trifle. To fear this sacrifice would be childish, for it would mean that we do not comprehend the tasks before us.

The chaos in our transport, the chaos in industry and agriculture are undermining the very life of the Soviet Republic. Here we must resort to the most energetic measures, straining every nerve of the country to the utmost. We must not practise a policy of petty pinpricks with regard to the experts. These experts are not the servitors of the exploiters, they are active cultural workers, who in bourgeois society served the bourgeoisie, and of whom all socialists all over the world said that in a proletarian society they would serve *us*. In this transition period we must accord them the best possible conditions of life. That will be the best policy. That will be the most economical management. Otherwise, while saving a few hundred millions, we may lose so much that no sum will be sufficient to restore what we have lost.

When we discussed the question of rates of pay with the Commissar for Labour, Schmidt, he mentioned facts like these. He said that in the matter of equalising wages we have done more than any bourgeois state has done anywhere, or can do in scores of years. Take the pre-war rates of pay: a manual labourer used to get one ruble a day, twenty-five rubles a month, while an expert got five hundred rubles a month, not counting those who were paid hundreds of thousands of rubles. The expert used to receive twenty times more than the worker. Our present rates of pay vary from six hundred rubles to three thousand rubles—only five times more. We have done a great deal towards equalising the rates. Of course, we are now overpaying experts, but to pay them a little more for giving us their knowledge is not only worth while, but necessary and theoretically indispensable. In my opinion, this question is dealt with in sufficient detail in the programme. It must be particularly stressed. Not only must it be settled here in principle, but we must see to it that every delegate to the Congress, on returning to his locality, should, in his report to his organisation and in all his activities, secure its execution.

We have already succeeded in bringing about a thorough change of attitude among the vacillating intellectuals. Yesterday we were talking about legalising the petty-bourgeois parties, but today we are arresting the Mensheviks and Socialist-Revolutionaries; by this switching back and forth we are applying a very definite system. A consistent and very firm line runs through these changes of policy, namely, *to cut off counter-revolution and to utilise the cultural apparatus of the bourgeoisie*. The Mensheviks are the worst enemies of socialism, because they clothe themselves in a proletarian disguise; but the Mensheviks are a non-proletarian group. In this group there is only an insignificant proletarian upper layer, while the group itself consists of petty intellectuals. This group is coming over to our side. We shall take it over wholly, as a group. Every time they come to us, we say, "Welcome!" With every one of these vacillations, part of them come over to us. This was the case with the Mensheviks and the *Novaya Zhizn* people and with the Socialist-Revolutionaries; this will be the case with all these vacillators, who will long continue to get in our way, whine

and desert one camp for the other—you cannot do anything with them. But through all these vacillations we shall be enlisting groups of cultured intellectuals into the ranks of Soviet workers, and we shall cut off those elements that continue to support the whiteguards.

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

The employees in the other spheres of government are more hardened bureaucrats. The task here is more difficult. We cannot live without this apparatus; every branch of government creates a demand for such an apparatus. Here we are suffering from the fact that Russia was not sufficiently developed as a capitalist country. Germany, apparently, will suffer less from this, because her bureaucratic apparatus passed through an extensive school, which sucks people dry but compels them to work and not just wear out armchairs, as happens in our offices. We dispersed these old bureaucrats, shuffled them and then began to place them in new posts. The tsarist bureaucrats began to join the Soviet institutions and practise their bureaucratic methods, they began to assume the colouring of Communists and, to succeed better in their careers, to procure membership cards of the Russian Communist Party. And so, they have been thrown out of the door but they creep back in through the window.

What makes itself felt here most is the lack of cultured forces. These bureaucrats may be dismissed, but they cannot be re-educated all at once. Here we are confronted chiefly with organisational, cultural and educational problems.

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

Here we are confronted by a problem which cannot be solved except by prolonged education. At present this task is an inordinately difficult one for us, because, as I have had frequent occasion to say, the section of workers who are governing is inordinately, incredibly *small*. We must secure help. According to all indications, such a reserve is growing up within the country. There cannot be the slightest doubt of existence of a tremendous thirst for knowledge and of tremendous progress in education—mostly attained outside the schools—of tremendous progress in educating the working people. This progress cannot be confined within any school framework, but it is tremendous. All indications go to show that we shall obtain a vast reserve in the near future, which will replace the representatives of the small section of proletarians who have overstrained themselves in the work. But in any case, our present situation in this respect is extremely difficult. Bureaucracy has been defeated. The exploiters have been eliminated. But the cultural level has not been raised, and therefore the bureaucrats are occupying their old positions. They can be forced to retreat only if the proletariat and the peasants are organised far more

extensively than has been the case up to now, and only if real measures are taken to enlist the workers in government. You are all aware of such measures in the case of every People's Commissariat, and I shall not dwell on them.

The last point I have to deal with is the question of *the leading role of the proletariat and disfranchisement*. Our Constitution recognises the precedence of the proletariat in respect of the peasants and disfranchises the exploiters. It was this that the pure democrats of Western Europe attacked most. We answered, and are answering, that they have forgotten the most fundamental propositions of Marxism, they have forgotten that with them it is a case of bourgeois democracy, whereas we have passed to *proletarian* democracy. There is not a single country in the world which has done even one-tenth of what the Soviet Republic has done in the past few months for the workers and the poor peasants in enlisting them in the work of administering the state. That is an absolute truth. Nobody will deny that in the matter of true, not paper, democracy, in the matter of enlisting the workers and peasants, we have done more than has been done or could be done by the best of the democratic republics in hundreds of years. It was this that determined the significance of the Soviets, it was owing to this that the Soviets have become a slogan for the proletariat of all countries.

But this in no way saves us from stumbling over the inadequate culture of the people. We do not at all regard the question of disfranchising the bourgeoisie from an absolute point of view, because it is theoretically quite conceivable that the dictatorship of the proletariat may suppress the bourgeoisie at every step without disfranchising them. This is theoretically quite conceivable. Nor do we propose our Constitution as a model for other countries. All we say is that whoever conceives the transition to socialism without the suppression of the bourgeoisie is not a socialist. But while it is essential to suppress the bourgeoisie as a class, it is not essential to deprive them of suffrage and of equality. We do not want freedom for the bourgeoisie, we do not recognise equality of exploiters and exploited, but this question is so handled in the programme that the Constitution does not prescribe such measures as the inequality of workers and peasants. They were embodied in the Constitution *after* they

were already in actual practice. It was not even the Bolsheviks who drew up the Constitution of the Soviets; it was drawn up to their own detriment by the Mensheviks and the Socialist-Revolutionaries before the Bolshevik revolution. They drew it up in accordance with the conditions actually obtaining. The organisation of the proletariat proceeded much more rapidly than the organisation of the peasants, which fact made the workers the bulwark of the revolution and gave them a virtual advantage. The next task is gradually to pass from these advantages to their equalisation. Nobody drove the bourgeoisie out of the Soviets either before or after the October Revolution. *The bourgeoisie themselves left the Soviets.*

That is how the matter stands with the question of suffrage for the bourgeoisie. It is our task to put the question with absolute clarity. We do not in the least apologise for our behaviour, but give an absolutely precise enumeration of the facts as they are. As we point out, our Constitution was obliged to introduce this inequality because the cultural level is low and because with us organisation is weak. But we do not make this an ideal; on the contrary, in its programme the Party undertakes to work systematically to abolish this inequality between the better organised proletariat and the peasants. We shall abolish this inequality as soon as we succeed in raising the cultural level. We shall then be able to get along without such restrictions. Even now, after some seventeen months of revolution, these restrictions are of very small practical importance.

These, comrades, are the main points on which I believed it necessary to dwell in the general discussion of the programme, in order to leave their further consideration to the debate. (*Applause.*)

**Speech Closing the Debate
on the Party Programme
March 19**

(*Applause.*) Comrades, I could not divide this part of the question with Comrade Bukharin, after preliminary consultation, in such detail as was the case with the report. Perhaps it will prove unnecessary. I think the debate that unfolded here revealed primarily one thing—the absence of any definite and formulated counter-proposal. Many speakers dealt with separate points in a desultory way, but made no counter-proposals. I shall deal with the chief objections, which were mainly directed against the preamble. Comrade Bukharin told me that he is one of those who believe that it is possible in the preamble to combine a description of capitalism with a description of imperialism in such a way as to form an integral whole, but since this has not been done, we shall have to accept the existing draft.

Many of the speakers argued—and it was particularly emphasised by Comrade Podbelsky—that the draft presented to you is wrong. The arguments Comrade Podbelsky advanced were very strange indeed. For instance, he said that in Clause 1 the revolution is referred to as the revolution of such-and-such a date, and for some reason this suggested to Comrade Podbelsky the idea that even this revolution is numbered. I may say that in the Council of People's Commissars we have to deal with numerous documents with index numbers, and often we get a little tired of them. But why convey this impression here? What has an index number to do with the question? We fix the day of the holiday and celebrate it. Can it be denied that it was precisely on

October 25 that we captured power? If you were to attempt to change this in any way, it would be artificial. If you call the revolution the October-November Revolution, you provide a pretext for saying that it was not accomplished in one day. Of course, it was accomplished in a longer period—not in October, not in November, and not even in one year. Comrade Podbelsky took exception to the fact that one of the clauses speaks of the *impending* social revolution. On these grounds he made it appear that the programme was guilty of the crime of “offending Her Majesty the social revolution”. Here we are in the middle of the social revolution and yet the programme says that it is impending! This argument is obviously groundless, because the revolution referred to in our programme is the world social revolution.

We are told that we approach the revolution from the economic point of view. Should we do so or not? Many over-enthusiastic comrades here went as far as to talk about a world Economic Council, and about subordinating all the national parties to the Central Committee of the Russian Communist Party. Comrade Pyatakov almost went as far as to say the same. (*Pyatakov, from his place: “Do you think that would be a bad thing?”*) Since he now says that it would not be a bad thing, I must reply that if there were anything like this in the programme, there would be no need to criticise it: the authors of such a proposal would have dug their own graves. These over-enthusiastic comrades have overlooked the fact that in the programme we must take our stand on what actually exists. One of these comrades—I think it was Sunitsa, who criticised the programme very vigorously and said it was worthless, and so forth—one of these over-enthusiastic comrades said that he did not agree that it must contain what actually exists, and proposed that it should contain what does not exist. (*Laughter.*) I think that this argument is so obviously false that the laughter it evokes is quite natural. I did not say that it must contain only what actually exists. I said that we must *proceed from what has been definitely established*. We must say and prove to the proletarians and working peasants that the communist revolution is inevitable. Did anybody here suggest that it is not necessary to say this? Had any-

body made such a suggestion, it would have been proved to him that he was wrong. Nobody made any such suggestion, nor will anybody do so, because it is an undoubted fact that our Party came to power with the aid not only of the communist proletariat, but also of all the peasants. Shall we confine ourselves to telling these people who are now marching with us: "The Party's only function is to carry on socialist construction. The communist revolution has been accomplished, put communism into effect." Such an opinion would be utterly groundless, it would be wrong from the theoretical point of view. Our Party has absorbed directly, and still more indirectly, millions of people who are now beginning to understand the class struggle, to understand the transition from capitalism to communism.

It may now be said, and it would be no exaggeration at all to do so, of course, that nowhere, in no other country, have the working people displayed such keen interest in the question of transforming capitalism into socialism as the working people in our country today. Our people are giving more thought to this than the people of any other country. Is the Party not to give a reply to this question? We must demonstrate scientifically how this communist revolution will progress. All the other proposals fall short in this respect. Nobody wanted to delete it entirely. There was some vague talk about it being possible to abbreviate it, about not quoting from the old programme because it is wrong. But if the old programme were wrong, how could it have served as the basis of our activities for so many years? Perhaps we shall have a common programme when the world Soviet Republic is set up; by that time we shall probably have drafted several more programmes. But it would be premature to draft one now, when only one Soviet Republic exists in what was formerly the Russian Empire. Even Finland, which is undoubtedly advancing towards a Soviet Republic, has not yet reached it. And yet the Finnish people are the most cultured of the peoples that inhabit what was formerly the Russian Empire. Consequently, it is utterly wrong to demand that the programme should now reflect a finished process. It would be on a par with inserting the demand for a world Economic Council. We ourselves have not yet grown accustomed to this ugly word *Sovnarkhoz*—Economic

Council; as for foreigners, it is said that some of them searched the railway directory, thinking that there was a station of that name. (*Laughter.*) We cannot dictate such words to the whole world by means of decrees.

To be international, our programme must take into account the class factors which are characteristic of the economy of all countries. It is characteristic of all countries that capitalism is still developing in a great many places. This is true of the whole of Asia, of all countries which are advancing towards bourgeois democracy; it is true of a number of parts of Russia. For instance, Comrade Rykov, who is closely familiar with the facts in the economic field, told us of the new bourgeoisie which have arisen in our country. This is true. The bourgeoisie are emerging not only from among our Soviet government employees—only a very few can emerge from their ranks—but from the ranks of the peasants and handicraftsmen who have been liberated from the yoke of the capitalist banks, and who are now cut off from railway communication. This is a fact. How do you think you will get round this fact? You are only fostering your own illusions, or introducing badly digested book-learning into reality, which is far more complex. It shows that even in Russia, capitalist commodity production is alive, operating, developing and giving rise to a bourgeoisie, in the same way as it does in every capitalist society.

Comrade Rykov said, "We are fighting against the bourgeoisie who are springing up in our country because the peasant economy has not yet disappeared; this economy gives rise to a bourgeoisie and to capitalism." We do not have exact figures about it, but it is beyond doubt that this is the case. So far a Soviet Republic exists only within the boundaries of what was formerly the Russian Empire. It is maturing and developing in a number of countries, but it does not yet exist in any other country. It would, therefore, be fantastic to claim in our programme something we have not yet reached; it would merely express a desire to escape unpleasant reality, which shows that the birth-pangs of other countries bringing forth socialist republics are undoubtedly more severe than those we experienced. We found it easy because on October 26, 1917, we gave legal effect to what the peasants had demanded in the resolutions of the Socialist-

Revolutionary Party.* This is not the case in any other country. A Swiss comrade and a German comrade told us that in Switzerland the peasants took up arms against the strikers as never before, and that in Germany there is not the faintest indication in the rural districts of the likelihood of the appearance of councils of agricultural labourers and small peasants. In our country, however, Soviets of Peasants' Deputies were formed almost over the entire country in the first few months of the revolution. We, a backward country, created them. Here a gigantic problem arises, for which the people in the capitalist countries have not yet found a solution. Were we a model capitalist nation? Survivals of serfdom were still to be found in this country right up to 1917. But no nation organised on capitalist lines has yet shown how this problem can be solved in practice. We achieved power under exceptional conditions, when tsarist despotism stimulated a great burst of effort to bring about a radical and rapid change; and under these exceptional conditions we were able for several months to rely on the support of all the peasants. This is a historical fact. Right up to the summer of 1918, up to the time of the formation of the Poor Peasants' Committees, we were holding on as a government because we enjoyed the support of all the peasants. This is impossible in any capitalist country. And it is this fundamental economic fact that you forget when you talk about radically redrafting the whole programme. Without this your programme will have no scientific foundation.

We must take as our point of departure the universally recognised Marxist thesis that a programme must be built on a scientific foundation. It must explain to the people how

* What is implied here is the Decree on Land adopted at the Second All-Russia Congress of Soviets on October 26 (November 8), 1917, which abolished private property and proclaimed nationalisation of the land. It included the "Peasant Mandate on the Land" that recommended the adoption of "egalitarian tenure" advocated by the Socialist-Revolutionaries. Explaining why the Bolsheviks, who had earlier opposed this slogan, later found it possible to adopt it, Lenin said: "As a democratic government, we cannot ignore the decision of the masses of the people, even though we may disagree with it. In the fire of experience, applying the decree in practice, and carrying it out locally, the peasants will themselves realise where the truth lies" (*Collected Works*, Vol. 26, p. 260).—*Ed.*

the communist revolution arose, why it is inevitable, what its significance, nature, and power are, and what problems it must solve. Our programme must be a summary for agitational purposes, summary such as all programmes were, such as, for instance, the Erfurt Programme* was. Every clause of that programme contained material for agitators to use in hundreds of thousands of speeches and articles. Every clause of our programme is something that every working man and woman must know, assimilate and understand. If they do not know what capitalism is, if they do not understand that small peasant and handicraft economy constantly, inevitably and necessarily engenders this capitalism—if they do not understand this, then even if they were to declare themselves Communists a hundred times and flaunt the most radical communism, it would not be worth a brass farthing, because we value communism only when it is based on economic facts.

The socialist revolution will cause many changes even in some of the advanced countries. The capitalist mode of production still exists in all parts of the world, and in many places it still bears its less developed forms in spite of the fact that imperialism has mobilised and concentrated finance capital. There is not a country in the world, even the most developed, where capitalism is to be found exclusively in its most perfect form. There is nothing like it even in Germany. When we were collecting material for our particular assignments, the comrade in charge of the Central Statistical Board informed us that in Germany the peasants *concealed* from the Food Supply Departments 40 per cent of their surplus potatoes. Small peasant farms, which engage in free, petty trading, and petty profiteering, are still to be found in a capitalist country where capitalism has reached its full development. Such facts must not be forgotten. Of the 300,000 members of the Party who are represented here, are there many who fully understand this question? It would be ridiculous conceit to imagine that because we, whose good fortune it was to draft this programme, understand all this, the entire mass of Communists also understands it. They

* I.e., the programme of the German Social-Democratic Party adopted in October 1891 at a congress in Erfurt.—Ed.

do not, and they need this ABC. They need it a hundred times more than we do, because people who have not grasped, who have not understood what communism is and what commodity production is, are far removed from communism. We come across these cases of small commodity economy every day, in every question of practical economic policy, food policy, agricultural policy, on matters concerning the Supreme Economic Council. And yet we are told that we ought not to speak about it in the programme! If we heeded this advice we would only show that we are incapable of solving this problem, and that the success of the revolution in our country is due to exceptional circumstances.

Comrades from Germany visit us to study the forms of the socialist system. And we must act in such a way as to prove to our comrades from abroad that we are strong, to enable them to see that in our revolution we are not in the least exceeding the bounds of reality, and to provide them with material that will be absolutely irrefutable. It would be absurd to set up our revolution as the ideal for all countries, to imagine that it has made a number of brilliant discoveries, and has introduced a heap of socialist innovations. I have not heard anybody make this claim and I assert that we shall not hear anybody make it. We have acquired practical experience in taking the first steps towards destroying capitalism in a country where specific relations exist between the proletariat and the peasants. Nothing more. If we behave like the frog in the fable and become puffed up with conceit, we shall only make ourselves the laughing-stock of the world, we shall be mere braggarts.

We educated the party of the proletariat with the aid of the Marxist programme, and the tens of millions of working people in our country must be educated in the same way. We have assembled here as ideological leaders and we must say to the people: "We educated the proletariat, and in doing so we always took our stand first and foremost on an exact economic analysis." This cannot be done by means of a manifesto. The manifesto of the Third International is an appeal, a proclamation, it calls attention to the tasks that confront us, it is an appeal to the people's sentiments. Take the trouble to prove scientifically that you have an economic basis, and that you are not building on sand. If you cannot

do that, do not undertake to draw up a programme. To do it, we must necessarily review what we have lived through in these fifteen years. Fifteen years ago we said that we were advancing towards the social revolution, and now we have arrived; does that fact weaken our position? On the contrary, it reinforces and strengthens it. It all amounts to this, that capitalism is developing into imperialism, and imperialism leads to the beginning of the socialist revolution. It is tedious and lengthy, and not a single capitalist country has yet gone through this process, but it is necessary to deal with this in the programme.

That is why the theoretical arguments that have been levelled against this hold no water. I have no doubt that if we were to set ten or twenty writers, who are well able to expound their ideas, to work for three or four hours a day, they would, in the course of a month, draw up a better and more integral programme. But to demand that this should be done in a day or two, as Comrade Podbelsky does, is ridiculous. We worked for more than a day or two, or even a couple of weeks. I repeat that if it were possible to select a commission of thirty persons and set them to work several hours a day for a month, and moreover, not allow them to be disturbed by telephone calls, there can be no doubt that they would produce a programme five times better than this one. But nobody here has disputed essentials. A programme which says nothing about the fundamentals of commodity economy and capitalism will not be a Marxist international programme. To be international it is not enough for it to proclaim a world Soviet Republic, or the abolition of nations, as Comrade Pyatakoff did when he said: "We don't want any nations. What we want is the union of all proletarians." This is splendid, of course, and eventually it will come about, but at an entirely different stage of communist development. Comrade Pyatakoff said in a patronising tone: "You were backward in 1917, but you have made progress." We made progress when we put into the programme something that began to conform to reality. When we said that nations advance from bourgeois democracy to proletarian government, we stated what was a fact, although in 1917 it was merely an expression of what you desired.

When we establish with the Spartacists that complete com-

radely confidence needed for united communism, the comradely confidence that is maturing day by day, and which, perhaps, will come into being in a few months' time, we shall record it in the programme. But to proclaim it when it does not yet exist, would mean dragging them into something for which their own experience has not yet prepared them. We say that the Soviet type has acquired international significance. Comrade Bukharin mentioned the Shop Stewards' Committees in Britain. These are not quite Soviets. They are developing but they are still in the embryonic stage. When they burst into full bloom, we shall "see what happens". But the argument that we are presenting Russian Soviets to the British workers is beyond all criticism.

I must now deal with the question of self-determination of nations. Our criticism has served to exaggerate the importance of this question. The defect in our criticism was that it attached special significance to this question, which, in substance, is of less than secondary importance in the programme's general structure, in the sum total of programme demands.

While Comrade Pyatakov was speaking I was amazed and asked myself what it was, a debate on the programme, or a dispute between two Organising Bureaus? When Comrade Pyatakov said that the Ukrainian Communists act in conformity with the instructions of the Central Committee of the R.C.P.(B.), I was not sure about the tone in which he said it. Was it regret? I do not suspect Comrade Pyatakov of that, but what he said was tantamount to asking what was the good of all this self-determination when we have a splendid Central Committee in Moscow. This is a childish point of view. The Ukraine was separated from Russia by exceptional circumstances, and the national movement did not take deep root there. Whatever there was of such a movement the Germans killed. This is a fact, but an exceptional fact. Even as regards the language it is not clear whether the Ukrainian language today is the language of the common people or not. The mass of working people of the other nations greatly distrusted the Great Russians whom they regarded as a kulak and oppressor nation. That is a fact. A Finnish representative told me that among the Finnish bourgeoisie, who hated the Great Russians, voices are

to be heard saying: "The Germans proved to be more savage brutes, the Entente proved to be more savage, we had better have the Bolsheviki." This is the tremendous victory we have gained over the Finnish bourgeoisie in the national question. This does not in the least prevent us from fighting it as our class enemy and from choosing the proper methods for the purpose. The Soviet Republic, which has been established in the country where tsarism formerly oppressed Finland, must declare that it respects the right of nations to independence. We concluded a treaty with the short-lived Red Finnish Government and agreed to certain territorial concessions, to which I heard quite a number of utterly chauvinistic objections, such as: "There are excellent fisheries there, and you have surrendered them." These are the kind of objections which induce me to say, "Scratch some Communists and you will find Great-Russian chauvinists."

I think that the case of Finland, as well as of the Bashkirs, shows that in dealing with the national question one cannot argue that economic unity should be effected under all circumstances. Of course, it is necessary! But we must endeavour to secure it by propaganda, by agitation, by a voluntary alliance. The Bashkirs distrust the Great Russians because the Great Russians are more cultured and have utilised their culture to rob the Bashkirs. That is why the term Great Russian is synonymous with the terms "oppressor", "rogue" to Bashkirs in those remote places. This must be taken into account, it must be combated, but it will be a lengthy process. It cannot be eliminated by a decree. We must be very cautious in this matter. Exceptional caution must be displayed by a nation like the Great Russians, who earned the bitter hatred of all the other nations; we have only just learned how to remedy the situation, and then, not entirely. For instance, at the Commissariat of Education, or connected with it, there are Communists, who say that our schools are uniform schools, and therefore don't dare to teach in any language but Russian! In my opinion, such a Communist is a Great-Russian chauvinist. Many of us harbour such sentiments and they must be combated.

That is why we must tell the other nations that we are out-and-out internationalists and are striving for the voluntary alliance of the workers and peasants of all nations.

This does not preclude wars in the least. War is another question, and arises out of the very nature of imperialism. If we are fighting Wilson, and Wilson uses a small nation as his tool, we say that we shall oppose that tool. We have never said anything different. We have never said that a socialist republic can exist without military forces. War may be necessary under certain circumstances. But at present, the essence of the question of the self-determination of nations is that different nations are advancing in the same historical direction, but by very different zigzags and by-paths, and that the more cultured nations are obviously proceeding in a way that differs from that of the less cultured nations. Finland advanced in a different way. Germany is advancing in a different way. Comrade Pyatakoff is a thousand times right when he says that we need unity. But we must strive for it by means of propaganda, by Party influence, by forming united trade unions. But here, too, we must not act in a stereotyped way. If we do away with this point, or formulate it differently, we shall be deleting the national question from the programme. This might be done if there were people with no specific national features. But there are no such people, and we cannot build socialist society in any other way.

I think, comrades, that the programme proposed here should be accepted as a basis and then referred back to the commission, which should be enlarged by the inclusion of representatives of the opposition, or rather, of comrades who have made practical proposals, and that the commission should put forward (1) the amendments to the draft that have been enumerated, and (2) the theoretical objections on which no agreement can be reached. I think this will be the most practical way of dealing with the matter, and one that will most speedily lead to a correct decision. (*Applause.*)

Report on Work in the Countryside

March 23

(Prolonged applause.) Comrades, I must apologise for having been unable to attend all the meetings of the committee elected by the Congress to consider the question of work in the countryside. My report will therefore be supplemented by the speeches of comrades who have taken part in the work of the committee from the very beginning. The committee finally drew up theses which were turned over to a commission and which will be reported on to you. I should like to dwell on the general significance of the question as it confronts us following the work of the committee and as, in my opinion, it now confronts the whole Party.

Comrades, it is quite natural that as the proletarian revolution develops we have to put in the forefront first one then another of the most complex and important problems of social life. It is perfectly natural that in a revolution which affects, and is bound to affect, the deepest foundations of life and the broadest mass of the population, not a single party, not a single government, no matter how close it may be to the people, can possibly embrace all aspects of life *at once*. And if we now have to deal with the question of work in the countryside, and in connection with this question to give prominence to the position of the middle peasants, there is nothing strange or abnormal in this from the standpoint of the development of the proletarian revolution in general. It is natural that the proletarian revolution had to begin with the fundamental relation between two hostile classes, the proletariat and the bourgeoisie. The principal task was to transfer power to the working class, to

secure its dictatorship, to overthrow the bourgeoisie and to deprive them of the economic sources of their power which would undoubtedly be a hindrance to all socialist construction in general. Since we are acquainted with Marxism, none of us have ever for a moment doubted the truth of the thesis that the very economic structure of capitalist society is such that the deciding factor in that society must be either the proletariat or the bourgeoisie. We now see many former Marxists—from the Menshevik camp, for example—who assert that in a period of decisive struggle between the proletariat and the bourgeoisie *democracy in general* can prevail. This is what is said by the Mensheviks, who have come to a complete agreement with the Socialist-Revolutionaries. As though it were not the bourgeoisie themselves who create or abolish democracy as they find most convenient for themselves! And since that is so, there can be no question of democracy in general at a time of acute struggle between the bourgeoisie and the proletariat. It is astonishing how rapidly these Marxists or pseudo-Marxists—our Mensheviks, for example—expose themselves, and how rapidly their true nature, the nature of petty-bourgeois democrats, comes to the surface.

All his life Marx fought most of all the illusions of petty-bourgeois democracy and bourgeois democracy. Marx scoffed most of all at empty talk of freedom and equality, when it serves as a screen for the freedom of the workers to starve to death, or the equality between the one who sells his labour-power and the bourgeois who allegedly freely purchases that labour in the open market as if from an equal, and so forth. Marx explains this in all his economic works. It may be said that the whole of Marx's *Capital* is devoted to explaining the truth that *the basic forces of capitalist society are, and must be, the bourgeoisie and the proletariat*—bourgeoisie, as the builder of this capitalist society, as its leader, as its motive force, and the proletariat, as its gravedigger and as the only force capable of replacing it. You can hardly find a single chapter in any of Marx's works that is not devoted to this. You might say that all over the world the socialists of the Second International have vowed and sworn to the workers time and again that they understand this truth. But when matters reached the stage of the

real and, moreover, decisive struggle for power between the proletariat and the bourgeoisie we find that our Mensheviks and Socialist-Revolutionaries, as well as the leaders of the old socialist parties all over the world, forgot this truth and began to repeat in purely parrot fashion the philistine phrases about democracy in general.

Attempts are sometimes made to lend these words what is considered to be greater force by speaking of the "dictatorship of democracy". That is sheer nonsense. We know perfectly well from history that the dictatorship of the democratic bourgeoisie meant nothing but the suppression of the insurgent workers. That has been the case ever since 1848—at any rate, beginning no later, and isolated examples may be found even earlier. History shows that it is precisely in a bourgeois democracy that a most acute struggle between the proletariat and the bourgeoisie develops extensively and freely. We have had occasion to convince ourselves of this truth in practice. And the measures taken by the Soviet Government since October 1917 have been distinguished by their firmness on all fundamental questions precisely because we have never departed from this truth and have never forgotten it. The issue of the struggle for supremacy waged against the bourgeoisie can be settled only by the dictatorship of one class—the proletariat. Only the dictatorship of the proletariat can defeat the bourgeoisie. Only the proletariat can overthrow the bourgeoisie. And only the proletariat can secure the following of the people in the struggle against the bourgeoisie.

However, it by no means follows from this—and it would be a profound mistake to think it does—that in further building communism, when the bourgeoisie have been overthrown and political power is already in the hands of the proletariat, we can continue to carry on without the participation of the middle, intermediary elements.

It is natural that at the beginning of the revolution—the proletarian revolution—the whole attention of its active participants should be concentrated on the main and fundamental issue, the supremacy of the proletariat and the securing of that supremacy by a victory over the bourgeoisie—making it certain that the bourgeoisie cannot regain power. We are well aware that the bourgeoisie still enjoy the

advantages derived from the wealth they possess in other countries or the monetary wealth they possess, sometimes even in our own country. We are well aware that there are social elements who are more experienced than proletarians and who aid the bourgeoisie. We are well aware that the bourgeoisie have not abandoned the idea of returning to power and have not ceased attempting to restore their supremacy.

But that is by no means all. The bourgeoisie, who put forward most insistently the principle "my country is wherever it is good for me", and who, as far as money is concerned, have always been international—*the bourgeoisie internationally are still stronger than we are*. Their supremacy is being rapidly undermined, they are being confronted with such facts as the Hungarian revolution—about which we were happy to inform you yesterday and are today receiving confirming reports—and they are beginning to understand that their supremacy is shaky. They no longer enjoy freedom of action. But now, if you take into account the material means on the world scale, we cannot help admitting that in the material respect the bourgeoisie are at present still stronger than we are.

That is why nine-tenths of our attention and our practical activities was devoted, and had to be devoted, to this fundamental question—the overthrow of the bourgeoisie, the establishment of the power of the proletariat and the elimination of every possibility of the return of the bourgeoisie to power. That is perfectly natural, legitimate, and unavoidable, and in this field very much has been accomplished.

Now, however, we must decide the question of other sections of the population. We must—and this was our unanimous conclusion in the agrarian committee, and on this, we are convinced, all Party workers will agree, because we merely summed up the results of their observations—we must now decide *the question of the middle peasants* in its totality.

Of course, there are people who, instead of studying the course taken by our revolution, instead of giving thought to the tasks now confronting us, instead of all this, make every step of the Soviet government a butt for the derision and criticism of the type we hear from those gentlemen, the Mensheviks and the Right Socialist-Revolutionaries. These

people have still not understood that they must make a choice between us and the bourgeois dictatorship. We have displayed great patience, even indulgence, towards these people. We shall allow them to enjoy our indulgence once more. But in the very near future we shall set a limit to our patience and indulgence, and if they do not make their choice, we shall tell them in all seriousness to go to Kolchak. (*Applause.*) We do not expect particularly brilliant intellectual ability from such people. (*Laughter.*) But it might have been expected that after experiencing the bestialities of Kolchak they ought to understand that we are entitled to demand that they should choose between us and Kolchak. If during the first few months that followed the October Revolution there were many naïve people who were stupid enough to believe that the dictatorship of the proletariat was something transient and fortuitous, today even the Mensheviks and the Socialist-Revolutionaries ought to understand that there is something logically necessary in the struggle that is being waged because of the onslaught of the whole international bourgeoisie.

Actually only two forces have been created—the dictatorship of the bourgeoisie and the dictatorship of the proletariat. Whoever has not learned this from Marx, whoever has not learned this from the works of all the great socialists, has never been a socialist, has never understood anything about socialism, and has only called himself a socialist. We are allowing these people a brief period for reflection and demand that they make their decision. I have mentioned them because they are now saying or will say: “The Bolsheviks have raised the question of the middle peasants; they want to make advances to them.” I am very well aware that considerable space is given in the Menshevik press to arguments of this kind, and even far worse. We ignore such arguments, we never attach importance to the jabber of our adversaries. People who are still capable of running to and fro between the bourgeoisie and the proletariat may say what they please. We are following our own road.

Our road is determined above all by considerations of class forces. A struggle is developing in capitalist society between the bourgeoisie and the proletariat. As long as that struggle has not ended we shall give our keenest attention to fight-

ing it out to the end. It has not yet been brought to the end, although in that struggle much has already been accomplished. The hands of the international bourgeoisie are no longer free; the best proof of this is that the Hungarian proletarian revolution has taken place. It is therefore clear that our rural organisational work has already gone beyond the limits to which it was confined when everything was subordinated to the fundamental demand of the struggle for power.

This development passed through two main phases. In October 1917 we seized power *together with the peasants as a whole*. This was a bourgeois revolution, inasmuch as the class struggle in the rural districts had not yet developed. As I have said, the real proletarian revolution in the rural districts began only in the summer of 1918. Had we not succeeded in stirring up this revolution our work would have been incomplete. The first stage was the seizure of power in the cities and the establishment of the Soviet form of government. The second stage was one which is fundamental for all socialists and without which socialists are not socialists, namely, to single out the proletarian and semi-proletarian elements in the rural districts and to ally them to the urban proletariat in order to wage the struggle against the bourgeoisie in the countryside. This stage is also in the main completed. The organisations we originally created for this purpose, the Poor Peasants' Committees, had become so consolidated that we found it possible to replace them by properly elected Soviets, i.e., to reorganise the village Soviets so as to make them the organs of class rule, the organs of proletarian power in the rural districts. Such measures as the law on socialist land settlement and the measures for the transition to socialist farming, which was passed not very long ago by the Central Executive Committee and with which everybody is, of course, familiar, sum up our experience from the point of view of our proletarian revolution.

The main thing, the prime and basic task of the proletarian revolution, we have already accomplished. And precisely because we have accomplished it, a more complicated problem has come to the fore—*our attitude towards the middle peasants*. And whoever thinks that the prominence being given this problem is in any way symptomatic of a weaken-

ing of the character of our government, of a weakening of the dictatorship of the proletariat, that it is symptomatic of a change, however partial, however minute, in our basic policy, completely fails to understand the aims of the proletariat and the aims of the communist revolution. I am convinced that there are no such people in our Party. I only wanted to warn the comrades against people not belonging to the workers' party who will talk in this way, not because it follows from any system of ideas, but because they merely want to spoil things for us and to help the whiteguards—or, to put it more simply, to incite against us the middle peasant, who is always vacillating, who cannot help vacillating, and who will continue to vacillate for a fairly long time to come. In order to incite the middle peasant against us they will say, "See, they are making advances to you! That means they have taken your revolts into account, they are beginning to wobble", and so on and so forth. All our comrades must be armed against agitation of this kind. And I am certain that they will be armed—provided we succeed now in having this question treated from the standpoint of the class struggle.

It is perfectly obvious that this fundamental problem—*how precisely to define the attitude of the proletariat towards the middle peasants*—is a more complex but no less urgent problem. Comrades, from the theoretical point of view, which has been mastered by the vast majority of the workers, this question presents no difficulty to Marxists. I will remind you, for instance, that in his book on the agrarian question, written at a time when he was still correctly expounding the teachings of Marx and was regarded as an indisputed authority in this field, Kautsky states in connection with the transition from capitalism to socialism that the task of a socialist party is to *neutralise the peasants*, i.e., to see to it that in the struggle between the proletariat and the bourgeoisie the peasant should remain neutral and should not be able to give active assistance to the bourgeoisie against us.

Throughout the extremely long period of the rule of the bourgeoisie, the peasants sided with the bourgeoisie and supported their power. This will be understood if you consider the economic strength of the bourgeoisie and the political instruments of their rule. We cannot count on the middle

peasant coming over to our side immediately. But if we pursue a correct policy, after a time these vacillations will cease and the peasant will be able to come over to our side.

It was Engels—who together with Marx laid the foundations of scientific Marxism, that is, the teachings by which our Party has always guided itself, and particularly in time of revolution—it was Engels who established the division of the peasants into small peasants, middle peasants, and big peasants, and this division holds good for most European countries even today. Engels said, “Perhaps it will not everywhere be necessary to suppress even the big peasant by force.” And that we might ever use force in respect of the middle peasant (the small peasant is our friend) is a thought that has never occurred to any sensible socialist. That is what Engels said in 1894, a year before his death, when the agrarian question came to the fore.* This point of view expresses a truth which is sometimes forgotten, but with which we are all in theory agreed. In relation to the landowners and the capitalists our aim is complete expropriation. *But we shall not tolerate any use of force in respect of the middle peasants.* Even in respect of the rich peasants we do not say as resolutely as we do of the bourgeoisie—absolute expropriation of the rich peasants and the kulaks. This distinction is made in our programme. We say that the resistance and the counter-revolutionary efforts of the rich peasants must be suppressed. That is not complete expropriation.

The basic difference in our attitude towards the bourgeoisie and the middle peasant—complete expropriation of the bourgeoisie and an alliance with the middle peasant who does not exploit others—this basic line is accepted by everybody in theory. But this line is not consistently followed in practice; the people in the localities have not yet learned to follow it. When, after having overthrown the bourgeoisie and consolidated its own power, the proletariat started from various angles to create a new society, the question of the middle peasant came to the fore. Not a single socialist in the world denied that the building of commu-

* See Frederick Engels, “The Peasant Question in France and Germany”.—*Ed.*

nism would take different courses in countries where large-scale farming prevails and in countries where small-scale farming prevails. That is an elementary truth, an ABC. And from this truth it follows that as we approach the problems of communist construction our principal attention must to a certain extent be concentrated precisely on the middle peasant.

Much will depend on how we define our attitude towards the middle peasant. Theoretically, that question has been solved; but we know perfectly well from our own experience that there is a difference between solving a problem theoretically and putting the solution into practice. We are now directly confronted with that difference, which was so characteristic of the great French Revolution, when the French Convention launched into sweeping measures but did not possess the necessary support to put them into effect, and did not even know on what class to rely for the implementation of any particular measure.

Our position is an infinitely more fortunate one. Thanks to a whole century of development, we know on which class we are relying. But we also know that the practical experience of that class is extremely inadequate. The fundamental aim was clear to the working class and the workers' party—to overthrow the power of the bourgeoisie and to transfer power to the workers. But *how* was that to be done? Everyone remembers with what difficulty and at the cost of how many mistakes we passed from workers' control to workers' management of industry. And yet that was work within our own class, among the proletarians, with whom we had always had to deal. But now we are called upon to define our attitude towards a new class, a class the urban worker does not know. We have to determine our attitude towards a class which has no definite and stable position. The proletariat in the mass is in favour of socialism, the bourgeoisie in the mass are opposed to socialism. It is easy to determine the relations between these two classes. But when we come up against people like the middle peasants we find that *they are a class that vacillates*. The middle peasant is partly a property-owner and partly a working man. He does not exploit other working people. For decades the middle peasant defended his position with the greatest difficulty, he suffered

the exploitation of the landowners and the capitalists, he bore everything. Yet he is a property-owner. Our attitude towards this vacillating class therefore presents enormous difficulties. In the light of more than a year's experience, in the light of more than six months' proletarian work in the rural districts, and in the light of the class differentiation in the rural districts that has already taken place, we must most of all beware here lest we are too hasty, lest we are inadequately theoretical, lest we regard what is in process of being accomplished, but has not yet been realised, as having been accomplished. In the resolution which is being proposed to you by the commission elected by the committee, and which will be read to you by a subsequent speaker, you will find sufficient warning against this.

From the economic point of view, it is obvious that we must help the middle peasant. Theoretically, there is no doubt of this. But because of our habits, our level of culture, the inadequacy of the cultural and technical forces we are in a position to place at the disposal of the rural districts, and because of the helpless manner in which we often approach the rural districts, comrades frequently resort to coercion and thus spoil everything. Only yesterday, a comrade gave me a pamphlet entitled *Instructions and Regulations on Party Work in Nizhni-Novgorod Gubernia*, issued by the Nizhni-Novgorod Committee of the Russian Communist Party (Bolsheviks), and in this pamphlet, for example, I find this on p. 41. "The whole burden of the emergency tax decree must be placed on the shoulders of the village kulaks and profiteers and *the middle element of the peasants generally*." Well, well! These people have indeed "understood". This is either a printer's error—and it is impermissible that such printer's errors should be made—or a piece of rushed, hasty work, which shows how dangerous all haste is in this matter. Or—and this is the worst surmise of all, one I would not like to make with regard to the Nizhni-Novgorod comrades—they have simply failed to understand. It may very well be that it is an oversight.

We have, in practice, cases like the one related by a comrade in the commission. He was surrounded by peasants, and every one of them asked: "Tell me, am I a middle peasant or not? I have two horses and one cow. . . . I have two cows

and one horse", etc. And this agitator, who tours the uyezds, is expected to possess an infallible thermometer with which to gauge every peasant and say whether he is a middle peasant or not. To do that you must know the whole history of the given peasant's farm, his relation to higher and lower groups—and we cannot know that accurately.

Considerable practical ability and knowledge of local conditions are required here, and we do not yet possess them. You need not be ashamed to confess it; it must be admitted frankly. We were never utopians and never imagined that we would build communist society with the immaculate hands of immaculate Communists, born and educated in an immaculately communist society. That is a fairy-tale. We have to build communism out of the debris of capitalism, and only the class which has been steeled in the struggle against capitalism can do that. The proletariat, as you are very well aware, is not free from the shortcomings and weaknesses of capitalist society. It is fighting for socialism, but at the same time it is fighting against its own shortcomings. The best and foremost section of the proletariat, which carried on a desperate struggle in the cities for decades, was in a position to acquire in the course of that struggle the culture of life in the capital and other cities, and to a certain extent did acquire it. You know that even in advanced countries the rural districts were condemned to ignorance. Of course, we shall raise the level of culture in the rural districts, but that will be the work of many, many years, that is what our comrades everywhere are forgetting and what is being strikingly brought home to us by every word uttered by people who come from the rural districts; not by the intellectuals who work here, not by the officials—we have listened to them a lot—but by people who have in practice observed the work in the rural districts. It was these opinions that we found particularly valuable in the agrarian committee. These opinions will be particularly valuable now—I am convinced of that—for the whole Party Congress, for they come not from books, and not from decrees, but from experience.

All this obliges us to work for the purpose of introducing the greatest possible clarity into our attitude towards the middle peasant. This is very difficult, because *such clarity*

does not exist in reality. Not only is this problem unsolved, it is *insoluble*, if you want to solve it *immediately and all at once*. There are people who say that there was no need to write so many decrees. They blame the Soviet Government for setting about writing decrees without knowing how they were to be put into effect. These people, as a matter of fact, do not realise that they are sinking to the whiteguard position. If we had expected that life in the rural districts could be completely changed by writing a hundred decrees, we would have been absolute idiots. But if we had refrained from indicating in decrees the road that must be followed, we would have been traitors to socialism. These decrees, while in practice they could not be carried into effect fully and immediately, played an important part as propaganda. While formerly we carried on our propaganda by means of general truths, *we are now carrying on our propaganda by our work*. That is also preaching, but it is preaching by action—only not action in the sense of the isolated sallies of some upstarts, at which we scoffed so much in the era of the anarchists and the socialism of the old type. Our decree is a call, but not the old call “Workers, arise and overthrow the bourgeoisie!” No, it is a call to the people, it calls them to practical work. *Decrees are instructions which call for practical work on a mass scale.* That is what is important. Let us assume that decrees do contain much that is useless, much that in practice cannot be put into effect; but they contain material for practical action, and the purpose of a decree is to teach practical steps to the hundreds, thousands, and millions of people who heed the voice of the Soviet government. This is a trial in practical action in the sphere of socialist construction in the rural districts. If we treat matters in this way we shall acquire a good deal from the sum total of our laws, decrees, and ordinances. We shall not regard them as absolute injunctions which must be put into effect instantly and at all costs.

We must avoid everything that in practice may tend to encourage individual abuses. In places careerists and adventurers have attached themselves to us like leeches, people who call themselves Communists and are deceiving us, and who have wormed their way into our ranks because the Communists are now in power, and because the more honest

government employees refused to come and work with us on account of their retrograde ideas, while careerists have no ideas, and no honesty. These people, whose only aim is to make a career, resort in the localities to coercion, and imagine they are doing a good thing. But in fact the result of this at times is that the peasants say, "Long live Soviet power, but *down with the communia!*" (i.e., communism). This is not an invention; these facts are taken from real life, from the reports of comrades in the localities. We must not forget what enormous damage is always caused by lack of moderation, by all rashness, and haste.

We had to hurry and, by taking a desperate leap, to get out of the imperialist war at any cost, for it had brought us to the verge of collapse. We had to make most desperate efforts to crush the bourgeoisie and the forces that were threatening to crush us. All this was necessary, without this we could not have triumphed. But if we were to act in the same way towards the middle peasant it would be such idiocy, such stupidity, it would be so ruinous to our cause, that only provocateurs could deliberately act in such a way. The aim here must be an entirely different one. Here our aim is not to smash the resistance of obvious exploiters, to defeat and overthrow them—which was the aim we previously set ourselves. No, now that this main purpose has been accomplished, more complicated problems arise. You cannot create anything here by coercion. *Coercion applied to the middle peasants would cause untold harm.* This section is a numerous one, it consists of millions of individuals. Even in Europe, where it nowhere reaches such numbers, where technology and culture, urban life and railways are tremendously developed, and where it would be easiest of all to think of such a thing, nobody, not even the most revolutionary of socialists, has ever proposed adopting measures of coercion towards the middle peasant.

When we were taking power we relied on the support of the peasants as a whole. At that time the aim of all the peasants was the same—to fight the landowners. But their prejudice against large-scale farming has remained to this day. The peasant thinks that if there is a big farm, that means he will again be a farm-hand. That, of course, is a mistake. But the peasant's idea of large-scale farming is

associated with a feeling of hatred and the memory of how landowners used to oppress the people. That feeling still remains, it has not yet died.

We must particularly stress the truth that here by the very nature of the case coercive methods can accomplish nothing. The economic task here is an entirely different one; there is no upper layer that can be cut off, leaving the foundation and the building intact. That upper layer which in the cities was represented by the capitalists does not exist in the villages. *Here coercion would ruin the whole cause.* Prolonged educational work is required. We have to give the peasant, who not only in our country but all over the world is a practical man and a realist, concrete examples to prove that the "communia" is the best possible thing. Of course, nothing will come of it if hasty individuals flit down to a village from a city to chatter and stir up a number of intellectual-like and at times unintellectual-like squabbles, and then quarrel with everyone and go their way. That sometimes happens. Instead of evoking respect, they evoke ridicule, and deservedly so.

On this question we must say that we do encourage communes, but they must be so organised *as to gain the confidence of the peasants.* And until then we are pupils of the peasants and not their teachers. Nothing is more stupid than people who know nothing about farming and its specific features, rushing to the village only because they have heard of the advantages of socialised farming, are tired of urban life and desire to work in rural districts—it is most stupid for such people to regard themselves as teachers of the peasants in every respect. *Nothing is more stupid than the very idea of applying coercion in economic relations with the middle peasant.*

The aim is not to expropriate the middle peasant but to bear in mind the specific conditions in which the peasant lives, to learn from him methods of transition to a better system, *and not to dare to give orders!* That is the rule we have set ourselves. (*General applause.*) That is the rule we have endeavoured to set forth in our draft resolution, for in that respect, comrades, we have indeed sinned a great deal. We are by no means ashamed to confess it. We were inexperienced. Our very struggle against the exploiters was

taken from experience. If we have sometimes been condemned on account of it, we can say, "Dear capitalist gentlemen, you have only yourselves to blame. If you had not offered such savage, senseless, insolent, and desperate resistance, if you had not joined in an alliance with the world bourgeoisie, the revolution would have assumed more peaceful forms." Now that we have repulsed the savage onslaught on all sides we can change to other methods, because we are acting not as a narrow circle, but as a party which is leading the millions. The millions cannot immediately understand a change of course, and so it frequently happens that blows aimed at the kulaks fall on the middle peasants. That is not surprising. It must only be understood that this is due to historical conditions which have now been outlived and that the new conditions and the new tasks in relation to this class demand a new psychology.

Our decrees on peasant farming are in the main correct. We have no grounds for renouncing a single one of them, or for regretting a single one of them. But if the decrees are right, *it is wrong to impose them on the peasants by force*. That is not contained in a single decree. They are right inasmuch as they indicate the roads to follow, inasmuch as they call to practical measures. When we say, "Encourage associations", we are giving instructions which must be tested many times before the final *form* in which to put them into effect is found. When it is stated that we must strive to gain the peasants' voluntary consent, it means that they must be persuaded, and persuaded by practical deeds. They will not allow themselves to be convinced by mere words, and they are perfectly right in that. It would be a bad thing if they allowed themselves to be convinced merely by reading decrees and agitational leaflets. If it were possible to reshape economic life in this way, such reshaping would not be worth a brass farthing. It must first be proved that such association is better, people must be united in such a way that they become actually united and are not at odds with each other—it must be proved that association is advantageous. That is the way the peasant puts the question and that is the way our decrees put it. If we have not been able to achieve that so far, there is nothing to be ashamed of and we must admit it frankly.

We have so far accomplished only the fundamental task of every socialist revolution—that of defeating the bourgeoisie. That in the main has been accomplished, although an extremely difficult half-year is beginning in which the imperialists of the world are making a last attempt to crush us. We can now say without in the least exaggerating that *they themselves understand that after this half-year their cause will be absolutely hopeless*. Either they take advantage now of our state of exhaustion and defeat us, an isolated country, or we emerge victorious not merely in regard to our country alone. In this half-year, in which the food crisis has been aggravated by a transport crisis, and in which the imperialist powers are endeavouring to attack us on several fronts, our situation is extremely difficult. But *this is the last difficult half-year*. We must continue to mobilise all our forces in the struggle against the external enemy who is attacking us.

But when we speak of the aims of our work in the rural districts, in spite of all the difficulties, and in spite of the fact that our experience has been wholly concerned with the immediate task of crushing the exploiters, we must remember, and never forget, that our aims in the rural districts, in relation to the middle peasant, are entirely different.

All the class-conscious workers—from Petrograd, Ivanovo-Voznesensk, or Moscow—who have been to the rural districts related examples of how a number of misunderstandings which appeared to be irremovable, and a number of conflicts which appeared to be very serious, were removed or mitigated when intelligent working men came forward and spoke, not in the bookish language, but in a language understood by the peasants, when they spoke not as commanders who take the liberty of giving orders without knowing anything of rural life, but as comrades, explaining the situation and appealing to their sentiments as working people against the exploiters. And by such comradely explanation they accomplished what could not be accomplished by hundreds of others who conducted themselves like commanders and superiors.

That is the spirit that permeates the resolution we are now submitting to you.

I have endeavoured in my brief report to dwell on the underlying principles, on the general political significance of this resolution. I have endeavoured to show—and I should like to think that I have succeeded—that from the point of view of the interests of the revolution as a whole we are making no change of policy, we are not changing the line. The whiteguards and their henchmen are shouting, or will shout, that we are. Let them shout. We do not care. We are pursuing our aims in a most consistent manner. We must transfer our attention from the aim of suppressing the bourgeoisie to the aim of arranging the life of the middle peasant. We must live in peace with him. In a communist society the middle peasants will be on our side only when we alleviate and improve their economic conditions. If tomorrow we could supply one hundred thousand first-class tractors, provide them with fuel, provide them with drivers—you know very well that this at present is sheer fantasy—the middle peasant would say, “I am for the communia” (i.e., for communism). But in order to do that we must first defeat the international bourgeoisie, we must compel them to give us these tractors, or so develop our productive forces as to be able to provide them ourselves. That is the only correct way to pose this question.

The peasant needs the industry of the towns; he cannot live without it, and it is in our hands. If we set about the task properly, the peasant will be grateful to us for bringing him these products, these implements and this culture from the towns. They will be brought to him not by exploiters, not by landowners, but by his fellow-workers, whom he values very highly, but values in a practical manner, for the actual help they give, at the same time rejecting—and quite rightly rejecting—all domineering and “orders” from above.

First help, and then endeavour to win confidence. If you set about this task correctly, if every step taken by every one of our groups in the uyezds, the volosts, the food procurement groups, and in every other organisation is made properly, if every step of ours is carefully checked from this point of view, we shall gain the confidence of the peasant, and only then shall we be able to proceed farther. What we must now do is to help him and advise him. This will not be

the orders of a commander, but the advice of a comrade. The peasant will then be entirely on our side.

