

V.I. LENIN

REPORT ON PEACE

HOME AND FOREIGN POLICY
OF THE REPUBLIC

258

WORKERS OF ALL COUNTRIES, UNITE!

V. I. LENIN

REPORT ON PEACE

Delivered at the Second All-Russian Congress
of Soviets of Workers' and Soldiers' Deputies
October 26 (November 8), 1917

HOME AND FOREIGN POLICY OF THE REPUBLIC

Report of the All-Russian Central Executive
Committee and the Council of People's
Commissars to the Ninth All-Russian
Congress of Soviets
December 23, 1921

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V. I. Lenin

PUBLISHER'S NOTE

The present collection includes works by V. I. Lenin dealing with the home and foreign policy of the young Soviet Republic and questions of peaceful coexistence of the two systems.

The translation has been made from the fourth Russian edition of Lenin's *Collected Works* (unless otherwise indicated). The appropriate volume and pages of the *Works* are given on the right at the end of each item.

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**REPORT ON PEACE
DELIVERED AT THE SECOND ALL-RUSSIAN
CONGRESS OF SOVIETS OF WORKERS' AND
SOLDIERS' DEPUTIES¹
OCTOBER 26 (NOVEMBER 8), 1917**

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

DECREE ON PEACE

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

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

foreign lands, without the forcible incorporation of foreign nations) and without reparations.

The government of Russia proposes this kind of peace be immediately concluded by all the belligerent nations, and expresses its readiness to take all the resolute measures now, without the least delay, pending the final ratification of all the terms of such a peace by authoritative assemblies of the people's representatives of all countries and all nations.

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

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

The government considers it the greatest of crimes against humanity to continue this war over the issue of how to divide among the strong and rich nations the weak nationalities they have conquered, and solemnly announces its determination immediately to sign peace to stop this

war on the terms indicated, which are equally just for all nationalities without exception.

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

The government abolishes secret diplomacy, and, for its part, announces its firm intention to conduct all negotiations quite openly in full view of the whole people. It will proceed immediately with the full publication of the secret treaties endorsed or concluded by the government of landlords and capitalists from February to October 25, 1917.² The government proclaims the unconditional and immediate annulment of everything contained in these secret treaties in so far as it is aimed, as is mostly the case, at securing advantages and privileges for the Russian landlords and capitalists and at the retention, or extension, of the annexations made by the Great Russians.

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

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

involved in or compelled to take part in the war, and the summoning of authoritative assemblies of the representatives of the peoples of all countries for the final ratification of the peace terms.

While addressing this proposal for peace to the governments and peoples of all the belligerent countries, the Provisional Workers' and Peasants' Government of Russia appeals in particular also to the class-conscious workers of the three most advanced nations of mankind and the largest states participating in the present war, namely, Great Britain, France and Germany. The workers of these countries have made the greatest contributions to the cause of progress and socialism; they have furnished the great examples of the Chartist movement³ in England, a number of revolutions of historic importance effected by the French proletariat, and, finally, the heroic struggle against the Anti-Socialist Law in Germany⁴ and the prolonged, persistent and disciplined work of creating mass proletarian organisations in Germany, a work which serves as a model to the workers of the whole world. All these examples of proletarian heroism and historical creative work are a pledge that the workers of the countries mentioned will understand the duty that now faces them of saving mankind from the horrors of war and its consequences, that these workers, by comprehensive, determined and supremely vigorous action, will help us to conclude peace successfully, and at the same time emancipate the labouring and exploited masses of the population from all forms of slavery and all forms of exploitation.

The workers' and peasants' government, created by the revolution of October 24-25 and basing itself on the Soviets of Workers', Soldiers' and Peasants' Deputies, must start immediate negotiations for peace. Our appeal must be addressed both to the governments and to the peoples. We

cannot ignore the governments, for that would delay the possibility of concluding peace, and the people's government dare not do that; but we have no right not to appeal to the peoples at the same time. Everywhere there are differences between the governments and the peoples, and we must therefore help the peoples to intervene in questions of war and peace. We will, of course, in every possible way insist upon the whole of our programme for a peace without annexations and reparations. We shall not retreat from it; but we must not give our enemies an opportunity to say that their terms are different from ours and that therefore it is useless to start negotiations with us. No, we must deprive them of that advantageous position and not present our terms in the form of an ultimatum. Therefore the point is included that we are willing to consider any peace terms and all proposals. We shall consider them, but that does not necessarily mean that we shall accept them. We shall submit them for consideration to the Constituent Assembly which will have the power to decide what concessions can and what cannot be made. We are combating the deception practised by governments which pay lip service to peace and justice, but in fact wage annexationist and predatory wars. No government will say all it thinks. We, however, are opposed to secret diplomacy and will act openly in full view of the whole people. We do not close our eyes to difficulties and never have done. War cannot be ended by refusal, it cannot be ended unilaterally. We are proposing an armistice for three months, but shall not reject a shorter period, so that the exhausted army may breathe freely, even if only for a little while; moreover, in all the civilised countries national assemblies must be summoned for the discussion of the terms.

In proposing an immediate armistice, we appeal to the class-conscious workers of the countries that have done so much for the development of the proletarian movement. We appeal to the workers of England, where there was the

Chartist movement, to the workers of France, who have in repeated uprisings displayed the strength of their class consciousness, and to the workers of Germany, who waged the fight against the Anti-Socialist Law and have created powerful organisations.

In the Manifesto of March 14,⁵ we called for the overthrow of the bankers, but, far from overthrowing our own bankers, we entered into an alliance with them. Now we have overthrown the government of the bankers.

The governments and the bourgeoisie will make every effort to unite their forces and drown the workers' and peasants' revolution in blood. But the three years of war have been a good lesson to the masses—the Soviet movement in other countries and the mutiny in the German navy,⁶ which was crushed by the junkers of Wilhelm the hangman. Finally, we must remember that we are not living in the depths of Africa, but in Europe, where news can spread quickly.

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

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

Vol. 26, pp. 217-21

CONCLUDING SPEECH ON THE REPORT ON PEACE OCTOBER 26 (NOVEMBER 8)

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

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

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

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

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

What will the peasant of some remote province say if, owing to our insistence on ultimatums, he will not know what another government wants? He will say: comrades,

why did you preclude the possibility of any peace terms being proposed? I would have discussed them, I would have examined them, and would then have instructed my representatives in the Constituent Assembly how to act. I am prepared to fight by revolutionary methods for just terms if the governments do not agree, but there might be such terms for some countries that I would be prepared to recommend their governments to go on fighting by themselves. The full realisation of our ideas depends solely on the overthrow of the entire capitalist system. This is what the peasant might say to us, and he would accuse us of being excessively uncompromising over trifles, when for us the main thing is to expose all the vileness, all the baseness of the bourgeoisie and of its crowned and uncrowned hangmen placed at the head of the governments.

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

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

We shall not bind ourselves by treaties. We shall not allow ourselves to be entangled by treaties. We reject all

clauses on plunder and violence, but we shall welcome all clauses containing provisions for good-neighbourly relations and economic agreements; these we cannot reject. We propose an armistice for three months; we choose a lengthy period because the peoples are exhausted, the peoples yearn for a respite from this bloody shambles that has lasted over three years. We must realise that the peoples have to be given an opportunity to discuss the terms of peace and to express their will with parliament participating, and this requires time. We demand a lengthy armistice, so that the army in the trenches may enjoy a respite from this nightmare of constant slaughter; but we shall not reject proposals for a shorter armistice; we shall examine them, and it is incumbent upon us to accept them, even if we are offered an armistice of a month or a month and a half. Nor must our proposal for an armistice have the form of an ultimatum, for we will not give our enemies an opportunity to conceal the whole truth from the peoples, using our irreconcilability as a pretext. It must not be in the form of an ultimatum, for a government is criminal that does not desire an armistice. If we do not put our proposal for an armistice in the form of an ultimatum, we shall thereby show the peoples that the governments are criminal, and the peoples will not stand on ceremony with such criminals. The objection is raised that by not resorting to an ultimatum we are displaying weakness, but it is time to cast aside all bourgeois cant when speaking of the strength of the people. According to the bourgeois conception, there is strength when the people go blindly to the slaughter in obedience to the imperialist governments. The bourgeoisie admit a state to be strong only when it can, by the power of the government apparatus, hurl the people wherever the bourgeois rulers want them hurled. Our idea of strength is a different one. Our idea is that a state is strong when the people are politically conscious. It is strong when the people know everything, can form an opinion of everything and do

everything consciously. We need not fear to tell the truth about fatigue, for what state today is not tired, what nation does not talk about it openly? Take Italy, where, owing to this tiredness, there was a prolonged revolutionary movement demanding the termination of the slaughter. Are there not mass demonstrations of workers in Germany that put forward a demand for the termination of the war? Was it not fatigue that provoked the mutiny in the German navy that was so ruthlessly suppressed by that hangman, Wilhelm, and his hirelings? If such things are possible in so disciplined a country as Germany, where they are beginning to talk about fatigue and about putting an end to the war, we need not fear to say the same openly, because it is the truth, equally true both of our country and of all the belligerent and even non-belligerent countries.

Pravda No. 171,
November 10 (October 28), 1917

Vol. 26, pp. 222-24

STRANGE AND MONSTROUS

The Moscow Regional Bureau⁷ of our Party, in a resolution adopted on February 24, 1918, expressed lack of confidence in the Central Committee, refused to obey those of its decisions "that will be connected with the implementation of the terms of the peace treaty with Austria and Germany",⁸ and, in an "explanatory note" to the resolution, declared that it "considers a split in the Party in the very near future hardly avoidable".*

There is nothing monstrous, nor even strange in all this. It is quite natural that comrades who violently disagree with the Central Committee over the question of a separate peace violently condemn the Central Committee and express their conviction that a split is inevitable. All that is the most legitimate right of Party members, which is quite understandable.

But here is what is strange and monstrous. An "explanatory note" is appended to the resolution. Here it is in full:

* Here is the full text of the resolution: "Having discussed the activities of the Central Committee, the Moscow Regional Bureau of the R.S.D.L.P. expresses lack of confidence in the Central Committee owing to its political line and composition, and will at the first opportunity insist that a new Central Committee be elected. Furthermore, the Moscow Regional Bureau does not consider itself bound to obey unreservedly those decisions of the Central Committee that will be connected with the implementation of the terms of the peace treaty with Austria and Germany." The resolution was adopted unanimously.

"The Moscow Regional Bureau considers a split in the Party in the very near future hardly avoidable and it sets itself the aim of helping to unite all consistent revolutionary Communists who equally oppose both the advocates of the conclusion of a separate peace and all moderate opportunists in the Party. *In the interests of the world revolution, we consider it expedient to accept the possibility of losing Soviet power, which is now becoming purely formal.* We maintain as before that our primary task is to extend the ideas of the socialist revolution to all other countries, resolutely to promote the workers' dictatorship and ruthlessly to suppress bourgeois counter-revolution in Russia."

It is the words we have emphasised in this passage which are . . . strange and monstrous.

It is in these words that the crux of the matter lies.

These words reduce to an absurdity the whole line put forward by the authors of the resolution. These words expose the root of their error with exceptional clarity.

"In the interests of the world revolution it is expedient to accept the possibility of losing Soviet power. . . ." That is strange, for there is even no connection between the premises and the conclusion. "In the interests of the world revolution it is expedient to accept the *military defeat* of Soviet power"—such a proposition might be right or wrong, but it could not be called strange. That is the first thing.

Second thing: Soviet power "is now becoming purely formal". Now this is not only strange but downright monstrous. Obviously, the authors have got themselves thoroughly entangled. We shall have to disentangle them.

As regards the first question, the authors' idea evidently is that it would be expedient in the interests of the world revolution to accept the possibility of defeat in war, which would lead to the loss of Soviet power, in other words, to the triumph of the bourgeoisie in Russia. By voicing this idea the authors indirectly admit the truth of what I said in the theses (of January 8, 1918, published in *Pravda* on

February 24, 1918), namely, that refusal to accept the peace terms presented by Germany would lead to Russia's defeat and the overthrow of Soviet power.

And so, *la raison finit toujours par avoir raison*—the truth always triumphs! My "extremist" opponents, the Muscovites who threaten a split, were obliged—just because they have come to talk openly of a split—to completely expose their *concrete* reasons, those very reasons which people who confine themselves to general phrase-mongering about revolutionary war prefer to pass over in silence. The very essence of my theses and arguments (as anyone who cares to read attentively my theses of January 7, 1918, may see) is that we must accept this extremely harsh peace *right now*, at once, while at the same time seriously *preparing* for a revolutionary war (and accept it, moreover, precisely *in the interest* of such serious preparations). Those who confined themselves to general phrase-mongering about a revolutionary war ignored or failed to notice, or did not want to notice, the very essence of my arguments. And now I must thank precisely my "extremist" opponents, the Muscovites, from the bottom of my heart for having broken the "conspiracy of silence" over the *essence* of my arguments. The Muscovites were the *first* to reply to them.

And what was their reply?

Their reply was an *admission of the correctness* of my *concrete* argument. Yes, the Muscovites admitted, we shall certainly be defeated if we fight the Germans now.* Yes, this defeat would certainly lead to the fall of Soviet power.

Again and again I thank my "extremist" opponents, the Muscovites, from the bottom of my heart for having brok-

* As to the counter-argument, that to avoid fighting was anyway impossible, the reply has been given by the facts: on January 8 my theses were read; by January 15 we *might* have had peace. A respite would have been certainly assured (and for us even the briefest respite would have been of gigantic significance, both materially and morally, for the *Germans* would have had to declare a new war), if . . . if it had not been for revolutionary phrase-mongering.

en the "conspiracy of silence" against the essence of my arguments, i.e., against my *concrete* statement as to what the conditions of war would be, if we were to accept it at once, and for having fearlessly admitted the correctness of my concrete statement.

Further, on what grounds were my arguments, the substantial correctness of which the Muscovites were compelled to admit, rejected?

On the grounds that in the interests of the world revolution we *must* accept the loss of Soviet power.

Why should the interests of the world revolution demand that? This is the crux of the matter; it is the very essence of the reasoning of those who would like to defeat my arguments. And precisely on this, the most important, fundamental and vital point, not a word is said, either in the resolution or in the explanatory note. The authors of the resolution found time and space to speak of what is universally known and indisputable—of "ruthlessly suppressing bourgeois counter-revolution in Russia" (using the methods and means of a policy which would lead to the loss of Soviet power?), and of opposing all moderate opportunists in the Party—but of that which is really disputable and which concerns the very essence of the position of the peace opponents—not a word!

Strange. Extremely strange. Did the authors of the resolution keep silent about this because they felt that on this point they were particularly weak? To have plainly stated *why* (this is demanded by the interests of the world revolution) would most likely have meant exposing themselves. . . .

However that may be, we have to *seek* out the arguments which *may* have guided the authors of the resolution.

Perhaps the authors believe that the interests of the world revolution forbid making any peace at all with imperialists? This opinion was expressed by some of the peace

opponents at one of the Petrograd meetings, but only an insignificant minority of those who objected to a separate peace supported it.⁹ It is clear that this opinion would lead to a denial of the expediency of the Brest negotiations and to a rejection of peace, "even" if accompanied by the return of Poland, Latvia and Courland. The incorrectness of this view (which was rejected, for example, by a majority of the Petrograd peace opponents) is as clear as day. A socialist republic surrounded by imperialist powers could not, from this point of view, conclude any economic treaties, and could not exist at all, without flying off to the moon.

Perhaps the authors believe that the interests of the world revolution demand that it should be *given a push*, and that only war can give that push—believe that peace, in any case, cannot; that peace might give the people the impression—that imperialism was being "legalised"? Such a "theory" would be completely at variance with Marxism, which has always been opposed to "pushing" revolutions that develop with the acuteness of the class antagonisms engendering revolutions. Such a theory would be tantamount to the view that armed uprising is a form of struggle which is obligatory always and under all conditions. Actually, however, the interests of the world revolution demand that Soviet power, having overthrown the bourgeoisie in our country, should *help* that revolution, but that it should choose a *form* of help which is commensurate with its own strength. To help the socialist revolution on an international scale by accepting the possibility of defeat of that revolution in *one's own country* is a view that does not follow even from the pushing theory.

Perhaps the authors of the resolution believe that revolution has already begun in Germany and has already reached the stage of an open, nation-wide civil war, that we must therefore devote our strength to helping the

German workers, and must perish ourselves ("losing Soviet power") to save a German revolution which has already started its decisive fight and is being hard pressed? According to this theory, we, while perishing ourselves, would be diverting part of the forces of German counter-revolution, thereby saving the German revolution.

It is quite conceivable that, given these premises, it would not only be "expedient" (as the authors of the resolution put it) but a downright *duty* to accept the possibility of defeat and the possibility of losing Soviet power. But obviously these premises do not exist. The German revolution is ripening, but it has evidently not reached the stage of an explosion in Germany, of civil war in Germany. By "accepting the possibility of losing Soviet power", we certainly would not be helping the German revolution to reach maturity, but *would be hindering* it. We would be helping German reaction, playing into its hands, hampering the socialist movement in Germany and repelling from socialism large masses of German proletarians and semi-proletarians who have not yet come over to socialism and would be scared by the defeat of Soviet Russia, just as the English workers were scared by the defeat of the Paris Commune in 1871.

Twist and turn them as much as you like, but you will find no logic in the authors' contentions. There are no sensible arguments to support the view that "in the interests of the world revolution it is expedient to accept the possibility of losing Soviet power".

"Soviet power is now becoming purely formal"—this, as we see, is the monstrous view the authors of the Moscow resolution have come to proclaim.

Since the German imperialists are going to make us pay indemnities and forbid us to carry on propaganda and agitation against Germany, Soviet power loses all significance and "becomes purely formal"—this is probably the line of

"reasoning" of the authors of the resolution. We say "probably", for the authors offer nothing clear and specific in support of their thesis.

Profound and hopeless pessimism and complete despair—such is the sum and substance of the "theory" that the significance of Soviet power is purely formal and that tactics which will risk the possible loss of Soviet power are permissible. Since there is no salvation anyway, then let even Soviet power perish—this is the sentiment that dictated this monstrous resolution. The allegedly "economic" arguments in which such ideas are sometimes clothed reveal the same hopeless pessimism: what sort of Soviet republic is it—the implication is—when every kind of tribute can be exacted from it?

Nothing but despair: we shall perish anyhow!

It is a quite understandable mood in the extremely desperate situation in which Russia finds herself. But it is not "understandable" among conscious revolutionaries. It is typical precisely because it expresses the views of the Muscovites which have been carried to the point of absurdity. The Frenchmen of 1793 would never have said that their conquests—the republic and democracy—were becoming purely formal and that they would have to accept the possibility of losing the republic. They were not filled with despair, but with faith in victory. To call for a revolutionary war, and at the same time to talk in an official resolution of "accepting the possibility of losing Soviet power", is to expose oneself completely.

Early in the nineteenth century, at the time of the Napoleonic wars, Prussia and a number of other countries suffered incomparably and immeasurably greater hardships and burdens of defeat, conquest, humiliation and oppression on the part of the conqueror than Russia is suffering in 1918. Yet the best men of Prussia, when Napoleon's military jackboots trampled upon them a hundred times more

heavily than we can be trampled upon now, did not despair, and did not say that their national political institutions were "purely formal". They did not drop their hands or give way to the feeling: "We shall perish anyhow." They signed peace treaties infinitely more drastic, brutal, humiliating and oppressive than the Brest Treaty, and then knew how to bide their time; they staunchly bore the conqueror's yoke, fought again, fell under the conqueror's yoke again, again signed the vilest of vile peace treaties, and again rose, and *in the end liberated themselves* (not without exploiting the dissensions among the stronger competing conquerors).

Why shouldn't this be repeated in our history?

Why should we give way to despair and write resolutions—which, by heavens, are more disgraceful than the most disgraceful peace—saying that "Soviet power is becoming purely formal"?

Why shouldn't the most crushing military defeats in the struggle against the giants of modern imperialism steel the national character in Russia too, strengthen self-discipline, put an end to the bragging and phrase-mongering, teach fortitude and bring the people round to the correct tactics of the Prussians when they were crushed by Napoleon—the tactics of signing the most humiliating of peace treaties when you haven't an army, then mustering your forces and rising again and again?

Why should we give way to despair at the first peace treaty, incredibly harsh though it be, when other nations were able staunchly to bear even bitterer misfortunes?

Is it the staunchness of the proletarian who knows that one must submit when strength is lacking, and is then nevertheless able to rise again and again at any price and to build up strength under *all* circumstances, is it this that underlies these tactics of despair, or, rather the spinelessness of the petty bourgeois, who, in our country, in the shape of the Left Socialist-Revolutionary Party, has

beaten the record for phrase-mongering about a revolutionary war?

No, dear Moscow "extremist" comrades, every day of trial will drive away from you precisely those workers who are the most class-conscious and the staunchest. Soviet power, they will say, is not *becoming*, and will not *become*, purely formal; and not only now, when the conqueror is in Pskov and is making us pay a ten-thousand-million-ruble tribute in grain, ore and money, but even if he gets as far as Nizhni-Novgorod and Rostov-on-Don and makes us pay a tribute of twenty thousand million rubles.

Never will any foreign conquest render a popular political institution "purely formal" (and Soviet power is *something more* than a political institution which is far and away superior to anything known to history). On the contrary, alien conquest will only strengthen popular sympathy for Soviet power, provided—provided it does not indulge in reckless follies.

And to refuse to sign even the vilest peace when you have no army would be a reckless folly, for which the people would be justified in condemning the government that refused to do so.

Immensely more harsh and humiliating peace treaties than the Brest Treaty have been signed in the past (we gave some instances above) without discrediting the regime or turning it into a formality; they ruined neither the regime nor the people, but rather steeled the people, *taught* them the stern and difficult science of building up an effective army even in the most desperate conditions and under the heel of the conqueror.

Russia is making for a new and genuine patriotic war, a war for the preservation and consolidation of Soviet power. It is possible that another epoch will—like the epoch of the Napoleonic wars—be an epoch of liberation wars (not one war, but wars) imposed by conquerors upon Soviet Russia. That is possible.

And, therefore, more humiliating than any harsh or extremely harsh peace, rendered imperative owing to the lack of an army—more humiliating than any humiliating peace is humiliating despair. We shall not perish even from a dozen obnoxious peace treaties if we take revolt and war *seriously*. No conquerors can destroy us if we do not destroy ourselves by despair and phrase-mongering.

Pravda Nos. 37 and 38,
February 28 and March 1, 1918
Signed: *N. Lenin*

Vol. 27, pp. 46-53

**SPEECH IN THE MOSCOW SOVIET OF WORKERS',
PEASANTS' AND RED ARMY DEPUTIES
MARCH 12, 1918**

Verbatim Report

Comrades, we are celebrating the anniversary of the Russian revolution at a time when the revolution is passing through difficult days, when many are ready to give way to despondency and disillusionment. But if we look around us, if we recall what the revolution has achieved during this past year and how the international situation is shaping, then not one of us, I am sure, will find room for despair or despondency. There should be no room for doubt that the world socialist revolution, begun in October, will triumph over all difficulties and obstacles, over all its enemies' efforts.

Comrades, remember the way the Russian revolution developed. . . . Remember how, in a few days in February, thanks to the joint action of the proletariat and the bourgeoisie, who saw that under tsarism even a bourgeois society could not exist, thanks to the co-operation between the workers and the more enlightened section of the peasants, namely, the soldiers, who had lived through all the horrors of war . . . remember how in a few days they succeeded in overthrowing the monarchy which in 1905, 1906 and 1907¹⁰ had resisted incomparably heavier blows and drowned revolutionary Russia in blood. And when, after

the February victory, the bourgeoisie found themselves in power, the revolution went forward with incredible speed.

The Russian revolution produced results which sharply distinguish it from the revolutions in Western Europe. It produced revolutionary people prepared by the events of 1905 to take independent action; it produced the Soviets of Workers', Soldiers' and Peasants' Deputies, bodies incomparably more democratic than all those preceding them, able to educate, elevate and lead the downtrodden mass of workers, soldiers and peasants. Thanks to these circumstances the Russian revolution within a few months passed through that era of compromise with the bourgeoisie which in Western Europe took entire decades. The bourgeoisie now say that the working class and its representatives, the Bolsheviks, are to blame for the fact that the army was unequal to the situation. But we can now see that if at that time—in March and April—power had not been in the hands of the conciliators, of the bourgeoisie who secured cushy jobs for themselves, and placed the capitalists in power while at the same time leaving the army ragged and starving, if power had not been in the hands of such gentlemen as Kerensky, who called themselves socialists, but who actually carried in their pockets secret treaties binding the Russian people to fight until 1918, then perhaps the Russian army and revolution might have been spared those incredibly severe trials and humiliations through which we have had to pass. If at that time power had passed to the Soviets, if the conciliators, instead of aiding Kerensky to drive the army into battle, had come forward with a proposal for a democratic peace, then our army would not have been so smashed. They should have said to it: stand by. In one hand let it hold the torn-up secret treaty with the imperialists and the proposal to all nations for a democratic peace; in the other let it hold rifle and gun, and let the front remain absolutely intact. In that case the army and the revolu-

tion could have been saved. Such a gesture, even before an enemy like German imperialism, even if aid were forthcoming from the whole bourgeoisie, the entire capitalist world, all the representatives of the bourgeois parties, could, nevertheless, have always been of help. This gesture could have put the enemy in a situation where it would have seen, on the one hand, the proposed democratic peace and the unmasked treaties and, on the other hand, the guns. Today we have not got such a strong front. We cannot reinforce it without artillery. The restoration of the front is too difficult, it is proceeding too slowly because we have not yet come into contact with the enemy. It was one thing to struggle with that idiot Romanov or that boaster Kerensky, but here we have an enemy which has organised all its forces and the economic life of its country for defence against the revolution. We knew that in June 1917, instead of tearing up the imperialist treaties, Kerensky's government hurled the soldiers into the offensive after which their forces were decidedly weakened. And now, when the bourgeoisie scream about the unparalleled disorganisation and national disgrace, do they imagine that the revolution born of war, born of unprecedented destruction, can develop calmly, smoothly, peacefully, without suffering, without torment, without horror? Anyone imagining the revolution beginning in this way is either nothing but a phrase-monger, or one of those flabby intellectuals, incapable of understanding the significance of this war and of the revolution, who argue in this way. Yes, that is how they reason. But to us it is clear that throughout this whole process a great national upsurge is taking place, which those who scream about national disgrace do not see.

However that may be, we have extricated ourselves from the war. We are not saying that we extricated ourselves without giving anything in return, without paying a price. But we managed to get out of the war. We gave the people

a breathing-space. We do not know how long this breathing-space will last. Possibly it will be exceedingly brief because the imperialist robbers are bearing down on us from the West and the East, and a new war will inevitably begin. We do not close our eyes to the fact that the country lies in ruins. But the people were able to rid themselves of the tsarist government, of the bourgeois government, and to create Soviet organisations which only now, when the soldiers have returned from the front, have reached the remotest villages. The necessity for them and their significance have been understood by the lowest levels of the people, by the most oppressed, downtrodden people, who were wronged and humiliated by tsars, landlords and capitalists, and who were seldom able to put heart and soul into anything or display their creative ability. They not only established Soviet power in the large towns and factory areas, but also in the most remote corners of the country. Every peasant who up to now has only known oppression and robbery at the hands of the authorities, now sees the government of the poor in power, the government which he himself elects, which has liberated him from oppression and which, despite all the unparalleled obstacles and difficulties, will be able to lead him still farther forward.

Comrades, although we now have to live through days of heavy defeat and oppression, when the head of the Russian revolution is under the boot of the Prussian landlords and imperialists, I am sure, no matter how great may be the anger and indignation in some circles, that deep among the people a constructive process is taking place, an accumulation of energy and discipline which will give us the strength to survive all blows and which proves that we have not betrayed, and will not betray, the revolution. If we have been compelled to undergo these trials and defeats then this is because the course of history does not run smoothly and pleasantly, permitting the work-

ing people of all countries to rise simultaneously with us. We must not forget the sort of enemy we are dealing with. The enemies with whom we have had to deal before—Romanov, Kerensky and the Russian bourgeoisie—stupid, unorganised, uncultured and only yesterday licking the boots of Romanov and then running about with secret treaties in their pockets—do these enemies amount to anything compared with the international bourgeoisie, who have turned all the achievements of the human mind into a weapon to suppress the will of the working people and have adapted the whole of their organisation to mankind's extermination?

This is the enemy that has hurled itself at us just at the moment when we have completely disarmed, when we have to state quite openly: we have no army, we are a country which has lost its army and is forced to accept a very humiliating peace.

We are not deceiving anybody, we are not betraying anyone, we are not refusing to aid our brothers. But we shall have to accept a very onerous peace, we shall have to accept terrible conditions. We shall have to retreat in order to gain time while this is still possible, so that our allies can come to our aid. And we have got allies. No matter how great our hatred of imperialism, no matter how strong the emotion, a justified emotion of anger and indignation against it, we must recognise that we are now defencists. It is not secret treaties that we are defending, we are defending socialism, we are defending our socialist fatherland. In order to be able to defend it, however, we have had to accept the most bitter humiliation. We know that there are periods in every nation's history when it is obliged to retreat before the pressure of an enemy with stronger nerves. We have gained a breathing-space, and we must make use of it so that the army may have some sort of respite, so that as a mass (not those tens of thousands in the large cities who attend meetings, but the

millions and tens of millions who have dispersed to the villages) it should understand that the old war is over, and a new war is commencing, a war to which we have replied with a peace offer, a war in which we have retreated in order to overcome our lack of discipline, our inertia, our flabbiness—despite which we were able to defeat tsarism and the Russian bourgeoisie, but not the European international bourgeoisie. If we overcome them we shall be the victors, because we have allies, and we are convinced of this.

However viciously the international imperialists now behave on seeing our defeat, their enemies, who are our allies, are maturing within their own countries. We know and have always known for certain that among the German working class this process is taking place, perhaps more slowly than we expected, than we would have liked, but there is no doubt that indignation against the imperialists is growing, that the number of our allies in our work is increasing and that they will come to our aid.

You must give all your strength, provide the right watchword and enforce discipline. This is our duty to the socialist revolution. Then we shall be able to hold out until the allied proletariat comes to our aid and, together, we shall defeat all the imperialists and capitalists.

Izvestia VTsIK
No. 47, March 14, 1918

Vol. 27, pp. 138-42

RESOLUTION OF THE FOURTH EXTRAORDINARY
ALL-RUSSIAN CONGRESS OF SOVIETS⁴¹
(MARCH 14-16, 1918)
RATIFICATION OF THE BREST TREATY

The Congress confirms (ratifies) the peace treaty concluded by our representatives at Brest-Litovsk on March 3, 1918.

The Congress recognises as correct the actions of the Central Executive Committee and the Council of People's Commissars in deciding to conclude the present incredibly harsh, rapacious and humiliating peace in view of the absence of an army and the extreme war exhaustion of the people who have not received the support of the bourgeoisie and bourgeois intelligentsia in their actions, but have seen those actions employed for selfish class purposes.

The Congress also recognises the undoubted correctness of the actions of the peace delegation that refused to enter into a detailed discussion on the German peace terms, because those terms were imposed on us in the form of an obvious ultimatum and by undisguised force.

The Congress most insistently presents to all workers, soldiers and peasants, to all the working and oppressed masses, the main, immediate and most urgent tasks of the moment—the improvement of the discipline and self-discipline of the working people, the creation throughout the country of strong, well-founded organisations that cover,

as far as possible, all production and distribution; a ruthless struggle against the chaos, disorganisation and economic ruin that are historically inevitable as the result of the most brutal of wars but which are, at the same time, the main obstacle to the complete victory of socialism and the strengthening of the foundations of socialist society.

Today, after the October Revolution, after the overthrow of the political power of the bourgeoisie in Russia, after our denunciation and publication of all secret imperialist treaties, after the cancellation of the foreign loans, after the workers' and peasants' government has proposed a just peace to all peoples without exception, Russia, having escaped from the clutches of the imperialist war, has the right to announce that she is not a participant in the plunder and suppression of other countries.

The Russian Soviet Federative Republic, having unanimously condemned predatory wars, from now on deems it its right and its duty to defend the socialist fatherland against all attacks by any of the imperialist powers.

The Congress, therefore, deems it the unconditional duty of all working people to muster all forces to re-establish and improve the defence potential of our country, to re-establish its military strength on the basis of our socialist militia and the universal military training of all adolescents and adults of both sexes.

The Congress expresses its absolute confidence that Soviet power, that has valiantly fulfilled all the obligations of the international solidarity of the workers of all countries in their struggle for socialism against the yoke of capital, will in future do everything possible to promote the international socialist movement, to secure and shorten the road leading mankind to deliverance from the yoke of capital and from wage slavery, to the creation of a socialist society and an enduring, just peace between the peoples.

The Congress is firmly convinced that the international workers' revolution is not far away, that the full victory of the socialist proletariat is assured despite the fact that the imperialists of all countries do not hesitate to use the most brutal means for the suppression of the socialist movement.

Pravda (Sotsial-Demokrat)
No. 47, March 16, 1918

Vol. 27, pp. 173-74

REPORT ON FOREIGN POLICY
DELIVERED AT A JOINT MEETING OF THE
ALL-RUSSIAN CENTRAL EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE
AND THE MOSCOW SOVIET
MAY 14, 1918

Comrades, permit me to acquaint you with the present foreign policy situation. In the past few days our international position has in many respects become more complicated owing to the aggravation of the general situation. Because of this aggravation, provocation, the deliberate panic-mongering of the bourgeois press and its echo, the socialist press, is again doing its dark and filthy work of repeating the Kornilov affair.

First, I shall draw your attention to the factors determining, in the main, the international position of the Soviet Republic in order to proceed to the outward legal forms determining this position, and on the basis of this, again to describe the difficulties which have cropped up or, to be more precise, outline the turning-point at which we have arrived and which is the cause of the worsened political situation.

Comrades, you know, and your knowledge has been particularly reinforced by the experience of the two Russian revolutions, that economic interests and the economic position of the classes which rule our state, lie at the root of both our home and foreign policy. These propositions

which constitute the basis of the world Marxist outlook and have been confirmed for us Russian revolutionaries by the great experience of both Russian revolutions, must not be forgotten even for a moment if we are to avoid losing ourselves in the mazes and labyrinths of diplomatic tricks, labyrinths which at times are artificially created and made more intricate by people, classes, parties and groups who like to fish in muddy waters, or who are compelled to do so.

The present moment is one in which, despite the existing international situation, both our counter-revolutionaries—the Cadets,¹² bourgeoisie and landlords, and their yes-men, the Right Socialist-Revolutionaries and Mensheviks, have been attempting to fish in muddy waters.

Basically, the position is that the Russian Socialist Soviet Republic, due to economic and political causes which we have described in the press on more than one occasion, and of which you are aware, due to a different rate of development, a different basis of development than that of the West, still remains a lone island in the stormy sea of imperialist robbery. The main economic factor in the West is that this imperialist war which has tortured and exhausted mankind has given rise to such complicated, such acute, such involved conflicts that again and again, at every step, the question of war and peace, the solution of the question to the advantage of one or other grouping, hangs by a thread. We have lived through precisely such a situation in the past few days. Contradictions, conflicts, struggles and furious clashes developing into war between imperialist powers which are unable in their politics to stop this war owing to the economic conditions of the development of capitalism over a number of decades, make it impossible for the imperialists themselves to stop this war. This has brought to life the main contradictions, has confused and made the situation more complicated.

Owing to these contradictions the general alliance of the imperialists of all countries, forming the basis of the eco-

nomic alliance of capitalism, the alliance whose natural and inevitable aim is to defend capital that recognises no fatherland, has proved in the course of many major and important episodes in world history that capital places the safeguarding of the alliance of the capitalists of all countries against the working people above the interests of the fatherland, of the people or what you will. This alliance is not the moving force of politics.