This, comrades, is what is contained in our resolution, and this, in my opinion, must become the decision of the Congress. If we adopt this, if it serves to determine the work of all our Party organisations, we shall cope with the second great task before us.

We have learned how to overthrow the bourgeoisie, how to suppress them, and we are proud of the fact. But we have not yet learned how to regulate our relations with the millions of middle peasants, how to win their confidence, and we must frankly admit it. But we have understood the task, we have set it, and we say in all confidence, with full knowledge and determination, that we shall cope with this task—and then socialism will be absolutely invincible. (*Prolonged applause.*)

Speech Closing the Congress

March 23

Comrades, all the items on our agenda have been dealt with. Permit me to say a few words in closing the Congress.

Comrades, it is not only the loss of one of our best organisers and practical leaders, Yakov Mikhailovich Sverdlov, that has made the time at which we assembled here a very difficult one. It is a particularly difficult time because international imperialism is making a last and exceptionally strenuous effort to crush the Soviet Republic—of this there is now no doubt. We do not doubt that the fierce attacks launched in the West and the East, accompanied as they are by a number of whiteguard revolts and attempts to dismantle the railway line in several places, are deliberate measures apparently decided on in Paris by the Entente imperialists. We all know, comrades, how difficult it was for Russia, after four years of imperialist war, to take up arms in defence of the Soviet Republic against the imperialist plunderers. We all know what a burden this war is, how it is exhausting us. But we also know that this war is being fought with redoubled vigour and dauntless courage only because for the first time in world history, an army, an armed force, has been created, which knows what it is fighting for; and because, for the first time in world history, workers and peasants are making incredible sacrifices in the knowledge that they are defending the Soviet Socialist Republic, the rule of the working people over the capitalists; they know that they are defending the cause of the world proletarian socialist revolution.

Amidst these difficult conditions we accomplished a great deal in a very short time. We managed to endorse our programme unanimously, as was the case with every vital decision of the Congress. We are convinced that in spite of its numerous literary and other shortcomings, this programme has already gone into the history of the Third International as the programme which sums up the results of the new stage in the world movement for the emancipation of the proletariat. We are convinced that in many countries, where we have far more allies and friends than we imagine, the mere translation of our programme will provide the most effective answer to the question as to what has been done by the Russian Communist Party, which is one of the units of the international proletariat. Our programme will serve as extremely effective material for propaganda and agitation; it is a document which will lead the workers to say, "Here are our comrades, our brothers; here our common cause is becoming reality."

Comrades, we succeeded in passing a number of other important decisions at this Congress. We approved of the formation of the Third, Communist International, which was founded here in Moscow. We adopted a unanimous decision on the military question. Vast though the differences of opinion may have appeared at first, diverse as may have been the views of the many comrades who very frankly criticised the shortcomings of our military policy, we on the commission found no difficulty in arriving at an absolutely unanimous decision, and we shall leave this Congress convinced that our chief defender, the Red Army, for the sake of which the whole country is making such incalculable sacrifices, will find in every delegate to the Congress, in every member of the Party, a warm, unselfish and devoted assistant, leader, friend and collaborator.

Comrades, we were able to solve the organisational problems confronting us with such ease because the solutions had been indicated by the entire history of the relations between the Party and the Soviets. All we were called upon to do was sum up. On the subject of our work in the rural districts, the Congress, in a unanimous decision speedily arrived at, laid down our policy on a question that is particularly important and particularly difficult, and one that in

other countries is even regarded as insoluble—the attitude of the proletariat which has overthrown the bourgeoisie towards the vast masses of middle peasants. We are all convinced that this Congress decision will help to consolidate our power. We are convinced that in the trying period through which we are now passing, when the imperialists are making their final effort to overthrow the Soviet government by force, and when an acute food shortage and the chaotic state of the transport have once again rendered the position of hundreds, thousands and millions of people desperate, the resolution we adopted and the spirit which animated the delegates to this Congress will help us to bear these trials and to live through this difficult half-year.

We are convinced that *this will be the last difficult half-year*. This conviction of ours is greatly strengthened by the news we announced to the Congress the other day—the news of the success of the proletarian revolution in Hungary. Up to now Soviet power has been victorious in only one country, among the peoples which once constituted the former Russian Empire; and short-sighted people, who found it exceptionally difficult to abandon routine and old habits of thought (even though they may have belonged to the socialist camp), imagined that this surprising swing towards proletarian Soviet democracy was due entirely to the peculiar conditions prevailing in Russia; they thought that perhaps the specific features of this democracy reflected, as in a distorting mirror, the peculiar features of former, tsarist Russia. If there was ever any foundation for such an opinion, there is certainly none whatever now. Comrades, the news received today gives us a picture of the Hungarian revolution. We learn from today's news that the Allied powers have presented a brutal ultimatum to Hungary demanding free passage for their troops. The bourgeois government, seeing that the Allied powers wanted to move their troops through Hungary, seeing that Hungary would be subjected to the frightful sufferings of a new war—this government of bourgeois compromisers voluntarily resigned, voluntarily opened negotiations with the Communists, our Hungarian comrades, who were in prison, and voluntarily admitted that there was no way out of the situation except by transferring power to the working people. (*Applause.*)

Comrades, it was said that we were usurpers. At the end of 1917 and the beginning of 1918, the only words with which the bourgeoisie and many of their followers described our revolution were "violence" and "usurpation". Even now we hear statements to the effect that the Bolshevik government is holding on by force, although we have repeatedly demonstrated that this is absurd. But if such absurdities could be uttered in the past, they have now been silenced by what has occurred in Hungary. Even the bourgeoisie has realised that there can be no government authority except that of the Soviets. The bourgeoisie of a more cultured country sees more clearly than our bourgeoisie did on the eve of October 25 that the country is perishing, that trials of increasing severity are being imposed on the people, and that, therefore, political power must be transferred to the Soviets, that the workers and peasants of Hungary, the new, Soviet, proletarian democracy must save her.

Comrades, the difficulties which face the Hungarian revolution are immense. Hungary is a small country compared with Russia and can be stifled by the imperialists much more easily. However great the difficulties which undoubtedly still face Hungary, we have achieved a *moral victory* in addition to a victory of Soviet power. A most radical, democratic and compromising bourgeoisie realised that at a moment of extreme crisis, when a new war is menacing a country already exhausted by war, a Soviet government is a historical necessity, that in such a country there can be no government but a Soviet government, the dictatorship of the proletariat.

Comrades, behind us there is a long line of revolutionaries who sacrificed their lives for the emancipation of Russia. The lot of the majority of these revolutionaries was a hard one. They suffered the persecution of the tsarist government, but it was not their good fortune to see the triumph of the revolution. A better fortune has fallen to our lot. Not only have we seen the triumph of our revolution, not only have we seen it become consolidated amidst unprecedented difficulties, and create new forms of government which win the sympathy of the whole world, but we also see the seed sown by the Russian revolution springing up in Europe. This imbues us with the absolute and unshakable conviction that

no matter how difficult the trials that may still befall us, and no matter how great the misfortunes that may be brought upon us by that dying beast, international imperialism, that beast will perish, and socialism will triumph throughout the world. (*Prolonged applause.*)

I declare the Eighth Congress of the Russian Communist Party closed.

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Ninth Congress of the R.C.P.(B.)
March 29-April 5, 1920

Opening Speech
March 29

First of all allow me on behalf of the Central Committee of the Russian Communist Party to greet the delegates who have assembled for the Party Congress.

Comrades, we are opening this present Congress of the Party at a highly important moment. The internal development of our revolution has led to very big and rapid victories over the enemy in the Civil War, and, in view of the international situation, these victories, we find, are nothing more nor less than the victory of the Soviet revolution in the first country to make this revolution—a very weak and backward country—a victory over the combined forces of world capitalism and imperialism. And after these victories we may now proceed with calm and firm assurance to the immediate tasks of peaceful economic development, confident that the present Congress, having reviewed the experience of over two years of Soviet work, will be able to utilise the lesson gained in order to cope with the more difficult and complex task of economic development that now confronts us. From the international standpoint, our position has never been as favourable as it is now; and what fills us with particular joy and vigour is the news we are daily receiving from Germany, which shows that, however difficult and painful the birth of a socialist revolution may be, the proletarian Soviet power in Germany is spreading irresistibly. The part played by the German Kornilov-type putsch was similar to that of Kornilov revolt in Russia. After that a swing towards a workers' government began, not only among the masses of urban workers, but also among the rural proletariat of Ger-

many. And this swing is of historic importance. Not only is it one more absolute confirmation of the correctness of the line, but it gives us the assurance that the time is not far off when we shall be marching hand in hand with a German Soviet government. (*Applause.*)

I hereby open the Congress and request you to nominate a presidium.

Report of the Central Committee

March 29

Comrades, before beginning my report I must say that, like the report at the preceding Congress, it is divided into two parts: political and organisational. This division first of all leads one to think of the way the work of the Central Committee has developed in its external aspect, the organisational aspect. Our Party has now been through its first year without Y. M. Sverdlov, and our loss was bound to tell on the whole organisation of the Central Committee. No one has been able to combine organisational and political work in one person so successfully as Comrade Sverdlov did and we have been obliged to attempt to replace his work by the work of a collegium.

During the year under review the current daily work of the Central Committee has been conducted by the two collegiums elected by the plenary meeting of the Central Committee—the Organising Bureau of the Central Committee and the Political Bureau of the Central Committee. In order to achieve co-ordination and consistency in the decisions of these two bodies, the Secretary was a member of both. In practice it has become the main and proper function of the Organising Bureau to distribute the forces of the Party, and that of the Political Bureau to deal with political questions. It goes without saying that this distinction is to a certain extent artificial; it is obvious that no policy can be carried out in practice without finding expression in appointments and transfers. Consequently, every organisational question assumes a political significance; and it has become the established practice for the request of a single member of the

Личная анкета

для делегатов 9-го Съезда Р. К. П. (большевиков).

1. Имя, отчество и фамилия.

Иван Иванович (Великий)

2. № делегатского билета решающий

381

3. В какой организации числитесь (уезд, губерния).

Моск.

4. Число членов вашей организации.

35 000

5. Как избраны (на губконференции, уездконференции, общем собрании и т. д.) и когда.

Моск. губконференция

6. Число представленных членов партии на губконференции, уездконференции, общем собрании, на которой вы были избраны на Съезд.

35 000

7. Возраст.

50

8. Образование.

Высшее

9. Бывшая профессия (указать вполне определенно), или какие специальности знаете.

Юрид. : нач. упр. ивер. музеев

10. Национальность.

Белорус

11. Семейное положение.

Учен

Партийная работа.

12. С какого времени состоите членом Р. К. П. (год, месяц).

с 1893 г.

13. На каких Всероссийских партийных Съездах вы участвовали.

Каждый раз на всех

14. Какую партийную работу исполняли, когда и где.

член ЦК и ред. г. в.

15. Сколько времени вы вели нелегальную работу. *1893-1917*
16. Какую партийную работу исполняете сейчас. *Зам. чл. Цек. СНК и Сов.*
17. Принадлежали-ли к какой-либо партии до вступления в Р. К. П., когда, сколько времени.

нет

Советская работа.

18. Какую советскую работу исполняли, когда, где. *чл. СНК и Сов.*
19. Какую советскую работу исполняете сейчас. *чл. Цек.*

20. В каких и когда состояли Профессиональных Союзах и в каком состоите сейчас. *не состою*

21. Подвергались-ли вы репрессиям за партийную работу, когда, по каким делам. *б. арестован 1887, 1894 и 1900*

22. Где застала вас февральская революция (в ссылке, каторге, тюрьме, за границей, на военной службе, фабрике и т. д.). *в эмиграции (в Чугуеве)*

23. Сколько времени провезли: в тюрьме, *14 мес. в Киев, Киев*
 " " " в ссылке, *3 года*
 " " " на каторге, *не был*
 " " " в эмиграции. *1900-1901 и 1902-1907.*

Подпись *И. Удоводников*

29 марта дня, 1920 г.

Central Committee to be sufficient to have any question, for one reason or another, examined as a political question. To have attempted to divide the functions of the Central Committee in any other way would hardly have been expedient and in practice would hardly have achieved its purpose.

This method of conducting business has produced extremely good results: no difficulties have arisen between the two bureaus on any occasion. The work of these bodies has on the whole proceeded harmoniously, and practical implementation has been facilitated by the presence of the Secretary who acted, furthermore, solely and exclusively in pursuance of the will of the Central Committee. It must be emphasised from the very outset, so as to remove all misunderstanding, that only the corporate decisions of the Central Committee adopted in the Organising Bureau or the Political Bureau, or by a plenary meeting of the Central Committee—only these decisions were carried out by the Secretary of the Central Committee of the Party. The work of the Central Committee cannot otherwise proceed properly.

After these brief remarks on the arrangement of work within the Central Committee, I shall get on with my job, which is the report of the Central Committee. To present a report on the political work of the Central Committee is a highly difficult task if understood literally. A large part of the work of the Political Bureau has this year consisted in making the current decision on the various questions of policy that have arisen, questions of co-ordinating the activities of all the Soviet and Party institutions and all organisations of the working class, of co-ordinating and doing their utmost to direct the work of the entire Soviet Republic. The Political Bureau adopted decisions on all questions of foreign and domestic policy. Naturally, to attempt to enumerate these questions, even approximately, would be impossible. You will find material for a general summary in the printed matter prepared by the Central Committee for this Congress. To attempt to repeat this summary in my report would be beyond my powers, and I do not think it would be interesting to the delegates. All of us who work in a Party or Soviet organisation keep daily track of the extraordinary succession of political questions, both foreign and domestic. The way these questions have been decided, as

expressed in the decrees of the Soviet government, and in the activities of the Party organisations, at every turn, is in itself an evaluation of the Central Committee of the Party. It must be said that the questions were so numerous that they frequently had to be decided under conditions of extreme haste, and it was only because the members of the body concerned were so well acquainted with each other, knew every shade of opinion and had confidence in each other, that this work could be done at all. Otherwise it would have been beyond the powers of a body even three times the size. When deciding complex questions it frequently happened that meetings had to be replaced by telephone conversations. This was done in the full assurance that obviously complicated and disputed questions would not be overlooked. Now, when I am called upon to make a general report, instead of giving a chronological review and a grouping of subjects, I shall take the liberty of dwelling on the main and most essential points, such, moreover, as link up the experience of yesterday, or, more correctly, of the past year, with the tasks that now confront us.

The time is not yet ripe for a history of Soviet government. And even if it were, I must say for myself—and I think for the Central Committee as well—that we have no intention of becoming historians. What interests us is the present and the future. We take the past year under review as material, as a lesson, as a stepping-stone, from which we must proceed further. Regarded from this point of view, the work of the Central Committee falls into two big categories—work connected with war problems and those determining the international position of the Republic, and work of internal, peace-time economic development, which only began to come to the fore at the end of the last year perhaps, or the beginning of this year, when it became quite clear that we had won a decisive victory on the decisive fronts of the Civil War. Last spring our military situation was an extremely difficult one; as you remember, we were still to experience quite a number of defeats, of new, huge and unexpected offensives on the part of the counter-revolution and the Entente, none of which could have been anticipated by us. It was therefore only natural that the greater part of this period was devoted to the military problem, the problem

of the Civil War, which seemed unsolvable to all the faint-hearted, not to speak of the parties of the Mensheviks and Socialist-Revolutionaries and other petty-bourgeois democrats, and to all the intermediate elements; this induced them to declare quite sincerely that the problem could not be solved, that Russia was backward and enfeebled and could not vanquish the capitalist system of the entire world, seeing that the revolution in the West had been delayed. And we therefore had to maintain our position and to declare with absolute firmness and conviction that we would win, we had to implement the slogans "Everything for victory!" and "Everything for the war!"

To carry out these slogans it was necessary to deliberately and openly leave some of the most essential needs unsatisfied, and time and again to deny assistance to many, in the conviction that all forces had to be concentrated on the war, and that we had to win the war which the Entente had forced upon us. It was only because of the Party's vigilance and its strict discipline, because the authority of the Party united all government departments and institutions, because the slogans issued by the Central Committee were adopted by tens, hundreds, thousands and finally millions of people as one man, because incredible sacrifices were made—it was only because of all this that the miracle which occurred was made possible. It was only because of all this that we were able to win in spite of the campaigns of the imperialists of the Entente and of the whole world having been repeated twice, thrice and even four times. And, of course, we not only stress this aspect of the matter; we must also bear in mind that it teaches us that without discipline and centralisation we would never have accomplished this task. The incredible sacrifices that we have made in order to save the country from counter-revolution and in order to ensure the victory of the Russian revolution over Denikin, Yudenich and Kolchak are a guarantee of the world social revolution. To achieve this, we had to have Party discipline, the strictest centralisation and the absolute certainty that the untold sacrifices of tens and hundreds of thousands of people would help us to accomplish all these tasks, and that it really could be done, could be accomplished. And for this purpose it was essential that our Party and the

class which is exercising the dictatorship, the working class, should serve as elements uniting millions upon millions of working people in Russia and all over the world.

If we give some thought to what, after all, was the underlying reason for this historical miracle, why a weak, exhausted and backward country was able to defeat the most powerful countries in the world, we shall find that it was centralisation, discipline and unparalleled self-sacrifice. On what basis? Millions of working people in a country that was anything but educated could achieve this organisation, discipline and centralisation only because the workers had passed through the school of capitalism and had been united by capitalism, because the proletariat in all the advanced countries has united—and united the more, the more advanced the country; and on the other hand, because property, capitalist property, small property under commodity production, disunites. Property disunites, whereas we are uniting, and increasingly uniting, millions of working people all over the world. This is now clear even to the blind, one might say, or at least to those who will not see. Our enemies grew more and more disunited as time went on. They were disunited by capitalist property, by private property under commodity production, whether they were small proprietors who profited by selling surplus grain at exorbitant prices and enriched themselves at the expense of the starving workers, or the capitalists of the various countries, even though they possessed military might and were creating a League of Nations, a “great united league” of all the foremost nations of the world. Unity of this kind is a sheer fiction, a sheer fraud, a sheer lie. And we have seen—and this was a great example—that this notorious League of Nations, which attempted to hand out mandates for the government of states, to divide up the world—that this notorious alliance proved to be a soap-bubble which at once burst, because it was an alliance founded on capitalist property. We have seen this on a vast historical scale, and it confirms that fundamental truth which told us that our cause was just, that the victory of the October Revolution was absolutely certain, and that the cause we were embarking on was one to which, despite all difficulties and obstacles, millions and millions of working people in all countries would rally. We knew that

we had allies, that it was only necessary for the one country to which history had presented this honourable and most difficult task to display a spirit of self-sacrifice, for these incredible sacrifices to be repaid a hundred-fold—every month we held out in our country would win us millions and millions of allies in all countries of the world.

If, after all, we give some thought to the reason we were able to win, were bound to win, we shall find that it was only because all our enemies—who were formally tied by all sorts of bonds to the most powerful governments and capitalists in the world—however united they may have been formally, actually turned out to be disunited. Their internal bond in fact disunited them, pitted them against each other. Capitalist property disintegrated them, transformed them from allies into savage beasts, so that they failed to see that Soviet Russia was increasing the number of her followers among the British soldiers who had been landed in Archangel, among the French sailors in Sevastopol, among the workers of all countries, of all the advanced countries without exception, where the social-compromisers took the side of capital. In the final analysis this was the fundamental reason, the underlying reason, that made our victory certain and which is still the chief, insuperable and inexhaustible source of our strength; and it permits us to affirm that when we in our country achieve the dictatorship of the proletariat in full measure, and the maximum unity of its forces, through its vanguard, its advanced party, we may expect the world revolution. And this in fact is an expression of will, an expression of the proletarian determination to fight; it is an expression of the proletarian determination to achieve an alliance of millions upon millions of workers of all countries.

The bourgeoisie and the pseudo-socialist gentry of the Second International have declared this to be mere propagandist talk. But it is not, it is historical reality, borne out by the bloody and painful experience of the Civil War in Russia. For this Civil War was a war against world capital; and world capital disintegrated of itself, devoured itself, amidst strife, whereas we, in a country where the proletariat was perishing from hunger and typhus, emerged more hard-

ened and stronger than ever. In this country we won the support of increasing numbers of working people. What the compromisers formerly regarded as propagandist talk and the bourgeoisie were accustomed to sneer at, has been transformed in these years of our revolution, and particularly in the year under review, into an absolute and indisputable historical fact, which enables us to say with the most positive conviction that our having accomplished this is evidence that we possess a world-wide basis, immeasurably wider than was the case in any previous revolution. We have an international alliance, the alliance which has nowhere been registered, which has never been given formal embodiment, which from the point of view of "constitutional law" means nothing, but which, in the disintegrating capitalist world, actually means everything. Every month that we gained positions, or merely held out against an incredibly powerful enemy, proved to the whole world that we were right and brought us millions of new supporters.

This process has been a difficult one; it has been accompanied by tremendous defeats. In this very year under review the monstrous White terror in Finland* was followed by the defeat of the Hungarian revolution, which was stifled by the governments of the Entente countries that deceived their parliaments and concluded a secret treaty with Rumania.

It was the vilest piece of treachery, this conspiracy of the international Entente to crush the Hungarian revolution by means of a White terror, not to mention the fact that in order to strangle the German revolution** they were ready for any understanding with the German compromisers, and that these people, who had declared Liebknecht to be an honest German, pounced on this honest German like mad dogs together with the German imperialists. They exceeded all conceivable bounds; but every such act of suppression on their part only strengthened and consolidated us, while it undermined them.

And it seems to me that we must first and foremost draw a lesson from this fundamental experience. Here we must

* The White terror began in Finland after the suppression of the Finnish revolution in May 1918.—*Ed.*

** The reference is to the defeat of the November 1918 revolution in Germany.—*Ed.*

make a special point of basing our agitation and propaganda on an analysis, an explanation of why we were victorious, why the sacrifices made in the Civil War have been repaid a hundredfold, and how we must act, on the basis of this experience, in order to succeed in another war, a war on a bloodless front, a war which has only changed its form, but which is being waged against us by those same representatives, lackeys and leaders of the old capitalist world, only still more vigorously, still more furiously, still more zealously. More than any other, our revolution has proved the rule that the strength of a revolution, the vigour of its assault, its energy, determination, its victory and its triumph intensify the resistance of the bourgeoisie. The more victorious we are the more the capitalist exploiters learn to unite and the more determined their onslaught. For, as you all distinctly remember—it was not so long ago when judged by the passage of time, but a long time ago when judged by the march of events—at the beginning of the October Revolution Bolshevism was regarded as a freak; this view, which was a reflection of the feeble development and weakness of the proletarian revolution, very soon had to be abandoned in Russia and has now been abandoned in Europe as well. Bolshevism has become a world-wide phenomenon, the workers' revolution has raised its head. The Soviet system, in creating which in October we followed the traditions of 1905, developing our own experience—this Soviet system has become a phenomenon of world-historic importance.

Two camps are now quite consciously facing each other all over the world; this may be said without the slightest exaggeration. It should be noted that only this year have they become locked in a decisive and final struggle. And now, at the time of this very Congress, we are passing through what is perhaps one of the greatest, most acute but not yet completed periods of transition from war to peace.

You all know what happened to the leaders of the imperialist powers of the Entente who loudly announced to the whole world: "We shall never stop fighting those usurpers, those bandits, those arrogators of power, those enemies of democracy, those Bolsheviks"—you know that first they lifted the blockade, that their attempt to unite the small states

failed, because we succeeded in winning over not only the workers of all countries, but also the bourgeoisie of the small countries, for the imperialists oppress not only the workers of their own countries but the bourgeoisie of the small states as well. You know that we won over the vacillating bourgeoisie in the advanced countries. And the present position is that the Entente is breaking its former promises and assurances and is violating the treaties which, incidentally, it concluded dozens of times with various Russian whiteguards. And now, as far as these treaties are concerned, the Entente is the loser, for it squandered hundreds of millions on them but failed to complete the job.

It has now lifted the blockade and has virtually begun peace negotiations with the Soviet Republic. But it is not completing these negotiations, and therefore the small states have lost faith in it and in its might. So we see that the position of the Entente, its position in foreign affairs, defies all definition from the standpoint of the customary concepts of law. The states of the Entente are neither at peace with the Bolsheviks nor at war with them; they have recognised us and they have not recognised us. And this utter confusion among our opponents, who were so convinced that they represented something, proves that they represent nothing but a pack of capitalist beasts who have fallen out among themselves and are absolutely incapable of doing us any harm.

The position today is that Latvia has officially made peace proposals to us. Finland has sent a telegram which officially speaks of a demarcation line but actually implies a swing to a policy of peace. Lastly, Poland, the Poland whose representatives have been, and still are, sabre-rattling so vigorously, the Poland that has been, and still is, receiving so many trainloads of artillery and promises of help in everything, if only she would continue the war with Russia—even Poland, the unstable position of whose government compels her to consent to any military gamble, has invited us to begin negotiations for peace.* We must be

* Poland's agreement to start negotiations was merely a manoeuvre masking her preparations for a war against Soviet Russia. Polish reactionaries sabotaged the negotiations and on April 25 opened hostilities

extremely cautious. Our policy demands the most careful thought. Here it is hardest of all to find the proper policy, for nobody as yet knows on what track the train is standing; the enemy himself does not know what he is going to do next. The gentlemen who represent French policy and who are most zealous in egging Poland on, and the leaders of landowner and bourgeois Poland do not know what will happen next; they do not know what they want. Today they say, "Gentlemen, let us have a few trainloads of guns and a few hundred millions and we are prepared to fight the Bolsheviks." They are hushing up the news of the strikes that are spreading in Poland; they are tightening up the censorship so as to conceal the truth. But the revolutionary movement in Poland is growing. The spread of revolution in Germany, in its new phase, in its new stage, now that the workers, after the German Kornilov-type putsch, are creating Red Armies, plainly shows (as can be seen from the recent dispatches from Germany) that the temper of the workers is rising more and more. The Polish bourgeoisie and landowners are themselves beginning to wonder whether it is not too late, whether there will not be a Soviet Republic in Poland before the government acts either for war or for peace. They do not know what to do. They do not know what the morrow will bring.

But we know that our forces are growing vastly every month, and will grow even more in future. The result is that our international position is now more stable than ever. But we must watch the international crisis with extreme care and be prepared for any eventuality. We have received a formal offer of peace from Poland. These gentlemen are in desperate straits, so desperate that their friends, the German monarchists, people with better training and more political experience and knowledge, plunged into a venturesome gamble, a Kornilov-type putsch. The Polish bourgeoisie are throwing out offers of peace because they know that any venturesome gamble may prove to be a Polish Kornilov-type affair. Knowing that our enemy is in desperate straits, that

against the Soviet Republic. However, in the autumn of 1920, as a result of the Red Army's victories, the Polish Government was obliged to agree to sign a peace treaty.—*Ed.*

our enemy does not know what he wants to do or what he will do tomorrow, we must tell ourselves quite definitely that in spite of the peace overtures war is possible. It is impossible to foretell what their future conduct will be. We have seen these people before, we know these Kerenskys, these Mensheviks and Socialist-Revolutionaries. During the past two years we have seen them one day drawn towards Kolchak, the next day almost towards the Bolsheviki, and then towards Denikin—and all this camouflaged by talk about freedom and democracy. We know these gentlemen, and therefore we grasp at the proposal of peace with both hands and are prepared to make the maximum concessions, in the conviction that the conclusion of peace with the small states will further our cause infinitely more than war. For the imperialists used war to deceive the working masses, they used it to conceal the truth about Soviet Russia. Any peace, therefore, will open channels for our influence a hundred times wider, which, as it is, has grown considerably in these past few years. The Third, Communist International has achieved unparalleled successes. But at the same time we know that war may be forced upon us any day. Our enemies do not themselves know as yet what they are capable of doing in this respect.

That war preparations are under way, of that there is not the slightest doubt. Many of the states bordering on Russia—and perhaps many of those not bordering on Russia—are now arming. That is why we must manoeuvre so flexibly in our international policy and adhere so firmly to the course we have taken, that is why we must be prepared for anything. We have waged the war for peace with extreme vigour. This war is yielding splendid results. We have made a very good showing in this sphere of the struggle, at any rate, not inferior to the showing made by the Red Army on the front where blood is being shed. But the conclusion of peace with us does not depend on the will of the small states even if they desire it. They are up to their ears in debt to the countries of the Entente, who are wrangling and competing desperately among themselves. We must therefore remember that peace is of course possible from the point of view of the world situation, the historical situation created by the Civil War and by the war against the Entente.

But the measures we take for peace must be accompanied by intensified preparedness for defence, and in no case must our army be disarmed. Our army offers a real guarantee that the imperialist powers will not make the slightest attempt or encroachment on us; for although they might count on certain ephemeral successes at first, not one of them would escape defeat at the hands of Soviet Russia. That we must realise, that must be made the basis of our agitation and propaganda, that is what we must prepare for, in order to solve the problem which, in view of our growing fatigue, compels us to combine the one with the other.

I now pass to those important considerations of principle which induced us to direct the working masses so resolutely along the lines of using the army for the solution of certain basic and immediate problems. The old source of discipline, capital, has been weakened, the old source of unity has disappeared. We must create a different kind of discipline, a different source of discipline and unity. Coercion evokes the indignation, the howls, the yells and outcries of the bourgeois democrats, who make great play of the words "freedom" and "equality", but do not understand that freedom for capital is a crime against the working people, that equality between the rich and the destitute is a crime against the working people. In our fight against falsehood, we introduced labour conscription and proceeded to unite the working people, not hesitating to use coercion. For no revolution has ever been effected without coercion, and the proletariat has a right to exercise coercion in order to hold its own at all costs. When those gentry, the bourgeois, the compromisers, the German Independents, the Austrian Independents, and the French Longuetists,* argued about the historical factor, they always forgot such a factor as the revolutionary determination, firmness and steadfastness of the proletariat. And that factor is precisely the steadfastness and firmness of the

* *Longuetists*—a minority group in the French Socialist Party led by Jean Longuet, a social-reformer, that emerged in 1915; during the First World War they adopted a social-chauvinist stand. After the victory of the October Socialist Revolution in Russia the Longuetists declared that they supported the dictatorship of the proletariat, but in practice they opposed it.—*Ed.*

proletariat of our country, which declares, and has proved by its deeds, that we are prepared to perish to a man rather than yield our territory, rather than yield our principle, the principle of discipline and firm policy, for the sake of which everything else must be sacrificed. At the time when the capitalist countries and the capitalist class are disintegrating, at this moment of crisis and despair, this political factor is the only decisive one. Talk about minority and majority, about democracy and freedom decides nothing, however much the heroes of a past historical period may invoke them. It is the class-consciousness and firmness of the working class that count here. If the working class is prepared to make sacrifices, if it shows that it is able to strain every nerve, the problem will be solved. Everything must be directed to the solution of this problem. The determination of the working class, its inflexible adherence to the watchword "Death rather than surrender!" is not only a historical factor, it is the decisive, the winning factor.

We are now going over from this victory and this conviction to problems of peaceful economic development, the solution of which is the chief function of our Congress. In this respect we cannot, in my opinion, speak of a report of the Political Bureau of the Central Committee, or, rather, of a political report of the Central Committee. We must say frankly and bluntly that this, comrades, is a question which you must decide, which you must weigh with all your authority as the supreme Party body. We have laid the question before you quite clearly. We have taken up a definite stand. It is your duty finally to endorse, correct or amend our decision. But in its report the Central Committee must say that on this fundamental and urgent question it has adopted an absolutely definite stand. Yes, the thing now is to apply to the peaceful work of economic development, to the restoration of our shattered industry, everything that can weld the proletariat into an absolute unity. Here we need the iron discipline, the iron system, without which we could not have held on for two months, let alone over two years. We must be able to utilise our success. On the other hand, it must be realised that this transition will demand many sacrifices, of which the country has already made so many.

On the principle involved the Central Committee was quite clear. Our activities were entirely governed by this policy and conducted in this spirit. Take, for example, the question of corporate management versus individual management, which you will have to settle—a question which may appear to be a subsidiary one, and which in itself, if torn from its context, cannot of course claim to be a fundamental question of principle. This question should be examined only from the point of view of our basic knowledge, experience and revolutionary practice. For instance, we are told that “corporate management is one of the forms in which the masses participate in the work of administration”. But we on the Central Committee discussed this question and took our decision, which we have to report to you—comrades, such theoretical confusion cannot be tolerated. Had we permitted a tenth part of this theoretical confusion in the fundamental question of our military activities, of our Civil War, we would have been beaten, and would have deserved to be beaten.

Permit me, comrades, in connection with the report of the Central Committee and with this question of whether the new class should participate in the work of administration on a corporate or an individual basis, to introduce a little bit of theory, to point out how a class governs and what class domination actually is. After all, we are not novices in these matters, and what distinguishes our revolution from former revolutions is that there is nothing utopian about it. The new class, having replaced the old class, can maintain itself only by a desperate struggle against other classes; and it will finally triumph only if it can bring about the abolition of classes in general. That is what the vast and complex process of the class struggle demands; otherwise you will sink into a morass of confusion. What is class domination? In what way did the bourgeoisie dominate over the feudal lords? The Constitution spoke of freedom and equality. That was a lie. As long as there are working men, property-owners are in a position to profiteer, and indeed, as property-owners, are compelled to profiteer. We declare that there is no equality, that the well-fed man is not the equal of the hungry man, that the profiteer is not the equal of the working man.

How is class domination expressed today? The domination of the proletariat consists in the fact that the landowners and capitalists have been deprived of their property. The spirit and basic idea of all previous constitutions, even the most republican and democratic, amounted to one thing—property. Our Constitution has the right, has won itself the right, to a place in history by virtue of the fact that the abolition of property is not confined to a paper declaration. The victorious proletariat has abolished property, has completely annulled it—and therein lies its domination as a class. The prime thing is the question of property. As soon as the question of property was settled practically, the domination of the class was assured. When, after that, the Constitution recorded on paper what had been actually effected, namely, the abolition of capitalist and landed property, and added that under the Constitution the working class enjoys more rights than the peasantry, while exploiters have no rights whatever—that was a record of the fact that we had established the domination of our class, thereby binding to ourselves all sections and all small groups of working people.

The petty-bourgeois property-owners are disunited; those who have more property are the enemies of those who have less property; and the proletarians, by abolishing property, have declared open war on them. There are still many unenlightened and ignorant people who are wholly in favour of any kind of freedom of trade, but who cannot fight when they see the discipline and self-sacrifice displayed in securing victory over the exploiters; they are not with us, but are powerless to come out against us. It is only the domination of a class that determines property relations and which class is to be on top. Those who, as we so frequently observe, associate the question of the nature of class domination with the question of democratic centralism create such confusion that all successful work on this basis becomes impossible. Clarity in propaganda and agitation is a fundamental condition. When our enemies said and admitted that we had performed miracles in developing agitation and propaganda, that was not to be understood in the superficial sense that we had large numbers of agitators and used up large quantities of paper, but in the intrinsic sense that the truth

contained in that propaganda penetrated to the minds of all; there is no escaping from that truth.

Whenever classes displaced each other, they changed property relations. When the bourgeoisie superseded the feudals, it changed property relations; the Constitution of the bourgeoisie says: "The man of property is the equal of the beggar." That was bourgeois freedom. This kind of "equality" ensured the domination of the capitalist class in the state. But do you think that when the bourgeoisie superseded the feudals they confused the state with the administration? No, they were no such fools. They declared that the work of administration required people who knew how to administer, and that they would adapt feudal administrators for that purpose. And that is what they did. Was it a mistake? No, comrades, the art of administration does not descend from heaven, it is not inspired by the Holy Ghost. And the fact that a class is the leading class does not make it at once capable of administering. We have an example of this: while the bourgeoisie were establishing their victory they took for the work of administration members of another class, the feudal class; there was nowhere else to get them from. We must be sober and face the facts. The bourgeoisie had recourse to the old class; and we, too, are now confronted with the task of taking the knowledge and training of the old class, subordinating it to our needs, and using it all for the success of our class. We, therefore, say that the victorious class must be mature, and maturity is attested not by a document or certificate, but by experience and practice.

When the bourgeoisie triumphed, they did not know how to administer; and they made sure of their victory by proclaiming a new constitution and by recruiting, enlisting administrators from their own class and training them, utilising for this purpose administrators of the old class. They began to train their own new administrators, fitting them for the work with the help of the whole machinery of state; they sequestered the feudal institutions and admitted only the wealthy to the schools; and in this way, in the course of many years and decades, they trained administrators from their own class. Today, in a state which is constructed on the pattern and in the image of the dominant class, we must act as every state has acted. If we do not want to be guilty

of sheer utopianism and meaningless phrase-mongering, we must say that we must take into account the experience of the past; that we must safeguard the Constitution won by the revolution, but that for the work of administration, of organising the state, we need people who are versed in the art of administration, who have state and business experience, and that there is nowhere we can turn to for such people except the old class.

Opinions on corporate management are all too frequently imbued with a spirit of sheer ignorance, a spirit of opposition to the specialists. We shall never succeed with such a spirit. In order to succeed we must understand the history of the old bourgeois world in all its profundity; and in order to build communism we must take technology and science and make them available to wider circles. And we can take them only from the bourgeoisie—there is nowhere else to get them from. Prominence must be given to this fundamental question, it must be treated as one of the basic problems of economic development. We have to administer with the help of people belonging to the class we have overthrown; they are imbued with the prejudices of their class and we must re-educate them. At the same time we must recruit our own administrators from our own class. We must use the entire machinery of state to put the schools, adult education, and all practical training at the service of the proletarians, the factory workers and the labouring peasants, under the guidance of the Communists.

That is the only way to get things going. After our two years' experience we cannot argue as though we were only just setting about the work of socialist construction. We committed follies enough in and around the Smolny period. That is nothing to be ashamed of. How were we to know, seeing that we were undertaking something absolutely new? We first tried one way, then another. We swam with the current, because it was impossible to distinguish the right from the wrong; that requires time. Now that is all a matter of the recent past, which we have got beyond. That past, in which chaos and enthusiasm prevailed, is now over. One document from that past is the Treaty of Brest-Litovsk. It is a historic document—more, it was a period of history. The Treaty of Brest-Litovsk was forced upon us because we were

helpless in every way. What sort of period was it? It was a period of impotence, from which we emerged victorious. It was a period in which corporate management was universal. You cannot escape that historical fact by declaring that corporate management is a school of administration. You cannot stay for ever in the preparatory class of a school! (*Applause.*) That will not do. We are grown-up now, and we shall be beaten and beaten again in every field if we behave like schoolboys. We must push forward. We must push higher with energy and unanimity of will. Tremendous difficulties face the trade unions. We must get them to regard this task in the spirit of the fight against the survivals of the celebrated democracy. All these outcries against appointees, all this old and dangerous rubbish which finds its way into various resolutions and conversations must be swept away. Otherwise we cannot succeed. If we have failed to master this lesson in these two years, we are lagging, and those who lag, get beaten.

The task is an extremely difficult one. Our trade unions have been of tremendous assistance in building the proletarian state. They were a link between the Party and the unenlightened millions. Let us not close our eyes to the fact that the trade unions bore the brunt of the struggle against all our troubles when the state needed help in food work. Was this not a tremendous task? The recent issue of the *Bulletin of the Central Statistical Board* contains summaries by statisticians who certainly cannot be suspected of Bolshevism. Two interesting figures are given: in 1918 and 1919 the workers in the consuming gubernias received seven poods a year, while the peasants in the producing gubernias consumed seventeen poods a year. Before the war they used to consume sixteen poods a year. There you have two figures illustrating the relation of classes in the struggle for food. The proletariat continued to make sacrifices. People shout about coercion! But the proletariat justified and legitimated coercion; it justified it by making the greatest sacrifices. The majority of the population, the peasants of the producing gubernias of our starving and impoverished Russia, for the first time had more food than throughout the centuries of tsarist and capitalist Russia. And we say that the masses will go on starving until the Red Army is victo-

rious. The vanguard of the working class had to make this sacrifice. This struggle is a school; but when we leave this school we must go forward. This step must now be taken at all costs. Like all trade unions, the old trade unions have a history and a past. In the past they were organs of resistance to those who oppressed labour, to capitalism. But now that their class has become the governing class, and is being called upon to make great sacrifices, to starve and to perish, the situation has changed.

Not everybody understands this change, not everybody grasps its significance. And certain Mensheviks and Socialist-Revolutionaries who are demanding that corporate management be substituted for individual management have helped us in this matter. No, comrades, that won't work! We have got beyond that. We are now faced with a very difficult task; having gained victory on the bloody front, we must now gain victory on the bloodless front. This war is a more difficult one. This front is the most arduous. We say this frankly to all class-conscious workers. The war which we have withstood at the front must be followed by a bloodless war. The fact is that the more we were victorious, the more regions we secured like Siberia, the Ukraine and the Kuban. In those regions there are rich peasants; there are no proletarians, and what proletariat there is, has been corrupted by petty-bourgeois habits. We know that everybody who has a piece of land in those parts says: "A fig for the government, I'll get all I can out of the starving. A fat lot I care for the government." The peasant profiteer who, when left to the tender mercies of Denikin, was swinging towards us will now be aided by the Entente. The war has changed its front and its forms. It is now taking the form of trade, of food profiteering, which it has made international. In Comrade Kamenev's theses published in the *Bulletin of the C.C., R.C.P.(B.)* the underlying principles are stated fully. They want to make food profiteering international. They want to turn peaceful economic development into the peaceful disintegration of Soviet power. No you don't, my imperialist gentlemen! We are on our guard. We declare: we have fought and won, and we shall therefore retain as our basic slogan the one which helped us to victory; we shall fully preserve that slogan and apply it to the field of labour.

That slogan is the firmness and unity of will of the proletariat. The old prejudices, the old habits that still remain, must be discarded.

I should like, in conclusion, to dwell on Comrade Gusev's pamphlet,* which in my opinion deserves attention for two reasons. It is a good pamphlet not only from the formal standpoint, not only because it has been written for our Congress. Somehow, up to now we have all been accustomed to writing resolutions. They say that all literature is good except tedious literature. Resolutions, I take it, should be classed as tedious literature. It would be better if we followed Comrade Gusev's example and wrote fewer resolutions and more pamphlets, even though they bristled with errors as his does. The pamphlet is good in spite of these errors, because it centres attention on a fundamental economic plan for the restoration of industry and production throughout the country, and because it subordinates everything to this fundamental economic plan. The Central Committee has introduced into the theses distributed today a whole paragraph taken entirely from Comrade Gusev's theses. This fundamental economic plan can be worked out in greater detail with the help of experts. We must remember that the plan is designed for many years to come. We do not promise to deliver the country from hunger all at once. We say that the struggle will be much harder than the one on the war front. But it is a struggle that interests us more; it brings us nearer to our immediate and main tasks. It demands that maximum exertion of effort and that unity of will which we have displayed before and must display now. If we accomplish this, we shall gain no less a victory on the bloodless front than on the front of civil war. (*Applause.*)

* S. I. Gusev, *Immediate Problems of Economic Development (On C.C., R.C.P.[B.] Theses. Materials for the Ninth Party Congress, 1920).*—Ed.

**Reply to the Discussion on the Report
of the Central Committee
March 30**

Comrades, the part of the political report of the Central Committee which evoked chief attack was the one Comrade Saprionov called vituperation. Comrade Saprionov lent a very definite character and flavour to the position he defended; and in order to show you how matters actually stand, I would like to begin by reminding you of certain basic dates. Here I have before me *Bulletin of the C.C., R.C.P.(B.)* for March 2 in which we printed a letter from the Central Committee to R.C.P. organisations on the subject of the organisation of the Congress. And in this first letter we said: "Happily, the time for purely theoretical discussions, disputes over general questions and the adoption of resolutions on principles has passed. That stage is over; it was dealt with and settled yesterday and the day before yesterday. We must march ahead, and we must realise that we are now confronted by a *practical task*, the *business* task of rapidly overcoming economic chaos, and we must do it with all our strength, with truly revolutionary energy, and with the same devotion with which our finest worker and peasant comrades, the Red Army men, defeated Kolchak, Yudenich and Denikin."

I must confess that I was guilty of optimism in thinking that the time of theoretical discussions had passed. We had theorised for fifteen years before the revolution, we had been administering the state for two years, and it was about time we displayed practical, business-like efficiency; and so, on March 2 we appealed to comrades with practical expe-

rience. In reply, Tomsky's theses were published in *Ekonomicheskaya Zhizn* on March 10, the theses of Comrades Sapronov, Osinsky and Maximovsky on March 23, and on March 27 the theses of the Moscow Gubernia Committee appeared—that is, all after our appeal to the Party. And in all the theses the question was treated wrongly from the theoretical standpoint. The view we expressed in the letter was optimistic, mistaken; it had seemed to us that this period had already passed, but the theses showed that it had not yet passed, and the comrades from the trade unions have no right to complain of having been treated unfairly. The question now is, which is right—our view, or the position advocated after our appeal of March 2 by all these theses? All of them contain a lot of practical material to which attention must be given. If the Central Committee did not give it serious attention, it would be an absolutely worthless institution.

But listen to what Comrade Tomsky says.

“§ 7. The basic structural principle of the regulation and management of industry, the only one that can ensure the participation of broad masses of non-party workers through the trade unions, is the existing principle of corporate management of industry, from the Presidium of the Supreme Economic Council down to the factory managements. Only in special cases, and by mutual agreement between the Presidiums of the Supreme Economic Council and the All-Russia Central Trade Union Council, or the Central Committees of the trade unions concerned, should one-man management be permitted in certain enterprises, but only on the obligatory condition that control be exercised over the administrators by the trade unions and their bodies.

“§ 8. To ensure a single plan of economic development and co-ordination of the activities of the trade unions and the economic bodies, the participation of the trade unions in the management and regulation of industry should be based on the following principles: (a) general questions of economic policy shall be discussed by the Supreme Economic Council and its organs with the participation of the trade unions; (b) the directing economic collegiums shall be formed by the Supreme Economic Council and its organs in conjunction with the relevant trade union bodies; (c) the collegiums of economic bodies, while discussing general questions of the economic policy of any branch of production in conjunction with the trade unions and furnishing them with periodical reports on their activities, shall be regarded as organs of the Supreme Economic Council only, and shall be obliged to carry out the decisions only of that body; (d) all collegiums of economic bodies shall unreservedly carry out the decisions of the higher organs of the Supreme Economic Council, individually and corporately, and be accountable for their fulfilment only to the Supreme Economic Council.”

Here the most elementary theoretical questions are terribly muddled.

It is true that management is the job of the individual administrator; but who exactly that administrator will be—an expert or a worker—will depend on how many administrators we have of the old and the new type. That is elementary theory. Well, then, let us talk about that. But if you want to discuss the political line of the Central Committee, do not attribute to us things we did not suggest and did not say. On March 2 we appealed to the comrades to give us practical support, and what did we get in reply? From the comrades in the localities we got in reply things that are obviously wrong from the theoretical standpoint. The theses of Comrades Osinsky, Maximovsky and Sapronov that appeared on March 23 contain nothing but theoretical blunders. They say that corporate management in one form or another is an indispensable basis of democracy. I assert that you will find nothing like it in the fifteen years' pre-revolutionary history of the Social-Democratic movement. Democratic centralism means only that representatives from the localities get together and elect a responsible body, which is to do the administering. But how? That depends on how many suitable people, how many good administrators are available. Democratic centralism means that the congress supervises the work of the Central Committee, and can remove it and appoint another in its place. But if we were to go into the theoretical errors contained in these theses, we should never be done. I personally will not deal with this any more, and will only say that the Central Committee adopted the only line that could be adopted on this question. I know very well that Comrade Osinsky and the others do not share the views of Makhno and Makhaisky, but Makhno's followers are bound to seize upon their arguments. They are connected with them. Take the theses of the Moscow Gubernia Committee of the Party that we have been given. It says there that in a developed socialist society, where there will be no social division of labour or fixed professions, the periodical replacement of people performing administrative functions in rotation will be possible only on the basis of a broad corporate principle, and so on and so forth. This is a sheer muddle!

We appealed to the experienced people in the localities to help us with their practical advice. Instead, we are told that the Central Committee ignores the localities. What does it ignore? Dissertations on socialist society? There is not a trace of anything practical or business-like here. Of course, we have some splendid workers, who are borrowing a lot from the intelligentsia; but sometimes they borrow the worst, not the best. Then something has to be done about it. But if in reply to an appeal of the Central Committee for practical advice you bring up questions of principle, we have to talk about those questions. We have to say that errors of principle must be combated. And the theses published since March 2 contain preposterous errors of principle.

That is what I affirm. Well, let us talk about that and argue it out. Don't try to evade it! It is not use claiming that you are not theoreticians. Pardon me, Comrade Sapronov, your theses are the theses of a theoretician. You would see if they were put into practice that you would have to turn back and settle questions in an unbusiness-like manner. Anybody who tried to take the theses of Comrades Maximovsky, Sapronov and Tomsky as practical guidance, would be profoundly mistaken; they are fundamentally wrong. I consider that their idea of the attitude of the class to the structure of the state is fundamentally wrong and would drag us back. Naturally, it is backed by all the elements who are lagging behind and have not yet got beyond all this. And the authors of these theses are to be blamed not for deliberately advocating inefficiency, but for their theoretical mistake on the question the Central Committee asked them to discuss, a mistake which in a way provides a banner, a justification, for the worst elements. And why? From want of thought. Authentic documents prove this beyond all doubt.

I now pass to the accusation made by Comrade Yurenev in connection with Comrade Shlyapnikov. If the Central Committee had removed Comrade Shlyapnikov, as a representative of the opposition, just before the Congress, that certainly would have been infamous. When we had established that Comrade Shlyapnikov was leaving, we said in the Political Bureau that we were not giving him any instructions before his departure; and on the eve of his departure Comrade Shlyapnikov came to me and said that he

was not going on the instructions of the Central Committee. And so Comrade Yurenev simply heard a rumour and is now spreading it. (*Yurenev*: "Shlyapnikov told me so himself. . . .")

I do not know how he could have told you so himself, seeing that he came to me before he left and said that he was not going on the instructions of the Central Committee. Yes, of course, if the Central Committee had banished the opposition before the Congress that would have been an unpardonable thing. But, in general, when there is talk about banishing people, I say: "Well, then, just try to elect a Central Committee which could distribute forces properly without giving any cause for complaint." How can forces be distributed so that everybody is satisfied? If forces are not distributed, how can you talk about centralism? And if there were distortions of principles, let us have instances. If you say that we banished representatives of the opposition, give us an instance, and we shall examine it, for there may have been mistakes. Perhaps Comrade Yurenev, who complained to the Political Bureau of having been wrongfully withdrawn from the Western Front—perhaps he was banished? The Political Bureau examined the matter and found it correct. And whatever Central Committee you elected, it would have to distribute its forces.

Further, as regards the division of business between the Organising Bureau and the Political Bureau. Comrade Maximovsky is more experienced in matters of organisation than I am, and he says that Lenin is mixing Organising Bureau and Political Bureau questions. Well, let us see. In our opinion, the Organising Bureau should distribute forces and the Political Bureau deal with policy. If such a division is wrong, how are the functions of these two bodies to be divided? Do you want us to write a constitution? It is difficult to draw a hard and fast line between the Political Bureau and the Organising Bureau, to delimit their functions precisely. Any question may become a political one, even the appointment of the superintendent of a building. If anyone has any other solution to suggest, please let us have it. Comrades Saponov, Maximovsky and Yurenev, let us have your proposals; just try to divide, to delimit the Organising Bureau and the Political Bureau. As we have it, the protest

of a single member of the Central Committee is enough for us to treat the question as a political one. Yet in all this time there has not been a single protest. Independence is not hampered in any way: any member of the Central Committee may declare a question to be a political one. And anybody who has any practical experience in organisation, even if he is not as competent as Comrade Maximovsky, even if he has worked in this field only six months, ought to have made a different sort of criticism from the one Comrade Maximovsky made. Let the critics make definite recommendations. We shall accept them, and advise the election of a new Central Committee, which will carry out these recommendations. But all we have had is abstract criticism and false assertions.

Let us suppose you keep the Organising Bureau away from political leadership. What, then, I ask, will political leadership amount to? Who does the leading, if not people? And how can you lead except by distributing forces? How can you compel a man to carry out instructions if he is incompetent? He is given certain instructions, his work is checked, and finally he is put on another job. What more must we do to bring this home to Comrades Maximovsky, Saprionov and Osinsky, who in their theses propose a theoretical amendment that was rejected long ago? What they are doing in practice is even worse, and they are making it quite clear that they have no material for serious criticism.

Comrade Saprionov had a good deal to say about oligarchy and independent initiative. It is a pity he did not illustrate his points with examples from the Ukraine, where it is clear what kind of attacks the local conferences made against oligarchy. The Congress will examine this question or entrust such an examination to the Central Committee. But with regard to the Ukrainian conference, at which the majority headed by Saprionov spoke out against Comrade Rakovsky subjecting him to impermissible baiting, I would point out that we do not recognise this resolution of the regional conference. This is a Central Committee decision. If it is an incorrect one, demand that we substantiate it, but do not indulge in phrase-mongering, for there are knowledgeable people here and they would say that is demagoguery. If we are mistaken in our assessment of the Ukrainian split, then give

factual proof to the effect that the Central Committee has made a mistake.

I say that we do not recognise Comrade Sapronov's conference and we appoint two old and two new comrades, Comrade Zh. . . and the Borotbists.* I have not heard a single protest either from Comrade Sapronov, or from the others, nor have I heard a single argument of any weight. If we had broken up the Ukrainian conference and put a stop to it, then they would need to sound the alarm and say that we were criminals. Meanwhile they all keep silent, because they are aware that those phrases about independent initiative, etc., merely served to hide and disguise all the disruptive elements that smack of philistine and ataman practices which are very strong in the Ukraine. (*Applause.*)

I heard one practical point in Comrade Sapronov's speech and jumped at it. Comrade Sapronov said: "The Seventh Congress of Soviets gave a ruling, and we are violating it; the decree on requisitioning flax is an infringement of the decision of the All-Russia Central Executive Committee." I cannot remember even a tenth of the decrees we pass. But I made inquiries in the Secretariat of the Council of People's Commissars about the regulations governing flax procurements. The decree was passed on February 10. And what has happened? There is not a comrade, whether on the Political Bureau or on the All-Russia Central Executive Committee, who is opposed to independent initiative. We have seen them all here on this platform. Comrades know that they can speak for themselves. Why did they not appeal against this decision? Let us have your complaints! There was no such complaint after February 10. After a long fight, we adopted this decision, which was proposed by Comrade Rykov and agreed to by Comrade Sereda and the People's Commissariat of Food. "You have made a mistake!" we are told. Perhaps we have. Correct us. Submit this question to the Political Bureau. That will be a formal decision. Let us have the minutes. If they show that we have violated a decision of the

* *Borotbists*—members of a petty-bourgeois nationalist Ukrainian party formed in May 1918. The party took its name from its central organ, the newspaper *Borotba* (Struggle).—*Ed.*

Congress, we ought to be put on trial. Where is the charge? On the one hand, they reproach us on account of Shlyapnikov; on the other, they say that the flax business was a violation of a decision. Be good enough to bring facts to show that we violated the decision. But you do not bring any facts. All your words are mere words: initiative, appointments, and so on. Why then have centralism? Could we have held out for even two months if we had made no appointments during this period, during these two years when in various places we passed from complete exhaustion and disruption to victory again? Just because you are displeased with the recall of Comrade Shlyapnikov or Comrade Yurenev, you fling these words among the crowd, among the unenlightened masses. Comrade Lutovinov says that the question has not been settled. It will have to be settled. If two people's commissars differ in their opinion of Ivan Ivanovich, and one says that a question of policy is involved, what is to be done? What method do you propose? Do you think that it is only in the Presidium of the All-Russia Central Executive Committee that tedious questions arise? Let me tell you that there is not a single institution where tedious questions do not arise, and we all have to deal with questions of Maria Ivanovna and Sidor Ivanovich. But you cannot say that no politics are involved here, for politics fill all minds. Comrade Lutovinov had—I do not know how to put it; I fear to offend Comrade Sapronov's delicate ear and I shrink from using a polemical expression—but he said that Comrade Krestinsky threatened to bring about a split. A meeting of the Bureau was held on the subject. We have the minutes of the Bureau, and I would ask all the Congress delegates to take these minutes and read them. We came to the conclusion that Comrade Krestinsky was hot-headed and that you, Comrade Lutovinov and Comrade Tomsky, had raised a very malodorous scandal. Perhaps we were wrong—then correct our decision; but it is preposterous to say what you said, without having read the documents and without mentioning that there was a special meeting and that the matter was investigated in the presence of Tomsky and Lutovinov.

There are two other points I still have to deal with. First, the appointment of Comrades Bukharin and Radek. It is

said that we sent them to the All-Russia Central Trade Union Council as political commissars, and the attempt is being made here to represent this as a violation of independence, as bureaucracy. Perhaps you know better theoreticians than Radek and Bukharin. Then by all means let us have them. Perhaps you know people better acquainted with the trade union movement. Let us have them. Do you mean to say that the Central Committee has no right to reinforce a trade union with people who have the best theoretical knowledge of the trade union movement, who are acquainted with the experience of the Germans, and who can counteract an incorrect line? A Central Committee which did not do that could not be a directing body. The more we are surrounded by peasants and Kuban Cossacks the more difficulties we have with the proletarian dictatorship. Therefore the line must be straightened out at all costs and made as hard as steel, and this is the line we recommend to the Party Congress.

Comrade Bubnov told us here that he has close connections with the Ukraine and thereby betrayed the true character of his objections. He said that the Central Committee is responsible for the growing strength of the *Borotba* Party. This is a very complex and important issue, and I think in this important issue, which demanded manoeuvring, and very complex manoeuvring at that, we emerged victorious. When we said in the Central Committee that the maximum concessions should be made to the Borotbists, we were laughed at and told that we were not following a straight line. But you can fight in a straight line when the enemy's line is straight. But when the enemy moves in zigzags, and not in a straight line, we have to follow him and catch him at every turn. We promised the maximum concessions to the Borotbists, but on condition that they pursued a communist policy. In this way we showed that we are in no way intolerant. And that these concessions were made quite rightly is shown by the fact that all the best elements among the Borotbists have now joined our Party. We have carried out a re-registration of this party, and instead of a revolt of the Borotbists, which seemed inevitable, we find that, thanks to the correct policy of the Central Committee, which was carried out so splendidly by Comrade Rakovsky, all the best

elements among the Borotbists have joined our Party under our control and with our recognition, while all the rest have disappeared from the political scene. This victory was worth a couple of good tussles. So anybody who says that the Central Committee is guilty of strengthening the Borotbists does not understand the political line on the national question.

I shall just touch on the speech of the last comrade, who said that everything in the programme about the trade unions should be deleted. There you have an example of hastiness. We don't do things so simply. We say that nothing should be deleted, that the question should be discussed in pamphlets, articles in the press, and so on. The trade unions are heading for the time when they will take economic life, namely industry, into their hands. The talk about not admitting bourgeois specialists into the trade unions is a prejudice. The trade unions are educational bodies, and strict demands must be made on them. The Central Committee will not tolerate bad educators. Education is a long and difficult business. A decree is not enough here; patient and skilful handling is required. And that is what we are aiming at and will continue to aim at. It is a matter in which we must be cautious but firm.

Speech on Economic Development

March 31

Comrades, first two brief remarks. Comrade Saprnov continued to accuse me of forgetfulness, but the question he raised he left unexplained. He continued to assure us that the flax requisitioning decree is a violation of the decision of the All-Russia Central Executive Committee. I maintain that you cannot hurl unsupported accusations, very serious accusations, at a Party Congress in that way. Of course, if the Council of People's Commissars has violated a decision of the All-Russia Central Executive Committee it should be put on trial. But how is it that from February 10 to this day no complaint has been received that this decree is a violation? All we get is an absolutely unsupported accusation of the sort that are handed out easily enough, but such methods of fighting are not to be taken seriously.

Comrade Milyutin says that there are practically no points of difference between us, and that therefore it looks as if Lenin opposes squabbling and himself provokes this squabble. But Comrade Milyutin is distorting things somewhat, which he ought not to do. The first draft of the resolution, compiled by Comrade Trotsky, was then edited corporately in the Central Committee. We sent this draft to Comrades Milyutin and Rykov. They returned it with the statement that they would give battle on it. This is what actually happened. After we had developed agitation and obtained allies, they organised an all-round opposition at the Congress; and it was only when they saw that nothing would come of it that they began to say they were almost in agreement. That is so, of course; but you must carry it through

to the end and admit that your agreement means that you failed completely after the opposition came forward here and tried to consolidate itself on the issue of corporate management. Only after Comrade Milyutin had spoken for fifteen minutes, and his time was up, did it occur to him that it would be well to put the matter on a practical footing. He was quite right there. But I am afraid it is too late: although Comrade Rykov has still to close the discussion, the opposition cannot be saved. If the advocates of corporate management had during the past two months practised what they preached, if they had given us even a single example—not by saying there is a certain director and an assistant, but by an inquiry promoting a detailed investigation of the problem, comparing corporate management with individual management, as was decided by the Congress of Economic Councils and by the Central Committee—we would have been much the wiser; at the Congress we would then have had something more than not very relevant discussions of principle, and the advocates of corporate management might have furthered matters. Their position would have been a strong one if they could have produced even ten factories with similar conditions managed on the corporate principle and compared them in a practical manner with the state of affairs in factories with similar conditions, but managed on the individual principle. We could have allowed any speaker an hour for such a report, and he would have furthered matters considerably. We might perhaps have established practical gradations in this question of corporate management. But the whole point is that none of them, neither the Economic Council members nor the trade unionists, who should have had practical data at their disposal, gave us anything, because they had nothing to give. They have nothing, absolutely nothing!

Comrade Rykov objected here that I want to remake the French Revolution, that I deny that the bourgeoisie grew up within the feudal system. That is not what I said. What I said was that when the bourgeoisie replaced the feudal system they took the feudal lords and learned from them how to administer; and this in no way contradicts the fact that the bourgeoisie grew up within the feudal system. And as for my thesis that, after it has seized power, the working

class begins to put its principles into effect, nobody, absolutely nobody, has refuted it. After it has seized power, the working class maintains it, preserves it and consolidates it as every other class does, namely, by a change of property relations and by a new constitution. That is my first and fundamental thesis; and it is incontrovertible. My second thesis that every new class learns from its predecessor and takes over administrators from the old class, is also an absolute truth. And, lastly, my third thesis is that the working class must increase the number of administrators from its own ranks, establish schools, and train executives on a nation-wide scale. These three theses are indisputable, and they fundamentally contradict the theses of the trade unions.

At the meeting of the group, when we examined their theses, and when Comrade Bukharin and I were defeated,* I told Comrade Tomsky that article 7 in the theses is the result of complete theoretical confusion. It says:

"The basic structural principle of the regulation and management of industry, the only one that can ensure the participation of broad masses of non-party workers through the trade unions, is the existing principle of corporate management of industry, from the Presidium of the Supreme Economic Council down to the factory managements. Only in special cases, and by mutual agreement between the Presidiums of the Supreme Economic Council and the All-Russia Central Trade Union Council, or the Central Committees of the trade unions concerned, should one-man management be permitted in certain enterprises, but only on the obligatory condition that control be exercised over the administrators by the trade unions and their bodies."

This is sheer nonsense, because everything—the role of the working class in winning state power, the interrelation of methods—everything is muddled! Such things cannot be tolerated! Such things drag us back theoretically. The same must be said of the democratic centralism of Comrades Saporonov, Maximovsky and Osinsky. Comrade Osinsky forgets that when he comes forward and claims that I call democratic centralism nonsense. You cannot distort things in that

* Lenin refers here to the meeting of the group of the All-Russia Central Trade Union Council on March 15, 1920, at which Tomsky's theses on the "Tasks of the Trade Unions" were discussed. Lenin sharply criticised the theses, particularly article 7 on corporate management as the main method. However, the All-Russia Central T.U.C. group took up an incorrect stand, the majority voting for Tomsky's theses.—*Ed.*

way! What has the question of appointments, of endorsement by local organisations, got to do with it? You can have things endorsed by collegiums and you can also appoint collegiums. That has nothing to do with the case. They say that democratic centralism consists not only in the All-Russia Central Executive Committee ruling, but in the All-Russia Central Executive Committee ruling through the local organisations. What has corporate management or individual management got to do with it?

Comrade Trotsky recalled his report made in 1918 and, reading the speech he then made, pointed out that at that time not only did we argue about fundamental questions but a definite decision was taken by the All-Russia Central Executive Committee. I dug up my old pamphlet *The Immediate Tasks of the Soviet Government*, which I had completely forgotten, and find that the question of individual management was not only raised but even approved in the theses of the All-Russia Central Executive Committee. We work in such a way that we forget not only what we ourselves have written but even what has been decided by the All-Russia Central Executive Committee, and subsequently dig up these decisions. Here are some passages from this pamphlet.

"Those who deliberately (although most of them probably do not realise it) promote petty-bourgeois laxity would like to see in this granting of 'unlimited' (i.e., dictatorial) powers to individuals a departure from the collegiate principle, from democracy and from the principles of Soviet government. Here and there, among Left Socialist-Revolutionaries, a positively hooligan agitation, i.e., agitation appealing to the base instincts and to the small proprietor's urge to 'grab all he can', has been developed against the dictatorship decree. . . .*

"Large-scale machine industry—which is precisely the material source, the productive source, the foundation of socialism—calls for absolute and strict *unity of will*, which directs the joint labours of hundreds, thousands and tens of thousands of people. The technical, economic and histori-

* The Decree of the Council of People's Commissars "On Centralisation of Management, Protection of Roads and Raising Their Traffic Capacity" was demagogically called the "Decree on Dictatorship" by the Mensheviks and Socialist-Revolutionaries.—*Ed.*

cal necessity of this is obvious, and all those who have thought about socialism have always regarded it as one of the conditions of socialism"... this is the only way in which "strict unity of will can be ensured. . . .

"But be that as it may, *unquestioning subordination* to a single will is absolutely necessary for the success of processes organised on the pattern of large-scale machine industry. On the railways it is twice and three times as necessary. . . .

"And our whole task, the task of the Communist Party (Bolsheviks), which is the class-conscious vehicle of the strivings of the exploited for emancipation, is to appreciate this change, to understand that it is necessary, to stand at the head of the exhausted people who are wearily seeking a way out and lead them along the true path, along the path of labour discipline, along the path of co-ordinating the task of arguing at mass meetings *about* the conditions of work with the task of unquestioningly obeying the will of the Soviet leader, of the dictator, *during* the work. . . .

"It required precisely the October victory of the working people over the exploiters, it required a whole historical period in which the working people themselves could first of all discuss the new conditions of life and the new tasks, in order to make possible the durable transition to superior forms of labour discipline, to the conscious appreciation of the necessity for the dictatorship of the proletariat, to unquestioning obedience to the orders of individual representatives of the Soviet government during the work. . . .

"We must learn to combine the 'public meeting' democracy of the working people—turbulent, surging, overflowing its banks like a spring flood—with *iron* discipline while at work, with *unquestioning obedience* to the will of a single person, the Soviet leader, while at work."^{*}

On April 29, 1918, the All-Russia Central Executive Committee adopted a resolution fully endorsing the basic propositions set forth in this report and instructed its Presidium to recast them as theses representing the principal tasks of the Soviet government. We are thus reiterating what was approved two years ago in an official resolution of the All-

* See *Collected Works*, Vol. 27, pp. 267-71.—Ed.

Russia Central Executive Committee! And we are now being dragged back on a matter that was decided long ago, a matter which the All-Russia Central Executive Committee endorsed and explained, namely, that Soviet socialist democracy and individual management and dictatorship are in no way contradictory, and that the will of a class may sometimes be carried out by a dictator, who sometimes does more alone and is frequently more necessary. At any rate, the attitude towards the principles of corporate management and individual management was not only explained long ago, but was even endorsed by the All-Russia Central Executive Committee. In this connection our Congress is an illustration of the sad truth that instead of advancing from the explanation of questions of principle to concrete questions, we are advancing backward. Unless we get away from this mistake we shall never solve the economic problem.

I should also like to say a few words about certain remarks of Comrade Rykov's. He asserts that the Council of People's Commissars is putting obstacles in the way of the amalgamation of the commissariats running the economy. And when Comrade Rykov is told that he wants to swallow up Comrade Tsyurupa, he replies, "I don't care if it is Tsyurupa that swallows me up, as long as the economic commissariats are amalgamated." I know where this leads, and I must say that the attempt of the Supreme Economic Council to form a sort of separate bloc of the economic commissariats, separate from the Council of Defence and the Council of People's Commissars, did not pass unnoticed by the Central Committee, and met with disfavour. The Council of Defence has now been renamed the Council of Labour and Defence. You want to separate yourselves from the Commissariat of the Army, which is giving its best forces to the war and is an institution without which you cannot even carry out labour conscription. And we cannot carry out labour conscription without the People's Commissariat of Internal Affairs either. Take the post office; we cannot send a letter without the Commissariat of Posts and Telegraphs. Take the People's Commissariat of Health. How will you conduct the economy if seventy per cent are down with typhus? What it amounts to is that every matter must

be co-ordinated and referred to an economic commissariat. Is not such a plan absolutely absurd? Comrade Rykov had no serious argument. That is why it was opposed and the Central Committee did not support it.

Further, Comrade Rykov joked about a bloc with Comrade Holtzmann, which Comrade Trotsky seems to be forming. I should like to say a few words on this. A bloc is always needed between Party groups that are in the right. That should always be regarded as an essential condition for a correct policy. If Comrade Holtzmann, whom, I regret to say, I know very little, but of whom I have heard as a representative of a certain trend among the metalworkers, a trend that particularly insists on sensible methods—which I stress in my theses, too—if it is on these grounds that he insists on individual management, that, of course, can only be extremely useful. A bloc with this trend would be an exceedingly good thing. If the representation of the trade unions on the Central Committee is to be increased, it would be useful to have on it representatives of this trend too—though it may be wrong on certain points, it is at least original and has a definite shade of opinion of its own—side by side with the extremist champions of corporate management who are battling in the name of democracy but who are mistaken. Let them both be represented on the Central Committee—and you will have a bloc. Let the Central Committee be so constituted that, with the help of a bloc, a field of operation may be found that functions all the year round, and not only during the week a Party Congress is held. We have always rejected the principle of regional representation, because it leads to a lot of regional cliquism. When it is a question of closer fusion with the trade unions, of being alive to every shade of opinion in the trade unions, of maintaining contacts—it is essential for the Central Committee to be constituted in such a way as to have a transmission belt to the broad masses of the trade unions (we have 600,000 Party members and 3,000,000 trade union members) to connect the Central Committee simultaneously with the united will of the 600,000 Party members and the 3,000,000 trade union members. We cannot govern without such a transmission belt. The more we won back of Siberia, the Kuban area and the Ukraine, with their peasant population, the more

difficult the problem became, and the more laboriously the machine revolved, because in Siberia the proletariat is numerically small, and it is weaker in the Ukraine too. But we know that the Donets Basin and Nikolayev workers have bluntly refused to defend the semi-demagogic corporate principle into which Comrade Sapronov has lapsed. There can be no question but that the proletarian element in the Ukraine differs from the proletarian element in Petrograd, Moscow and Ivanovo-Voznesensk—not because it is no good, but for purely historical reasons. They did not have occasion to become so steeled by hunger, cold and strife as the proletarians of Moscow and Petrograd. We therefore need such a bond with the trade unions, such a form of organisation of the Central Committee, as would enable it to know every shade of opinion, not only among the 600,000 Party members, but also among the 3,000,000 trade union members, so that it may be able at any moment to lead them all as one man! Such an organisation is essential. That is the basic factor, the political factor without which the dictatorship of the proletariat will not be a dictatorship. If we are to have a bloc, let it be a real bloc! We should not be afraid of it, but should welcome it and practise it more vigorously and more extensively right in the central institutions of the Party.

Speech on the Co-operatives

April 3

It was only last night and today that I have had an opportunity of partially acquainting myself with the two resolutions. I think that the resolution of the minority of the commission is the more correct. Comrade Milyutin attacked it with a great battery of terrifying words: he discovered half-measures in it, even quarter-measures; he accused it of opportunism. But it seems to me that the devil is not as black as he is painted. If you get down to the root of the matter you will see that Comrade Milyutin, who tried to give the matter a basis in principle, showed by his own arguments that the resolution he advocated was incorrect and unsuitable specifically from the standpoint of practice and of Marxism. It is incorrect for the following reasons; Milyutin stated that his resolution, the resolution of the majority of the commission, advocated fusion with the volost executive committees, subordination to the volost executive committees, and that is why he sees in his resolution directness and decisiveness as compared with the insufficiently revolutionary character of the minority resolution. During the long course of our revolutionary campaign we have seen that whenever we made proper preparations for our revolutionary actions they were crowned with success; but that when they were merely imbued with revolutionary fervour they ended in failure.

What does the resolution of the minority of the commission say? The resolution of the minority says: direct your attention to intensifying communist work in the consumers' societies and to securing a majority within them; first make

ready the organs to which you want to hand them over, then you can hand them over. Compare this with the line pursued by Milyutin. He says: the co-operatives are no good, therefore hand them over to the volost executive committees. But have you a communist basis in the co-operatives you want to hand over? The essence of the matter—preparation—is ignored; only the ultimate slogan is given. If this communist work has been done, and organs have been set up to take them over and guide them, the transfer is quite natural, and there is no need to proclaim it at a Party congress. But have you not been threatening the peasants enough? Has not the Supreme Economic Council shaken its fist enough at the peasants and the co-operatives in the matter of the flax procurement? If you recall the practical experience of our work in the localities and in the Council of People's Commissars, you will admit that this is a wrong attitude to take, and that the right resolution is the one which declares that the work of communist education and the training of executives are necessary, for otherwise the transfer will be impossible.

The second question of cardinal importance is that of contacts with the consumers' co-operatives. Here Comrade Milyutin says something utterly inconsistent. If the consumers' co-operatives are not fulfilling all their assignments—which is what we have been saying for two years in a number of decrees directed against the kulaks—it must be remembered that government measures against the kulaks can also be applied against the co-operative societies. And this is being done in full. The most important thing at the moment is to increase production and the quantity of goods. If the consumers' co-operatives do not get this done, they will be punished for it. But if, owing to their connection with the producers' co-operatives, they give even a small increase of products, we must welcome it and foster the initiative. If the consumers' co-operatives, in spite of their closer, intimate local connections with production, do not show an increase, it will mean that they have not fulfilled the direct assignment of the Soviet government. If there are even two or three energetic comrades in a district who are prepared to combat the kulaks and the bourgeoisie, victory is assured. In what way was Comrade Chuchin's

initiative thwarted? He did not cite a single instance. But the idea that we must link up the producers' co-operatives with the consumers' co-operatives and agree to any concession that may increase the amount of products in the near future follows logically from our experience of the past two years. It in no way hampers either communist functionaries or Soviet officials in their war on the kulak co-operative, the bourgeois type of co-operative. Far from hampering them, it provides them with a new weapon. If you succeed in organising anything at all we shall give you a bonus; but if you do not fulfil this assignment we shall punish you, not only because you are counter-revolutionary—we have the Cheka for that, as was rightly pointed out here—no, we shall punish you for not fulfilling the assignment of the state, of the Soviet government and the proletariat.

Comrade Milyutin has not produced a single sound argument against amalgamating the consumers' co-operatives—all he said was that this seemed to him to be opportunism or a half-measure. This is strange coming from Comrade Milyutin, who, with Comrade Rykov, was prepared to make big strides, but discovered that he cannot even make a tenth of one stride. From this aspect, connections with the consumers' co-operatives will be an advantage; they will make it possible to tackle production immediately. All means are available to prevent interference in political matters; and as to obedience in the production and economic sphere, that depends entirely on the People's Commissariat of Agriculture and the Supreme Economic Council. These means are adequate for you to be able to control the co-operatives.

I now come to the third question, the question of nationalisation, which Milyutin advocated in a way that was strange to hear. A commission was set up. Comrade Krestinsky was in a minority on the commission and Comrade Milyutin was the victor. But now he says: "On the question of nationalisation I am prepared not to argue." Then what was the commission arguing about? If your standpoint is the same as Comrade Chuchin's you are wrong in renouncing nationalisation. It has been asked here why, if the capitalists have been nationalised, the kulaks cannot be nationalised too. It is not surprising that this argument

evoked hilarity. For however you count the well-to-do peasants, those who exploit the labour of others, you will find there are no less than half a million, perhaps even something like a million. How do you propose to nationalise them? It is fantastic. We have not the means for that as yet.

Comrade Chuchin is quite right when he says that there are a lot of counter-revolutionaries in the co-operatives. But that is a horse of another colour. What was said about the Cheka was quite in place here. If you are too shortsighted to expose individual leaders of the co-operatives, then just install one Communist to detect the counter-revolution; if he is a good Communist—and a good Communist has the qualities of a good member of the Cheka—he should, when assigned to a consumers' society, bag at least two counter-revolutionary co-operators.

That is why Comrade Chuchin is wrong when he advocates immediate nationalisation. It would be a good thing, but it is impossible, for we are dealing with a class which is least susceptible to our influence and which certainly cannot be nationalised. We have not even nationalised all the industrial enterprises. By the time an order of the chief administrations and central boards reaches the localities it becomes absolutely ineffective; it is completely lost in a sea of documents, because of lack of roads and telegraph, etc. It is therefore impossible to speak of the nationalisation of the co-operatives as yet. Comrade Milyutin is wrong in principle too. He feels that his position is weak and thinks that he can simply withdraw this point. But in that case, Comrade Milyutin, you are undermining your own resolution, you are issuing a certificate to the effect that the resolution of the minority is right; for the spirit of your resolution—to subordinate them to the volost executive committees (that is exactly what is said in the first clause—"take measures")—is a Cheka spirit, wrongly introduced into an economic issue. The other resolution says that the first thing to do is to increase the number of Communists, to intensify communist propaganda and agitation—that a basis must be created. There is nothing grandiloquent here, no immediate promises of a land flowing with milk and honey. But if there are Communists in the localities, they will know what has to be done, and there will be no need for Comrade

Chuchin to explain where counter-revolutionaries should be taken to. Secondly, an organ must be created. Create an organ and test it in action, check whether production is increasing—that is what the resolution of the minority says. First of all create a basis, and then—then we shall see. What has to be done will follow from this of itself. We have enough decrees saying that counter-revolutionaries should be handed over to the Cheka, and if there is no Cheka, to the Revolutionary Committee. We need less of this fist-shaking. We must adopt the resolution of the minority, which lays down a basic line of policy.

Speech Closing the Congress April 5

Comrades, in making a brief summary of the work of our Congress we must, in my opinion, first of all dwell upon the tasks of our Party. The Congress has adopted a detailed resolution on the question of organisation, and, as might have been expected, a very important place in that resolution is occupied by the question of the education, the training, the organisational deployment of the members of our Party. The Credentials Committee has reported that over 600,000 members of our Party are represented at this Congress. We are all fully aware of the tremendous difficulties the Party has had to cope with in these strenuous times, when measures had to be taken to prevent the worst elements, the offal of the old capitalist system, from seeping into the government party, from fastening themselves on to it—it is naturally an open party, for it is the government party, and as such opens the way to power. One of these measures was the institution of Party Weeks.* Under such conditions, at such moments, when the Party and the movement were in exceptionally trying situations, when Denikin

* *Party Weeks* were conducted in accordance with the decision of the Eighth Party Congress to enlarge Party membership. Late in September the Central Committee sent a circular to all Party organisations in which it stated that during Party Weeks only men and women workers, Red Army men, sailors and peasant men and women should be admitted to the Party. As a result, in 38 gubernias of the European part of the R.S.F.S.R. alone over 200,000 new members joined the Party, more than half of whom were workers. At the fronts up to 25 per cent of soldiers and sailors became members of the Party.—*Ed.*

stood north of Orel, and Yudenich within fifty versts of Petrograd, it was only people who were sincerely devoted to the cause of the emancipation of the working people who could have joined the Party.

Such conditions will not occur again, at least not in the near future, and it must be said that the huge membership (as compared with previous congresses) our Party has attained gives rise to a certain apprehension. And there is one very real danger, which is that the rapid growth of our Party has not always been commensurate with the extent to which we have educated this mass of people for the performance of the tasks of the moment. We must always bear in mind that this army of 600,000 must be the vanguard of the working class, and that we should scarcely have been able to carry out our tasks during these two years if it had not been for iron discipline. The basic condition for the maintenance and continuance of strict discipline is loyalty; all the old means and sources of discipline have ceased to exist, and we base our activities solely on a high degree of understanding and political consciousness. This has enabled us to achieve a discipline which is superior to that of any other state and which rests on a basis different from that of the discipline which is being maintained with difficulty, if it can be maintained at all, in capitalist society. We must therefore remember that our task in the coming year, after the brilliant successes achieved in the war, is not so much the growth of the Party as work inside the Party, the education of the membership of our Party. It is not for nothing that our resolutions on organisation devote as much space as possible to this question.

We must spare no effort to make this vanguard of the proletariat, this army of 600,000 members, capable of coping with the tasks that confront it. And it is confronted by tasks of gigantic international and internal importance. As to the international tasks, our international position has never been as good as it is now. News about the life of the workers abroad seldom reaches us, yet every time you receive a couple of letters or a few issues of European or American working-class socialist newspapers you experience real pleasure, because everywhere, in all parts of the world, you see among masses formerly entirely untouched by prop-

aganda, or steeped in wretched opportunism, in purely parliamentary socialism, a tremendous growth of interest in the Soviet power, in the new tasks, a growth much greater than we imagine; everywhere you see intense revolutionary movement, ferment, and revolution has become a current issue.

I had occasion yesterday to glance through an issue of the newspaper of the British Socialist Labour Party. The British workers, whose leaders were intellectuals and who for decades were distinguished by their contempt for theory, are talking in quite definite tones; and the paper shows that the British workers are now taking an interest in the question of revolution, that there is a growing interest in the fight against revisionism, opportunism, and parliamentary socialism, the social-treachery we have got to know so well. This struggle is becoming an issue of the day. We can say quite definitely that our American Comrade R., who has published a voluminous book containing a number of articles by Trotsky and myself, thus giving a summary of the history of the Russian revolution, was quite right when he said that the French Revolution was victorious on a world-wide scale, and that, if it was directly crushed, it was only because it was surrounded on the European continent by more backward countries, in which a movement of emulation, sympathy and support could not immediately arise. The Russian revolution, which, owing to the yoke of tsarism and a number of other factors (continuity with 1905, etc.), started before the others, is surrounded by countries which are on a higher level of capitalist development and are approaching the revolution more slowly, but more surely, durably and firmly. We find that with every year, and even with every month, the number of supporters and friends of the Soviet Republic is increasing tenfold, a hundredfold, a thousandfold in every capitalist country; and it must be said that we have more friends and allies than we imagine!

The attempt of world imperialism to crush us by military force has collapsed completely. The international situation has now given us a much longer and more durable respite than the one we had at the beginning of the revolution. But we must remember that this is nothing more than a

respite. We must remember that the whole capitalist world is armed to the teeth and is only waiting for the moment, choosing the best strategical conditions, and studying the means of attack. We must never under any circumstances forget that all the economic power and all the military power is still on its side. We are still weak on an international scale, but we are rapidly growing and gaining strength, wresting one weapon after another from the hands of the enemy. But the enemy is lurking in wait for the Soviet Republic at every step. International capital has definite designs, a calculated plan, now that the blockade has been removed, to unite, to fuse, to weld together international food speculation, international freedom of trade, with our own internal food speculation, and on the basis of this speculation to pave the way for a new war against us, to prepare a new series of traps and pitfalls.

And this brings us to that fundamental task which constituted the chief theme, the chief object of attention of our Congress. That is the task of development. In this respect the Congress has done a lot. A resolution has been unanimously adopted on the principal question, the question of economic development and transport. And now, by means of Party education, we shall be able to get this resolution carried into effect by the three million working-class members of the trade unions, acting as one man. We shall ensure that this resolution channels all our strength, discipline and energy to the restoration of the country's economic life—first of all to the restoration of the railways, and then to the improvement of the food situation.

We have now quite a number of subjects for propaganda, and every item of news we get from abroad and every new dozen members of the Party provide us with fresh material. Propaganda must be carried on systematically, without the dispersion and division of forces. We must bear firmly in mind that we achieved successes and performed miracles in the military sphere because we always concentrated on the main and fundamental thing, and solved problems in a way that capitalist society could not solve them. The point is that in capitalist society everything that particularly interests the citizens—their economic conditions, war and peace—is decided secretly, apart from

society itself. The most important questions—war, peace, diplomatic questions—are decided by a small handful of capitalists, who deceive not only the masses, but very often parliament itself. No parliament in the world has ever said anything of weight on the question of war and peace. In capitalist society the major questions affecting the economic life of the working people—whether they are to live in starvation or in comfort—are decided by the capitalist, who is the lord, a god! In all capitalist countries, including the democratic republics, the attention of the people is diverted at such times by the corrupt bourgeois press, which wears the label of freedom of speech, and which will invent and circulate anything to fool and deceive the masses. In our country, on the other hand, the whole apparatus of state power, the whole attention of the class-conscious worker have been entirely and exclusively centred on the major and cardinal issue, on the chief task. We have made gigantic progress in this way in the military sphere, and we must now apply our experience to the economic sphere.

We are effecting the transition to socialism, and the most urgent question—bread and work—is not a private question, not the private affair of an employer, but the affair of the whole of society, and any peasant who thinks at all must definitely realise and understand that if the government raises the question of the railways in its whole press, in every article, in every newspaper issue, it is because it is the common affair of all. This work to develop the country will lead the peasant out of the blindness and ignorance that doomed him to slavery; it will lead him to real liberty, to a state of affairs in which the working folk will be aware of all the difficulties that confront them and will direct all the forces of public organisation, all the forces of the state apparatus, all the forces of agitation to the simplest and most essential things, rejecting all the tinsel and trimmings, all the playing at resolutions and the artful promises which form the subject of the newspaper agitation of all capitalist countries. All our forces, all our attention must be centred on these simple economic tasks, which are clear to every peasant, to which the middle, even the well-to-do, peasant, if he is at all honest, cannot object, and which we are always absolutely right in raising at every meeting. Even the masses

of the least politically conscious workers and peasants will confirm that the chief thing at the moment is to restore the economy in a way that will prevent it from falling again into the hands of the exploiters and will not offer the slightest indulgence to those who, having a surplus of grain in a starving country, use it to enrich themselves and to make the poor starve. You will not find a single man, however ignorant and unenlightened, who does not have the feeling that this is unjust, to whom the idea has not occurred, vague and unclear perhaps, that the arguments of the supporters of the Soviet government fully accord with the interests of the working people.

It is to these simple tasks, which in the big capitalist societies are kept in the background and are regarded as the private affair of the bosses, that we must direct the attention of the whole army of 600,000 Party members, among whom we must not tolerate a single one who does not do his duty; and for the sake of this we must get the whole mass of the workers to join us and to display the greatest self-sacrifice and devotion. It will be difficult to organise this, but since, from the point of view of the working people, it is just, it has tremendous moral weight and immense power of conviction. And so, confident that, thanks to the work of the Congress, this task can now be accomplished as brilliantly as we accomplished the military task (although again at the price of a number of defeats and mistakes), we may say that the workers of all European and American countries are now looking towards us, looking with expectancy to see whether we shall accomplish the more difficult task confronting us—for it is more difficult than the achievement of military victory. It cannot be accomplished by enthusiasm, by self-sacrifice and heroic fervour alone. In this work of organisation, in which we Russians have been weaker than others, in this work of self-discipline, in this work of rejecting the incidental and striving for the main thing, nothing can be done in a hurry. And in this sphere of requisitioning grain, repairing the railways, restoring the economy, where progress is made only inch by inch, where the ground is being prepared, and where what is being done is perhaps little, but is durable—in this work, the eyes of the workers of all countries are upon us,

they expect new victories of us. I am convinced that, guided by the decisions of our Congress, with the 600,000 members of the Party working like one man, and establishing closer ties with the economic bodies and the trade union bodies, we shall accomplish this task as successfully as we accomplished the military task, and shall march swiftly and surely towards the victory of the World Socialist Soviet Republic! (*Applause.*)

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Verbatim Report*

Reply to the discussion
on the report of the
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Tenth Congress of the R.C.P.(B.) ***March 8-16, 1921***

Speech at the Opening of the Congress **March 8**

(Prolonged applause.) Comrades, allow me to declare the Tenth Congress of the Russian Communist Party open. We have passed through a very eventful year both in international and in our own internal history. To begin with the international situation, let me say that this is the first time we have met in conditions in which the Communist International has ceased to be a mere slogan and has really been converted into a mighty organisation with foundations—real foundations—in the major advanced capitalist countries. What had only been a set of resolutions at the Second Congress of the Communist International has been successfully implemented during the past year and has found expression, confirmation and consolidation in such countries as Germany, France and Italy. It is enough to name these three countries to show that the Communist International, since its Second Congress in Moscow last summer, has become part and parcel of the working-class movement in all the major advanced countries of Europe—more than that, it has become the chief factor in international politics. This is such a great achievement, comrades, that however difficult and severe the various trials ahead of us—and we cannot and must not lose sight of them—no one can deprive us of it!

Furthermore, comrades, this is the first congress that is meeting without any hostile troops, supported by the capitalists and imperialists of the world, on the territory of the Soviet Republic. The Red Army's victories over the past year have enabled us to open a Party Congress in such

conditions for the first time. Three and a half years of unparalleled struggle, and the last of the hostile armies has been driven from our territory—that is our achievement! Of course, that has not won us everything, not by a long shot; nor have we won all that we have to—real freedom from imperialist invasion and intervention. On the contrary, their warfare against us has taken a form that is less military but is in some respects more severe and more dangerous. The transition from war to peace—which we hailed at the last Party Congress and in the light of which we have tried to organise our work—is still far from completed. Our Party is still confronted with incredibly difficult tasks, not only in respect of the economic plan—where we have made quite a few mistakes—or the basis of economic construction, but also the basis of relations between the classes remaining in our society, in this Soviet Republic. These relations have undergone a change, and this—you will all agree—should be one of the chief questions for you to examine and decide here.

Comrades, we have passed through an exceptional year, we have allowed ourselves the luxury of discussions and disputes within the Party*. This was an amazing luxury for a Party shouldering unprecedented responsibilities and surrounded by mighty and powerful enemies uniting the whole capitalist world.

I do not know how you will assess that fact now. Was it fully compatible with our resources, both material and spiritual? It is up to you to appraise this. At all events, however, I must say that the slogan, task and aim which we should set ourselves at this Congress and which we must accomplish at all costs, is to emerge from the discussions and disputes stronger than before. (*Applause.*) You, comrades, cannot fail to be aware that all our enemies—and their name is legion—in all their innumerable press organs abroad repeat, elaborate and multiply the same wild rumour that our bourgeois and petty-bourgeois enemies spread here, inside the Soviet Republic, namely: discussion means disputes; disputes mean discord; discord means that the

* Lenin refers here to the discussion on the role and tasks of the trade unions in socialist construction.—*Ed.*

Communists have become weak; press hard, seize the opportunity, take advantage of their weakening! This has become the slogan of the hostile world. We must not forget this for a moment. Our task now is to show that, to whatever extent we have allowed ourselves this luxury in the past, whether rightly or wrongly, we must emerge from this situation in such a way that, having properly examined the extraordinary abundance of platforms, shades, slight shades and almost slight shades of opinion, that have been formulated and discussed, we at our Party Congress could say to ourselves: at all events, whatever form the discussion has taken up to now, however much we have argued among ourselves—and we are confronted with so many enemies—the task of the dictatorship of the proletariat in a peasant country is so vast and difficult that formal cohesion is far from enough. (Your presence here at the Congress is a sign that we have that much.) Our efforts should be more united and harmonious than ever before; there should not be the slightest trace of factionalism—whatever its manifestations in the past. That we must not have on any account. That is the only condition on which we shall accomplish the immense tasks that confront us. I am sure that I express the intention and firm resolve of all of you when I say: at all events, the end of this Congress must find our Party stronger, more harmonious, and more sincerely united than ever before. (*Applause.*)

**Report on the Political Work
of the Central Committee of the R.C.P.(B.)
March 8**

Comrades, the question of the Central Committee's political work, as you are, of course, aware, is so closely bound up with the whole work of the Party and Soviet institutions, and with the whole course of the revolution, that in my view, at any rate, there can be no question of a report in the full sense of the word. Accordingly, I take it to be my task to try to single out some of the more important events which, I think, represent the cardinal points of our work and of Soviet policy over the past year, which are most typical of what we have gone through and which provide most food for thought concerning the reasons for the course taken by the revolution, the significance of our mistakes—and these have been many—and the lessons for the future. For no matter how natural it is to report on the events of the past year, no matter how essential it is for the Central Committee, and no matter how interesting such a report in itself may be for the Party, the tasks of the current and forthcoming struggle are so urgent, difficult and grave, and press so hard upon us that all our attention is unwittingly concentrated on how to draw the appropriate conclusions from past experience and how best to solve present and future problems on which all our attention is focused.

Of all the key problems of our work in the past year, which chiefly hold our attention and with which, in my opinion, our mistakes are mainly connected, the most important is the transition from war to peace. All, or possibly most of you, will recall that we have attempted this transition several times during the past three and a half years,

without once having completed it; and apparently we shall not accomplish it this time either because international capitalism is too vitally interested in preventing it. I recall that in April 1918, i.e., three years ago, I had occasion to speak to the All-Russia Central Executive Committee about our tasks, which at the time were formulated as if the Civil War had in the main come to an end, when in actual fact it had only just begun. You all recall that at the previous Party Congress we based all our plans on the transition to peaceful construction, having assumed that the enormous concessions then made to Poland would assure us of peace. As early as April, however, the Polish bourgeoisie, which, with the imperialists of the capitalist countries, interpreted our peaceful stand as a sign of weakness, started an offensive for which they paid dearly: they got a peace that was much worse. But we were unable to switch to peaceful construction and had once again to concentrate on the war with Poland and subsequently on wiping out Wrangel. That is what determined the substance of our work in the year under review. Once again all our work turned on military problems.

Then followed the transition from war to peace when the last enemy soldier was finally driven from the territory of the R.S.F.S.R.

This transition involved upheavals which we had certainly never foreseen. That is undoubtedly one of the main causes of all our mistakes in policy during the period under review, from which we are now suffering. We now realise that some of the tasks we had grossly underrated were posed by the demobilisation of the army, which had to be created in a country that had suffered unparalleled strains and stresses, and that had gone through several years of imperialist war. Its demobilisation put a terrible strain on our transport facilities, and this was intensified by the famine due to the crop failure and the fuel shortage, which largely brought the railways to a standstill. That is largely the source of the series of crises—economic, social and political—that hit us. At the end of last year I had occasion to point out that one of the main difficulties of the coming spring would be that connected with the demobilisation of the army. I also pointed this out at the big discussion on

December 30, which many of you may have attended. I must say that at the time we had scarcely any idea of the scale of these difficulties. We had not yet seen the extent of the possible technical difficulties; but then neither had we realised the extent to which the demobilisation would intensify all the misfortunes which befell the Soviet Republic, exhausted as it was by the old imperialist war and the new civil war. To some extent it would be right to say that the demobilisation brings out these difficulties to an even greater degree. For a number of years, the country had been dedicated to the solution of war tasks and had given its all to solve them. It had ungrudgingly sacrificed all it had, its meagre reserves and resources, and only at the end of the war were we able to see the full extent of that devastation and poverty which now condemn us to the simple healing of wounds for a long time to come. But even to this we cannot devote ourselves entirely. The technical difficulties of army demobilisation show a good part of the depth of that devastation which inevitably breeds, apart from other things, a whole series of economic and social crises. The war had habituated us—hundreds of thousands of men, the whole country—to war-time tasks, and when a great part of the army, having solved these military tasks, finds very much worse conditions and incredible hardships in the countryside, without any opportunity—because of this and the general crisis—to apply its labour, the result is something midway between war and peace. We find that it is a situation in which we cannot very well speak of peace. For it is the demobilisation—the end of the Civil War—that makes it impossible for us to concentrate on peaceful construction, because it brings about a continuation of the war, but in a new form. We find ourselves involved in a new kind of war, a new form of war, which is summed up in the word “banditism”—when tens and hundreds of thousands of demobilised soldiers, who are accustomed to the toils of war and regard it almost as their only trade, return, impoverished and ruined, and are unable to find work.

Failure to reckon with the scale of the difficulties connected with the demobilisation was undoubtedly a mistake on the part of the Central Committee. It must, of course, be said that we had nothing to go on, for the Civil War was

so arduous an effort that there was only one guiding principle: everything for victory on the Civil War front, and nothing else. It was only by observing this principle, and by the Red Army's unparalleled efforts in the struggle against Kolchak, Yudenich and others, that we could hope to achieve victory over the imperialists who had invaded Soviet Russia.

From this crucial fact, which determined a whole series of mistakes and intensified the crisis, I should like to turn to the question of how a whole number of even more profound discrepancies, erroneous calculations or plans were brought to light in the work of the Party and the struggle of the entire proletariat. These were not only mistakes in planning, but in determining the balance of forces between our class and those classes in collaboration with which, and frequently in struggle against which, it had to decide the fate of the Republic. With this as a starting-point, let us turn to the results of the past, to our political experience, and to what the Central Committee, as the policy-making body, must understand and try to explain to the whole Party. These questions range from the course of our war with Poland to food and fuel. Our offensive, our too swift advance almost as far as Warsaw, was undoubtedly a mistake. I shall not now analyse whether it was a strategic or a political error, as this would take me too far afield. Let us leave it to future historians, for those of us who have to keep beating off the enemy in hard struggle have no time to indulge in historical research. At any rate, the mistake is there, and it was due to the fact that we had overestimated the superiority of our forces. It would be too difficult to decide now to what extent this superiority of forces depended on the economic conditions, and on the fact that the war with Poland aroused patriotic feelings even among the petty-bourgeois elements, who were by no means proletarians or sympathisers with communism, by no means giving unconditional support to the dictatorship of the proletariat; sometimes, in fact, they did not support it at all. But the fact remains that we had made a definite mistake in the war with Poland.

We find a similar mistake in food. With regard to surplus food appropriation and its fulfilment there can be no doubt that the year under review was more favourable than

the previous one. This year the amount of grain collected is over 250 million poods. By February 1, the figure was estimated at 235 million poods, as against the 210 million poods for the whole of the previous year; that is to say, more was collected in a much shorter period than for the whole of the previous year. It turned out, however, that of these 235 millions collected by February 1, we had used up about 155 million poods within the first six months, that is, an average of 25 million or even more poods a month. Of course, we must on the whole admit that we were unable to space out our reserves properly, even when they were better than last year's. We failed to see the full danger of the crisis approaching with the spring, and succumbed to the natural desire to increase the starving workers' ration. Of course, it must be said that there again we had no basis for our estimates. All capitalist countries, in spite of the anarchy and chaos intrinsic to capitalism, have, as a basis for their economic planning, the experience of many decades which they can compare, for they have the same economic system differing only in details. From this comparison it is possible to deduce a genuinely scientific law, a certain regularity and uniformity. We cannot have and have not had anything of the kind, and it was quite natural that when at the end of the war the possibility finally arose to give the starving population a little more, we were unable all at once to establish the correct proportion. We should have obviously limited the increase in the ration, so as to create a certain reserve fund for a rainy day, which was due to come in the spring, and which has now arrived. That we failed to do. Once again it is a mistake typical of all our work, a mistake which shows that the transition from war to peace confronted us with a whole number of difficulties and problems, and we had neither the experience, the training, nor the requisite material to overcome them, and this worsened, intensified and aggravated the crisis to an extraordinary extent.

We undoubtedly had something similar in fuel. It is crucial to economic construction. The output estimates and proper distribution of fuel had, of course, to be the basis for the entire transition from war to peace—to economic construction—which was discussed at the previous Party

Congress and which has been the main concern and the focal point of all our policy during the year under review. There can be no question of overcoming our difficulties or rehabilitating our industry without it. In this respect, we are clearly in a better position now than we were last year. We used to be cut off from the coal and oil districts, but we got the coal and oil after the Red Army's victories. In any case, our fuel resources have increased. We know that the fuel resources with which we entered upon the year under review were greater than before. Accordingly, we made the mistake of immediately permitting such a wide distribution of fuel that these resources were exhausted and we were faced with a fuel crisis before we had put everything in proper working order. You will hear special reports on all these problems, and I cannot even give you any approximate figures. But in any case, bearing in mind the experience of the past, we must say that this mistake was due to a wrong understanding of the state of affairs and the rapid pace of transition from war to peace. It turned out that the transition could only be made at a much slower pace than we had imagined. The lesson driven home to us over the past year is that the preparations had to be longer, and the pace slower. It is a lesson that the whole Party will need particularly to learn in order to determine our main tasks for the year ahead, if we are to avoid similar mistakes in the future.

I must add that the crop failure aggravated these mistakes and especially the resultant crises. I have pointed out that the food effort during the year under review gave us very much better food reserves, but that too was one of the main sources of the crises, because the crop failure had led to an acute feed shortage, a great loss of cattle and widespread ruin among the peasants, so that these grain procurements fell mainly in places where the grain surplus was not very large. There are far greater surpluses in various outlying areas of the Republic, in Siberia and in the Northern Caucasus, but it is there that the Soviet power was less stable, the Soviet government apparatus least efficient, and transportation from over there was very difficult. That is why it turned out that we collected the increased food reserves from the gubernias with the poorer crops and this went to intensify the crisis in the peasant economy considerably.

Here again we clearly see that our estimates were not as accurate as they should have been. But then we were in such a tight corner that we had no choice. A country which, after a devastating imperialist war, survived such a thing as a long civil war, could not, of course, exist without giving the front everything it had. And, once ruined, what could it do but take the peasants' surpluses, even without compensating them by any other means. We had to do this to save the country, the army, and the workers' and peasants' government. We said to the peasants: "Of course, you are lending your grain to the workers' and peasants' state, but unless you do, you cannot expect to save the country from the landowners and the capitalists." We could do nothing else in the circumstances forced upon us by the imperialists and the capitalists through their war. We had no choice. But these circumstances led to such a weakening of the peasant economy after the long war that the crop failure was due also to the smaller sown area, worsening equipment, lower crop yields, shortage of hands, etc. The crop failure was disastrous, but the collection of surplus grain, which was rather better than we had expected, was accompanied by an aggravation of the crisis that may bring us still greater difficulties and calamities in the months to come. We must carefully reckon with this fact when analysing our political experience of the past year, and the political tasks we set ourselves for the year ahead. The year under review has left the following year with the same urgent problems.

I shall now deal with another point from a totally different sphere—the trade union discussion, which has taken up so much of the Party's time. I mentioned it earlier on today, and could naturally only venture the cautious remark that I thought many of you would consider this discussion as being too great a luxury.* I must add, for my part, that I think it was quite an impermissible luxury, and we certainly made a mistake when we allowed it, for we had failed to realise that we were pushing into the forefront a question which for objective reasons cannot be there. We allowed ourselves to indulge in this luxury, failing to realise how much attention we distracted from the vital and threatening

* See p. 187.—*Ed.*

question before us, namely, this question of the crisis. What are the actual results of this discussion, which has been going on for so many months and which must have bored most of you? You will hear special reports on it, but I should like to draw your attention to one aspect of the matter. It is that in this case the saying, "Every cloud has a silver lining", has been undoubtedly justified.

Unfortunately, there was rather a lot of cloud, and very little silver lining. (*Laughter.*) Still, the silver lining was there, for although we lost a great deal of time and diverted the attention of our Party comrades from the urgent tasks of the struggle against the petty-bourgeois elements surrounding us, we did learn to discern certain relationships which we had not seen before. The good thing was that the Party was bound to learn something from this struggle. Although we all knew that, being the ruling party, we had inevitably to merge the Party and government leadership—they are merged and will remain so—the Party nevertheless learned a certain lesson in this discussion which cannot be ignored. Some platforms mostly got the votes of the "top" section of the Party. Some platforms which were sometimes called "the platforms of the Workers' Opposition",* and sometimes by other names, clearly proved to be an expression of a syndicalist deviation. That is not just my personal opinion, but that of the vast majority of those present. (*Voices: "That's right."*)

In this discussion, the Party proved itself to have matured to such an extent that, aware of a certain wavering of the "top" section and hearing the leadership say: "We cannot

* *The Workers' Opposition*, an anti-Party factional group headed by A. G. Shlyapnikov, S. P. Medvedyev, Alexandra Kollontai and others, took final shape during the discussion on the trade unions in 1920-21. Its views constituted an anarcho-syndicalist deviation within the Party. The Workers' Opposition proposed that the organisation of the management of the national economy should be the function of an "All-Russia Congress of Producers" organised in industrial unions which would elect a central body to run the whole of the national economy of the country. It opposed the trade unions to the Soviet state and the Communist Party since it regarded them, not the Party, as the highest form of workers' organisation. The Tenth Party Congress exposed the views of the Workers' Opposition for what they were and the Eleventh Congress in 1922 marked its final organisational defeat.—*Ed.*

agree—sort us out”, it mobilised rapidly for this task and the vast majority of the more important Party organisations quickly responded: “We do have an opinion, and we shall let you know it.”

During the discussion we got a number of platforms. There were so many of them that, although in view of my position I should have read them all, I confess I had not. (*Laughter.*) I do not know whether all those present had found the time to read them, but, in any case, I must say that this syndicalist, and to a certain degree even semi-anarchist, deviation, which has crystallised, gives food for thought. For several months we allowed ourselves to wallow in the luxury of studying shades of opinion. Meanwhile, the demobilisation of the army was producing banditry and aggravating the economic crisis. The discussion should have helped us to understand that our Party, with at least half a million members and possibly even more, has become, first, a mass party, and, second, the government party, and that as a mass party it reflects something of what is taking place outside its ranks. It is extremely important to understand this.

There would be nothing to fear from a slight syndicalist or semi-anarchist deviation; the Party would have swiftly and decisively become aware of it, and would have set about correcting it. But it is no time to argue about theoretical deviations when one of them is bound up with the tremendous preponderance of peasants in the country, when their dissatisfaction with the proletarian dictatorship is mounting, when the crisis in peasant farming is coming to a head, and when the demobilisation of the peasant army is setting loose hundreds and thousands of broken men who have nothing to do, whose only accustomed occupation is war and who breed banditry. At the Congress, we must make it quite clear that we cannot have arguments about deviations and that we must put a stop to that. The Party Congress can and must do this; it must draw the appropriate lesson, and add it to the Central Committee's political report, consolidate and confirm it, and make it a Party law and duty. The atmosphere of the controversy is becoming extremely dangerous and constitutes a direct threat to the dictatorship of the proletariat.