Of course, as before, this alliance remains the main economic trend of the capitalist system which must ultimately make itself felt with inevitable force. That the imperialist war has divided the imperialist powers which at the present moment one may say have divided up the whole world among themselves, into hostile groups, into hostile coalitions, is an exception to this main tendency of capitalism. This enmity, this struggle, this desperate clash, proves that in certain circumstances the alliance of world imperialism is impossible. We are witnessing a situation in which the stormy waves of imperialist reaction, the imperialist slaughter of nations are hurling themselves at the small island of the Soviet Socialist Republic, and seemingly are ready to drown it any minute, but actually these waves only break against each other.

The basic contradictions between the imperialist powers have led to such a merciless struggle that, while recognising its hopelessness, neither the one, nor the other group is in a position to extricate itself from the iron grip of this war at will. The war clearly brought out two main contradictions, which in their turn determined the Soviet Socialist Republic's present international position. The first is the extreme ferocity of the battle being waged on the Western front between Germany and Britain. We have heard on more than one occasion representatives of the two belligerent groups promise and assure their own people and other peoples, that all that is required is one more last effort for the enemy to be subdued, the fatherland defended and the

interests of civilisation and of the war of liberation saved for all time. The longer this terrible struggle drags on and the deeper the belligerent countries become involved, the further off is the way out of this interminable war. And it is exactly the violence of this battle that makes extremely difficult, well-nigh impossible, an alliance of the great imperialist powers against the Soviet Republic, which during the bare half-year of its existence has won the warm regard and the most whole-hearted sympathy of the class-conscious workers of the world.

The second contradiction determining Russia's international position is the rivalry between Japan and America. Over several decades the economic development of these countries has produced a vast amount of inflammable material which makes inevitable a desperate clash between them for domination of the Pacific Ocean and the surrounding territories. The entire diplomatic and economic history of the Far East leaves no room for doubt that under capitalist conditions it is impossible to avert the imminent conflict between Japan and America. This contradiction, temporarily concealed by the alliance of Japan and America against Germany, delays Japanese imperialism's attack on Russia. The campaign which began against the Soviet Republic (the landing at Vladivostok and the support of the Semyonov band) is delayed because it threatens to turn the hidden conflict between Japan and America into open war. It is quite likely, of course, and we must not forget that no matter how solid the imperialist groupings may appear to be, they can be broken up in a few days if the interests of sacred private property, the sacred rights of concessions, etc., demand it. It may well be that the tiniest spark will suffice to blow up the existing grouping of powers, and then the afore-mentioned contradictions will no longer protect us.

At the moment, however, the situation we have described explains why it is possible to preserve our socialist

island in the middle of stormy seas, also why its position is so unstable, and, at times, to the great joy of the bourgeoisie and the panic of the petty bourgeoisie, it seems that it may be engulfed by the waves any minute.

The outer aspect, the external expression of this situation is the Brest Treaty on the one hand, and the customs and laws with regard to neutral countries, on the other.

You know that treaties and laws are worth nothing but a scrap of paper in the face of international conflicts.

These words are usually recalled and quoted as an example of the cynicism of imperialist foreign policy; the cynicism, however, lies not in these words, but in the ruthless, the cruelly and agonisingly ruthless imperialist war, in which all peace treaties and all laws of neutrality have been flouted, are flouted and will be flouted, as long as capitalism exists.

That is why, when we come to the most important question for us, the Brest peace and the likelihood of its violation with all the possible consequences for us—if we want to stand firmly on our socialist feet and do not want to be overthrown by the plots and provocations of the counter-revolutionaries, no matter under what socialist labels they disguise themselves, we must not forget for a single moment the economic principles underlying all peace treaties, including that of Brest-Litovsk, the economic principles underlying all neutrality, including our own. We must not forget, on the one hand, the state of affairs internationally, the state of affairs of international imperialism in relation to the class which is growing and which sooner or later, maybe even later than we desire or expect, but which nevertheless will become capitalism's heir and will defeat world capitalism. And on the other hand, we must not forget the relations between the imperialist countries, the relations between the imperialist economic groups.

Having clarified this situation, I think, comrades, we shall not find it difficult to understand the significance of

those diplomatic particulars and details, at times even trifles, which mostly occupied our attention during the past few days, which have been on our minds during the past few days. Clearly, the instability of the international situation gives rise to panic. This panic emanates from the Cadets, the Right Socialist-Revolutionaries and Mensheviks who aid and abet the interests of those who want and who strive to sow panic. In no way closing our eyes to the full danger and tragedy of the situation, and analysing the economic relations on an international scale, we must say: yes, the question of war and peace hangs by a thread both in the West and in the Far East because two trends exist; one, which makes an alliance of all the imperialists inevitable; the other, which places the imperialists in opposition to each other—two trends, neither of which stands on firm ground. Yes, now Japan cannot decide to launch a full-scale attack, although with her million-strong army she could quite easily overrun weak Russia. I do not know, nor can anyone know, when this is likely to take place.

The form of the ultimatum threatens war against the allies and a treaty with Germany, but this position can change in a few days. There is always the possibility of it changing, because the American bourgeoisie, now at loggerheads with Japan, can tomorrow come to terms with her, because the Japanese bourgeoisie are just as likely tomorrow to come to terms with the German bourgeoisie. Their basic interests are the same: the division of the world between themselves, the interests of the landlords, of capital, the safeguarding (as they say) of their national self-respect and their national interests. This language is sufficiently familiar to those who have, either the misfortune or the habit—I don't know which—of reading newspapers like those of the Socialist-Revolutionaries. And when national self-respect begins to be mentioned frequently we all know, we very well know from the experience of 1914, what facts of imperialist robbery prompt this. In view of

this relationship it is clear why the situation in the Far East is unstable. One thing must be said: we must have a clear understanding of these contradictions of capitalist interests, we must appreciate that the stability of the Soviet Republic ensures a growing sympathy towards it from the vast mass of working people, all the working and exploited people of the world.

At the same time any day, any moment we must be prepared for and expect changes in international politics in favour of the policies of the extremist war parties.

The position of the German coalition is clear to us. At the present moment the majority of the German bourgeois parties stand for observing the Brest peace, but, of course, are very glad to "improve" on it and to receive a few more annexations at Russia's expense. What makes them take this stand? Political and military considerations of German national interests—as they express it—imperialist interests make them prefer peace in the East, so that their hands may be free in the West where German imperialism has promised an immediate victory on many occasions, and where every week or every month proves that this victory, the more the partial successes gained, recedes still further into the distance. On the other hand, there is a war party which, during discussions on the Brest Treaty, showed its hand on a number of occasions, a party which naturally exists in all imperialist powers, a war party which says to itself: force must be used immediately, irrespective of possible consequences. These are the voices of the extremist war party, known in Germany's history since the time of overwhelming military victories, known from 1866, for instance, when the extremist war party of Germany defeated Austria and turned this victory into a complete rout. All these clashes, all these conflicts are inevitable and lead to a situation where matters now hang by a thread, where, on the one hand, the bourgeois imperialist majority of the German parliament, the German propertied classes, the

German capitalists prefer to stand by the Brest Treaty, while, I repeat, not refusing to improve on it. And on the other hand, any day, any moment we must be prepared for and expect changes in politics in the interests of the extremist war party.

All this explains the instability of the international situation; all this explains how easy it is, on these grounds, for different attitudes to arise in the Party; and all this shows what prudence, caution, self-control and presence of mind is demanded of Soviet power, so that it may clearly define its task. Let the Russian bourgeoisie rush from a French to a German orientation. They like doing this. They have in several places seen that German support is an excellent guarantee against the peasants who have taken the land, and against the workers who are building the foundations of socialism. Only yesterday, and over a long period, over a number of years they branded as traitors those who condemned the imperialist war and opened people's eyes to its real nature, but now they are all prepared in a few weeks to change their political beliefs and to go over from an alliance with the British robbers to an alliance with the German robbers against Soviet power. Let the bourgeoisie of all shades, from the Right Socialist-Revolutionaries and Mensheviks to the Left Socialist-Revolutionaries, panic. They would be running true to form. Let them spread panic, for they are themselves in a panic. Let them rush to and fro, unable to do otherwise, vacillating between the different orientations and between the absurd phrases that fail to take into consideration that to intensify the revolution when it has attained great proportions, you have to live through the most diverse groupings and transitions from one stage to another. We Russian revolutionaries have had the good fortune in the twentieth century to pass through two revolutions, each of which gave us a lot of experience that has stamped its impression on the lives of the people, the experience of how to prepare a deep-

going and effective revolutionary movement; how the different classes in this movement behave; by what difficult and exhausting path, sometimes by a long evolution, the maturity of new classes is growing.

Remember how hard it was for the Soviets, created by the spontaneous outburst in 1905, how hard it was for them in 1917 once again to enter the fray, and then, when they had to go through all the suffering of conciliation with the bourgeoisie and with the hidden, most rabid enemies of the working class, who talked of the defence of the revolution, of the Red Flag, and committed the greatest of crimes in June 1917¹³—now, when the majority of the working class supports us, remember what it cost after the great 1905 Revolution to emerge with Soviets of the working and peasant classes. Remember all this, and think of the mass scale on which the struggle against international imperialism is developing, think how difficult the transition to this situation is, and what the Russian Republic had to undergo when it found itself ahead of all the remaining divisions of the socialist army.

I know that there are, of course, wiseacres thinking a lot of themselves and even calling themselves socialists, who assert that power should not have been taken until the revolution breaks out in all countries. They do not realise that in saying this they are deserting the revolution to the side of the bourgeoisie. To wait until the working classes carry out a revolution on an international scale means that everyone will remain suspended in mid-air. This is senseless. Everyone knows the difficulties of a revolution. It may commence with brilliant success in one country and then go through agonising periods, since final victory is only possible on a world scale, and only by the joint efforts of the workers of all countries. Our task consists in being restrained and prudent, we must manoeuvre and retreat until we receive reinforcements. A change-over to these tactics is inevitable, no matter how much they are mocked

by so-called revolutionaries with no idea of what revolution means.

Having dealt with the general questions I now want to examine the causes of the recent alarm and panic which have again enabled the counter-revolutionaries to start activities intended to undermine Soviet power.

I have already mentioned that the outward legal form and outer aspect of all international relations of the Soviet Socialist Republic are, on the one hand, the Brest-Litovsk Treaty, and, on the other, the general law and customs defining the status of a neutral country among the other belligerent countries; this accounted for the recent difficulties. The conclusion of a full-scale peace with Finland, the Ukraine and Turkey was a natural consequence of the Brest-Litovsk Treaty, yet we are still at war with these countries, and this is not in any way due to our internal development, but to the influence of the ruling classes of these countries. In these conditions the only temporary way out lay in the temporary breathing-space provided by the Brest-Litovsk Treaty, the breathing-space which provoked so many futile and unnecessary words about its impossibility but which nevertheless turned out to be possible. It brought results during the two months, made itself felt on the majority of Russian soldiers, enabled them to return home and see how things were going, to take advantage of the revolution's gains, to work the land, to look around and draw new strength for the fresh sacrifices ahead.

Naturally, this temporary breathing-space appeared to be coming to an end when the situation worsened in Finland, the Ukraine and Turkey, when, instead of a full-scale peace, we merely obtained a postponement of that self-same acute economic problem: war or peace? And are we to go to war once again, despite all the peaceful intentions of Soviet power and its absolute determination to sacrifice so-called Great-Power status, i.e., the right to conclude secret treaties, to conceal them from the people with the

assistance of the Chernovs, Tseretelis and Kerenskys, to sign secret predatory treaties and conduct an imperialist, predatory war? After all, instead of a full-scale peace, all that we obtained was a brief postponement of that self-same acute question of war or peace.

Here is the result of this situation, and you again clearly see what its final outcome boils down to—namely, the question of what the results will be of the shilly-shallying between two groups of hostile imperialist countries—the American conflict in the Far East, and the German-British conflict in Western Europe. It is clear how these contradictions became intensified over the conquest of the Ukraine, over the situation which the German imperialists, particularly their main war party, frequently viewed so optimistically, looked upon as so easy, and which caused precisely this extremist German war party such fantastic difficulties. It was this situation which temporarily raised the hopes of the Russian Cadets, Mensheviks and Right Socialist-Revolutionaries, who have become consumed with love for that which Skoropadsky brings to the Ukraine, and who now hope that this will also be easily achieved in Russia. These gentlemen will be mistaken; their hopes will turn to dust because ... (*stormy applause*), because, I say, that same main war party in Germany, which is too accustomed to rely on the power of the sword, even this party in these particular circumstances was not supported by the majority of the imperialists, those bourgeois imperialist circles who saw the unprecedented difficulties in the conquest of the Ukraine, in the struggle for the subordination of a whole people, in the forced necessity of resorting to a terrible coup d'état.

This main war party created unprecedented difficulties in Germany when, having promised its people and the workers to achieve supreme victories on the Western Front, this extremist war party was forced to recognise that it was faced with new, unbelievable economic and political

difficulties, with having to divert military efforts to tasks which also at first seemed easy, and also with having to conclude a treaty with the Ukrainian Mensheviks and the Right Socialist-Revolutionaries who had signed the peace treaty.

The extremist war party in Germany reasoned: we shall send many troops and obtain grain, but then it became necessary to engineer a coup d'état. This turned out to be easy there, because the Ukrainian Mensheviks readily supported this move. But it then turned out that this coup d'état creates fresh and gigantic difficulties, because the grain and raw materials, without which Germany cannot exist, have to be fought for step by step, and their appropriation by military force in an occupied country involves too great an effort and too many sacrifices.

Such is the situation that arose in the Ukraine and that should have lent wings to the hopes of the Russian counter-revolution. It is clear that in this struggle, Russia, which had been unable to rebuild her army, suffered and suffers further losses. The peace talks led to new, onerous conditions, to new open and concealed indemnities. Under what decree the Ukraine's frontiers are to be determined is not clear. The Rada¹⁴ which signed the decree has been removed. The landlord-hetman has been restored instead. Because of this uncertainty a whole number of questions have emerged which prove that the questions of war and peace remain as before. The partial armistice existing between the Russian and German troops, in no way pre-determines the general situation. The question hangs in the air. The same is true of Georgia where we have a drawn-out counter-revolutionary struggle by the government of Caucasian Mensheviks, a long struggle by the counter-revolutionaries calling themselves Social-Democrats. And when the victory of Soviet power and the working people, having embraced the whole of Russia, has begun to draw in the non-Russian outlying areas, when it has become quite obvious and beyond all doubt that the victory of

Soviet power, as has been admitted by the counter-revolutionary representatives of the Don Cossacks, cannot be delayed, when the Menshevik government in the Caucasus has begun to waver—the government of Gegechkori and Jordania, who realised this too late and started to talk about whether to find a common language with the Bolsheviks, when Tsereteli, aided by the Turkish troops, showed his hand by advancing against the Bolsheviks—they will reap the same harvest as the Rada. (*Applause.*)

Remember, however, that if these smart lads of the Caucasian Rada receive the support of the German troops, as did the Ukrainian Rada, then there will no doubt be fresh difficulties for the Russian Soviet Republic, a new inevitability of war, new dangers and new uncertainties. There are people who refer to this uncertainty, to the strain of an uncertain situation (in fact such an uncertain situation is sometimes worse than any clearly defined one), and say that the uncertainty can be easily removed—you only have to openly demand that the Germans observe the Brest Treaty.

I happened to hear such naïve people, who consider themselves to be on the Left, but who in fact only reflect the narrow-mindedness of our petty bourgeoisie....*

They forget that you have first to be victorious before you can make demands. If you are not victorious the enemy can delay his reply or even make no reply at all to your demands. That is the law of imperialist war.

You don't like it. Then succeed in defending your homeland. For the sake of socialism, for the sake of the working class, the worker has every right to defend his homeland.

I shall only add that this uncertain situation on the Caucasian border was a result of the extremely unpardonable vacillation of the Gegechkori government which at first announced that it did not recognise the Brest peace, and then declared its independence, without informing us

of what territory this independence covered. We have sent innumerable radio-telegrams asking them to please inform us of the territory they lay claim to. You have the right to claim independence, but since you speak of independence, you are bound to say what territory you are representing. That was a week ago. Countless radio-telegrams have been dispatched, but not a single reply has been received. German imperialism is taking advantage of this. It has made it possible for Germany, and Turkey as a satellite state, to push farther and farther forward, remaining silent, ignoring everything, stating: we shall take whatever we can, we are not infringing the Brest peace, because the Transcaucasian army does not recognise it, because the Caucasus is independent.

Of whom is the Gegechkori government independent? It is independent of the Soviet Republic, but it is dependent, just a little, on German imperialism, and quite naturally so. (*Applause.*)

That is the situation which has developed, comrades—an acute aggravation of relations in the past few days—it is a situation which has once again, and fairly obviously, confirmed the correctness of the tactics employed by the vast majority of our Party, the Russian Communist Party of Bolsheviks, and firmly insisted on during recent months.

We possess great revolutionary experience which has taught us that it is essential to employ the tactics of merciless attack when objective conditions permit, when the experience of compromising has shown that the people have become angry and that an expression of this change will be attack. But we have to resort to temporising tactics, to a slow gathering of forces when objective circumstances do not favour a call for a general merciless rebuff.

Whoever opens his eyes to the facts, who is not blind, knows that we are merely repeating what we have said earlier and what we have always said: that we do not forget the weakness of the Russian working class compared

* Phrase omitted, not clear in the verbatim report.—Ed.

to other detachments of the international proletariat. It was not our own will, but historical circumstances, the legacy of the tsarist regime, the flabbiness of the Russian bourgeoisie, that caused this detachment to march ahead of the other detachments of the international proletariat; not because we desired it, but because circumstances demanded it. We must remain at our post until the arrival of our ally, the international proletariat, which will arrive and will inevitably arrive, but which is advancing at an immeasurably slower pace than we expect or wish. If we see that as a result of objective conditions the international proletariat moves too slowly, we must nevertheless stick to our tactics of temporising and utilising the conflicts and contradictions between the imperialists, of slowly accumulating strength; the tactics of preserving that island of Soviet power in the stormy imperialist sea, maintaining that island which attracts the gaze of the working people of all countries. That is why we tell ourselves that, if the extremist war party can at any moment defeat any imperialist coalition and build a new unexpected imperialist coalition against us, we at any rate will not make it any easier for them. And if they come against us—yes, we are now defencists—we shall do everything in our power, everything within the power of diplomatic tactics, we shall do everything to delay that moment, everything to make the brief and unstable respite, given us in March, last longer, for we are firmly convinced that behind us are tens of millions of workers and peasants who know that with every week and, the more so, with every month of this respite they gain new strength, they are consolidating Soviet power, making it firm and stable. They know that they are introducing a new spirit, and that after the attrition and weariness of this exhausting, reactionary war, they will create firmness and readiness for the last and decisive battle should external forces attack the Socialist Soviet Republic.

We have been defencists since October 25, 1917; we have

won the right to defend our native land. It is not secret treaties that we are defending, we have annulled and exposed them to the whole world. We are defending our country against the imperialists. We are defending and we shall win. It is not the Great-Power status of Russia that we are defending, of that nothing is left but Russia proper, nor national interests for we assert that the interests of socialism, of world socialism are higher than national interests, higher than the interests of the state. We are defenders of the socialist fatherland.

This is not achieved by issuing declarations, but only by overthrowing the bourgeoisie in one's own country, by a ruthless finish started there; and we know that we shall win this war. Ours is a small island in the war engulfing the imperialist world, but on it we have shown and proved to all what the working class can do. This is seen and acknowledged by all. We have proved that we possess the right to defend our homeland. We are defencists and look upon our task with all the seriousness taught us by the four years of war, with all the seriousness and caution understood by every worker and peasant who has met any soldier and has learned what the soldier has lived through in these four years of war—the caution which may not be understood, which may be sneered at and regarded frivolously only by people who are revolutionaries in word but not in deed. Precisely because we support the defence of the fatherland we tell ourselves: a firm and strong army and a strong rear are needed for the defence, and in order to have a firm and strong army we must in the first place ensure that the food supplies are on a sound basis. For this the dictatorship of the proletariat must be expressed not only centrally—that is the first step and only the first step—but there must be dictatorship throughout the whole of Russia—that is the second step and only the second step—which we have not yet carried out sufficiently. Proletarian discipline is essential and necessary for us; real

proletarian dictatorship, when the firm and iron rule of class-conscious workers is felt in every remote corner of our country, when not a single kulak, not a single wealthy person, not a single opponent of the grain monopoly remains unpunished, but is found and punished by the iron hand of the disciplined dictators of the working class, proletarian dictators. (*Applause.*)

We say to ourselves: our attitude to defence of the fatherland is a cautious one; it is our duty to do everything that our diplomacy can do to delay the moment of war, to extend the respite period; we promise the workers and peasants to do all we can for peace. This we shall do. And bourgeois gentlemen and their hirelings who think that just as in the Ukraine where a coup was brought about so easily, so it may be possible to give birth to new Skoropadskys in Russia, should not forget that if the war party in Germany found it so difficult to effect a coup in the Ukraine, it will meet with plenty of opposition in Soviet Russia. Everything goes to prove this; Soviet power has pursued this line and has made every sacrifice to consolidate the position of the working people in the country.

The situation with regard to peace with Finland may be summed up in the words: Fort Ino and Murmansk. Fort Ino, which defends Petrograd, lies geographically within the Finnish state. In concluding peace with the workers' government of Finland we, the representatives of socialist Russia, recognised Finland's absolute right to the whole territory, but it was mutually agreed by both governments that Fort Ino should remain in Russia's hands "for the defence of the joint interests of the Socialist Republics", as stated in the treaty that was concluded.⁴⁵ It is natural that our troops should sign this peace in Finland, should sign these terms. It is natural that bourgeois and counter-revolutionary Finland could not but raise a hue and cry against this. It is natural that the reactionary and counter-revolutionary Finnish bourgeoisie would present claims for

this stronghold. It is natural that, because of this, the question should become acute on a number of occasions and should still remain acute. Matters hang by a thread. It is natural that the question of Murmansk to which the Anglo-French laid claim, should give rise to even greater aggravation, because they had spent tens of millions on the port's construction in order to safeguard their military rear in their imperialist war against Germany. Their respect for neutrality is so wonderful that they make use of everything that is in a bad way. Furthermore, sufficient excuse for their grabbing proclivities is their possession of a battle-ship, while we have nothing with which to chase it away. It is natural that all this should have aggravated the situation. There is an outer aspect, a legal expression resulting from the international position of the Soviet Republic, which presumes that it is impossible for armed forces of any belligerent state to set foot on neutral territory without being disarmed. The British landed their military forces at Murmansk, and we were unable to prevent this by armed force. Consequently, we are presented with demands almost in the nature of an ultimatum: if you cannot protect your neutrality, we shall attack your territory.

A worker-peasant army, however, has now been formed, rallying in the uyezds and gubernias the peasants who had returned to their land wrested from the landlords; they now have something to defend. An army has been formed which has started to build Soviet power and which will become the vanguard if an invasion against Russia breaks out; we shall rise as one man to meet the enemy.

My time is up, and I want to conclude by reading a telegram received by radio from Comrade Joffe, Soviet Ambassador in Berlin. This telegram will show you that, on the one hand, you have confirmation from our Ambassador of whether my analysis of the international situation is correct and, on the other hand, that the foreign policy of our Soviet Republic is a responsible one—it is a policy of preparation

for defence of our country, a steadfast policy, not allowing a single step to be taken that would aid the extremist parties of the imperialist powers in the East and West. This is a responsible policy with no illusions. There always remains the possibility that any day military forces may be thrown against us and we, the workers and peasants, assure ourselves and the whole world, and shall be able to prove, that we shall rise to a man to defend the Soviet Republic. I hope, therefore, that the reading of this telegram will serve as an appropriate conclusion to my speech and will show us the spirit in which the representatives of the Soviet Republic work abroad in the interests of the Soviets, of all Soviet institutions and the Soviet Republic.

"The latest radio-telegrams received today report that the German War Prisoners' Commission is leaving on Friday May 10. We have already received a note from the German Government proposing the setting up of a special commission to consider all legal questions in regard to our possessions in the Ukraine and in Finland. I have agreed to such a commission and have asked you to send the appropriate military and legal representatives. Today I had a talk about further advances, demands for clearing Fort Ino, and the attitude of Russians to Germany. Here is the reply: The German High Command states that there will be no further advances; Germany's role in the Ukraine and Finland has ended. Germany is willing to assist our peace talks with Kiev and Helsingfors and is entering into negotiations with the governments concerned. As regards Fort Ino, in connection with the Finnish peace talks: according to the treaty, the forts should be destroyed. Germany considers that when defining the frontiers the agreement with the Reds can be accepted; the Whites have not yet replied. The German Government declares officially: Germany abides firmly by the Brest Treaty, she wants peaceful relations with us, she has no aggressive plans and has no intention of attacking us in any way. It is promised that, in accordance with my request, Russian citizens in Germany will be treated on a par with other neutrals."

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**SPEECH ON THE INTERNATIONAL SITUATION
DELIVERED AT THE SIXTH EXTRAORDINARY
ALL-RUSSIAN CONGRESS OF SOVIETS OF WORKERS',
PEASANTS', COSSACKS' AND RED ARMY DEPUTIES¹⁶
NOVEMBER 8, 1918**

(*Prolonged applause.*) Comrades, from the very beginning of the October Revolution the main question that has faced us is that of foreign policy and international relations. This is not merely because from now on all the states in the world are being firmly linked by imperialism into a single system, or rather, into one dirty, bloody mass, but because the complete victory of the socialist revolution in one country alone is inconceivable, and demands the most active co-operation of at least several advanced countries, amongst whom we cannot include Russia. That is why the problem of the extent to which we succeed in broadening the revolution also in other countries, the extent to which we succeed meanwhile in warding off imperialism, has become one of the main problems of the revolution.

I should like, if I may, to remind you briefly of the main stages of our international policy during the past year. As I have already had occasion to point out in my speech on the anniversary of the revolution, the main feature characterising our position a year ago was that we were on our own. No matter how sound our conviction that a revolutionary force was being and had been created throughout

Europe and that the war would not end without revolution, there were no signs at that time that a revolution had begun or was beginning. In these circumstances we could do nothing but direct our foreign policy efforts to enlightening the working people of Western Europe. This was not because we claimed to be more enlightened than they, but because so long as the bourgeoisie of a country have not been overthrown, military censorship and that unprecedented blood-thirsty atmosphere which accompanies every war, particularly a reactionary one, predominate in that country. You are well aware that in the most democratic, republican countries, war means military censorship and unprecedented methods employed by the bourgeoisie and the bourgeois military staffs in order to deceive the people. It was our task to share our achievements in this respect with other peoples. We did everything possible in this connection when we annulled and published the disgraceful secret treaties which the former Tsar had concluded with the capitalists of Britain and France to the benefit of the Russian capitalists. You know that these were downright predatory treaties. You know that the government of Kerensky and the Mensheviks kept these treaties secret, and upheld them. By way of exception, we come across statements in that section of the British and French press which is to any degree honest that, thanks only to the Russian revolution, the French and the British learned much that was material to their diplomatic history.

We have certainly done very little from the point of view of the social revolution as a whole, but what we have done has been one of the greatest steps in its preparation.

If we now make a general survey of the results gained by the exposure of German imperialism, we shall see that it is now obvious and clear to the working people of all countries that they were made to wage a bloody and predatory war. And at the end of this year of war the behaviour of Britain and America is beginning to be exposed in the

same way, since the people are opening their eyes and begin to see through their intentions. That is all that we have done, but we have done what we could. The exposure of these treaties was a blow to imperialism. The terms of the peace treaty which we were compelled to conclude proved to be a powerful weapon of propaganda and agitation; we did more with them than any other government or nation has done. But while it is true that the attempt we made to awaken the people did not produce immediate results, we never even assumed that the revolution would begin immediately, or that all would be lost if it did not. During the past fifteen years we have brought about two revolutions, and we have clearly seen how much time must elapse before they grip the people. Recent events in Austria and Germany confirm this. We said that we had no intention of allying ourselves with robbers and becoming robbers ourselves; no, we expected to arouse the proletariat of the enemy countries. We were jeered at and told that we were preparing to arouse the German proletariat which would strangle us while we were preparing to launch a propaganda attack. But facts have shown that we were right to assume that the working people in all countries are equally hostile to imperialism. They only need to be given a certain period for preparation; the Russian people, too, despite the memories of the 1905 Revolution, required a long period before they again roused themselves for revolution.

Before the Brest peace we did everything in our power to strike a blow at imperialism. If the history of the growth of the proletarian revolution did not completely wipe this out, and if the Brest peace forced us to retreat before imperialism, this was because we were insufficiently prepared in January 1918. Fate condemned us to isolation, and we went through an agonising period after the Brest peace.

Comrades, the four years which we spent in world war ended in peace, but in a tyrannical peace. In the final analysis, however, even this tyrannical peace proved that we were right and that our hopes were not built on sand. With every passing month we became stronger while West-European imperialism became weaker. Now, as a result, we see that Germany, which six months ago completely ignored our Embassy and thought there could be no red institution there, recently, at any rate, has been weakening. The latest telegram informs us of German imperialism's appeal to the people to remain calm, and its assurance that peace is near at hand. We know what is meant when emperors appeal for calm and promise to do what is impossible in the near future. If Germany gets peace soon, it will be a Brest peace for her, which in place of peace will bring the working people more misery than they have ever experienced.

The results of our international policy shaped in such a way that six months after the Brest peace we, from the point of view of the bourgeoisie, were a devastated country, but, from the proletarian point of view, we were rapidly developing and are at the head of the proletarian army which has begun to shake Austria and Germany. This success vindicated and fully justified all our sacrifices in the eyes of any representative of the proletariat. If we were to be suddenly wiped out, if our activities were to be brought to an end—but this is impossible since miracles do not happen—but if this were to take place, we would be justified in saying, without concealing our mistakes, that we had made full use of the period, offered us by fate, for the world socialist revolution. We have done everything we could for the working people of Russia, and we have done more than anyone else for the world proletarian revolution. (*Applause.*)

Comrades, in recent months, in recent weeks the international situation has begun to change sharply, until the

German imperialism was almost completely defeated. All the hopes for the Ukraine which German imperialism fostered among working people proved to be mere promises. It turned out that American imperialism was ready, and a blow was struck at Germany. A totally different situation has arisen. We have been under no illusions. After the October Revolution we were considerably weaker than imperialism, and even now we are weaker than international imperialism. We must repeat this now in order not to deceive ourselves: following the October Revolution we were weaker and could not fight. And now we are weaker and must do everything necessary to avoid a battle with imperialism.

That we were able to survive a year after the October Revolution was due to the split of international imperialism into two predatory groups: Anglo-French-American on the one hand, and German on the other, which were engaged in mortal combat, and which had no time for us. Neither of these groups could concentrate considerable forces against us, which they would have done had they been in a position to do so. They were blinded by the blood-thirsty atmosphere of war. The material sacrifices required to carry on the war demanded the utmost concentration of their efforts. They had no time for us, not because by some miracle we were stronger than the imperialists—no, that's nonsense—but only because international imperialism had split into two predatory groups which were at each other's throats. It is only thanks to this that the Soviet Republic was able to openly proclaim battle against the imperialists of all countries, depriving them of their capital in the shape of foreign loans, slapping them in the face and openly emptying their rapacious pockets.

An end has come to the period of declarations which we then made over the correspondence started by the German imperialists, even though world imperialism could not tear into us as it should have done in accordance with its hostility and thirst for capitalist profits, which had been

incredibly increased by the war. Up till the moment of the Anglo-American imperialists' victory over the other group they were fully occupied fighting among themselves, and for this reason could not think of launching a decisive campaign against the Soviet Republic. There is no longer a second group. Only one group of victors remains. This has completely altered our international position, and we must take this change into account. The facts show how this change bears on the development of the international situation. Defeated countries are now experiencing the victory of the workers' revolution, the tremendous growth of which is clear to everyone. When we took power in October we were no greater in Europe than a single spark. True, the sparks began to fly, and they flew from us. This is the greatest thing we managed to do but, even so, these were isolated sparks. Now the majority of countries within the sphere of German-Austrian imperialism are aflame (Bulgaria, Austria, Hungary). We know that after Bulgaria the revolution spread to Serbia. We know how these worker-peasant revolutions passed through Austria and reached Germany. A whole number of countries are enveloped in the flames of workers' revolutions. In this respect our efforts and sacrifices have been justified. They were not adventures, as our enemies slanderously claimed, but an essential step towards world revolution, which had to be taken by the country that had been placed in the lead, despite its under-development and backwardness.

This is one result—the most important from the point of view of the final outcome of the imperialist war. The other result is the one to which I referred earlier, that Anglo-American imperialism is now exposing itself in the same way as Austro-German did in its time. We can see that if, at the time of the Brest negotiations, Germany had to some extent been level-headed and able to refrain from making gambles, she would have been able to maintain her domination, and undoubtedly would have been able to

secure an advantageous position in the West. She did not do this because when a machine like a war involving millions and tens of millions, a war which inflamed to the last degree chauvinist passions, a war which is bound up with capitalist interests totalling hundreds of billions of rubles—when such a machine has gathered full speed there are no brakes that can stop it. This machine went farther than the German imperialists desired, and they were crushed by it. They could not move; they landed in the predicament of a man who had overeaten, and met his doom as a result. And now, before our very eyes, British and American imperialism is in this extremely ugly, but, from the viewpoint of the revolutionary proletariat, extremely useful position. You would have thought they have much greater political experience than Germany. Here are people accustomed to democratic rule, not to the rule of some junker or other, people who endured the most difficult period of their history hundreds of years ago. You would have thought these people would have retained their presence of mind. If we were to speak as individuals, from the point of view of democracy in general, as bourgeois philistines, professors, who have understood nothing in the struggle of imperialism and the working class, whether or not they were capable of level-headedness, if we reasoned from the point of view of democracy in general, then we would have to say that Britain and America are countries with a centuries-old tradition of democracy, that the bourgeoisie there would be able to hold their ground. If they were to succeed now by some means or other in holding on, this would at any rate be for a fairly long period. But it seems that the same thing is happening to them as to the militarist-despotic Germany. In this imperialist war there is a tremendous difference between Russia and the republican countries. The imperialist war is so steeped in blood, so predatory and bestial, that it has effaced even these important differences, and in this respect it has brought the

freest democracy of America to the level of semi-militarist despotic Germany.