A few months ago, when I had occasion to meet and argue with some comrades in a discussion and said, "Beware, this constitutes a threat to working-class rule and the dictatorship of the proletariat," they replied, "This is intimidation, you are terrorising us." On several occasions I have had to hear my remarks being labelled in this manner, and accusations of intimidation thrown about, and I replied that it would be absurd for me to try to intimidate old revolutionaries who had gone through all sorts of ordeals. But when you see the difficulties the demobilisation is producing you can no longer say it was an attempt at intimidation, or even an unavoidable exaggeration in the heat of the controversy; it was, in fact, an absolutely exact indication of what we now have, and of our need for unity, discipline and restraint. We need all this not only because otherwise a proletarian party cannot work harmoniously, but because the spring has brought and will bring even more difficult conditions in which we cannot function without maximum unity. These two main lessons, I think, we shall still be able to learn from the discussion. I think it necessary to say, therefore, that whilst we did indulge in luxury and presented the world with a remarkable example of a party, engaged in a most desperate struggle, permitting itself the luxury of devoting unprecedented attention to the detailed elucidation of separate points of platforms—all this in face of a crop failure, a crisis, ruin and demobilisation—we shall now draw from these lessons a political conclusion—not just a conclusion pointing to some mistake, but a political conclusion—concerning the relations between classes, between the working class and the peasants. These relations are not what we had believed them to be. They demand much greater unity and concentration of forces on the part of the proletariat, and under the dictatorship of the proletariat they are a far greater danger than all the Denikins, Kolchaks and Yudeniches put together. It would be fatal to be deluded on this score! The difficulties stemming from the petty-bourgeois element are enormous, and if they are to be overcome, we must have great unity, and I don't mean just a semblance of unity. We must all pull together with a single will, for in a peasant country only the will of the

mass of proletarians will enable the proletariat to accomplish the great tasks of its leadership and dictatorship.

Assistance is on its way from the West-European countries but it is not coming quickly enough. Still it is coming and growing.

I pointed out this morning that one of the most important factors of the period under review, one closely related to the work of the Central Committee, is the organisation of the Second Congress of the Comintern.* Of course, compared with last year, the world revolution has made considerable headway. Of course, the Communist International, which at the time of last year's Congress existed only in the form of proclamations, has now begun to function as an independent party in each country, and not merely as an advanced party—communism has become central to the working-class movement as a whole. In Germany, France and Italy the Communist International has become not only the centre of the working-class movement, but also the focus of political life in these countries. Any German or French newspaper you picked up last autumn contained abuse of Moscow and the Bolsheviks, who were called all sorts of names; in fact, the Bolsheviks and the 21 conditions for admission to the Third International** were made the central issue of their entire political life. That is an achievement no one can take away from us! It shows how the world revolution is growing and how it is paralleled by the aggravation of the economic crisis in Europe. But in any case, it would be madness on our part to assume that help will shortly arrive from Europe in the shape of a strong proletarian revolution, and I am sure no one here is making such an assumption. In these last three years, we have learned to understand that placing our stake on the world revolution does not mean relying on a definite date, and that the accelerating pace of development may or may not lead to a revolution in the spring. Therefore, we must be able to

* See p. 186.—*Ed.*

** The 21st condition for admission to the Comintern, adopted at its Second Congress on August 6, 1920, ran as follows: "Members of the Party who reject the obligations and theses of the Communist International in principle should be expelled from the Party. This also applies to delegates of extraordinary Party Congresses."—*Ed.*

bring our work in line with the class balance here and elsewhere, so as to be able to maintain the dictatorship of the proletariat for a long time, and, however gradually, to remedy all our numerous misfortunes and crises. This is the only correct and sober approach.

I shall now turn to an item concerning the work of the Central Committee during the present year which is closely related to the tasks facing us. It is the question of our foreign relations.

Prior to the Ninth Party Congress, our attention and all our endeavours were aimed at switching from our relations of war with the capitalist countries to relations of peace and trade. For that purpose we undertook all sorts of diplomatic moves and bested men who were undoubtedly skilled diplomats. When, for instance, the representatives of America or of the League of Nations proposed that we halt hostilities against Denikin and Kolchak on certain stated terms, they thought we would land in difficulties. In actual fact, it was they who landed in difficulties and we who scored a great diplomatic victory. They were made to look silly, they had to withdraw their terms, and this was subsequently exposed in all the diplomatic writings and press of the world. But we cannot rest content with a diplomatic victory. We need more than that: we need genuine trade relations. However, only this year has there been some development in trade relations. There is the question of trade relations with Britain, which has been central since the summer of last year. In this connection, the war with Poland was a considerable setback for us. Britain was ready to sign a trade agreement. The British bourgeoisie wanted it, but court circles in Britain were against it and hampered it, and the war with Poland delayed it. It so happens that the matter has not been settled yet.

Today's papers, I think, say that Krasin has told the press in London that he expects the trade agreement to be signed shortly.* I do not know whether these hopes are fully justified. I cannot be certain that it will actually take place, but for my part I must say that we in the Central Committee

* This trade agreement between Soviet Russia and Britain was signed on March 16, 1921.—*Ed.*

have devoted a great deal of attention to this question and considered it correct for us to compromise in order to achieve a trade agreement with Britain. Not only because we could obtain more from Britain than from other countries—she is, in this respect, not as advanced as, say, Germany or America. She is a colonial power, with too great a stake in Asian politics, and is sometimes too sensitive to the successes of the Soviet power in certain countries lying near her colonies. That is why our relations with Britain are especially tenuous. This tenuousness arises from such an objective tangle of causes that no amount of skill on the part of the Soviet diplomatics will help. But we need a trade treaty with Britain owing to the possibility opening up for a treaty with America, whose industrial capacity is so much greater.

The concession issue is bound up with this. We devoted far more attention to it last year than before. A decree of the Council of People's Commissars issued on November 23 set out the concession question in a form most acceptable to foreign capitalists. When certain misinterpretations or insufficient understanding of this problem arose in Party circles, a number of meetings of senior Party workers were held to discuss it. On the whole, there was not a great deal of disagreement, although we did hear of many protests from workers and peasants. They said: "We got rid of our own capitalists, and now they want to call in some foreign capitalists." Of course, the Central Committee had no statistics at its disposal to decide to what extent these protests were due to ignorance, or expressed the hopes of the kulak or outright capitalist section of the non-Party people who believe they have a legitimate right to be capitalists in Russia, and not like the foreign capitalists who are invited in without any power, but with real power. Indeed, it is most unlikely that statistics on such factors are available anywhere in the world. But this decree was, at any rate, a step towards establishing relations with a view to granting concessions. I must add that in practice—and this is something we must never forget—we have not secured a single concession. The point at issue is whether we should try to get them at all costs. Whether we get them or not does not depend on our arguments or decisions, but on interna-

tional capital. On February 1 of this year, the Council of People's Commissars took another decision on the concessions.* Its first clause says: "To approve in principle the granting of oil concessions in Grozny and Baku and at other working oilfields and to open negotiations which should be pressed forward."

There was some difference of opinion on this point. Some comrades thought it was wrong to grant concessions in Grozny and Baku, as this would arouse opposition among the workers. The majority on the Central Committee, including myself, took the view that there were possibly no grounds for the complaints.

The majority on the Central Committee and I myself took the view that it was essential to grant these concessions, and we shall ask you to back it up with your authority. It is vital to have such an alliance with the state trusts of the advanced countries because our economic crisis is so deep that we cannot, on our own, rehabilitate our ruined economy without machinery and technical aid from abroad. Getting the equipment out here is not enough. We could grant concessions to the biggest imperialist trusts on a wider basis: say, a quarter of Baku, a quarter of Grozny, and a quarter of our best forest reserves, so as to assure ourselves of an essential basis by the installation of the most modern machinery; on the other hand, in return for this we shall be getting badly needed machinery for the remaining part. In this way we shall be able to close a part—say, a quarter or a half—of the gap between us and the modern, advanced trusts of other countries. No one, with anything like a sober view of the present situation, will doubt that unless we do this we shall be in a very difficult position indeed, and shall be unable to overtake them without a superhuman effort. Negotiations with some of the largest world trusts have already begun. Naturally, for their part they are not simply doing us a good turn: they are in it only for the fantastic profits. Modern capitalism—as a non-belligerent diplomat would put it—is a robber, a ring. It is not the old capitalism of pre-war days: because of its monopoly of the world market its profit margins run to hundreds of per

* This decision was based on the draft written by Lenin.—Ed.

cents. Of course, this will exact a high price, but there is not other way out because the world revolution is marking time. There is no other way for us to raise our technology to the modern level. And if one of the crises were to give a sharp spur to the world revolution, and if it were to arrive before the concession terms ran out, our concession obligations would turn out to be less onerous than they appear on paper.

On February 1, 1921, the Council of People's Commissars decided to purchase 18,500,000 poods of coal abroad, for our fuel crisis was already in evidence. It had already become clear by then that we would have to expend our gold reserves not only on the purchase of machinery. In the latter case, our coal output would have increased, for we would have boosted our production if, instead of coal, we had bought machines abroad to develop our coal industry, but the crisis was so acute that we had to opt for the worse economic step and spend our money on the coal we could have produced at home. We shall have to make further compromises to buy consumer goods for the peasants and workers.

I should now like to deal with the Kronstadt events.* I have not yet received the latest news from Kronstadt, but I have no doubt that this mutiny, which very quickly revealed to us the familiar figures of whiteguard generals, will be put down within the next few days, if not hours. There can be no doubt about this. But it is essential that we make a thorough appraisal of the political and economic lessons of this event.

What does it mean? It was an attempt to seize political power from the Bolsheviks by a motley crowd or alliance of ill-assorted elements, apparently just to the right of the

* On February 28, 1921 a counter-revolutionary mutiny broke out in Kronstadt. It was organised by the Socialist-Revolutionaries, Mensheviks and whiteguards and supported by foreign imperialists. The leaders of the mutiny put forward the slogan "Soviets without Communists" hoping to drive out the Communists from the Soviets, liquidate the Soviet system and re-establish capitalist rule in Russia.

The capture of Kronstadt by the mutineers constituted a threat to Petrograd. The Soviet Government sent out Red Army units against them and on March 18 the mutiny was put down.—*Ed.*

Bolsheviks, or perhaps even to their "left"—you can't really tell, so amorphous is the combination of political groupings that has tried to take power in Kronstadt. You all know, undoubtedly, that at the same time whiteguard generals were very active over there. There is ample proof of this. A fortnight before the Kronstadt events, the Paris newspapers reported a mutiny at Kronstadt. It is quite clear that it is the work of Socialist-Revolutionaries and whiteguard émigrés, and at the same time the movement was reduced to a petty-bourgeois counter-revolution and petty-bourgeois anarchism. That is something quite new. This circumstance, in the context of all the crises, must be given careful political consideration and must be very thoroughly analysed. There is evidence here of the activity of petty-bourgeois, anarchist elements with their slogans of unrestricted trade and invariable hostility to the dictatorship of the proletariat. This mood has had a wide influence on the proletariat. It has had an effect on factories in Moscow and a number of provincial centres. This petty-bourgeois counter-revolution is undoubtedly more dangerous than Denikin, Yudenich and Kolchak put together, because ours is a country where the proletariat is in a minority, where peasant property has gone to ruin and where, in addition, the demobilisation has set loose vast numbers of potentially mutinous elements. No matter how big or small the initial, shall I say, shift in power, which the Kronstadt sailors and workers put forward—they wanted to correct the Bolsheviks in regard to restrictions in trade—and this looks like a small shift, which leaves the same slogans of "Soviet power" with ever so slight a change or correction. Yet, in actual fact the whiteguards only used the non-Party elements as a stepping stone to get in. This is politically inevitable. We saw the petty-bourgeois, anarchist elements in the Russian revolution, and we have been fighting them for decades. We have seen them in action since February 1917, during the great revolution, and their parties' attempts to prove that their programme differed little from that of the Bolsheviks, but that only their methods in carrying it through were different. We know this not only from the experience of the October Revolution, but also of the outlying regions and various areas within the former Russian Empire where the Soviet power was temporarily re-

placed by other regimes. Let us recall the Democratic Committee in Samara.* They all came in demanding equality, freedom, and a constituent assembly, and every time they proved to be nothing but a conduit for whiteguard rule.

Because the Soviet power is being shaken by the economic situation, we must consider all this experience and draw the theoretical conclusions a Marxist cannot escape. The experience of the whole of Europe shows the practical results of trying to sit between two stools. That is why in this context we must say that political friction, in this case, is a great danger. We must take a hard look at this petty-bourgeois counter-revolution with its calls for freedom to trade. Unrestricted trade—even if it is not as bound up initially with the whiteguards as Kronstadt was—is still only the thin end of the wedge for the whiteguard element, a victory for capital and its complete restoration. We must, I repeat, have a keen sense of this political danger.

It shows what I said in dealing with our platforms discussion** : in face of this danger we must understand that we must do more than put an end to Party disputes as a matter of form—we shall do that, of course. We need to remember that we must take a much more serious approach to this question.

We have to understand that, with the peasant economy in the grip of a crisis, we can survive only by appealing to the peasants to help town and countryside. We must bear in mind that the bourgeoisie is trying to pit the peasants against the workers; that behind a façade of workers' slogans it is trying to incite the petty-bourgeois, anarchist elements against the workers. This, if successful, will lead directly to the overthrow of the dictatorship of the proletariat and, consequently, to the restoration of capitalism and of the old

* The reference is to a counter-revolutionary whiteguard-S.R.-Menshevik government in Samara, the so-called Committee of Members of the Constituent Assembly (Komuch) or the "Samara Constituent Assembly", which was set up on June 8, 1918. By August 1918, the Committee had occupied a number of gubernias on the Volga and in the Urals, but in the autumn of the same year it was defeated by the Red Army and ceased to exist.—*Ed.*

** See pp. 196-97.—*Ed.*

landowner and capitalist regime. The political danger here is obvious. A number of revolutions have clearly gone that way; we have always been mindful of this possibility and have warned against it. This undoubtedly demands of the ruling party of Communists, and of the leading revolutionary elements of the proletariat a different attitude to the one we have time and again displayed over the past year. It is a danger that undoubtedly calls for much greater unity and discipline; it undoubtedly requires that we should all pull harder together. Otherwise we shall not cope with the dangers that have fallen to our lot.

Then there are the economic problems. What is the meaning of the unrestricted trade demanded by the petty-bourgeois elements? It is that in the proletariat's relations with the small farmers there are difficult problems and tasks we have yet to solve. I am speaking of the victorious proletariat's relations with the small proprietors when the proletarian revolution unfolds in a country where the proletariat is in a minority, and the petty bourgeoisie, in a majority. In such a country the proletariat's role is to direct the transition of these small proprietors to socialised and collective work. Theoretically this is beyond dispute. We have dealt with this transition in a number of legislative acts, but we know that it does not turn on legislative acts, but on practical implementation, which, we also know, can be guaranteed when you have a very powerful, large-scale industry capable of providing the petty producer with such benefits that he will see its advantages in practice.

That is how Marxists and all socialists who have given thought to the social revolution and its tasks have always regarded the question in theory. But Russia's most pronounced characteristic of which I have spoken is that we have, on the one hand, not only a minority, but a considerable minority of proletarians, and, on the other, a vast majority of peasants. And the conditions in which we have had to defend the revolution made the solution of our problems incredibly difficult. We have not been able to show all the advantages of large-scale production, for it lies in ruins, and is dragging out a miserable existence. It can only be rehabilitated by demanding sacrifices from these very same small farmers. To get industry on its feet you need fuel; if you

need fuel, you must rely on firewood; and if you rely on firewood, you must look to the peasant and his horse. In conditions of crisis, the fodder shortage and the loss of cattle, the peasant must give his produce on credit to the Soviet power for the sake of a large-scale industry which has not yet given him a thing. That is the economic situation which gives rise to enormous difficulties and demands a deeper analysis of the conditions of transition from war to peace. We cannot run a war-time economy otherwise than by telling the peasants: "You must make loans to the workers' and peasants' state to help it pull through." When concentrating on economic rehabilitation, we must understand that we have before us a small farmer, a small proprietor and producer who will work for the market until the rehabilitation and triumph of large-scale production. But rehabilitation on the old basis is impossible; it will take years, at least a decade, and possibly longer, in view of the havoc. Until then we shall have to deal, for many long years, with the small producer as such, and the unrestricted trade slogan will be inevitable. It is dangerous, not because it covers up the aspirations of the whiteguards and Mensheviks, but because it may become widespread in spite of the peasants' hatred for the whiteguards. It is apt to spread because it conforms to the economic conditions of the small producer's existence. It is out of such considerations that the Central Committee adopted its decision to start a discussion on the substitution of a tax for surplus food appropriation and today placed this question squarely before the Congress, a motion which today's resolution approves. The tax and appropriation problem had been brought up in our legislation a long time ago, back in late 1918. The tax law was dated October 30, 1918. The law on a tax in kind on the farmer was enacted, but never became operative. A number of instructions were issued in the few months after its promulgation, but it was never applied. On the other hand, the confiscation of surpluses from the peasants was a measure with which we were saddled by the imperative conditions of war-time, but which no longer applies to anything like the peace-time conditions of the peasant's economy. He needs the assurance that, while he has to give away a certain amount, he will have so much left to sell locally.

The whole of our economy and its various branches were affected throughout by war-time conditions. With this in mind, our task was to collect a definite quantity of food, regardless of what it did to the national turnover. As we turn from problems of war to those of peace, we take a different view of the tax in kind: we see it not only from the standpoint of meeting the needs of the state, but also those of the small farms. We must try to understand the economic forms of the petty farmer's indignation against the proletariat which has been in evidence and which is being aggravated in the current crisis. We must try to do our utmost in this respect for it is a matter of vital importance. We must allow the peasant to have a certain amount of leeway in local trade, and supplant the surplus food appropriation by a tax, to give the small farmer a chance to plan his production and determine its scale in accordance with the tax. We know quite well, of course, that in our conditions this is a very difficult thing to do. The sown area, the crop yield, and the farm implements have all been reduced, the surpluses have undoubtedly decreased, and in very many cases have disappeared altogether. These circumstances must be regarded as a fact. The peasant will have to go hungry for a while in order to save the towns and factories from famine. That is something quite understandable on a country-wide scale, but we do not expect the poverty-stricken lone-wolf farmer to understand it. And we know that we shall not be able to do without coercion, on which the impoverished peasants are very touchy. Nor must we imagine that this measure will rid us of the crisis. But we do regard it as our task to make the maximum concessions, to give the small producer the best conditions to come into his own. Up to now, we have been adapting ourselves to the tasks of war; we must now adapt ourselves to the conditions of peace. The Central Committee is faced with this task—the task of switching to the tax in kind in conditions of proletarian power, and it is closely bound up with the question of concessions. You will be having a special discussion on this problem, and it requires your special consideration. By granting concessions, the proletarian power can secure an agreement with advanced capitalist states. On it depends our industrial growth, without which we cannot

hope to advance towards communism. On the other hand, in this period of transition in a country where the peasants predominate, we must manage to go over to measures giving economic security to the peasants, and do the most we can to ease their economic condition. Until we have remoulded the peasant, until large-scale machinery has recast him, we must assure him of the possibility of running his economy without restrictions. We are now in a transitional phase, and our revolution is surrounded by capitalist countries. As long as we are in this phase, we are forced to seek highly complex forms of relationships. Oppressed by war, we were unable to concentrate on how to establish economic relations between the proletarian state power, with an incredibly devastated large-scale industry, and the small farmers, and how to find forms of coexistence with them, who, as long as they remain small farmers, cannot exist without their small economy having some system of exchange. I believe this to be the Soviet Government's most important question in the sphere of economics and politics at the present time. I believe that it sums up the political results of our work, now that the war period has ended and we have begun, in the year under review, to make the transition to peace.

This transition is bound up with such difficulties and has so clearly delineated this petty-bourgeois element, that we must take a sober view of it. We view this series of events in terms of the class struggle, and we have never doubted that the relations between the proletariat and the petty bourgeoisie are a difficult problem, demanding complex measures or, to be more accurate, a whole system of complex, transitional measures, to ensure the victory of the proletarian power. The fact that we issued our tax in kind decree at the end of 1918 proves that the Communists were aware of this problem, but were unable to solve it because of the war. With the Civil War on, we had to adopt war-time measures. But it would be a very great mistake indeed if we drew the conclusion that these are the only measures and relations possible. That would surely lead to the collapse of the Soviet power and the dictatorship of the proletariat. When the transition to peace takes place in a period of economic crisis, it should be borne in mind that it is easier to build up a proletarian state in a country with large-scale production

than in one with a predominantly small-scale production. This problem has to be approached in a whole number of ways, and we do not close our eyes to these difficulties, or forget that the proletariat is one thing, and the small-scale producer, another. We have not forgotten that there are different classes, that petty-bourgeois, anarchist counter-revolution is a political step to whiteguard rule. We must face this squarely, with an awareness that this needs, on the one hand, maximum unity, restraint and discipline within the proletarian party, and on the other, a series of economic measures which we have not been able to carry out so far because of the war. We must recognise the need to grant concessions, and purchase machinery and equipment to satisfy agriculture, so as to exchange them for grain and re-establish relations between the proletariat and the peasants which will enable it to exist in peace-time conditions. I trust that we shall return to this problem, and I repeat that, in my view, we are dealing here with an important matter, and that the past year, which must be characterised as a period of transition from war to peace, confronts us with some extremely difficult problems.

Let me say a few words in conclusion about combating bureaucratic practices, the question which has taken up so much of our time. It came up before the Central Committee last summer; in August the Central Committee sent a circular to all organisations, and the matter was put before a Party conference in September. Finally, at the December Congress of Soviets, it was dealt with on a wider scale. We do have a bureaucratic ulcer; it has been diagnosed and has to be treated in earnest. Of course, in the discussion that we have had some platforms dealt with the problem quite frivolously, to say the least, and, by and large, from a petty-bourgeois viewpoint. There is no doubt that some discontent and stirrings have recently been in evidence among non-Party workers. Non-Party meetings in Moscow have clearly turned "democracy" and "freedom" into slogans leading up to the overthrow of the Soviet power. Many, or, at any rate, some representatives of the Workers' Opposition have battled against this petty-bourgeois, counter-revolutionary evil, and have said: "We shall unite against this." And in actual fact they have been able to display the maximum unity. I cannot tell whether

all the supporters of the Workers' Opposition group and other groups with semi-syndicalist platforms are like them. We need to learn more about this at the Congress, we need to understand that the struggle against the evils of bureaucracy is absolutely indispensable, and that it is just as intricate as the fight against the petty-bourgeois element. The bureaucratic practices of our state system have become such a serious malaise that they are dealt with in our Party Programme, because they are connected with this petty-bourgeois element, which is widely dispersed. This malaise can only be cured by the working people's unity and their ability not only to welcome the decrees of the Workers' and Peasants' Inspection (have you seen many decrees that have not been welcomed?) but to exercise their right through the Inspection, something you don't find either in the villages, the towns, or even the capital cities. Those who shout loudest against the evils of bureaucracy very frequently do not know how to exercise this right. Very great attention needs to be paid to this fact.

In this area, we often see those who battle against this evil, possibly with a sincere desire to help the proletarian party, the proletarian dictatorship and the proletarian movement, actually helping the petty-bourgeois, anarchist element, which on more than one occasion during the revolution has shown itself to be the most dangerous enemy of the proletarian dictatorship. And now—and this is the main conclusion and lesson of the past year—it has once again shown itself to be the most dangerous enemy, which is most likely to have followers and supporters in a country like ours, to change the mood of the broad masses and to affect even a section of the non-Party workers. That is when the proletarian state finds itself in a very difficult position. Unless we understand this, learn our lesson, and make this Congress a turning-point both in economic policy and in the sense of maximum unity of the proletariat, we shall have to apply to ourselves the unfortunate saying: we have forgotten nothing of what—small and trifling at times—deserves to be forgotten, and have learned nothing of the serious things this year of the revolution should have taught us. I hope that will not be the case! (*Stormy applause.*)

**Summing-Up Speech
on the Report of the C.C. of the R.C.P.(B.)
March 9**

(Prolonged applause.) Comrades, one would have expected the criticism, remarks, additions and amendments, etc., elicited by the report on the political activity of the Central Committee to concentrate on political work and political mistakes, and to give political advice.

Unfortunately, when you take a closer look at the debate and go over the main points made in it, you cannot help asking yourself: Was it not because the speeches were so strangely vapid, and almost all the speakers were from the Workers' Opposition, that the Congress folded up its debate so quickly? Indeed, just what has been said of the Central Committee's political work and current political tasks? Most of the speakers said they belonged to the Workers' Opposition. This is no trifling title! And it is no trifling matter to form an opposition in such a Party and at such a moment!

Comrade Kollontai, for example, said bluntly: "Lenin's report evaded Kronstadt." When I heard that I didn't know what to say. Everyone present at this Congress knows perfectly well—newspaper reports will naturally not be as explicit as the speeches here are—that my report tied in everything—from beginning to end—with the lessons of Kronstadt.* If anything, I deserve to be reproached for devoting the greater part of my report to the lessons that flow from the Kronstadt events, and the smaller part to past mistakes, political facts and crucial points in our work, which, in my opinion, determine our political tasks and help us to avoid such mistakes in the future.

* See pp. 203-05.—*Ed.*

What did we hear of the lessons of Kronstadt?

When people come forward in the name of an opposition, which they call a "workers'" opposition, and say that the Central Committee has failed to steer the Party's policy properly, we must tell them that we need pointers indicating what was wrong on the main questions, and ways of rectifying it. Unfortunately, we heard absolutely nothing, not a word or sound, about the present situation and its lessons. No one even touched upon the conclusion that I drew. It may be wrong, but the whole point of making reports at congresses is precisely to rectify what is wrong. The political conclusion to be drawn from the present situation is that the Party must be united and any opposition prevented. The economic conclusion is that we must not rest content with what has been achieved in the policy of reaching an agreement between the working class and the peasantry; we must seek new ways and put them to the test. I was quite specific about what we needed to do. Perhaps I was wrong, but nobody said a word about that. One of the speakers, I think it was Ryazanov, reproached me only for having suddenly sprung the tax on the Congress, before the ground had been prepared for it by discussion. That is not true. The surprising thing is that responsible comrades can make such statements at a Party Congress. The tax discussion was started in *Pravda* a few weeks ago. If the comrades who are fond of the game of opposition and like to complain that we are not providing an opportunity for broad discussion did not choose to take part in it, they have no one to blame but themselves. We are connected with *Pravda's* editorial board not only through Comrade Bukharin's being a member of the Central Committee, but also through the Central Committee discussions of all the most important subjects and lines of policy. Otherwise there can be no political work. The Central Committee submitted the tax question for discussion. Articles were published in *Pravda*. Nobody replied to them. Those who refrained from replying showed that they did not wish to go into the matter. When, at a meeting of the Moscow Soviet—after these articles had been published—somebody, I do not remember whether it was a non-Party man or a Menshevik, got up and began to talk about the tax, I said: You don't seem to

know what's being said in *Pravda*. It was more natural to say that sort of thing to a non-Party man than to a member of the Party. It was no accident that the discussion was started in *Pravda*; and we shall have to deal with it here. The criticism has been altogether unbusiness-like. The question was put up for discussion, and the critics should have taken part in it; because they had failed to do so, their criticism is groundless. The same may be said of the political question. I repeat: all my attention was concentrated on drawing the correct conclusion from recent events.

We are passing through a period of grave danger: as I have said, the petty-bourgeois counter-revolution is a greater danger than Denikin. The comrades did not deny this. The peculiar feature of this counter-revolution is that it is petty-bourgeois and anarchistic. I insist that there is a connection between its ideas and slogans and those of the Workers' Opposition. There was no response to this from any of the speakers, although most of them belonged to the Workers' Opposition. And yet, the Workers' Opposition pamphlet, which Comrade Kollontai published for the Congress, serves to confirm my assertion better than anything else. And I suppose I shall have to deal chiefly with this pamphlet to explain why the counter-revolution, to which I have referred, is assuming an anarchist, petty-bourgeois form, why it is so vast and dangerous, and why the speakers from the Workers' Opposition have failed entirely to realise the danger.

But before replying to them I want to say a word or two, before I forget, on another subject, namely Osinsky. This comrade, who has written a great deal and has brought out his own platform, gets up and criticises the Central Committee's report. We could have expected him to criticise our principal measures, and this would have been very valuable for us. Instead, he said that we had "thrown out" Sapronov, which showed that our calls for unity were at variance with our deeds; and he made a point of stressing that two members of the Workers' Opposition had been elected to the Presidium. I am surprised that an extremely prominent Party worker and writer, who occupies a responsible post, can talk about such trifles, which are of tenth-rate importance! Osinsky has the knack of seeing political

trickery in everything. He sees it also in the fact that two seats on the Presidium were given to the Workers' Opposition.

At a Party meeting in Moscow I called attention to the rise of the Workers' Opposition, and I regret that I must do so again now, at the Party Congress. It had revealed itself in October and November by bringing in the two-room system, and the formation of factions.

We have repeatedly said, and I have, in particular, that our task is to separate the wheat from the chaff in the Workers' Opposition, because it has spread to some extent, and has damaged our work in Moscow. There was no difference of opinion in the Central Committee on that score. There was evidence of damage to our work, the start of factionalism and a split in November, during the two-room conference*—when some met here and others down at the other end of the floor, and when I had my share of the trouble, for I had to act as errand-boy and shuttle between the rooms.

Back in September, during the Party Conference,** we regarded it as our task to separate the wheat from the chaff for the group could not be regarded as consisting entirely of good stuff. When we hear complaints about inadequate democracy, we say: it is absolutely true. Indeed, it is not being practised sufficiently. We need assistance and advice in this matter. We need real democracy, and not just talk. We even accept those who call themselves the Workers' Opposition, or something worse, although I think that for members of the Communist Party no name can be worse or more disreputable. (*Applause.*) But even if they had adopted a much worse title, we say to ourselves: since this is a malaise

* *A Moscow Gubernia Conference of the R.C.P.(B.)* was held in the Kremlin on November 20-22, 1920. The atmosphere at the Conference was electric, because of the tense struggle which the opposition groups waged against R.C.P.(B.) policy. The Workers' Opposition tried to get as many of their supporters on the Moscow Committee as possible and called a special meeting of worker delegates in the Mitrofanyevsky Hall of the Grand Kremlin Palace, while the other delegates held a meeting in the Sverdlovsky Hall.—*Ed.*

** The Ninth All-Russia Conference of the R.C.P.(B.) that took place in Moscow between September 22 and 25, 1920.—*Ed.*

that has affected a section of the workers we must pay the closest attention to it. And we should be given credit for the very thing that Comrade Osinsky has accused us of, though why he should have done so, I don't know.

I now come to the Workers' Opposition. You have admitted that you are in opposition. You have come to the Party Congress with Comrade Kollontai's pamphlet which is entitled *The Workers' Opposition*. When you sent in the final proofs, you knew about the Kronstadt events and the rising petty-bourgeois counter-revolution. And it is at a time like this that you come here, calling yourselves a Workers' Opposition. You don't seem to realise the responsibility you are undertaking, and the way you are disrupting our unity! What is your object? We will question you and put you through a test right here.

Comrade Osinsky used this expression in a polemical sense; he seemed to think that we were guilty of some mistake or misdemeanour. Like Ryazanov, he saw political trickery in our policy towards the Workers' Opposition. It is not political trickery; it is the policy the Central Committee has been pursuing, and will continue to pursue. Since unhealthy trends and groups have arisen, let us more than redouble our attention to them.

If there is anything at all sound in that opposition, we must make every effort to sift it from the rest. We cannot combat the evils of bureaucracy effectively, or practise democracy consistently because we lack the strength and are weak. We must enlist those who can help us in this matter, and expose and sift out those who produce such pamphlets on the pretext of helping us.

This task of sifting is being facilitated at the Party Congress. Representatives of the ailing group have been elected to the Presidium and these "poor", "wronged", and "banished" people will no longer dare to complain and wail. There's the rostrum, up on it, and let's have your answer! You have spoken more than anyone else. Now let us see what you have in store for us, with this looming danger, which, you admit, is a greater one than Denikin! What have you come up with? What is the nature of your criticism? We must have this test now, and I think it will be the final one. We have had enough of that sort of thing! The Party

will not be trifled with in this way! Whoever comes to the Congress with such a pamphlet is trifling with the Party. You can't play that kind of game when hundreds of thousands of demoralised veterans are playing havoc with our economy—the Party will not stand for such treatment. You can't behave that way. You must realise that, and put a stop to it!

After these preliminary remarks about the election to the Presidium and the character of the Workers' Opposition I want to draw your attention to Comrade Kollontai's pamphlet. It really deserves your attention, for it sums up the activity this opposition has been carrying on for several months, or the disintegration it has caused. It was said here, by a comrade from Samara, I think, that I had stuck the label of syndicalism on the Workers' Opposition, in an "administrative" fashion. The reference is altogether misplaced, and we must investigate which of the questions calls for an administrative solution. Comrade Milonov tried to score with a terrifying catchword, but it fell flat. He said that I stuck on a label in "administrative" fashion. I have said before that at our meetings Comrade Shlyapnikov and others have accused me of "intimidating" people with the word "syndicalism". When this was mentioned at one of our discussions, at the Miners' Congress, I think, I replied to Comrade Shlyapnikov: "Do you hope to take in any grown-ups?" After all, Comrade Shlyapnikov and I have known each other for many, many years, ever since the period of our underground work and emigration—how can he say that I am trying to intimidate anyone by characterising certain deviations? And when I say that the stand of the Workers' Opposition is wrong, and that it is syndicalism—what has administrating got to do with it?! And why does Comrade Kollontai write that I have been bandying the word "syndicalism" about in frivolous fashion? She ought to produce some proof before saying anything like that. I am prepared to allow that my proof is wrong, and that Comrade Kollontai's statement is weightier—I am prepared to believe that. But we must have some little proof—not in the form of words about intimidating or administrating (which, unfortunately, my official duties compel me to engage in a great deal), but in the form of a definite reply,

refuting my accusation that the Workers' Opposition is a deviation towards syndicalism.

I made it before the whole Party, with a full sense of responsibility, and it was printed in a pamphlet in 250,000 copies, and everyone has read it. Evidently, all the comrades have prepared for this Congress, and they should know that the syndicalist deviation is an anarchist deviation, and that the Workers' Opposition, which is hiding behind the backs of the proletariat, is a petty-bourgeois, anarchist element.

That it has been penetrating into the broad masses is evident, and the Party Congress has thrown light on this fact. That this element has become active is proved by Comrade Kollontai's pamphlet and Comrade Shlyapnikov's theses. And this time you can't get away with talk about being a true proletarian, as Comrade Shlyapnikov is in the habit of doing.

Comrade Kollontai starts her pamphlet with the following: "The opposition," we read on page one, "consists of the advanced section of the class-organised proletarians, who are Communists." A delegate from Siberia told the Miners' Congress that over there they had discussed the same questions as were being discussed in Moscow, and Comrade Kollontai mentions this in her pamphlet:

"We had no idea that there were disagreements and discussions in Moscow about the role of the trade unions," a delegate from Siberia told the Miners' Congress, "but we were set astir by the same questions that you are faced with over here."

Further:

"The Workers' Opposition has the backing of the proletarian masses, or, to be more precise: it is the class-welded, class-conscious and class-consistent section of our industrial proletariat."

Well, thank heaven, we now know that Comrade Kollontai and Comrade Shlyapnikov are "class-welded" and "class-conscious". But, comrades, when you say and write such things you must have some sense of proportion! Comrade Kollontai writes on page 25, and this is one of the main points of the Workers' Opposition theses, the following:

"The organisation of the management of the national economy is the function of an All-Russia Congress of Producers organised in trade and industrial unions, which shall elect a central body to run the whole of the national economy of the Republic."

That is the very thesis of the Workers' Opposition that I have quoted in every case in the discussion and in the press. I must say that after reading it I did not trouble to read the rest, as that would have been a waste of time; for that thesis made it quite clear that these people had reached the limit, and that theirs is a petty-bourgeois, anarchist element. Now, in the light of the Kronstadt events, that thesis sounds queerer than ever.

At the Second Congress of the Comintern last summer, I pointed to the significance of the resolution on the role of the Communist Party. It is a resolution uniting the Communist workers and the Communist Parties of the world. It explains everything. Does that mean that we are fencing off the Party from the whole of the working class, which is definitely exercising a dictatorship? That is what certain "Leftists" and very many syndicalists think, and the idea is now widespread. It is the product of petty-bourgeois ideology. The theses of the Workers' Opposition fly in the face of the decision of the Second Congress of the Comintern on the Communist Party's role in operating the dictatorship of the proletariat. It is syndicalism because—consider this carefully—our proletariat has been largely declassed; the terrible crises and the closing down of the factories have compelled people to flee from starvation. The workers have simply abandoned their factories; they have had to settle down in the country and have ceased to be workers. Are we not aware of the fact that the unprecedented crises, the Civil War, the disruption of proper relations between town and country and the cessation of grain deliveries have given rise to a trade in small articles made at the big factories—such as cigarette lighters—which are exchanged for cereals, because the workers are starving, and no grain is being delivered? Have we not seen this happen in the Ukraine, or in Russia? That is the economic source of the proletariat's declassing and the inevitable rise of petty-bourgeois, anarchist trends.

The experience of all our hardships tells us how desper-

ately hard it is to combat them. After two and a half years of the Soviet power we came out in the Communist International and told the world that the dictatorship of the proletariat would not work except through the Communist Party. At the time, the anarchists and syndicalists furiously attacked us and said: "You see, this is what they think—a Communist Party is needed to operate the proletarian dictatorship."* But we said this before the whole Communist International. After all this, you have these "class-conscious and class-welded" people coming and telling us that "the organisation of the management of the national economy is the function of an All-Russia Congress of Producers" (Comrade Kollontai's pamphlet). What is this "All-Russia Congress of Producers"? Are we going to waste more time on that sort of opposition in the Party? I think we have had enough of this discussion! All the arguments about freedom of speech and freedom to criticise, of which the pamphlet is full and which run through all the speeches of the Workers' Opposition, constitute nine-tenths of the meaning of these speeches, which have no particular meaning at all. They are all words of the same order. After all, comrades, we ought to discuss not only words, but also their meaning. You can't fool us with words like "freedom to criticise". When we were told that there were symptoms of a malaise in the Party, we said that this deserved our redoubled attention: the malaise is undoubtedly there, let us help to cure it; but tell us how you intend to go about it. We have spent quite a lot of time in discussion, and I must say that the point is now being driven farther home with "rifles" than with the opposition's theses. Comrades, this is no time to have an opposition. Either you're on this side, or on the other, but then your weapon must be a gun, and not an opposition. This follows from the objective situation, and you mustn't blame us for it. I think the Party Congress will have to draw the conclusion that the opposition's time has run out and that the lid's on it. We want no more oppositions! (*Applause.*)

* Lenin has in mind the speeches made by Angel Pestana of the Spanish National Confederation of Labour and Jack Tanner of the British Shop Stewards Committee at the sitting of the Second Congress of the Communist International of July 23, 1920.—*Ed.*

This group has long been free to criticise. And now, at this Party Congress, we ask: What are the results and the content of your criticism? What have you taught the Party by your criticism? We are prepared to enlist the services of those of you who stand closest to the masses, the really class-welded and class-mature masses. If Comrade Osinsky regards this as political trickery he will be isolated, for the rest will regard it as a real help to Party members. We must really help those who live with the workers' masses, who have intimate knowledge of them, who have experience and can advise the Central Committee. Let them call themselves what they like—it makes no difference—as long as they help in the work, as long as they help us, instead of playing at opposition and insisting on having groups and factions at all costs. But if they continue this game of opposition, the Party will have to expel them.

And when on this very same page of her pamphlet Comrade Kollontai writes in bold type: "Lack of confidence in the working class (of course, not in the political sphere but in the sphere of its creative economic capacities) is the whole essence of the theses signed by our top leadership", the idea is that they are a real "workers'" opposition. There is an even more striking expression of this idea on page 36 of this same pamphlet:

"The Workers' Opposition cannot, and must not, make any concessions. This does not mean calling for a split. . . . No, its aim is different. Even in the event of defeat at the Congress, it must remain within the Party and firmly defend its point of view, step by step, saving the Party and straightening out its line."

"Even in the event of defeat at the Congress"—my word, what foresight! (*Laughter.*) You will pardon me if I take the liberty of saying, on my own behalf, that I am sure that is something the Party Congress will certainly not permit! (*Applause.*) Everyone has the right to straighten out the Party's line, and you have had every opportunity of doing so.

The condition has been laid down at the Party Congress that there must not be the slightest suspicion that we want to expel anybody. We welcome every assistance in getting democracy working, but when the people are exhausted it will take more than talk to do it. Everyone who wants to

help is to be welcomed; but when they say that they will "make no concessions" and will make efforts to save the Party, while remaining within it, we say: yes, if you are allowed to stay! (*Applause.*)

In this case, we have no right to leave any room for ambiguity. We certainly need help in combating bureaucracy, safeguarding democracy, and extending contacts with the truly working-class masses. We can and must make "concessions" in this respect. And though they keep saying that they will not make any concessions, we shall repeat: We will. That's not making concessions but helping the workers' Party. In this way, we shall win over all the sound and proletarian elements in the Workers' Opposition to the side of the Party, leaving outside the "class-conscious" authors of syndicalist speeches. (*Applause.*) This has been done in Moscow. The Moscow Gubernia Conference last November ended up in two rooms: some met in one, others, in another. That was the eve of a split. The last Moscow Conference said, "We will take from the Workers' Opposition those we want, and not those they want", because we need the assistance of men who are connected with the masses of workers and who can teach us how to combat the evils of bureaucracy in practice. This is a difficult task. I think the Party Congress should take note of the Muscovites' experience and stage a test, not only on this point, but on all the points of the agenda. As a result, the people who declare that they "will make no concessions" must be told: "But the Party will." We must all pull together. By means of this policy we shall sift the sound elements from the unsound in the Workers' Opposition, and the Party will be strengthened.

Just think: it was said here that production should be run by an "All-Russia Congress of Producers". I find myself groping for words to describe this nonsense, but am reassured by the fact that all the Party workers present here are also Soviet functionaries who have been doing their work for the revolution for one, two or three years. It is not worth criticising that sort of thing in their presence. When they hear such tedious speeches they close the discussion, because it is frivolous to speak of an "All-Russia Congress of Producers" running the national economy. A proposal of

that kind could be made in a country where the political power has been taken but no start has been made on the work. We have made a start. And it is a curious fact that on page 33 of this pamphlet we find the following:

"The Workers' Opposition is not so ignorant as to disregard the great role of technique and of technically trained forces. . . . It has no intention to set up its organ of administration of the national economy elected by the Producers' Congress and then to dissolve the economic councils, chief administrations and central boards. No, the idea is quite different: it is to subordinate these necessary, technically valuable centres of administration to its guidance, assign theoretical tasks to them and use them in the same way as the factory owners once used the services of technical experts."

In other words, Comrade Kollontai and Comrade Shlyapnikov, and their "class-welded" followers, are to subordinate to their necessary guidance the economic councils, chief administrations and central boards—all the Rykovs, Nogins and other "nonentities"—and assign to them theoretical tasks! Comrades, are we to take that seriously? If you have had any "theoretical tasks", why had you not assigned them before? Why did we proclaim freedom of discussion? It was not merely to engage in verbal exchanges. During the war we used to say: "This is not the time for criticism: Wrangel is out there. We correct our mistakes by beating Wrangel." After the war, we hear shouts of "We want freedom of discussion!" When we ask, "Tell us our mistakes!", we are told, "The economic councils and chief administrations must not be dissolved; they must be assigned theoretical tasks." Comrade Kiselyov, as a representative of the "class-welded" Workers' Opposition, was left in an insignificant minority at the Miners' Congress, but, when he was head of the Chief Administration of the Textile Industry, why did he not teach us how to combat the evils of bureaucracy? Why did not Comrade Shlyapnikov, when he was a People's Commissar, and Comrade Kollontai, when she too was a People's Commissar, why did they not teach us how to combat the evils of bureaucracy? We know that we have a touch of bureaucracy, and we, who have to deal with this bureaucratic machine at first hand, suffer as a result. You sign a paper—but how is it applied in practice? How do you check up on it, when

the bureaucratic machine is so enormous? If you know how to make it smaller, dear comrades, please share your knowledge with us! You have a desire to argue, but you give us nothing apart from general statements. Instead, you indulge in demagoguery pure and simple. For it is sheer demagoguery to say: "The specialists are ill-treating the workers; the workers are leading a life of penal servitude in a toilers' republic."

Comrades, I entreat you all to read this pamphlet. You could not find a better argument against the Workers' Opposition than Comrade Kollontai's pamphlet, *The Workers' Opposition*. You will see that this is really no way to approach the question. We all admit that bureaucratic practices are a vexed question, and as much is stated in our Party Programme. It is very easy to criticise the chief administrations and economic councils, but your kind of criticism leads the masses of non-Party workers to think they should be dissolved. The Socialist-Revolutionaries seize upon this. Some Ukrainian comrades have told me that Left Socialist-Revolutionaries, at their conference,* formulated their proposals in exactly the same way. And what about the Kronstadt resolutions? You have not all read them? We will show them to you: they say the same thing. I emphasised the danger of Kronstadt because it lies precisely in the fact that the change demanded was apparently very slight: "The Bolsheviks must go. . . we will correct the regime a little." That is what the Kronstadt rebels are demanding. But what actually happened was that Savinkov arrived in Revel, the Paris newspapers reported the events a fortnight before they actually occurred, and a whiteguard general appeared on the scene. That is what actually happened. All revolutions have gone that way. That is why we are saying: Since we are faced with that sort of thing, we must unite, and, as I said in my first speech, counter it with rifles, no matter how innocent it may appear to be. To this the Workers' Opposition does not reply, but says: "We shall not dissolve the economic councils but 'subordinate them to our guid-

* This was a non-Party City Conference on the food problem held in Kharkov on March 5-6, 1921. Left Socialist-Revolutionaries and Mensheviks sharply criticised the activity of the economic and food supply bodies, but the conference did not support their resolution.—*Ed.*

ance'." The "All-Russia Congress of Producers" is to subordinate to its guidance the Economic Council's 71 chief administrations! I ask you: is that a joke? Can we take them seriously? This is the petty-bourgeois, anarchist element not only among the masses of the workers, but also in our own Party; and that is something we cannot tolerate in any circumstances. We have allowed ourselves a luxury: we gave these people the opportunity to express their opinions in the greatest possible detail and have heard their side of it several times. When I had occasion to debate with Comrades Trotsky and Kiselyov at the Second Miners' Congress, two points of view were definitely revealed. The Workers' Opposition said: "Lenin and Trotsky will unite." Trotsky came out and said: "Those who fail to understand that it is necessary to unite are against the Party; of course we will unite, because we are men of the Party." I supported him. Of course, Comrade Trotsky and I differed; and when more or less equal groups appear within the Central Committee, the Party will pass judgement, and in a way that will make us unite in accordance with the Party's will and instructions. Those are the statements Comrade Trotsky and I made at the Miners' Congress, and repeat here; but the Workers' Opposition says: "We will make no concessions, but we will remain in the Party." No, that trick won't work! (*Applause.*) I repeat that in combating the evils of bureaucracy we welcome the assistance of every worker, whatever he may call himself, if he is sincere in his desire to help. This help is highly desirable if sincere. In this sense we will make "concessions" (I take the word in quotation marks). No matter how provocative the statements against us, we shall make "concessions" because we know how hard the going is. We cannot dissolve the economic councils and chief administrations. It is absolutely untrue to say that we have no confidence in the working class and that we are keeping the workers out of the governing bodies. We are on the look-out for every worker who is at all fit for managerial work; we are glad to have him and give him a trial. If the Party has no confidence in the working class and does not allow workers to occupy responsible posts, it ought to be ousted! Go on, be logical and say it! I have said that that is not true: we are on our last legs for want

of men and we are prepared to take any assistance, with both hands, from any efficient man, especially if he is a worker. But we have no men of this type, and this creates the ground for anarchy. We must keep up the fight against the evils of bureaucracy—and it demands hundreds of thousands of men.

Our Programme formulates the task of combating the evils of bureaucracy as one of extremely long duration. The wider the dispersal of the peasantry, the more inevitable are bureaucratic practices at the centre.

It is easy to write things like this: "There is something rotten in our Party." You know what weakening the Soviet apparatus means when there are two million Russian émigrés abroad. They were driven out by the Civil War. They have gratified us by holding their meetings in Berlin, Paris, London, and all the other capitals but ours. They support this element that is called the small producer, the petty-bourgeois element.

We shall do everything that can be done to eliminate bureaucratic practices by promoting workers from below, and we shall accept every piece of practical advice on this matter. Even if we give this the inappropriate name of "concessions", as some here have done, there is no doubt that, despite this pamphlet, 99 per cent of the Congress will say, "In spite of this we will make 'concessions' and win over all that is sound." Take your place by the side of the workers and teach us how to combat the evils of bureaucracy, if you know how to do it better than we do; but don't talk as Shlyapnikov has done. That is not the sort of thing that one can brush aside. I shall not deal with the theoretical part of his speech because Kollontai said the same thing. I shall deal with the facts he quoted. He said that potatoes were rotting, and asked why Tsyurupa was not being prosecuted.

But I ask: Why is Shlyapnikov not prosecuted for making such statements? Are we seriously discussing discipline and unity in an organised Party, or are we at a meeting of the Kronstadt type? For his is a Kronstadt, anarchist type of statement, to which the response is a gun. We, organised members of the Party, have come here to rectify our mistakes. If Shlyapnikov thinks that Tsyurupa ought to be pros-

ecuted, why had he not, as an organised member of the Party, lodged a complaint with the Control Commission? When we were setting up the Control Commission, we said: The Central Committee is swamped with administrative work. Let us elect people who enjoy the confidence of the workers, who will not have so much administrative work and will be able to examine complaints on behalf of the Central Committee. This created a means of developing criticism and rectifying mistakes. If Tsyurupa was so wrong why was not a complaint lodged with the Control Commission? Instead, Shlyapnikov comes to the Congress, the most responsible assembly of the Party and the Republic, and starts hurling accusations about rotting potatoes, and asking why Tsyurupa is not being prosecuted. But I ask, doesn't the Defence Department make any mistakes? Are not battles lost and waggons and supplies abandoned? Shall we then prosecute the military workers? Comrade Shlyapnikov comes here and hurls accusations which he himself does not believe, and which he cannot prove. Potatoes are rotting. Of course, many mistakes will be made, for our machinery wants adjustment, and our transport is not running smoothly. But when instead of a rectification of our mistakes such accusations are hurled at random, and when, in addition—as several comrades here have noted—there is an undertone of malice in this question of why Tsyurupa is not being prosecuted, then I say: Why not prosecute us, the Central Committee? We think that such talk is demagogy. Either proceedings should be started against Tsyurupa and us, or against Shlyapnikov; but no work can be done in such a spirit. When Party comrades talk as Shlyapnikov has done here—and he always talks like that at other meetings—and Comrade Kollontai's pamphlet says the same thing, although she mentions no names, we say: We cannot go on like this, for it is the kind of demagogy that the Makhno anarchists and the Kronstadt elements jump at. We are both members of the Party, and both of us are standing before this most responsible tribunal. If Tsyurupa has committed an unlawful act and we, the Central Committee, have condoned it, then why not come out with a definite charge, instead of throwing about words that will be caught up here, in Moscow, tomorrow, and immediately carried by the grapevine telegraph

to the bourgeoisie. Tomorrow all the gossips in the Soviet offices will be rubbing their hands in glee and repeating your words with delight. If Tsyurupa is the kind of man Shlyapnikov accuses him of being, and if, as he demands, he ought to be prosecuted, then I say that we must seriously ponder over his words; such accusations are not lightly made. Those who make accusations of this sort should be either removed from the Party or told: We are putting you on this potato job; you go to such and such a gubernia and let's see whether you have less rotting potatoes than in the gubernias under Tsyurupa's charge.

Speech on the Trade Unions March 14

Comrades, Comrade Trotsky was particularly polite in his polemics with me today and reproached me for being, or said that I was, extremely cautious. I thank him for the compliment, but regret that I cannot return it. On the contrary, I must speak of my incautious friend, so as to express my attitude to the mistake which has caused me to waste so much time, and which is now making us continue the debate on the trade union question, instead of dealing with more urgent matters. Comrade Trotsky had his final say in the discussion on the trade union question in *Pravda* of January 29, 1921. In his article, "There Are Disagreements, But Why Confuse Things?" he accused me of being responsible for this confusion by asking who started it all. The accusation recoils on Trotsky, for he is trying to shift the blame. The whole of his article was based on the claim that he had raised the question of the role of the trade unions in production, and that this is the subject that ought to have been discussed. This is not true; it is not this that has caused the disagreements, and made them painful. And however tedious it may be after the discussion to have to repeat it again and again—true, I took part in it for only one month—I must restate that that was not the starting-point; it started with the "shake-up" slogan that was proclaimed at the Fifth All-Russia Conference of Trade Unions on November 2-6. Already at that time it was realised by everyone who had not overlooked Rudzutak's resolution—and among those were the members of the Central Committee, including myself—that no disagreements could be found

on the role of the trade unions in production. But the three-month discussion revealed them. They existed, and they were a political mistake. During a discussion at the Bolshoi Theatre, Comrade Trotsky accused me before responsible Party workers of disrupting the discussion. I take that as a compliment: I did try to disrupt the discussion in the form it was being conducted, because with a severe spring ahead of us such pronouncements were harmful. Only the blind could have failed to see that.