We see that Britain and America, countries which had greater opportunities than others for remaining democratic republics, have gone out of their way as outrageously and insanely, as Germany did in her time, and they, therefore, just as quickly, and maybe even faster, are heading towards the end so successfully arrived at by German imperialism. First it incredibly swelled out over three-quarters of Europe, became distended and then burst, leaving behind it an awful stench. And now British and American imperialism is madly racing to the same end. You only have to take a cursory glance at the armistice and peace terms which the "liberators" of the peoples from German imperialism, the British and Americans, are presenting to the defeated nations, to be convinced of this. Take Bulgaria. You would have thought that a country like Bulgaria could hold no terror for the Anglo-American imperialist colossus. Nevertheless, the revolution in this small, weak, absolutely helpless country caused the Anglo-Americans to lose their heads and present armistice terms that are equivalent to occupation. In this country where a peasants' republic has been proclaimed, in Sofia, an important railway junction, all the railway lines are now occupied by Anglo-American troops. They are forced to fight against this little peasants' republic. From the military point of view this is a trifle. People who take the view of the bourgeoisie, of the old ruling class, of old military relations, merely smile contemptuously. What does this pigmy Bulgaria signify in comparison with the Anglo-American forces? From the military standpoint nothing, but from the revolutionary standpoint a great deal. This is not a colony where they are used to exterminating the defeated people in millions and millions. The British and Americans consider that this is only establishing law and order, introducing civilisation and Christianity to savage Africans. But this is

not Central Africa. Here the soldiers, no matter how strong their army, become demoralised when they come face to face with a revolution. Germany proves this to be no mere empty phrase. In Germany, at any rate from the point of view of discipline, the soldiers were model army men. But when the Germans marched into the Ukraine, factors other than discipline came into play. The starving German soldier marched for bread, and it would have been unrealistic to demand that he should not steal too much bread. Moreover, we know that in this country he was most of all infected by the spirit of the Russian revolution. This was perfectly understood by the German bourgeoisie and this caused Wilhelm to panic. The Hohenzollerns are mistaken if they imagine that Germany will shed a single drop of blood for them. This is the result of the policy of bellicose German imperialism. The same thing is repeating itself so far as Britain is concerned. The Anglo-American army is already becoming demoralised; this began as soon as it launched a ferocious campaign against Bulgaria. And this is only the beginning. Austria followed Bulgaria. Permit me to read you some of the clauses of the terms dictated by the Anglo-American imperialist victors. These are the people who most of all shouted to the working people that they were conducting a liberation war, that their main aim was to crush Prussian militarism which threatened to spread the despotic regime over all countries. They shouted that they were conducting a liberation war. This was a deception. You know that bourgeois lawyers, these parliamentarians, who have spent their whole lives learning the art of deception without blushing, find it easy to deceive each other—but when they have to deceive the workers in the same way, they don't get away scot-free. British and American politicians and parliamentarians are past masters at this art. But they will not succeed in their deception. The working people, whom they aroused in the name of freedom, will come to their senses straight away, and this is

still to be felt when, on a mass scale, not from proclamations (which help, but do not really move the revolution), but from their own experience, they see that they are being deceived, when they become aware of the peace terms with Austria.

This is the peace now being forced on a comparatively weak, disintegrating state, by the people who shouted that the Bolsheviks were traitors because they signed the Brest peace. When the Germans wanted to send their soldiers to Moscow, we said, we would rather all fall in battle than agree to this. (*Applause.*) We told ourselves that severe sacrifices would have to be made by the occupied areas, but everybody knows how Soviet Russia helped and kept them supplied with necessities. Now the democratic troops of Britain and France will have to serve to "maintain law and order", and this is said when there are Soviets of Workers' Deputies in Bulgaria and Serbia, when there are Soviets of Workers' Deputies in Vienna and Budapest. We know what kind of order this means. It means that the Anglo-American troops are called on to play the role of throttlers and executioners of the world revolution.

Comrades, when the Russian serf troops were sent to throttle the Hungarian Revolution¹⁷ in 1848, they could get away with this because they were serf troops; they could get away with this in relation to Poland¹⁸; but it is inconceivable that a people who has known freedom for a century and who was incited to hate German imperialism because it was a beast which had to be destroyed, should not understand that Anglo-American imperialism is the same sort of beast whom it would be only just to crush as well.

And now history, with its usual malicious irony, has arrived at the point where, after the exposure of German imperialism, it is the turn of Anglo-French imperialism to utterly expose itself. We declare to the Russian, German and Austrian working people that these are not the Russian

serf troops of 1848! They will not get away with this! They are trying to suppress people who are making the transition from capitalism to freedom and they are trying to throttle the revolution. We assert with absolute conviction that this engorged monster will fall into the same abyss as did the monster of German imperialism.

Comrades, I shall now touch on matters which mainly affect us. I shall begin with the peace terms which Germany will have to sign. The comrades from the Commissariat for Foreign Affairs told me that *The Times*, the chief organ of the astoundingly rich British bourgeoisie, which actually shapes the whole policy, had already published the terms to be imposed on Germany. She is expected to hand over Heligoland and the Wilhelmshaven Canal, to give up Essen, where practically all military equipment is manufactured, to destroy her mercantile fleet, to immediately hand over Alsace-Lorraine and to pay indemnities totalling 60 thousand million, a great part of which must be paid in kind because money has depreciated everywhere and British merchants too have begun to calculate in other currency. We can see that the peace they are preparing for Germany will be completely devastating, a far more harsh one than the Brest peace. From the viewpoint of their material and physical strength they could do this, were it not for the existence of Bolshevism, which is so odious to them. By imposing this peace they are preparing their own doom. For this is not taking place in Central Africa, but in civilised countries in the twentieth century. The once disciplined German soldier who suppressed the illiterate Ukrainian population has now buried his discipline; it is all the most certain, therefore, that the British and American imperialists will bury themselves when they make a gamble which will bring about their political downfall, when they assign to their troops the role of throttlers and gendarmes of the whole of Europe. For a long time they have endeavoured to destroy Russia, and for a long

time they have had the campaign against her in mind. You only have to remember the occupation of Murmansk, the millions which they squandered on the Czechoslovak Corps,¹⁹ the treaty which they concluded with Japan; and now Britain has a treaty with the Turks which gives her Baku so that she may strangle us by depriving us of raw materials.

British troops are ready to start a campaign against Russia from the south, through the Dardanelles, or through Bulgaria and Rumania. They are closing in around the Soviet Republic, they are trying to break economic communications between the republic and the whole world. For this reason they compelled Holland to break off diplomatic relations with us.²⁰ When Germany drove out our Ambassador she acted, if not in direct agreement with Anglo-French policy, then hoping to do them a service so that they should be magnanimous to her. The implication was—we are also fulfilling the duties of executioner against the Bolsheviks, your enemies.

Comrades, we should say that the chief result of the international situation may be described (as I did the other day) as that we have never been so near to world proletarian revolution as now. We have proved that we were not mistaken in banking on the world proletarian revolution. Our great national and economic sacrifices were not made in vain. We achieved successes. But if we have never before been so close to world revolution, then it is also true to say that never have we been in such a dangerous situation as now. The imperialists were occupied with each other, but now one group has been wiped out by the Anglo-French-American group. The members of this group consider their main task to be the extermination of world Bolshevism, strangulation of its main centre, the Russian Soviet Republic. To do this, they intend to surround themselves with a Great Wall of China in order to keep out the plague, the plague of Bolshevism. These people are trying

to rid themselves of Bolshevism by going into quarantine, but this cannot be done. Even if these Anglo-French imperialist gentlemen, who possess the best technique in the world, succeed in building this Great Wall around the republic, the germ of Bolshevism will still penetrate the wall and infect the workers of all lands. (*Applause.*)

Comrades, the West-European press, the press of Anglo-French imperialism tries in every way to keep silent about its position. No lie or slander is vile enough to use against Soviet power. It is true to say now that the whole of the Anglo-French and American press is in capitalist hands—and it controls billions—and that in order to suppress the truth about Soviet Russia, in order to spread lies and slanders against us, it operates as one syndicate. Yet despite the fact that for years there has been a military censorship which has succeeded in preventing a word of truth about the Soviet Republic from appearing in the press of the democratic countries, there is not a single large meeting of workers held in any country at which the workers have not proved to be on the side of the Bolsheviks, because it is impossible to hide the truth. The enemy accuses us of implementing the dictatorship of the proletariat. They are right—we do not hide this. The fact that the Soviet Government is not afraid and openly admits this attracts to its side more millions of working people, because the dictatorship it exercises is directed against the exploiters, and the working people see and become convinced that the struggle we are waging against the exploiters is a serious one and will be brought to a serious conclusion. Although the European press surrounds us with a conspiracy of silence, they have so far announced that they regard it as their duty to march against Russia, because Russia surrendered to Germany, because Russia is in fact a German agent, because the heads of government in Russia, they claim, are German agents. New forged documents, for which a good price is paid, appear every month proving

that Lenin and Trotsky are downright traitors and German agents. Despite all this they cannot hide the truth, and from time to time there are open signs that the imperialist gentlemen do not feel safe. *L'Echo de Paris*²¹ admits: "We are going into Russia to break the power of the Bolsheviks." Their official line is that they are not conducting a war with Russia, that they are not interfering in military matters, but are only fighting German domination. Our French internationalists who publish the *Third International*²² in Moscow, cited this quotation, and although we have been cut off from Paris and France by an extremely elaborate Great Wall of China, we say: you, French imperialist gentlemen, cannot defend yourselves against your own bourgeoisie. This small quotation, and not only this one, is, of course, known to hundreds of thousands of French workers. They see that the declarations of their rulers, of their bourgeoisie, are nothing but lies. Their own bourgeoisie let the cat out of the bag; they acknowledge that they want to break the power of the Bolsheviks. After four years of bloody war they have to tell their people: go and fight again against Russia in order to break the power of the Bolsheviks whom we hate because they owe us 17 thousand million and don't want to pay up, whom we hate because they ill-treat capitalists, landlords and tsars. Civilised nations who are reduced to a position where they have to admit such things, most of all betray the fact that their policy is doomed, and no matter how strong they may be militarily we regard their strength in a perfectly calm manner and say: but in your rear you have an even more terrible enemy—the people, whom, up to now, you have deceived; so much so that your tongue has dried up from the lies and slanders you have spread about Soviet Russia. Similar information may be gleaned from the British bourgeois newspaper *The Manchester Guardian* of October 23. This bourgeois British newspaper writes: "If the Allied armies still remain in

Russia and still operate in Russia, their purpose can only be to effect a revolution in the internal affairs of Russia. The Allied governments must, therefore, either ... put an end to their operations in Russia or announce that they are at war with Bolshevism."

I repeat that the significance of this small quotation, which for us sounds like a revolutionary call, like a powerful revolutionary appeal, is that it is written by a bourgeois newspaper, which is itself an enemy of the socialists, but feels that the truth can no longer be hidden. If bourgeois papers write in this way you can imagine what the British workers must be thinking and saying. You know the sort of language used by the liberals in tsarist times, prior to the 1905 and 1917 revolutions. You know that this language of the liberals heralded an approaching explosion amidst the revolutionary proletariat. From the language of these bourgeois British liberals, therefore, you can draw conclusions as to what is taking place in the moods, minds and hearts of the British, French and American workers. Without concealing anything we must, therefore, face the bitter truth about our international position. The world revolution is close at hand, but it cannot develop according to a particular time-table; of this, we who have survived two revolutions are well aware. But we know that whereas the imperialists are unable to contain the world revolution, certain countries are likely to be defeated, and still heavier losses are possible. They know that Russia is in the birthpangs of a proletarian revolution, but they are mistaken if they think that by crushing one centre of the revolution they will crush the revolution in other countries.

We, for our part, must say that the situation is more dangerous than ever before, that again and again we shall have to strain every effort. During the past year we have laid a firm foundation, created a socialist Red Army based on a new discipline, and we are absolutely certain that we can and must continue the work we are doing. At all meet-

ings, at every Soviet institution, at trade union meetings and at meetings of Committees of Poor Peasants we must say: comrades, we have survived a year and have achieved success, but all this is still insufficient when we compare it to the powerful enemy bearing down on us. This enemy, Anglo-French imperialism, is world-wide, powerful and has defeated the whole world. We are going to fight it not because we think we are equal ourselves economically and technically with the advanced countries in Europe. No, but we do know that this enemy is going to topple into that same abyss as Austro-German imperialism; we know that the enemy which has now ensnared Turkey, seized Bulgaria and is intent on occupying the whole of Austro-Hungary with the object of establishing a tsarist, gendarme regime—is heading for its doom. We know that this is a historical fact, and that is why, while in no way setting ourselves impossible tasks, we say that we can beat off Anglo-French imperialism.

Every step in the strengthening of our Red Army will be echoed by a dozen steps in the disintegration of, and revolutions in, this apparently very powerful enemy. Therefore, there is no cause whatsoever to succumb to despair or pessimism. We know that the danger is great. It may be that fate has even more bitter sacrifices in store for us. Even if they can crush one country, they can never crush the world proletarian revolution, they will only add more fuel to its flames which will consume all of them. *(Prolonged applause.)*

Newspaper reports published in *Izvestia VTsIK* No. 244, November 9, 1918, and in *Pravda* No. 243, November 10, 1918

First published in full in 1919 in *The Sixth Extraordinary All-Russian Congress of Soviets. Verbatim Report*, Moscow

Vol. 28, pp. 132-45

TO THE AMERICAN WORKERS

Comrades,

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

and through the help it gives to counter-revolution, but we have already defeated Kolchak and we are carrying on the war against Denikin with the firm assurance of our coming victory.

N. Lenin

September 23, 1919

* * *

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

N. Lenin

September 23, 1919

Published in English
December 27, 1919
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Soviet Russia No. 30

First published in Russian
November 7, 1930 in *Pravda*
No. 308

Vol. 30, pp. 20-21

ANSWERS TO QUESTIONS PUT BY A *CHICAGO* *DAILY NEWS* CORRESPONDENT

October 5, 1919

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

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

Our peace policy is the former, that is, we have accepted the peace proposition of Mr. Bullitt.²³ We have never changed our peace conditions (Question 2), which are formulated with Mr. Bullitt.

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

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

We are willing to guarantee it.

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

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

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

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

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

Wl. Oulianoff (N. Lenin)

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

First published in Russian in
1942

Vol. 30, pp. 32-33

Verified with the
Chicago Daily News text

DRAFT RESOLUTION PRESENTED TO THE EIGHTH ALL-RUSSIAN CONFERENCE OF THE R.C.P.(B.) ON THE QUESTION OF FOREIGN POLICY²⁴

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

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

The Seventh Congress of Soviets fully approves these many steps taken by the Council of People's Commissars and the People's Commissariat for Foreign Affairs, once

more confirms its unwavering desire for peace and again proposes to the Entente powers, Britain, France, the United States of America, Italy and Japan, individually and collectively, to begin immediately negotiations on peace; the Congress instructs the All-Russian Central Executive Committee, the Council of People's Commissars and the People's Commissariat for Foreign Affairs to continue this peace policy systematically (or: to continue this peace policy systematically, adopting all measures necessary for its success).

Written December 2, 1919
First published in 1932

Vol. 30, pp. 169-70

**REPORT OF THE ALL-RUSSIAN CENTRAL EXECUTIVE
COMMITTEE AND THE COUNCIL OF PEOPLE'S
COMMISSARS DELIVERED AT THE SEVENTH
ALL-RUSSIAN CONGRESS OF SOVIETS²⁵
DECEMBER 5, 1919**

(Applause. Delegates give Lenin standing ovation.)
Comrades, in accordance with the decision of the Presidium, I have been entrusted to make a political report which is a joint report of the All-Russian Central Executive Committee and the Council of People's Commissars. I trust that you are not expecting me to enumerate the laws and administrative measures introduced by us during the year under review. No doubt you are conversant with them from the newspapers. Furthermore, small booklets published by nearly all our Commissariats are being distributed to all Congress delegates, describing their main activities during the period under review. I should like to draw your attention to several overall results, which in my view may be deduced from our experience and which may serve as useful instructions and material for the future work of all comrade-delegates in the localities.

When speaking of the political results and lessons of our activities the Soviet Republic's international position comes naturally in the forefront. Both prior to October and during the October Revolution, we always said that we regard ourselves and can only regard ourselves as one of

the contingents of the international proletarian army, a contingent which came to the fore, not because of its level of development and preparedness, but because of Russia's exceptional conditions; we always said that the victory of the socialist revolution, therefore, can only be regarded as final when it becomes the victory of the proletariat in at least several advanced countries. It was over this that we had the greatest difficulties.

Our stake, if you can call it that, on the world revolution has been fully justified on the whole. But from the point of view of the speed of its development we endured an exceptionally difficult period; we saw for ourselves that the revolution's development in more advanced countries proved to be considerably slower, considerably more difficult, considerably more complicated. This should not surprise us for it was naturally easier for a country such as Russia to start a socialist revolution than it was for the advanced countries. But, in any case, this slower, more complicated, more zig-zag development of the socialist revolution in Western Europe burdened us with incredible difficulties. The question that primarily comes to mind is: how was it possible for such a miracle to take place as Soviet power holding out for two years in a backward, ruined and war-weary country, in the face of the stubborn struggle waged against it first by German imperialism, which at that time was considered omnipotent, and then by Entente imperialism, which a year ago settled accounts with Germany, was unrivalled and lorded it over all the countries on earth? From the point of view of a simple calculation of the forces involved, from the point of view of a military assessment of these forces, it really is a miracle, because the Entente was and continues to be immeasurably stronger than we are. Nevertheless, the year under review is noteworthy most of all for our having won a tremendous victory, so great a victory that I think we may say without exaggeration that our *main difficulties are al-*

ready behind us. No matter how great the dangers and difficulties in store for us, evidently the main ones are behind us. We must understand the reasons for this, and, what is most important, must correctly determine our future policy, since the future will almost certainly bring many further attempts by the Entente to repeat intervention, and possibly a rebirth of the previous predatory alliance between the international and Russian capitalists to restore the power of the landlords and capitalists, to overthrow Soviet rule in Russia, in a word, one pursuing the old aim of extinguishing the centre of the world socialist conflagration—the Russian Socialist Federative Soviet Republic.

Looking from this point of view at the history of the Entente intervention and its political lesson for us, I would say that this history could be divided into three main stages, each of which has successively given us full and lasting victory.

The first stage, naturally the most convenient and easiest for the Entente, involved their attempt to settle matters with Soviet Russia by using their own troops. Of course, after the Entente countries had defeated Germany they had armies of millions of men who had not yet openly declared for peace and who did not immediately recover from the fright given them by the bogey of German imperialism, which had been used to scare them in all the Western countries. At that time, of course, from the military point of view, from the point of view of foreign policy, it would have been easy for the Entente countries to take a tenth part of their armies and dispatch them to Russia. Note that they completely dominated on sea, they had complete naval supremacy. Troop transportation and supplies were always completely under their control. Had the Entente countries, who hated us as only the bourgeoisie can hate the socialist revolution, then been able to fling with any success even a tenth part of their armies against us, there

cannot be the slightest doubt that the fate of Soviet Russia would have been sealed and it would have met the same doom as Hungary.

Why did the Entente countries fail to achieve this? They landed troops in Murmansk. The drive into Siberia was undertaken with the aid of Entente troops, and Japanese troops continue to hold a distant slice of Eastern Siberia, while military units, even though they were not big, of all the Entente states were to be found all over Western Siberia. Then French troops were landed in the south of Russia. That was the first stage of international intervention in our affairs, the first attempt, so to speak, to crush the Soviets with troops taken by the Entente from their own countries, i.e., with the aid of workers and peasants of the more advanced countries, who were splendidly equipped, and, generally speaking, as far as the technical and material prerequisites for the campaign were concerned, the Entente countries lacked nothing. There were no obstacles confronting them. How, then, are we to explain the failure of that attempt? It ended in the Entente countries having to withdraw their troops from Russia, because they proved incapable of waging a struggle against revolutionary Soviet Russia. That, comrades, has always been our main and principal argument. From the very outset of the revolution, we have said that we constitute a party of the international proletariat, and that, however great the difficulties facing the revolution, there would come a time when, at the most decisive moment, the sympathy, the solidarity of the workers oppressed by international imperialism would make itself felt. For this we were accused of being Utopians. But experience has shown that while we cannot always and in all cases rely on action by the proletariat, at any rate we may say that during these two years of the world's history we have been proved correct a thousand times. The attempt by the British and French to crush Soviet Russia with their own troops, an

attempt that promised them certain and very easy success in a minimum of time, ended in failure: the British troops have left Archangel, and the French troops that had landed in the South were all taken back home. Despite the blockade, despite the ring encircling us, news does reach us from Western Europe, we do get British and French newspapers, however sporadically, from which we learn that letters sent by British soldiers from the Archangel Region reached Britain and were published there. We know that the name of the Frenchwoman, Comrade Jeanne Labourbe, who engaged in communist activity among French soldiers and workers and was shot in Odessa, became known to the entire French proletariat and became a battle-cry, a name around which all French workers, irrespective of the apparently insurmountable factional trends of syndicalism, united for action against international imperialism. The words of Comrade Radek, who fortunately, as today's reports state, has been liberated by Germany and whom we shall perhaps see soon, that the soil of Russia, aflame with the fire of revolution, would prove inaccessible to the Entente troops—these words, which seemed to be just a writer's flight of fancy, proved to be an exactly realised fact. Despite all our backwardness, despite all the burden of our struggle, the workers and peasants of Britain and France were incapable of fighting us on our own soil. The result was a victory for us. The first time that they tried to send massive military forces against us—and without them victory is impossible—the only result was that, thanks to their correct class instinct, the French and British soldiers brought home from Russia the very ulcer of Bolshevism that the German imperialists were fighting when they expelled our envoys from Berlin.²⁶ They thought they would fortify themselves in this way against the ulcer of Bolshevism, which now spreads over the whole of Germany in the shape of a strengthened labour movement. The victory we won in compelling the evacuation of the British

and French troops was the greatest of our victories over the Entente countries. We deprived them of their soldiers. We answered unlimited military and technical superiority of the Entente countries by depriving them of it, thanks to the solidarity of the working people against the imperialist governments.

This revealed how superficial and inexact it is to judge these so-called democratic countries by the accepted criteria. Their parliaments have stable bourgeois majorities. This they call "democracy". Capital dominates and weighs down everything and causes them to continue to resort to military censorship. And they call that "democracy". Among the millions of copies of their newspapers and magazines you will be hard put to find more than a few that contain even a hint of anything favourable about the Bolsheviks. That is why they say: "We are protected against the Bolsheviks, there is order in our countries," and they call it "democracy". How could it happen that a small section of British soldiers and French sailors were able to compel the withdrawal of the Entente troops from Russia? There is something wrong here. It means that even in Britain, France and America the mass of the people are for us; it means that all these external features, as has always been asserted by socialists who have refused to betray socialism, are a deception; it means that the bourgeois parliamentary system, bourgeois democracy, bourgeois freedom of the press are merely freedom for the capitalists, freedom to bribe public opinion, to exert pressure on it by all the power of money. That is what socialists have always said until the imperialist war scattered them to their national camps and turned each national group of socialists into lackeys of their bourgeoisie. That was said by socialists before the war, that was always said by the internationalists and Bolsheviks during the war—and it all proved to be absolutely correct. All the external features, all the window-dressings, are a decep-

tion; and this is becoming increasingly obvious to the people. They all shout about democracy, but in no parliament in the world did they dare to say that they were declaring war on Soviet Russia. That is why we read in the numerous French, British and American publications now to hand the proposal to "place the heads of states in the dock for having violated the Constitution, for waging war on Russia without declaring war". When and where was it sanctioned, what article of the Constitution, what Parliament sanctioned it? Where did they gather their parliamentary representatives together, even after taking the precaution to imprison all Bolsheviks and near-Bolsheviks, to use the expression of the French press? Even under those conditions they did not dare to state in their parliaments that they were fighting Russia. That was why the splendidly armed, previously undefeated troops of Britain and France were unable to defeat us and departed from the Archangel Region in the North, and from the South.

That was our first and main victory, because it is not only a military victory, and not even a military victory at all, but actually a victory of that international solidarity of the working people for which we began the whole revolution, and which we pointed to and said that, however numerous the trials we would have to undergo, all these sacrifices would be repaid a hundredfold by the development of the world revolution, which is inevitable. It was apparent from the fact that in the sphere where the grossest and the material factors play the greatest part, namely, in the military sphere, we defeated the Entente countries by depriving them of the workers and peasants in soldier's uniforms.

The first victory was followed by the second period of Entente intervention in our affairs. Each nation is headed by a group of politicians who possess wonderful experience, and that is why, after losing this stake, they made another stake, taking advantage of their dominant posi-

tion in the world. There is not a single country, not a single bit of the earth's surface, which is not in fact totally dominated by British, French and American finance capital. That was the basis for the new attempt they made, namely, to compel the small countries surrounding Russia, many of whom were liberated and able to declare themselves independent only during the war—Poland, Estonia, Finland, Georgia, the Ukraine, etc.,—to compel these small states to go to war against Russia on British, French and American money.

You may remember, comrades, the report in our newspapers of a speech by the well-known British Minister Churchill, in which he said that 14 states would attack Russia and that September would see the fall of Petrograd, and December that of Moscow. I heard that Churchill then disclaimed this report, but it was taken from the Swedish *Folkets Dagblad Politiken* of August 25. But even if this source proved unreliable we know that Churchill and the British imperialists acted precisely in this way. We are perfectly well aware that everything was done to exert pressure on Finland, Estonia and other small countries, in order to persuade them to wage war on Soviet Russia. I happened to read a leading article in *The Times*, the most influential bourgeois newspaper in Britain, a leader written when Yudenich's troops, obviously supplied, equipped and conveyed aboard Entente ships, were a few versts away from Petrograd, and Detskoye Syelo had been taken. The article was a veritable onslaught, in which the maximum pressure was exerted—military, diplomatic and historical. British capital flung itself on Finland and faced her with an ultimatum: "The eyes of the whole world are on Finland," said the British capitalists, "the entire fate of Finland depends on whether it understands her role, whether she will help to crush the filthy, dirty, bloody wave of Bolshevism and liberate Russia." And in return for this "great and moral" work, for this "noble,

civilised" work, Finland was promised so many million pounds, such-and-such a piece of territory, and such-and-such benefits. And what was the result? There was a time when Yudenich's troops were a few versts away from Petrograd, when Denikin stood to the north of Orel, when the slightest assistance to them would have quickly settled the fate of Petrograd to the advantage of our enemies, in a minimum of time and at negligible cost.

The entire pressure of the Entente was brought to bear on Finland, which is over head and ears in debt to them. And not only in debt: Finland cannot carry on for one month without the aid of these countries. How did the "miracle" happen that we won the battle against such an enemy? And we did win it. Finland did not enter the war, Yudenich was defeated, so was Denikin, and that at a time when joint action by them would most surely, most swiftly have led to the settling of the whole struggle to the advantage of international capitalism. We won the battle with international imperialism in this most serious and desperate trial of strength. But how did we do it? How could such a "miracle" have taken place? It took place because the Entente made the same stake as all capitalist states, which operate wholly and solely by deception and pressure; that was why everything they did aroused such resistance that the result was to our advantage. We were very poorly armed, worn out, and we said to the Finnish workers, whom the Finnish bourgeoisie had crushed: "You must not fight against us." The Entente countries appeared in all the strength of their armaments, of their external might, with their food supplies with which they were in a position to provide these countries, and demanded that they fight against us. We won this battle. We won because the Entente countries now had no troops of their own to fling against us, they had to resort to the forces of the small nations, but here, not only the workers and peasants, but

even the considerable section of the bourgeoisie that had crushed the working class, did not after all go against us.

When the Entente imperialists spoke of democracy and independence, these nations had the impudence, from the Entente viewpoint, and from our viewpoint, the foolishness, to take these promises seriously and to understand independence as really implying independence, and not a means of enriching the British and French capitalists. They thought that democracy meant to live as free men, and not that all American multimillionaires should be able to plunder their country, or that every tinpot aristocrat of an officer should be able to behave like a cad and turn into a brazen black-marketeer prepared, for the sake of a few hundred per cent profit, to do the dirtiest of jobs. That was how we won victory! The Entente encountered opposition to the pressure they exerted on these small countries, on each of these 14 countries. The Finnish bourgeoisie, which employed White Terror to crush tens of thousands of Finnish workers and which knows that this will not be forgotten, that the German bayonets that made this possible no longer exist—this Finnish bourgeoisie hates the Bolsheviks as intensely as an exploiter would hate the workers who kicked him out. Nevertheless this Finnish bourgeoisie said to themselves: "If we follow the instructions of the Entente, that means we shall undoubtedly lose all hope of independence." And this independence was given to them by the Bolsheviks in November 1917, when Finland had a bourgeois government. The attitude of wide sections of the Finnish bourgeoisie, therefore, proved to be one of vacillation. We won the battle with the Entente countries because they counted on the small nations and at the same time repelled them.

This experience confirms, on an enormous, global scale, what we have always said. There are two forces on earth that can decide the destiny of mankind. One force is international capitalism, and should it be victorious it will dis-

play this force in countless atrocities—this may be seen from the history of every small nation's development. The other force is the international proletariat, which fights for the socialist revolution through the dictatorship of the proletariat, which it calls workers' democracy. Neither the vacillating elements here in Russia, nor the bourgeoisie of the small countries believed us; they called us Utopians or bandits or even worse, for there is no stupid and monstrous accusation that they will not fling at us. But when they squarely faced the issue of either going with the Entente countries and helping them to crush the Bolsheviks, or of helping the Bolsheviks by neutrality, it turned out that we won the battle and got that neutrality. We had no treaties, whereas Britain, France and America had all sorts of promissory notes, all sorts of treaties, yet the small nations did as we wanted them to; they did so not because the Polish, Finnish, Lithuanian or Latvian bourgeoisie derived satisfaction from conducting their policy in a way that suited the Bolsheviks—that, of course, is nonsense—but because our assessment of the historical forces involved was correct; the issue was: either brute capital would be victorious, and then, even if it were in the most democratic republic, it would crush all the small nations of the world—or the dictatorship of the proletariat would be victorious, the sole hope of all working people and of the small, down-trodden and weak nations. It turned out that we were right not only in theory, but also in practical world politics. When this battle for the troops of Finland and Estonia took place we won it, although they could have crushed us with insignificant forces. Despite the fact that the Entente countries threw the whole weight of their financial pressure, their military might, and their food supplies into the fray, in order to compel Finland to take action, we won the battle.

That, comrades, was the second stage of international intervention, our second historic victory. Firstly, we won

the workers and peasants away from Britain, France and America. These troops could not fight against us. Secondly, we won away from them these small countries, all of which are against us, and in which not Soviet, but bourgeois rule dominates. They displayed friendly neutrality towards us and acted contrary to the desires of that mighty world force, the Entente, for it was a beast that wanted to crush them.

We witness here on a world scale the same thing that happened to the Siberian peasants, who believed in the Constituent Assembly and helped the Socialist-Revolutionaries and Mensheviks to join forces with Kolchak and to strike at us. When they learned to their own cost that Kolchak represented the dictatorship of the very worst exploiters, a plunderous dictatorship of landlords and capitalists which was worse than that of the tsar, they organised the tremendous number of revolts in Siberia about which comrades have given us exact reports, and which now guarantee the complete return to us of Siberia, this time politically conscious. What happened to the Siberian muzhik, with all his backwardness and political ignorance, has now happened on a broader scale, on a world scale, with all the small nations. They hated the Bolsheviks; some of them had suppressed the Bolsheviks with a bloody hand, with furious White Terror, but when they saw their "liberators", the British officers, they understood the meaning of British and American "democracy". When the representatives of the British and American bourgeoisie appeared in Finland and in Estonia, they began to suppress more brazenly than the Russian imperialists had, because the Russian imperialists were representatives of the old times and did not know how to suppress properly, whereas these people do know, and go about it thoroughly.

That is why this victory at the second stage is a far more lasting one than is now apparent. I am not exaggerating at all, and consider exaggerations to be extremely dan-

gerous. I have not the slightest doubt that further attempts will be made by the Entente to set now one, now another of our small neighbouring states against us. Such attempts will occur because the small states are wholly dependent on the Entente, because all this talk about freedom, independence and democracy is just hypocrisy, and the Entente may compel them once again to raise their hands against us. But if this attempt has been foiled at such a convenient moment when it was so easy to wage a struggle against us, we may, I think, say definitely that in this regard the main difficulty is undoubtedly behind us. We are entitled to say this, and do so without the slightest exaggeration, fully conscious that the Entente countries possess a tremendous advantage in strength. We have won a lasting victory. Attempts will be made against us, but we shall defeat them with greater ease, because the small states, despite their bourgeois system, have become convinced by experience, not theory—these gentlemen are theory-proof—that the Entente is a more brazen and predatory brute than the one they have in their minds when they think of the Bolsheviks, the bogey used for scaring children and cultured philistines all over Europe.

But our victories were not limited to this. In the first place we won over to our side the workers and peasants of the Entente countries; secondly, we gained the neutrality of the small nations under the Entente's domination and, thirdly, we began to win over, within the Entente countries, the petty bourgeoisie and educated urban petty bourgeoisie who had been completely opposed to us. To prove this I will quote the newspaper *L'Humanité* of October 26 which I have here. This newspaper, which always belonged to the Second International, was rabidly chauvinistic during the war, adhered to the viewpoint of such socialists as our Mensheviks and Right Socialist-Revolutionaries, and still plays the role of a conciliator,—now announces that it has become convinced of a change in

mood among the workers. It saw this, not in Odessa, but on the streets and at meetings in Paris, when the workers stopped everyone who dared say a word against Bolshevik Russia. As politicians who have learned a fair amount during the course of several revolutions, as persons who understand what the people represent, they dare not say a word in favour of intervention, and are all speaking against it. Moreover, it is not only the socialists who say this (they call themselves socialists, although for a long time we have been aware what sort of socialists they are); the same issue of *L'Humanité* of October 26, which I quoted, contains a statement by a whole number of French intellectuals, of French public opinion. In this statement, headed by the signature of Anatole France and including that of Ferdinand Buisson, I counted the names of 71 bourgeois intellectuals famed throughout France, who state that they are against intervention in Russia's affairs, because the blockade and the attempt to starve her out, from which children and the aged perish, are incompatible with culture and civilisation; that they cannot tolerate this. The well-known French historian Aulard, who supports the bourgeois point of view to the hilt, writes in his letter: "As a Frenchman I am an enemy of the Bolsheviks, as a Frenchman I support democracy, it is ridiculous to suspect me of the contrary, but when I read that France invites Germany to participate in the blockade of Russia, when I read that France has approached Germany with this proposal—then I feel myself blushing with shame." It may be that these are just fine words on the part of an intellectual, but we are justified in saying that this is the third victory won by us over imperialist France, within the country itself. That is the implication of this statement, feeble and pathetic as it is, the statement of intellectuals whose bark, as we know from hundreds of examples, is worse than their bite, but who serve as a good barometer, an indicator of the trend developing amongst the petty bourgeoisie, of the

way in which public opinion is reacting, permeated as it is with bourgeois sentiment. If we have achieved such results within France herself, where all the bourgeois papers write about us only in the most lying terms, then we say to ourselves: it looks like a second Dreyfus case²⁷ is beginning in France only on a much larger scale. At that time the bourgeois intellectuals fought against clerical and military reactionaries, while the working class could not consider it their business, as the objective conditions were absent, the deep revolutionary feeling of today did not then exist. And now? If, after the recent electoral victory of the most rabid reaction and in the face of a regime hostile to the Bolsheviks, the French bourgeois intellectuals say that they are ashamed of the alliance between reactionary France and reactionary Germany the object of which is to starve out the workers and peasants of Russia by famine—then we can say to ourselves: this, comrades, is the third and greatest of victories. And I should like to see how, with this situation within the country, Clemenceau, Lloyd George and Wilson will carry out their plan of fresh attacks on Russia, of which they dream. Just try it, gentlemen! (*Applause.*)

Comrades, I repeat, that it would be a great mistake to jump to hasty conclusions because of all this. There can be no doubt that the imperialists will resume their attempts, but we are absolutely confident that these attempts, no matter by what powerful forces they may be undertaken, will end in failure. We can say that the Civil War which we conducted with such tremendous sacrifices, ended in victory. It was victorious, not only on the Russian scale, but on a world-historical scale. Every conclusion that I have presented to you has been based on the results of the military campaign. That is why, I repeat, new attempts are doomed to failure because the imperialists have become much weaker and we have become much stronger after our victory over Kolchak, over Yudenich,

and the complete victory over Denikin which is in its early stages, but which is imminent. Did not Kolchak have the aid of the all-powerful Entente? Did not the peasants of the Urals and Siberia who returned the smallest number of Bolsheviks to the Constituent Assembly, solidly support the Constituent Assembly front, at that time the front of the Mensheviks and Socialist-Revolutionaries? Were not they the best human material against the Communists? Is it not a fact that Siberia was a country where landed estates were non-existent and where we were not immediately able to assist the mass of peasants as we were able to help the Russian peasants elsewhere? What did Kolchak lack to defeat us? He lacked what all imperialists lack. He remained an exploiter. He had to act in the backwash of a world war, in circumstances which gave him the chance to merely babble about democracy and freedom, but which made a dictatorship possible: either the dictatorship of the exploiters, who frenziedly defend their privileges and insist on payment of the tribute on the bills, whereby they wish to squeeze billions out of all peoples, or the dictatorship of the workers which fights the power of the capitalists and strives to firmly safeguard the power of the working people. It was only because of this that Kolchak came to grief. This is the way—not by voting which is, of course, in certain circumstances not a bad way—in which indeed the Siberian and Ural peasant has chosen his destiny. He was dissatisfied with the Bolsheviks in the summer of 1918. He saw that the Bolsheviks forced him to sell his surplus grain at a non-speculative price and he turned to Kolchak. Now he has seen, compared and arrived at a different conclusion. He has understood, despite all that he has been taught in the past, because he has learned from his own experience what many Socialist-Revolutionaries and Mensheviks do not want to understand (*applause*)—that there can be only two dictatorships, that it is necessary to choose either the dictatorship of the

workers—and this means to assist all working people to throw off the yoke of the exploiters—or the dictatorship of the exploiters. We have won the peasants to our side, we have proved in practice through the most bitter experience, through unprecedented difficulties that we, as representatives of the working class, can lead the peasants better, with greater success than any other party. Other parties like to accuse us of carrying on a struggle against the peasants, of being unable to arrive at a proper agreement with them, and they all offer their kind, noble services to reconcile us with the peasants. We are most grateful to you, gentlemen, but we do not think that you will succeed. We, at any rate, have shown long ago that we have been able to do this. We did not paint rosy pictures for the peasant saying that he would be able to make the transition from capitalist society without iron discipline and the firm rule of the working class; or that the mere counting of votes would decide the world-historical problem of the struggle with capital. We said openly: dictatorship is a harsh word, severe and even bloody, but we said that the dictatorship of the workers will ensure the end of the yoke of the exploiters, and we proved to be correct. The peasant, having experienced both dictatorships, chose the dictatorship of the working class, and will go forward with it to complete victory. (*Applause.*)

Comrades, from what I have said about our international successes it follows—and, I think, it is not necessary to dwell at length on this—that we must repeat our peace proposal in a manner that is calm and business-like to the maximum degree. We must do this because we have already made such a proposal many times. Each time we made this proposal, we gained something in the eyes of every educated man, even if he was our enemy, and that educated man blushed with shame. That was the case when Bullitt came here, was received by Comrade Chicherin, talked with him and with me, and when we concluded

a preliminary agreement on peace in the course of a few hours. And he assured us (those gentlemen like to boast) that America is everything, and who would care about France in view of America's strength? But when we signed the agreement the French and British ministers made this gesture. (*Lenin made an expressive gesture with his foot. Laughter.*) Bullitt was left with a useless piece of paper and he was told: "Who could have expected you to be so naïve and so foolish as to believe in the democracy of Britain and France?" (*Applause.*) The result is that in the same issue I read the full text of the agreement with Bullitt in French—and it was published in all the British and American newspapers. The result is that they are showing themselves to the whole world to be either rogues or infants—let them take their choice! (*Applause.*) All the sympathies even of the petty bourgeoisie, even of those bourgeois who have any sort of an education and who recall how they once fought their own tsars and kings, are on our side, because we signed the hardest possible peace terms in a business-like manner and said: "The price of the blood of our workers and soldiers is too high for us; we shall pay you businessmen a heavy tribute as the price of peace; we consent to a heavy tribute to preserve the lives of our workers and peasants." That is why I think there is no reason for us to dwell long on this, and in conclusion I shall read a draft resolution that will express, in the name of the Congress of Soviets, our unwavering desire to pursue a policy of peace. (*Applause.*)

Now I wish to pass from the international and military section of our report to the political.

We have gained three tremendous victories over the Entente, and they were not just military victories. They were victories achieved by the dictatorship of the working class, and each victory strengthened our position, not only because it has weakened our enemy and has lost him his troops; our international position strengthened because

each time we won out in the eyes of all toiling mankind and even of many members of the bourgeoisie. In this connection, the victories which we won over Kolchak and Yudenich, and are now winning over Denikin, will make it possible in the future to gain much greater sympathy by peaceful means.

We have always been accused of terrorism. This is a current accusation which is never absent from the pages of the press. We are accused of conducting terrorism on principle. To this we reply: "You yourselves do not believe this slander." The historian Aulard who sent a letter to *L'Humanité*, writes: "I have studied and taught history. When I read that the Bolsheviks are freaks, monsters and scarecrows, I say: the same sort of thing was written about Robespierre and Danton. I in no way compare these great men to the present Russians, nothing of the sort, there is absolutely no resemblance between them. But as a historian, I say you cannot believe every rumour." When a bourgeois historian begins to speak in this way we see that the lie being spread about us fizzles out. We say that terror was thrust on us. They forget that terrorism was provoked by the attack of the omnipotent Entente. Is it not terror when the world's fleet blockades a starving country? Is it not terror when foreign representatives, relying on their so-called diplomatic immunity, organise whiteguard insurrections? There must, after all, be a more sober look at things. It must be understood that international imperialism has staked everything on suppressing the revolution, that it stops at nothing and says: "For one officer—one Communist, and we shall win." And they are right. If we had attempted to use words and persuasion to influence these troops which were created by international bandits, which the war has brutalised, to influence them other than by resorting to terror, we would not have held out even two months; we would have been fools. The terror has been forced on us by the terror of the Entente, the terror of

mighty world capitalism which has been throttling the workers and peasants, and is condemning them to death by starvation because they are fighting for their country's freedom. Our every victory over this prime cause of and reason for the terror will inevitably and invariably mean that in our administration we shall do without this means of persuasion and influence.

What we say about terrorism also applies to our attitude towards all waverers. We are accused of having created extraordinarily difficult conditions for the middle sections of the population, for the bourgeois intellectuals. We reply that the imperialist war was a continuation of imperialist politics and for this reason it led to revolution. During the imperialist war everyone felt that the war was being conducted by the bourgeoisie in their own selfish interests, that in this war the people die while the bourgeoisie profit. This is the basic motive inspiring the policy of the bourgeoisie in all countries, which is their undoing and which will seal their fate. Our war is the continuation of the politics of revolution, and every worker and peasant knows, and if he does not know then he instinctively feels and sees, that this is a war of defence against the exploiters, a war demanding the greatest sacrifices from the workers and peasants, but which stops at nothing in order to ensure that these sacrifices are also borne by the other classes. We know that it is more difficult for them than it is for the workers and peasants, because they have belonged to a privileged class. But we say that when it is a case of freeing millions of working people from exploitation, a government that held back from making other classes bear the burden, would not be a socialist government, but a traitor government. If we have burdened the middle classes it is because we have been placed in extraordinarily difficult conditions by the Entente governments. Every step in our victories—as we see it from the experience of our revolution, though I cannot deal with this in

detail—is characterised by the fact that through all the waverings and innumerable attempts to return to the past, more and more waverers are becoming convinced that there really is no other choice but the dictatorship of the working people or the rule of the exploiters. If these waverers have had a hard time of it, this is not the fault of Bolshevik rule, but the fault of the whiteguards, the fault of the Entente, and a victory over them will be a real and sound condition for improving the lot of all these classes. In this connection, comrades, I should like, in passing on to the lessons of the political experience within the country, to say a few words about the war's significance.

Our war is the continuation of the politics of revolution, the politics of overthrowing the exploiters, capitalists and landlords. The workers and peasants are therefore drawn to our side despite the infinite gravity of our war. War is not only a continuation of politics, it is the epitome of politics, political education in this unprecedentedly difficult war which the landlords and capitalists have brought down on us with the aid of the mighty Entente. The workers and peasants have learned a great deal during this ordeal. The workers have learned how to use state power, and how to utilise every step for propaganda and education, how to make the Red Army, consisting mainly of peasants, a weapon for their education, how to make the Red Army an instrument for utilising bourgeois specialists. We know that in their overwhelming majority these bourgeois specialists are against us, and must be against us in their overwhelming majority due to their class character; we need have no doubts on this score. Hundreds and thousands of these specialists have betrayed us, and tens and tens of thousands have come to serve us more faithfully, because in the course of the struggle itself they were drawn to us, because that revolutionary enthusiasm which did wonders in the Red

Army arose because we served and satisfied the interests of the workers and peasants. This situation, in which masses of workers and peasants act in harmony and know what they are fighting for, has had its effect, and still larger and larger sections of people who have come over to our side from the other camp, at times unconsciously, have turned and are turning into our conscious supporters.

Comrades, the task which now confronts us is to transfer the experience gained during our military activities to the sphere of peaceful construction. There is nothing which fills us with so much joy or which gives us such an opportunity of greeting the Seventh All-Russian Congress of Soviets as the turning-point in the history of Soviet Russia, as the fact that the main period of the civil wars lies behind us, and that ahead of us lies the main period of peaceful construction which means so much to all of us, which we desire, which we must carry out and to which we shall dedicate all our energies and our whole lives. We can now say, on the basis of the severe ordeals of the war, that in the main, in the military and in the international sphere, we are victorious. The path of peaceful construction opens out before us. We have, of course, to remember that the enemy is always watching every step we take and will make many more attempts to overthrow us by all the means that lie in his power: by force, fraud, bribery, conspiracies, etc. Our task is to direct all the experience gained in war towards the solution of the main questions of peaceful construction. I shall enumerate these main questions. First and foremost there is *the question of food supplies, the question of grain*.

We have carried out a most difficult struggle against prejudices and old customs. On the one hand, the peasant is a toiler, who for decades has suffered the oppression of the landlord and capitalist; with the instinct of the oppressed man he knows that they are beasts whom rivers of blood will not prevent from attempting to regain their

power. On the other hand, the peasant is a small proprietor. He wants to sell his grain freely, he wants "freedom of trade", he does not understand that the free sale of grain in a starving country means freedom for speculation, freedom for the rich to make profits. And we say that we shall never agree to this, we would sooner die than make this concession.

We know that in this case we conduct a policy whereby the workers persuade the peasants to loan them grain, because the piece of paper the peasants receive in return is not equivalent to the grain's value. The peasant sells us grain at fixed prices but does not receive goods in return because we have none; instead he receives a piece of coloured paper. He is giving us the grain as a loan and we say to him: "If you are a toiler, can you deny that this is fair? How can you not agree that it is essential to loan the existing grain surpluses at fixed prices and not to dispose of them at speculative prices, since speculation means a return to capitalism, a return to exploitation, to all that we have fought against?" It was extremely difficult to do this, and we hesitated a good deal. We have gained this fundamental experience although we have taken many steps gropingly and continue to do so. When you hear the report of Comrade Tsyurupa or of others concerned with food supplies you will see that when the government says to the peasants they must loan their grain they are becoming accustomed to this compulsory delivery, for we have information from a number of volosts of its 100 per cent fulfilment. Although the successes are meagre, they are nevertheless successes, and our food supply policy enables the peasants to understand more and more clearly: if you want free sale of grain in a ruined country, go back, try out Kolchak and Denikin! We shall fight against this to the last drop of blood. There can be no concessions in this. On this fundamental question, the question of grain, we shall fight with all our might to prevent speculation,

to see that the sale of grain should not enrich the rich, and that all grain surpluses raised on state land by the efforts of generations of toilers, should be the property of the state; that now, when the state is impoverished, these surpluses should be loaned by the peasants to the workers' state. If the peasant does this, we shall pull out of all our difficulties, we shall rehabilitate industry, and the worker will repay his debt to the peasant a hundredfold. He and his children will be guaranteed a livelihood without having to work for the landlord and the capitalist. That is what we tell the peasant, and he is becoming convinced there is no alternative. The peasant is being convinced of this, not so much by us, as by our enemies, Kolchak and Denikin. They, more than anybody else, are giving the peasant practical lessons of life, and turning him to our side.

However, comrades, after the problem of grain there is the second *question—that of fuel*. At the moment sufficient stocks of grain have been collected in the grain-growing regions to feed the starving workers of Petrograd and Moscow. But if you walk through the workers' districts of Moscow you will find them in the grip of the most frightful cold, frightful calamity, intensified owing to the fuel problem. Here we are going through a desperate crisis, we are far behind the demands of the situation. Recently a number of meetings of the Council of Defence and the Council of People's Commissars were devoted entirely to working out measures for solving the fuel crisis. Comrade Ksandroff has supplied material for my speech which shows that we have begun to emerge from this desperate crisis. At the beginning of October 16,000 trucks were loaded in a week; by the end of October this figure had dropped to 10,000 a week. This was a crisis, a catastrophe; it meant hunger for the workers of a whole number of factories in Moscow, Petrograd and a number of other places. The results of this catastrophe are felt even today. And then

we came to grips with the problem, bent all our energies on solving it, and did the same as we had done in relation to military matters. We said: all socially conscious workers must throw their full weight into solving the fuel problem, not in the old capitalist way, when the speculators were given a bonus and enriched themselves on contracts—no, we said: solve this problem in a socialist way, by self-sacrifice; solve this problem in the same way that we saved Red Petrograd, liberated Siberia, by which we gained victory in all those difficult moments, in face of all the difficult problems of the revolution and by which we shall always be victorious. From loading 12,000 trucks in the last week of October we now load 20,000. We are emerging from this catastrophe, but we are far from having solved the problem. It is essential that all workers know and bear in mind that without bread for the people, without bread for industry, that is without fuel, the country is doomed to calamity. And this applies not only to us. Today's newspapers carry the news that in France, a victorious country, the railways are grinding to a halt. What can you expect of Russia? France will crawl out of the crisis the capitalist way, the way of enrichment of the capitalists and continued deprivation of the people. Soviet Russia will emerge from the crisis through the discipline and self-sacrifice of the workers, through a firm attitude towards the peasants, that firm attitude, which in the final analysis, the peasant can always understand. The peasant will learn from experience that no matter how difficult the transition, no matter how firm the state rule of the workers, it is the rule of the toiler who is fighting for the alliance of the working people, for the complete abolition of all exploitation.

There is yet a third scourge bearing down on us, *lice, typhus*, which is mowing down our troops. Comrades, it is impossible to imagine the dreadful situation in the localities afflicted with typhus, when the population is broken,

weakened, without material resources, when all life, all public life ceases. To this we say: "Comrades, everything must be concentrated on this problem. *Either the lice will defeat socialism, or socialism will defeat the lice!*" And here too, comrades, by using the same methods as elsewhere, we are beginning to achieve success. There are still some doctors, of course, who hold preconceived notions and have no faith in workers' rule, who prefer to draw fees from the rich rather than fight the severe battle with typhus. But these are in the minority, they are becoming fewer, and the majority are those who see that the people are struggling for their very existence, who realise that by their struggle the people desire to solve the fundamental question of preserving civilisation. These doctors are behaving in this arduous and difficult matter with no less self-sacrifice than any military specialists. They are willing to put themselves at the service of the working people. I must say that we are beginning to emerge also from this crisis. Comrade Semashko has given me some information about this work. According to news from the front, 122 doctors and 467 field nurses arrived at the front before October 1. One hundred and fifty doctors have been sent from Moscow. We have reason to believe that by December 15 another 800 doctors will have arrived at the front to help in the battle against typhus. We must pay great attention to this scourge.

We must concentrate on consolidating our foundation: grain, fuel, and the battle against typhus. I particularly wished to mention these matters because a certain lack of co-ordination has been noted in our socialist construction, and understandably so. When people decided to transform the whole world, it is only natural that inexperienced workers and inexperienced peasants are drawn into this work. There can be no doubt that a considerable period must elapse before we are able to correctly determine where to chiefly concentrate our attention. It is not

surprising that such great historical tasks frequently give rise to great visions, which develop side by side with many small, unsuccessful dreams. There have been many instances when we wanted to build a house from above, starting from a small upper wing, a cornice, but paid no real attention to the foundations. I must tell you that from my own experience, from my observations of the work being performed, it is my opinion that the essential task for our policy is to lay that foundation. It is necessary for every worker, every organisation, every institution to bear this in mind at every meeting. If we are able to supply grain, if we succeed in increasing the fuel supply, if we bend all our energies to wiping out typhus in Russia, which comes from a lack of culture, from poverty, backwardness and ignorance, if we devote all the strength and experience gained by us in a bloody war, to this bloodless war—we can be certain that we shall achieve even greater successes in this work, which is, after all, much easier and much more humane than a war.

We have carried out military mobilisation. The parties which were our most uncompromising opponents, which to a far greater extent than others supported and still support the idea of capitalism, like the Socialist-Revolutionaries, for instance, have had to recognise, despite all the accusations rained on us by the bourgeois imperialists, that the Red Army has become a People's Army. This indicates that in this most difficult task we achieved the alliance of the working class with the great mass of peasants who are coming over to the side of the working class, and we have, by this means, shown the peasants what is meant by the leadership of the working class.

The words "dictatorship of the proletariat" frighten the peasants. This is a bogey for the Russian peasants. They turn their backs on people who try to scare them with this bogey. But they now realise that, while the words "dictatorship of the proletariat" are probably very wise Latin

words, in practice they stand for that selfsame Soviet power which transfers the state apparatus to the workers. This being the case, it is the true friend and ally of the working people and the merciless enemy of any form of exploitation. That is why we shall ultimately defeat all imperialists, for we possess a deep source of strength, a broad and deep-rooted reservoir of human material, such as has never been accessible to any bourgeois government and never will. We possess the material from which we can draw ever greater and more profound strength, proceeding not only from the most advanced workers to the middle sections, but even lower down the scale, to the toiling peasants, the poor peasants and the very poor peasants. The Petrograd comrades have recently said that Petrograd has given up all its workers and can supply no more. But when a critical hour struck, Petrograd proved to be remarkable, as Comrade Zinoviev justly remarked, proved to be the town which gave birth to new forces as it were. Workers, who had no experience in politics or government, who were considered to be below the middle sections, drew themselves up to their full stature, gave a mass of forces for propaganda, agitation, organisation, performed new miracles. We have an enormous source for further miracles. Every new section of the workers and peasants who have not yet been drawn into the work is our true friend and ally. At the present moment we have quite often to rely on a very small section of leading workers in state administration. In the course of our Party work and our Soviet practice we must repeatedly approach non-Party people, approach non-Party workers and peasants more boldly, not with the object of winning them to our side immediately, or of drawing them into the Party—that is not so important for us—but making them understand that their help is needed to save the country. When the people, whom the landlords and capitalists least of all permitted to participate in running the state, are brought

to realise that we are calling on them to join us in building the solid foundation for the Socialist Republic, then our cause will be once and for all invincible.

That is why, on the basis of two years' experience, we can say to you with absolute certainty that every step in our military victories will with terrific speed bring closer the time—now very near—when we can devote the whole of our energy to peaceful construction. On the basis of experience gained, we can guarantee that in the next few years we shall perform even greater miracles in peaceful construction than we did in the two years of victorious war against the all-powerful Entente. (*Applause.*)

Comrades, in conclusion, allow me to read to you the draft resolution, which I now present to you.

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

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

“The Seventh Congress of Soviets fully approves these many steps taken by the Council of People's Commissars

and the People's Commissariat for Foreign Affairs, once more confirms its unwavering desire for peace and again proposes to the Entente powers, Britain, France, the United States of America, Italy and Japan, individually and collectively, to begin immediately negotiations on peace; the Congress instructs the All-Russian Central Executive Committee, the Council of People's Commissars and the People's Commissariat for Foreign Affairs to continue this peace policy systematically, taking all appropriate measures to ensure its success."

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**REPORT ON THE WORK OF THE ALL-RUSSIAN
CENTRAL EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE AND THE COUNCIL
OF PEOPLE'S COMMISSARS DELIVERED AT THE FIRST
SESSION OF THE ALL-RUSSIAN CENTRAL EXECUTIVE
COMMITTEE OF THE SEVENTH CONVOCATION
FEBRUARY 2, 1920**

Comrades, my report on the activities of the Council of People's Commissars and the All-Russian Central Executive Committee, whose functions in the intervals between meetings have been carried out by the Presidium of the All-Russian Central Executive Committee, falls naturally into two main subdivisions, the first is international policy, the Soviet Republic's international position, and the second is internal construction and our main economic tasks. Allow me to present to you in that order the main facts of our work during the period under review, i.e., during the past two months.

As far as the Soviet Republic's international position is concerned, the main factor determining this position was the successes of the Red Army. As you know, the last remnants of Kolchak's army in the Far East have almost been wiped out, while the rivalry and enmity between Japan and America, nominally allies, are becoming more and more obvious and prevent them from fully developing their onslaught against the Soviet Republic. After the annihilation of Yudenich's troops and after the capture, in the South, of Novocherkassk and Rostov-on-Don in early

January, their main forces suffered so decisive a blow that the Soviet Republic's military position radically changed, and although the war was not over, every state clearly saw that its previous hopes of crushing the military forces of the Soviet Republic had been dashed.

Acknowledgement of this radical change in the Soviet Republic's international position was shown by the radio message to us (not delivered officially) of the decision of the Allied High Command adopted on January 16 to lift the blockade against the Soviet Republic. The main section of the decision taken by the High Command reads: (*reads*).²⁸

There is no need for me to criticise the diplomacy contained in this formulation; it is so striking that it is not worth dwelling on the fact that the attitude of the Allies to Russia remains unchanged. If that is how the Allies understand their policy—that it is unchanged by the lifting of the blockade, then it shows how untenable their policy is. The importance of this decision for us, however, lies in its economic, not political, aspect. Lifting the blockade is a fact of major international significance showing that a new stage in the socialist revolution has begun. For the blockade was in fact the principal, the really strong weapon wielded by the imperialists of the world for strangling Soviet Russia.

At the last Congress of Soviets I had occasion to state and expound the idea that the struggle against Soviet Russia resulted, not only in the workers and peasants of France, Britain and other advanced countries forcing the imperialists to renounce the struggle, but in the mass of the petty bourgeoisie within these countries becoming opponents of the blockade. And of course, this opposition by the middle sections of the population in countries like Britain and France was bound to influence international imperialist policy. Knowing their brand of diplomacy, we cannot expect them to act in a straightforward manner, without any reservations, without wanting to restore the

past, to slip in by some cunning trick or other their previous policy which at the moment they cannot openly pursue. It must be said, however, that on the whole we have gained tremendous victories, that we were even able to deprive the Allies of the weapon which only they possessed—the navy, despite the fact that waverers tried to scare us by saying the navy was invincible. Nevertheless, the development of political relations proved that even this invincible navy was unable to venture against us. We, who were unable to put up any naval resistance, forced the imperialist powers to abandon this weapon.

Of course, this change in policy on the international scene does not have an effect immediately, but the fact remains that we have now entered the sphere of world-wide international relations, and this enables us to get support from the more advanced countries. It is true that economically and financially these countries are in a sorry plight, they are all going downhill, and we cannot rely on much from them; but with the opportunity to develop our own industry, we can count on receiving machinery for production, machinery for restoring our industry. And above all, that which had cut us off completely, by means of the blockade, from the advanced countries, has been broken down.

After the Allied High Command had been forced to abandon this weapon our victories in the field of international politics continued, the greatest of them being that we succeeded in concluding peace with Estonia. We received a communication from Joffe and Gukovsky today saying: "Today, February 2 at 2 a.m. Moscow time, peace was signed between Russia and Estonia. The Estonian Minister of Foreign Affairs, Birk, arrived from Revel to sign the document."

Comrades, the text of this peace document which was discussed at great length and is of tremendous importance has been sent by courier who should arrive tomorrow

morning, but we have now received the exact text by telegraph, and it will be distributed tomorrow. It will be discussed and ratified. This document is of the highest importance to us. The peace treaty between Russia and Estonia is of epoch-making significance. We have succeeded in concluding a peace treaty with a government which is also becoming democratic and whose relations with us will now be stable, but which up to now was supported by the whole imperialist world. Therefore we must regard this as an act of tremendous historical importance.

We know that people who stand between imperialism and democracy usually go over to one side or the other. So you see, we have undoubtedly gained a victory, because peace has been signed, and now this government must come out against our enemy. The significance of this fact from the point of view of principle is that in the imperialist epoch the whole world is split into a vast number of big and small states, the small states being absolutely helpless, an insignificant group in relation to the rich powers which completely dominate a number of small, weak states. Imperialism is the epoch in which the division of the whole world takes place, when the whole of the world's population is divided into a minority of exploiting oppressor countries, and a majority of countries with small, weak population, existing in a state of colonial dependence.

When we gained peace with Estonia we proved that we were able to go forward as a proletarian and communist state. How? All the belligerent Entente powers, opposed to peace, have been shown that the sympathy we are able to evoke from our opponents and bourgeois governments, that the sympathy of a small country is more powerful than all that military oppression, all that financial aid and all those economic ties which link this small country to the omnipotent states. The Entente has seen that we are able to win not only when we use force, and we are in a position to refute the lie and slander spread against us by

the bourgeois governments of the world when they say the Bolsheviks only retain power by force. What was it that enabled us to prevail over the united forces of world imperialism in regard to Estonia, a country which had always suffered violence at the hands of tsarist, landlord Russia? It was the fact that we proved our ability to renounce the use of force at the appropriate moment and in all sincerity, in order to change to a peace policy, so winning the sympathy of the bourgeois government of a small country, regardless of all the support given it by international capital. This is a fact of historical significance. Estonia is a small country, a small republic, but it is oppressed economically and militarily in a thousand and one ways by world imperialist capital, so much so that its entire population comes under this oppression. And now this peace proves that we can, in spite of our exhaustion, weakness and disarray, gain the upper hand over the white-guard army with its imperialist backing. The powerful Entente knows how to reply to force with even more triumphant force, but this peace proves that it is not by resorting to force that we are able to win the sympathy and support of the bourgeoisie.

A most difficult international problem had arisen in this respect. The rate of capitalist development in different countries varies; it takes place under different conditions, in various ways and by various means. The socialist republic of one country exists alongside all the capitalist countries of the world and causes their bourgeoisie to waver. The conclusions they arrived at were: "Your position is a hopeless one; even if you defeated the white-guards by force, what are you going to do with the rest of the world?" We shall defeat it also. The peace with Estonia proves that this is no empty phrase. The entire pressure of international capital was overcome in that area where our rejection of the use of force was recognised to be sincere. International capital said: "Don't make peace

with the Bolsheviks, otherwise we shall conquer you by starvation; we shall give you neither financial nor economic aid." And Estonia proved to be one of the small, formally independent countries which said to itself: "We rely more on the fact that the Bolsheviks are able to live in peace with other, weaker nations, even with a bourgeois government, than on the whole powerful Entente democracy."

The most prominent manifestation of democracy is in the fundamental question of war and peace. All the powers are preparing a new imperialist war, and this is seen daily by the workers of the world. Any day now America and Japan will hurl themselves at each other; Britain has grabbed so many colonies after her victory over Germany that the other imperialist powers will never resign themselves to this. A new fanatical war is being prepared, and the people are aware of this. And just at this moment a democratic peace is signed between Estonia and Russia with her huge forces, who now that she has disposed of Yudenich, Kolchak and Denikin, is accused of intending to fling all her forces against a small state. Furthermore, the terms of the peace treaty provide for a number of territorial concessions on our part which do not completely correspond to the strict observance of the principle of self-determination of nations, and prove in practice that the question of frontiers is of secondary importance for us, while the question of peaceful relations, the question of our capacity for watching the development of the conditions of life of each nation, is not only an important question of principle, it is also a matter in which we have succeeded in winning the confidence of nations hostile to us. It was no accident that we achieved this in relation to Estonia; it was evidence that the weak proletarian republic, existing in isolation and apparently helpless, had begun to win to its side the countries—and they constitute a majority—which are dependent on the imperialist states.

That is why our peace with Estonia is of such historical significance. No matter how the Entente strives to start a war—even if it succeeds in turning peace once again into war—the fact will remain, firmly established in history, that despite all the pressure of international capital we were able to inspire greater confidence in a small country ruled by the bourgeoisie than the so-called democratic, but in reality, predatory imperialist bourgeoisie.

On the question of how our policy compared with the policy of the allegedly democratic, but, in actual fact, predatory powers of the whole world, we are by chance in possession of some particularly interesting documents, which you will permit me to read to you. These documents were furnished by a whiteguard officer or official named Oleinikov who was commissioned by one whiteguard government to hand over some highly important documents to another. But he handed them over to us instead.²⁹ (Applause.) It proved possible to send these documents to Russia, and I shall read them to you, although it will take some time to do so. Nevertheless, they are very interesting for they very clearly reveal the hidden springs of policy. The first document is a telegram to Gulkevich from Sazonov:

Paris, October 14, 1919, No. 668.

S. D. Sazonov conveys his respects to Constantin Nikolayevich, and has the honour to enclose for his information copies of a telegram from B. A. Bakhmetev, No. 1050, and a telegram from I. I. Sukin, No. 23, on the situation in the Baltic Provinces.

Here is a more interesting document—a telegram of October 11 from Washington:

Received October 12, 1919. Incoming No. 3346.

Bakhmetev to the Minister.

Washington, October 11, 1919, No. 1050.

Further to my telegram No. 1045.

(In code) The State Department acquainted me verbally with the instructions given to Gade. He is appointed the Commissar of the

American Government in the Baltic Provinces of Russia. He is not accredited to any Russian Government. His mission is to observe and inform. His behaviour must not lead the local population to expect that the American Government could agree to support separatist trends going beyond autonomy. On the contrary, the American Government trusts that the population of the Baltic Provinces will help their Russian brothers in their work of general state importance. The instructions are based on the interpretation of the agreement of the Allied governments with the Supreme Ruler* as outlined in my memorandum of June 17 to the Government. Gade has been given extracts from the recent speeches of the President in which he fulminates against Bolshevism.

So, the American Government intimates that its representative can issue any kind of instructions but may not support independence, i.e., may not guarantee independence as regards these states. This is what directly or indirectly came to light, and Estonia could not be kept in ignorance of the fact that it was being deceived by the Great Powers. Of course, everyone could have guessed this, but now we have the documents and they will be published:

Received October 12, 1919. Incoming No. 3347.
Sukin to the Minister.

Omsk, October 9, 1919, No. 28.

(In code) Knox has given the Supreme Ruler the message of the British War Office in which the latter warns of the inclination of the Baltic States to conclude a peace with the Bolsheviks who guarantee them immediate recognition of their independence. At the same time the British War Office raises the question of the advisability of paralysing this pledge by satisfying, in its turn, the wishes of the states indicated. We replied to Knox by referring to the principles outlined in the note of the Supreme Ruler to the Powers on June 4, and, in addition, we pointed out that the conclusion of a peace between the Baltic States and the Bolsheviks would be undoubtedly fraught with danger since this would permit the freeing of part of the Soviet forces and would clear the way to the infiltration of Bolshevism in the West. The mere fact that they are ready to talk peace is in our opinion evidence of the utter demoralisation of the

* The reference is to Kolchak.—Ed.

parties of these self-governing entities which cannot protect themselves from the penetration of aggressive Bolshevism on their own.

Expressing the conviction that the Powers could not approve of the further spread of Bolshevism, we pointed to the necessity of withdrawing all aid from the Baltic States since this would be a real means of exerting influence by the Powers, and is more advisable than competition in promises with the Bolsheviks, who now have nothing to lose.

In transmitting the above, I would request you to make similar representations in Paris and London; we are making a special approach to Bakhmetev.

Received October 9, 1919. Incoming No. 3286.

Sablin to the Minister.

London, October 7, 1919, No. 677.

(In code) In a letter to Guchkov, the Director of Military Operations of the War Office to whom Guchkov made an offer of our shipping in order to facilitate the delivery of supplies to Yudenich by the British, states that in the opinion of the War Office Yudenich has all that he requires at the moment, and that Britain is experiencing some difficulty in providing further supplies. He adds, however, that as we have shipping, we could arrange the delivery of supplies to Yudenich on a commercial basis, providing we obtain credits. At the same time General Radcliffe admits that Yudenich's army must be properly equipped since it is "the only force among the Baltic States able to engage in active operations against the Bolsheviks".

Minister to Bakhmetev in Washington.

Paris, September 30, 1919, No. 2442.

(In code) From a rather confidential Swedish source I learn that the American envoy in Stockholm, Morris, says about growing sympathy in America towards the Bolsheviks and of intentions to cease aid to Kolchak in order to enter into contacts with Moscow in the interests of American trade. Such statements on the part of an official representative make a strange impression.

Received October 5, 1919. Incoming No. 3244.

Bakhmetev to the Minister.

Washington, October 4, 1919, No. 1021.

Further to your telegram No. 2442.

(In code) The State Department informed me in confidence that it is true that the envoy in Stockholm, Morris, and particularly Hapgood in Copenhagen, are well known for their Left sympathies, but that they have no influence or authority here, and that the government is obliged to admonish them from time to time, categorically pointing

out that American policy is one of undeviating support of our government in the struggle against the Bolsheviks.

Here are all the documents which we shall publish and which clearly show how the battle went on around Estonia, how the Entente together with Kolchak and America, Britain and France all brought pressure to bear on Estonia with the one aim of preventing the signing of a peace treaty with the Bolsheviks, and how the Bolsheviks, pledging themselves to territorial concessions and guaranteeing independence, won this trial of strength. I state that this victory is of gigantic historical significance, because it has been gained without the use of force. This victory over world imperialism is a victory thanks to which the Bolsheviks are gaining the sympathy of the whole world. This victory by no means denotes that universal peace will be concluded immediately; but this victory does show that we represent the peace interests of the majority of the world's population against the imperialist warmongers. Such an assessment of the situation has induced bourgeois Estonia, an opponent of communism, to conclude peace with us. If we, a proletarian state, a Soviet Republic, conclude a peace treaty, if we act in the spirit of peace towards bourgeois governments oppressed by the great magnates of imperialism, then this must enable us to decide how our international policy is to be shaped.

The main task we set ourselves is to defeat the exploiters and to win to our side the waverers—this is a task of historic significance. Among the waverers are a whole number of bourgeois states which, as bourgeois states, detest us, but which, on the other hand, as oppressed states, prefer peace with us. This explains the peace with Estonia. This peace is, of course, only a first step, and its influence will only be felt in the future, but that it will be felt is a fact. Up to now our negotiations with Latvia have only occurred through the Red Cross,³⁰ and the same is true of the Polish Government. I repeat—the peace with

Estonia is bound to influence events because the basis is identical; the same attempts are being made to goad Latvia and Poland into making war on Russia as were made in the case of Estonia. Perhaps these attempts will prove successful, and we must be vigilant, since war with Poland is possible, but we are certain—this has been demonstrated by our main achievements—that we can conclude peace and make concessions which permit the development of any form of democracy. This is now especially important because the Polish question is particularly acute. We have received a number of communications indicating that apart from bourgeois, conservative, landlord Poland, apart from the pressure being exerted by all capitalist parties in Poland, all the Entente powers are doing their utmost to incite Poland to make war against us.

As you know, the Council of People's Commissars has issued an appeal to the working people of Poland.³¹ We are going to ask you to endorse this appeal as a means of fighting that campaign of vilification in which the Polish landlord circles are engaged. We shall submit an additional text of an appeal to the working people of Poland. This appeal will be a blow to the imperialist powers, who are doing their utmost to incite Poland against us; for us the interests of the toiling majority take first place.

I shall now acquaint you with a telegram intercepted by us yesterday, which illustrates the activities of American capital aimed at presenting us in a certain light and thereby dragging us into a war with Poland. The telegram says (*reads*). I have said and heard nothing of the sort, but they are able to lie because they do not spend their money for nothing on spreading lying rumours. Their bourgeois government guarantees them this. (*Continues reading the telegram.*) This telegram is travelling from Europe to America, it is paid for out of capitalist funds and it serves as a means of promoting war with Poland in a most unashamed way. American capital is doing its utmost to

bring pressure to bear on Poland and does this unashamedly, making it appear that the Bolsheviks want to finish with Kolchak and Denikin in order to throw all their "iron troops" against Poland.