Comrade Trotsky now laughs at my asking who started it all, and is surprised that I should reproach him for refusing to serve on the commission. I did it because this is very important, Comrade Trotsky, very important, indeed; your refusal to serve on the trade union commission was a violation of Central Committee discipline. And when Trotsky talks about it, the result is not a controversy, but a shake-up of the Party, and a generation of bitter feeling; it leads to extremes—Comrade Trotsky used the expression “diabolical rage”. I recall an expression used by Comrade Holtzmann—I will not quote it because the word “diabolical” calls to mind something fiendish, whereas Holtzmann reminds one of something angelic. There is nothing “diabolical” about it, but we must not forget that both sides go to extremes, and, what is much more monstrous, some of the nicest comrades have gone to extremes. But when Comrade Trotsky’s authority was added to this, and when in a public speech on December 25 he said that the Congress must choose between two trends, such words are unpardonable! They constitute the political mistake over which we are fighting. And it is naïve for people to try to be witty about two-room conferences. I should like to see the wag who says that Congress delegates are forbidden to confer to prevent their votes from being split. That would be too much of an exaggeration. It was Comrade Trotsky and Tsektran’s* political mistake to raise the “shake-up” question and to do it in an entirely wrong

* *Tsektran*—the Central Committee of the Joint Trade Union of Rail and Water Transport Workers—was set up in September 1920 and initially did a great deal to rehabilitate the transport system. Its leadership was later seized by the Trotskyites, and Tsektran degenerated into a bureaucratic body divorced from rank-and-file members of the trade unions.—*Ed.*

way. That was a political mistake, and it is yet to be rectified. As regards transport, we have a resolution.*

What we are discussing is the trade union movement, and the relationship between the vanguard of the working class and the proletariat. There is nothing discreditable in our dismissing anybody from a high post. This casts no reflection upon anybody. If you have made a mistake the Congress will recognise it as such and will restore mutual relations and mutual confidence between the vanguard of the working class and the workers' mass. That is the meaning of the "Platform of Ten".** It is of no importance that there are things in it that can be substituted, and that this is emphasised by Trotsky and enlarged upon by Ryazanov. Someone said in a speech that there is no evidence of Lenin's having taken a hand in the platform or of his having taken any part in drafting it. I say to this: If I had a hand, by writing or phoning, in everything I sign, I would have gone mad long ago. I say that in order to establish mutual relations and mutual confidence between the vanguard of the working class and the workers' mass, it was necessary, if Tsektran had made a mistake—and anyone can make a mistake—to rectify it. But it is a source of political danger to defend the mistake. We would have been faced with political bankruptcy if we had not done everything we could to turn the attitudes expressed here by Kutuzov to the service of democracy. Persuasion must come before coercion. We must make every effort to persuade people before applying coercion. We were not able to carry conviction to the broad masses, and disturbed the correct relationship between them and the vanguard.

When people like Kutuzov devote part of a business-like speech to pointing out the scandalous bureaucratic practices

* The resolution on railway and water transport and its further expansion was adopted by the Eighth All-Russia Congress of Soviets on December 29, 1920.—*Ed.*

** *The "Platform of Ten"* ["Draft Decision of the Tenth Congress of the R.C.P.(B.) on the Role and Tasks of the Trade Unions"] was drawn up during the discussion on the trade unions in November 1920 and was supported by the bulk of the Party members. It formed the basis of the Tenth Party Congress's resolution on the role and tasks of the trade unions.—*Ed.*

in our machinery we say: That is true, our state is one with bureaucratic distortions. And we invite the non-Party workers to join us in fighting them. I must say here that we should enlist comrades like Kutuzov for this work and promote them. That is the lesson of our experience.

As for the syndicalist deviation—it is ridiculous. That is all we have to say to Shlyapnikov, who maintained that the “All-Russia Congress of Producers”, a demand set down in black and white in their platform and confirmed by Kollontai, can be upheld by a reference to Engels. Engels speaks of a communist society which will have no classes, and will consist only of producers.* Do we now have classes? Yes, we do. Do we have a class struggle? Yes, and a most furious one! To come in the midst of this furious class struggle and talk about an “All-Russia Congress of Producers”—isn't that a syndicalist deviation which must be emphatically and irrevocably condemned? We saw that in this platform hurly-burly even Bukharin was tripped up by the one-third nomination proposal. Comrades, in the history of the Party we must not forget such waverings.

And now, since the Workers' Opposition has defended democracy, and has made some sound demands, we shall do our utmost to mend our fences with it; and the Congress as such should make a definite selection. You say that we are not doing enough to combat the evils of bureaucracy—come and help us, come closer and help us in the fight; but it is not a Marxist, not a communist notion to propose an “All-Russia Congress of Producers”. The Workers' Opposition, with Ryazanov's help, is putting a false construction on our Programme which says: “The trade unions *should eventually arrive* at a *de facto* concentration in their hands of the whole administration of the whole national economy, as a single economic entity.” Exaggerating, as he always does, Shlyapnikov thinks that it will take us twenty-five centuries. . . . The Programme says: the trade unions “should eventually arrive”, and when a Congress says that this has been done, the demand will have been carried out.

* See Engels, *The Origin of the Family, Private Property and the State* (Marx and Engels, *Selected Works*, Vol. 3, Moscow, 1970, p. 330). —Ed.

Comrades, if the Congress now declares before the proletariat of the whole of Russia and of the whole world that it regards the proposals of the Workers' Opposition as a syndicalist semi-deviation, I am sure that all the truly proletarian and sound elements in the opposition will follow us and help us to regain the confidence of the masses, which has been shaken by Tsektran's slight mistake. I am sure that we shall strengthen and rally our ranks in a common effort and march forward together to the hard struggle that lies ahead. And marching forward unanimously, with firmness and resolution, we shall win out. (*Applause.*)

**Report on the Substitution
of a Tax in Kind
for the Surplus-Grain
Appropriation System
March 15**

Comrades, the question of substituting a tax for surplus-grain appropriation is primarily and mainly a political question, for it is essentially a question of the attitude of the working class to the peasantry. We are raising it because we must subject the relations of these two main classes, whose struggle or agreement determines the fate of our revolution as a whole, to a new or, I should perhaps say, a more careful and correct re-examination and some revision. There is no need for me to dwell in detail on the reasons for it. You all know very well of course what totality of causes, especially those due to the extreme want arising out of the war, ruin, demobilisation, and the disastrous crop failure—you know about the totality of circumstances that has made the condition of the peasantry especially precarious and critical and was bound to increase its swing from the proletariat to the bourgeoisie.

A word or two on the theoretical significance of, or the theoretical approach to, this issue. There is no doubt that in a country where the overwhelming majority of the population consists of small agricultural producers, a socialist revolution can be carried out only through the implementation of a whole series of special transitional measures which would be superfluous in highly developed capitalist countries where wage-workers in industry and agriculture make up the vast majority. Highly developed capitalist countries have a class of agricultural wage-workers that has taken shape over many decades. Only such a class can socially, economically, and politically support a direct transition to

socialism. Only in countries where this class is sufficiently developed is it possible to pass directly from capitalism to socialism, without any special country-wide transitional measures. We have stressed in a good many written works, in all our public utterances, and all our statements in the press, that this is not the case in Russia, for here industrial workers are a minority and petty farmers are the vast majority. In such a country, the socialist revolution can triumph only on two conditions. First, if it is given timely support by a socialist revolution in one or several advanced countries. As you know, we have done very much indeed in comparison with the past to bring about this condition, but far from enough to make it a reality.

The second condition is agreement between the proletariat, which is exercising its dictatorship, that is, holds state power, and the majority of the peasant population. Agreement is a very broad concept which includes a whole series of measures and transitions. I must say at this point that our propaganda and agitation must be open and above-board. We must condemn most resolutely those who regard politics as a series of cheap little tricks, frequently bordering on deception. Their mistakes have to be corrected. You can't fool a class. We have done very much in the past three years to raise the political consciousness of the masses. They have been learning most from the sharp struggles. In keeping with our world outlook, the revolutionary experience we have accumulated over the decades, and the lessons of our revolution, we must state the issues plainly—the interests of these two classes differ, the small farmer does not want the same thing as the worker.

We know that so long as there is no revolution in other countries, only agreement with the peasantry can save the socialist revolution in Russia. And that is how it must be stated, frankly, at all meetings and in the entire press. We know that this agreement between the working class and the peasantry is not solid—to put it mildly, without entering the word “mildly” in the minutes—but, speaking plainly, it is very much worse. Under no circumstances must we try to hide anything; we must plainly state that the peasantry is dissatisfied with the form of our relations, that it does not want relations of this type and will not continue to live as

it has hitherto. This is unquestionable. The peasantry has expressed its will in this respect definitely enough. It is the will of the vast masses of the working population. We must reckon with this, and we are sober enough politicians to say frankly: let us re-examine our policy in regard to the peasantry. The state of affairs that has prevailed so far cannot be continued any longer.

We must say to the peasants: "If you want to turn back, if you want to restore private property and unrestricted trade in their entirety, it will certainly and inevitably mean falling under the rule of the landowners and the capitalists. This has been proved by a number of examples from history and examples of revolutions. The briefest examination of the ABC of communism and political economy will prove that this is inevitable. Let us then look into the matter. Is it or is it not in the interest of the peasantry to part ways with the proletariat only to slip back—and let the country slip back—to the rule of the capitalists and landowners? Consider this, and let us consider it together."

We believe that if the matter is given proper consideration, the conclusion will be in our favour, in spite of the admittedly deep gulf between the economic interests of the proletariat and the small farmer.

Difficult as our position is in regard to resources, the needs of the middle peasantry must be satisfied. There are far more middle peasants now than before, the antagonisms have been smoothed out, the land has been distributed for use far more equally, the kulak's position has been undermined and he has been in considerable measure expropriated—in Russia more than in the Ukraine, and less in Siberia. On the whole, however, statistics show quite definitely that there has been a levelling out, an equalisation, in the village, that is, the old sharp division into kulaks and cropless peasants has disappeared. Everything has become more equable, the peasantry in general has acquired the status of the middle peasant.

Can we satisfy this middle peasantry as such, with its economic peculiarities and economic roots? Any Communist who thought the economic basis, the economic roots, of small farming could be reshaped in three years was, of course, a dreamer. We need not conceal the fact that there were a

good many such dreamers among us. Nor is there anything particularly bad in this. How could one start a socialist revolution in a country like ours without dreamers? Practice has, of course, shown the tremendous role all kinds of experiments and undertakings can play in the sphere of collective agriculture. But it has also afforded instances of these experiments as such playing a negative role, when people, with the best of intentions and desires, went to the countryside to set up communes but did not know how to run them because they had no experience in collective endeavour. The experience of these collective farms merely provided examples of how not to run farms: the peasants around either laughed or jeered.

You know perfectly well how many cases there have been of this kind. I repeat that this is not surprising, for it will take generations to remould the small farmer, and recast his mentality and habits. The only way to solve this problem of the small farmer—to improve, so to speak, his mentality—is through the material basis, technical equipment, the extensive use of tractors and other farm machinery and electrification on a mass scale. This would remake the small farmer fundamentally and with tremendous speed. If I say this will take generations, it does not mean centuries. But you know perfectly well that to obtain tractors and other machinery and to electrify this vast country is a matter that may take decades in any case. Such is the objective situation.

We must try to satisfy the demands of the peasants who are dissatisfied and disgruntled, and legitimately so, and who cannot be otherwise. We must say to them: "Yes, this cannot go on any longer." How is the peasant to be satisfied and what does satisfying him mean? Where is the answer? Naturally it lies in the demands of the peasantry. We know these demands. But we must verify them and examine all that we know of the farmer's economic demands from the standpoint of economic science. If we go into this, we shall see at once that it will take essentially two things to satisfy the small farmer. The first is a certain freedom of exchange, freedom for the small private proprietor, and the second is the need to obtain commodities and products. What indeed would free exchange amount to if there was

nothing to exchange, and freedom of trade, if there was nothing to trade with! It would all remain on paper, and classes cannot be satisfied with scraps of paper, they want the goods. These two conditions must be clearly understood. The second—how to get commodities and whether we shall be able to obtain them—we shall discuss later. It is the first condition—free exchange—that we must deal with now.

What is free exchange? It is unrestricted trade, and that means turning back towards capitalism. Free exchange and freedom of trade mean circulation of commodities between petty proprietors. All of us who have studied at least the elements of Marxism know that this exchange and freedom of trade inevitably lead to a division of commodity producers into owners of capital and owners of labour-power, a division into capitalists and wage-workers, i.e., a revival of capitalist wage-slavery, which does not fall from the sky but springs the world over precisely from the agricultural commodity economy. This we know perfectly well in theory, and anyone in Russia who has observed the small farmer's life and the conditions under which he farms must have seen this.

How then can the Communist Party recognise freedom to trade and accept it? Does not the proposition contain irreconcilable contradictions? The answer is that the practical solution of the problem naturally presents exceedingly great difficulties. I can foresee, and I know from the talks I have had with some comrades, that the preliminary draft on replacing surplus-grain appropriation by a tax—it has been handed out to you—gives rise to legitimate and inevitable questions, mostly as regards permitting exchange of goods within the framework of local economic turnover. This is set forth at the end of Point 8. What does it mean, what limits are there to this exchange, how is it all to be implemented? Anyone who expects to get the answer at this Congress will be disappointed. We shall find the answer in our legislation; it is our task to lay down the principle to be followed and provide the slogan. Our Party is the government party and the decision the Party Congress passes will be obligatory for the entire Republic: it is now up to us to decide the question in principle. We must do this and inform the peasantry of

our decision, for the sowing season is almost at hand. Further we must muster our whole administrative apparatus, all our theoretical forces and all our practical experience, in order to see how it can be done. Can it be done at all, theoretically speaking: can freedom of trade, freedom of capitalist enterprise for the small farmer, be restored to a certain extent without undermining the political power of the proletariat? Can it be done? Yes, it can, for everything hinges on the extent. If we were able to obtain even a small quantity of goods and hold them in the hands of the state—the proletariat exercising political power—and if we could release these goods into circulation, we, as the state, would add economic power to our political power. Release of these goods into circulation would stimulate small farming, which is in a terrible state and cannot develop owing to the grievous war conditions and the economic chaos. The small farmer, so long as he remains small, needs a spur, an incentive that accords with his economic basis, i.e., the individual small farm. Here you cannot avoid local free exchange. If this turnover gives the state, in exchange for manufactured goods, a certain minimum amount of grain to cover urban and industrial requirements, economic circulation will be revived, with state power remaining in the hands of the proletariat and growing stronger. The peasants want to be shown in practice that the worker who controls the mills and factories—industry—is capable of organising exchange with the peasantry. And, on the other hand, the vastness of our agricultural country with its poor transport system, boundless expanses, varying climate, diverse farming conditions, etc., makes a certain freedom of exchange between local agriculture and local industry, on a local scale, inevitable. In this respect, we are very much to blame for having gone too far; we overdid the nationalisation of industry and trade, clamping down on local exchange of commodities. Was that a mistake? It certainly was.

In this respect we have made many patent mistakes, and it would be a great crime not to see it, and not to realise that we have failed to keep within bounds, and have not known where to stop. There has, of course, also been the factor of necessity—until now we have been living in the conditions of a savage war that imposed an unprecedented

burden on us and left us no choice but to take war-time measures in the economic sphere as well. It was a miracle that the ruined country withstood this war, yet the miracle did not come from heaven, but grew out of the economic interests of the working class and the peasantry, whose mass enthusiasm created the miracle that defeated the landowners and capitalists. But at the same time it is an unquestionable fact that we went further than was theoretically and politically necessary, and this should not be concealed in our agitation and propaganda. We can allow free local exchange to an appreciable extent, without destroying, but actually strengthening the political power of the proletariat. How this is to be done, practice will show. I only wish to prove to you that theoretically it is conceivable. The proletariat, wielding state power, can, if it has any reserves at all, put them into circulation and thereby satisfy the middle peasant to a certain extent—on the basis of local economic exchange.

Now a few words about local economic exchange. First of all, the co-operatives. They are now in an extreme state of decline, but we naturally need them as a vehicle of local economic exchange. Our Programme stresses that the co-operatives left over from capitalism are the best distribution network and must be preserved. That is what the Programme says. Have we lived up to this? To a very slight extent, if at all, again partly because we have made mistakes, partly because of the war-time necessity. The co-operatives brought to the fore the more business-like, economically more advanced elements, thereby bringing out the Mensheviks and Socialist-Revolutionaries in the political sphere. This is a law of chemistry—you can't do anything about it! (*Laughter.*) The Mensheviks and Socialist-Revolutionaries are people who either consciously or unconsciously work to restore capitalism and help the Yudeniches. This too is a law. We must fight them. And if there is to be a fight, it must be done the military way; we had to defend ourselves, and we did. But do we have to perpetuate the present situation? No, we do not. It would be a mistake to tie our hands in this way. Because of this I submit a resolution on the question of the co-operatives; it is very brief and I shall read it to you:

"Whereas the resolution of the Ninth Congress of the R.C.P. on the co-operatives is based entirely on the principle of surplus-grain appropriation, which is now superseded by a tax in kind, the Tenth Congress of the R.C.P. resolves:

"That the said resolution be rescinded.

"The Congress instructs the Central Committee to draw up and carry out through Party and Soviet channels decisions to improve and develop the structure and activity of the co-operatives in conformity with the Programme of the R.C.P. and with a view to substituting the tax in kind for the surplus-grain appropriation system."

You will say that this is rather vague. Yes, it is, and should necessarily be so to some extent. Why necessarily? Because if we are to be absolutely definite, we must know exactly what we are going to do over the year ahead. Who knows that? No one.

But the resolution of the Ninth Congress ties our hands by calling for "subordination to the Commissariat for Food". This is a fine institution, but it would be an obvious political mistake to subordinate the co-operatives to it and to no other, and to tie our hands at a time when we are reviewing our attitude to the small farmers. We must instruct the newly elected Central Committee to elaborate and carry out definite measures and changes, and to check up on every step we take forward or back—to what extent we must act, how to uphold our political interests, how much relaxation there must be to make things easier, how to check up on the results of our experience. Theoretically speaking, in this respect we are facing a number of transitional stages, or transitional measures. One thing is clear: the resolution of the Ninth Congress assumed that we would be advancing in a straight line, but it turned out, as has happened again and again throughout the history of revolutions, that the movement took a zigzag course. To tie one's hands with such a resolution would be a political mistake. Annulling it, we say that we must be guided by our Programme, which stresses the importance of the co-operative machinery.

As we annul the resolution, we say: work with a view to replacing surplus-grain appropriation by a tax. But when are we to do this? Not before the harvest, that is, in a few months' time. Will it be done the same way everywhere?

In no circumstances. It would be the height of stupidity to apply the same pattern to central Russia, the Ukraine, and Siberia. I propose that this fundamental idea of unrestricted local exchange be formulated as a decision of this Congress. I presume that following this decision the Central Committee will without fail send out a letter within the next few days and will point out—doing it better than I can do here (we shall find the best writers to polish up the style)—that there are to be no radical changes, no undue haste, or snap decisions, and that things should be done so as to give maximum satisfaction to the middle peasantry, without damaging the interests of the proletariat. Try one thing and another, study things in practice, through experience, then share your experience with us, and let us know what you have managed to do, and we shall set up a special commission or even several commissions to consider the experience that has been accumulated. I think we should issue a special invitation to Comrade Preobrazhensky, the author of *Paper Money in the Epoch of the Proletarian Dictatorship*. This is a highly important question, for money circulation is a splendid test of the state of commodity circulation in the country; when it is unsatisfactory, money is not worth the paper it is printed on. In order to proceed on the basis of experience, we must check and recheck the measures we have adopted.

We shall be asked where the goods are to come from, for unrestricted trade requires goods, and the peasants are shrewd people and very good at scoffing. Can we obtain any goods now? Today we can, for our international economic position has greatly improved. We are waging a fight against the international capitalists, who, when they were first confronted by this Republic, called us “brigands and crocodiles” (I was told by an English artist that she had heard these very words spoken by one of the most influential politicians*). Crocodiles are despicable. That was the verdict of international capital. It was the verdict of a class enemy and quite correct from his point of view. However, the correctness of such conclusions has to be verified in practice.

* The expression was conveyed to Lenin by Clare Sheridan, an English sculptress, who visited Soviet Russia in 1920, and evidently belongs to Winston Churchill.—Ed.

If you are world capital—a world power—and you use words like “crocodile” and have all the technical means at your disposal, why not try and shoot it! Capital did shoot—and got the worst of it. It was then that the capitalists, who are forced to reckon with political and economic realities, declared: “We must trade.” This is one of our greatest victories. Let me tell you that we now have two offers of a loan to the amount of nearly one hundred million gold rubles. We have gold, but you can’t sell gold, because you can’t eat it. Everybody has been reduced to a state of impoverishment, currency relations between all the capitalist countries are incredibly chaotic as a result of the war. Moreover, you need a merchant marine to communicate with Europe, and we have none. It is in hostile hands. We have concluded no treaty with France; she considers that we are her debtors and, consequently, that every ship we have is hers. They have a navy and we have none. In these circumstances we have so far been in a position to make use of our gold on a limited and ridiculously insignificant scale. Now we have two offers from capitalist bankers to float a loan of one hundred million. Of course, they will charge us an exorbitant rate of interest. Still it is their first offer of this kind; so far they have said: “I’ll shoot you and take everything for nothing.” Now, being unable to shoot us, they are ready to trade with us. Trade agreements with America and Britain can now be said to be almost in the bag; the same applies to concessions. Yesterday I received another letter from Mr. Vanderlip, who is here and who, besides numerous complaints, sets forth a whole series of plans concerning concessions and a loan. He represents the shrewdest type of finance capitalist connected with the Western States of the U.S.A., those that are more hostile to Japan. So it is economically possible for us to obtain goods. How we shall manage to do it is another question, but a certain possibility is there.

I repeat, the type of economic relations which on top looks like a bloc with foreign capitalism makes it possible for the proletarian state power to arrange for free exchange with the peasantry below. I know—and I have had occasion to say this before—that this has evoked some sneers. There is a whole intellectual-bureaucratic stratum in Moscow, which

is trying to shape "public opinion". "See what communism has come to!" these people sneer. "It's like a man on crutches and face all bandaged up—nothing but a picture puzzle." I have heard enough of gibes of this kind—they are either bureaucratic or just irresponsible. Russia emerged from the war in a state that can most of all be likened to that of a man beaten to within an inch of his life; the beating had gone on for seven years, and it's a mercy she can hobble about on crutches! That is the situation we are in! To think that we can get out of this state without crutches is to understand nothing! So long as there is no revolution in other countries, it would take us decades to extricate ourselves, and in these circumstances we cannot grudge hundreds of millions' or even thousands of millions' worth of our immense wealth, our rich raw material sources, in order to obtain help from the major capitalists. Later we shall recover it all and to spare. The rule of the proletariat cannot be maintained in a country laid waste as no country has ever been before—a country where the vast majority are peasants who are equally ruined—without the help of capital, for which, of course, exorbitant interest will be extorted. This we must understand. Hence, the choice is between economic relations of this type and nothing at all. He who puts the question otherwise understands absolutely nothing in practical economics and is side-stepping the issue by resorting to gibes. We must recognise the fact that the masses are utterly worn-out and exhausted. What can you expect after seven years of war in this country, if the more advanced countries still feel the effects of four years of war?!

In this backward country, the workers, who have made unprecedented sacrifices, and the mass of the peasants are in a state of utter exhaustion after seven years of war. This condition borders on complete loss of working capacity. What is needed now is an economic breathing space. We had hoped to use our gold reserve to obtain some means of production. It would be best of all to make our own machines, but even if we bought them, we would thereby build up our industry. To do this, however, you must have a worker and a peasant who can work; yet in most cases they are in no condition for it, they are exhausted, worn-out. They

must be assisted, and contrary to our old Programme the gold reserve must be used for consumer goods. That Programme was theoretically correct, but practically unsound. I shall pass on to you some information I have here from Comrade Lezhava. It shows that several hundred thousand poods of various items of food have already been bought in Lithuania, Finland, and Latvia and are being shipped in with the utmost speed. Today we have learned that a deal has been concluded in London for the purchase of 18,500,000 poods of coal, which we decided to buy in order to revive the industry of Petrograd and the textile industry. If we obtain goods for the peasant, it will, of course, be a violation of the Programme, an irregularity, but we must have a respite, for the people are exhausted to a point where they are not able to work.

I must say a few words about the individual exchange of commodities. When we speak of free exchange, we mean individual exchange of commodities, which in turn means encouraging the kulaks. What are we to do? We must not close our eyes to the fact that the switch from the appropriation of surpluses to the tax will mean more kulaks under the new system. They will appear where they could not appear before. This must not be combated by prohibitive measures but by association under state auspices and by government measures from above. If you can give the peasant machines you will help him grow, and when you provide machines or electric power, tens or hundreds of thousands of small kulaks will be wiped out. Until you can supply all that, you must provide a certain quantity of goods. If you have the goods, you have the power; to preclude, deny or renounce any such possibility means making all exchange unfeasible and not satisfying the middle peasant, who will be impossible to get along with. A greater proportion of peasants in Russia have become middle peasants, and there is no reason to fear exchange on an individual basis. Everyone can give something in exchange to the state: one, his grain surplus; another, his garden produce; a third, his labour. Basically the situation is this: we must satisfy the middle peasantry economically and go over to free exchange; otherwise it will be impossible—economically impossible—in view of the delay in the world revolution, to preserve the

rule of the proletariat in Russia. We must clearly realise this and not be afraid to say it. In the draft decision to substitute a tax in kind for the surplus appropriation system (the text has been handed out to you) you will find many discrepancies, even contradictions, and that is why we have added these words at the end: "The Congress, approving in substance" (this is a rather loose word covering a great deal of ground) "the propositions submitted by the Central Committee to substitute a tax in kind for surplus-grain appropriation, instructs the Central Committee of the Party to co-ordinate these propositions with the utmost dispatch." We know that they have not been co-ordinated, for we had no time to do so. We did not go into the details. The ways of levying the tax in practice will be worked out in detail and the tax implemented by a law issued by the All-Russia Central Executive Committee and the Council of People's Commissars. The procedure outlined is this: if you adopt the draft today, it will be given the force of a decision at the very first session of the All-Russia Central Executive Committee, which will not issue a law either, but modified regulations; the Council of People's Commissars and the Council of Labour and Defence will later make them into a law, and, what is still more important, issue practical instructions. It is important that people in the localities should understand the significance of this and help us.

Why must we replace surplus appropriation by a tax? Surplus appropriation implied confiscation of all surpluses and establishment of a compulsory state monopoly. We could not do otherwise, for our need was extreme. Theoretically speaking, state monopoly is not necessarily the best system from the standpoint of the interests of socialism. A system of taxation and free exchange can be employed as a transitional measure in a peasant country possessing an industry—if this industry is running—and if there is a certain quantity of goods available.

The exchange is an incentive, a spur to the peasant. The proprietor can and will surely make an effort in his own interest when he knows that all his surplus produce will not be taken away from him and that he will only have to pay a tax, which should whenever possible be fixed in advance. The basic thing is to give the small farmer an incentive

and a spur to till the soil. We must adapt our state economy to the economy of the middle peasant, which we have not managed to remake in three years, and will not be able to remake in another ten.

The state had to face definite responsibilities in the sphere of food. Because of this the appropriation quotas were increased last year. The tax must be smaller. The exact figures have not been defined, nor can they be defined. Popov's booklet, *Grain Production of the Soviet and Federated Republics*, gives the exact data issued by our Central Statistical Board and shows why agricultural production has fallen off.

If there is a crop failure, surpluses cannot be collected because there will be none. They would have to be taken out of the peasants' mouths. If there is a crop, everybody will go moderately hungry and the state will be saved, or it will perish, unless we take from people who do not eat their fill as it is. This is what we must make clear in our propaganda among the peasants. A fair harvest will mean a surplus of up to five hundred million poods. This will cover consumption and yield a certain reserve. The important thing is to give the peasants an economic incentive. The small proprietor must be told: "It is your job as a proprietor to produce, and the state will take a minimum tax."

My time is nearly up, I must close; I repeat: we cannot issue a law now. The trouble with our resolution is that it is not sufficiently legislative—laws are not written at Party congresses. Hence we propose that the resolution submitted by the C.C. be adopted as a basis and that the C.C. be instructed to co-ordinate the various propositions contained in it. We shall print the text of the resolution and Party officials in the various localities will try to co-ordinate and correct it. It cannot be co-ordinated from beginning to end; this is an insoluble problem, for life is too varied. To find the transitional measures is a very difficult task. If we are unable to do this quickly and directly, we must not lose heart, for we shall win through in the end. No peasant with the slightest glimmer of political consciousness will fail to understand that we, as the government, represent the working class and all those working people with whom the labouring peasants (and they make up nine-tenths of the

total) can agree, that any turn back will mean a return to the old, tsarist government. The experience of Kronstadt proves this. There they do not want either the whiteguards or our government—and there is no other—and as a result they find themselves in a situation which speaks best of all in our favour and against any new government.

We are now in a position to come to an agreement with the peasants, and this must be done in practice, skilfully, efficiently, and flexibly. We are familiar with the apparatus of the Commissariat for Food and know that it is one of the best we have. We see that it is better than that of the others and we must preserve it. Administrative machinery, however, must be subordinated to politics. The splendid apparatus of the Commissariat for Food will be useless if we cannot establish proper relations with the peasants, for otherwise this splendid apparatus will be serving Denikin and Kolchak, and not our own class. Since resolute change, flexibility and skilful transition have become politically necessary, the leaders must realise it. A strong apparatus must be suitable for any manoeuvre, but struggle is inevitable when its strength makes it unwieldy and hampers change. All efforts must, therefore, be turned to achieving our aim: the complete subordination of the apparatus to politics. Politics are relations between classes, and that will decide the fate of our Republic. The stronger the apparatus, as an auxiliary, the better and more suitable it is for manoeuvring. If it cannot manoeuvre, it is of no use to us.

I ask you to bear in mind this basic fact—it will take several months to work out the details and interpretations. The chief thing to bear in mind at the moment is that we must let the whole world know, by wireless this very night, of our decision; we must announce that this Congress of the government party is, in the main, replacing the surplus appropriation system by a tax and is giving the small farmer certain incentives to expand his farm and plant more; that by embarking on this course the Congress is correcting the system of relations between the proletariat and the peasantry and expresses its conviction that in this way these relations will be made durable. (*Stormy applause.*)

Summing-Up Speech on the Tax in Kind

March 15

Comrades, I think I can confine myself to a few fairly brief remarks. First of all, the question of the Siberian food supply workers. Yaroslavsky and Danishevsky have asked me to make the following statement. Drozhzhin has been put on trial to prove that he is not guilty. I can hear sceptical remarks, but at all events it must be said that this course is correct. We hear a lot of scandal and gossip, and this is the proper way of proving them to be false. Then again, a number of food supply workers in Tyumen have been shot for flogging, torture, rape and other crimes. Consequently, in no circumstances can this be connected with food supply work, but should be regarded as criminal outrages calling for harsher penalties than usual, in view of the conditions in which the food supply work is proceeding. From this aspect, therefore, the measures adopted were correct.

I should now like to start by saying a few words about the question of the co-operatives. Comrade Tsyurupa's report—as we all heard him say here—was not a co-report presenting a point of view opposite to that of the chief rapporteur. The Central Committee's decision to substitute a tax for the surplus-grain appropriation system was adopted with such obvious unanimity—and what is most important, we saw at once, even before the Congress opened, that various comrades in the localities had arrived at the same conclusions independently of this decision, on the basis of their own practical experience—that it is essentially impossible to doubt that as a measure it is proper and necessary. In his report, Comrade Tsyurupa added a few suggestions

and warnings on a number of questions, but he did not propose a different policy.

The only departure from this general line in his report was made on the question of the co-operatives. He opposed my draft resolution, but I'm afraid his arguments do not carry conviction. We can hardly determine just now how relations in local free economic exchange will develop, and how the fund is to be handled—through co-operative societies or the restoration of small private trade. This question must certainly be examined, and in this respect we must make a careful study of local experience; that, of course, is something we all agree upon. I think, however, that the co-operative societies still present certain advantages. In so far as, politically—I have already pointed this out—they serve as centres for the organisation, centralisation and amalgamation of elements politically hostile to us and are in effect pursuing a Kolchak and Denikin policy, the co-operatives are only another form of small economy and small trade. Every emergence of the kulaks and the development of petty-bourgeois relations evidently give rise to corresponding political parties, which had been developing in Russia for decades, and with which we are quite familiar. The choice before us is not whether or not to allow these parties to grow—they are inevitably engendered by petty-bourgeois economic relations. The only choice before us, and a limited one at that, is between the forms of concentration and co-ordination of these parties' activities. It cannot possibly be proved that the co-operatives are worse in this respect. On the contrary, the Communists will have somewhat greater opportunities to exert systematic influence and control over the co-operatives.

The resolution on the co-operatives passed by the Ninth Congress was strongly defended here by Comrade Tsyurupa, and strongly opposed by Comrade Milyutin.

Incidentally, Comrade Tsyurupa said that I had been a witness to the struggle over the question of co-operatives before it was settled by the Congress. I must corroborate this. Indeed, there was a struggle, and the resolution adopted by the Ninth Congress put a stop to it by ensuring greater predominance, or it would be more exact to say complete predominance, for the Food Supply Department. But it

would, undoubtedly, be politically wrong, on these grounds, to forego greater freedom of action and freedom of choice of political measures in respect of the co-operatives. In my capacity of, say, Chairman of the Council of People's Commissars, I find it much more unpleasant to have to watch this petty strife, and even bickering, at scores of meetings, than to have the backing of a Congress resolution, which is binding on all and which puts a stop to this struggle. But we must not be swayed by such conveniences, but must look to the interests of a definite economic policy. You have all seen here, and the large number of notes—a great pile of notes—that I have received confirm it even more strikingly, that in this concrete question a vast number of difficulties of detail arise in the course of changing our policy. That is the whole point. And there is no doubt whatever that we shall be unable to solve them at one stroke. If we allow the resolution on the co-operatives adopted by the Ninth Congress to remain in force we shall have our hands tied. We shall put ourselves in a position where, being entirely subordinate to the Congress and bound to pursue its policy, we shall be unable to depart from the letter of this resolution. The resolution repeatedly refers to the surplus-grain appropriation system, but we are substituting a tax for it.

We have no idea how much latitude we shall leave to economic exchange.

That we must allow some is beyond doubt, and we must take account of and verify the economic conditions for it. That is why, of course, if we rescind the resolution of the Ninth Congress we shall be back where the question, which seems to have been closed to some extent, becomes an open one again. This is absolutely inevitable. To evade it would mean basically to prejudice the economic policy relations which we have outlined and which are, undoubtedly, more acceptable to the peasants.

There is evidently no difference of opinion at this Congress, or among Communists in general, as to whether the switch from appropriation to a tax is a more acceptable economic policy for the peasants. And we have a number of statements to this effect from non-Party peasants as well. This has been definitely established, and it alone suggests

that we ought to have the change. Let me, therefore, read you the resolution on the co-operatives again:

"Whereas the resolution of the Ninth Congress of the R.C.P. on the co-operatives is based entirely on the principle of surplus-grain appropriation, which is now superseded by a tax in kind, the Tenth Congress of the R.C.P. resolves:

"That the said resolution be rescinded.

"The Congress instructs the Central Committee to draw up and carry out through Party and Soviet channels decisions to improve and develop the structure and activity of the co-operatives in conformity with the Programme of the R.C.P. and with a view to substituting the tax in kind for the surplus-grain appropriation system."

On behalf of the Central Committee, I shall ask the Congress to adopt the first resolution—the preliminary draft on substituting a tax for the surplus-grain appropriation system—to adopt it as a basis and instruct the Central Committee of the Party to co-ordinate the proposals, make the final draft and submit it to the All-Russia Central Executive Committee; and also the second resolution on the co-operatives.

I now come to the remarks made here. I must say that the questions I have received in writing are so numerous, there is such a heap of them, that not only am I unable to enumerate the subjects they touch upon, but I am compelled to give up the effort to classify them all in a suitable way for discussion here. I regret to say that I am compelled to abandon this task, but I will keep these notes as material for any future discussion of the subject.

Perhaps it will be possible to utilise them in greater detail in the press, or, at all events, to collect and classify them and then compile a detailed and really full summary for the benefit of the comrades economists, executives and political leaders who will be directly engaged in the task of drafting the law substituting the tax for surplus appropriation. At present, I can only select the two main trends and say a few words about the two main objections or remarks, about the two main types or groups of questions raised in these notes.

The first deals with technical questions: these are numerous and detailed references to the difficulties and the

many problems that will arise in carrying out these measures. I pointed out in my report that this was absolutely inevitable and that it is quite impossible at present to determine at once how we shall proceed to solve these difficulties.

The second deals with general principles of economic policy. Many, I should say most, of the speakers, and these written questions, all pointed to the inevitable increase in the strength of the petty bourgeoisie, the bourgeoisie and capitalism. A number of comrades wrote in their notes: "This is throwing open the door for the development of a bourgeoisie, small industry and capitalist relationships." In answer to this, comrades, I must say, repeating something of what I said in my report: There is no doubt whatever that the transition from capitalism to socialism is conceivable in different forms, depending upon whether big capitalist or small production relationships predominate in the country. And I must say on this score that criticism was expressed of certain conclusions drawn from my speech on the relation between state capitalism and free small-scale exchange; but no one has criticised my propositions, nor were they criticised in any of the notes I have received (I have read most of them, and they run to several dozen). Direct transition to communism would have been possible if ours was a country with a predominantly—or, say, highly developed—large-scale industry, and a high level of large-scale production in agriculture, otherwise the transition to communism is economically impossible. Comrade Milyutin said that we had a harmonious system, and that our laws represented, as he put it, to a certain extent, a harmonious system for such a transition, which, however, did not take account of the necessity of having to make a number of concessions to the petty bourgeoisie. But having said that, Comrade Milyutin drew a different conclusion from mine. The harmonious system that has been created was dictated by war and not by economic requirements, considerations or conditions. There was no other way out in the conditions of the unexampled ruin in which we found ourselves, when after a big war we were obliged to endure a number of civil wars. We must state quite definitely that in pursuing our policy, we may have made mistakes and gone to extremes in a number of cases. But in the war-time condi-

tions then prevailing, the policy was in the main a correct one. We had no alternative but to resort to wholesale and instant monopoly, including the confiscation of all surplus stocks, even without compensation. That was the only way we could tackle the task. That was not a harmonious economic system; it was not a measure called forth by economic conditions, but one largely dictated to us by war conditions. The main economic consideration now is to increase the quantity of products. Our principal productive forces, the peasants and workers, are in such a state of impoverishment, ruin, weariness and exhaustion that for a time we must subordinate everything to this main consideration—increasing the quantity of products at all costs.

Some ask: What connection is there between the substitution of a tax for the surplus-grain appropriation system and the sowing campaign now in progress? In their notes, the comrades strive to expose a number of contradictions. I think that, in the main, there is economic consistency here, and not contradiction. The sowing campaign is based on a number of measures directed towards taking the utmost possible advantage of all economic opportunities to increase the sown area. For this purpose, we must redistribute the seed, store it properly and transport it. But scanty as our seed stocks are, we are unable to transport them; very often we are compelled to resort to various forms of mutual aid to reduce the area left unsown to a minimum and to eliminate it altogether, in spite of the appalling shortage of implements. That is out of the question in a number of gubernias. If the non-Party peasants, who in very many cases have themselves demanded the switch to the tax—for it gives them an incentive to develop their farms on the present economic basis—are definitely told by the state authorities before the spring campaign that this measure has been decided upon and will be applied—does that run counter to the general policy of the sowing campaign? No, it does not; it is a measure that introduces an element of encouragement. I know that it will be said that this is a very small element of encouragement. But that is not the point. It would, of course, be something much more real, if we could immediately show the peasants dozens of ships on their way from Britain with goods to be exchanged for

the grain they collect in the coming harvest. But it would be ridiculous to attempt to deceive people who have practical knowledge of the state of our commerce. We know that ships loaded with coal and a small quantity of foodstuffs are leaving Britain; we have the information from Comrade Krasin. We know that pending the conclusion of a trade agreement, which has not been signed yet, semi-legal commerce is being carried on with individual merchants whom the bourgeois government cannot, of course, prohibit from trading with us. It is a difficult task to break through the economic blockade, and, of course, we cannot make any great promises. At all events, we are doing all we can, and we are altering the imports plan accordingly.

From the standpoint of the small proprietor, the small farmer, the tax, which is to be smaller than surplus appropriation, will be more definite and will enable him to sow more, and assure him of the opportunity of using his surplus to improve his farm. From his standpoint, it is a policy of rendering the utmost assistance to the industrious farmer, and this is being emphasised in the sowing campaign. In the last analysis, all the objections can be reduced to the following: Who will gain most by this—the petty bourgeoisie, which is economically hostile to communism, or large-scale industry, which is the basis of the transition to socialism and—in the light of the state of the productive forces, that is, the touchstone of social development—is the basis of socialist economic organisation, for it unites the advanced industrial workers, the class which is exercising the dictatorship of the proletariat?

Several speakers tried to prove or draw the economic deduction that the petty bourgeoisie—handicraft commodity production—will undoubtedly gain most; and they urged this particularly on the grounds that as a result of our granting concessions, large-scale industry will cease to be socialist. I think there is fundamental economic error in these arguments. Even if it could be definitely proved that small industry will gain most, relatively, or even, say, absolutely, it would not, either theoretically or practically, disprove the correctness of the steps we are taking. The fact is that there is no other basis for the economic consolidation of our work of building socialism. Let us assume—purely for the sake of

example and illustration—that small industry has a value of 100 (100 million work units, or 100 units of any other kind, it makes no difference) and large-scale industry, 200. Let us assume that on a capitalist basis small industry increases to 175, while large-scale industry remains at 200. We are assuming stagnation in large-scale industry and an enormous development of small industry. I think that even this worst assumption that I have made would represent an undoubted gain for us because at present, as this year's experience has shown, as our fuel and transport conditions indicate, and as the food distribution—which Comrade Milyutin very opportunely reminded us of—is showing, we are barely holding on.

Speakers here have asked, and I have received written questions to the same effect: "How will you retain the workers' state, if capitalism develops in the rural areas?" This peril—the development of small production and of the petty bourgeoisie in the rural areas—is an extremely serious one.

I now come to concessions. They signify a bloc with capitalism in the advanced countries. We must be clear in our minds about the nature of concessions. They signify an economic alliance, a bloc, a contract with advanced finance capital in the advanced countries, a contract that will give us a slight increase in products, but will also result in an increase in the products of the concessionaires. If we give the latter ore or timber, they will take the lion's share and leave us a small share. But it is so important for us to increase the quantity of products at our command that even a small share will be an enormous gain for us. Even a slight improvement in the condition of the urban workers, which will be guaranteed in the concessions agreement, and will not present the slightest difficulty to foreign capital, will be a gain and will serve to strengthen our large-scale industry. And this, as a result of its economic influence, will serve to improve the condition of the proletariat, the class which is wielding political power.

There is no ground to fear that small-scale agriculture and small industry will grow to dimensions that may prove dangerous for our large-scale industry. There must be certain signs for the rise of industry.

If we have a bad harvest (I have already mentioned Popov's pamphlet), and our resources are as scanty as they were last year, an abatement of the crisis and development of small industry are out of the question: capitalist relations can be restored only if agricultural industry yields a surplus. That is possible, and this is very important, for it represents a material gain for us. The question of whether small or large-scale production will gain more will be determined by the extent to which we succeed in co-ordinating and combining the utilisation of our funds and the development of the market, which we shall achieve by means of concessions agreements with capitalism; and this will result in an increase in agricultural production for us. The result will depend upon which side makes the best use of these resources. I think that if the working class, which controls the most important branches of large-scale industry, concentrates on the key ones, it will gain more than small industry, even if the latter does have a relatively faster growth. The situation in our textile industry was such that at the end of 1920 there were obvious signs of an improvement, but there was a shortage of fuel. Otherwise we should have obtained about 800 million arshins* of cloth, and would have had materials of our own manufacture to exchange for farm products.

Owing to the fuel crisis, however, there has been an enormous drop in production. Although we have succeeded in purchasing coal abroad, and ships with this cargo will arrive in a week or two, we have nevertheless lost several weeks or even months.

Every improvement in the state of large-scale production and the possibility of starting some large factories will strengthen the position of the proletariat to such an extent that there will be no need to fear the petty-bourgeois element, even if it is growing. We must not be afraid of the growth of the petty bourgeoisie and small capital. What we must fear is protracted starvation, want and food shortage, which create the danger that the proletariat will be utterly exhausted and will give way to petty-bourgeois vacillation and despair. This is a much more terrible prospect. If output is increased the development of the petty bourgeoisie will

* Arshin is equal to 28 inches.—T τ .

not cause great harm, for the increased output will stimulate the development of large-scale industry. Hence, we must encourage small farming. It is our duty to do all we can to encourage small farming. The tax is one of the modest measures to be taken in this direction, but it is a measure that will undoubtedly provide such encouragement, and we certainly ought to adopt it. (*Applause.*)

**Report on Party Unity
and the Anarcho-Syndicalist
Deviation
March 16**

Comrades, I do not think there is any need to say a great deal on this question because the subjects on which an official pronouncement must now be made on behalf of the Party Congress, that is, on behalf of the whole Party, were touched upon in all the questions discussed at the Congress. The resolution "On Unity"* largely contains a characterisation of the political situation. You must have all read the printed text of this resolution that has been distributed. Point 7, which introduces an exceptional measure, namely, the right to expel a member from the Central Committee by a two-thirds majority of a general meeting of members of the C.C., alternate members and members of the Central Control Commission, is not for publication. This measure was repeatedly discussed at private conferences at which representatives of all shades expressed their opinions. Let us hope, comrades, that it will not be necessary to apply this point; but it is necessary to have it, in view of the new situation, when we are on the eve of a new and fairly sharp turn, and want to abolish all traces of separatism.

Let me now deal with the resolution on syndicalist and anarchist deviations. It is the question touched upon in Point 4 of the Congress agenda. The definition of our attitude to certain trends, or deviations in thinking, is the pivot of the whole resolution. By saying "deviations", we emphasise that we do not as yet regard them as something that has crystallised and is absolutely and fully defined, but merely

* This reference is to the Preliminary Draft Resolution of the Tenth Congress of the R.C.P. on Party Unity.—*Ed.*

as the beginning of a political trend of which the Party must give its appraisal. Point 3 of the resolution on the syndicalist and anarchist deviation, copies of which you all probably have, evidently contains a misprint (judging by the remarks, it has been noticed). It should read: "illustrative of this is, for example, the following thesis of the Workers' Opposition: 'The organisation of the management of the national economy is the function of an All-Russia Congress of Producers organised in industrial unions which shall elect a central body to run the whole of the national economy of the Republic.'"^{*} We have repeatedly discussed this point during the Congress, at restricted conferences as well as at the open general sessions of the Congress. I think we have already made it clear that it is quite impossible to defend this point on the plea that Engels had spoken of an association of producers, because it is quite obvious, and an exact quotation of the appropriate passage will prove, that Engels was referring to a classless communist society. That is something we all take for granted. Once society is rid of classes, only the producers remain, without any division into workers and peasants. And we know perfectly well from all the works of Marx and Engels that they drew a very clear distinction between the period in which classes still exist and that in which they no longer do. Marx and Engels used to ridicule the idea that classes could disappear before communism, and said that communism alone meant their abolition.

The position is that we are the first to raise the question of abolishing classes in the practical plane, and that two main classes remain in this peasant country—the working class and the peasantry. Alongside of them, however, are whole groups left over from capitalism.

Our Programme definitely says that we are taking the first steps and shall have a number of transitional stages. But in the practical work of Soviet administration and in the whole history of the revolution we have constantly had graphic illustrations of the fact that it is wrong to give theoretical definitions of the kind the opposition has given in this case. We know perfectly well that classes have re-

^{*} *Collected Works*, Vol. 32, p. 245.—*Ed.*

mained in our country and will remain for a long time to come; and that in a country with a predominantly peasant population they are bound to remain for many, many years. It will take us at least ten years to organise large-scale industry to produce a reserve and secure control of agriculture. This is the shortest period even if the technical conditions are exceptionally favourable. But we know that our conditions are terribly unfavourable. We have a plan for building up Russia on the basis of modern large-scale industry: it is the electrification plan drawn up by our scientists. The shortest period provided for in that plan is ten years, and this is based on the assumption that conditions will be something like normal. But we know perfectly well that we do not have such conditions and it goes without saying that ten years is an extremely short period for us. We have reached the very core of the question: the situation is such that classes hostile to the proletariat will remain, so that in practice we cannot now create that which Engels spoke about. There will be a dictatorship of the proletariat. Then will come the classless society.

Marx and Engels sharply challenged those who tended to forget class distinctions and spoke about producers, the people, or working people in general. Anyone who has read Marx and Engels will recall that in all their works they ridicule those who talk about producers, the people, working people in general. There are no working people or workers in general; there are either small proprietors who own the means of production, and whose mentality and habits are capitalistic—and they cannot be anything else—or wage-workers with an altogether different cast of mind, wage-workers in large-scale industry, who stand in antagonistic contradiction to the capitalists and are ranged in struggle against them.

We have approached this question after three years of struggle, with experience in the exercise of the political power of the proletariat, and knowledge of the enormous difficulties existing in the relationships between classes, which are still there, and with remnants of the bourgeoisie filling the cracks and crevices of our social fabric, and holding office in Soviet institutions. In the circumstances the appearance of a platform containing the theses I have read

to you is a clear and obvious syndicalist-anarchist deviation. That is no exaggeration: I have carefully weighed my words. A deviation is not yet a full-blown trend. A deviation is something that can be rectified. People have somewhat strayed or are beginning to stray from the path, but can still be put right. That, in my opinion, is what the Russian word *uklon* means. It emphasises that there is nothing final in it as yet, and that the matter can be easily rectified; it shows a desire to sound a warning and to raise the question on principle in all its scope. If anyone has a better word to express this idea, let us have it, by all means. I hope we shall not start arguing over words. We are essentially examining this thesis as the main one, so as not to go chasing after a mass of similar ideas, of which the Workers' Opposition group has a great many. We will leave our writers, and the leaders of this trend to go into the matter, for at the end of the resolution we make a point of saying that special publications and symposiums can and should give space to a more comprehensive exchange of opinion between Party members on all the questions indicated. We cannot now afford to put off the question. We are a party fighting in acute difficulties. We must say to ourselves: if our unity is to be more solid, we must condemn a definite deviation. Since it has come to light, it should be brought out and discussed. If a comprehensive discussion is necessary, let us have it, by all means; we have the men to give chapter and verse on every point, and if we find it relevant and necessary, we shall raise this question internationally as well, for you all know and have just heard the delegate of the Communist International say in his report that there is a certain Leftist deviation in the ranks of the international revolutionary working-class movement. The deviation we are discussing is identical with the anarchist deviation of the German Communist Workers' Party, the fight against which was clearly revealed at the last Congress of the Communist International.* Some of the terms used there to

* Lenin refers here to the anarchist "Leftist" group which broke away from the German Communist Party and formed the so-called Communist Workers' Party of Germany (C.W.P.G.) in April 1920. The "Leftists" advocated petty-bourgeois, anarcho-syndicalist views. C.W.P.G. delegates to the Second Congress of the Communist Interna-

qualify it were stronger than "deviation". You know that this is an international question. That is why it would be wrong to have done with it by saying, "Let's have no more discussions. Full stop." But a theoretical discussion is one thing, and the Party's political line—a political struggle—is another. We are not a debating society. Of course, we are able to publish symposiums and special publications and will continue to do so but our first duty is to carry on the fight against great odds, and that needs unity. If we are to have proposals, like organising an "All-Russia Congress of Producers", introduced into the political discussion and struggle, we shall be unable to march forward united and in step. That is not the policy we have projected over the next few years. It is a policy that would disrupt the Party's team-work, for it is wrong not only in theory, but also in its incorrect definition of the relations between classes—the crucial element which was specified in the resolution of the Second Congress of the Communist International, and without which there is no Marxism. The situation today is such that the non-Party element is yielding to the petty-bourgeois vacillations which are inevitable in Russia's present economic condition. We must remember that in some respects the internal situation presents a greater danger than Denikin and Yudenich; and our unity must not be formal but must go deep down below the surface. If we are to create this unity, a resolution like the one proposed is indispensable.

The next very important thing in my opinion is Point 4 of this resolution, which gives an interpretation of our Programme. It is an authentic interpretation, that is, the author's interpretation. Its author is the Congress, and that is why it must give its interpretation in order to put a stop to all this wavering, and to the tricks that are sometimes being played with our Programme, as if what it says about the trade unions is what some people would like it to say. You have heard Comrade Ryazanov's criticism of the Programme—let us thank the critic for his theoretical researches.

tional, Otto Rühle and A. Merges, left the Congress, after failing to win any support. The C.W.P.G. subsequently became no more than an insignificant sectarian group lacking any working-class support.—Ed.