It is important that we should here and now endorse the decision of the Council of People's Commissars, and then we must do what we did previously in relation to other states, and also what we did in regard to the troops of Kolchak and Denikin. We must immediately appeal to the democratic people within Poland and explain the real state of affairs. We know full well that this method of ours has the most positive effect in that it tends to disrupt the ranks of our enemy. And in the end, this method will lead to the path we need, the path to which it has led the working population of all countries. This policy must set a definite beginning—no matter how difficult this may prove—and once a beginning is made, we shall carry it through to completion.

I must mention that we have been pursuing the same policy in respect to all other countries. We invited Georgia and Azerbaijan to conclude an agreement against Denikin. They refused, pleading non-interference in the affairs of other countries. We shall see how the workers and peasants of Georgia and Azerbaijan regard this.

This policy has been even more cautious in relation to the Western nations than in dealing with the nations of Russia. It involved such countries as Latvia, Estonia, Poland and, on the other hand, a number of Eastern countries whose development level is the same as that of the vast majority of the colonial countries which constitute the majority of the world's population. They are weighed down by Britain, who continues to hold the colonial slaves under her sway. If our policy in relation to West-European countries has been so cautious—it will take some time for them to outlive their Kerensky period—our policy in the East must be even more cautious and patient, for here we are

dealing with countries that are much more backward, are under the oppressive influence of religious fanaticism, are imbued with greater distrust of the Russian people, and for decades and centuries were oppressed by the tsarist government's capitalist policy and imperialism, the policy conducted towards these nations by Russia as the dominant nation.

We have granted autonomy to the Bashkir Republic.³² We must found an autonomous Tatar Republic.³³ And we continue the same policy in relation to all the Eastern peoples, and say to ourselves: faced by a huge front of imperialist powers, we, who are fighting imperialism, represent an alliance that requires close military unity. Any attempt to violate this unity we regard as absolutely impermissible, as a betrayal of the struggle against international imperialism. However, in implementing this policy we must be even more cautious. For if the European countries have to go through a Kerensky period, in the countries that are at a lower development level there are even greater elements of distrust, and it will require more time to influence them. We support the independence of these countries. We appeal to their working people. We say: unity of the military forces is imperative; any deviation from this unity is impermissible.

We are confident that, by systematically going forward with our policy of close alliance, we shall achieve greater success than before in our relations with the peoples of the East. And our success is already great. The Soviet Republic enjoys tremendous popularity among all the Eastern peoples for the same reason that made it possible for us to conclude a peace treaty with a small Western state, namely, because they see in us an unswerving fighter against imperialism, the only republic which is waging a war against imperialism and is capable of utilising every situation, without using force, and which is able to gain victory also by renouncing the use of force.

Needless to say a far more refined form of this policy is being implemented in relation to the Ukrainian Republic. Here the problem has been simplified by the prior conclusion of an agreement between the All-Russian Central Executive Committee and the Central Executive Committee of the Ukrainian Soviet Republic. On the basis of this agreement, which implies a close federation of both republics in the struggle against the imperialist countries, we are building an even closer alliance. As a result of their bitter experience of Denikin's rule, the mass of Ukrainian peasants and workers are becoming convinced that only the closest alliance with the Russian Republic will be really invincible in the face of international imperialism, and that at the time of struggle against imperialism there is nothing to be gained by the separation of the Ukrainian state, as imperialism takes advantage of every division in order to crush Soviet power. Such a division is criminal. Our policy is taking deep root in the Ukraine, and we are confident that the forthcoming All-Ukraine Congress of Soviets of Workers and Peasants will officially endorse this policy. These are the few remarks to which I must limit myself on the question of the international position. I shall ask this session to endorse all the practical proposals I have to make and have enumerated on behalf of the Council of People's Commissars and the All-Russian Central Executive Committee.

In passing on to the work of internal construction I must in the first place deal with certain measures taken by our government, and then proceed to the most important matter of all—the change-over to a new course, the transition from military tasks to those of state construction.

In regard to our internal policy for the two months under review, among the main measures which more or less stand out from a number of current tasks, the following decision requiring the endorsement of the All-Russian Central Executive Committee is of considerable impor-

tance. This is the decision to abolish the death penalty. As you know, immediately after the main victory over Denikin, after the capture of Rostov, Comrade Dzerzhinsky, who is in charge of the Cheka and the People's Commissariat for Home Affairs, submitted a proposal to the Council of People's Commissars, and had it endorsed in his own department, that the passing of all death sentences by the Cheka be abolished. When bourgeois democracy in Europe does all in its power to spread the lie that Soviet Russia is predominantly terrorist, when this lie is spread about us by bourgeois democracy and by the socialists of the Second International, when Kautsky writes a special book entitled *Terrorism and Communism* in which he declares that the communist state is based on terrorism, then you can well imagine the kind of lies spread on this subject. In order to refute this lie we have decided on the step taken by Comrade Dzerzhinsky, endorsed by the Council of People's Commissars, and which now needs the approval of the All-Russian Central Executive Committee.

We were forced to use terror in answer to the terror employed by the Entente, when the mighty powers of the world flung their hordes against us, stopping at nothing. We could not have lasted two days had we not replied to these attempts of officers and whiteguards in a merciless fashion. This meant the use of terror, but this was forced on us by the terrorist methods of the Entente. But as soon as we had gained a decisive victory, even before the end of the war, immediately after Rostov's capture we rejected capital punishment, and have therefore proved that we intend to carry out our own programme as we had promised. We say that the use of violence arises from the need to crush the exploiters, the landlords and the capitalists. When this is accomplished we shall renounce all extraordinary measures. We have proved this in practice. And I think, I hope, and I am confident, that the All-Rus-

sian Central Executive Committee will unanimously endorse this measure of the Council of People's Commissars and will implement it in such a way that it will be impossible to apply the death penalty in Russia. Needless to say, any attempt by the Entente to resume methods of war will force us to reintroduce the former terror; we know that we are living at a time of jungle-law, when kind words are of no avail. This is what we had in mind, and as soon as the decisive struggle was over, we immediately began to abolish measures which all other powers apply in perpetuity.

Further, I should like to refer to the discussion on Workers' Inspection. There is to be a special report on this subject, and it would be wrong of me to dwell much on it. The most important problem confronting us here is that of drawing the mass of people into the field of management. This is a more acute problem than the task of large-scale construction. You will be presented with detailed plans, and when you have discussed and amended them, you will understand that this construction must continue with far greater participation by the mass of the workers. This is our main task, with which it is extremely difficult to get to grips in the existing chaos, but nevertheless we are approaching it steadily.

There is another question before us—the question of co-operation. We have set ourselves the task of uniting the whole population in co-operatives differing from previous forms of co-operation, which at best only covered an upper section of the population.

Socialism would be impossible if it did not make use of the technical knowledge, culture and the apparatus created by bourgeois, capitalist civilisation. Part of this apparatus is the co-operative movement whose growth is all the greater the higher the level of capitalist development in a country. We have set our co-operative movement the task of embracing the whole country. Up to now

the co-operative movement only covered an upper section and benefited those able to pay their dues. The working people, however, were unable to make use of its services. We have resolutely broken with this type of co-operation, but not so that co-operation as such is completely wiped out, for in March and April 1918 we set it the task of covering the whole population. If there are co-operators who value the ideas of the founders of the co-operative movement (the old aims of co-operation were to satisfy the needs of the working people), they will sympathise with this aim. We are certain that we have the sympathy of the majority of the members of the co-operative organisations, although we are by no means under the illusion that we have won to our side the majority of the leaders of the co-operatives, who subscribe to bourgeois and petty-bourgeois views, who see co-operation merely as another form of capitalist economy and the notorious freedom of trade which means fortunes for the few and ruin for the majority. Instead of this, we announced the country-wide task of co-operation to pass on to genuinely catering for the working people so that it covers the whole population. This could not be accomplished at once. Having set this task we worked systematically, and will go on working to achieve this end, so that ultimately all the population will be united in co-operatives; and we can say with certainty that the whole of the Soviet Republic, perhaps in a few weeks, or at most in a few months, will become one great co-operative of working people. After this the development of independent activity by the working people, their participation in construction will proceed along even broader lines.

In accomplishing this, we have decided that all types of co-operatives, not only consumers', but credit, production, etc., should, by appropriate stages and with due care, be amalgamated into a Central Union of Consumers' Societies (Centrosoyuz). We are confident that our steps in this direc-

tion will meet with the approval of the Central Executive Committee and the workers in the localities who, after the formal amalgamation of the co-operatives, will, by their work of economic construction and of drawing the majority of the workers and peasants into this, achieve what we regard as one of the major tasks: that of making co-operation also a prime factor in the struggle against bureaucracy, this legacy from the old capitalist state, a struggle which we proclaimed in our programme, too, as being of the highest importance. We shall carry on this struggle in all offices and departments by every means and, incidentally, through the amalgamation of the co-operatives and by shifting the appeal from the bourgeois co-operative top sections to the genuine working people, who must all undertake independent work in co-operative construction.

From among the problems of internal construction I now wish to refer to what has been done in the sphere of agriculture. In order to place land tenure on a proper basis, the People's Commissar for Agriculture in July 1919 issued a circular on measures against the frequent redistribution of allotted land. This circular was published on July 1 in *Izvestia VTsIK* and was included in "Collection of Statutes and Decrees of the Workers' and Peasants' Government". This circular is important because it meets the many suggestions and demands of the peasants who pointed out that the frequent reallocation of the land in conditions of small-scale farming prevented better labour discipline and the higher productivity of labour. This view is shared by the Council of People's Commissars which has empowered the Commissariat for Agriculture to work out a draft decree on procedures relating to re-allotment. This draft will be considered shortly. Similarly, the People's Commissariat for Agriculture sees as its task a number of urgent measures for rehabilitation of livestock and farm equipment. In this connection the systematic efforts

of local workers themselves are extremely important, and we hope that the members of the All-Russian Central Executive Committee will bring the appropriate pressure to bear on the authorities and render assistance, so that these measures of the People's Commissariat for Agriculture can be put into effect in the shortest space of time.

I shall now turn to the final, and in reality, the most important problem of our construction—the problem of the armies of labour and the labour mobilisation of the population. The most difficult task in the sharp turns and changes of social life is that of taking due account of the peculiar features of each transition. How socialists should fight within capitalist society is not a difficult question and has long since been decided. Nor is it difficult to visualise advanced socialist society. This problem has also been decided. But how in practice to effect the transition from the old, customary, familiar capitalism to the new socialism, as yet unborn and without a firm basis, is the most difficult task of all. At best this transition will take many years, in the course of which our policy will split into a number of even smaller transitions. And the whole difficulty of the task which falls to us, the whole difficulty of politics and the art of politics, lies in the ability to take into account the specific tasks of each of these transitions.

We have only just solved the problem of the war in its principal and basic features, though not yet completely. Our main task was to repel at all costs the attack of the whiteguards. We said: everything for the war effort. This was a correct policy. We are fully aware that this policy caused unparalleled hardships in the rear such as cold, famine and devastation. But the very fact that the Red Army, which is regarded, incidentally, in the way shown by the examples I have read out to you, has resolved this problem in the most backward country, proves that new forces in the country do exist. Otherwise the creation of this model army, and its victory over far better equipped

armies, would have been inconceivable. But after we had geared the entire apparatus to this task and had succeeded in surmounting the specific features of this problem—the subordination of everything to the war effort—the situation demands a swift and sharp change in policy. We have not yet finished the war. We must maintain our military readiness intact, we must destroy Denikin's troops, we must show the landlords and capitalists of every country that if they want to deal with Russia by war, they will meet the same fate as Kolchak and Denikin. We must not take a single step, therefore, which would weaken our military strength. At the same time, however, we must switch the whole country onto a different course, reconstruct its whole mechanism. We can no longer, and we have no need to, gear everything to the war effort, because in the main the problem of the war has been solved.

The task of the transition from war to peaceful construction arises in such peculiar conditions that we cannot disband the army, since we have to allow, say, for the possibility of an attack by that selfsame Poland or any of the powers which the Entente continues to incite against us. This specific feature of the problem of not being able to reduce our military forces, yet at the same time having to switch the whole of the Soviet state machine which is geared to war onto the new course of peaceful economic construction, demands exceptional attention. It is the type of problem that cannot be coped with by general formulas, the general provisions of a programme, general communist principles, but which requires that the specific features of the transition from capitalism to communism have to be taken into consideration, the transition from the position of a country whose whole attention has been concentrated on the war, to the position of a country which has won a decisive military victory and must go on to solve economic questions by military methods, because the

situation, as you all realise, is extremely grave. The end of the winter will bring and has brought the working people unbelievable hardships—cold, famine, devastation. We must overcome this at all costs. We know that we can do this. It has been proved by the enthusiasm of the Red Army.

If, up to the present, we were able to battle on, surrounded on all sides and cut off from the richest areas of grain and coal, now when we possess all this, when there is the possibility of solving the problems of economic construction, jointly with the Ukraine, we can solve the main problem: to get in large quantities of grain and foodstuffs, bring them to the industrial centres so that industrial construction can commence. We must concentrate all our efforts on this task. It is inadmissible to allow ourselves to be diverted from it to any other practical task. It has to be solved by adopting military methods, with absolute ruthlessness, absolute suppression of all other interests. We know that a whole number of perfectly legitimate demands and interests will go by the board, but if it were not for these sacrifices, we should not have won the war. The situation now demands that we make a sharp and swift turn towards the creation of a basis for peaceful economic construction. This basis must be the laying-in of great stocks of food and their transportation to the central regions; the task of transport is to convey raw materials and provisions. From August 1917 to August 1918 we collected 30 million poods of grain, in the second year 110 million, and now in five months 90 million have been collected by our Commissariat for Food Supplies, collected by socialist, not capitalist methods, by compulsory delivery of grain by the peasants at fixed prices, and not by selling on the free market—and this means that we have found our way ahead. We are certain that it is the correct way and that it will enable us to achieve results which will ensure tremendous economic construction.

All our forces must be dedicated to this task. All our military power, which came to the fore in military organisation, must be switched onto this new way. This is the specific situation, the specific transition, which engendered the idea of armies of labour and led to the law on the creation of the first army of labour in the Urals and the Ukrainian army of labour. It was followed by the law on the utilisation of the army reserves for civilian labour and the decree issued by the Soviet Government on the Committees for Labour Conscription. All these laws will be outlined to you by a member of the All-Russian Central Executive Committee in a fully detailed report. I naturally cannot trespass on this ground because the special report will throw sufficient light upon it. I only emphasise its significance in relation to our general policy, the significance of this transition which confronts us with its specific tasks, for which we are to redouble our efforts as in the military field, to organise them so that we can lay in large food reserves and bring them to the industrial centres. To achieve this we must at all costs create armies of labour, organise ourselves in a military way, reduce, even close down a whole number of institutions so that in the next few months, no matter what happens, we can overcome transport dislocation, and emerge from this desperate situation of cold, famine and impoverishment brought by the end of winter. We must and can get out of this situation. When the All-Russian Central Executive Committee endorses all the measures connected with labour conscription and the armies of labour, when it has succeeded in instilling these ideas in the broad mass of the population and demands that they be put into practice by the workers in the localities, then we are absolutely convinced that we shall cope with this most difficult of tasks, while not in the least degree weakening our military readiness.

We must at all costs, without weakening our military readiness, switch the Soviet Republic onto the new course

of economic construction. This task must be accomplished in the next few weeks, possibly months. Every Soviet or Party organisation must do everything in its power to end the transport dislocation and increase the grain reserves.

Then, and only then, shall we have a basis, a sound basis for industrial construction on a wide front, for the electrification of Russia. In order to prove to the population, and in particular to the peasants, that these extensive plans are not fantasies, but are borne out by and based on technology and science, I think we should adopt a resolution, and I hope that the Central Executive Committee will support this idea, recommending that the Supreme Economic Council and the Commissariat for Agriculture jointly draft a plan for the electrification of Russia.

Thanks to the aid of the State Publishing House and the energy of the workers at the former Kushnerev Printing Works, now the 17th State Printing Works, I succeeded in getting Krzhizhanovsky's pamphlet *The Main Tasks of the Electrification of Russia* published at very short notice, and tomorrow it will be distributed to all members of the All-Russian Central Executive Committee. This pamphlet of Comrade Krzhizhanovsky's, who works in the Electro-Technical Sub-Department of the Supreme Economic Council, summarises what has already been achieved and raises questions, the popularisation of which, not the practical application, is now one of the most important tasks.

I hope that the Central Executive Committee will adopt this resolution which instructs, in the name of the Central Executive Committee, the Supreme Economic Council and the People's Commissariat for Agriculture to work out over the next few months—our practical tasks during this period will be different—with the aid of scientists and engineers a broad and complete plan for the electrification of Russia. The author of this pamphlet is absolutely correct in choosing as its motto the saying: "The age of steam is the age of the bourgeoisie, the age of electricity is the age of social-

ism." We must have a new technical foundation for the new economic construction. This new technical foundation is electricity, and everything will have to be built on this foundation, but it will take many long years. We shall not be afraid of working ten or twenty years, but we must prove to the peasants that in place of the old isolation of industry and agriculture, this very deep contradiction on which capitalism thrived and which sowed dissension between the industrial and agricultural workers, we set ourselves the task of returning to the peasant the loan we received from him in the form of grain, for we know that paper money, of course, is not the equivalent of bread. We must repay this loan by organising industry and supplying the peasants with its products. We must show the peasants that the organisation of industry based on modern, advanced technology, on electrification which will provide a link between town and country, will put an end to the division between town and country, will make it possible to raise the level of culture in the countryside, and to overcome, even in the most remote corners of the land, the backwardness, ignorance, poverty, disease and barbarism. We shall tackle the problem as soon as we have dealt with our current, basic task. Not for a single moment shall we allow ourselves to be deflected from our fundamental, practical task to achieve this.

In the next few months all our energies must be concentrated on food transport and the extension of our resources of food supplies. There must not be the slightest departure from this. At the same time let the scientists and technicians produce a long-term plan for the electrification of the whole of Russia. Let the links which we have established with the outside world, with capitalist Europe, that gateway which we made for ourselves by concluding peace with Estonia, serve to provide us immediately with essential technical aid. And having solved the basic tasks of transport and food supplies in the coming months, having

solved the problem of labour conscription, on which we shall wholly concentrate all our energies, not allowing ourselves to be deflected from this in the next few months by anything else—having solved this, we shall prove that we can pass to the tasks of construction for many years to come, to the tasks of putting the whole of Russia onto an advanced technological footing which will abolish the division between town and country, and will make it possible to conquer completely and decisively the backwardness of the countryside, its scattered economy and its ignorance, which is the prime reason for all the stagnation, all the backwardness, all the oppression that have existed up to now. And in this matter, that of the peaceful victory on the bloodless front of the reorganisation of industry, we shall, if we employ all our military skill and all our energy, and concentrate all our forces on the fulfilment of this task, win victories in this field which will be even more decisive, even more glorious, than those we have won in the military field. (*Applause.*)

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IN REPLY TO QUESTIONS PUT BY A CORRESPONDENT OF THE *NEW YORK EVENING JOURNAL*³⁴

1. "Do we intend to attack Poland and Rumania?"

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

2. "What are our plans in Asia?"

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

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

Let the American capitalists leave us alone. We shall not touch them. We are even ready to pay them in gold for any machinery, tools, etc., useful to our transport and industries. We are ready to pay not only in gold, but in raw materials, too.

4. "What are the obstacles to such a peace?"

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

partition of colonies. Wars will then very soon become absolutely impossible.

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

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

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

The future belongs to the Soviet system all the world over. The facts have proved it. One has only to count, by quarterly periods say, the growth in the number of pamphlets, books, leaflets and newspapers standing for or sympathising with the Soviets published in any country. It cannot be otherwise. Once the workers in the cities, the workers, landless peasants and the handicraftsmen in the villages as well as the small peasants (i.e., those who do not exploit hired labour)—once this enormous majority of working people have understood that the Soviet system gives all power into their hands, releasing them from the yoke of landlords and capitalists—how could one prevent the victory of the Soviet system all over the world? I, for one, do not know of any means of preventing it.

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

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

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

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

V. Ulyanov (N. Lenin)

February 18, 1920

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IN REPLY TO QUESTIONS PUT BY A CORRESPONDENT OF THE *DAILY EXPRESS*³⁵

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

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

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

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

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

We are impatiently waiting to see the Allies' "decision" supported by their *deeds*, but the story of the Versailles Peace and of its consequences, unfortunately, indicates that in most cases the Allies' words disagree with their deeds and the decisions remain scraps of paper.

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

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

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

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

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SPEECH DELIVERED AT THE JOINT MEETING OF THE
ALL-RUSSIAN CENTRAL EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE,
THE MOSCOW SOVIET OF WORKERS', PEASANTS'
AND RED ARMY DEPUTIES, AND TRADE UNIONS
AND FACTORY COMMITTEES
MAY 5, 1920³⁶

(Applause.) Comrades, I should like to draw your attention to one aspect distinguishing the present war from previous wars from the international point of view, or to put it more correctly, from the point of view of Russia's international position. Of course, none of you doubt, or could doubt, that this war is one link in a long chain of events involving the frantic resistance of the international bourgeoisie against the victorious proletariat, the frantic attempt of the international bourgeoisie to crush Soviet Russia and to overthrow the first Soviet state at all costs and by all means. There cannot be the slightest doubt that there is a connection between these events, between previous attempts of the international bourgeoisie and the present war. But at the same time we see what a tremendous difference there is between this war and previous wars from the point of view of our international position. We see what a tremendous impetus our struggle gave to the international working-class movement. We see how the international proletariat reacts to Soviet Russia's victories,

how the world proletarian struggle grows and strengthens, and what gigantic work has been done in the slightly more than two years' existence of the Soviet Republic.

You remember how the most responsible, most powerful ministers of the mightiest, unrivalled capitalist powers announced quite recently that they had prepared an alliance of 14 powers against Russia; you know how this alliance, under pressure of the powerful capitalists of France and Britain, brought together Yudenich, Kolchak and Denikin, and how it drew up a really grandiose and comprehensive military plan of campaign. We ruined this plan because the imperialists only appeared to be united, and the forces of the international bourgeoisie cannot survive a single trial when it is a matter of real sacrifice. It appeared that after four years of imperialist slaughter the working people do not recognise the justice of a war against us, and in them we have a great ally. The Entente's plan was really destructive, but it came to grief because the capitalist states, despite their very powerful alliance, could not carry it through—they were unable to put it into effect. Not a single power, any one of whom could have gained the upper hand over us, was able to show unity, because the organised proletariat is not in support of it, not a single army—neither the French nor the British—could ensure that its soldiers could fight against the Soviet Republic on Russian soil.

If in our mind's eye we follow the desperate situations in which our republic found itself when in fact it stood against the whole world, against powers immeasurably more mighty, and if we recollect how we emerged completely victorious from these terrible trials, then these recollections will give us a clear idea of what we now face. What we have here is not a new plan but at the same time it in no way resembles that really comprehensive, unified plan that faced us six months ago. We have the debris of the former plan and this, above all, in the light of the

international balance of forces, guarantees the futility of the present attempts. The former plan was an attempt by all the imperialist powers to crush the Workers' and Peasants' Republic in alliance with all the small border states of the former Russian Empire which had been shamelessly and outrageously oppressed by the tsarist and capitalist government of Great Russia. Now a few powers, in alliance with one of the border states, are attempting to accomplish what was found impossible by all the imperialist powers in alliance with all the border states and what was undertaken by them twelve and six months ago in alliance with Kolchak, Denikin and others. We now see the debris of the imperialist plan. The peculiarity of the imperialist plans is that the bourgeoisie are showing their particular tenacity. They know that they are fighting to hold onto power at home, that it is not the Russian or Polish question that is being decided, but the question of their own survival. We should, therefore, expect them to try to salvage the former, unsuccessful plan from the debris.

All of us can clearly see the clashing of interests of the imperialist states. Despite all the pronouncements of their ministers about the peaceful settlement of questions in dispute, in reality the imperialist powers cannot take one serious step in political matters without disagreeing. The French need a powerful Poland and a powerful Russia of the tsarist brand, and they are prepared to make every sacrifice to this end. Britain, however, owing to her geographical position strives for something else—for the breaking up of Russia and the weakening of Poland, so as to strike an even balance between France and Germany which would guarantee the imperialist victors control of the colonies they acquired by robbing Germany as a consequence of the world war. Here the difference of interests is really glaring, and no matter how the representatives of the imperialist powers at San Remo³⁷ try to convince us

that there is absolute unanimity between the Allies, we know that this is not so.

We know that Poland's attack is a debris of the old plan which at one time united the entire international bourgeoisie, and if that grandiose plan was unsuccessful then, even though from the purely military point of view it was sure of certain success, today, even from that aspect, it has not a hope. Furthermore, we know that the imperialist powers who have made an alliance with the Polish bourgeoisie and the Polish Government are in a bigger mess than ever. Every political move made by the Polish bourgeoisie over the past months, weeks and days has shown them up before their own working people. They quarrel with their allies and cannot make a single consistent step in their policy. One moment they announce their uncompromising attitude to Soviet Russia and the impossibility of having any kind of negotiations with her, the next moment they raise the blockade and solemnly announce this on behalf of the allegedly existing alliance, the allegedly existing League of Nations. Then they again commence a policy of vacillation, in consequence of which the imperialists have enabled and are enabling us to prove that our policy is peaceful, that our international policy has nothing in common with either tsarist policy or that of the Russian capitalists or the Russian bourgeoisie, even a democratic bourgeoisie. We have proved to the entire world that our foreign policy has nothing in common with the policy constantly attributed to us by the whole bourgeois press. Consequently, the Poles themselves have exposed every bit of deception in their policy. The experience of three Russian revolutions has taught us how they were prepared and how each served as the basis for the further development of home and foreign policy. This experience proves that our most faithful assistants in the preparation of revolution are the ruling classes, who, laying claim to all kinds of coalitions, constituent assemblies and so on,

claiming to represent the will of the people, actually in their own policy at every serious, difficult and crucial moment in the life of the country, show up the self-interest of bourgeois groups battling against each other, unable to come to terms, of competing capitalist groups who expose themselves a hundred times more effectively than is done by communist propaganda. There is not a single country or state where the working class, even if it were the most revolutionary, could ever be made revolutionary by any propaganda and agitation, unless that agitation was backed up in practice by the behaviour of the ruling classes of its own country.

What is now taking place in all capitalist countries (and this will develop even more with time, particularly in a country like Poland) makes us confident that if we emerged as victors from a war that was undoubtedly far more difficult, and if we have correctly assessed the discord and irreconcilability of the bourgeoisie of various groups and parties at times when they are particularly in need of such an alliance, the improvement in our international position is now enormous. This fills us with confidence in view of both the internal and the international balance of forces. If we take the entire system of all the modern imperialist states, if we take all their desires—and we know that their desire to use every moment for an attack on Russia is irresistible—and judge them quite objectively in the light of the incontrovertible facts of the history of recent years and particularly of the past six months, we shall see that the international enemy is weakening, and that all attempts at an alliance between the imperialists are becoming more and more futile, and that from this aspect our victory is assured.

However, comrades, while engaged in economic tasks and having concentrated all our attention on peaceful economic construction, we face the approach of a new war, and it is essential for us to rapidly re-form our ranks. Our

entire army, which has recently been a labour army,³⁸ must now turn its attention to other matters. We must drop everything else and concentrate on this new war. We are perfectly well aware that after all that we have been through we do not have to fear the enemy before us now, but he may impose new, heavy sacrifices on the workers and peasants, he may considerably impede our economic construction, bring on the ruin and devastation of tens, hundreds and thousands of peasant households. He may also, by his temporary success, revive the lost hopes of the imperialists who were defeated by us and who will, of course, unavoidably join forces with this enemy. We must, therefore, declare that the rule observed by us throughout all previous wars must be resolutely re-enforced. If in the face of all our most conciliatory intentions, despite the fact that we made great concessions and renounced all national claims, the Polish landlords and the Polish bourgeoisie have forced a war on us; if we are certain, and we must be certain, that the bourgeoisie of all countries, even those who at present are not helping the Poles, will help them when the war flares up, because it is not only a Russian or Polish question—but a question of the survival of the whole bourgeoisie—then we must remember and at all costs carry right through the rule that we followed in our policy and which was always the guarantee of our success. This rule is that once things have led to war then everything must be subordinated to its interests; all the internal life of the country must be subordinated to the interests of the war; the slightest hesitation on this score is impermissible. No matter how hard it is for the great majority of comrades to tear themselves away from their work which has only recently been switched onto a new course, more gratifying and essential for the tasks of peaceful construction, it must be remembered that the least oversight or inattention may often mean the deaths of tens of thousands of our best comrades, our

younger generation of workers and peasants, our communists who, as always, are in the front ranks of the fighters. Therefore, once more—everything for the war effort. Not a single meeting, not a single conference should be held without having as its first item the question: have we done everything possible to help the war effort, have all our forces been sufficiently mobilised, have we sent sufficient help to the front? Only those people who cannot help at the front should remain here. Every sacrifice, every assistance for the front, without the slightest hesitation. And, by concentrating all efforts and bearing every sacrifice, we shall undoubtedly triumph again. (*Applause.*)

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of Workers', Peasants' and Red
Army Deputies*

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SPEECH DELIVERED AT A CONFERENCE
OF CHAIRMEN OF UYEZD, VOLOST AND VILLAGE
EXECUTIVE COMMITTEES OF MOSCOW GUBERNIA
OCTOBER 15, 1920

Comrades, you wanted to hear a report on the question of the domestic and foreign position of the republic, and I shall naturally have to devote most of my remarks to the war with Poland and its causes. It was precisely this war that in the main determined the domestic and foreign position of the republic during the past six months. And it is only now when a provisional peace with Poland has just been signed, it is now that it is possible and necessary to take a general look at this war, at its significance and try to think over the lessons taught us all by this war which has only just finished, but whether for good nobody knows. Therefore, I first wish to remind you that on April 26 this year the Poles started their attack. The Soviet Republic solemnly and formally made a peace offer to the Poles, the Polish landlords and the Polish bourgeoisie, the terms of which were more favourable than the present terms despite the great reverses suffered by our troops at Warsaw, and the even greater reverses during the retreat from Warsaw. At the end of April this year, the Polish front lay 50-150 versts to the east of the line which they now regard as the line of the provisional peace; in spite of the fact that at that time the line was

obviously unfair, we solemnly, on behalf of the All-Russian Central Executive Committee, made a peace offer to them, since, as you all of course know and remember, the main concern of the Soviet Government then was to safeguard the transition to peaceful construction. We had no reason for wishing to settle questions in dispute between ourselves and the Polish state through war. We were fully aware that the Polish state was then and still is a state of landlords and capitalists, and that it is absolutely dependent on the capitalists of the Entente countries, in particular on France. Despite the fact that at that time Poland held sway, not only over the whole of Lithuania, but over Byelorussia, to say nothing of Eastern Galicia, we considered it our duty to do everything possible to avoid war, so that the working class and peasants of Russia would be able to rest, even if for a short while, from imperialist and civil wars, and at last get down in earnest to peaceful work. What happened has happened all too frequently; our straightforward, open statement that we were offering the Poles peace on the line where they stood, was regarded as a sign of weakness. Bourgeois diplomats of all countries are not accustomed to such frank declarations, and our readiness to conclude peace on a line so disadvantageous to us was taken and interpreted as proof of our extreme weakness. The French capitalists succeeded in inciting the Polish capitalists to go to war. You will remember how, after a short interval, following the Polish attack, we replied by dealing a counter-blow and almost reached Warsaw, after which our troops suffered a heavy defeat, and were thrown back.

For more than a month and during the entire recent period our troops were retreating and suffered reverses, for they were utterly worn out and exhausted from their incredible march from Polotsk to Warsaw. But, I repeat, despite this grim situation, peace was concluded on terms less advantageous to Poland than the previous terms. The frontier at that time was 50 versts to the east, now it is

50 versts to the west. Despite the fact, therefore, that we concluded peace at a time when it was advantageous only to the enemy, when our troops were retreating and Wrangel was pressing forward with renewed force, the terms of the peace treaty were more advantageous for ourselves. This once again proves to you that when the Soviet Government makes a peace offer, its words and statements have to be treated seriously, for otherwise what happens is that we offer peace on terms less favourable to us and get this peace on more favourable terms. The Polish landlords and capitalists will not, of course, forget this lesson; they realise that they went too far; now the peace terms give them less territory than was offered them previously. And this is not the first lesson. Probably you all remember that in the spring of 1919 a representative of the American Government came to Moscow and proposed a provisional peace with us and with all the whiteguard commanders at the time: Kolchak, Denikin and others, a peace which would have been extremely unfavourable to us. When he returned and reported on the terms of this peace, our terms were not considered advantageous, and the war continued. You know the results of this war. This means that it is not the first time that the Soviet Government has proved to be considerably stronger than it appears, and that our notes do not contain the boasts and threats which are customary to all bourgeois governments; this means that not to agree to peace with Soviet Russia is tantamount to obtaining peace some time later on far worse conditions. Such things are not forgotten in international politics, and having proved to the Polish landlords that they now have a worse peace than the one which we originally offered, we shall teach the Polish people, the Polish peasants and workers, to judge and compare the statements of their government and of our government.

Possibly many of you have seen in the newspapers the note of the American Government in which it states: "We

do not wish to have dealings with the Soviet Government because it does not fulfil its pledges." We are not surprised, because this has been said for many years, and still the ultimate result has always been that all their attempts to invade Soviet Russia ended in disaster. The Polish newspapers, nearly all of which are in the pay of the landlords and capitalists—this they call the freedom of the press—say that the Soviet Government is not to be trusted, that it is a government of tyrants and cheats. All the Polish newspapers say this, but the Polish workers and peasants check the words with the deeds, and deeds have shown that we proved our love of peace the first time we made our peace offer; by concluding peace in October we proved this again. You will not find such proof in the history of a single bourgeois government, and this fact cannot but leave an impression on the minds of the Polish workers and peasants. The Soviet Government concluded peace at a time when it was not to its advantage to do so. Only in this way shall we teach the governments of states in the hands of landlords and capitalists to stop lying, and shall we destroy the faith which the workers and peasants have in them. We must reflect more on this than on anything else. Soviet power in Russia is surrounded by innumerable enemies, and yet these enemies are powerless. Think of the course and outcome of the Polish war. We now know that the French capitalists were behind Poland, that they supplied Poland with money, equipment, uniforms, shells and sent them French officers. We learned quite recently of the appearance of black troops on the Polish front, namely, French colonial troops. This means that France conducted the war, and she was assisted by Britain and America. At the same time in the person of Wrangel France recognised the legitimate government of Russia—so France was supporting Wrangel as well and gave him the means to equip and maintain an army. Britain and America are also giving aid to Wrangel's army. Consequently, three allies were

against us: France, supported by all the rich countries of the world, Poland and Wrangel—and we emerged from this war having concluded a favourable peace. This means we remained victors. Looking at the map everyone will see that we were victorious, that we emerged from this war with more territory than we had before it started. But can it be said that the enemy is weaker than we are, that he is weaker in the military sense, and that he has fewer people, fewer war supplies, less ammunition? He has more of everything. This enemy is stronger than we are, and yet he was beaten. This is something we need to think about in order to understand Soviet Russia's position with respect to all the other countries.

When the Bolsheviks started the revolution they said that it could and must be started, but at the same time we did not forget that the only way in which we could successfully end it and bring it to a completely victorious conclusion would be not to restrict ourselves to Russia alone, but, in alliance with a whole number of countries, to defeat international capital. Russian capital is linked with international capital. And when our enemies say to us: even if you were to win in Russia your cause will nevertheless perish, because the other capitalist states will crush you, we now have an answer—the highly important experience of the war with Poland, which shows how things actually turned out. In fact, why did it happen that within six months—and even less if we regard the start of the attack as taking place in April—France, Poland and Wrangel, more powerful than we are, full of hatred towards Bolshevism and of determination to overthrow Soviet power, were defeated, and that the war ended in our favour? How could it happen that Soviet Russia, exhausted by the imperialist and civil wars, surrounded by enemies, cut off from every source of clothing and equipment—this Soviet Russia turned out to be the victor? We must reflect on this, because if we go deep into this question we begin to under-

stand the mechanics not only of the Russian, but of the world revolution as well. We see confirmation that the Russian revolution is only one link in the chain of the world revolution, and that our cause is strong and invincible, because the revolutionary cause is growing throughout the world; economic conditions are taking shape in such a way that they are making our enemies weaker and making us stronger with every passing day. That this is neither exaggeration, nor boasting nor yet over-enthusiasm has once again been proved to you by the Polish war. Three allies were fighting against us. You would have thought that it would not have been difficult for the three allies to unite, but it turned out that, enlightened by the great experience of the war of Yudenich, Kolchak and Denikin, they were unable to unite against us and at every step they quarrelled among themselves. The history of the Polish war which has only just ended is particularly instructive in this connection. Our march on Warsaw, the march of the Red Army in which weary, exhausted, poorly-clad soldiers trudged more than 600 versts, continuously inflicting one defeat after another on the Polish troops, which were excellently trained and supplied with hundreds of the best instructors out of the French officers—this march revealed to us the relations between all our enemies. When the Red Army troops were approaching the Polish frontier we recieved a telegram, on July 12, from the British Foreign Secretary, Lord Curzon, on behalf of the League of Nations, the notorious League of Nations, an alliance which professes to unite Britain, France, America, Italy and Japan, countries which possess military forces, gigantic forces, which possess all the navies of the world, and against which military resistance would seem to be something perfectly impossible and absurd. On behalf of this League of Nations Curzon proposes that we stop the war and enter into negotiations with the Poles in London. According to this telegram, the frontier should be a line in the proximity of Grodno, Bialystok,

Brest-Litovsk and along the River San in Eastern Galicia. We replied to this proposal saying that we do not recognise any League of Nations, because we have seen its insignificance, and even its members disregard it. The French Government considered our reply impudent, and you would have thought that this League of Nations would have launched an attack on us. But what happened? The League of Nations went to pieces at our very first statement, and Britain and France fell on each other.

For several years the British War Minister, Churchill, has been using all possible means, legitimate and more often illegitimate, from the viewpoint of British law, to support all the whiteguards against Russia, to supply them with military equipment. He bitterly hates Soviet Russia; yet immediately after our statement Britain fell out with France, because France needs the forces of a whiteguard Russia to protect her from Germany, while Britain needs no such protection. Britain is a naval power, she fears no action because she has a very strong navy. So, from the very outset, the League of Nations, which had sent such unheard-of threats to Russia, was itself helpless. At every step it is obvious that the interests of the members of the League conflict. France desires the defeat of Britain and vice versa. And when Comrade Kamenev was negotiating with the British Government in London and said to the British Prime Minister, "Suppose you really do what you say, but what about France?" the British Prime Minister had to reply that France would go her own way. "We cannot take the same road as France," he said. It became plain that the League of Nations was non-existent, that the alliance of the capitalist powers is sheer fraud, and that in actual fact it is an alliance of robbers, each one of whom tries to snatch something from the other. And when we discovered, at the conclusion of peace in Riga, what divided Poland, Britain, France and Wrangel, why they could not act in unison, we learnt that their interests differ:

Britain wants to have in her sphere of influence the new, small states—Finland, Estonia, Latvia and Lithuania—and has no interest in, and even stands to lose from, the restoration of tsarist, or whiteguard, or even bourgeois, Russia. That is why the actions of Britain run counter to those of France, and she cannot ally herself with Poland and Wrangel. France's concern is to fight to the last Polish soldier for her interests, for her debts. She hopes we shall pay her the 20 thousand million debt incurred by the former tsar and recognised by the Kerensky government. Every sensible person realises that the French capitalists will not see this money again any more than they will ever see their ears. The French capitalists realise that the workers and peasants of France cannot be sent to war, but that they can send as many Polish soldiers as they want; let them die so that the French capitalists may get back their billions. The Polish workers too, however, can see that French, British and other officers in Poland behave as if they were in a conquered country. That is why, during the Riga negotiations, we saw that the party of the Polish workers and peasants—undoubtedly patriotic, undoubtedly hostile to Bolshevism, like our Right Menshevik and Socialist-Revolutionary parties—stood for peace and was opposed to the government of the Polish landlords and capitalists, who up to the last moment tried to wreck the peace, who aim at doing so even now, and will long continue to do so. I shall have to speak on this point when I broach the question of whether the provisional peace we have just concluded will last.

The third ally, Wrangel, who fought for the return of Russia to the landlords and capitalists, regards Poland as part of Russia. All the Russian tsars, landlords and capitalists were accustomed to regard Poland as their prey; they never forgot that Poland had been crushed by the Russian serfs when they were led to war by the tsar. This meant that if Wrangel had been victorious, he would have used

his victory in order to restore full power both in Russia and in Poland to the landlords. What happened, however, was that, when the three allies stood ready to attack us, they began to fight among themselves. What France wants, neither the Polish peasant nor the Polish worker wants, and what Wrangel wants, not even a single Polish landlord wants. And now, when we hear Wrangel's radio broadcasts or the French Government radio communications from Paris, we see that France and Wrangel are grinding their teeth because they realise the implication of this peace which we have concluded with Poland, although they assert that it is not a peace, and that Poland cannot sign it. We shall see—meanwhile peace has been signed. But in point of fact, neither Wrangel nor France really understand what this means. They cannot stomach the miracle of devastated Soviet Russia defeating civilised countries stronger than herself. They do not understand that the whole strength of these victories lies in the basic teaching of Communists that property divides and labour unites. Private property is robbery, and a state based on private property is a state of robbers who are fighting for a share of the spoils. And although they have not yet finished this war they are already fighting among themselves. A year ago fourteen states threatened us. But this alliance of fourteen states broke up immediately. And why did it break up? Simply because the agreement between these states only existed on paper, and not one of them went to war. And now, when a war has started, when France, Poland and Wrangel have joined forces, their alliance too broke up, because they are trying to trip each other up. They are trying to divide up the skin of the bear which they have not yet killed and never will kill. And they are already fighting over this bear.

The experience of world politics has proved that an alliance against Soviet Russia is inevitably doomed to failure, because it is an imperialist alliance, an alliance of robbers who are not united, and who have no genuine, per-

manent interest in common. They lack that which unites the working class, they have no common interest, and this was again revealed during the Polish war. When our Red Army broke the resistance of the Poles, when it captured Bialystok and Brest-Litovsk and approached the Polish frontier, this signified the collapse of the entire international policy, for it is based on the Treaty of Versailles, which is a treaty of robbers and plunderers. When we were forced to sign the Brest peace, the burden of which we bore for so long, the whole world cried out that it was a robber's peace. When Germany was defeated, the League of Nations which had been fighting against her proclaimed the war to be a liberation war, a democratic war. Peace was forced on Germany, but this was a usurer's peace, a strangler's peace, a butcher's peace, because they looted and parcelled out Germany and Austria. They deprived them of all means of existence, and the children were left to starve and die of hunger; this was a predatory peace without parallel. Therefore, what is the Treaty of Versailles? It is an unparalleled, predatory peace which has made slaves of tens of millions including the most civilised human beings. This is not a peace; these are terms dictated by robbers with knives in their hands to their defenceless victim. Under the Treaty of Versailles her enemies have deprived Germany of all her colonies. Turkey, Persia and China have been enslaved. A situation has arisen where seven-tenths of the world's population is in a position of servitude. These slaves are scattered all over the world and are at the mercy of a group of countries: Britain, France and Japan. That is why the entire international system, the order based on the Treaty of Versailles, stands on the edge of a volcano, for the seven-tenths of the world's population who are enslaved are just waiting impatiently for someone to give a lead in the struggle which would make all these countries begin to shake. France, hoping to be repaid old debts, is herself in debt to America whom she cannot repay since

she has nothing, and private property there is sacred. What is the essence of this sacred, private property? It is merely that tsars and capitalists borrow money, and the workers and peasants have to repay the debt for them. They are on the eve of a crash. They cannot meet their debts. And just at that moment the Red Army broke through the Polish frontier and approached the German frontier. That was when everybody in Germany, even the reactionaries and monarchists, was saying that the Bolsheviks would save them, it being evident that the Versailles peace was falling to pieces, that there was a Red Army which had declared war on all capitalists. And what happened? What happened was that the Versailles peace now hinges on Poland. It is true that we were not strong enough to bring the war to an end. We have to remember, however, that our workers and peasants were barefooted and in rags, but all the same they marched forward and overcame difficulties and fought under conditions never before experienced by any other army in the whole world. We lacked the strength, we could not take Warsaw and finish off the Polish landlords, whiteguards and capitalists, but our army showed the whole world that the Treaty of Versailles is not the force that it is made out to be, that hundreds of millions of people are now condemned for many years to repay loans themselves, and to make their grandchildren and great-grandchildren to do the same in order to enrich the French, British and other imperialists. The Red Army proved that the Treaty of Versailles is not very firm. After the Treaty of Versailles our army showed that in the summer of 1920, the Soviet country, devastated as it was, was within a few steps of complete victory thanks to the Red Army. The whole world saw that there is a force for which the Treaty of Versailles holds no terror, and that no Versailles treaties will subdue the power of the workers and peasants once they know how to deal with the landlords and capitalists.

So, the very campaign against the Versailles peace, the campaign against all the capitalists and landlords of every country and against their oppression of others was not in vain. Millions upon millions of workers and peasants in all countries have been watching this and thinking about it and they now see, in the Soviet Republic, their deliverers. They say: the Red Army has shown that it can give blow for blow, but it was not strong enough for victory in the first year or, you might even say, in the first month of its peaceful construction. That first month of peaceful construction, however, will be followed by many years, and with every year that passes it will become ten times stronger. It was thought that the Versailles peace was a peace of omnipotent imperialists, but after the summer of 1920 they proved to be weaker than the workers and peasants of even a weak country, when they know how to unite their forces and repulse the capitalists. In the summer of 1920 Soviet Russia emerged as a force which not only defended itself against an attack, against the onslaught of the Polish whiteguards, but revealed itself in fact as a world force able to wreck the Treaty of Versailles and to free hundreds of millions of people in the majority of countries of the world. This is the significance of the Red Army campaign which took place this summer. That is why events took place in Britain during this war which marked a turning-point in the whole of British policy. When we refused to halt our troops Britain replied by a threat: "We are sending our fleet to Petrograd." The order was given to attack Petrograd. That is what the British Prime Minister announced to Comrade Kamenev, and all countries were notified. But on the day following the dispatch of this telegram meetings were held throughout Britain, and Councils of Action sprang up like mushrooms. The workers united. All the British Mensheviks, who are even more vile than the Russian, and who to a far greater degree play the part of lackeys to the capitalists, even they had to join in because

the workers demanded it, because the British workers said: "We shall not permit a war against Russia!" And all over Britain Councils of Action were formed, the war plans of the British imperialists were frustrated, and once again it was proved that in her war against the imperialists of all countries Soviet Russia has allies in each of them. When the Bolsheviks were saying: "We are not alone in our revolt against the landlords and capitalists of Russia, because in every country we have an ally, the worker and peasant; that ally is to be found in the majority of countries"—we were ridiculed and asked: "Where are these working people to be seen?" Yes, it is true that in Western Europe, where the capitalists are much stronger, where they live at the expense of hundreds of millions in the plundered colonies, it is far more difficult to rise in revolt. There the working-class revolution is developing incomparably more slowly. Nevertheless it is developing. And when, in July 1920, Britain threatened Russia with war, the British workers prevented that war from taking place. The British Mensheviks followed the British Bolsheviks. They had to follow the British Bolsheviks and come out against the Constitution, against the law, saying: "We shall not permit this war. If you declare war tomorrow, we shall call a strike and not only shall we not give coal to you, but we shall not give France coal, either." The British workers declared that they wanted to shape foreign policy; and they are directing it in the same way as the Bolsheviks in Russia and not as the capitalists in other countries.

That is an example of what the Polish war brought to light. That is why we emerged as victors within six months. That is why devastated, weak, backward Soviet Russia is defeating the alliance of incomparably more powerful states; this is so because they lack strength at home, because the workers and the working people in general are against them, and this is apparent at every crisis. This is apparent because they are robbers who attack each other and

cannot unite against us; because, in the final analysis, private property divides people and transforms them into beasts, whereas labour unites them. And labour has not only united the workers and peasants of Russia, it has united them with the workers and peasants of all countries; and consequently, now in all these countries the people can see that Soviet Russia is the force which is wrecking the Versailles peace. Soviet Russia will become stronger, and the Treaty of Versailles will collapse as it all but collapsed at the first blow of the Red Army in July 1920. That is why the Polish war ended in a manner not bargained for by a single imperialist state. And this is a lesson of supreme importance for us, for it shows by the example and behaviour of all the countries taking part in international politics that our cause is strong, that no matter what attempts are made to invade Russia, what military moves are made against us, and in all probability there will be many more such attempts, all these attempts will go up in smoke as we know from our actual experience, in which we have been steeled. After every such attempt by our enemies we shall emerge stronger than ever.

I shall now turn from international politics, where the clash with the Versailles peace demonstrated our strength, to problems which are more immediate and practical, to the situation which arose in connection with the Treaty of Versailles. I shall not dwell on the significance of the Second Congress of the Communist International which took place in Moscow in July, the congress of the Communists of the whole world, and the Congress of the Peoples of the East which took place afterwards in Baku.³⁹ They were international congresses that united the Communists and showed that in all the civilised countries, and in all the backward Eastern countries, the banner of Bolshevism, the programme of Bolshevism, the line of the Bolsheviks' action, represent for the workers of all the civilised countries, and for the peasants of all the backward colonial

countries, the banner of salvation, the banner of struggle. They showed that during the past three years Soviet Russia did in fact not only beat off those who threw themselves on her in order to throttle her, but earned herself the sympathy of the working people of the whole world; that we not only defeated our enemies, but acquired and are still acquiring new allies daily and by the hour. It is not possible to assess immediately what was achieved by the congress of Communists in Moscow and the congress of Communist representatives of the peoples of the East in Baku; this does not lend itself to a direct calculation, but it is a victory of greater significance than some military victories, because it proves to us that the experience of the Bolsheviks, their activities and programme, their call to revolutionary struggle against the capitalists and imperialists have won world-wide recognition. What was achieved in Moscow in July and in Baku in September will for many months to come be reflected on and assimilated by the workers and peasants of the world. They are a force which in any conflict or crisis that may arise will, as we have frequently seen, declare itself for Soviet Russia. This is the fundamental lesson of the Polish war from the standpoint of the balance of world forces.

In dealing with events at home I must say that the chief force in the field against us is Wrangel. France, Poland and Wrangel went against us together. When our forces were wholly engaged in the war on the Western front Wrangel gathered his forces together, aided by the French and British navies. When Wrangel approached the Kuban he was hoping for the support of wealthy Cossack kulaks. Who was it that aided Wrangel then? Who gave him fuel and a fleet in order to maintain him in the Donets Basin? The British and American navies. We know, however, that this landing operation failed, for the Kuban Cossack, with plenty of grain, could see perfectly well through those promises of a constituent assembly, rule of the

people and other fine things with which the Mensheviks, Socialist-Revolutionaries, etc., tried to fool people. Perhaps the Kuban peasants had believed them when they spoke so eloquently, but in the long run they put their faith in deeds not in words, and saw that although the Bolsheviks were stern people, things were nevertheless better with them. As a result Wrangel fled from the Kuban, and many hundreds and thousands of his troops were shot. Despite this, Wrangel assembled more and more of his forces in the Crimea; his troops consisted mainly of officers. This was done in the hope that at the first favourable moment it would be possible to increase these forces provided they had the support of the peasants.

Wrangel's troops are better equipped with guns, tanks, aeroplanes than all the other armies that had fought in Russia. Wrangel was assembling his forces when we were fighting the Poles; that is why I say that the peace with Poland is unstable. According to the provisional peace signed on the 12th, the armistice will come into force only on the 18th, and the Poles still have two days in which they can repudiate it. The whole French press and the capitalists are striving to incite Poland to start a new war against Soviet Russia; Wrangel is hastening to use all his connections in order to wreck this peace, because he can see that when the war with Poland is ended the Bolsheviks will turn against him. The only practical conclusion for us, therefore, is to direct all our forces against Wrangel. In April this year we proposed peace on terms which were unfavourable to us only in order to spare tens of thousands of workers and peasants the carnage of a new war. For us frontiers do not matter so much, we do not mind losing some territory in the frontier regions; it is far more important for us to preserve the lives of tens of thousands of workers and peasants, to retain the possibility of peaceful construction, than to retain a small piece of territory. That is why we submitted this peace proposal and now repeat that

Wrangel is the main threat, that his troops, which have grown in strength enormously in the meantime, are fighting desperately, at points have crossed the Dnieper and have taken the offensive. Wrangel's front and the Polish front are one and the same thing, and the question of the war with Wrangel is the question of the war with Poland, and in order to turn the provisional peace with Poland into a permanent peace we must crush Wrangel in the shortest possible space of time. If this is not done we cannot be certain that the Polish landlords and capitalists, under the pressure of the French landlords and capitalists and with their help, may not once again try to embroil us in war. That is why I am taking advantage of this broadly representative meeting to draw your attention to this fundamental question and to ask you to make use of your position and authority in order to influence the broad mass of workers and peasants and ensure that the greatest possible efforts are made towards the full achievement of our immediate task—at all costs to crush Wrangel in the shortest space of time, as the possibility of our engaging in the work of peaceful construction depends only on this.

We know that in this devastated country the peasant economy has been thoroughly destroyed, that the peasant needs goods, not the paper money which is being showered on him in such profusion. But in order to supply him with goods: paraffin oil, salt, clothing, etc., industry must be restored. We are approaching the position when we can do this. We know that we now have more grain than we had last year, and we have fuel for industry, we have over 100 million poods of oil from Baku. The Donets Basin, which supplies an enormous quantity of fuel, has been rehabilitated; and despite the fact that during Wrangel's march to the south of the Donets Basin some industrial enterprises had to be evacuated, Donets industry may, nevertheless, be considered to be completely restored. Timber felling has improved; whereas last year we laid in seven

million cubic metres, we now have considerably more. Our industry is reviving. In Ivanovo-Voznesensk Gubernia where for a number of years the factories were at a standstill putting all the workers in low spirits, the factories are now being supplied with fuel and are beginning to function. Thanks to the victories in Turkestan, they have received Turkestan cotton and are beginning to function. Before us now lies a vast field of productive work, and we must do everything possible to rehabilitate industry, to supply clothing, footwear and food to the peasant and so commence the fair exchange of grain for town products. We must begin to help agriculture. Yesterday, in the Council of People's Commissars, we decided to encourage by extra rations the workers of the factory that will manufacture the first plough proving most suitable to our Russian conditions, so that we may improve our agriculture and raise it to a higher level, despite the lack of cattle.

The workers and peasants are working together and achieving successes without landlords and capitalists, but in order to tackle this question in earnest we need one thing: we need to firmly remember that tens of thousands of workers and peasants are now dying on the Wrangel front, that the enemy is better armed than we are, that there, on the Wrangel front, the last desperate battle is being fought out; that there the question is being decided whether Soviet Russia will have a chance to strengthen herself for peaceful labour, so that not only no Polish whiteguards, but no imperialist, world-wide alliance would hold any terror for her. It depends on you, comrades. You must exert all your efforts and remember that Soviet Russia was able to solve all the problems of her struggle, not because decrees were being issued from the centre, but because these decrees met with the enthusiastic and ardent sympathy of the workers and peasants in the localities. Only when the workers and peasants saw that they were fighting against Kolchak, Denikin and Wrangel for their own land, factories

and workshops, for their own interests against the landlords and capitalists, did every one of them give the Red Army every possible support and assistance. When the Red Army men saw that the people in the rear were doing all they could for them, they were filled with that spirit which led them to victory. Everything depends on our defeating Wrangel, and I call on you to do everything possible in your organisations, factories and workshops, in your villages, voluntarily and in accordance with the interests of the workers and peasants of the whole of Russia, to come to the aid of the Wrangel front, and then we shall be victorious, both on the Wrangel front and on the international front. (*Stormy applause.*)

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OUR FOREIGN AND DOMESTIC POSITION AND THE TASKS OF THE PARTY

(Speech Delivered to the Moscow Gubernia Conference
of the R.C.P.(B.), November 21, 1920)

(*Applause.*) Comrades, in speaking of the international position of the Soviet Republic we naturally have to deal mainly with the Polish war and Wrangel's defeat. I think that at a meeting of Party workers who, of course, have followed the Party press and have frequently heard major reports on this question, there is no need and it would be superfluous for me to dwell on the details of the whole of this period or on every separate turn in the course of the Polish war, on the nature of our offensives, or on the significance of our defeat at Warsaw. I assume that the majority of comrades are so familiar with this aspect that I would only have to repeat myself, and this would be unsatisfactory to these comrades. I shall, therefore, not speak on the various episodes and turns of our Polish war, but on the results before us now.

After the Red Army's brilliant victories in the summer and the heavy defeat at Warsaw, after the conclusion of a provisional peace with Poland which at this very moment in Riga is being, or at least should be, made a final peace, the chances that this provisional peace will really become a final peace have greatly increased; they have increased

due to the rout of Wrangel. Now that this rout has become an established fact the imperialist press of the Entente countries is beginning to show its cards and confess what it most of all has up to now kept hidden.

I do not know whether you noticed a small item in the papers today or a few days ago reporting that the newspaper *Times* (*Temps*), the chief organ of the French imperialist bourgeoisie, now says the peace with Poland was concluded against France's advice. There can be no doubt that the spokesmen of the French bourgeoisie are here admitting a truth which they would have most of all preferred to conceal and which for a very long time they have tried to conceal. Despite the unfavourable terms of the Polish peace (although they are more favourable than those we ourselves offered to the Polish landlords last April in order to avoid any war)—and they are unfavourable as compared to what could have been achieved but for the extremely serious situation at Warsaw—we succeeded in obtaining terms which frustrate the greater part of the general plan of the imperialists. The French bourgeoisie now admit that they insisted on Poland continuing the war, that they were opposed to the conclusion of peace, fearing the rout of Wrangel's army and wishing to support a new intervention and campaign against the Soviet Republic. Despite the fact that the conditions of Polish imperialism impel and have impelled it to war against Russia, despite this, the plans of the French imperialists were wrecked, and as a result we now have gained something more substantial than a mere breathing-space.

Of the small states previously belonging to the Russian Empire, Poland was among those which, during the past three years, were most of all at odds with the Great Russian nation, and which most of all laid claim to a large slice of territory not inhabited by the Poles. We also concluded peace with Finland, Estonia and Latvia against the wishes of the imperialist Entente, but it was easier to do this

because the bourgeoisie of Finland, Estonia and Latvia had no imperialist aims of their own which would call for war against the Soviet Republic, whereas the Polish bourgeois republic had an eye, not only on Lithuania and Byelorussia, but also on the Ukraine. Furthermore, it was impelled in this direction by the age-long struggle of Poland who used to be a major power and who is now pitting herself against another major power—Russia. Even at the present time Poland cannot refrain from this age-long struggle. That is why Poland was much more bellicose and stubborn in her war plans against our Republic and that is why our present success in concluding peace against the wishes of the Entente is so much more resounding. If there is any power retaining a bourgeois system and bordering on Russia on whom the Entente can rely in a long-term plan of military intervention, it is only Poland, and that is why now, when all the bourgeois states hate Soviet power, they are immediately interested in having Eastern Galicia under the control of the Polish landlords.

Furthermore, Poland lays claim to the Ukraine and Lithuania. This lends the campaign a particularly acute and stubborn character. The supply of war materials to Poland was, naturally, the main concern of France and other powers, and it is quite impossible to estimate just how much money has gone into this. Therefore, despite our defeat at Warsaw, the importance of the Red Army's ultimate victory is particularly great, for it has placed Poland in a position where she no longer has the strength to continue the war. She has had to agree to a peace the terms of which gave her less than those proposed by us in April 1920, before the Polish offensive, when we, not wishing to be torn from our work of economic construction, suggested frontiers eminently unfavourable to us. At that time, the press of the petty-bourgeois patriots, to whom both our Socialist-Revolutionaries and Mensheviks belong, accused the Bolsheviks of conciliation and of an almost Tolstoyan

attitude displayed by the Soviet Government. It called a Tolstoyan attitude the fact that we agreed to peace on the proposed Pilsudski line, the line which left Minsk in Polish hands, the frontier in some places being 50 and at others 100 versts to the east of the present line. Of course, I do not have to tell a meeting of Party workers why we agreed and had to agree to worse frontiers if indeed our work of economic construction was to go on. The result was that by her war Poland, retaining a bourgeois system, caused extreme economic dislocation of the whole country, provoked a vast growth of discontent and brought about a bourgeois reign of terror, not only against the industrial workers, but against the poor peasants. The general position of Poland as a bourgeois state became so unstable that there could be no question of continuing the war.

The successes of the Soviet government in this respect are tremendous. When we raised the question of the tasks and conditions needed for the victory of the proletarian revolution in Russia three years ago, we always categorically stated that there could be no permanent victory unless it was followed up by a proletarian revolution in the West, and that a correct appraisal of our revolution was only possible from the international point of view. In order to achieve a permanent victory we must achieve the victory of the proletarian revolution in all, or at any rate in several, main capitalist countries. After three years of desperate, stubborn struggle, we can see in what sense our predictions were or were not justified. They were not justified in the sense that there was no swift or simple solution of this problem. None of us, of course, expected that such an unequal struggle as the struggle of Russia against the whole of the capitalist world could drag on for three years. It turned out that neither side, the Russian Soviet Republic or the rest of the capitalist world, gained victory or suffered defeat, and at the same time it turned out that while our forecasts were not fulfilled simply,

swiftly and directly, they were fulfilled insofar as we achieved the main thing—the possibility has been preserved for the existence of proletarian power and the Soviet Republic even in the event of the world socialist revolution being delayed. And in this respect it must be said that the Republic's international position is now such that it has provided the best and most precise confirmation of all our plans and all our policy.

That the military strength of the R.S.F.S.R. does not stand comparison with that of all the capitalist powers is obvious. In this respect we are very much weaker than they, but, nevertheless, after three years of war we forced nearly all these states to abandon the idea of further intervention. This means that what we conceived as being possible three years ago, while the imperialist war was still on, namely, a long drawn-out situation, without any final decision in favour of either side, has come about. And the reasons for this? It has not come about because we proved to be militarily stronger, and the Entente weaker, but because, throughout this period, the internal disintegration in the Entente countries intensified, whereas we, on the contrary, internally gained in strength. This has been confirmed and proved by the war. The Entente was unable to fight us with its own forces. The workers and peasants of the capitalist countries could not be forced to fight us. The bourgeois states managed to retain their bourgeois status at the end of the imperialist war. They managed to hold off and delay the crisis directly threatening them, but basically they so undermined their own position that, despite all their gigantic military forces, they had to acknowledge after three years that they were unable to crush the Soviet Republic with its almost non-existent military forces. It turned out, therefore, that fundamentally our policy and our predictions proved correct in everything and that indeed the oppressed people in any capitalist country were our allies, for it was they who stopped the war. We are in

the position of not having gained an international victory, which for us is the only sure victory, but of having won conditions enabling us to coexist with capitalist powers who are now compelled to enter into commercial relations with us. In the course of the struggle we have won the right to an independent existence.

When we cast a glance at our international position as a whole, we see, therefore, that we have achieved tremendous successes, that we not only have a breathing-space but something much more significant. A breathing-space, as we understand it, is a brief period during which the imperialist powers have many times had an opportunity to make an attempt at renewing the war against us with greater strength. And today, too, we do not allow our attention to be distracted and do not deny the possibility of a future military intervention in our affairs by the capitalist countries. It is essential for us to maintain a state of military preparedness. But if we take a glance at the conditions under which we defeated all attempts by Russian counter-revolution and achieved the formal conclusion of peace with all Western states, it will be clear that we have more than a breathing-space—we have entered a new period in which we have won the right to our fundamental international existence in the network of capitalist states. Internal conditions did not allow a single powerful capitalist state to hurl its army against Russia; this was due to the revolution having matured inside those countries and prevented them from conquering us as quickly as they might have done. There were British, French and Japanese armies on Russian territory for three years. There is no doubt that the most insignificant concentration of forces by these three powers would have been quite enough to win a victory over us in a few months, if not in a few weeks. We were able to hold that attack off only on account of disintegration among the French troops and the ferment that began among the British and Japanese. It is this divergence of

imperialist interests that we have made use of all the time. We defeated the intervention only because their own interests kept them divided but consolidated and strengthened us. It was in this way that we obtained a breathing-space and made impossible the complete victory of German imperialism at the time of the Brest peace.

In recent times this discord has become still greater, especially in view of the project to conclude an agreement on concessions with a group of American capitalist sharks, with the most rabid of them, headed by a multimillionaire who expects to form a whole group of multimillionaires. We know that almost every report coming from the Far East bears witness to the extraordinary resentment reigning in Japan over the conclusion of this agreement, although so far there is no agreement, but only a project. Japanese public opinion, however, is already seething, and today I read a communication which said that Japan is accusing Soviet Russia of wanting to set Japan against America.

We made a correct appraisal of the tension of the imperialist competition and said to ourselves that we must make systematic use of the discord between them to hamper their struggle against us. Political dissension is already apparent in the relations between Britain and France. Today we have to speak, not merely of a breathing-space, but of there being a serious chance of a new and lengthy period of development. Until now we have actually had no basis in the international sense. We now have this basis, the reason being the attitude of the smaller powers that are completely dependent on the great powers both in the military and in the economic sense. It now happens that Poland, despite the pressure brought to bear by France, has concluded peace with us. The Polish capitalists show unbelievable hatred for Soviet power; they suppress the most ordinary strikes with unparalleled ferocity. More than anything else they want war with Soviet Russia—nevertheless they prefer to make peace with us rather than fulfil

the conditions set by the Entente. We see that the imperialist powers dominate the whole world although they comprise an insignificant part of the world's population. And the very fact that a country has appeared that has resisted world imperialism for three years, has considerably changed the international situation; all the minor powers—and they make up the majority of the world's population—are therefore inclined to make peace with us.

The entry of the socialist country into commercial relations with capitalist countries is a most powerful factor ensuring our existence in such an intricate and absolutely exceptional situation.

I chanced to see how one American social-chauvinist, close to our Right Socialist-Revolutionaries and Mensheviks, Spargo, a figure in the Second International, a member of the American Socialist Party, a sort of American Alexinsky, the author of a pile of books against the Bolsheviks, blamed us for, and adduced as evidence of the complete collapse of communism, the fact that we speak of making deals with the capitalist powers. He wrote that he could not imagine a better proof of the complete collapse of communism and the break-down of its programme. It seems to me that those who think about it will say the opposite. No better proof of the material and moral victory of the Russian Soviet Republic over the capitalists of the whole world could be found than the fact that the powers who made war on us because of our terror and our entire system, have been compelled, against their own wishes, to enter upon the path of commercial relations, knowing that by so doing they are strengthening us. This could be put forward as proof of the collapse of communism only if we had promised, with the forces of Russia alone, to transform the whole world, or had dreamed of doing so. We never descended to such madness and have always said that our revolution will be victorious when it is supported by the workers of all countries. What actually happened

was that they went half-way in their support, for they weakened the hand raised against us, but in this way they still helped us.

I shall not dwell any further on this question but I shall only remark that conditions in the Caucasus at the moment are becoming most complicated and extremely difficult to sort out, with the likelihood that war may be forced on us any day. But with the peace with Poland almost assured and Wrangel wiped out, this war cannot be so terrifying and, if forced on us, only promises to strengthen and fortify our position even further. Newspaper reports of events in Armenia and Turkey give us some idea of this. An extremely confused situation has arisen, but I am absolutely confident that we shall emerge from it, preserving peace on the present basis, which in some respects is extremely favourable, on a basis satisfactory to us and which gives us the possibility of economic existence. We are doing all we can to ensure this. It is, however, quite likely that circumstances may arise which will directly force war on us or indirectly lead to it. We can view this prospect quite calmly—this will be a war in a distant region, with the balance of forces fully in our favour, probably ensuring a greater victory than that in the Polish war. The Polish war was a war on two fronts, with a threat from Wrangel, a war that could not be called a war in an outlying region, because the Pilsudski line ran not all that far away from Moscow. With this I conclude my review of the international situation.

I now turn to the state of affairs at home. As a result of the failure of a number of attempts at military intervention, our position, economically, has considerably improved. The basic reason for our former desperate position was that we—Central Russia, industrial Russia, proletarian Russia, Petrograd, Moscow, Ivanovo-Voznesensk—were cut off from all the main grain-producing areas—Siberia, the south, south-east; were cut off from one of the main

sources of fuel—the Donets Basin, cut off from the sources of oil, and it seemed absolutely impossible that the republic could actually hold out. You know what desperate misfortunes, what colossal privation, what a need for grain and what hunger befell us because we were cut off from the most important grain-producing and economic regions. The return of these regions is to a considerable extent responsible for the improvement to be observed. Thanks to the possibility of drawing in Siberia and the Caucasus, and thanks to the developing social change in our favour in the Ukraine, there is promise that with the state food procurements in the forthcoming food campaign we shall not only emerge without an actual hole in the sack as we did this year, but we shall have sufficient food for all industrial workers. This is the first campaign when we can hope that, thanks to the indisputable growing improvement in transport, the government's food stocks will be so great—250-300 million poods of grain—that we shall not merely talk about socialist construction and do precious little, as at present, but we shall actually operate with real armies of labour, we shall be able to transfer hundreds of thousands of industrial workers, or workers now engaged in provisioning for industry, to really urgent, vital work, and to improve this work just as the improved fuel situation made it possible to restore the textile industry. The factories in Ivanovo-Voznesensk Gubernia have started to work. At first, not more than a quarter of a million spindles were operating, now there are already half a million, up to 600,000—by the end of the year we reckon there will be a million working, and think that we shall reach four million spindles next year. From a situation where we managed, with the greatest difficulty, to make both ends meet by using up old stocks, we are only just starting to change to a situation where we are rehabilitating Russia's ruined industry and are being able, while collecting grain from the village, to supply the peasant, in return, with salt and

paraffin oil, and, although in small quantities, with textiles. Until this is done it is useless to talk of socialist construction.

While in the international sense we have gained a footing by putting an end to a whole number of military campaigns and wresting peace treaties from several states, it has only now become economically possible for us to supply grain to the workers engaged in industry, to supply food for industry, namely fuel, on a scale large enough to commence the building of socialism. This is our main task, this is the root of the problem, this is the transition which we have tried to make several times. I remember that in April 1918, at a meeting of the All-Russian Central Executive Committee, I said that our military tasks appeared to be ending and that we had not only convinced Russia, we had not only won her from the exploiters for the working people, but that we must proceed to other tasks in order to govern Russia in the interests of economic construction. Our breathing-space at that time proved to be quite insignificant. The war which was forced on us, starting with the Czechoslovak revolt in the summer of 1918,⁴⁰ was extremely ferocious. But we made this attempt several times, both in the spring of 1918, and, on a broader scale, in the spring of this year when we tackled in practice the question of labour armies. Now, we must once again regard this transition as a question of paramount importance and exert all efforts to accomplish it. This is the task of the entire socialist revolution which is of the utmost importance from the international point of view, from the point of view of victory over capitalism in general. In order to defeat capitalism altogether it is necessary, in the first place, to defeat the exploiters and to uphold the power of the exploited, namely, to solve the task of overthrowing the exploiters by revolutionary forces; in the second place, to solve a constructive task—of building new economic relations, of setting an example of how this should be

done. These two aspects of accomplishing a socialist revolution are indissolubly connected and distinguish our revolution from all previous ones which never went beyond destruction.