You have heard Comrade Shlyapnikov's criticism. That is something we must not ignore. I think that here, in this resolution, we have exactly what we need just now. We must say on behalf of the Congress, which endorses the Programme and which is the Party's supreme organ: here is what we understand the Programme to mean. This, I repeat, does not cut short theoretical discussion. Proposals to amend the Programme may be made; no one has suggested that this should be prohibited. We do not think that our Programme is so perfect as not to require any modification whatever; but just now we have no formal proposals, nor have we allocated any time for the examination of this question. If we read the Programme carefully we shall find the following: "The trade unions . . . should eventually arrive at a *de facto* concentration", etc. The words, "should eventually arrive at a *de facto* concentration", should be underlined. And a few lines above that we read: "On the strength of the laws . . . the trade unions participate in all the local and central organs of industrial management." We know that it took decades to build up capitalist industry, with the assistance of all the advanced countries of the world. Are we so childish as to think that we can complete this process so quickly at this time of dire distress and impoverishment, in a country with a mass of peasants, with workers in a minority, and a proletarian vanguard bleeding and in a state of prostration? We have not even laid the main foundation, we have only begun to give an experimental definition of industrial management with the participation of the trade unions. We know that want is the principal obstacle. It is not true to say that we are not enlisting the masses; on the contrary, we give sincere support to anyone among the mass of workers with the least sign of talent, or ability. All we need is for the conditions to ease off ever so little. We need a year or two, at least, of relief from famine. This is an insignificant period of time in terms of history but in our conditions it is a long one. A year or two of relief from famine, with regular supplies of fuel to keep the factories running, and we shall receive a hundred times more assistance from the working class, and far more talent will arise from its ranks than we now have. No one has or can have any doubts about this. The assis-

tance is not forthcoming at present, but not because we do not want it. In fact, we are doing all we can to get it. No one can say that the government, the trade unions, or the Party's Central Committee have missed a single opportunity to do so. But we know that the want in the country is desperate, that there is hunger and poverty everywhere, and that this very often leads to passivity. Let us not be afraid to call a spade a spade: it is these calamities and evils that are hindering the rise of mass energy. In such a situation, when the statistics tell us that 60 per cent of the members of management boards are workers, it is quite impossible to try to interpret the words in the Programme—"The trade unions . . . should eventually arrive at a *de facto* concentration", etc.—*à la* Shlyapnikov.

An authentic interpretation of the Programme will enable us to combine the necessary tactical solidarity and unity with the necessary freedom of discussion, and this is emphasised at the end of the resolution. What does it say in essence? Point 6 reads:

"In view of all this, the Congress of the R.C.P., emphatically rejecting the said ideas, as being expressive of a syndicalist and anarchist deviation, deems it necessary, first, to wage an unswerving and systematic struggle against these ideas; secondly, to recognise the propaganda of these ideas as being incompatible with membership of the R.C.P.

"Instructing the C.C. of the Party strictly to enforce these decisions, the Congress at the same time points out that special publications, symposiums, etc., can and should provide space for a most comprehensive exchange of opinion between Party members on all the questions herein indicated."

Do you not see—you all who are agitators and propagandists in one way or another—the difference between the propaganda of ideas within political parties engaged in struggle, and the exchange of opinion in special publications and symposiums? I am sure that everyone who takes the trouble to understand this resolution will see the difference. And we hope that the representatives of this deviation whom we are taking into the Central Committee will treat the decisions of the Party Congress as every class-conscious disciplined Party member does. We hope that with their assistance we, in the Central Committee, shall

look into this matter, without creating a special situation. We shall investigate and decide what it is that is going on in the Party—whether it is the propaganda of ideas within a political party engaged in struggle, or the exchange of opinion in special publications and symposiums. There is the opportunity for anyone interested in a meticulous study of quotations from Engels. We have theoreticians who can always give the Party useful advice. That is necessary. We shall publish two or three big collections—that is useful and absolutely necessary. But is this anything like the propaganda of ideas, or a conflict of platforms? How can these two things be confused? They will not be confused by anyone who desires to understand our political situation.

Do not hinder our political work, especially in a difficult situation, but go on with your scientific research. We shall be very happy to see Comrade Shlyapnikov supplement his recent book on his experiences in the underground revolutionary struggle with a second volume written in his spare time over the next few months and analysing the concept of “producer”. But the present resolution will serve as our landmark. We opened the widest and freest discussion. The platform of the Workers’ Opposition was published in the Central Organ of the Party in 250,000 copies. We have weighed it up from all sides, we have elected delegates on its basis, and finally we have convened this Congress, which, summing up the political discussion, says: “The deviation has come to light, we shall not play hide-and-peek, but shall say openly: a deviation is a deviation and must be straightened out. We shall straighten it out, and the discussion will be a theoretical one.”

That is why I renew and support the proposal that we adopt both these resolutions, consolidate the unity of the Party, and give a correct definition to what should be dealt with by Party meetings, and what individuals—Marxists, Communists who want to help the Party by looking into theoretical questions—are free to study in their spare time. (*Applause.*)

Summing-Up Speech on Party Unity and the Anarcho-Syndicalist Deviation March 16

Comrades, we have heard some incredibly harsh expressions here, and the harshest, I think, was the accusation that our resolution is slanderous. But some harsh expressions tend to expose themselves. You have the resolution. You know that we took two representatives of the Workers' Opposition into the Central Committee and that we used the term "deviation". I emphasise the meaning of this term. Neither Shlyapnikov nor Medvedyev proposed any other. The theses we have criticised here have been criticised by the representatives of all shades of opinion. After this, how can one talk of slander? If we had ascribed to someone something which is not true there would have been some sense in this harsh expression. As it is, it is simply a sign of irritation. That is not a serious objection!

I now come to the points that have been mentioned here. It has been stated that the Democratic Centralism group* was given unfair treatment. You have followed the development of the agreement between groups and the exchange of opinion on the question of the election to the Central

* *The Democratic Centralism group*—an opposition group that first emerged at the Eighth Congress of the R.C.P.(B.). During the discussion on the trade unions in 1920-21 the group published its factional platform. The group denied the Party's leading role in the Soviets and trade unions, opposed one-man management and the personal responsibility of managers for the administration of enterprises, came out against Lenin's principles in organisational questions, and demanded freedom of factions and groups. The Democratic Centralism group had no influence among the rank-and-file Party members and in 1923 it broke up after its leaders joined the Trotskyite opposition.—*Ed.*

Committee brought up by the representatives of the Democratic Centralism group. You know that ever since the private conference that was attended by the whole of the Workers' Opposition group and a number of very prominent comrades, representatives of all shades, I, for one, have publicly urged that it would be desirable to have representatives of the Workers' Opposition and Democratic Centralism groups on the Central Committee. No one opposed this at the conference, which was attended by all the comrades of the Workers' Opposition and representatives of all shades. It is quite clear that the election of a representative of the Democratic Centralism group as an alternate and not as a full member of the Central Committee was the result of a lengthy exchange of opinion, and an agreement arrived at among the groups. It is captious to regard this as a sign of mistrust in or unfairness to the Democratic Centralism group. We in the Central Committee have done everything to emphasise our desire to be fair. This is a fact that cannot be obliterated. It is cavilling to draw the conclusion that someone has been unfairly treated. Or take the argument of a comrade from the Democratic Centralism group that Point 7 of the resolution was superfluous because the Central Committee already had that right. We propose that Point 7 be withheld from publication because we hope it will not be necessary to apply it; it is an extreme measure. But when the comrade from the Democratic Centralism group says: "The Rules give you this right", he shows that he does not know the Rules, and is ignorant of the principles of centralism and democratic centralism. No democracy or centralism would ever tolerate a Central Committee elected at a Congress having the right to expel its members. (*A voice*: "Bypassing the Party.") Particularly bypassing the Party. The Congress elects the Central Committee, thereby expressing its supreme confidence and vesting leadership in those whom it elects. And our Party has never allowed the Central Committee to have such a right in relation to its members. This is an extreme measure that is being adopted specially, in view of the dangerous situation. This was quite correctly explained by Comrade Radek. A special meeting is called: the Central Committee, plus the alternate members, plus the Control Commission, all having the same right of

vote. Our Rules make no provision for such a body or plenum of 47 persons; and never has anything like it been practised. Hence, I repeat that the comrades of the Democratic Centralism group know neither the Rules, nor the principles of centralism or democratic centralism. It is an extreme measure. I hope we shall not have to apply it. It merely shows that the Party will resort to what you have heard about in the event of disagreements which in one aspect verge on a split. We are not children, we have gone through some hard times, we have seen splits and have survived them; we know what a trial they are, and are not afraid of giving the danger its proper name.

Have we had at previous congresses, even amidst the sharpest disagreements, situations which, in one aspect, verged on a split? No, we have not. Do we have such a situation now? Yes, we do. This point has been made repeatedly. Now, I think, these are disagreements we can combat.

It has also been said that unity is not created by such resolutions; that according to the resolution criticism must be expressed only through the medium of the gubernia committee; that lack of confidence has been expressed in the comrades of the Workers' Opposition and that this has hampered their presence on the Central Committee. But all of this is not true either. I explained from the very outset why we had chosen the word "deviation". If you don't like the word, accept the resolution as a basis and send it up to the Presidium for possible modification. If we find a milder term I would propose that it be substituted for the word "deviation", and also that other parts be modified. We shall not object to that. We cannot discuss such details here, of course. Hand in the resolution to the Presidium for editing and toning down. It is certainly impossible to couch it in stronger terms—I agree with that. But it is not true to say that the resolution means inciting one section of the Party against another.

I do not know the composition of the Workers' Opposition group in Samara, I have not been there; but I am sure that if any member of the Central Committee or delegate to the Congress of whatever shade of opinion—except the Workers' Opposition—were to set out to prove at a meeting of the Samara organisation that there is no incitement in

the resolution, but a call for unity and for winning over the majority of the members of the Workers' Opposition, he would certainly succeed. When people here use the term "incitement" they forget about Point 5 of the resolution on unity, which notes the services of the Workers' Opposition. Are these not set down alongside each other? On the one hand, there is the "guilty of a deviation", and on the other, Point 5 says: "The Congress at the same time declares that every practical proposal concerning questions to which the so-called Workers' Opposition group, for example, has devoted special attention, such as purging the Party of non-proletarian and unreliable elements, combating bureaucratic practices, developing democracy and workers' initiative, etc., must be examined with the greatest care",* etc. Is that incitement? It is a recognition of services. We say: On the one hand, in the discussion, you have shown a deviation which is politically dangerous, and even Comrade Medvedyev's resolution** admits this, although his wording is different. And then we go on to say: As for combating bureaucratic practices, we agree that we are not yet doing all that can be done. That is recognition of services and not incitement!

When a comrade from the Workers' Opposition is taken into the Central Committee, it is an expression of comradely confidence. And after this, anyone attending a meeting not inflamed with factional strife will hear it say that there is no incitement in this, and that it is an expression of comradely confidence. As for the extreme measure, it is a matter for the future: we are not resorting to it now, and are expressing our comradely confidence. If you think that we are wrong in theory, we can issue dozens of special publications on the subject. And if there are any young comrades, in the Samara organisation, for example, who have anything new to say on this question, then let's have it, Comrades Samaritans! We shall publish a few of your articles. Everyone will see the difference between speeches at a Congress and words being bandied outside it. If you examine

* *Collected Works*, Vol. 32, p. 243.—*Ed.*

** On behalf of the Workers' Opposition, S. P. Medvedyev motioned a resolution to counter Lenin's draft resolution "On Party Unity". The former was rejected by a majority at the Tenth Party Congress.—*Ed.*

the precise text of the resolution you will find a theoretical definition of principle, which is not offensive in the least. Alongside of it is recognition of services in combating bureaucratic practices, a request for assistance and, what is more, inclusion of the representatives of this group in the Central Committee, which is the Party's greatest expression of confidence. Therefore, comrades, I move that both resolutions be adopted, by a roll-call vote, and then sent on to the Presidium for revision and modification of the formulations. As Comrade Shlyapnikov is a member of the Presidium, perhaps he will find a more appropriate substitute for the word "deviation".

As regards the notices of resignation, I move we adopt the following resolution: "The Congress calls upon all members of the dissolved Workers' Opposition group to submit to Party discipline, binding them to remain at their posts, and rejects Comrade Shlyapnikov's and all other resignations." (*Applause.*)

Speech in Closing the Congress

March 16

Comrades, we have concluded the work of the Party Congress, which has been meeting at an extremely important moment for the fate of our revolution. The Civil War, coming in the wake of so many years of imperialist war, has so torn and dislocated this country, that its revival is taking place in incredibly difficult conditions. Hence, we should not be surprised that there is a resurgence of the elements of disintegration and decay and of petty-bourgeois and anarchistic elements. One of the fundamental conditions for this is the extreme and unprecedented intensification of want and despair that has now gripped tens and hundreds of thousands, and possibly even larger numbers, of people who see no way out of this disastrous situation. But we know, comrades, that this country has had it even worse. Without shutting our eyes to the danger, or entertaining any sort of false optimism, we say frankly to ourselves and our comrades that the danger is great, but we have great trust in the solidarity of the vanguard of the proletariat. We know that no other force but the class-conscious proletariat can unite the millions of scattered small farmers, many of whom are suffering incredible hardships; no other force can unite them economically and politically against the exploiters. We are convinced that this force has emerged from the experience of the struggle—the gruelling experience of the revolution—sufficiently steeled to withstand all severe trials and the difficulties that lie ahead.

Comrades, apart from the decisions we have adopted on these lines, there is the exceptionally important decision

our Congress has adopted on relations with the peasantry. In it we make a most sober appraisal of the relations between classes, and are not afraid openly to admit that this is a most difficult task, namely, that of establishing proper relations between the proletariat and the predominating peasantry while normal relations are unfeasible. You can call relations normal only when the proletariat has control of large-scale industry and its products and fully satisfies the needs of the peasantry and, providing them with the means of subsistence, so alleviates their condition that there is a tangible and obvious improvement over the capitalist system. That is the only way to create a basis for a normally functioning socialist society. We cannot do this at present because of the crushing ruin, want, impoverishment and despair. But to help to rid ourselves of this accursed legacy we are reacting in a definite way to the relations established during the disastrous war. We will not conceal the fact that the peasantry have some very deep grounds for dissatisfaction. We shall explain the situation more fully, and tell them that we shall do all we can to improve it and pay more heed to the small proprietor's living conditions.

We must do everything to alleviate his condition, to give more to the small farmer, and assure him of greater security in private farming. We are not afraid of the anti-communist trend this measure is bound to produce.

Comrades, we have now been working for several years to lay, for the first time in history, the foundations of a socialist society and a proletarian state, and it is in the spirit of sober appraisal of these relations that we have expressed our full readiness to reconsider this policy and even to modify it. I think that the results of our Congress in this respect will be all the more successful because we have been solidly united on this fundamental question from the very outset. There was need for unanimity in the solution of two fundamental questions, and we have had no disagreements on the relations between the vanguard of the proletariat and its mass, and the relations between the proletariat and the peasantry. In spite of the very difficult political conditions, we have been more united in our decisions on these points than ever before.

Permit me now to deal with two points, which I ask not to be entered into the minutes. The first is the question of concessions in Baku and Grozny. It was dealt with only in passing at this Congress. I was unable to attend that session, but I have been told that some comrades have their doubts or have been left with a sense of dissatisfaction. I don't think there are any grounds for this. The Central Committee thrashed out this question of granting concessions in Grozny and Baku. Several special commissions were set up and special reports from the departments concerned were called for. There was some disagreement, several votes were taken, but after the last one not a single member or group in the Central Committee wished to exercise their incontestable right to appeal to the Congress. The new Central Committee will, I think, have full formal and actual right to decide this big question on the strength of a Congress decision. Unless we grant concessions, we cannot hope to obtain the assistance of well-equipped modern capitalist industry. And unless we utilise the latter, we shall be unable to lay a proper foundation for our own large-scale production in such industries as oil, which is of exceptional importance for the whole of the world economy. We have not yet concluded a single concession agreement, but we shall do all we can to do so. Have you read in the newspapers about the opening of the Baku-Tiflis oil pipeline? There will soon be news of a similar pipeline to Batum. This will give us an outlet to the world market. We have to improve our economic position, and the technical equipment of our Republic, and give our workers more food and goods. Everything that helps to ease things in this respect is of tremendous value to us. That is why we are not afraid of leasing parts of Grozny and Baku. By leasing out one-fourth of Grozny and one-fourth of Baku, we shall be able—if we succeed—to raise the rest of them to the modern technical level of advanced capitalism. There is no other way for us to do this at present. Those who know the state of our economy will understand this. But once we have a base, even if it costs us hundreds of millions of gold rubles, we shall do everything to develop the rest.

The second question that I ask not to be published is the Presidium's special decision concerning the manner of

reporting. You know that at this Congress we have repeatedly had to work in an atmosphere of excessive tension and a larger number of delegates were kept away from the sittings of the Congress than has usually been the case. We must, therefore, be more calm and thoughtful in drawing up a plan of how the reports are to be made in the localities, and we must be guided by a definite decision. Let me read you a comrade's draft of the Presidium's instructions to the delegates returning home (*reads*). I have summed it up, and I think these few lines are sufficient to cause every delegate to ponder over the question and in his report to exercise the necessary caution, taking care not to exaggerate the danger of the situation or allow himself or those around him to panic, whatever the circumstances.

Now that world capitalism has started its incredibly frenzied, hysterical campaign against us, it would be particularly inappropriate for us to panic, and there is no reason to do so. Yesterday, by arrangement with Comrade Chicherin, I received a summary of the news on this question, and I think you will find it instructive. It is a summary of the news on the slander campaign about the situation in Russia. The comrade who made the summary writes: Never before has the West-European press indulged in such an orgy of lies or engaged in the mass production of fantastic inventions about Soviet Russia as in the last fortnight. Since the beginning of March, the whole of the West-European press has been daily pouring out torrents of fantastic reports about insurrections in Russia; a counter-revolutionary victory; Lenin and Trotsky's flight to the Crimea; the white flag over the Kremlin; barricades in Petrograd and Moscow and their streets running with blood; hordes of workers converging on Moscow from the hills to overthrow the Soviet government; Budyonny's defection to the rebels; a counter-revolutionary victory in a number of Russian towns, a succession of names adding up to virtually all the gubernia capitals of Russia. The scope and method of the campaign betray it as a far-reaching plan adopted by all the leading governments. On March 2, the British Foreign Office announced through the *Press Association* that it regarded these reports as improbable, but immediately thereafter issued its own bulletin about a rising in Petrograd, a bombardment

of Petrograd by the Kronstadt fleet, and fighting in the streets of Moscow.

On March 2, all the British newspapers published cabled reports about uprisings in Petrograd and Moscow: Lenin and Trotsky have fled to the Crimea; 14,000 workers in Moscow are demanding a constituent assembly; the Moscow arsenal and the Moscow-Kursk railway station are in the hands of the insurgent workers; in Petrograd, Vasilyevsky Ostrov is entirely in the hands of the insurgents.

Let me quote a few of the radio broadcasts and cables received on the following days: on March 3, Klyshko cabled from London that *Reuter* had picked up some absurd rumours about a rising in Petrograd and was assiduously circulating them.

March 6. The Berlin correspondent Mayson cables to New York that workers from America are playing an important part in the Petrograd revolution, and that Chicherin has radioed an order to General Hanecki to close the frontier to émigrés from America.

March 6. Zinoviev has fled to Oranienbaum; Red artillery is shelling the working-class quarter in Moscow; Petrograd is beleaguered (cable from Wiegand).

March 7. Klyshko cables that according to reports from Revel, barricades have been erected in the streets of Moscow; the newspapers carry reports from Helsingfors that anti-Bolshevik troops have taken Chernigov.

March 7. Petrograd and Moscow are in the hands of the insurgents; insurrection in Odessa; Semyonov advancing in Siberia at the head of 25,000 Cossacks; a Revolutionary Committee in Petrograd is in control of the fortifications and the fleet (reported by the Poldhu wireless station in England).

Nauen, March 7. The factory quarter in Petrograd is in revolt; an anti-Bolshevik insurrection has broken out in Volhynia.

Paris, March 7. Petrograd in the hands of a Revolutionary Committee; *Le Matin* quotes reports from London saying the white flag is flying over the Kremlin.

Paris, March 8. The rebels have captured Krasnaya Gorka; Red Army regiments have mutinied in Pskov Gubernia; the Bolsheviks are sending Bashkirs against Petrograd.

March 10. Klyshko cables: the newspapers are asking whether Petrograd has fallen or not. According to reports from Helsingfors, three-quarters of Petrograd is in the hands of the insurgents. Trotsky, or according to other reports, Zinoviev is in command of operations and has his headquarters in Tosna, or else in the Peter and Paul Fortress. According to other reports, Brusilov has been appointed Commander-in-Chief. Reports from Riga say that Petrograd, except for the railway stations, was captured on the 9th; the Red Army has retreated to Gatchina; strikers in Petrograd have raised the slogan: "Down with the Soviets and the Communists." The British War Office states that it is not yet known whether or not the Kronstadt rebels have joined up with the Petrograd rebels but, according to information at its disposal, Zinoviev is in the Peter and Paul Fortress, where he is in command of the Soviet troops.

Of a vast number of fabrications in this period I am taking only a few samples: Saratov has become an independent anti-Bolshevik republic (Nauen, March 11). Fierce anti-Communist riots in towns along the Volga (same source). Fighting between Byelorussian detachments and the Red Army in Minsk Gubernia (same source).

Paris, March 15. *Le Matin* reports that large numbers of Kuban and Don Cossacks are in revolt.

Nauen reported on March 14 that Budyonny's cavalry has joined up with the rebels near Orel. At various times insurrections were reported in Pskov, Odessa and other towns.

Krasin cabled on March 9 that the Washington correspondent of *The Times* said the Soviet regime was on its last legs and America was therefore deferring establishment of relations with the border states. Reports at various times quoted American banking circles as saying that in the circumstances trade with Russia would be a gamble.

The New York correspondent of *The Daily Chronicle* reported as early as March 4 that business circles and the Republican Party in America considered trade relations with Russia at the present time to be a gamble.

This campaign of lies is being undoubtedly conducted

not only with an eye to America, but also to the Turkish delegation in London, and the plebiscite in Silesia.*

Comrades, the picture is absolutely clear. The world press syndicate—over there they have a free press, which means that 99 per cent of the press is in the pay of the financial magnates, who have command of hundreds of millions of rubles—has launched a world-wide campaign on behalf of the imperialists with the prime object of disrupting the negotiations for a trade agreement with Britain, which Krasin has initiated, and the forthcoming trade agreement with America, which, as I have stated, we have been negotiating here, and reference to which was made at this Congress. This shows that the enemies around us, no longer able to wage their war of intervention, are now pinning their hopes on a rebellion. And the Kronstadt events revealed their connection with the international bourgeoisie. Moreover, we see that what they fear most, from the practical angle of international capital, is the resumption of proper trade relations. But they will fail in their attempts to disrupt them. There are some big businessmen here in Moscow, and they have stopped believing these false rumours. They have told us that a group of citizens in America has used an original method of propaganda in favour of Soviet Russia.

It has collected the diverse press reports about Russia over the past few months—about the flight of Lenin and

* This reference is to the *Turkish delegation* to the London Conference convened in February-March 1921 with a view to putting an end to the Greco-Turkish conflict.

Behind the scenes, the head of the Turkish delegation conducted secret talks with British Prime Minister, Lloyd George, who sought to push Turkey into a war with Soviet Russia. However, no agreement was reached with Britain. In general, the conference achieved no positive results. Greece continued hostilities, while Turkey started negotiations with the Soviet Government which ended in the signing of a treaty on March 16, 1921.

The plebiscite in Silesia was held in March 1921 in accordance with the Treaty of Versailles concluded in June 1919 between the victorious countries and Germany. Under this treaty the question of Upper Silesia—whether it should remain part of Germany or be annexed to Poland—was to be decided by a plebiscite.

The German Government did all it could to make the local population come out in favour of this rich industrial region being left within the boundaries of Germany.—*Ed.*

Trotsky, about Trotsky shooting Lenin, and vice versa—and has published them in a pamphlet.* You couldn't find a better way of popularising the Soviet power. Day after day they collected reports of the assassination of Lenin and Trotsky and showed how many times each had been shot or killed; such reports were repeated month after month. Finally, all these reports were collected in a pamphlet and published. The American bourgeois press has got a bad name for itself. That is the enemy whom two million Russian émigrés, landowners and capitalists, are serving; this is the army of the bourgeoisie confronting us. Let them try to disrupt trade relations and belittle the practical achievements of the Soviet power. We know that they will fail. And the reports of the international press, which controls hundreds of thousands of newspapers and supplies news to the whole world, show once again how we are surrounded by enemies and how much weaker they are as compared with last year. That, comrades, is what we must understand. I think that the majority of the delegates present here have realised just how far we can let our disagreements go. It was naturally impossible to keep within these bounds during the struggle at the Congress. Men who have just emerged from the heat of battle cannot be expected to see these limits all at once. But we must have no doubts in our own mind when we look at our Party as the nucleus of the world revolution, and at the campaign which the world syndicate of states is now waging against us. Let them wage their campaign. We have sized it up, and we have exactly sized up our own disagreements. We know that by closing our ranks at this Congress we shall emerge from our disagreements solidly united, with the Party much stronger and marching with ever greater resolution towards international victories! (*Stormy applause.*)

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R.C.P.(B.). Uerbatim Report.
March 8-16, 1921*

Vol. 32, pp. 167-69,
170-91, 192-207,
210-13, 214-28,
229-38, 249-56,
257-60, 264-71

* Lenin refers here to a book by Evans Clark, *Facts and Fabrications about Soviet Russia*, New York, The Rand School of Social Science, 1920.—Ed.

Eleventh Congress of the R.C.P.(B.) *March 27-April 2, 1922*

Speech in Opening the Congress **March 27**

Comrades, on behalf of the Central Committee of the Party I declare the Eleventh Congress of the R.C.P. open.

Comrades, you have gathered in congress after a whole year, in the course of which we have, for the first time, been free from the intervention and invasion of capitalist countries, at all events, in their most direct form. This is the first year that we have had the opportunity of devoting our efforts to the real, main and fundamental tasks of socialist construction.

In this field we have undoubtedly taken only the first steps. But I am sure that if we soberly appraise what we have achieved and are not afraid to look facts—which are not always pleasant, and sometimes very unpleasant—straight in the face, we shall certainly overcome all the difficulties that only now are looming ahead of us in all their magnitude.

The disasters that befell us in the past year were, if anything, even more severe than those of the preceding years.

It seemed as if all the consequences of the imperialist war and of the war which the capitalists forced upon us had combined and hurled themselves upon us in the shape of famine and the most desperate ruin. These disasters have as yet been far from overcome; and none of us expects that they can be overcome soon.

But if we maintain and strengthen the unity of our Party, if we emerge from international difficulties as successfully as we have done up to now, if we concentrate all our efforts

on the tasks that now necessarily arise from present conditions, there can be no doubt that we shall overcome these difficulties.

All over the world the communist movement is growing, if not as fast as those of us who measured it by wartime and immediate post-war standards expected, at all events it is growing and is becoming sound, solid, broad and deep. And if we, in co-operation with the Communist Parties that now exist in all, or nearly all, countries, soberly assess our position and are not afraid to admit our mistakes, we shall victoriously emerge from all these difficulties.

**Political Report of the Central Committee
of the R.C.P.(B.)
March 27**

(*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.e., the *Genoa Conference* (the International Economic Conference in Genoa). It was held between April 10 and May 19, 1922, and was attended by delegates from 29 countries. The imperialist powers tried to take advantage of Soviet Russia's economic difficulties so as to impose onerous terms on her. They demanded that Russia should pay all the tsarist government's debts, including those incurred before the war, return nationalised enterprises to foreign owners, etc.

The Soviet delegation rejected the imperialists' insolent claims and moved proposals on general disarmament and the annulment of all pre-war debts.

The work of the Conference was interrupted because of the hostile attitude adopted by France and Britain towards Soviet Russia.—*Ed.*

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 bourgeois 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 Two-and-a-Half International* was an international organization of Centrist Socialist Parties and groups that withdrew from the Second International under pressure from the revolutionary masses. It was formed at a conference in Vienna in February 1921. The leaders of the Two-and-a-Half International sought to offset the growing influence of the Communists among the workers. In May 1923 it merged with the Second International.—*Ed.*

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.

Needless to say, the comrades who desire to study the question in greater detail and who are not content with the list of delegates published in the newspapers may set up a commission, or a section, and acquaint themselves with all the material of the Central Committee, and all the correspondence and instructions. Of course, the details we have outlined are provisional, for no one up to now knows exactly who will sit round the table at Genoa, and what terms, or

preliminary terms or provisions will be announced. It would be highly inexpedient, and I think practically impossible, to discuss all this here. I repeat, this Congress, through the medium of a section, or a commission, has every opportunity to collect all the documents on this question—both the published documents and those in the possession of the Central Committee.

I shall not say any more, for I am sure that it is not here that our greatest difficulties lie. This is not the question on which the attention of the whole Party should be focussed. The European bourgeois press is artificially and deliberately inflating and exaggerating the importance of this Conference in order to deceive the masses of the working people (as nine-tenths of the bourgeois press in all these free democratic countries and republics always does). We have succumbed to the influence of this press to some extent. As usual, our press still yields to the old bourgeois habits; it refuses to adopt new, socialist methods, and we have made a greater fuss about this subject than it deserves. In fact, for Communists, especially for those who have lived through such stern years as we have lived through since 1917, and witnessed the formidable political combinations that have appeared in that period, Genoa does not present any great difficulties. I cannot recall any disagreement or controversy on this question either in the Central Committee or in the ranks of the Party. This is natural, for there is nothing controversial here from the point of view of Communists, even bearing in mind the various shades of opinion among them. I repeat: we are going to Genoa as merchants for the purpose of securing the most favourable terms for promoting the trade which has started, which is being carried on, and which, even if someone succeeded in forcibly interrupting it for a time, would inevitably continue to develop after the interruption.

Hence, confining myself to these brief remarks about Genoa, I shall now proceed to deal with the issues which, in my opinion, have been the major political questions of the past year and which will be such in the ensuing year. It seems to me that the political report of the Central Committee should not merely deal with the events of the year under review, but also point out (that, at any rate, is what I

usually do) the main, fundamental political lessons of the events of that year, so that we may learn something for the ensuing year and be in a position to correctly determine our policy for that year.

The New Economic Policy is, of course, the major question. This has been the dominant question throughout the year under review. If we have any important, serious and irrevocable gain to record for this year (and I am not so very sure that we have), it is that we have learnt something from the launching of this New Economic Policy. If we have learnt even a little, then, during the past year, we have learnt a great deal in this field. And the test of whether we have really learnt anything, and to what extent, will probably be made by subsequent events of a kind which we ourselves can do little to determine, as for example the impending financial crisis. It seems to me that in connection with the New Economic Policy, the most important things to keep in mind as a basis for all our arguments, as a means of testing our experience during the past year, and of learning practical lessons for the ensuing year are contained in the following three points.

First, the New Economic Policy is important for us primarily as a means of testing whether we are really establishing a link with the peasant economy. In the preceding period of development of our revolution, when all our attention and all our efforts were concentrated mainly on, or almost entirely absorbed by, the task of repelling invasion, we could not devote the necessary attention to this link; we had other things to think about. To some extent we could and had to ignore this bond when we were confronted by the absolutely urgent and overshadowing task of warding off the danger of being immediately crushed by the gigantic forces of world imperialism.

The turn towards the New Economic Policy was decided on at the last Congress with exceptional unanimity, with even greater unanimity than other questions have been decided by our Party (which, it must be admitted, is generally distinguished for its unanimity). This unanimity showed that the need for a new approach to socialist economy had fully matured. People who differed on many questions, and who assessed the situation from different

angles, unanimously and very quickly and unhesitatingly agreed that we lacked a real approach to socialist economy, to the task of building its foundation; that the only means of finding this approach was the New Economic Policy. Owing to the course taken by the development of war events, by the development of political events, by the development of capitalism in the old, civilised West, and owing also to the social and political conditions that developed in the colonies, we were the first to make a breach in the old bourgeois world at a time when our country was economically, if not the most backward, at any rate one of the most backward countries in the world. The vast majority of the peasants in our country are engaged in small individual farming. The items of our programme of building a communist society, that we could apply immediately, were to some extent outside the sphere of activity of the broad mass of the peasantry, upon whom we imposed very heavy obligations, which we justified on the grounds that war permitted no wavering in this matter. Taken as a whole, this was accepted as justification by the peasantry, notwithstanding the mistakes we could not avoid. On the whole, the mass of the peasantry realised and understood that the enormous burdens imposed upon them were necessary in order to save the workers' and peasants' rule from the landowners and prevent it from being strangled by capitalist invasion, which threatened to wrest away all the gains of the revolution. But there was no link between the peasant economy and the economy that was being built up in the nationalised, socialised factories and on state farms.

We saw this clearly at the last Party Congress. We saw it so clearly that there was no hesitation whatever in the Party on the question as to whether the New Economic Policy was inevitable or not.

It is amusing to read what is said about our decision in the numerous publications of the various Russian parties abroad. There are only trifling differences in the opinions they express. Living with memories of the past, they still continue to reiterate that to this day the Left Communists*

* *Left Communists*—an opportunist group in the R.C.P.(B.) headed by Bukharin, which emerged early in 1918 in connection with the signing

are opposed to the New Economic Policy. In 1921 they remembered what had occurred in 1918 and what our Left Communists themselves have forgotten; and they go on chewing this over and over again, assuring the world that these Bolsheviks are a sly and false lot, and that they are concealing from Europe that they have disagreements in their ranks. Reading this, one says to oneself, "Let them go on fooling themselves." If this is what they imagine is going on in this country, we can judge the degree of intelligence of these allegedly highly educated old fogies who have fled abroad. We know that there have been no disagreements in our ranks, and the reason for this is that the practical necessity of a different approach to the task of building the foundation of socialist economy was clear to all.

There was no link between the peasant economy and the new economy we tried to create. Does it exist now? Not yet. We are only approaching it. The whole significance of the New Economic Policy—which our press still often searches for everywhere except where it should search—the whole purpose of this policy is to find a way of establishing a link between the new economy, which we are creating with such enormous effort, and the peasant economy. That is what stands to our credit; without it we would not be communist revolutionaries.

We began to develop the new economy in an entirely new way, brushing aside everything old. Had we not begun to develop it we would have been utterly defeated in the very first months, in the very first years. But the fact that we began to develop this new economy with such splendid audacity does not mean that we must necessarily continue in the same way. Why should we? There is no reason.

From the very beginning we said that we had to undertake an entirely new task, and that unless we received speedy assistance from our comrades, the workers in the capitalistic-

of the Brest Treaty. Under cover of Left phrases about revolutionary war, Left Communists pursued an adventurist policy aimed at dragging the Soviet Republic, which as yet had no army, into war with imperialist Germany and thus imperilling Soviet power. They also came out against one-man management and labour discipline, against the utilisation of bourgeois experts in industry. Under Lenin's leadership the R.C.P.(B.) gave a decisive rebuff to the Left Communists.—*Ed.*

cally more developed countries, we should encounter incredible difficulties and certainly make a number of mistakes. The main thing is to be able dispassionately to examine where such mistakes have been made and to start again from the beginning. If we begin from the beginning, not twice, but many times, it will show that we are not bound by prejudice, and that we are approaching our task, which is the greatest the world has ever seen, with a sober outlook.

Today, as far as the New Economic Policy is concerned the main thing is to assimilate the experience of the past year correctly. That must be done, and we want to do it. And if we want to do it, come what may (and we do want to do it, and shall do it!), we must know that the problem of the New Economic Policy, the fundamental, decisive and overriding problem, is to establish a link between the new economy that we have begun to create (very badly, very clumsily, but have nevertheless begun to create, on the basis of an entirely new, socialist economy, of a new system of production and distribution) and the peasant economy, by which millions and millions of peasants obtain their livelihood.

This link has been lacking, and we must create it before anything else. Everything else must be subordinated to this. We have still to ascertain the extent to which the New Economic Policy has succeeded in creating this link without destroying what we have begun so clumsily to build.

We are developing our economy together with the peasantry. We shall have to alter it many times and organise it in such a way that it will provide a link between our socialist work on large-scale industry and agriculture and the work every peasant is doing as best he can, struggling out of poverty, without philosophising (for how can philosophising help him to extricate himself from his position and save him from the very real danger of a painful death from starvation?).

We must reveal this link so that we may see it clearly, so that all the people may see it, and so that the whole mass of the peasantry may see that there is a connection between their present severe, incredibly ruined, incredibly impoverished and painful existence and the work which is being done for the sake of remote socialist ideals. We must bring

about a situation where the ordinary, rank-and-file working man realises that he has obtained some improvement, and that he has obtained it not in the way a few peasants obtained improvements under the rule of landowners and capitalists, when every improvement (undoubtedly there were improvements and very big ones) was accompanied by insult, derision and humiliation for the muzhik, by violence against the masses, which not a single peasant has forgotten, and which will not be forgotten in Russia for decades. Our aim is to restore the link, to prove to the peasant by deeds that we are beginning with what is intelligible, familiar and immediately accessible to him, in spite of his poverty, and not with something remote and fantastic from the peasant's point of view. We must prove that we can help him and that in this period, when the small peasant is in a state of appalling ruin, impoverishment and starvation, the Communists are really helping him. Either we prove that, or he will send us to the devil. That is absolutely inevitable.

Such is the significance of the New Economic Policy; it is the basis of our entire policy; it is the major lesson taught by the whole of the past year's experience in applying the New Economic Policy, and, so to speak, our main political rule for the coming year. The peasant is allowing us credit, and, of course, after what he has lived through, he cannot do otherwise. Taken in the mass, the peasants go on saying: "Well, if you are not able to do it yet, we shall wait; perhaps you will learn." But this credit cannot go on for ever.

This we must know; and having obtained credit we must hurry. We must know that the time is approaching when this peasant country will no longer give us credit, when it will demand cash, to use a commercial term. It will say: "You have postponed payment for so many months, so many years. But by this time, dear rulers, you must have learnt the most sound and reliable method of helping us free ourselves from poverty, want, starvation and ruin. You can do it, you have proved it." This is the test that we shall inevitably have to face; and, in the last analysis, this test will decide everything: the fate of NEP and the fate of communist rule in Russia.

Shall we accomplish our immediate task or not? Is this NEP fit for anything or not? If the retreat turns out to be

correct tactics, we must link up with the peasant masses while we are in retreat, and subsequently march forward with them a hundred times more slowly, but firmly and unswervingly, in a way that will always make it apparent to them that we are really marching forward. Then our cause will be absolutely invincible, and no power on earth can vanquish us. We did not accomplish this in the first year. We must say this frankly. And I am profoundly convinced (and our New Economic Policy enables us to draw this conclusion quite definitely and firmly) that if we appreciate the enormous danger harboured by NEP and concentrate all our forces on its weak points, we shall solve this problem.

Link up with the peasant masses, with the rank-and-file working peasants, and begin to move forward immeasurably, infinitely more slowly than we expected, but in such a way that the entire mass will actually move forward with us. If we do that we shall in time progress much more quickly than we even dream of today. This, in my opinion, is the first fundamental political lesson of the New Economic Policy.

The second, more specific lesson is the test through competition between state and capitalist enterprises. We are now forming mixed companies—I shall have something to say about these later on—which, like our state trade and our New Economic Policy as a whole, mean that we Communists are resorting to commercial, capitalist methods. These mixed companies are also important because through them practical competition is created between capitalist methods and our methods. Consider it practically. Up to now we have been writing a programme and making promises. In its time this was absolutely necessary. It is impossible to launch on a world revolution without a programme and without promises. If the whiteguards, including the Mensheviks, jeer at us for this, it only shows that the Mensheviks and the socialists of the Second and Two-and-a-Half Internationals have no idea, in general, of the way a revolution develops. We could proceed in no other way.

Now, however, the position is that we must put our work to a serious test, and not the sort of test that is made by control institutions set up by the Communists themselves, even though these control institutions are magnificent, even though they are almost the ideal control institutions in the

Soviet system and the Party; such a test may be mockery from the point of view of the actual requirements of the peasant economy, but it is certainly no mockery from the standpoint of our construction. We are now setting up these control institutions but I am referring not to this test but to the test from the point of view of the entire economy.

The capitalist was able to supply things. He did it inefficiently, charged exorbitant prices, insulted and robbed us. The ordinary workers and peasants, who do not argue about communism because they do not know what it is, are well aware of this.

"But the capitalists were, after all, able to supply things—are you? You are not able to do it." That is what we heard last spring; though not always clearly audible, it was the undertone of the whole of last spring's crisis. "As people you are splendid, but you cannot cope with the economic task you have undertaken." This is the simple and withering criticism which the peasantry—and through the peasantry, some sections of workers—levelled at the Communist Party last year. That is why in the NEP question this old point acquires such significance.

We need a real test. The capitalists are operating alongside us. They are operating like robbers; they make profit; but they know how to do things. But you—you are trying to do it in a new way: you make no profit, your principles are communist, your ideals are splendid; they are written out so beautifully that you seem to be saints, that you should go to heaven while you are still alive. But can you get things done? We need a test, a real test, not the kind the Central Control Commission makes when it censures somebody and the All-Russia Central Executive Committee imposes some penalty. Yes, we want a real test from the viewpoint of the national economy.

We Communists have received numerous deferments, and more credit has been allowed us than any other government has ever been given. Of course, we Communists helped to get rid of the capitalists and landowners. The peasants appreciate this and have given us an extension of time, longer credit, but only for a certain period. After that comes the test: can you run the economy as well as the others? The old capitalist can; you cannot.

That is the first lesson, the first main part of the political report of the Central Committee. We cannot run the economy. This has been proved in the past year. I would like very much to quote the example of several Gos-trests (if I may express myself in the beautiful Russian language that Turgenyev praised so highly)* to show how we run the economy.

Unfortunately, for a number of reasons, and largely owing to ill health, I have been unable to elaborate this part of my report and so I must confine myself to expressing my conviction, which is based on my observations of what is going on. During the past year we showed quite clearly that we cannot run the economy. That is the fundamental lesson. Either we prove the opposite in the coming year, or Soviet power will not be able to exist. And the greatest danger is that not everybody realises this. If all of us Communists, the responsible officials, clearly realise that we lack the ability to run the economy, that we must learn from the very beginning, then we shall win—that, in my opinion, is the fundamental conclusion that should be drawn. But many of us do not appreciate this and believe that if there are people who do not think that way, it can only be the ignorant, who have not studied communism; perhaps they will some day learn and understand. No, excuse me, the point is not that the peasant or the non-Party worker has not studied communism, but that the time has passed when the job was to draft a programme and call upon the people to carry out this great programme. That time has passed. Today you must prove that you can give practical economic assistance to the workers and to the peasants under the present difficult conditions, and thus demonstrate to them that you have stood the test of competition.

The mixed companies that we have begun to form, in which private capitalists, Russian and foreign, and Communists participate, provide one of the means by which we can learn to organise competition properly and show that we are no less able to establish a link with the peasant

* An ironical reference to the habit, then emerging, of abbreviating the names of various institutions. Here the abbreviation stands for *state trusts*.—Ed.

economy than the capitalists; that we can meet its requirements; that we can help the peasant make progress even at his present level, in spite of his backwardness; for it is impossible to change him in a brief span of time.

That is the sort of competition confronting us as an absolutely urgent task. It is the pivot of the New Economic Policy and, in my opinion, the quintessence of the Party's policy. We are faced with any number of purely political problems and difficulties. You know what they are: Genoa, the danger of intervention. The difficulties are enormous but they are nothing compared with this economic difficulty. We know how things are done in the political field; we have gained considerable experience; we have learned a lot about bourgeois diplomacy. It is the sort of thing the Mensheviks taught us for fifteen years, and we got something useful out of it. This is not new.

But here is something we must do now in the economic field. We must win the competition against the ordinary shop assistant, the ordinary capitalist, the merchant, who will go to the peasant without arguing about communism. Just imagine, he will not begin to argue about communism, but will argue in this way—if you want to obtain something, or carry on trade properly, or if you want to build, I will do the building at a high price; the Communists will, perhaps, build at a higher price, perhaps even ten times higher. It is this kind of agitation that is now the crux of the matter; herein lies the root of economics.

I repeat, thanks to our correct policy, the people allowed us a deferment of payment and credit, and this, to put it in terms of NEP, is a promissory note. But this promissory note is undated, and you cannot learn from the wording when it will be presented for redemption. Therein lies the danger; this is the specific feature that distinguishes these political promissory notes from ordinary, commercial promissory notes. We must concentrate all our attention on this, and not rest content with the fact that there are responsible and good Communists in all the state trusts and mixed companies. That is of no use, because these Communists do not know how to run the economy and, in that respect, are inferior to the ordinary capitalist salesmen, who have received their training in big factories and big firms. But

we refuse to admit this; in this field communist conceit—*komchvanstvo*,* to use the great Russian language again—still persists. The whole point is that the responsible Communists, even the best of them, who are unquestionably honest and loyal, who in the old days suffered penal servitude and did not fear death, do not know how to trade, because they are not businessmen, they have not learned to trade, do not want to learn and do not understand that they must start learning from the beginning. Communists, revolutionaries who have accomplished the greatest revolution in the world, on whom the eyes of, if not forty pyramids, then, at all events, forty European countries are turned in the hope of emancipation from capitalism, must learn from ordinary salesmen. But these ordinary salesmen have had ten years' warehouse experience and know the business, whereas the responsible Communists and devoted revolutionaries do not know the business, and do not even realise that they do not know it.

And so, comrades, if we do away with at least this elementary ignorance we shall achieve a tremendous victory. We must leave this Congress with the conviction that we are ignorant of this business and with the resolve to start learning it from the bottom. After all, we have not ceased to be revolutionaries (although many say, and not altogether without foundation, that we have become bureaucrats) and can understand this simple thing, that in a new and unusually difficult undertaking we must be prepared to start from the beginning over and over again. If after starting you find yourselves at a dead end, start again, and go on doing it ten times if necessary, until you attain your object. Do not put on airs, do not be conceited because you are a Communist while there is some non-Party salesman, perhaps a whiteguard—and very likely he is a whiteguard—who can do things which economically must be done at all costs, but which you cannot do. If you, responsible Communists, who have hundreds of ranks and titles and wear communist and Soviet Orders, realise this, you will attain your object, because this is something that can be learned.

We have some successes, even if only very tiny ones, to

* Literally, "comconceit".—*Ed.*

record for the past year, but they are insignificant. The main thing is that there is no realisation nor widespread conviction among all Communists that at the present time the responsible and most devoted Russian Communist is less able to perform these functions than any salesman of the old school. I repeat, we must start learning from the very beginning. If we realise this, we shall pass our test; and the test is a serious one which the impending financial crisis will set—the test set by the Russian and international market to which we are subordinated, with which we are connected, and from which we cannot isolate ourselves. The test is a crucial one, for here we may be beaten economically and politically.

That is how the question stands and it cannot be otherwise, for the competition will be very severe, and it will be decisive. We had many outlets and loopholes that enabled us to escape from our political and economic difficulties. We can proudly say that up to now we have been able to utilise these outlets and loopholes in various combinations corresponding to the varying circumstances. But now we have no other outlets. Permit me to say this to you without exaggeration, because in this respect it is really “the last and decisive battle”, not against international capitalism—against that we shall yet have many “last and decisive battles”—but against Russian capitalism, against the capitalism that is growing out of the small-peasant economy, the capitalism that is fostered by the latter. Here we shall have a fight on our hands in the immediate future, and the date of it cannot be fixed exactly. Here the “last and decisive battle” is impending; here there are no political or any other flanking movements that we can undertake, because this is a test in competition with private capital. Either we pass this test in competition with private capital or we fail completely. To help us pass it we have political power and a host of economic and other resources; we have everything you want except ability. We lack ability. And if we learn this simple lesson from the experience of last year and take it as our guiding line for the whole of 1922, we shall conquer this difficulty, too, in spite of the fact that it is much greater than the previous difficulty, for it rests upon ourselves. It is not like some external enemy. The difficulty is that we ourselves refuse to admit the unpleasant truth forced upon

us; we refuse to undertake the unpleasant duty that the situation demands of us, namely, to start learning from the beginning. That, in my opinion, is the second lesson that we must learn from the New Economic Policy.

The third, supplementary lesson is on the question of state capitalism. It is a pity Comrade Bukharin is not present at the Congress. I should have liked to argue with him a little, but that had better be postponed to the next Congress. On the question of state capitalism, I think that generally our press and our Party make the mistake of dropping into intellectualism, into liberalism; we philosophise about how state capitalism is to be interpreted, and look into old books. But in those old books you will not find what we are discussing; they deal with the state capitalism that exists under capitalism. Not a single book has been written about state capitalism under communism. It did not occur even to Marx to write a word on this subject; and he died without leaving a single precise statement or definite instruction on it. That is why we must overcome the difficulty entirely by ourselves. And if we make a general mental survey of our press and see what has been written about state capitalism, as I tried to do when I was preparing this report, we shall be convinced that it is missing the target, that it is looking in an entirely wrong direction.

The state capitalism discussed in all books on economics is that which exists under the capitalist system, where the state brings under its direct control certain capitalist enterprises. But ours is a proletarian state; it rests on the proletariat; it gives the proletariat all political privileges; and through the medium of the proletariat it attracts to itself the lower ranks of the peasantry (you remember that we began this work through the Poor Peasants' Committees). That is why very many people are misled by the term state capitalism. To avoid this we must remember the fundamental thing that state capitalism in the form we have here is not dealt with in any theory, or in any books, for the simple reason that all the usual concepts connected with this term are associated with bourgeois rule in capitalist society. Our society is one which has left the rails of capitalism, but has not yet got on to new rails. The state in this society is not ruled by the bourgeoisie, but by the proletariat. We refuse

to understand that when we say "state" we mean ourselves, the proletariat, the vanguard of the working class. State capitalism is capitalism which we shall be able to restrain, and the limits of which we shall be able to fix. This state capitalism is connected with the state, and the state is the workers, the advanced section of the workers, the vanguard. We are the state.

State capitalism is capitalism that we must confine within certain bounds; but we have not yet learned to confine it within those bounds. That is the whole point. And it rests with us to determine what this state capitalism is to be. We have sufficient, quite sufficient political power; we also have sufficient economic resources at our command, but the vanguard of the working class which has been brought to the forefront to directly supervise, to determine the boundaries, to demarcate, to subordinate and not be subordinated itself, lacks sufficient ability for it. All that is needed here is ability, and that is what we do not have.

Never before in history has there been a situation in which the proletariat, the revolutionary vanguard, possessed sufficient political power and had state capitalism existing alongside it. The whole question turns on our understanding that this is the capitalism that we can and must permit, that we can and must confine within certain bounds; for this capitalism is essential for the broad masses of the peasantry and for private capital, which must trade in such a way as to satisfy the needs of the peasantry. We must organise things in such a way as to make possible the customary operation of capitalist economy and capitalist exchange, because this is essential for the people. Without it, existence is impossible. All the rest is not an absolutely vital matter to this camp. They can resign themselves to all that. You Communists, you workers, you, the politically enlightened section of the proletariat, which undertook to administer the state, must be able to arrange it so that the state, which you have taken into your hands, shall function the way you want it to. Well, we have lived through a year, the state is in our hands; but has it operated the New Economic Policy in the way we wanted in this past year? No. But we refuse to admit that it did not operate in the way we wanted. How did it operate? The machine refused to obey

the hand that guided it. It was like a car that was going not in the direction the driver desired, but in the direction someone else desired; as if it were being driven by some mysterious, lawless hand, God knows whose, perhaps of a profiteer, or of a private capitalist, or of both. Be that as it may, the car is not going quite in the direction the man at the wheel imagines, and often it goes in an altogether different direction. This is the main thing that must be remembered in regard to state capitalism. In this main field we must start learning from the very beginning, and only when we have thoroughly understood and appreciated this can we be sure that we shall learn.

Now I come to the question of halting the retreat, a question I dealt with in my speech at the Congress of Metalworkers. Since then I have not heard any objection, either in the Party press, or in private letters from comrades, or in the Central Committee. The Central Committee approved my plan, which was, that in the report of the Central Committee to the present Congress strong emphasis should be laid on calling a halt to this retreat and that the Congress should give binding instructions on behalf of the whole Party accordingly. For a year we have been retreating. On behalf of the Party we must now call a halt. The purpose pursued by the retreat has been achieved. This period is drawing, or has drawn, to a close. We now have a different objective, that of regrouping our forces. We have reached a new line; on the whole, we have conducted the retreat in fairly good order. True, not a few voices were heard from various sides which tried to convert this retreat into a stampede. Some—for example, several members of the group which bore the name of Workers' Opposition (I don't think they had any right to that name)—argued that we were not retreating properly in some sector or other. Owing to their excessive zeal they found themselves at the wrong door, and now they realise it. At that time they did not see that their activities did not help us to correct our movement, but merely had the effect of spreading panic and hindering our effort to beat a disciplined retreat.