If we do not solve this second task then nothing will have been achieved by our successes, by our victories in overthrowing the exploiters, by the military rebuff to international imperialism, and a return to the old state of affairs will be inevitable. In the theoretical sense there can be no two opinions about this. The transition in this instance is particularly abrupt and difficult, demanding other methods, a different distribution and use of forces, a different emphasis, psychological approach and so on. In place of methods of the revolutionary overthrow of the exploiters, and of repelling the tyrants, we must employ methods of organisation and construction; we must prove to the whole world that we are a force, not only capable of resisting military suppression, but a force capable of setting an example. In all the writings of the greatest socialists there could always be found guidance on these two aspects of the socialist revolution's task which (as two aspects of this task) relate both to the outside world, the states remaining in capitalist hands, and to the non-proletarians of one's own country. We have convinced the peasants that the proletariat provides them with better living conditions than the bourgeoisie did; we have convinced them of this in practice. When the peasants, although dissatisfied with the Bolshevik regime, compared it in practice with the rule of the Constituent Assembly,⁴¹ Kolchak and others they, nevertheless, drew the conclusion that the Bolsheviks guaranteed them a better existence and defended them militarily from the violence of world imperialism. Yet, under conditions of bourgeois rule, half the peasants lived in a bourgeois way, and it could not have been otherwise. The proletariat must now solve the second problem: it must prove to the peasant that the proletariat can provide him

with the example and practice of economic relations of a higher level than those under which every peasant family farms on its own. The peasant still believes only in this old system, he still considers this to be the normal state of affairs. There can be no doubt of this. That the peasant should alter his attitude to life's problems, to economics, as a result of our propaganda—that's absurd. His is an attitude of wait and see. From being neutrally hostile, he has become neutrally sympathetic. He prefers us to any other form of government because he sees that the workers', proletarian state, the proletarian dictatorship, is not a crude force or usurpation, as it has been described, but is a better protector of the peasants than Kolchak, Denikin, etc.

But this is not enough; we have not accomplished the main thing—to show that the proletariat will restore large-scale industry and social economy so that the peasants can be transferred to a higher economic system. Having proved that by revolutionary organisation we can repulse the force used against the exploited, we must prove the same thing in another field by setting an example which would convince the whole vast mass of peasants and petty-bourgeois elements, and other countries, not by words, but in practice, that a communist system, way of life, can be created by a proletariat which has won a war. This is a task of world-wide significance. In order to achieve the second half of the victory in the international sense, we must resolve the second half of the task, that in the sphere of economic construction. We spoke about this at the last Party conference so that there seems to be no need or possibility to go into detail on the various aspects; this task covers every aspect of economic construction. I have briefly indicated the conditions guaranteeing grain to the industrial workers and guaranteeing fuel to industry. These conditions are the foundation ensuring the possibility of further construction. I should add that, as you have seen

from the agenda published in the newspapers, the central question to be discussed at the forthcoming Congress of Soviets must be the question of economic construction. The whole agenda is designed so that all the attention and concern of the delegates attending and of the whole mass of Soviet and Party workers in the entire republic will be concentrated on the economic aspect, on the restoration of transport and industry, on what is cautiously termed "aid to the peasant economy" but which implies far more, which implies a whole system of well thought-out measures to raise the peasant economy, which will continue to exist for some time to come, to the appropriate level.

The Congress of Soviets, therefore, will discuss a report on the electrification of Russia so that a single economic plan for the rehabilitation of the national economy, of which we have spoken, can be laid down from the technological side. There can be no question of rehabilitating the national economy or of communism unless Russia is put on to a different, a higher technical basis than that which has existed up to now. Communism is Soviet power plus the electrification of the whole country, for it is impossible to develop industry without electrification. This is a long-term task which will take at least ten years provided that very many technical experts are drawn into the work. A number of printed documents in which this project has been worked out in detail by technical experts will be presented to the Congress. We cannot accomplish the fundamentals of this plan—create 30 large areas of electric power stations which would enable our industry to be modernised—in less than ten years. Naturally, without this reconstruction of the whole of industry from the standpoint of the conditions of large-scale machine industry, socialist construction will remain only a set of decrees, will remain a political link of the working class with the peasants, will remain the means of saving the peasants from Kolchak and Denikin rule, will remain an example to all powers of the

world, but will not have its own basis. Communism implies Soviet power as a political organ, enabling the mass of the oppressed to run all state affairs—without this communism is unthinkable. And throughout the world we see proof of this because the idea of Soviet power and its programme are undoubtedly becoming victorious throughout the world. We see this in every phase of the struggle against the Second International which survives with the support of the police, the church and the old bourgeois officials of the labour movement.

This ensures the political side of the matter, but the economic side can be assured only when the Russian proletarian state really holds all the strands of a large industrial machine based on modern technique; and this means—electrification. For this, we must appreciate the basic conditions required for the application of electricity and understand both industry and agriculture accordingly. This is an enormous task, and a far greater period of time is required for its realisation than was needed to defend our right to exist against military invasion. But we do not fear this period, and we regard it as a victory that we have been able to attract tens and hundreds of engineers and scientists imbued with bourgeois ideas, whom we have given the task of reorganising the entire economy, industry and agriculture, in whom we have aroused interest and from whom we have received a great deal of information summarised in a number of pamphlets. Every area down for electrification is dealt with in a separate pamphlet. The plan for the electrification of the northern area is ready, and those interested may receive it. Pamphlets dealing with each area and giving the full plans for reorganisation are to be published by the time the Congress of Soviets meets. Our task is to carry on systematic work all over the country, in all Party cells, in every Soviet institution, according to this single plan covering many years, so that in the near future we may have a clear picture of how we

are progressing and how far, neither deceiving ourselves nor concealing the difficulties before us. The entire republic is confronted by the task of accomplishing this single economic plan by all means. All the Communist Party's activities, propaganda and agitation must be centred around this task. In theory, it has been dealt with on more than one occasion; no one argues against it, but scarcely a hundredth part of what needs to be done has been accomplished.

It is natural that we have become accustomed to a period of political warfare, we have all been steeled in politico-military struggle and, therefore, what has been accomplished by the present Soviet government is only an approach to the task demanding that the train be switched to other rails now; and this train has to carry tens of millions of people. The switching of this heavy load onto other rails, when in places there are none at all, demands concentrated attention, knowledge and very great persistence. Because the cultural level of the peasants and the workers was not adequate for this task and, at the same time, because we are almost 99 per cent accustomed to politico-military tasks, there has been a revival of bureaucracy. Everyone admits this. The task of the Soviet government is to destroy the old apparatus completely, as it was destroyed in October, and to transfer power to the Soviets. However, we recognise it in our programme that there is a revival of bureaucracy and that at present there is not yet an economic foundation for a genuine socialist society. The mass of workers and peasants have no cultured background, literacy and in general a higher cultural level. This is because the best proletarians have been occupied with military tasks. The proletariat bore tremendous sacrifices for the military tasks, and tens of millions of peasants had to be sacrificed to these tasks, and people imbued with bourgeois ideas had to be drawn into the work, because there were no others available. We had,

therefore, to state in the programme, in a document like the Party programme, that there has been a revival of bureaucracy against which a systematic struggle has to be waged. It is natural that the bureaucracy, which has reappeared in the Soviet institutions, was bound to have a pernicious effect even among the Party organisations, since the Party leadership is also the leadership of the Soviet apparatus; they are one and the same thing. Therefore, since we recognise the evil to be the old bureaucracy which has been able to appear in the Party apparatus, it is obvious and natural that all the signs of this evil have been found in the Party organisations. And since this is so, the question has been placed on the agenda of the Congress of Soviets and has received a great deal of the attention of this Conference, and justly so, because a Party disease, which has been admitted in the resolutions of the general Party Conference,⁴² exists not only in Moscow, but also throughout the whole republic. It is connected with the need to carry out politico-military work, when we had to draw in the mass of peasants and when we were unable to strengthen our demands for a broader plan connected with the development of the level of the peasant economy, the level of development of the mass of peasants.

Allow me in conclusion to say a few words about the situation within the Party, about the struggle and the appearance of an opposition, of which all those present are fully aware and which took up a great deal of energy and attention at the Moscow City and Gubernia Conference, perhaps considerably more than we all would have liked. It is quite natural that the great transition being made now, at a time when all the forces taken by the republic from the proletariat and the Party during three years of struggle have been exhausted, has placed us in a difficult position when confronted with a task which it was beyond our powers to assess accurately. We have to acknowledge that we do not know the exact dimensions of the evil, that

we are unable to determine the relationships and the exact groupings. The main task of the Party conference is to raise the question, not to hide the existing evil, but to draw the Party's attention to it, and to call on all Party members to consider how to rid ourselves of this evil. It is quite natural, and there can be no doubt, both from the point of view of the Central Committee and, I think, from that of the great majority of Party comrades (as far as I am aware of the views, which nobody has repudiated), that in connection with the inner-Party crisis there is very much in the opposition, which is to be found not only in Moscow but throughout Russia, that is completely healthy, essential and inevitable at a time of the Party's natural growth and the transition from a situation where all attention was concentrated on political and military tasks to one of construction and organisation, when we have to cover many bureaucratic institutions and when the cultural level of the majority of the proletariat and peasants is unequal to the task. After all, the Workers' and Peasants' Inspection exists more as a pious wish; it was impossible to set it in motion because the best workers were sent to the front, and because the cultural level of the peasants was such that it was unable to bring forward a sufficient number of officials.

It is natural that the opposition, whose slogan urges a more speedy transition, the drawing in of the greatest number of fresh and young forces and placing local workers in more responsible positions, has an extremely sound aim, tendency and programme. As far as can be judged by their statements, neither in the Central Committee, nor in circles of comrades who are in any degree responsible, are there two ideas about this. There is also no doubt, however, that there are other elements alongside these sound elements united around the platform of fulfilment of the Conference decisions. At all meetings, including also the preliminary meetings which were attended by more than the usual numbers at this Conference, you could not hear two

ideas about this. Our general programme must be realised—this is indisputable, and difficult work now faces us. Of course, here the essence of the matter is not to limit oneself to overthrowing the opponent and repulsing the opponent. For here we are faced by the petty-bourgeois elements surrounding us in tens of millions; we are fewer, there are very few of us compared with this petty-bourgeois mass. We must educate this mass and prepare it, but it so happened that all those organised forces doing the preparation had to be thrown into another affair, a very interesting, difficult and very risky, into another affair, connected with great sacrifices, into the affair of war. The affair of war is like that, and you cannot get away from it.

In this connection, therefore, we must ask ourselves—has the Party completely recovered, have we a complete victory over bureaucracy, for putting the economic construction on more correct lines, for setting in motion the Workers' and Peasants' Inspection, not only in the sense of issuing decrees, but by actually attracting working people? This is a difficult matter, and our main task, if we are speaking of Party tasks, must be to accomplish the speediest possible elimination of the so-called line of opposition. When we speak of differing views, different interpretations of events, different programmes, even for future activities, the Central Committee must pay the utmost attention to this question at all meetings of the Political Bureau and at plenary meetings where different shades of opinion are expressed. Harmonious work by the entire Party will guarantee the accomplishment of this task. We regard this as extremely important. We now face economic work that is more difficult than the military work which we accomplished thanks to the enthusiasm of the peasants, for undoubtedly the peasants preferred the workers' state to that of Kolchak. It is quite another thing now, when it is necessary to transfer the peasants to construction quite foreign to them, which they do not understand and in

which they cannot have any faith. This task demands much systematic work, great perseverance, great organisational abilities, and so far as organising ability is concerned, the Russian is possibly one of the worst. This is our weakest side, and so we must endeavour to remove quickly anything interfering with the work. The opposition, which in itself represents the transition, indubitably contains sound elements, but when it becomes an opposition for the sake of opposition, we should certainly put an end to it. We have wasted a great deal of time on skirmishes, wrangles and squabbles and we must say to ourselves "enough", and try to come to some agreement to work more effectively. Make some sort of concessions, better more than less, to those who are dissatisfied, who call themselves the opposition, but succeed in making our work harmonious, for without this it is impossible to exist in conditions when we are surrounded by enemies at home and abroad.

There can be no doubt that old petty-bourgeois elements, small property owners, are to be found in far greater numbers than we are. They are stronger than the socialist sector of the economy geared to meet the demands of the workers. Everyone who has had anything to do with the countryside and has seen the speculation that goes on in the towns, understands perfectly well that this social sector based on small economic units is far larger than we are; that is why absolutely harmonious work is needed. We must develop it at all costs. When I had occasion to note the controversies and the struggle in the Moscow organisations, when I had occasion to note what a great deal of debate took place at the meetings, how many skirmishes and wrangles there were, I came to the conclusion that it was high time to finish with all this and that everyone should unite around the Conference platform. It is necessary to say that we have paid a heavy price for this. It was sad to watch, for example, how hours were wasted at Party meetings on squabbles as to whether someone had

arrived at the meeting punctually, whether a particular individual had made his position clear in one way or another. Is it really for this sort of thing that people attend meetings? There is a special commission which discusses whether or not an individual on the list of delegates has made his position clear either in one way or another. Here, however, it is a question of the content of the meeting. For instance, take an experienced Party comrade like Bubnov. I heard his speech on the platform put forward by the Conference. This platform amounts to greater freedom of criticism. But the Conference was held in September and it is now November. Freedom of criticism is a splendid thing—but after we have all put our names to it, it would be no sin to concern ourselves with the content of the criticism. For a long time the Mensheviks, Socialist-Revolutionaries and others tried to scare us with freedom of criticism, but we were not afraid of it. If freedom of criticism means freedom to defend capitalism then we shall suppress it. We have moved on. Freedom of criticism has been proclaimed, but it is necessary to think about the content of the criticism.

And here you have to admit something extremely sad—the criticism is devoid of content. You visit a district and ask yourself what is the content of the criticism. The Party organisations cannot overcome ignorance by using old bureaucratic methods. What methods of defeating bureaucracy are there other than drawing in the workers and peasants? And at district meetings criticism is concerned with trifles, and not a word or a sound did I hear about the Workers' and Peasants' Inspection. I did not hear that a single district had encouraged workers and peasants to take part in this work. Genuine construction means applying criticism which must be constructive. And in Moscow the management of every small block of flats, every large plant, every factory must have its own experience. If we wish to combat bureaucracy we must draw the people

from below into this work. We must acquaint ourselves with the experience of certain factories, learn what steps they took to chase out their bureaucrats, learn the experience of a house management or of a consumers' society. A most rapid handling of the whole economic mechanism is needed, but in the meantime you do not hear a sound about this, although you can hear plenty of squabbling taking place. Of course, such a gigantic upheaval could not take place without some dirt and some, far from clean, scum coming to the surface. It is high time that we discussed, not only freedom of criticism, but also the content of it. It is high time we said that in view of our experience, a number of concessions are necessary, but that in future we shall not permit the slightest tendency to squabble. We must make a break with the past, undertake genuine economic construction and make a complete overhaul of all Party work to enable it to guide Soviet economic construction and ensure practical successes to do more by example than by precept. Nowadays, neither the worker nor the peasant can be convinced by words, but only by example. They must be convinced that they can improve their economy without capitalists, that conflicts can be abolished without the policeman's truncheon, or capitalist starvation, but that they need Party leadership to achieve that. This is the attitude we must adopt, and then we shall achieve successes in future economic construction which will lead to our complete victory in the international field.

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AND PEASANTS' DEPUTIES
FEBRUARY 28, 1921

(*Prolonged applause.*) Before passing to the domestic situation—a subject which, quite naturally, arouses great interest and much concern—I should like to discuss briefly the chief new developments in the international situation. To be brief I shall deal with only three. The first is the conference we have begun with Turkish delegates here in Moscow. This is an especially welcome fact, because there were many obstacles to direct negotiations with a delegation of the Turkish Government, and we feel sure that now, when there is an opportunity to reach understanding here in Moscow, the firm foundation will be laid for closer relations and for friendship. Of course, this will be achieved not through diplomatic subterfuge (in which, we do not fear to admit, our enemies are much stronger), but owing to the fact that both nations suffered incredibly at the hands of the imperialist powers in these past few years. A previous speaker referred here to the harm of isolation from the imperialist countries. But when a wolf attacks a sheep, there is hardly any point in advising the sheep to avoid isolation from the wolf. (*Laughter, applause.*) And if the Eastern nations have up to now been only sheep confronted by the imperialist wolf, Soviet Russia was the first to demonstrate that, despite her unparalleled weakness militarily, it is not so easy for the wolf to

get his claws and teeth into her. And this example of Soviet Russia has proved a contagious one for many nations, regardless of whether or not they sympathise with the “Bolshevik rumour-mongers”. A great deal is being said in the world about these “rumour-mongers”. We are even being described as malicious rumour-mongers in relation to Turkey. And though, of course, we have so far done nothing in this respect, all the same, it has been demonstrated to the Turkish workers and peasants that the resistance of modern nations to robbery is a thing that has to be reckoned with. The robbery to which the imperialist governments subjected Turkey met with such resistance that even the strongest of these imperialist powers had to keep their hands off. It is this that makes one regard the present negotiations with the Turkish Government as a very big achievement. We pursue no underhand objects. We know that these negotiations will proceed within a very modest framework, but they are important because of the fact that the workers and peasants of all nations are steadily coming closer together, despite all the formidable obstacles. And this should not be overlooked in gauging our present difficulties.

The second thing worth recalling when talking of the international situation is the state of the peace talks in Riga. You know that in order to conclude a peace which is in any degree stable we are making the greatest possible concessions to all states formerly belonging to the Russian Empire. This is only natural because one of the main factors which arouses hatred for the imperialists and unites the peoples against them is the oppression of a nationality, and there are few states in the world which have sinned so much in this respect as the old Russian Empire and the bourgeois republic of Kerensky, the Mensheviks and Socialist-Revolutionaries in alliance with the bourgeoisie. That is why precisely in relation to these states we show the greatest willingness to make concessions and readiness

to accept such peace terms for which some Socialist-Revolutionaries have called us Tolstoyans. We are indifferent to these reproaches because, in relation to these states, we need to display the greatest willingness to compromise, so as to dispel the age-old suspicion generated by the oppression of former days, and lay the foundation for a union between the workers and peasants of various nations who at one time suffered together at the hands of tsarism and the Russian landlords, and who now suffer at the hands of imperialism. This policy has been most of all frustrated in relation to Poland by the Russian whiteguards, Socialist-Revolutionaries and Mensheviks who enjoy "freedom of the press", "freedom of speech" and other wonderful "freedoms", alongside the extraordinary freedom of the French and other capitalists who freely bought themselves a larger part of Poland and developed their propaganda there with the utmost freedom striving to drag Poland into a war against us. Now the capitalists are doing their utmost to frustrate the peace that has been concluded. One of the reasons why we cannot demobilise our army, as we should like to do, is that we must reckon with war on a much larger scale than some people think. Those who say that we could allocate fewer forces to the war are wrong. They are mistaken because our enemies are resorting to all sorts of machinations and intrigues to break the final peace with Poland, the provisional terms of which have already been concluded. These negotiations have latterly been dragging on, and although a few weeks ago a stage was reached when a serious crisis was to be feared, we recently decided to make further concessions, not because we considered them to be just, but because we regarded it as important to thwart the intrigues of the Russian whiteguards, Socialist-Revolutionaries and Mensheviks in Warsaw, and of the Entente imperialists who above all are striving to prevent peace. Peace has not yet been signed, but I can state that we have grounds to be very optimistic

that in the near future peace will be signed, and we shall succeed in thwarting the intrigues against its conclusion. I think we shall all be glad of this, although this is only guess-work. But we must not count our chickens before they are hatched. And that is why we shall not slacken or weaken our military efforts for a minute or even slightly, while not fearing to make some more concessions to bourgeois Poland so as to wrest the workers and peasants of Poland from the Entente and prove to them that the workers' and peasants' government does not engage in national strife. We shall defend this peace even at the price of considerable sacrifice.

The third international question concerns the events in the Caucasus. There have been large-scale developments there recently, and though we do not yet know the details their implication is that we are on the brink of a major war. We are, of course, disturbed at the clash between Armenia and Georgia, and the events transformed the Armenian-Georgian war into an insurrection in which a section of the Russian troops have taken part. The result has been that the designs of the Armenian bourgeoisie against us have turned against them—so far at least—and in such a way that, according to the latest but still unconfirmed reports, Soviet power has been established in Tiflis. (Applause.) We know that the insurrection began in the neutral zone, the area between Georgia and Armenia, which Georgia occupied with the consent of the imperialist Entente. The Mensheviks, and particularly the Georgian Mensheviks, when they speak of the harm of isolation from the Western Powers, usually understand this to mean the trust in the Entente imperialists since they are stronger than anyone else. But that the advanced capitalists are more given to deceit than anyone else is often forgotten by some whiteguards who say to themselves: can Armenia, the Armenian peasants, etc., can the ravaged Soviet Republic be compared to the united imperialist powers of the

world? The advanced capitalists represent the cultural forces of the whole world, so let us turn to them. That is how the Georgian Mensheviks seek to justify their unseemly defence of the capitalists. The Georgian Mensheviks had control of the only railway line, the key to the food supply of the Armenian peasants.

No one will have the patience to read all the telegrams, statements and protests we exchanged with Georgia on this question. If there had been a peace treaty with Georgia, our policy would have been to procrastinate as long as possible. You must understand, however, that the Armenian peasants did not regard the question of a treaty in that light, and things culminated in the terrible insurrection which broke out early in February and has spread with astonishing rapidity, involving not only the Armenian, but also the Georgian population. It has been difficult to obtain information on the situation, but the latest available reports bear out our assumptions. We know perfectly well that the Georgian bourgeoisie and the Georgian Mensheviks do not rely for support on the working people, but on the capitalists of their country who are only looking for a pretext to start hostilities. We, on the other hand, have for three years placed our stake on the working people, even in a backward and oppressed country, and we shall continue to do this to the last. In the final analysis, no matter how circumspect we are, no matter what efforts we exert to strengthen the Red Army, we shall do everything possible to extinguish the conflagration that has flared up in the Caucasus. We shall demonstrate also in the East what we have been able to demonstrate in the West—that where there is Soviet power there is no place for national oppression. On this, in the final analysis, depends the outcome of our struggle, and the might of the workers and peasants will ultimately prove stronger and superior to capitalist might, because there are far more workers and peasants than capitalists.

After these remarks on foreign policy I now turn to home affairs. I was, unfortunately, unable to listen to the entire report made here by Comrade Bryukhanov. He has given you all the details and exact information, and there is, therefore, no need for me to repeat them. I want to deal with the main thing which may possibly show us the reasons for our terrible crisis. We shall have to set ourselves a task and find a way to solve it. There is a path, we have found it, but we are not yet strong enough to follow it with the persistence and the regularity made imperative by the difficult circumstances of the war's aftermath. We are in every respect poverty-stricken, and yet we are no more destitute than the workers of Vienna. The Viennese workers are dying and starving, their children are also dying and starving; but they have not the main thing that we have: they have no hope. They are dying, crushed by capitalism; they are in such a position that they endure sacrifices, but not as we do. We endure sacrifices for the war which we have declared on the whole capitalist world. This is the difference in the position of the workers of Petrograd and Moscow as compared with that of the workers of Vienna. Now, in the spring, our sufferings due to the dearth of food supplies have intensified, although a little earlier on we saw an improvement in the food situation. What happened was that we miscalculated. When the plan for surplus food requisitioning was drawn up, we thought we could improve on our success. The people had starved so much that their condition had to be improved at all costs. It was essential not only to help, but to improve things. We had not taken into account that if we did improve things now it would be difficult later on, and it is due to this mistake that we now face a food crisis. We made the same mistake in another sphere too. We made the same mistake in the Polish war and the same mistake in regard to fuel. The procurement of food, fuel, coal, oil, firewood—are all different, but in all three spheres we

made the same mistakes. At the time of the severest hardships, we overestimated our resources and did not take them into account properly. We did not take into account that our resources had been instantly spent, we failed to estimate the resources held in reserve and we put nothing by for a rainy day. This is, generally speaking, a simple rule that any peasant understands in his simple, everyday economy. All the time, on a state scale, we were in a situation when we did not care about the reserves so long as we had enough for today, and then the first time that we were faced with the question of reserves from the practical point of view, we were unable to arrange matters so that we could put this reserve by for a rainy day.

During the Polish war we had a vigorous, daring Red Army, but we advanced farther than was necessary—to the gates of Warsaw, and then rolled back, almost to Minsk. The same thing happened with the food supplies. True, we emerged from the war as victors. In 1920, we offered the Polish landlords and bourgeoisie peace on terms more advantageous to them than the present terms. They were taught a lesson, and the whole world was taught a lesson, which nobody had previously bargained for. When we speak about our position we tell the truth; to a certain extent we exaggerate the worst feature. In April 1921, we said: transport is falling to pieces, there is no food. We said this frankly in our newspapers, spoke about it openly at meetings in the best halls of Moscow and Petrograd attended by thousands. The European spies hurried to telegraph this news, and over there some rubbed their hands with glee and said: "Get on with the job, Poles, you see how badly things are going with them, we shall soon crush them." But we told the truth, sometimes exaggerating the worst features. Let the workers and peasants know that our difficulties are not over. And when the Polish army, under the direction of French, British and other military instructors and supplied with Entente money and arms,

went into battle, it was defeated. And now, when we say that our affairs are in poor shape, when our ambassadors report that the whole of the bourgeois press says: "The End of Soviet Power", when even Chernov said that it will undoubtedly fall, we say: "You can shout your heads off, that's what freedom of the press on capitalist money is for, you have as much of this freedom as you want, but we are still not in the least afraid to tell the sad truth." Yes, the situation this spring has again worsened, and our papers are full of admissions about this bad situation. But just try, you capitalists over there, you Mensheviks, S.R.s, Semyonovites, or whatever they are called over there, try to gain anything by this and you will find yourselves in a far deeper hole. (*Applause.*) Obviously it is a difficult transition from our state of utter destitution in 1918-19 when it was very hard to think about reserves or a year's allocation, and we could only think ahead for two or three weeks and say "we'll see" about the third week. Obviously it is difficult to change from this situation to that of 1920 when we saw that our army was bigger than that of the Poles, when we had twice as much grain as during the previous year, when we had fuel, and when there was one and a half times more Donets and Siberian coal. We were unable to distribute this on a country-wide scale. You must remember that calculations on a yearly basis require a special approach, special conditions. We knew that the spring would be worse than the autumn, but we could not know how much worse it would turn out to be. It is not a matter of figures or distribution but a matter of the degree to which the workers and peasants have starved, and the extent of the sacrifice they are now able to make for the common cause of all workers and peasants. Who can calculate this? Let whoever blames us, and justly so—for this is our mistake, and no one wishes to hide this, just as no one did in the case of the Polish war—let whoever points to this error submit to us an estimate on

the basis of which it is possible to determine in advance on a national scale what amount needs to be set aside from the first six months' grain reserves so that something should be left for a rainy day during the second six months. No such estimates were made. We made them first in 1920 and miscalculated. In certain respect a revolution is a miracle. Had we been told in 1917 that we would hold out in three years of war against the whole world and that, as a result of the war, two million Russian landlords, capitalists and their children would find themselves abroad, and that we would turn out to be the victors, not one of us would have believed it. A miracle took place because the workers and peasants rose against the attack of the landlords and capitalists with such force that danger threatened even powerful capitalism. And it is exactly because the miracle did occur that we lost the habit of calculating well in advance. That is why all of us are very much limping along. The forthcoming Party Congress is to be called earlier, because we need to sum up this new experience in earnest. The defence of the workers' and peasants' power was achieved by a miracle, not a heavenly miracle, not something that fell from the skies, but a miracle in the sense that, no matter how oppressed, humiliated, ruined and exhausted the workers and peasants were, precisely because the revolution went along with the workers, it found a hundred times more forces than any rich, enlightened and advanced state could have mustered. Such a habit, however, cannot be applied to economic activities. What is needed for economic activities—perhaps the word is not altogether appropriate—is a certain "miserliness". We have not yet learned how to be "miserly". We have to remember that we have defeated the bourgeoisie, but that they are still with us and so the struggle remains. And one of their methods of struggle against us is to sow panic. We must not forget that they are past masters at this. They have newspapers, although not printed ones, but

splendidly distributed, and they are doing much more than making mountains out of molehills. . . . But under no circumstances must we succumb to panic. The situation has become aggravated because we made a mistake in all fields of work. We shall not be afraid of these mistakes, we shall not be afraid to admit them, we shall not indulge in mutual recrimination; but, in order to be able to make use of all our forces, and that there be the greatest intensification of effort in all fields of work, we must know how to calculate. We must calculate, so as to become the master of our whole republic, for we can only assess the large amount of available grain and fuel by such calculations. For a healthy individual there will not be enough bread, but the amount cannot be increased immediately. There will be insufficient bread only if we do not lay in stocks, but we shall have enough if we calculate correctly and give to the most needy, and take from those who have big surpluses rather than from those who, during the past three years, perhaps gave their last crust. Have the peasants of the Ukraine and Siberia understood this calculation? Not yet. Their present and past grain surpluses have never been known in Central Russia, nor have they ever experienced such a plight. The peasants of the Ukraine, Siberia and Northern Caucasus have never known such destitution and hunger as the peasants of Moscow and Petrograd gubernias have endured for three years (and they received far less than the Ukrainian peasant). Their surpluses usually ran into hundreds of poods, and they were accustomed to reckon on receiving goods at once for this surplus. There is nowhere to get them when factories are at a standstill. To set them going it takes time, preparation, it takes workers. We do not bear tremendous sacrifices in desperation, but in the fight which wins victory after victory. This distinction determines everything.

This is the main thing that I wished to emphasise here, not from the point of view of the exact figures presented

to you by the comrade responsible for food supplies and by the comrade responsible for fuel, but from the economic and political point of view, in order to help understand how the mistakes of recent years differ from those of previous years, and although they are of a different kind, they still have this in common, that having the possibility of climbing one rung, we tried to jump up two. Nevertheless, we are now at a higher stage. This is good. This year we shall have a much better fuel balance than last year. And in regard to food supplies I shall cite one final thing—a telegram received from the Deputy Chief Commander of all the Republican forces in Siberia. He telegraphs that communications have been restored and that seven train-loads of grain are on their way to Moscow. At one time there were disturbances and kulak revolts. Of course, it is possible to joke about rumour-mongers, but it is necessary to appreciate that after all we have learned a thing or two in the course of the class struggle. We know that the tsarist government called us rumour-mongers, but when we speak of the Socialist-Revolutionary and Menshevik rumour-mongers, we are speaking of another class, of people who support the bourgeoisie, of people who take advantage of every difficult situation, issue leaflets and say: "Look, 300 poods of grain surpluses are confiscated from you; you give everything, but receive in return nothing but coloured bits of paper." Don't we know these rumour-mongers? The class they come from? No matter what they call themselves, Socialist-Revolutionaries, supporters of freedom, people's power, constituent assemblies, and so on, they are those selfsame landlords. We have listened to all their words and learned to understand their true meaning. These revolts indicate that there are people among the peasants who do not wish to reconcile themselves either to surplus food requisitioning or to the tax. Someone here mentioned the tax. Much of what he said was common sense, but he should not have forgotten to add

that before we said anything about it from this platform, the newspaper *Pravda*, which is the Central Organ of the Russian Communist Party, carried proposals about the tax signed not only by temporary staff members, but by responsible editors. When the non-Party peasant says to us: "Make your calculations conform to the needs of the small peasant; he needs confidence: I shall give so much and then I shall look after my own affairs," we say: "Yes, that is businesslike, that is common sense and in keeping with local conditions." So long as we have no machines, so long as the peasant himself has no wish to change from small-scale to large-scale farming, we are inclined to take this idea into account and we shall place this question before the Party Congress due to be held in a week's time, sort it out and take a decision satisfactory to the non-Party peasant and to the mass of the people. In our apparatus there is, of course, much that is imperfect and inexcusable, because a great deal, a very, very great deal of bureaucracy has seeped in. But weren't there the same kind of mistakes and imperfections in our Red Army? We could not rid ourselves of them right away, but thanks to the help of the workers and peasants, the Army was, nevertheless, victorious. What took place in the Red Army is happening in another form in all spheres, and we shall be cured of these bureaucratic distortions—which everybody shouts about on all sides and condemns because they are evidence of our mistakes and misfortunes—by persistent work, not succumbing to panic and not turning a blind eye to those who, taking advantage of these mistakes, are trying to repeat the Kolchak and Denikin events. Any amount of scandalous practices in the way of the pilfering of coal is taking place in the Ukraine, while here we are suffering from a great shortage. There they have had 120 governments, and the rich peasants have been corrupted. They cannot understand that there is a workers' and peasants' government and that, if it confiscates grain,

it does so in order to ease the position of the workers and peasants. Until we are able to achieve full clarity on all these questions in that area, we shall continue to receive news of disturbances, gangs, revolts. This is inevitable because the ignorance and isolation of the peasants, and the resentment of individual peasants, our legacy from capitalism, are inevitable, and it will take us years to re-educate them. We see this every spring, and we shall continue to see it every spring for some time yet.

The south-eastern railways are quite another matter. This year, in the main, we existed on the resources supplied us by Siberia and the Northern Caucasus. Here is a five-day report. From February 1st, eight cars a day. The second five-day report gives 32 a day, the third 60 a day, the fourth 109; but we should receive 200 cars a day, and only for the last five days, from February 20 to 24, we have received 120 cars a day. This is three train-loads. Today Comrade Fomin reports that during the past two days we have already received four train-loads. As one comrade has indicated, the position in the Donets Basin is that there is no grain because there is no coal, and there is no coal because there is no grain. We must break this vicious circle at some point by the energy, pressure and heroism of the working people, so that all the wheels start turning. We are beginning to emerge from the enormous difficulties that we have experienced in this respect. A ray of light has appeared. I do not at all wish, comrades, to soothe you with promises and I have no intention of announcing that this difficult period has ended. Nothing of the sort! There are signs of improvement, but the period has remained incredibly difficult, and, in comparison with last autumn, it need not have been as difficult as it is now despite the fact that we are cut off from Western Europe. In order not to be cut off we have had to grant concessions: you get 500 per cent profit, and we get an increase in grain, paraffin oil, etc. We grant and shall grant these

concessions. This will mean a new struggle because we shall not give them 500 per cent, or perhaps even more, without bargaining, and to switch to this struggle is equivalent to switching the train onto new rails.

For this it is essential to convince the capitalists that they cannot butt in on us with a war. We have decisively accepted the policy of granting concessions. You know that we have had many arguments with the peasants and workers about this, you know that the workers have said: "We've got rid of our own bourgeoisie and now we are going to let in others." And we have explained to them that we cannot immediately change from a position where we had nothing to one where there will be everything, and in order to ease this transition, in order to obtain the necessary amount of grain and textiles, we must be able to make every necessary sacrifice. Let the capitalists benefit from their own avarice, so long as we are able to improve the position of the workers and peasants. It is a difficult thing, however, to make this concession business work. We published a decree about this in November, but so far not a single concession has been made. Of course, this is due to the influence of the whiteguard and Menshevik press. There are now Russian newspapers in every country in the world, and in all of them the Mensheviks are crying out against concessions, pointing out that things are not going well in Moscow, and that therefore Soviet power will soon fall, and that you, gentlemen capitalists, should not believe them or come to terms with them. But we do not spurn this battle; we have defeated the capitalists, but we have not destroyed them, they have now changed chairs and are sitting in Warsaw, which at one time was the centre of the struggle against Russian autocracy, and which now unites the whiteguards against Soviet Russia; and we shall fight them everywhere, both on the foreign and on the home front.