Retreat is a difficult matter, especially for revolutionaries who are accustomed to advance; especially when they have been accustomed to advance with enormous success for

several years; especially if they are surrounded by revolutionaries in other countries who are longing for the time when they can launch an offensive. Seeing that we were retreating, several of them burst into tears in a disgraceful and childish manner, as was the case at the last extended Plenary Meeting of the Executive Committee of the Communist International.* Moved by the best communist sentiments and communist aspirations, several of the comrades burst into tears because—oh horror!—the good Russian Communists were retreating. Perhaps it is now difficult for me to understand this West-European mentality, although I lived for quite a number of years in those marvellous democratic countries as an exile. Perhaps from their point of view this is such a difficult matter to understand that it is enough to make one weep. We, at any rate, have no time for sentiment. It was clear to us that because we had advanced so successfully for many years and had achieved so many extraordinary victories (and all this in a country that was in an appalling state of ruin and lacked the material resources!), to consolidate that advance, since we had gained so much, it was absolutely essential for us to retreat. We could not hold all the positions we had captured in the first onslaught. On the other hand, it was because we had captured so much in the first onslaught, on the crest of the wave of enthusiasm displayed by the workers and peasants, that we had room enough to retreat a long distance, and can retreat still further now, without losing our main and fundamental positions. On the whole, the retreat was fairly orderly, although certain panic-stricken voices, among them that of the Workers' Opposition (this was the tremendous harm it did!), caused losses in our ranks, caused a relaxation of discipline, and disturbed the proper order of retreat. The most dangerous thing during a retreat is panic. When a whole army (I speak in the figurative sense) is in retreat, it cannot

* This apparently refers to the behaviour of some delegates from the French Communist Party at the first extended Plenary Meeting of the Comintern (February 21-March 4, 1922) who failed to understand the essence and significance of the New Economic Policy of the R.C.P.(B.) alleging that NEP would lead to the restoration of capitalism in Russia and weaken the international revolutionary movement.—*Ed.*

have the same morale as when it is advancing. At every step you find a certain mood of depression. We even had poets who wrote that people were cold and starving in Moscow, that "everything before was bright and beautiful, but now trade and profiteering abound". We have had quite a number of poetic effusions of this sort.

Of course, retreat breeds all this. That is where the serious danger lies; it is terribly difficult to retreat after a great victorious advance, for the relations are entirely different. During a victorious advance, even if discipline is relaxed, everybody presses forward on his own accord. During a retreat, however, discipline must be more conscious and is a hundred times more necessary, because, when the entire army is in retreat, it does not know or see where it should halt. It sees only retreat; under such circumstances a few panic-stricken voices are, at times, enough to cause a stampede. The danger here is enormous. When a real army is in retreat, machine-guns are kept ready, and when an orderly retreat degenerates into a disorderly one, the command to fire is given, and quite rightly, too.

If, during an incredibly difficult retreat, when everything depends on preserving proper order, anyone spreads panic—even from the best of motives—the slightest breach of discipline must be punished severely, sternly, ruthlessly; and this applies not only to certain of our internal Party affairs, but also, and to a greater extent, to such gentry as the Mensheviks, and to all the gentry of the Two-and-a-Half International.

The other day I read an article by Comrade Rakosi in No. 20 of *The Communist International* on a new book by Otto Bauer, from whom at one time we all learned, but who, like Kautsky, became a miserable petty bourgeois after the war. Bauer now writes: "There, they are now retreating to capitalism! We have always said that it was a bourgeois revolution."

And the Mensheviks and Socialist-Revolutionaries, all of whom preach this sort of thing, are astonished when we declare that we shall shoot people for such things. They are amazed; but surely it is clear. When an army is in retreat a hundred times more discipline is required than when it is advancing, because during an advance everybody presses

forward. If everybody started rushing back now, it would spell immediate and inevitable disaster.

The most important thing at such a moment is to retreat in good order, to fix the precise limits of the retreat, and not to give way to panic. And when a Menshevik says, "You are now retreating; I have been advocating retreat all the time, I agree with you, I am your man, let us retreat together," we say in reply, "For the public manifestations of Menshevism our revolutionary courts must pass the death sentence, otherwise they are not our courts, but God knows what."

They cannot understand this and exclaim: "What dictatorial manners these people have!" They still think we are persecuting the Mensheviks because they fought us in Geneva.* But had we done that we should have been unable to hold power even for two months. Indeed, the sermons which Otto Bauer, the leaders of the Second and Two-and-a-Half Internationals, the Mensheviks and Socialist-Revolutionaries preach express their true nature—"The revolution has gone too far. What you are saying now we have been saying all the time, permit us to say it again." But we say in reply: "Permit us to put you before a firing squad for saying that. Either you refrain from expressing your views, or, if you insist on expressing your political views publicly in the present circumstances, when our position is far more difficult than it was when the whiteguards were directly attacking us, then you will have only yourselves to blame if we treat you as the worst and most pernicious whiteguard elements." We must never forget this.

When I speak about halting the retreat I do not mean that we have learned to trade. On the contrary, I am of the opposite opinion; and if my speech were to create that impression it would show that I had been misunderstood and that I am unable to express my thoughts properly.

The point, however, is that we must put a stop to the nervousness and fuss that have arisen with the introduction of NEP—the desire to do everything in a new way and to adapt everything. We now have a number of mixed com-

* Lenin has in mind here the struggle waged abroad between the Bolsheviks and Mensheviks.—*Ed.*

panies. True, we have only very few. There are nine companies formed in conjunction with foreign capitalists and sanctioned by the Commissariat of Foreign Trade. The Sokolnikov Commission* has sanctioned six and the Northern Timber Trust has sanctioned two. Thus we now have seventeen companies with an aggregate capital amounting to many millions, sanctioned by several government departments (of course, there is plenty of confusion with all these departments, so that some slip here is also possible). At any rate, we have formed companies jointly with Russian and foreign capitalists. There are only a few of them. But this small but practical start shows that the Communists have been judged by what they do. They have not been judged by such high institutions as the Central Control Commission and the All-Russia Central Executive Committee. The Central Control Commission is a splendid institution, of course, and we shall now give it more power. For all that, the judgement these institutions pass on Communists is not—just imagine—recognised on the international market. (*Laughter.*) But now that ordinary Russian and foreign capitalists are joining the Communists in forming mixed companies, we say, "We can do things after all; bad as it is, meagre as it is, we have got something for a start." True, it is not very much. Just think of it: a year has passed since we declared that we would devote all our energy (and it is said that we have a great deal of energy) to this matter, and in this year we have managed to form only seventeen companies.

This shows how devilishly clumsy and inept we are; how much Oblomovism** still remains, for which we shall inevitably get a good thrashing. For all that, I repeat, a start, a reconnaissance has been made. The capitalists would not agree to have dealings with us if the elementary conditions for their operations did not exist. Even if only a very small section of them has agreed to this, it shows that we have scored a partial victory.

* The Commission for Mixed Companies under the Council of Labour and Defence with G. Y. Sokolnikov as its Chairman.—*Ed.*

** This word is derived from the name of the main character in Ivan Goncharov's novel *Oblomov*; the name Oblomov has come to stand for narrow-mindedness, stagnation and inertia.—*Ed.*

Of course, they will cheat us in these companies, cheat us so that it will take several years before matters are straightened out. But that does not matter. I do not say that that is a victory; it is a reconnaissance, which shows that we have an arena, we have a terrain, and can now stop the retreat.

The reconnaissance has revealed that we have concluded an insignificant number of agreements with capitalists; but we have concluded them for all that. We must learn from that and continue our operations. In this sense we must put a stop to nervousness, screaming and fuss. We received notes and telephone messages, one after another asking, "Now that we have NEP, may we be reorganised too?" Everybody is bustling, and we get utter confusion; nobody is doing any practical work; everybody is continuously arguing about how to adapt oneself to NEP, but no practical results are forthcoming.

The merchants are laughing at us Communists, and in all probability are saying, "Formerly there were Persuaders-in-Chief,* now we have Talkers-in-Chief." That the capitalists gloated over the fact that we started late, that we were not sharp enough—of that there need not be the slightest doubt. In this sense, I say, these instructions must be endorsed in the name of the Congress.

The retreat is at an end. The principal methods of operation, of how we are to work with the capitalists, are outlined. We have examples, even if an insignificant number.

Stop philosophising and arguing about NEP. Let the poets write verses, that is what they are poets for. But you economists, you stop arguing about NEP and get more companies formed; check up on how many Communists we have who can organise successful competition with the capitalists.

The retreat has come to an end; it is now a matter of regrouping our forces. These are the instructions that the Congress must pass so as to put an end to fuss and bustle. Calm down, do not philosophise; if you do, it will be count-

* *Persuader-in-Chief* was the nickname given by soldiers to A. F. Kerensky, then the War and Naval Minister in the Provisional Government, for trying to persuade the soldiers to start an offensive when he toured the front in the summer of 1917.—Ed.

ed as a black mark against you. Show by your practical efforts that you can work no less efficiently than the capitalists. The capitalists create an economic link with the peasants in order to amass wealth; you must create a link with peasant economy in order to strengthen the economic power of our proletarian state. You have the advantage over the capitalists in that political power is in your hands; you have a number of economic weapons at your command; the only trouble is that you cannot make proper use of them. Look at things more soberly. Cast off the tinsel, the festive communist garments, learn a simple thing simply, and we shall beat the private capitalist. We possess political power; we possess a host of economic weapons. If we beat capitalism and create a link with peasant farming we shall become an absolutely invincible power. Then the building of socialism will not be the task of that drop in the ocean, called the Communist Party, but the task of the entire mass of the working people. Then the rank-and-file peasants will see that we are helping them and they will follow our lead. Consequently, even if the pace is a hundred times slower, it will be a million times more certain and more sure.

It is in this sense that we must speak of halting the retreat; and the proper thing to do is, in one way or another, to make this slogan a Congress decision.

In this connection, I should like to deal with the question: what is the Bolsheviks' New Economic Policy—evolution or tactics? This question has been raised by the *Smena Vekh** people, who, as you know, are a trend which has arisen among Russian émigrés; it is a socio-political trend led by some of the most prominent Constitutional-Democrats,**

* *Smena Vekh* (Change of Landmarks)—a journal published in Paris from October 1921 to March 1922. It was the mouthpiece of a counter-revolutionary socio-political trend that emerged among White émigré intellectuals in 1921.—Ed.

** *Constitutional-Democrats* (Cadets)—members of the leading party of the liberal-monarchist bourgeoisie in Russia founded in October 1905. After the Great October Socialist Revolution the Cadets became irreconcilable enemies of Soviet power and took an active part in all the armed counter-revolutionary actions and campaigns of the interventionists. When the interventionists and whiteguards were defeated, the Cadets fled abroad, where they continued their anti-Soviet, counter-revolutionary activities.—Ed.

several Ministers of the former Kolchak government, people who have come to the conclusion that the Soviet government is building up the Russian state and therefore should be supported. They argue as follows: "What sort of state is the Soviet government building? The Communists say they are building a communist state and assure us that the new policy is a matter of tactics: the Bolsheviks are making use of the private capitalists in a difficult situation, but later they will get the upper hand. The Bolsheviks can say what they like; as a matter of fact it is not tactics but evolution, internal regeneration; they will arrive at the ordinary bourgeois state, and we must support them. History proceeds in devious ways."

Some of them pretend to be Communists; but there are others who are more straightforward, one of these is Ustryalov. I think he was a Minister in Kolchak's government. He does not agree with his colleagues and says: "You can think what you like about communism, but I maintain that it is not a matter of tactics, but of evolution." I think that by being straightforward like this, Ustryalov is rendering us a great service. We, and I particularly, because of my position, hear a lot of sentimental communist lies, "communist fibbing", every day, and sometimes we get sick to death of them. But now instead of these "communist fibs" I get a copy of *Smena Vekh*, which says quite plainly: "Things are by no means what you imagine them to be. As a matter of fact, you are slipping into the ordinary bourgeois morass with communist flags inscribed with catchwords stuck all over the place." This is very useful. It is not a repetition of what we are constantly hearing around us, but the plain class truth uttered by the class enemy. It is very useful to read this sort of thing; and it was written not because the communist state allows you to write some things and not others, but because it really is the class truth, bluntly and frankly uttered by the class enemy. "I am in favour of supporting the Soviet government in Russia," says Ustryalov, although he was a Constitutional-Democrat, a bourgeois, and supported intervention. "I am in favour of supporting Soviet power because it has taken the road that will lead it to the ordinary bourgeois state."

This is very useful, and I think that we must keep it in

mind. It is much better for us if the *Smena Vekh* people write in that strain than if some of them pretend to be almost Communists, so that from a distance one cannot tell whether they believe in God or in the communist revolution. We must say frankly that such candid enemies are useful. We must say frankly that the things Ustryalov speaks about are possible. History knows all sorts of metamorphoses. Relying on firmness of convictions, loyalty, and other splendid moral qualities is anything but a serious attitude in politics. A few people may be endowed with splendid moral qualities, but historical issues are decided by vast masses, which, if the few do not suit them, may at times treat them none too politely.

There have been many cases of this kind; that is why we must welcome this frank utterance of the *Smena Vekh* people. The enemy is speaking the class truth and is pointing to the danger that confronts us, and which the enemy is striving to make inevitable. *Smena Vekh* adherents express the sentiments of thousands and tens of thousands of bourgeois, or of Soviet employees whose function it is to operate our New Economic Policy. This is the real and main danger. And that is why attention must be concentrated mainly on the question: "Who will win?" I have spoken about competition. No direct onslaught is being made on us now; nobody is clutching us by the throat. True, we have yet to see what will happen tomorrow; but today we are not being subjected to armed attack. Nevertheless, the fight against capitalist society has become a hundred times more fierce and perilous, because we are not always able to tell enemies from friends.

When I spoke about communist competition, what I had in mind were not communist sympathies but the development of economic forms and social systems. This is not competition but, if not the last, then nearly the last, desperate, furious, life-and-death struggle between capitalism and communism.

And here we must squarely put the question: Wherein lies our strength and what do we lack? We have quite enough political power. I hardly think there is anyone here who will assert that on such-and-such a practical question, in such-and-such a business institution, the Communists, the Communist Party, lack sufficient power. There are people who

think only of this, but these people are hopelessly looking backward and cannot understand that one must look ahead. The main economic power is in our hands. All the vital large enterprises, the railways, etc., are in our hands. The number of leased enterprises, although considerable in places, is on the whole insignificant; altogether it is infinitesimal compared with the rest. The economic power in the hands of the proletarian state of Russia is quite adequate to ensure the transition to communism. What then is lacking? Obviously, what is lacking is culture among the stratum of the Communists who perform administrative functions. If we take Moscow with its 4,700 Communists in responsible positions, and if we take that huge bureaucratic machine, that gigantic heap, we must ask: who is directing whom? I doubt very much whether it can truthfully be said that the Communists are directing that heap. To tell the truth, they are not directing, they are being directed. Something analogous happened here to what we were told in our history lessons when we were children: sometimes one nation conquers another, the nation that conquers is the conqueror and the nation that is vanquished is the conquered nation. This is simple and intelligible to all. But what happens to the culture of these nations? Here things are not so simple. If the conquering nation is more cultured than the vanquished nation, the former imposes its culture upon the latter; but if the opposite is the case, the vanquished nation imposes its culture upon the conqueror. Has not something like this happened in the capital of the R.S.F.S.R.? Have the 4,700 Communists (nearly a whole army division, and all of them the very best) come under the influence of an alien culture? True, there may be the impression that the vanquished have a high level of culture. But that is not the case at all. Their culture is miserable, insignificant, but it is still at a higher level than ours. Miserable and low as it is, it is higher than that of our responsible Communist administrators, for the latter lack administrative ability. Communists who are put at the head of departments—and sometimes artful saboteurs deliberately put them in these positions in order to use them as a shield—are often fooled. This is a very unpleasant admission to make, or, at any rate, not a very pleasant one; but I think we must admit it, for at present this is the salient problem. I think

that this is the political lesson of the past year; and it is around this that the struggle will rage in 1922.

Will the responsible Communists of the R.S.F.S.R. and of the Russian Communist Party realise that they cannot administer; that they only imagine they are directing, but are, actually, being directed? If they realise this they will learn, of course; for this business can be learnt. But one must study hard to learn it, and our people are not doing this. They scatter orders and decrees right and left, but the result is quite different from what they want.

The competition and rivalry that we have placed on the order of the day by proclaiming NEP is a serious business. It appears to be going on in all government offices; but as a matter of fact it is one more form of the struggle between two irreconcilably hostile classes. It is another form of the struggle between the bourgeoisie and the proletariat. It is a struggle that has not yet been brought to a head, and culturally it has not yet been resolved even in the central government departments in Moscow. Very often the bourgeois officials know the business better than our best Communists, who are invested with authority and have every opportunity, but who cannot make the slightest use of their rights and authority.

I should like to quote a passage from a pamphlet by Alexander Todorsky.* It was published in Vesyegonsk (there is an uyezd town of that name in Tver Gubernia) on the first anniversary of the Soviet revolution in Russia, on November 7, 1918, a long, long time ago. Evidently this Vesyegonsk comrade is a member of the Party—I read the pamphlet a long time ago and cannot say for certain. He describes how he set to work to equip two Soviet factories, and for this purpose enlisted the services of two bourgeois. He did this in the way these things were done at that time—threatened to imprison them and to confiscate all their property. They were enlisted for the task of restoring the factories. We know how the services of the bourgeoisie were enlisted in 1918 (*laughter*); so there is no need for me to go

* Lenin refers to Alexander Todorsky's book *A Year with a Rifle and a Plough* published in 1918 by the Vesyegonsk Uyezd Executive Committee of Soviets, Tver Gubernia.—Ed.

into details. The methods we are now using to enlist the bourgeoisie are different. But here is the conclusion he arrived at: "This is only half the job. It is not enough to defeat the bourgeoisie, to overpower them; they must be compelled to work for us."

Now these are remarkable words. They are remarkable for they show that even in the town of Veseyegonsk, even in 1918, there were people who had a correct understanding of the relationship between the victorious proletariat and the vanquished bourgeoisie.

When we rap the exploiters' knuckles, render them innocuous, overpower them, it is only half the job. In Moscow, however, ninety out of a hundred responsible officials imagine that all we have to do is to overpower, render innocuous and rap knuckles. What I have said about the Mensheviks, Socialist-Revolutionaries and whiteguards is very often interpreted solely as rendering innocuous, rapping knuckles (and, perhaps, not only the knuckles, but some other place) and overpowering. But that is only half the job. It was only half the job even in 1918, when this was written by the Veseyegonsk comrade; now it is even less than one-fourth. We must make these hands work for us, and not have responsible Communists at the head of departments, enjoying rank and title, but actually swimming with the stream together with the bourgeoisie. That is the whole point.

The idea of building communist society exclusively with the hands of the Communists is childish, absolutely childish. We Communists are but a drop in the ocean, a drop in the ocean of the people. We shall be able to lead the people along the road we have chosen only if we correctly determine it not only from the standpoint of its direction in world history. From that point of view we have determined the road quite correctly, and this is corroborated by the situation in every country. We must also determine it correctly for our own native land, for our country. But the direction in world history is not the only factor. Other factors are whether there will be intervention or not, and whether we shall be able to supply the peasants with goods in exchange for their grain. The peasants will say: "You are splendid fellows; you defended our country. That is why we obeyed you. But if you cannot

run the show, get out!" Yes, that is what the peasants will say.

We Communists shall be able to direct our economy if we succeed in utilising the hands of the bourgeoisie in building up this economy of ours and in the meantime learn from these bourgeoisie and guide them along the road we want them to travel. But when a Communist imagines that he knows everything, when he says: "I am a responsible Communist, I have beaten enemies far more formidable than any salesman. We have fought at the front and have beaten far more formidable enemies"—it is this prevailing mood that is doing us great harm.

Rendering the exploiters innocuous, rapping them over the knuckles, clipping their wings is the least important part of the job. That must be done; and our State Political Administration and our courts must do it more vigorously than they have up to now. They must remember that they are proletarian courts surrounded by enemies the world over. This is not difficult; and in the main we have learned to do it. Here a certain amount of pressure must be exercised; but that is easy.

To win the second part of the victory, i.e., to build communism with the hands of non-Communists, to acquire the practical ability to do what is economically necessary, we must establish a link with peasant farming; we must satisfy the peasant, so that he will say: "Hard, bitter and painful as starvation is, I see a government that is an unusual one, is no ordinary one, but is doing something practically useful, something tangible." We must see to it that the numerous elements with whom we are co-operating, and who far exceed us in number, work in such a way as to enable us to supervise them; we must learn to understand this work, and direct their hands so that they do something useful for communism. This is the key point of the present situation; for although individual Communists have understood and realised that it is necessary to enlist the non-Party people for this work, the rank-and-file of our Party have not. Many circulars have been written, much has been said about this, but has anything been accomplished during the past year? Nothing. Not five Party committees out of a hundred can show practical results. This shows how much we lag behind

the requirements of the present time; how much we are still living in the traditions of 1918 and 1919. Those were great years; a great historical task was then accomplished. But if we only look back on those years and do not see the task that now confronts us, we shall be doomed, certainly and absolutely. And the whole point is that we refuse to admit it.

I should now like to give two practical examples to illustrate how we administer. I have said already that it would be more correct to take one of the state trusts as an example, but I must ask you to excuse me for not being able to apply this proper method, for to do so it would have been necessary to study the concrete material concerning at least one state trust. Unfortunately, I have been unable to do that, and so I will take two small examples. One example is the accusation of bureaucracy levelled at the People's Commissariat of Foreign Trade by the Moscow Consumers' Co-operative Society. The other example I will take from the Donets Basin.

The first example is not quite relevant—I am unable to find a better—but it will serve to illustrate my main point. As you know from the newspapers, I have been unable to deal with affairs directly during these past few months. I have not been attending the Council of People's Commissars, or the Central Committee. During the short and rare visits I made to Moscow I was struck by the desperate and terrible complaints levelled at the People's Commissariat of Foreign Trade. I have never doubted for a moment that the People's Commissariat of Foreign Trade functions badly and that it is tied up with red tape. But when the complaints became particularly bitter I tried to investigate the matter: to take a concrete example and for once get to the bottom of it; to ascertain the cause, to ascertain why the machine was not working properly.

The M.C.C.S. wanted to purchase a quantity of canned goods. A French citizen appeared and offered some. I do not know whether he did it in the interests of the international policy and with the knowledge of the leadership of the Entente countries, or with the approval of Poincaré and the other enemies of the Soviet government (I think our historians will investigate and make this clear after the Genoa Confer-

ence), but the fact is that the French bourgeoisie took not only a theoretical, but also a practical interest in this business, as a French bourgeois turned up in Moscow with an offer of canned goods. Moscow is starving; in the summer the situation will be worse; no meat has been delivered, and knowing the merits of our People's Commissariat of Railways, probably none will be delivered.

An offer is made to sell canned meat for Soviet currency (whether the meat is entirely bad or not will be established by a future investigation). What could be simpler? But if the matter is approached in the Soviet way, it turns out to be not so simple after all. I was unable to go into the matter personally, but I ordered an investigation and I have before me the report which shows how this celebrated case developed. It started with the decision adopted on February 11 by the Political Bureau of the Central Committee of the Russian Communist Party on the report of Comrade Kamenev concerning the desirability of purchasing food abroad. Of course, how could a Russian citizen decide such a question without the consent of the Political Bureau of the Central Committee of the Russian Communist Party! Think of it! How could 4,700 responsible officials (and this is only according to the census*) decide a matter like purchasing food abroad without the consent of the Political Bureau of the Central Committee? This would be something supernatural, of course. Evidently, Comrade Kamenev understands our policy and the realities of our position perfectly well, and, therefore, he did not place too much reliance on the numerous responsible officials. He started by taking the bull by the horns—if not the bull, at all events the Political Bureau—and without any difficulty (I did not hear that there was any discussion over the matter) obtained a resolution stating: "To call the attention of the People's Commissariat of Foreign Trade to the desirability of importing food from abroad; the import duties. . .", etc. The attention of the People's Commissariat of Foreign Trade was drawn to this. Things started moving. This was on February 11. I remember that I had

* The census of responsible officials in July 1921 was to ascertain the numerical composition and efficiency of leading Party functionaries in gubernia and uyezd centres, their geographical distribution and the expediency of their utilisation.—*Ed.*

occasion to be in Moscow at the very end of February, or about that time, and what did I find? The complaints, the despairing complaints of the Moscow comrades. "What's the matter?" I ask. "There is no way we can buy these provisions." "Why?" "Because of the red tape of the People's Commissariat of Foreign Trade." I had not been taking part in affairs for a long time and I did not know that the Political Bureau had adopted a decision on the matter. I merely ordered the Executive Secretary of our Council to investigate, procure the relevant documents and show them to me. The matter was settled when Krasin arrived. Kamenev discussed the matter with him; the transaction was arranged, and the canned meat was purchased. All's well that ends well.

I have not the least doubt that Kamenev and Krasin can come to an understanding and correctly determine the political line desired by the Political Bureau of the Central Committee of the Russian Communist Party. If the political line on commercial matters were decided by Kamenev and Krasin, ours would be the best Soviet Republic in the world. But Kamenev, a member of the Political Bureau, and Krasin—the latter is busy with diplomatic affairs connected with Genoa, affairs which have entailed an enormous, an excessive amount of labour—cannot be dragged into every transaction, dragged into the business of buying canned goods from a French citizen. That is not the way to work. This is not new, not economic, and not a policy, but sheer mockery. Now I have the report of the investigation into this matter. In fact, I have two reports: one, the report of the investigation made by Gorbunov, the Executive Secretary of the Council of People's Commissars, and his assistant, Miroshnikov; and the other, the report of the investigation made by the State Political Administration. I do not know why the latter interested itself in the matter, and I am not quite sure whether it was proper for it to do so; but I will not go into that now, because I am afraid this might entail another investigation. The important thing is that material on the matter has been collected and I now have it before me.

On arriving in Moscow at the end of February I heard bitter complaints, "We cannot buy the canned goods", although in Libau there was a ship with a cargo of canned goods, and the owners were prepared to take Soviet currency

for real canned goods! (*Laughter.*) If these canned goods are not entirely bad (and I now emphasise the "if", because I am not sure that I shall not call for another investigation, the results of which, however, we shall have to report at the next Congress), if, I say, these goods are not entirely bad and they have been purchased, I ask: why could not this matter have been settled without Kamenev and Krasin? From the report I have before me I gather that one responsible Communist sent another responsible Communist to the devil. I also gather from this report that one responsible Communist said to another responsible Communist: "From now on I shall not talk to you except in the presence of a lawyer." Reading this report I recalled the time when I was in exile in Siberia, twenty-five years ago, and had occasion to act in the capacity of a lawyer. I was not a certified lawyer, because, being summarily exiled, I was not allowed to practise; but as there was no other lawyer in the region, people came and confided their troubles to me. But sometimes I had the greatest difficulty in understanding what the trouble was. A woman would come and, of course, start telling me a long story about her relatives, and it was incredibly difficult to get from her what she really wanted. I said to her: "Bring me a copy." She went on with her endless and pointless story. When I repeated, "Bring me a copy", she left, complaining: "He won't hear what I have to say unless I bring a copy." In our colony we had a hearty laugh over this copy. I was able, however, to make some progress. People came to me, brought copies of the necessary documents, and I was able to gather what their trouble was, what they complained of, what ailed them. This was twenty-five years ago, in Siberia, in a place many hundreds of versts from the nearest railway station.

But why was it necessary, three years after the revolution, in the capital of the Soviet Republic, to have two investigations, the intervention of Kamenev and Krasin and the instructions of the Political Bureau to purchase canned goods? What was lacking? Political power? No. The money was forthcoming, so they had economic as well as political power. All the necessary institutions were available. What was lacking, then? Culture. Ninety-nine out of every hundred officials of the M.C.C.S.—against whom I have no complaint to make whatever, and whom I regard as excellent Communists—and

of the Commissariat of Foreign Trade lack culture. They were unable to approach the matter in a cultured manner.

When I first heard of the matter I sent the following written proposal to the Central Committee: "All the officials concerned of the Moscow government departments—except the members of the All-Russia Central Executive Committee, who, as you know, enjoy immunity—should be put in the worst prison in Moscow for six hours, and those of the People's Commissariat of Foreign Trade for thirty-six hours." And then it turned out that no one could say who the culprits were (*laughter*), and from what I have told you it is evident that the culprits will never be discovered. It is simply the usual inability of the Russian intellectuals to get things done—inefficiency and slovenliness. First they rush at a job, do a little bit, and then think about it, and when nothing comes of it, they run to complain to Kamenev and want the matter to be brought before the Political Bureau. Of course, all difficult state problems should be brought before the Political Bureau—I shall have to say something about that later on—but one should think first and then act. If you want to bring up a case, submit the appropriate documents. First send a telegram, and in Moscow we also have telephones; send a telephone message to the competent department and a copy to Tsyurupa saying: "I regard the transaction as urgent and will take proceedings against anyone guilty of red tape." One must think of this elementary culture, one must approach things in a thoughtful manner. If the business is not settled in the course of a few minutes, by telephone, collect the documents and say: "If you start any of your red tape I shall have you clapped in gaol." But not a moment's thought is given to the matter, there is no preparation, the usual bustle, several commissions, everybody is tired out, exhausted, run down, and things begin to move only when Kamenev is put in touch with Krasin. All this is typical of what goes on not only in the capital, Moscow, but also in the other capitals, in the capitals of all independent republics and regions. And the same thing, even a hundred times worse, constantly goes on in the provincial towns.

In our struggle we must remember that Communists must be able to reason. They may be perfectly familiar with the

revolutionary struggle and with the state of the revolutionary movement all over the world; but if we are to extricate ourselves from desperate poverty and want we need culture, integrity and an ability to reason. Many lack these qualities. It would be unfair to say that the responsible Communists do not fulfil their functions conscientiously. The overwhelming majority of them, ninety-nine out of a hundred, are not only conscientious—they proved their devotion to the revolution under the most difficult conditions before the fall of tsarism and after the revolution; they were ready to lay down their lives. Therefore, it would be radically wrong to attribute the trouble to lack of conscientiousness. We need a cultured approach to the simplest affairs of state. We must all understand that this is a matter of state, a business matter; and if obstacles arise we must be able to overcome them and take proceedings against those who are guilty of red tape. We have proletarian courts in Moscow; they must bring to account the persons who are to blame for the failure to effect the purchase of several tens of thousands of poods of canned food. I think the proletarian courts will be able to punish the guilty; but in order to punish, the culprits must be found. I assure you that in this case no culprits will be found. I want you all to look into this business: no one is guilty; all we see is a lot of fuss and bustle and nonsense. Nobody has the ability to approach the business properly; nobody understands that affairs of state must not be tackled in this way. And all the whiteguards and saboteurs take advantage of this. At one time we waged a fierce struggle against the saboteurs; that struggle confronts us even now. There are saboteurs today, of course, and they must be fought. But can we fight them when the position is as I have just described it? This is worse than any sabotage. The saboteur could wish for nothing better than that two Communists should argue over the question of when to appeal to the Political Bureau for instructions on principles in buying food; and of course he would soon slip in between them and egg them on. If any intelligent saboteur were to stand behind these Communists, or behind each of them in turn, and encourage them, that would be the end. The matter would be doomed for ever. Who is to blame? Nobody, because two responsible Communists, devoted revolutionaries, are arguing over last year's snow; are arguing over the ques-

tion of when to appeal to the Political Bureau for instructions on principles in buying food.

That is how the matter stands and that is the difficulty that confronts us. Any salesman trained in a large capitalist enterprise knows how to settle a matter like that; but ninety-nine responsible Communists out of a hundred do not. And they refuse to understand that they do not know how and that they must learn the ABC of this business. Unless we realise this, unless we sit down in the preparatory class again, we shall never be able to solve the economic problem that now lies at the basis of our entire policy.

The other example I wanted to give you is that of the Donets Basin. You know that this is the centre, the real basis of our entire economy. It will be utterly impossible to restore large-scale industry in Russia, to really build socialism—for it can only be built on the basis of large-scale industry—unless we restore the Donets Basin and bring it up to the proper level. The Central Committee is closely watching developments there.

As regards this region there was no unjustified, ridiculous or absurd raising of minor questions in the Political Bureau; real, absolutely urgent business was discussed.

The Central Committee ought to see to it that in such real centres, bases and foundations of our entire economy, work is carried on in a real business-like manner. At the head of the Central Coal Industry Board we had not only undoubtedly devoted, but really educated and very capable people. I should not be wrong even if I said talented people. That is why the Central Committee has concentrated its attention on it. The Ukraine is an independent republic. That is quite all right. But in Party matters it sometimes—what is the politest way of saying it?—takes a roundabout course, and we shall have to get at them. For the people in charge there are sly, and their Central Committee I shall not say deceives us, but somehow edges away from us. To obtain a general view of the whole business, we discussed it in the Central Committee here and discovered that friction and disagreement exist. There is a Commission for the Utilisation of Small Mines there and, of course, severe friction between it and the Central Coal Industry Board. Still we, the Central Committee, have a certain amount of experience and we unanimously

decided not to remove the leading people, but if there was any friction it was to be reported to us, down to the smallest detail. For since we have not only devoted but capable people in the region, we must back them up, and enable them to complete their training, assuming that they have not done so. In the end, a Party Congress was held in the Ukraine—I do not know what happened there; all sorts of things happened. I asked for information from the Ukrainian comrades, and I asked Comrade Orjonikidze particularly—and the Central Committee did the same—to go down there and ascertain what had happened. Evidently, there was some intrigue and an awful mess, which the Commission on Party History* would not be able to clear up in ten years should it undertake to do so. But the upshot of it all was that contrary to the unanimous instructions of the Central Committee, this group was superseded by another group. What was the matter? In the main, notwithstanding all its good qualities, a section of the group made a mistake. They were overzealous in their methods of administration.** There we have to deal with workers. Very often the word “workers” is taken to mean the factory proletariat. But it does not mean that at all. During the war people who were by no means proletarians went into the factories; they went into the factories to dodge the war. Are the social and economic conditions in our country today such as to induce real proletarians to go into the factories? No. It would be true according to Marx; but Marx did not write about Russia; he wrote about capitalism as a whole, beginning with the fifteenth century. It held true over a period of six hundred years, but it is not true for present-day Russia. Very often those who go into the factories are not proletarians; they are casual elements of every description.

The task is to learn to organise the work properly, not to lag behind, to remove friction in time, not to separate administration from politics. For our administration and our

* The Commission for Collecting and Studying Materials on the History of the October Revolution and the History of the Russian Communist Party was set up on September 21, 1920.—*Ed.*

** This refers to the Central Coal Industry Board of the Donets Basin which failed to appreciate the importance of restoring small mines and other industries and suppressed the initiative of local Party and trade union organisations in economic construction.—*Ed.*

politics rest on the ability of the entire vanguard to maintain contact with the entire mass of the proletariat and with the entire mass of the peasantry. If anybody forgets these cogs and becomes wholly absorbed in administration, the result will be a disastrous one. The mistake the Donets Basin officials made is insignificant compared with other mistakes of ours, but this example is a typical one. The Central Committee unanimously ordered: "Allow this group to remain; bring all conflicts, even minor ones, before the Central Committee, for the Donets Basin is not an ordinary district, but a vital one, without which socialist construction would simply remain a pious wish." But all our political power, all the authority of the Central Committee proved of no avail.

This time there was a mistake in administration, of course; in addition, a host of other mistakes were made.

This instance shows that it is not a matter of possessing political power, but of administrative ability, the ability to put the right man in the right place, the ability to avoid petty conflicts, so that state economic work may be carried on without interruption. This is what we lack; this is the root of the mistake.

I think that in discussing our revolution and weighing up its prospects, we must carefully single out the problems which the revolution has solved completely and which have irrevocably gone down in history as an epoch-making departure from capitalism. Our revolution has such solutions to its credit. Let the Mensheviks and Otto Bauer of the Two-and-a-Half International shout: "Theirs is a bourgeois revolution." We say that our task was to consummate the bourgeois revolution. As a certain whiteguard newspaper expressed it: Dung had accumulated in our state institutions for four hundred years; but we cleaned it all out in four years. This is the great service we rendered. What have the Mensheviks and Socialist-Revolutionaries done? Nothing. The dung of medievalism has not been cleaned out either in our country, or even in advanced, enlightened Germany. Yet they reproach us for doing what stands very much to our credit. The fact that we have consummated the revolution is an achievement that can never be expunged from our record.

War is now in the air. The trade unions, for example, the reformist trade unions, are passing resolutions against war

and are threatening to call strikes in opposition to war. Recently, if I am not mistaken, I read a report in the newspapers to the effect that a certain very good Communist delivered an anti-war speech in the French Chamber of Deputies in the course of which he stated that the workers would prefer to rise in revolt rather than go to war.* This question cannot be formulated in the way we formulated it in 1912, when the Basle Manifesto was issued. The Russian revolution alone has shown how it is possible to emerge from war, and what effort this entails. It showed what emerging from a reactionary war by revolutionary methods means. Reactionary imperialist wars are inevitable in all parts of the world; and in solving problems of this sort mankind cannot and will not forget that tens of millions were slaughtered then, and will be slaughtered again if war breaks out. We are living in the twentieth century, and the only nation that emerged from a reactionary war by revolutionary methods not for the benefit of a particular government, but by overthrowing it, was the Russian nation, and it was the Russian revolution that extricated it. What has been won by the Russian revolution is irrevocable. No power on earth can erase that; nor can any power on earth erase the fact that the Soviet state has been created. This is a historic victory. For hundreds of years states have been built according to the bourgeois model, and for the first time a non-bourgeois form of state has been discovered. Our machinery of government may be faulty, but it is said that the first steam engine that was invented was also faulty. No one even knows whether it worked or not, but that is not the important point; the important point is that it was invented. Even assuming that the first steam engine was of no use, the fact is that we now have steam engines. Even if our machinery of government is very faulty, the fact remains that it has been created; the greatest invention in history has been made; a proletarian type of state has been created. Therefore, let all Europe, let thousands of bourgeois newspapers broadcast news about the horrors and poverty that prevail in our country, about suffering being the sole lot of the working people in our country; the workers

* The French Communist referred to is Jean Renault who spoke out against militarism and imperialism.—*Ed.*

all over the world are still drawn towards the Soviet state. These are the great and irrevocable gains that we have achieved. But for us, members of the Communist Party, this meant only opening the door. We are now confronted with the task of laying the foundations of socialist economy. Has this been done? No, it has not. We still lack the socialist foundation. Those Communists who imagine that we have it are greatly mistaken. The whole point is to distinguish firmly, clearly and dispassionately what constitutes the historic service rendered by the Russian revolution from what we do very badly, from what has not yet been created, and what we shall have to redo many times yet.

Political events are always very confused and complicated. They can be compared with a chain. To hold the whole chain you must grasp the main link. Not a link chosen at random. What was the central event in 1917? Withdrawal from the war. The entire nation demanded this, and it overshadowed everything. Revolutionary Russia accomplished this withdrawal from the war. It cost tremendous effort; but the major demand of the people was satisfied, and that brought us victory for many years. The people realised, the peasants saw, every soldier returning from the front understood perfectly well that the Soviet government was a more democratic government, one that stood closer to the working people. No matter how many outrageous and absurd things we may have done in other spheres, the fact that we realised what the main task was proved that everything was right.

What was the key feature of 1919 and 1920? Military resistance. The all-powerful Entente was marching against us, was at our throats. No propaganda was required there. Every non-Party peasant understood what was going on. The landowners were coming back. The Communists knew how to fight them. That is why, taken in the mass, the peasants followed the lead of the Communists; that is why we were victorious.

In 1921, the key feature was an orderly retreat. This required stern discipline. The Workers' Opposition said: "You are underrating the workers; the workers should display greater initiative." But initiative had to be displayed then by retreating in good order and by maintaining strict discipline. Anyone who introduced an undertone of panic or

insubordination would have doomed the revolution to defeat; for there is nothing more difficult than retreating with people who have been accustomed to victory, who are imbued with revolutionary views and ideals, and who, in their hearts, regard every retreat as a disgraceful matter. The greatest danger was the violation of good order, and the greatest task was to maintain good order.

And what is the key feature now? The key feature now—and I would like to sum up my report with this—is not that we have changed our line of policy. An incredible lot of nonsense is being talked about this in connection with NEP. It is all hot air, pernicious twaddle. In connection with NEP some people are beginning to fuss around, proposing to reorganise our government departments and to form new ones. All this is pernicious twaddle. In the present situation the key feature is people, the proper choice of people. A revolutionary who is accustomed to struggle against petty reformists and uplift educators finds it hard to understand this. Soberly weighed up, the political conclusion to be drawn from the present situation is that we have advanced so far that we cannot hold all the positions; and we need not hold them all.

Internationally our position has improved vastly these last few years. The Soviet type of state is our achievement; it is a step forward in human progress; and the information the Communist International receives from every country every day corroborates this. Nobody has the slightest doubt about that. From the point of view of practical work, however, the position is that unless the Communists render the masses of the peasants practical assistance they will lose their support. Passing laws, passing better decrees, etc., is not now the main object of our attention. There was a time when the passing of decrees was a form of propaganda. People used to laugh at us and say that the Bolsheviks do not realise that their decrees are not being carried out; the entire whiteguard press was full of jeers on that score. But at that period this passing of decrees was quite justified. We Bolsheviks had just taken power, and we said to the peasant, to the worker: "Here is a decree; this is how we would like to have the state administered. Try it!" From the very outset we gave the ordinary workers and peasants an idea of our policy in the

form of decrees. The result was the enormous confidence we enjoyed and now enjoy among the masses of the people. This was an essential period at the beginning of the revolution; without it we should not have risen on the crest of the revolutionary wave; we should have wallowed in its trough. Without it we should not have won the confidence of all the workers and peasants who wanted to build their lives on new lines. But this period has passed, and we refuse to understand this. Now the peasants and workers will laugh at us if we order this or that government department to be formed or reorganised. The ordinary workers and peasants will display no interest in this now, and they will be right, because this is not the central task today. This is not the sort of thing with which we Communists should now go to the people. Although we who are engaged in government departments are always overwhelmed with so many petty affairs, this is not the link that we must grasp, this is not the key feature. The key feature is that we have not got the right men in the right places; that responsible Communists who acquitted themselves magnificently during the revolution have been given commercial and industrial functions about which they know nothing; and they prevent us from seeing the truth, for rogues and rascals hide magnificently behind their backs. The trouble is that we have no such thing as practical control of how things have been done. This is a prosaic job, a small job; these are petty affairs. But after the greatest political change in history, bearing in mind that for a time we shall have to live in the midst of the capitalist system, the key feature now is not politics in the narrow sense of the word (what we read in the newspapers is just political fireworks; there is nothing socialist in it at all), the key feature is not resolutions, not departments and not reorganisation. As long as these things are necessary we shall do them, but don't go to the people with them. Choose the proper men and introduce practical control. That is what the people will appreciate.

In the sea of people we are after all but a drop in the ocean, and we can administer only when we express correctly what the people are conscious of. Unless we do this the Communist Party will not lead the proletariat, the proletariat will not lead the masses, and the whole machine will collapse. The

chief thing the people, all the working people, want today is nothing but help in their desperate hunger and need; they want to be shown that the improvement needed by the peasants is really taking place in the form they are accustomed to. The peasant knows and is accustomed to the market and trade. We were unable to introduce direct communist distribution. We lacked the factories and their equipment for this. That being the case, we must provide the peasants with what they need through the medium of trade, and provide it as well as the capitalist did, otherwise the people will not tolerate such an administration. This is the key to the situation; and unless something unexpected arises, this, given three conditions, should be the central feature of our activities in 1922.

The first condition is that there shall be no intervention. We are doing all we can in the diplomatic field to avoid it; nevertheless, it may occur any day. We must really be on the alert, and we must agree to make certain big sacrifices for the sake of the Red Army, within definite limits, of course. We are confronted by the entire bourgeois world, which is only seeking a way in which to strangle us. Our Mensheviks and Socialist-Revolutionaries are nothing more nor less than the agents of this bourgeoisie. Such is their political status.

The second condition is that the financial crisis shall not be too severe. The crisis is approaching. You will hear about that when we discuss financial policy. If it is too severe and rigorous we shall have to revise many things again and concentrate all efforts on one thing. If it is not too severe it may even be useful; it will give the Communists in all the state trusts a good shaking; only we must not forget to do it. The financial crisis will shake up government departments and industrial enterprises, and those that are not equal to their task will be the first to burst; only we must take care that all the blame for this is not thrown on the specialists while the responsible Communists are praised for being very good fellows who have fought at the fronts and have always worked well. Thus, if the financial crisis is not too severe we can derive some benefit from it and comb the ranks of the responsible Communists engaged in the business departments not in the way the Central Control Commission and the

Central Verification Commission* comb them, but very thoroughly.

The third condition is that we shall make no political mistakes in this period. Of course, if we do make political mistakes all our work of economic construction will be disrupted and we shall land ourselves in controversies about how to rectify them and what direction to pursue. But if we make no sad mistakes, the key feature in the near future will be not decrees and politics in the narrow sense of the word, not departments and their organisation—the responsible Communists and the Soviet institutions will deal with these things whenever necessary—the main thing in all our activities will be choosing the right people and making sure that decisions are carried out. If, in this respect, we learn something practical, if we do something practically useful, we shall again overcome all difficulties.

In conclusion I must mention the practical side of the question of our Soviet institutions, the higher government bodies and the Party's relation to them. The relations between the Party and the Soviet government bodies are not what they ought to be. On this point we are quite unanimous. I have given one example of how minor matters are dragged before the Political Bureau. It is extremely difficult to get out of this by formal means, for there is only one governing party in our country; and a member of the Party cannot be prohibited from lodging complaints. That is why everything that comes up on the Council of People's Commissars is dragged before the Political Bureau. I, too, am greatly to blame for this, for to a large extent contact between the Council of People's Commissars and the Political Bureau was maintained through me. When I was obliged to retire from work it was found that the two wheels were not working in unison and Kamenev had to bear a treble load to maintain this contact. Inasmuch as it is barely probable that I shall return to work in the near future, all hope devolves on the fact that there are two other deputies—Comrade Tsyurupa, who has been cleansed by the

* *The Central Verification Commission* consisting of five members was set up by the Central Committee of the R.C.P.(B.) on June 25, 1921 to direct the work of local verification commissions during the period of the Party purge.—*Ed.*

Germans, and Comrade Rykov, whom they have splendidly cleansed. It seems that even Wilhelm, the German Emperor, has stood us in good stead—I never expected it. He had a surgeon, who happened to be the doctor treating Comrade Rykov, and he removed his worst part, keeping it in Germany, and left the best part intact, sending that part of Comrade Rykov thoroughly cleansed to us. If that method continues to be used it will be a really good thing.

Joking aside, a word or two about the main instructions. On this point there is complete unanimity on the Central Committee, and I hope that the Congress will pay the closest attention to it and endorse the instructions that the Political Bureau and the Central Committee be relieved of minor matters, and that more should be shifted to the responsible officials. The People's Commissars must be responsible for their work and should not bring these matters up first on the Council of People's Commissars and then on the Political Bureau. Formally, we cannot abolish the right to lodge complaints with the Central Committee, for our Party is the only governing party in the country. But we must put a stop to the habit of bringing every petty matter before the Central Committee; we must raise the prestige of the Council of People's Commissars. The Commissars and not the Deputy Commissars must mainly attend the meetings of the Council. The functions of the Council must be changed in the direction in which I have not succeeded in changing them during the past year, that is, it must pay much more attention to executive control. We shall have two more deputies—Rykov and Tsyurupa. When Rykov was in the Extraordinary Authorised Council of Workers' and Peasants' Defence for the Supply of the Red Army and Navy he tightened things up and the work went well. Tsyurupa organised one of the most efficient People's Commissariats. If together they make the maximum effort to improve the People's Commissariats in the sense of efficiency and responsibility, we shall make some, even if a little, progress here. We have eighteen People's Commissariats of which not less than fifteen are of no use at all—efficient People's Commissars cannot be found everywhere, and I certainly hope that people give this more of their attention. Comrade Rykov must be a member of the Central Committee Bureau and of the Presidium of the All-

Russia Central Executive Committee because there must be a tie-up between these two bodies, for without this tie-up the main wheels sometimes spin in the air.

In this connection, we must see to it that the number of commissions of the Council of People's Commissars and of the Council of Labour and Defence is reduced. These bodies must know and settle their own affairs and not split up into an infinite number of commissions. A few days ago the commissions were overhauled. It was found that there were one hundred and twenty of them. How many were necessary? Sixteen. And this is not the first cut. Instead of accepting responsibility for their work, preparing a decision for the Council of People's Commissars and knowing that they bear responsibility for this decision, there is a tendency to take shelter behind commissions. The devil himself would lose his way in this maze of commissions. Nobody knows what is going on, who is responsible; everything is mixed up, and finally a decision is passed for which everybody is held responsible.

In this connection, reference must be made to the need for extending and developing the autonomy and activities of the regional economic conferences.* The administrative division of Russia has now been drawn up on scientific lines; the economic and climatic conditions, the way of life, the conditions of obtaining fuel, of local industry, etc., have all been taken into account. On the basis of this division, district and regional economic conferences have been instituted. Changes may be made here and there, of course, but the prestige of these economic conferences must be enhanced.

Then we must see to it that the All-Russia Central Executive Committee works more energetically, meets in session more regularly, and for longer periods. The sessions of the All-Russia Central Executive Committee should discuss bills which sometimes are hastily brought before the Council of People's Commissars when there is no need to do so. It would be better to postpone such bills and give the local

* *Regional economic conferences* (or councils) were local organs of the Council of Labour and Defence instituted in early 1921 to co-ordinate and intensify the activities of all local economic bodies and gubernia economic conferences.—*Ed.*

workers an opportunity to study them carefully. Stricter demands should be made upon those who draft the bills. This is not done.

If the sessions of the All-Russia Central Executive Committee last longer, they can split up into sections and sub-commissions, and thus will be able to verify the work more strictly and strive to achieve what in my opinion is the key, the quintessence of the present political situation: to concentrate attention on choosing the right people and on verifying how decisions are carried out.

It must be admitted, and we must not be afraid to admit, that in ninety-nine cases out of a hundred the responsible Communists are not in the jobs they are now fit for; that they are unable to perform their duties, and that they must sit down to learn. If this is admitted, and since we have the opportunity to learn—judging by the general international situation we shall have time to do so—we must do it, come what may. (*Stormy applause.*)

**Closing Speech on the Political Report
of the Central Committee of the R.C.P.(B.)
March 28**

(*Applause.*) First of all I shall have to devote a little time to criticising the remarks made here by Comrades Preobrazhensky and Osinsky. I think that on the most important and fundamental question Comrades Preobrazhensky and Osinsky were wide of the mark, and their own statements have proved their line of policy to be wrong.

Comrade Preobrazhensky spoke about capitalism and said that we ought to open a general discussion on our Programme. I think that this would be the most unproductive and unjustified waste of time.

First of all about state capitalism.

“State capitalism is capitalism,” said Preobrazhensky, “and that is the only way it can and should be interpreted.” I say that that is pure scholasticism. Up to now nobody could have written a book about this sort of capitalism, because this is the first time in human history that we see anything like it. All the more or less intelligible books about state capitalism that have appeared up to now were written under conditions and in a situation where state capitalism was capitalism. Now things are different; and neither Marx nor the Marxists could foresee this. We must not look to the past. When you write history, you will write it magnificently; but when you write a textbook, you will say: State capitalism is the most unexpected and absolutely unforeseen form of capitalism—for nobody could foresee that the proletariat would achieve power in one of the least developed countries, and would first try to organise large-scale production and distribution for the peasantry and then, finding that it could not cope with the task owing to the low standard of culture, would enlist the

services of capitalism. Nobody ever foresaw this; but it is an incontrovertible fact.

Comrade Larin, in his speech, revealed that he has a very vague conception of the New Economic Policy and of how it should be handled.

Not a single serious objection has been raised to our adoption of the New Economic Policy. The proletariat is not afraid to admit that certain things in the revolution went off magnificently, and that others went awry. All the revolutionary parties that have perished so far, perished because they became conceited, because they failed to see the source of their strength and feared to discuss their weaknesses. We, however, shall not perish, because we are not afraid to discuss our weaknesses and will learn to overcome them. (*Applause.*) The capitalism that we have permitted is essential. If it is ugly and bad, we shall be able to rectify it, because power is in our hands and we have nothing to fear. Everybody admits this, and so it is ridiculous to confuse this with panic-mongering. If we were afraid to admit this our doom would be sealed. But the fact that we will learn and want to learn this is proved by the experience of the past three, four, five years, during which we learnt more complicated matters in a shorter period. True, then we were driven by necessity. During the war we were driven very hard; I think there was neither a front nor a campaign in which we were not hard pressed. The enemy came within a hundred versts of Moscow; was approaching Orel; was within five versts of Petrograd. That was the time we really woke up and began to learn and to put the lessons we had learnt into practice, and we drove out the enemy.

The position now is that we have to deal with an enemy in mundane economics, and this is a thousand times more difficult. The controversies over state capitalism that have been raging in our literature up to now could at best be included in textbooks on history. I do not in the least deny that textbooks are useful, and recently I wrote that it would be far better if our authors devoted less attention to newspapers and political twaddle and wrote textbooks, as many of them, including Comrade Larin, could do splendidly. His talent would prove most useful on work of this kind and we would solve the problem that Comrade Trotsky emphasised so well

when he said that the main task at the present time is to train the younger generation, but we have nothing to train them with. Indeed, from what can the younger generation learn the social sciences? From the old bourgeois junk. This is disgraceful! And this is at a time when we have hundreds of Marxist authors who could write textbooks on all social problems, but do not do so because their minds are taken up with other things.

As regards state capitalism, we ought to know what should be the slogan for agitation and propaganda, what must be explained, what we must get everyone to understand practically. And that is that the state capitalism that we have now is not the state capitalism that the Germans wrote about. It is capitalism that we ourselves have permitted. Is that true or not? Everybody knows that it is true!

At a congress of Communists we passed a decision that state capitalism would be permitted by the proletarian state, and we are the state. If we did wrong we are to blame and it is no use shifting the blame to somebody else! We must learn, we must see to it that in a proletarian country state capitalism cannot and does not go beyond the framework and conditions delineated for it by the proletariat, beyond conditions that benefit the proletariat. It was quite rightly pointed out here that we had to give consideration to the peasants as a mass, and enable them to trade freely. Every intelligent worker appreciates that this is necessary for the proletarian dictatorship, and only Comrade Shlyapnikov can joke about and mock it. This is appreciated by everybody and has been chewed over a thousand times, but you simply refuse to understand it. If under present conditions the peasant must have freedom to trade within certain limits, we must give it to him, but this does not mean that we are permitting trade in raw brandy. We shall punish people for that sort of trade. It does not mean that we are permitting the sale of political literature called Menshevik and Socialist-Revolutionary and financed by the capitalists of the whole world.

That is what I meant when I mentioned machine-guns, and Comrade Shlyapnikov should have understood it. What he says is nonsensical!

You will not frighten anybody and you will not win any sympathy! (*Applause. Laughter.*)

Poor Shlyapnikov! Lenin had planned to use machine-guns against him!

What I had in mind was Party disciplinary measures, and not machine-guns as such. When we talk about machine-guns we have in mind the people in this country whom we call Mensheviks and Socialist-Revolutionaries and who argue as follows: "You say you are retreating towards capitalism, and we say the same thing; we agree with you!" We are constantly hearing this sort of thing; and abroad a gigantic propaganda campaign is being conducted to prove that while we Bolsheviks are keeping the Mensheviks and Socialist-Revolutionaries in prison, we ourselves are permitting capitalism. True, we are permitting capitalism, but within the limits that the peasants need. This is essential! Without it the peasants could not exist and continue with their husbandry. But we maintain that the Russian peasants can do very well without Socialist-Revolutionary and Menshevik propaganda. To those who assert the contrary we say: We would rather perish to the last man than yield to you! And our courts must understand all this. Now that we are passing from the Cheka to state-political courts we must say at this Congress that there is no such thing as above-class courts. Our courts must be elected, proletarian courts; and they must know what it is that we are permitting. They must clearly understand what state capitalism is.

This is the political slogan of the day and not a controversy about what the German professors meant by state capitalism and what we mean by it. We have gone through a great deal since then, and it is altogether unseemly for us to look back.

The degree to which Comrade Preobrazhensky goes off the political track is shown by what he said about an Economic Bureau and about the Programme. What a magnificent thing our Programme is, but how frightfully we garble it! How is that possible? Because some people read it word for word and line by line, and beyond that they will not look. They pick out a passage and say: "There was a controversy over this." Some say that the line of the Workers' Faculties and of the Communist local cells was correct, but the line of those who said: "Go easy, treat those specialists more carefully", was wrong. True, the Communist cells are splendid and so are the

Workers' Faculties, but they are not infallible; they are not saints. . . .

Yes, the Communist cells are the representatives of our Party, and the Workers' Faculties are the representatives of our class; but the fact that they make mistakes and that we must correct them is an elementary truism. How they are to be corrected I do not know, because I did not attend the meetings of the Central Committee at which this question was discussed. But I do know that the Workers' Faculties and the Communist cells overdo things in the line they have taken against the professors. After our Central Committee has examined this question in all its aspects and has decided that things have been overdone and that a more cautious line must be adopted towards these professors, who are the representatives of an alien class, Comrade Preobrazhensky comes along, takes out the Programme and says: "No political concessions to this stratum; that would be an infringement of the Programme."

If we start guiding the Party in this way we shall inevitably go under. And this is not because Comrade Preobrazhensky has wrong ideas about politics in general, but because he approaches everything from the angle of what is his strongest point; he is a theoretician whose mind is restricted by what is customary and usual; he is a propagandist whose mind is taken up with measures directed to the purpose of propaganda. Everybody is aware of and appreciates this strong point of his, but when he approaches things from the political and administrative angle the result is simply monstrous. Set up an Economic Bureau?! But everybody has just said, everybody has agreed, and we have complete unanimity on the point (and this is very important, for action depends upon this unity) that the Party machinery must be separated from the Soviet government machinery.

It is terribly difficult to do this; we lack the men! But Preobrazhensky comes along and airily says that Stalin has jobs in two Commissariats. Who among us has not sinned in this way? Who has not undertaken several duties at once? And how can we do otherwise? What can we do to preserve the present situation in the People's Commissariat of Nationalities; to handle all the Turkestan, Caucasian, and other questions? These are all political questions! They have

to be settled. These are questions that have engaged the attention of European states for hundreds of years, and only an infinitesimal number of them have been settled in democratic republics. We are settling them; and we need a man to whom the representatives of any of these nations can go and discuss their difficulties in all detail. Where can we find such a man? I don't think Comrade Preobrazhensky could suggest any better candidate than Comrade Stalin.

The same thing applies to the Workers' and Peasants' Inspection. This is a vast business; but to be able to handle investigations we must have at the head of it a man who enjoys high prestige, otherwise we shall become submerged in and overwhelmed by petty intrigue.

Comrade Preobrazhensky proposes that an Economic Bureau should be set up; but if we do that all our talk about separating Party activities from Soviet government activities will be just hot air. Comrade Preobrazhensky proposes what appears to be a splendid scheme: on the one hand the Political Bureau, then the Economic Bureau, and then the Organising Bureau. But all this is very fine only on paper; in actual practice it is ridiculous! I positively cannot understand how, after Soviet power has been in existence for five years, a man who has an intuition for vital politics can make and insist upon such a proposal.

What is the difference between the Organising Bureau and the Political Bureau? You cannot draw a hard and fast line between a political question and an organisation question. Any political question may be an organisation question, and vice versa. Only after established practice had shown that questions could be transferred from the Organising Bureau to the Political Bureau was it possible to organise the work of the Central Committee properly.

Has anybody ever proposed anything different? No, because no other rational solution can be proposed. Political questions cannot be mechanically separated from organisation questions. Politics are conducted by definite people; but if other people are going to draft documents, nothing will come of it.

You know perfectly well that there have been revolutions in which parliamentary assemblies drafted documents which were put into effect by people from another class. This led to

friction, and they were kicked out. Organisation questions cannot be separated from politics. Politics are concentrated economics.

Comrade Kosior complained about the Central Committee and mentioned names (I have written them all down). I am not personally familiar with the subject, and so I cannot answer; but if you, as the Party Congress, are interested, it is your duty to elect a commission to investigate every case and subject Kosior and the persons concerned to examination by third degree. The whole point here is that if the Central Committee is deprived of the right to distribute forces, it will be unable to direct policy. Although we make mistakes when we transfer people from one place to another, nevertheless, I take the liberty of asserting that all the time it has been functioning, the Political Bureau of the Central Committee has made the minimum of mistakes. This is not self-praise. The activities of the Political Bureau are tested not by commissions, not by people appointed by our Party, but by the whiteguards, by our enemies; and the proof is the results of its policy, in which no serious mistakes have been committed.

Comrade Osinsky's strong point is that if he undertakes anything he pursues it with energy and vigour. We must do all we can to cultivate this strong point of his and to curb his weak points (even if Osinsky raises a howl—he is such a vigorous fellow—this must be done; otherwise, as a worker, he will be done for). We on the Central Committee have taken measures which, I think, will combine his weak points with his strong ones.

If I wanted to polemise with Comrade Osinsky—which I do not want to do—I would say that the weightiest evidence that could be brought against him is the speech he delivered here today. I would have it printed and posted up on a board. . . . There was once a man. . . .

A Deputy People's Commissar and a leading figure in one of the most important People's Commissariats, and foremost among those who can draw up a platform on any question, this man proposes that we should adopt the Cabinet system.*

* The man referred to is N. Osinsky who, speaking at the Congress, proposed that a "Cabinet" of Commissars be set up. He suggested that

I assert that this man is absolutely done for. . . . I will not go into this in detail, or polemise; what interests me most is that Comrade Osinsky's vast energy should be directed into proper channels. If Comrade Osinsky does not, in a comradely way, heed the advice that has been often given to him by the Central Committee, and for which I have been largely responsible, and if he does not moderate his zeal in this matter, he will inevitably find himself in the mire, as he found himself today.

This is very unpleasant for a man who is fond of displaying his character; and it is quite legitimate for a man gifted with a strong character to want to display it. Would to God that everybody had such a character to display. But the Central Committee must see to it that this character is displayed for a useful purpose. The Central Committee must see to it that this talk about a Cabinet is cut short, even if the man who undergoes this circumcision, so to speak, complains about it. This will be beneficial. He must put a curb on his talents to prevent himself from landing in the mire; and he must consult comrades in the other People's Commissariats and adhere to the general line. Has any one of our Commissariats done anything without controversy? No.

"Improvement of the system of administration and the psychological mobilisation of the masses." This is sheer murder! If the Congress were to adopt this politically reactionary point of view it would be the surest and best method of committing suicide.

"Improvement of the system of administration"?! Pray God that we succeed, at least, in getting out of the muddle that we are in today.

We have no system?! For five years we have been spending our best efforts in the endeavour to create this system! This system is a tremendous step forward.

The machinery of state is faulty! Do we know what the trouble is? We do not! But Comrade Osinsky talks as if he does. Why, he can sit down and in ten minutes devise a whole system of administration. It will be harmful and a political

it should be formed not by the All-Russia Central Executive Committee but unilaterally by its Chairman, who would be responsible to the Committee.—*Ed.*

mistake if his zeal is not curbed. In other channels, however, the zeal he is displaying now will be very useful.

Well, that's one illustration. And then Comrades Preobrazhensky and Osinsky bore out in the comments what I said about the most important thing, and Comrade Larin proved it still more thoroughly. Look what he did. He hurled accusations at me and laughed and jested very merrily.

He does this magnificently; this is his strong point. If Comrade Larin could display this strong point of his in some field other than that of state activities he would be a thousand times more useful for our Republic; for he is a very capable man and has a vivid imagination. This quality is extremely valuable; it is wrong to think that only poets need imagination. That is a silly prejudice! It is needed even in mathematics; it would have been impossible to discover the differential and integral calculus without imagination. Imagination is a very valuable asset; but Comrade Larin has a little too much of it. I would say, for example, that if Comrade Larin's stock of imagination were divided equally among all the members of the R.C.P., there would be very good results. (*Laughter. Applause.*) But until we can perform this operation, Comrade Larin must be kept away from state, administrative, planning, and economic affairs. Otherwise, we shall have the same thing occurring as did in the old Supreme Economic Council, when Comrade Rykov had not yet recovered, and affairs were directed and documents signed by "Y. Larin" on behalf of the entire Supreme Economic Council. Things were run badly not because Comrade Larin displayed his worst qualities, but on the contrary; it was because he displayed his best qualities—and nobody can have even a shadow of doubt about his devotion and knowledge of affairs. Nevertheless, things were run badly.

This is exactly what I said. True, all these are copybook maxims. As for copybook maxims, even Kamkov poked fun at me for this at the Congress of the Socialist-Revolutionaries. He said: "Today, Lenin is preaching: 'Thou shalt not steal'; and tomorrow he will add: 'Thou shalt not commit adultery.'" This is all that Lenin's wisdom amounts to." I heard this from Kamkov, the Socialist-Revolutionary, as far back as 1918. And if Kamkov, who backed these arguments with artillery, made no impression on anyone, what impression

can Comrade Larin's jokes make? Now we must concentrate all our attention on the major problems of our New Economic Policy. Here Comrade Larin tried to divert the Party on to the wrong road. If he were engaged with matters on which he could usefully display his numerous talents, where he could be of great benefit to the younger generation, and where he would not play such a trick as he played in the State Planning Commission, it would be entirely different. If he were engaged in such work he would make an impression on the younger generation—I think I am speaking plainly enough—and we should not have the confusion that he has caused here.

I said that Comrade Kamenev proposed on the Political Bureau that a resolution be adopted to the effect that it would be useful to import food and that canned goods be purchased with Soviet currency. Larin sat here, heard this perfectly well, and, remembering it perfectly well, said as soon as he got on to the platform: "Lenin forgot, owing to ill health—we shall forgive him this time—that the permission of the Political Bureau has to be obtained for disbursements from the gold reserve." Had Comrade Kamenev proposed that we should take money out of the gold reserve and give it to French profiteers in exchange for canned goods we would not have listened to him. We did not offer a single gold kopek for the canned goods, we offered Soviet paper currency and—just imagine—it was accepted. Wolfson even assured me yesterday that these canned goods were of good quality (although they have not arrived yet); but I shall not believe him until we have tasted them, because here they may try to cheat us. The point is, however, that Comrade Larin garbled the facts; we did not spend a single gold kopek; we spent 160,000 million Soviet paper rubles.

Of course, it would be ridiculous and absurd to think that Comrade Larin did this with malicious intent. No, that is not the point. The point is that his imagination soars a trillion kilometres high and, as a consequence, he mixes everything up.

Then he went on to say that the State Planning Commission had proposed to lease out three-fourths of our railways. It is a good thing that he said this at the Party Congress, where Krzhizhanovsky immediately refuted him. It does not

often happen like that. You think that talk of this sort is heard only at Party congresses? Inquire at the Central Control Commission and they will tell you how they examined the case of the Moscow Debating Club,* and what brought up the case of the Moscow Debating Club, where Comrades Larin and Ryazanov. . . . (*Ryazanov from his seat*: "I said nothing about the gold reserve there; worse things were said.") I was not in Moscow and took no part in the investigation of this case, I merely had a brief report. . . . (*Ryazanov*: "Don't believe every rumour.") I learned this from a conversation I had with Comrade Solts; it is not a rumour, but a conversation I had with a man whom our supreme body, the Party Congress, had appointed to the Central Control Commission. It was he who told me; and what he told me cannot rouse the slightest doubt. One must be very thoughtless to call this a rumour. The Central Control Commission investigated the affair of the Debating Club and was obliged to state unanimously that it was not being run properly. What is wrong is quite clear to me. Today, Larin, in passing, carried away by his own eloquence, went to the length of saying that a proposal had been made to lease out three-fourths of our railways, but that the Central Committee had put the matter right. Krzhizhanovsky said that nothing of the kind had happened; the Central Committee had put nothing right; Larin had simply muddled up his facts. This is constantly happening.

For four years we have been unable to put a useful worker like Larin to really useful work and to relieve him of work where he causes harm, in spite of himself.

The situation is rather unnatural, I think. We have the dictatorship of the proletariat, a reign of terror, victory over all the armies in the world, but no victory over Larin's army!

* *The Debating Club* of the Moscow Committee of the R.C.P.(B.) was organised in August 1921. Similar clubs were opened in various districts of Moscow; they debated Party and Soviet development, the Soviet Republic's economic policy and other problems. However, the Moscow Committee's Club soon began to be used by opposition groups to propagate their views.

On February 20, 1922 the Central Committee of the R.C.P.(B.) examined the question of the Debating Club and instructed the Moscow Committee to reconsider the composition of the Club's board and to organise its work in conformity with the Party's tasks.—*Ed.*

Here we have suffered utter defeat! He is always doing what he has no business to do. His vast knowledge and his ability to enthuse people would be of real benefit to the younger generation, which is groping in the dark. We are unable to utilise his knowledge, and this gives rise to friction and resistance. Here the Political Bureau, the Organising Bureau of the Central Committee and the Plenary Meetings of the Central Committee, which are accused of enjoying too much authority, turn out to have insufficient authority, or prestige, to distribute all the comrades properly.

We must think this question over and discuss it seriously. This is the pivot of our work, and we must set things right here. If we do, we shall emerge from our difficulties. We shall achieve this by rectifying things, but not by talking about the new tasks of the Agrarian Programme as Osinsky and Larin did. I wrote a review of this programme for the Central Committee. I shall not discuss it now; every member of the Party interested in the subject has a right to go to the Secretariat and read it there. Please do so. If we divert the efforts of Larin and Osinsky into the proper channels and curb their misguided zeal, enormous benefit will accrue.

In conclusion I shall say a few words about Shlyapnikov. I intended to speak about him at greater length, but ninety-nine per cent of this subject has been covered by Trotsky and Zinoviev, who on instructions of the Central Committee replied to the Statement of the Twenty-Two* at the meeting of the Communist International.

Firstly, Comrade Shlyapnikov pretended not to understand why I referred to machine-guns and panic-mongers;

* This anti-Party statement was sent on February 26, 1922 to the Presidium of the Extended Plenary Meeting of the Comintern Executive Committee by a group of members of the former Workers' Opposition. It claimed that the leading Party bodies were ignoring the requirements and interests of the workers and that a split was impending in the Party.

The Plenary Meeting of the Comintern Executive Committee passed a resolution rejecting the accusations and condemning the stand taken by the Twenty-Two.

The Eleventh Congress of the R.C.P.(B.) adopted a special resolution condemning the anti-Party behaviour of members of the Workers' Opposition group and warning its leaders that they would be expelled from the Party if they renewed their factional activities.—*Ed.*

and he jokingly said that he had been tried lots of times. Of course, comrades, it is not a bad thing to make a joke. One cannot speak at a big meeting without cracking a joke or two, because one's audience gets weary. One must be human. But there are certain things that one must not joke about; there is such a thing as Party unity.

At a time when we are completely surrounded by enemies; when the international bourgeoisie is sufficiently astute to shift Milyukov to the left, to supply the Socialist-Revolutionaries with money for the publication of all sorts of newspapers and to incite Vandervelde and Otto Bauer to launch a campaign against the trial of the Socialist-Revolutionaries and to howl that the Bolsheviks are brutes; when all these people, who have studied politics for ages and have thousands of millions of gold rubles, francs, etc., at their disposal, are arrayed against us, for Comrade Shlyapnikov to crack jokes and to say: "I have been tried by the Central Committee", and so forth, is a deplorable thing, comrades. The Party Congress must draw definite conclusions. We do not arrange trials at the Central Committee for nothing! Comrade Shlyapnikov was tried by the Central Committee, and we were short of three votes to expel him from the Party.* The members of the Party gathered at this Congress should interest themselves in the matter and read the minutes of that meeting of the Central Committee. This is no laughing matter!

You have a legitimate right to appeal to the Communist International. But a long time before that appeal was lodged a large majority of the Central Committee was in favour of expelling Comrade Shlyapnikov; only the necessary two-third vote was lacking. You cannot trifle with a thing like that! It will do you no harm to know that at the meeting of the Communist group at the Metalworkers' Congress Comrade Shlyapnikov openly advocated a split.

Comrade Trotsky has already dealt with the significance of Comrade Kollontai's pamphlet.

If we trifle with things like this it will be utterly hopeless

* In response to a motion proposed by Lenin, the joint sitting of the Plenary Meeting of the Central Committee and the Central Control Commission on August 9, 1921 discussed whether Shlyapnikov should be expelled from the Central Committee and from the Party for anti-Party activity.—Ed.

to expect that we shall hold on in the difficult situation in which we now find ourselves. I have indicated the three conditions under which it will be possible for us to hold on: first, that there shall be no intervention; second, that the financial crisis shall not be too severe; and third, that we shall make no political mistakes.

One of the speakers stated that I said political complications. No, I said political mistakes. If we make no political mistakes, I say, 99 per cent of the Party membership will be with us, and so also will the non-Party workers and peasants, who will understand that this is the time to learn.

I remember that in the article he wrote on the anniversary of the Red Army Comrade Trotsky said: "A year of tuition." This slogan applies equally to the Party and to the working class. During this period we have rallied around us a vast number of heroic people who have undoubtedly made the turn in world history permanent. But this does not justify our failure to understand that we now have ahead of us a "year of tuition".

We are standing much more firmly on our feet today than we stood a year ago. Of course, even today the bourgeoisie may attempt another armed intervention, but they will find it much more difficult than before; it is much more difficult today than it was yesterday.

To ensure ourselves the opportunity to learn we must make no political mistakes. We must waste no time playing with the unity of the Party, as Comrade Shlyapnikov is doing. We cannot afford games of that kind! We know that the conflict within the Party is costing us a great deal. Comrades, we must not forget this lesson! Concerning the past year, the Central Committee has every right to say that at the opening of this Congress there was less factional strife in the Party, it was more united than last year. I do not want to boast that all factionalism in the Party has vanished. But it is an incontrovertible fact that there is less factionalism in the Party today. This has been proved.

You know that the present Workers' Opposition is only a wreck of the former Workers' Opposition. Compare the signatures appended to the Statement of the Twenty-Two with those appended to the platform that was issued before the Tenth Congress. You will find that many of those signa-

tures are missing. We must tell those people who legitimately used their right to appeal to the Communist International that they had no right to appeal on behalf of Myasnikov. The Myasnikov case came up last summer. I was not in Moscow at the time, but I wrote Myasnikov a long letter, which he inserted in his pamphlet. I saw that he was a capable man and that it was worth while having a talk with him; but this man must be told that if he comes out with criticism of this sort it will not be tolerated.

He writes a letter saying: "Collect all the discontented in the district." Yes, it is not a very difficult matter to collect all the discontented in a district. Take the speeches that Shlyapnikov delivers here, and which Comrade Medvedyev delivers elsewhere. (*Medvedyev from his seat*: "Where did you obtain your information?") I obtained my information from the bodies appointed by the Congress of the R.C.P.: the Organising Bureau of the Central Committee, the Secretariat of the Central Committee, and the Central Control Commission. Make inquiries there, if you like, and you will learn what sort of speeches Comrade Medvedyev delivers. If we do not put a stop to this sort of thing we shall be unable to maintain unity which, perhaps, is our greatest asset. We must ruthlessly expose our mistakes and discuss them. If we clearly understand this—and we are beginning to understand it at this Congress—there is not the slightest doubt that we shall be able to overcome them. (*Stormy applause.*)

Speech in Closing the Congress April 2

Comrades, we have reached the end of our Congress.

The first difference that strikes one in comparing this Congress with the preceding one is the greater solidarity, the greater unanimity and greater organisational unity that have been displayed.

Only a small part of one of the sections of the opposition that existed at the last Congress has placed itself outside the Party.

On the trade union question and on the New Economic Policy no disagreements, or hardly any disagreements, have been revealed in our Party.

The radically and fundamentally "new" achievement of this Congress is that it has provided vivid proof that our enemies are wrong in constantly reiterating that our Party is becoming senile and is losing its flexibility of mind and body.

No. We have not lost this flexibility.

When the objective state of affairs in Russia, and all over the world, called for an advance, for a supremely bold, swift and determined onslaught on the enemy, we made that onslaught. If necessary, we shall do it again and again.

By that we raised our revolution to a height hitherto unparalleled in the world. No power on earth, no matter how much evil, hardship and suffering it may yet cause millions

and hundreds of millions of people, can annul the major gains of our revolution, for these are no longer our but historic gains.

But when in the spring of 1921 it turned out that the vanguard of the revolution was in danger of becoming isolated from the masses of the people, from the masses of the peasants, whom it must skilfully lead forward, we unanimously and firmly decided to retreat. And on the whole, during the past year we retreated in good revolutionary order.

The proletarian revolutions maturing in all advanced countries of the world will be unable to solve their problems unless they combine the ability to fight heroically and to attack with the ability to retreat in good revolutionary order. The experience of the second period of our struggle, i.e., the experience of retreat, will in the future probably be just as useful to the workers of at least some countries, as the experience of the first period of our revolution, i.e., the experience of bold attack, will undoubtedly prove useful to the workers of all countries.

Now we have decided to halt the retreat.

This means that the entire object of our policy must be formulated in a new way.

The central feature of the situation now is that the vanguard must not shirk the work of educating itself, of remoulding itself, must not be afraid of frankly admitting that it is not sufficiently trained and lacks the necessary skill. The main thing now is to advance as an immeasurably wider and larger mass, and only together with the peasantry, proving to them by deeds, in practice, by experience, that we are learning, and that we shall learn to assist them, to lead them forward. In the present international situation, in the present state of the productive forces of Russia, this problem can be solved only very slowly, cautiously, in a business-like way, and by testing a thousand times in a practical way every step that is taken.

If voices are raised in our Party against this extremely slow and extremely cautious progress, these voices will be isolated ones.

The Party as a whole has understood—and will now prove by deeds that it has understood—that at the present time its

work must be organised exactly along these lines, and since we have understood it, we shall achieve our goal!

I declare the Eleventh Congress of the Russian Communist Party closed.

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of the Russian Communist Party
(Bolsheviks). Verbatim Report,*
Moscow, Publishing Department
of the Central Committee
of the R.C.P.

Vol. 33, pp. 259-326

Name Index

A

AUKSENTYEU, Nikolai Dmitrievich (1878-1943)—a Socialist-Revolutionary Party leader, Minister of the Interior in the Kerensky government—9

B

BAUER, Otto (1882-1938)—one of the leaders of the Right wing of the Austrian Social-Democratic Party and the Second International. Adopted a hostile attitude towards the October Socialist Revolution in Russia. In 1918 and 1919 he was Foreign Minister of the Austrian bourgeois republic—301, 302, 320, 342

BRUSILOV, Alexei Alexeyevich (1853-1926)—general in the tsarist army; in May, June and July 1917 was Commander-in-Chief of the Russian army. In 1919 began to serve in the Soviet Army—277

BUBNOV, Andrei Sergeevich (1883-1940)—prominent Party official and statesman; he joined the Bolshevik Party in 1903 and took an active part in preparing and carrying out the October Socialist Revolution. From 1918 onwards

Bubnov held responsible Party, government and army posts; a member of the Soviet Government of the Ukraine and of the Central Committee of the Ukrainian Communist Party (Bolsheviks). He belonged to the anti-Party group of Left Communists, and in 1920-21 he aligned himself with the Democratic Centralism group—33, 34, 164

BUDYONNY, Semyon Mikhailovich (1883-1973)—Soviet Marshal and statesman and a member of the Bolshevik Party since 1919. In 1921 he commanded the First Cavalry Army which played an outstanding part in defeating Denikin's whiteguard troops, White Poles and Wrangel—275, 277

BUKHARIN, Nikolai Ivanovich (1888-1938)—joined the Bolshevik Party in 1906. After the October Socialist Revolution he was editor of Pravda, and a member of the Central Committee Political Bureau and of the Comintern Executive Committee. Repeatedly opposed the Party's Leninist policy: in 1918 headed the anti-Party group of Left Communists;

during the discussion on the trade unions carried on by the Party in 1920-21 he initially adopted a "buffer" position and then joined Trotsky's group. In 1937 he was expelled from the Party for anti-Party activities—31, 32, 33, 35, 36, 37, 38, 44, 78, 79, 80, 81, 83, 84, 85, 86, 100, 108, 163, 164, 168, 213, 232, 287, 297

C

- CHICHERIN, Georgy Uasilyevich* (1872-1936)—Soviet statesman and diplomat—275, 276
CHUCHIN, F. G. (1883-1942)—joined the Bolsheviks in 1904 and in 1918-19 carried underground work for the Party in the territory occupied by Kolchak's troops—175-78

D

- DANISHEUSKY, Karl Khristianovich* (1884-1941)—joined the R.S.D.L.P. in 1900 and was a Bolshevik. In 1921 he was elected secretary of the Siberian Bureau of the Central Committee of the R.S.D.L.P.(B.) and later held various leading economic posts—249
DENIKIN, Anton Ivanovich (1872-1947)—general in the tsarist army, who was a henchman of the Anglo-French and American imperialists and Commander-in-Chief of the whiteguard armed forces in the South of Russia during the foreign armed intervention and the Civil War (1918-20). After the whiteguards were defeated by the Red Army in March 1920 he fled abroad—139, 146, 154, 156, 179, 198, 200, 204, 214, 216, 248, 250, 263

DROZHZHIN—249
DZERZHINSKY, Felix Edmondovich (1877-1926)—Communist and professional revolutionary; outstanding leader of the Communist Party and the Soviet state—64

E

ENGELS, Frederick (1820-1895)—41, 43, 44, 73, 79, 118, 232, 260, 261, 266

G

- GORBUNOV, Nikolai Petrovich* (1892-1938)—joined the Communist Party in 1917 and after the October Socialist Revolution he was secretary of the Council of People's Commissars and Lenin's personal secretary—314
GUSEV, Sergei Ivanovich (Drabkin, Y. D.) (1874-1933)—Bolshevik. During the October Revolution of 1917 he was secretary of the Petrograd Military Revolutionary Committee; later a political worker in the Red Army (1918), head of the Political Administration and member of the Revolutionary Military Council of the Republic (1921-23)—155

H

- HANECKI (FÜRSTENBERG), Jakob* (1879-1937)—prominent figure in the Polish and Russian revolutionary movement. After the October Socialist Revolution he was on the staff of the People's Commissariat for Finance, and later engaged in diplomatic work—276
HILFERDING, Rudolf (1877-1941)—one of the opportunist

- leaders of the German Social-Democratic movement and the Second International; in 1917 he became the leader of the Independent Social-Democratic Party of Germany—63
- HOFFMANN, Max** (1869-1927)—German general, Chief of General Staff and in practice commander of the German troops on the Eastern Front (from September 1916 onwards); he played a prominent role during the Brest peace negotiations between Soviet Russia and the countries of the Austro-German coalition—24, 27, 29, 37
- HOLTZMANN, A. Z.** (1894-1933)—he started to work in the revolutionary movement in 1910. After the October Socialist Revolution he held leading trade union and administrative posts and was a member of the Presidium of the All-Russia Central Council of Trade Unions (1920-21). During the Party discussion on the trade unions he supported Trotsky's platform—172, 230

K

- KALEDIN, Alexei Maximovich** (1861-1918)—general in the tsarist army. After the October Socialist Revolution he was one of the leaders of the counter-revolutionary Cossacks on the Don, took part in forming the whiteguard "Volunteer Army", and headed a Cossack revolt—12
- KAMENEV, Lev Borisovich** (1883-1936)—joined the Bolshevik Party in 1901. After the October Socialist Revolution, he was Chairman of the Moscow Soviet, Deputy Chairman of the Council of People's Commissars, member of the Central Committee Political Bureau. He repeatedly opposed the Party's Leninist policy and in 1934 was expelled from the Party for anti-Party activities—154, 313, 314, 315, 316, 326, 339
- KAMKOU, B. D.** (1885-1938)—one of the organisers and leaders of the Left Socialist-Revolutionary Party—338
- KAUTSKY, Karl** (1854-1938)—one of the leaders of the German Social-Democrats and the Second International; he was first a Marxist, later became a renegade Marxist and the theoretician of Centrism (Kautskyism)—a most dangerous and harmful variety of opportunism. After the October Socialist Revolution he openly opposed the proletarian revolution and the working-class dictatorship, the Bolshevik Party and the Soviet state—63, 66, 117, 301
- KERENSKY, Alexander Fyodorovich** (1881-1970)—Socialist-Revolutionary. After the February bourgeois-democratic revolution in 1917 he was Prime Minister of the bourgeois Provisional Government and Supreme Commander-in-Chief. After the October Socialist Revolution he actively opposed Soviet power and in 1918 fled abroad—9, 10, 12, 16, 18, 21, 59, 146, 304
- KISELYOU, Alexei Semyonovich** (1879-1938)—joined the R.S.D.L.P. in 1898, a Bolshevik. After the October Socialist Revolution he held responsible posts in government, economic and trade union organisations. He was a member of the anti-Party anarcho-syndicalist

- group called the Workers' Opposition—223, 225
- KLYSHKO, N. K.** (1880-1937)—joined the Party in 1904. After the October Socialist Revolution he held government, diplomatic and economic posts—276, 277
- KOLCHAK, Alexander Vasilyevich** (1873-1920)—tsarist admiral, monarchist, one of the prominent leaders of the Russian counter-revolutionaries in 1918-19, a henchman of the Entente powers. After the October Socialist Revolution, supported by the imperialists of the U.S.A., Britain and France Kolchak declared himself supreme ruler of Russia and headed the military bourgeois-landowner dictatorship in the Urals, Siberia and the Far East. Kolchak's regime collapsed as a result of the onslaught of the Red Army and the growth of the revolutionary and guerrilla movement—115, 139, 146, 156, 192, 198, 200, 204, 248, 250, 306
- KOLLONTAI, Alexandra Mikhailovna** (1872-1952)—professional revolutionary, who took part in the Social-Democratic movement from the 1890s. After the October Socialist Revolution, was People's Commissar of State Charity, in 1920 headed the Women's Department in the Central Committee of the R.C.P.(B.). During the trade union discussion in the Party (1920-21) she played an active part in the anti-Party Workers' Opposition group—212, 214, 216, 217, 218, 220, 221, 223, 224, 226, 227, 232, 342
- KORNILOU, Lavr Georgiyevich** (1870-1918)—general in the tsarist army, monarchist, Supreme Commander-in-Chief of the Russian army (July-August 1917). He headed a counter-revolutionary revolt in August 1917 and after its suppression was arrested and imprisoned. He then fled from the prison to the Don where he became an organiser and later commander of the white-guard "Volunteer Army"—8, 16, 21, 59, 134, 145
- KOSIOR, U. U.** (1891-1938)—joined the R.S.D.L.P. in 1907. After the October Socialist Revolution he held military, trade union and economic posts. In 1920-21 during the discussion on the trade unions in the Party he supported Trotsky's platform—336
- KRASIN, Leonid Borisovich** (1870-1926)—prominent Soviet statesman; he was engaged in diplomatic work from 1919; in 1922 he became People's Commissar for Foreign Trade—200, 255, 277, 278, 314, 315, 316
- KRASNOU, Pyotr Nikolayevich** (1869-1947)—general in the tsarist army. Late in October 1917 he commanded Cossack detachments thrown by Kerensky against Petrograd during an anti-Soviet revolt. In 1918-19, led the whiteguard Cossack army on the Don; in 1919 he fled abroad where he continued to engage in anti-Soviet activities—10
- KRESTINSKY, Nikolai Nikolayevich** (1883-1938)—joined the Social-Democratic movement in 1903, People's Commissar for Finance of the R.S.F.S.R. and secretary of the Central Committee of the R.C.P.(B.) in 1918-21. Later he was appointed Soviet plenipotentiary in Germany and

Deputy People's Commissar for Foreign Affairs. In 1918, together with the Left Communists, he opposed the conclusion of the Brest Peace Treaty and during the Party debate on the trade unions (1920-21) supported Trotsky's platform—163, 176

KRYLENKO, Nikolai Uasilyevich (1885-1938)—joined the Bolshevik Party in 1904 and later became a prominent Soviet statesman. Took an active part in the October Socialist Revolution. In the first Soviet Government he was a member of the Committee for Army and Naval Affairs and later Supreme Commander-in-Chief. After 1918 worked in Soviet judicial bodies—32

KRZHIZHANOUSKY, Gleb Maximilianovich (1872-1959)—veteran member of the Communist Party, well-known Soviet scientist and engineer. In 1920, on Lenin's instructions, headed GOELRO—the State Commission for the Electrification of Russia; from 1921 to 1930 headed the State Planning Commission—339, 340

KUTUZOV, I. I. (1885-1943)—Party member from 1917. After the Great October Socialist Revolution was engaged in trade union and Soviet government work—231, 232

L

LARIN, Mikhail Alexandrovich (1882-1932)—joined the Social-Democratic movement in 1901, adopted a Menshevik stand. After the October Socialist Revolution he worked in government and economic

organisations. During the Party discussion on the trade unions (1920-21) supported Bukharin's platform, and then that of Trotsky—331, 338, 339, 340, 341

LENIN, Vladimir Ilyich (1870-1924)—31, 58, 80, 160, 166, 212, 225, 231, 275, 276, 279, 333, 338, 339

LEZHAUA, Anton Matveyevich (1870-1937)—Soviet statesman; joined the Party in 1904. After the October Socialist Revolution he held responsible economic and government posts—245

LIEBKNECHT, Karl (1871-1919)—a prominent leader of the German and international working-class movement. During the November 1918 revolution in Germany he and Rosa Luxemburg headed the revolutionary vanguard of the German workers. He was one of the founders of the Communist Party of Germany and a leader of the Berlin workers' uprising in January 1919. After the suppression of the uprising he was assassinated by counter-revolutionaries—16, 24, 142

LOMOU, G. I. (1888-1938)—joined the Bolshevik Party in 1903; a professional revolutionary and subsequently a Soviet statesman. At the Second Congress of the Soviets entered the Council of People's Commissars as People's Commissar for Justice. Left Communist in 1918—32

LUTOVINOU, Yuri Khrisanfovich (1887-1924)—joined the Party in 1904. In 1920, he was elected to the Central Committee of the Metalworkers' Union and the Presidium of the All-Russia Central

Executive Committee; he was also a member of the Presidium of the All-Russia Central Council of Trade Unions. During the trade union discussion in the Party in 1920-21 he was among the active members of the anti-Party Workers' Opposition group—163

LUXEMBURG, Rosa (1870-1919)—a prominent figure in the international working-class movement, a leader of the Left wing of the Second International. During the November 1918 revolution in Germany she was one of the leaders of the revolutionary vanguard of the German workers and later took an active part in the Inaugural Congress of the Communist Party of Germany. In January 1919 she was arrested and assassinated by counter-revolutionaries—69

M

MAKHAISKY—158

MAKHNO, Nestor Ivanovich (1884-1934)—the leader of the counter-revolutionary kulak-anarchist detachments in the Ukraine which fought actively against the Soviet order in 1918-21. After these bands were finally defeated in the spring of 1921, Makhno fled abroad—158, 227

MARX, Karl (1818-1883)—51, 65, 81, 112, 115, 117, 118, 260, 261, 297, 319, 330

MAXIMOUSKY, Vladimir Nikolayevich (1887-1941)—joined the Party in 1903 and after the October Socialist Revolution held Party and government posts. During the negotiations for the conclusion of the Brest Peace Treaty took up

a Left-Communist stand and in 1920-21 was active in the anti-Party Democratic Centralism group—157, 158, 159, 160, 161, 168

MAYSON—American correspondent in Berlin—276

MEDUEDYEU, S. P. (1885-1937)—joined the R.S.D.L.P. in 1900 and after the October Socialist Revolution was engaged in political work in the Red Army. He was one of the leaders of the anti-Party Workers' Opposition group and later an active member of the New Opposition; was eventually expelled from the R.C.P.(B.) for anti-Party activities—267, 270, 344

MILONOU, Yuri Konstantinovich (b. 1895)—joined the Party in 1912. After the October Socialist Revolution he was engaged in Party and trade union work. In 1921 he sided with the Workers' Opposition group—217

MILYUKOU, Pavel Nikolayevich (1859-1943)—leader of the Cadet Party, ideologist of Russian imperialist bourgeoisie, historian and publicist. As Minister of Foreign Affairs in the bourgeois Provisional Government (1917), he advocated the policy of continuing the imperialist war "to a victorious end". After the October Socialist Revolution he took part in organising foreign military intervention against Soviet Russia and as an émigré was active in white-guard organisations—342

MILYUTIN, Vladimir Pavlovich (1884-1938)—was active in the Social-Democratic movement from 1903, at first as a Menshevik but then in 1910 joined the Bolsheviks. He was Deputy

Chairman of the Supreme Economic Council from 1918 to 1921 and later held other responsible government and economic posts—166, 167, 174, 175, 176, 177, 250, 253, 256

MIROSHNIKOU, Ivan Ivanovich (1894-1939)—joined the Bolshevik Party in March 1917 and during the foreign military intervention and the Civil War served in the Red Army. He was business executive of the Council of People's Commissars from 1921 to 1937—314

MYASNIKOU, G. I. (1889-1946)—joined the Bolshevik Party in 1906. He was an active member of the Workers' Opposition group and in 1922 was expelled from the R.C.P.(B.) for anti-Party activities and repeated violations of Party discipline—344

N

NAPOLEON I (BONAPARTE) (1769-1821)—emperor of France—1804-14 and 1815—27

NICHOLAS II (ROMANOU) (1868-1918)—last emperor of Russia—19

NOGIN, Victor Pavlovich (1878-1924)—joined the R.S.D.L.P. in 1898, a professional revolutionary and Bolshevik. After the October Socialist Revolution he was a member of the Presidium of the Supreme Economic Council—223

O

ORJONIKIDZE, Grigori Konstantinovich (1886-1937)—joined the R.S.D.L.P. in 1903 and supported the Bolsheviks. A prominent member of the

Communist Party and the Soviet Government—319

OSINSKY, N. (OBOLENSKY, Valeryan Valeryanovich) (1887-1938)—joined the Bolshevik Party in 1907; one of the organisers of the Left Communist platform in 1918. In 1920-21 he took an active part in the anti-Party Democratic Centralism group and in 1923 joined the Trotskyite opposition. From 1921 to 1923 he was Deputy People's Commissar for Agriculture—157, 158, 161, 168, 214, 216, 221, 330, 336, 337, 338, 341

P

PETLYURA, Simon Vasilyevich (1877-1926)—one of the organisers of the bourgeois-nationalist movement in the Ukraine (1917-20)—31

PODBELSKY, Vadim Nikolayevich (1887-1920)—joined the Bolshevik Party in 1905; a prominent member of the Communist Party and Soviet statesman. In May 1918 he was appointed People's Commissar for Posts and Telegraphs of the R.S.F.S.R.—100, 101, 107

PODUOISKY, Nikolai Ilyich (1880-1948)—joined the Bolshevik Party in 1901; an outstanding Party worker and military figure. After the October Socialist Revolution he was elected to the Committee for Army and Naval Affairs, and put in command of the Petrograd Military District; in 1919 he was appointed People's Commissar for Army and Naval Affairs of the Ukraine—32

POPOU, Pavel Ilyich (1872-1950)—manager of the Central Statistical Board—247, 257

PREOBRAZHENSKY, Yevgeny Alexeyevich (1886-1937)—joined the Bolshevik Party in 1903. After the October Socialist Revolution was engaged in Party and military-political work, associated himself with the Left Communists in 1918. During the Party discussion on the trade unions (1920-21) supported Trotsky's platform and was later expelled from the Party for anti-Party activities—242, 330, 333, 334, 335, 338

PYATAKOU, Georgy Leonidovich (1890-1937)—joined the Bolshevik Party in 1910. After the October Socialist Revolution he was a member of the Ukrainian Soviet Government and in 1920 was appointed to economic and government posts. He repeatedly opposed the Party's Leninist policy and in 1918 headed the anti-Party group of Left Communists in the Ukraine; during the Party discussion on the trade unions (1920-21) he supported Trotsky's platform and in 1936 was expelled from the Party—101, 107, 108, 110

R

RADEK, Karl Bergardovich (1885-1939)—joined the Social-Democratic movement of Galicia, Poland and Germany early in the 1900s and the Bolshevik Party in 1917. After the October Socialist Revolution he worked in the People's Commissariat for Foreign Affairs and was secretary of the Comintern Executive Committee. He repeatedly opposed the Party's Leninist policy as a Left Communist in 1918 and an active member of the

Trotskyite opposition after 1923. Expelled from the R.C.P.(B.) in 1936—33, 37, 163, 164, 268

RAKOSI, Matyas (b. 1892)—joined the Communist Party of Hungary in 1918. After the establishment of Soviet power in Hungary (March 21-August 1, 1919) he was a member of the revolutionary government. From 1920 to 1924 worked in the Comintern Executive Committee and in 1921 was elected secretary—301

RAKOUSKY, Khristian Georgiyevich (1873-1941)—joined the Bolshevik Party in 1917. After the October Socialist Revolution was engaged in Party and government work. He was an active member of the Trotskyite opposition and was eventually expelled from the Party for anti-Party activities in 1938—161, 164

RASPUTIN, Grigori Yefimovich (1872-1916)—adventurer who exercised wide influence at Nicholas II's court—20

RUDZUTAK, Yan Ernestovich (1887-1938)—joined the R.S.D.L.P. in 1905, an active Bolshevik; a prominent figure in the Communist Party and Soviet statesman—229

RYAZANOU, David Borisovich (1870-1938)—joined the Social-Democrats in the early 1890s and the Bolsheviks in 1917. After the October Socialist Revolution worked in the trade unions. In 1918 opposed the conclusion of the Brest Peace Treaty, expelled from the Party in 1931 for anti-Party activities—31, 213, 216, 231, 232, 263, 340

RYKOU, Alexei Ivanovich (1881-1938)—joined the Bolshevik Party in 1899. After the

October Socialist Revolution he held several responsible posts but repeatedly opposed the Party's Leninist policy and was expelled from the Party for anti-Party activities in 1937—103, 162, 166, 167, 171, 172, 176, 223, 327, 338

S

- SAPRONOV, Timofei Vladimirovich* (1887-1939)—joined the Bolshevik Party in 1912. After the October Socialist Revolution he held responsible government, Party and trade union posts. He repeatedly opposed the Party's policy; he associated himself with the Left Communists in 1918, and during the trade union discussion in the Party in 1920-21 headed the anti-Party Democratic Centralism group—156, 157, 158-63, 166, 168, 173, 214
- SAVINKOV, Boris Viktorovich* (1879-1925)—one of the Socialist-Revolutionary leaders. After the October Socialist Revolution he organised a number of counter-revolutionary revolts and helped to organise military intervention against the Soviet Republic—224
- SCHEIDEMANN, Filipp* (1865-1939)—one of the leaders of the extreme Right, opportunist wing of the German Social-Democratic Party. He headed the coalition government of the Weimar Republic in February-June 1919 and helped to organise the ruthless suppression of the German working-class movement in 1918-21—83, 87
- SEMYONOV, G. M.* (1890-1946)—ataman of the Trans-Baikal Cossack army; from 1918 he waged an armed struggle against the Soviet order in the Far East—276
- SEREDA, Semyon Pafnutyevich* (1871-1933)—a prominent Soviet statesman; he joined the Bolshevik Party in 1903. After the October Socialist Revolution he held responsible government and executive posts—162
- SCHMIDT, Vasily Vladimirovich* (1886-1940)—joined the Bolsheviks in 1905 and was secretary of the All-Union Central Council of Trade Unions from 1918 to 1928—95
- SHLYAPNIKOV, Alexander Gavrilovich* (1885-1937)—joined the Bolshevik Party in 1901. After the October Socialist Revolution he entered the Council of People's Commissars as People's Commissar for Labour; later worked in trade unions and economic organisations. From 1920 to 1922 he was an organiser and leader of the anti-Party Workers' Opposition group. In 1933 he was expelled from the R.C.P.(B.)—159, 163, 217, 218, 223, 226, 227, 228, 232, 264, 265, 266, 267, 271, 332, 333, 341, 342, 343
- SMIRNOV, U. M.* (1887-1937)—joined the Bolsheviks in 1907. After the October Socialist Revolution, member of the Presidium of the Supreme Economic Council. He aligned himself with the Left Communists in 1918 and was an active member of the anti-Party Democratic Centralism group in 1920-21. He was expelled from the Party in 1927 for anti-Party activities—44
- SOKOLNIKOV, Grigori Yakovlevich* (1888-1939)—joined the

- Bolsheviks in 1905. After the October Socialist Revolution he held various diplomatic and military posts but was later expelled from the Party, in 1936, for anti-Party activities—44, 303
- SOLTS, A. A.** (1872-1945)—joined the R.S.D.L.P. in 1898, an active Bolshevik. After the October Socialist Revolution he held responsible government and Party posts—340
- STALIN, Joseph Vissarionovich** (1879-1953)—334, 335
- STOLYPIN, Pyotr Arkadyevich** (1862-1911)—a tsarist statesman and rich landowner; Chairman of the Council of Ministers and Minister of the Interior (1906-11). His name is associated with a period of severe political reaction when capital punishment was used to put down the revolutionary movement (Stolypin reaction of 1907-10)—21, 22
- SUNITSA, L. B.** (b. 1887)—joined the R.S.D.L.P.(B.) in 1905. After the October Socialist Revolution he was engaged in Party work and teaching—101
- SUERDLOU, Yakov Mikhailovich** (1885-1919) — outstanding leader of the Communist Party and Soviet statesman—55, 69, 73, 74, 75, 129, 136
- SUINHUFUUD, Pehr Evind** (1861-1944)—Finnish statesman; in 1917-18 he headed the bourgeois government of Finland which resorted to terrorism so as to combat the Finnish workers' revolution of 1918—85
- T
- TODORSKY, Alexander Ivanovich** (1894-1965)—joined the Communist Party in 1918.
- In 1918-19 he was a member of the Executive Committee of the Vesyegonsk Uyezd, Tver Gubernia; editor of the local paper *Izvestia* put out by the Vesyegonsk Soviet of Deputies and the newspaper *Krasny Vesyegonsk*. He wrote a book entitled *A Year with a Rifle and a Plough* which was highly commended by Lenin—309
- TOMSKY, Mikhail Pavlovich** (1880-1936)—joined the Bolshevik Party in 1904. After the October Socialist Revolution while holding responsible posts he repeatedly opposed the Party's Leninist policy. In 1928, together with Bukharin and Rykov, he led the Right opportunist deviationists in the Communist Party of the Soviet Union (Bolsheviks)—157, 159, 163, 168
- TROTSKY, Lev Davidovich** (1879-1940)—joined the R.S.D.L.P. in 1897; originally a Menshevik he joined the Bolsheviks in 1917. After the October Socialist Revolution he held a number of responsible government posts. In 1918 he opposed the conclusion of the Brest Peace Treaty; in 1920-21 he headed the opposition during the Party discussion on the trade unions; in 1923 he started to wage a fierce factional struggle against Party policy, against the Leninist plan for socialist construction, holding that the victory of socialism was impossible in the U.S.S.R. In 1927 he was expelled from the Party and in 1929 banished from the U.S.S.R. for his anti-Soviet activities; in 1932 he was deprived of his Soviet citizenship—34, 35, 36, 37, 66, 166, 169, 172, 181, 225, 229,

230, 231, 275, 276, 277, 279, 331, 341, 342, 343

TSYURUPA, Alexander Dmitriyevich (1870-1928)—a prominent figure in the Communist Party and the Soviet state. He joined the R.S.D.L.P. in 1898 and was an active Bolshevik. In early 1918 he was appointed People's Commissar for Food and held the post till late 1921 when he became Deputy Chairman of the Council of People's Commissars and the Council of Labour and Defence. In 1922 and 1923 he held the post of People's Commissar for Workers' and Peasants' Inspection—71, 171, 226, 227, 228, 249, 250, 316, 326, 327

TURGENEV, Ivan Sergeyeovich (1818-1883)—great Russian writer—293

U

URITSKY, Moisei Solomonovich (1873-1918)—an active member of the Russian revolutionary movement, who became a Bolshevik after the February 1917 bourgeois-democratic revolution. On the question of the Brest Peace Treaty he adopted a Left-Communist stand. In 1918 he was appointed Chairman of the Petrograd Extraordinary Commission to Combat Counter-Revolution and Sabotage—33, 37, 38

USTRYALOV, N. U. (b. 1890)—a prominent Constitutional-Democratic leader. In 1918 in Siberia he headed the press bureau in Kolchak's government—306

V

VANDERLIP, Washington (b. 1866)—an engineer and a

representative of American business interests, who came to Soviet Russia in 1920 to conclude a treaty for oil and coal concessions on Kamchatka—243

VANDERUELDE, Emile (1866-1938)—one of the leaders of the opportunist wing of the Belgian Workers' Party and the Second International. He adopted a hostile attitude to the October Socialist Revolution and gave active support to the armed intervention against Soviet Russia—342

VINNICHENKO, Vladimir Kirillovich (1880-1951)—bourgeois Ukrainian nationalist. After the February bourgeois-democratic revolution in 1917 he was one of the organisers and leaders of the counter-revolutionary Ukrainian Central Rada; later, together with Petlyura he headed the Directory (the Ukrainian nationalist government in 1918-19) serving first the German and then the Anglo-French imperialists. After the establishment of Soviet rule in the Ukraine he emigrated—35

W

WOLFSON, S. D. (1879-1932)—joined the R.S.D.L.P. in 1902, an active Bolshevik. During the foreign military intervention and the Civil War (1918-20) he was working at the fronts organising Red Army supplies. After the war he held various economic posts—339

WILHELM II (HOHENZOLLERN) (1859-1941)—German emperor and King of Prussia (1888-1918)—327

WILSON, Woodrow (1856-1924)—President of the U.S.A.

(1913-21), one of the chief organisers of the armed intervention of the imperialist states against Soviet Russia—87, 110

WRANGEL, Pyotr Nikolayevich (1878-1928)—arch-monarchist general in the tsarist army. During the foreign armed intervention and the Civil War (1918-20) he was a henchman of the Anglo-French and American imperialists; later he became one of the leaders of the counter-revolution in the South of Russia and Commander-in-Chief of the white-guard "armed forces of the South of Russia" (April-November 1920). After those forces were routed by the Red Army he fled abroad—190, 223

Y

YAROSLAUSKY, Yemelyan Mikhailovich (1878-1943)—prominent Communist Party member, well-known historian. After the Great October Socialist Revolution held responsible Party posts—249

YUDENICH, Nikolai Nikolayevich (1862-1933)—general in

the tsarist army. After the October Socialist Revolution he was a member of the counter-revolutionary "North-Western Government" and Commander-in-Chief of the whiteguard North-Western Army. He was widely supported by the Entente imperialists and in 1919 he made two unsuccessful attempts to capture Petrograd—139, 156, 192, 198, 204, 240, 263

YURENEU, Konstantin Konstantinovich (1888-1938)—an active member of the Russian revolutionary movement and a prominent Soviet official—159, 160, 163

Z

ZINOUIEU, Grigori Yevseyevich (1883-1936)—joined the Bolshevik Party in 1901. After the October Socialist Revolution, he was Chairman of the Petrograd Soviet, member of the Central Committee Political Bureau and Chairman of the Comintern Executive Committee. He repeatedly opposed the Party's Leninist policy and was expelled from the Party for anti-Party activities in 1934—75, 276, 277, 341

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