I have here a telegram from Comrade Zinoviev in Petro-

grad which says that, in connection with the arrests there, a leaflet was found in the possession of one of those arrested from which it is clear that he is a spy of foreign capitalists. There is another leaflet with the heading "To the Faithful", which is counter-revolutionary in content. Further, Comrade Zinoviev informs us that Menshevik leaflets have been posted up in Petrograd calling for strikes, and here in Moscow they have exaggerated it into a rumour about some demonstration or other. In actual fact one Communist was killed by a provocative shot. That is the only victim of these unhappy days. When Denikin was at Orel the whiteguard papers wrote that he leaped forward nearly 100 versts an hour. These papers do not surprise us. We look at things soberly; we must rally closer, comrades. Otherwise, what are we to do? Once again try a "coalition" government of Kerensky and Kolchak? There is no longer any Kolchak, but if there is no Kolchak, another will take his place. There are any number of Russian generals, enough for a large army. We must speak frankly and not be afraid of the newspapers which are being published in all the cities of the world. These are all trifles, and we shall not keep silent about our difficult position because of them. But we shall say this: we, comrades, are conducting this entire difficult and bloody struggle, and if at the moment they cannot attack us with a gun in their hands, they attack us with the weapon of lies and slander, taking advantage of all instances of need and poverty in order to help our enemies. I repeat, we have experienced and survived all this. We have lived through far greater difficulties; we know this enemy extremely well, and we shall defeat this enemy this spring, we shall defeat him by working more successfully, and by calculating more carefully. (*Applause.*)

REPORT ON THE POLITICAL WORK OF THE
CENTRAL COMMITTEE TO THE
TENTH CONGRESS OF THE R.C.P.(B.)
MARCH 8, 1921

Comrades, the question of the political work of the Central Committee, as you are, of course, aware, is so closely bound up with the whole of Party work, with the entire work of Soviet institutions, and with the whole course of the revolution, that in my view at any rate there can be no talk of a report in the exact, literal, meaning of the word. And I understand my task to be 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 for this year, which are most typical of what we have gone through and which provide most food for thought on the reasons for the course of the revolution, on the significance of the mistakes made—and there have been many mistakes—and on the lessons for the future. For no matter how natural it is for a report to be given on events of the past year, no matter how essential this is for the Central Committee, and no matter how interesting such a report is, in itself, for the Party—the tasks of the struggle, both in the future and unfolding before us now, are so urgent, grave and difficult, and press so hard upon us that unwittingly all our attention is 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 for 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. Probably all of you or, at any rate, the majority of you, remember 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 because international capitalism is too vitally interested in preventing this transition. I recall that even in April 1918, i.e., three years ago, I had occasion to speak to the All-Russian Central Executive Committee about our tasks,⁴³ which were formulated at that time as if the main stage of the Civil War had ended, when in actual fact the war had only just begun. You all remember that at the previous Party Congress we based all our calculations on the transition to peaceful construction, on the assumption that the enormous concessions then made to Poland would ensure peace for us. As early as April, however, the Polish bourgeoisie, which, with the imperialists of the capitalist countries, interpreted our peaceful stand as our weakness, started an offensive for which they paid dearly by having to conclude a far more unfavourable peace. But we were unable to make a transition to peaceful construction and once again had to devote our main attention to the war with Poland and subsequently to wiping out Wrangel. It is this that determined the substance of our work for the year under review. Once again all our work turned to military problems.

Then followed the transition from war to peace when we succeeded in ensuring that not a single soldier of the enemy armies remained on the territory of the R.S.F.S.R.

This transition involved upheavals which we had certainly never foreseen. This is undoubtedly one of the main

causes of all the mistakes in policy that we made during the period under review and from which we now suffer. The demobilisation of the army, which had to be created in a country that had suffered unparalleled strains and stresses, which had to be created after several years of imperialist war—the demobilisation of this army which, in view of our facilities, was incredibly difficult to transport, at a time when in addition there was famine due to the crop failure and a fuel shortage which to a great extent halted transport,—this demobilisation, as we can now see, confronted us with tasks which we had grossly underestimated. Here to a large extent lie the sources of a whole number of crises: economic, social and political. Even at the end of last year I had to point out that one of the main difficulties of the coming spring would be the difficulties connected with the demobilisation of the army. I also pointed this out at a big discussion on December 30⁴⁴ in which most probably many of you took part. I must say that at the time we had scarcely any idea of the scale of these difficulties. We had not yet seen then the extent to which there would be not only technical difficulties, but also the extent to which all the misfortunes which befell the Soviet Republic, exhausted by the previous imperialist war and the new civil war, would intensify during demobilisation. To some extent it will be correct to say that demobilisation itself exposes these difficulties to an even greater degree. For a number of years the country has devoted itself exclusively to the war, given it all it possessed, ungrudgingly sacrificed its last mite, its miserable reserves and resources—and only at the conclusion of the war we were able to see the full extent of the devastation and poverty which for a long time condemn us to simply healing our wounds. But we cannot even devote ourselves entirely to healing these wounds. The technical difficulties of army demobilisation to a considerable degree reveal the

whole depth of the devastation that inevitably leads, apart from other things, to a series of economic and social crises.

There is no doubt that the Central Committee's mistake was that it did not take into account the scale of the difficulties connected with demobilisation. It must, of course, be said that we could have nothing on which to base this appraisal, for the Civil War was so arduous 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 unparalleled efforts of the Red Army in the struggle against Kolchak, Yudenich and others, that we could achieve victory over the imperialists who had invaded Soviet Russia.

From this main circumstance which was responsible for a whole series of mistakes and for the intensification of the crisis, I should like to turn to the question of how the work of the Party and the struggle of the entire proletariat brought to light a whole number of even more profound contradictions, erroneous calculations, or plans—and not only mistakes in planning, but mistakes in determining the balance of forces between our class and those classes in collaboration with which, and sometimes in struggle against which, our class must decide the fate of the republic. Taking this as our starting-point we must pay attention to the results of past experience, to political experience, to what the Central Committee, as the policy-directing body, must appreciate and endeavour to explain to the whole Party. These are such diverse matters as the course of our war with Poland and questions of food and fuel supplies. 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 away from the matter in hand. I think that this will be the concern of future historians, and those of us who have to continue to repulse the enemy in difficult struggle, have no time to

indulge in historical research. But at any rate the mistake is there for all to see, and it was due to the fact that we overestimated the superiority of our forces. The extent to which this superiority of forces depended on economic conditions, to which it depended on the fact that the war with Poland aroused patriotic feelings even among petty-bourgeois elements, by no means proletarian and by no means sympathetic to communism, who did not give unconditional support to the dictatorship of the proletariat and sometimes, one must say, did not support it at all—it would be too complicated to decide that. But the fact remains: we made a definite error in the war with Poland.

If we take a field of work such as food procurements, we shall see a similar error. With regard to surplus food requisitioning 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 it was calculated that 235 million poods had been collected, whereas for the whole of the previous year 210 million poods were collected; that is to say, more was collected in a much shorter period than for the whole of the previous year. However, it turned out that of these 235 millions collected by February 1 we expended 155 million poods in the first six months, that is, an average of 25 million poods a month or even more. Of course, it has to be admitted in general that we were unable to allocate our reserves properly, even when they were better than last year's. We were unable correctly to assess the full danger of the crisis approaching with the spring, and succumbed to the natural desire to increase the ration of the starving workers. Of course, it must be said that here too we had no basis for making such estimates. In all capitalist states, in spite of the anarchy, in spite of the chaos inherent in capitalism, the basis for economic planning lies in the experience of many decades, an experience enabling capitalist states, which have the same

economic system and differ only in details, to make comparisons. From these comparisons it is possible to deduce a genuinely scientific law, a certain regularity and uniformity. We had nothing like this experience for such calculations and cannot have, and it was quite natural that at the end of the war, as soon as the possibility arose at last of giving the starving population a little more, we were unable immediately to establish the correct proportion. It is obvious that we should have limited the increase in the ration, and in this way create a certain reserve fund for a rainy day which was to come in the spring and which has now arrived. We did not do this. Here again is a mistake typical of all our work, a mistake which shows that the transition from war to peace presented us with a whole number of such problems and difficulties, to overcome which we had neither experience, nor training, nor the requisite material, and therefore the crisis was extraordinarily intensified, aggravated and worsened.

There was undoubtedly a somewhat analogous position in regard to fuel. This is the main issue in economic construction. The entire transition from war to peace, the entire transition to economic construction, which was spoken about at the previous Party Congress and which was the main concern and the focal point of all our policy during the year under review, had, of course, to be based on an estimation of the output of fuel and its proper distribution. It is no use talking of overcoming difficulties or of rehabilitating industry without this. It is clear that, in this respect, we are in a better position now than we were last year. Previously we were cut off from the coal and oil districts. After the victories of the Red Army we obtained coal and oil. At any rate the amount of fuel resources increased. We know that those fuel resources with which we entered the year under review were greater than previously. And because of this increase in our fuel resources we made the mistake of immediately permitting such a wide distri-

bution of fuel that these resources were exhausted and we were faced with a fuel crisis before we had put everything in proper working order. Special reports on all these problems will be presented to you, and at present 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 is bound up with a wrong understanding of the state of affairs and with the pace of the transition from war to peace. It turned out that this transition could only be made at a much slower pace than we had imagined. A far more lengthy period of preparation is required, a much slower tempo—that is the lesson of this year, a lesson which the whole Party will need particularly to learn in order to determine our main tasks for next year, and in order to avoid such mistakes in the future.

It is undoubtedly necessary to point out that these mistakes and particularly the crises to which they led were aggravated by the failure of the harvest. I have pointed out that the food procurements during the year under review gave us incomparably better food reserves, but this was one of the main reasons for the crises, because as a result of the failure of the harvest which led to a colossal dearth of fodder, loss of cattle and the ruin of peasant households, these grain procurements were concentrated in places where the grain surplus was not very big. There are far greater surpluses in various outlying regions of the republic, in Siberia and in the Northern Caucasus, but it is there that the Soviet government apparatus was least powerful, that Soviet power was less stable, and transportation very difficult. That is why it turned out that we collected the increased food reserves from less grain-producing gubernias, and consequently the crisis in the peasant economy intensified considerably.

Here again we clearly see that our estimate was not as accurate as it should have been. On the other hand, however, we were in such a tight corner that we had no other

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 up everything to the front. And of course, being ruined, the country could do nothing but confiscate the peasants' surpluses even though they were not compensated by any other means. This was vital in order 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 if you don't you cannot save your country from the landlords and capitalists." We could act in no other way in circumstances forced upon us by the imperialists and the capitalists through their war. We had no other choice. But these circumstances led to the peasant economy being so weakened after such a long war that there was a crop failure due to the smaller sown area, a deterioration in equipment, a fall in the crop yield, and lack of workers, etc. The crop failure was colossal, and the collection of surplus grain which, nevertheless, was still better than we had expected, was accompanied by such an aggravation of the crisis that it will possibly bring us still further difficulties and misfortunes in the months to come. This fact must be carefully taken into account when analysing our political experience of the past year, and the political tasks we must set ourselves for the new year. The year under review has left the same urgent problems for the following year.

I shall now deal with another point from a totally different sphere—the discussion on trade unions which has taken up so much of the Party's time. I have mentioned it already today and naturally I could only cautiously remark that there will hardly be many of you who would not regard this discussion as too great a luxury. I cannot help but add that in my view this was a really impermissible luxury, and that in allowing such a discussion we undoubtedly committed an error, not realising that we had

pushed into the forefront a question which objectively cannot be in the forefront. We allowed ourselves to indulge in this luxury, not realising the extent to which we distracted attention from the vital and threatening question so close to us, namely, the question of that selfsame crisis. What are the actual results of this discussion which lasted so many months and with which most of you are undoubtedly bored? Special reports will be given you about this, but in my report I should like to draw attention to one aspect of the question—that here the proverb "every cloud has a silver lining" has undoubtedly justified itself.

Unfortunately, there was rather a lot of cloud, and very little silver lining. (*Laughter.*) But still, there was a silver lining, for although we lost a great deal of time and diverted the attention of our Party comrades from urgent tasks of struggle against the petty-bourgeois elements which surround us, we, nevertheless, learned to distinguish certain interrelationships 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 have been merged and will remain so—the Party nevertheless learned a certain lesson in this discussion which cannot be ignored. For some policy statements mainly the leadership of the Party voted. The policy statements which were sometimes called "policy statements of the 'workers' opposition'", sometimes something different, clearly proved to represent a syndicalist trend. And this is not merely my personal opinion, but the opinion of the vast majority of those present. (*Voices: Correct.*)

In this discussion the Party proved itself to have matured to such an extent that, aware of a certain wavering of the leadership, aware that the leadership says: "We cannot agree—sort us out," it mobilised rapidly for this task and the vast majority of the more important

Party organisations answered straight away: "We have an opinion and we shall give it to you."

During this discussion we have received a number of policy statements. They were so many that although in view of my position I should have read them, I am afraid I sinned and did not read them all. (*Laughter.*) I do not know whether all those present had so much leisure that they found time to read them, but in any case it should be said that this syndicalist, and to a certain degree even semi-anarchist, trend that was revealed provides much food for thought. For several months we allowed ourselves the luxury of studying shades of opinion. In the meantime the demobilisation of the army led to banditry and aggravated the economic crisis. This discussion should have helped us to understand that our Party, as a party which now has approximately half a million members and perhaps even more than half a million, has become, first, a mass party, and, secondly, the government party, and that as a mass party it to some extent reflects what takes place outside its ranks. It is extremely important to understand this.

There would be nothing to fear in a slight syndicalist or semi-anarchist trend; the Party would swiftly and decisively recognise it, and would set about correcting it. But when it is bound up with the gigantic preponderance of the peasants in the country, when the dissatisfaction of the peasants with proletarian dictatorship is increasing, when the crisis in peasant farming is coming to a head, when the demobilisation of the peasant army throws out hundreds and thousands of broken men, who cannot find a place for themselves, who are only accustomed to war as an occupation, and who breed banditry, then it is not the time to argue about theoretical trends. And at the Congress we must frankly state that we shall not permit arguments about trends, we must put a stop to this. The Party Congress can and must do this; it must draw the

appropriate lesson and embody it in the Central Committee's Political Report, consolidate, confirm it and make it a duty and law for the Party. The atmosphere of the controversy is becoming dangerous to the extreme and constitute a direct threat to the dictatorship of the proletariat.

Several months ago, when I had occasion to meet and argue with some comrades in these discussions and said, "Beware, this constitutes a threat to working-class rule and the dictatorship of the proletariat", they replied, "This is intimidation, you are browbeating us". On several occasions I have had to listen to my remarks being labelled in this manner, that I indulge in browbeating, and I have replied that it would be absurd of me to browbeat old revolutionaries who have gone through all kinds of ordeals. But when you see the difficulties developing around demobilisation, there can now be no disputing not only that this was not browbeating, nor even an unavoidable preoccupation with the controversy, but was a completely exact indication of the situation, of our need for unity, restraint and discipline, not only because, otherwise, a proletarian party cannot work harmoniously, but because 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 nevertheless be able to learn from the discussion. I think it necessary to say therefore that whilst we indulged in luxury and presented the world with a remarkable example of a party, placed in the most difficult conditions of desperate struggle, permitting itself the luxury of devoting unprecedented attention to the detailed elucidation of separate points of policy statements, at a time when it was faced with a crop failure and a crisis, devastation and demobilisation, we shall now draw from these lessons a political conclusion, not only a conclusion regarding particular errors made, but a political conclusion concerning the relations between classes, between the working class and the peas-

ants. These relations are not what we thought them to be. These relations require a far greater unity and concentration of forces by the proletariat. Under the dictatorship of the proletariat they represent a danger far greater than all the Denikins, Kolchaks and Yudeniches taken together. It would be fatal for anyone to harbour any illusions on this score! The difficulties stemming from the petty-bourgeois elements are enormous, and in order to overcome them great unity is needed, not only a formal unity, but joint harmonious work, a single will, as it is only with this single will of the mass of proletarians that the proletariat, in a peasant country, can accomplish the immense tasks of its dictatorship and government.

Aid is coming from West-European countries but not quickly enough. It is coming and it is increasing.

I have already pointed out during the morning session 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 considerably advanced. Of course, the Communist International which at the time of last year's Congress existed only as a body that issued proclamations has now begun to function as an independent party in each country, and not merely as an advanced party—communism has become the central problem of the entire working-class movement. In Germany, France and Italy the Communist International has not only become the centre of the working-class movement, but is the focus of attention of the whole political life of these countries. Last autumn you could not pick up a German or French newspaper without seeing how they abused Moscow and the Bolsheviks, what adjectives they heaped on us, and how the Bolsheviks and the 21 conditions for admission to the Third International⁴⁵ were made the central issue of their own entire political life. This is our achievement, and no

one can take it away from us! This shows how the world revolution is growing and how, parallel with it, the economic crisis in Europe is being aggravated. But in any case if we were to assume from this that in a short space of time help from Europe would come in the shape of a lasting proletarian revolution, we could simply be lunatics, and I am certain there are none in this hall. In these three years we have learned to understand that our stake on the world revolution does not mean that we rely on a definite date, or that the accelerated rate of development may or may not lead to a revolution in the spring. Therefore, we must be able to bring our work in line with the class relations within our country and other countries so as to be able to maintain the dictatorship of the proletariat for a long time, and, however gradually, to remedy all those misfortunes and crises which rain down on us. This is the only correct and sober presentation of the question.

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. This is the question of our relations with foreign countries.

Until the Ninth Party Congress our attention and all our endeavours were aimed at achieving the transition from the relations of war with capitalist countries to peaceful and trade relations. We made a whole number of diplomatic moves in this direction and gained the upper hand over undoubtedly skilled diplomats. When, for instance, representatives of America or of the League of Nations proposed that we halt hostilities against Denikin and Kolchak on specific terms, they thought that we would find ourselves in difficulties. In actual fact, it was they who found themselves in difficulties and we who achieved a great diplomatic victory. They were made to look fools, had to withdraw their terms, and subsequently this was exposed in all the diplomatic literature and press of the world. But

we cannot rest content with a diplomatic victory. We need genuine trade relations and not only diplomatic victories. It is only this year, however, that there is some development in trade relations. The question has arisen of trade relations with Britain. Since the summer of last year this has become the main question. In this connection the war with Poland put us back considerably. Britain was ready to sign a trade agreement. The British bourgeoisie wanted this agreement, court circles in Britain were against it and interfered with it, while the war with Poland delayed the agreement. And so up to the present moment this matter has not been settled.

It seems that today the newspapers have reported that Krassin has in London informed the press that he expects the trade agreement to be signed shortly.⁴⁶ I do not know whether these hopes are fully justified. I cannot be certain that this will actually take place, but for my part I must say that we in the Central Committee have devoted a great deal of attention to this question and consider it correct for us to compromise in order to achieve a trade agreement with Britain.

The granting of concessions is bound up with this. We have devoted far more attention to this question this year than previously. A decree of the Council of People's Commissars issued on November 23 outlined the problem of granting concessions 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 were held where it was discussed by leading Party workers. In general there was not a great deal of disagreement, although we heard a great many protests from workers and peasants. They said: "We've got rid of our capitalists and now they want to call in foreign capitalists." How much these protests were due to ignorance, or how much they were a reflection of the calculations of the kulak or outright capitalist section

of non-Party people who consider that they have the legitimate right to be capitalists in Russia, and what is more, capitalists with power, and not so that foreign capital is introduced without power—how big was the role played by these factors, the Central Committee, of course, had no statistics at its disposal to decide, and indeed it is most unlikely that such statistics exist anywhere in the world to appreciate and ascertain this. But by this decree at any rate we made a step towards establishing relations with a view to granting concessions. It is necessary to point out that in practice—and this must never be forgotten—we have not secured a single concession. Our argument is about whether we should try to get them at all costs. Whether we get concessions does not depend on our arguments or decisions, but on international capital. On February 1 of this year the Council of People's Commissars took another decision on concessions. The first clause of this decision says: "To approve in principle the granting of all concessions in Grozny and Baku and at other operating oilfields and to commence negotiations, conducting them speedily."

This question was not settled without a certain amount of dispute. The granting of concessions in Grozny and Baku seemed to comrades to be wrong, and likely to arouse opposition among the workers. The majority on the Central Committee, and I personally, held the view that perhaps there were no grounds for complaints.

The majority on the Central Committee, and I personally, supported the view that it was essential to grant these concessions, and we shall ask you to back it up with your authority. This alliance with the state trusts of the advanced countries is absolutely essential because our economic crisis is so deep that we cannot, on our own, rehabilitate our ruined economy without machinery and technical aid from abroad. It is not enough simply to bring the equipment here. We may perhaps grant concessions to the biggest imperialist trusts on a wider basis: a quarter of

Baku, a quarter of Grozny, a quarter of our best forest reserves so as to ensure an essential basis by the installation of the most modern machinery; on the other hand, in return for this we shall obtain the machinery we lack for the remaining part. In this manner we shall be able, even if only by a quarter or a half, to catch up with the modern, advanced trusts of other countries. No one who to any degree takes a sober view of the present situation can doubt that without this we should be in a very difficult position and we should be unable to overtake them without the most colossal strain on all our resources. 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 doing it only for the sake of unlimited profits. Modern capitalism—speaking in the language of peace diplomacy—is a robber, a rapacious trust, it is not the former capitalism of the era of normal times: it makes hundreds of per cent in profit, taking advantage of its monopoly position on the world market.

On February 1, 1921, the Council of People's Commissars decided to purchase 18,500,000 poods of coal abroad, as our coal crisis was already approaching. It had already become clear then that we would have to expend our gold reserves not only on buying machinery. In the latter case our coal output would have increased and we would have advanced production if we had bought machines abroad for the development of our coal industry rather than purchase coal, but the crisis was so acute that we had to reject this better economic step for a worse one, and had to expend our resources on coal which we could have produced here. We shall have to compromise still further in order to purchase consumer goods for the peasants and workers.

Now I want to deal with the Kronstadt events.⁴⁷ 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 in the next few days, possibly within the next few 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 means the transfer of political power from the Bolsheviks to an undefined conglomeration or alliance of ill-assorted elements, seemingly a little to the right of the Bolsheviks, and perhaps even more "left" than the Bolsheviks—so amorphous was the combination of political groupings which tried to take power at Kronstadt. There is no doubt, as you all know, that at the same time White generals were very active there. This has been amply proved. Two weeks before the Kronstadt events took place, the Paris newspapers wrote that there was a mutiny at Kronstadt. It is quite clear that this is the work of Socialist-Revolutionaries and whiteguard émigrés, and at the same time this movement was reduced to a petty-bourgeois counter-revolution, to petty-bourgeois anarchism. This is already something new. This circumstance, seen in relation to all the crises, must be given careful political consideration and must be very thoroughly analysed. Here we have evidence of petty-bourgeois elements, anarchist elements, with slogans of free trade, always against the dictatorship of the proletariat. This mood has affected the proletariat very widely. It has affected the Moscow factories, and factories in a number of provincial centres. This petty-bourgeois counter-revolution is undoubtedly more dangerous than Denikin, Yudenich and Kolchak put together, because here we are dealing with a country where the proletariat is in the minority, we are dealing with a country where peasant property was ruined, and where besides there is also demobilisation which has released mutinous elements in great numbers. No matter how big or small at the beginning was what might be called the shift in power, which the Kronstadt

sailors and workers supported—they wanted to correct the Bolsheviks in regard to freedom of trade—which seems a small shift, leaving the same slogans of “Soviet power” with a slight change or only corrected, yet in reality the non-Party elements here served only as a footstool, a step or a bridge for the whiteguards to step in. This is politically inevitable. We have seen petty-bourgeois, anarchist elements in the Russian revolution and we have fought against them for decades. Since February 1917 we have seen these petty-bourgeois elements in action, we saw them in action during the great revolution, and we have seen the attempts of the petty-bourgeois parties to state that in their programme they little differ from the Bolsheviks, it is only their methods in carrying it through that are different. We know this from the experience not only of the October Revolution, but from the experience in the outlying regions and various areas included in the former Russian Empire where representatives of a different power replaced Soviet power. We may recall the Democratic Committee in Samara.⁴⁸ All of them came in with slogans of equality, freedom, constituent assembly, and not once, but many times, they proved to be simply steps, a bridge for the shift to whiteguard power.

The experience of the whole of Europe shows what, in practice, the policy of sitting between two stools leads to. That is why in this respect we must say that political conflicts here are the greatest danger. We must take a careful look at this petty-bourgeois counter-revolution, which puts forward slogans about freedom of trade.

This danger shows us what I spoke about when dealing with our arguments about different policy statements. Face to face with this danger we have to understand that we must not only put an end to Party squabbles in the formal sense; we shall of course do this, but it is not enough. We need to remember that we must have a far more serious approach to this question.

We have to understand that in a situation where there is a crisis in the peasant economy we can only exist by appealing to the peasants to give aid to the town and village. We must remember that the bourgeoisie try to pit the peasants against the workers, try to pit petty-bourgeois anarchist elements against the workers, using workers' slogans, which will lead directly to the overthrow of the dictatorship of the proletariat and therefore to the restoration of capitalism, of the old landlord-capitalist power. The political danger here is obvious. A number of revolutions have traversed this path in the most obvious way; we have always pointed to it, we saw it clearly before us. It demands from the ruling party of Communists, from the leading revolutionary proletarian elements an undoubtedly different attitude from the one which we displayed over and over again during this year. This danger calls for undoubtedly greater unity, undoubtedly greater discipline, undoubtedly more harmonious work, without which we shall not be able to cope with the dangers that fate has brought us.

Further there are the economic problems. What is the meaning of the slogan “freedom of trade” advocated by the petty-bourgeois elements? It means that in the relations of the proletariat and the small farmers there are such difficult problems, there are such tasks, which we have not yet solved. I am speaking of the relations of the victorious proletariat to the small proprietors when the proletarian revolution unfolds in a country where the proletariat is in the minority, and the petty bourgeoisie is in the majority. The proletariat's role in such a country consists in guiding the transition of these small proprietors to socialised, collective, communal work. In theory this is beyond dispute. We have dealt with this transition in a whole number of legislative acts, but we know that it is not a matter of legislative acts, but of practical realisation, and we know that this can be guaranteed when you have a very power-

ful, large-scale industry that is able to provide the petty producer with such benefits that he will see in practice the advantage of this large-scale economy.

Marxists and all socialists who have thought about the social revolution and its tasks have always presented the question theoretically in this way. But our main specific feature about which I have spoken and which is characteristic of Russia to the greatest degree 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 had to defend the revolution made the solution of our problems incredibly difficult. We have not been able to prove all the advantages of large-scale production in practice, for this production lies in ruins, drags out a miserable existence, and can only be rehabilitated by demanding sacrifices from these very same small farmers. Industry needs to be developed and for this fuel is needed, and once fuel is needed, firewood has to be relied on, and to rely on firewood means to rely on the peasant and his horse. In conditions of crisis, dearth of fodder, and loss of cattle, the peasant must give his produce on credit to the Soviet government for the sake of large-scale industry, from which so far he receives nothing. This is the economic situation which gives rise to enormous difficulties; this is the economic situation which demands a deeper analysis of the conditions of transition from war to peace. We cannot manage our economy during a war other than by saying to the peasants: "You must let the workers' and peasants' state have things on loan to enable it to overcome its grave difficulties". When we direct all our attention to the rehabilitation of the economy, we must understand that, until large-scale production triumphs, until it is rehabilitated, we shall be faced with the small farmer, the small proprietor, the small producer working for commodity circulation. And this rehabilitation is impossible on the old basis; it will take many years, not

less than decades, and in view of the havoc in the country, possibly longer. Until that happens we shall have to deal for many long years with that small producer as such, and the slogan "freedom of trade" will be inevitable. This slogan is dangerous, not because it hides the aspirations of whiteguards and Mensheviks, but because it may become widespread in spite of the hatred of the peasants for the whiteguards. It will become widespread because it conforms to the economic conditions of the small producer's existence. Bearing all this in mind the Central Committee has adopted a decision and initiated a discussion on the substitution of surplus food requisitioning by a tax, and has placed this question squarely before the Congress today. The resolution you have passed today approves this measure. The problem of the tax and requisitioning was legally raised long ago, at the end of 1918. The tax law was dated October 30, 1918. A tax in kind on the farmer became law, but was never carried out. Several months after it had been announced a number of instructions appeared, and it was never applied. On the other hand, the confiscation of surpluses from the peasants was a measure forced on us through sheer necessity owing to war conditions, but which no longer applies when the circumstances of the peasant's economy approximate to peace-time conditions. He needs the assurance that, while he has to give a certain amount, he can have a certain amount for his own local exchange.

The whole of our economy taken both in its entirety and by individual branches was affected throughout by war-time conditions. Bearing this in mind, our task was to collect a specific amount of food, completely disregarding its role in the social turnover. Now, when we are turning from problems of war to those of peace, we are beginning to regard the tax in kind in a different light; we view it not only from the standpoint of guaranteeing the needs of the state, but also of those of the small farms. We must

understand those economic forms of indignation of the small farmers against the proletariat that have appeared and are becoming more acute in the present crisis. We must try to do the maximum possible in this connection. This is a matter of vital importance for us. We must enable the peasant to have a certain amount of freedom in the local exchange of goods, and turn surplus food requisitioning into a tax, so that the small proprietor may be in a better position to calculate his own production and determine the scale of his production in accordance with the tax. Obviously we know quite well that in the conditions around us this is a very difficult thing to achieve. The amount of sown area, the crop yield, the farm implements have all been reduced, the surpluses have undoubtedly decreased, and in very many cases there are none at all. These circumstances must be regarded as a fact. The peasant has to go hungry for a while in order to save the factories and the towns from absolute famine. This is something easily understood on a country-wide scale, but we do not expect this to be understood by the poverty-stricken, scattered, peasant-proprietor. And we know that we shall not be able to avoid the use of coercion to which the impoverished peasants react very strongly. We must not imagine, either, that this measure will relieve us of the crisis. At the same time, however, we regard it our task to make the maximum concessions, so that the small producer may have the best conditions to come into his own. Up to now, we adapted ourselves to the tasks of war; now we must adapt ourselves to peace-time conditions. The Central Committee faces this task—the task of transition to the tax in kind in conditions of proletarian power, and this is closely connected with granting concessions. You will be having a special discussion on this problem, and it must receive your special attention. By granting concessions proletarian power can secure agreement with advanced capitalist states. We cannot advance farther along the path

to communist system without strengthening our industry which depends on this agreement. On the other hand, at the moment of transition in a country where the peasants predominate, we must be able to apply measures which safeguard the peasants economically, we must be able to apply the maximum measures for easing their economic situation. Until we have altered the peasant's outlook, until large-scale machinery has remade him, we must guarantee him the possibility of running his economy freely. We are now passing through a transitional phase; our revolution is surrounded by capitalist countries. As long as we are in this transitional phase, we are forced to seek extraordinarily complex forms of relationships. Oppressed by war, we were unable to concentrate our attention on how to establish economic relations between proletarian state power, which controls incredibly devastated large-scale production, and small farmers, and on how to find forms of coexistence with them, who as long as they remain small farmers, cannot exist without the guarantee of a certain system of exchange for their small economy. I consider this the most important question in the sphere of economics and politics for the Soviet government at the present time. I consider that this question sums up the political results of our work now that we have completed the war period and have begun, in the year under review, to make the transition to a peace-time situation.

This transition is bound up with such difficulties and has so clearly delineated this petty-bourgeois element, that we must consider it soberly. We look at this series of events from the point of view of the class struggle, and we have never held any illusions as to that the relations between the proletariat and the petty bourgeoisie are a difficult problem, demanding complicated measures or, to be more accurate, a whole range of complicated, transitional measures, so that the victory of proletarian power may be assured. The fact that we issued a decree on the tax in

kind at the end of 1918 proves that the Communists were aware of this problem, but owing to war conditions, were unable to solve it. In the civil war conditions we were obliged to adopt war-time measures. It would be a very great mistake, however, if we concluded from this that these are the only measures and relations possible. This would certainly mean the collapse of Soviet power and of the dictatorship of the proletariat. When the transition to peace takes place during a period of economic crisis, one must remember that it is easier to build up a proletarian state in a country with large-scale production than in a country where small-scale production predominates. This problem has to be approached in a whole number of ways, and we in no way close our eyes to these difficulties, nor do we forget that the proletariat is one thing, and small-scale production another. We do not forget that there are different classes, that petty-bourgeois, anarchist counter-revolution is a political step to whiteguard rule. We must face this squarely and soberly, recognising that what is needed here is, on the one hand, maximum unity, restraint and discipline within the proletarian party, and on the other hand, a whole number of economic measures which, owing to war conditions, we have so far been unable to carry out. We must recognise the need for granting concessions, for purchasing machinery and equipment to satisfy agriculture, so that by exchanging them for grain we are able to re-establish relations between the proletariat and the peasants which will guarantee their existence in peace-time conditions. I trust that we shall return again 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 the period of transition from war to peace, places us before extremely difficult tasks.

In conclusion, I shall say a few words about the question which has taken up so much of our time, the struggle

against bureaucracy. This question came up before the Central Committee in the summer of last year, and in August the Central Committee sent a letter to all organisations on the subject, and it was placed before a Party conference in September. Finally, at the December Congress of Soviets it was dealt with on a wider scale. There can be no doubt that a bureaucratic ulcer exists; it is recognised, and a real struggle against it is essential. Of course in the discussion that we have had this question, to say the least, was dealt with frivolously in some policy statements, and by and large was dealt with from a petty-bourgeois viewpoint. There is no doubt that there had recently been discontent and ferment among non-Party workers. At non-Party meetings in Moscow it has been clear that the words democracy and freedom have been used as slogans for the overthrow of Soviet power. Many, or at any rate, some representatives of the "workers' opposition" have battled against this evil, 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 do not know 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 bureaucracy is absolutely indispensable, and that it is just as complicated as the problem of fighting petty-bourgeois elements. Bureaucracy in our state system has become such a serious ailment that it is dealt with in our Party Programme, because it is connected with these petty-bourgeois elements and their widely scattered nature. These ailments can only be cured by the unity of the working people, so that they will be able not only to welcome the decrees of the Workers' and Peasants' Inspection (do we not issue plenty of decrees that are welcomed?) but will be able, through the Workers' and Peasants' Inspection, to exercise their right, something which

is not to be found, not only in the villages, but even in the towns and even in the capital cities. Very frequently people who shout loudest against bureaucracy do not know how to exercise this right. Very great attention needs to be paid to this fact.

In this instance we frequently observe that some people who battle with this evil may sincerely wish to help the proletarian party, the proletarian dictatorship, the proletarian movement, but in reality help the petty-bourgeois anarchist elements, which on more than one occasion during the revolution have shown themselves to be the most dangerous enemy of the proletarian dictatorship. And now—and this is the main conclusion and lesson of the current year—they have once again shown themselves to be the most dangerous enemy, most likely to have followers and support in a country like ours, able to change the mood of the broad mass of people, and to affect even a section of non-Party workers. In that case the proletarian state finds itself in a very difficult position. If we do not understand this, if we do not learn a lesson from it and do not make this Congress a turning-point both in economic policy and in the sense of maximum unity of the proletariat—we shall have to sadly say of ourselves that we have forgotten nothing of that which, at times small and trifling, ought to be forgotten, and have learned nothing from those serious things which this year of the revolution should have taught us. I hope this will not be the case! (*Stormy applause.*)

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THE HOME AND FOREIGN POLICY OF THE REPUBLIC

Report of the All-Russian Central Executive Committee
and the Council of People's Commissars to the
Ninth All-Russian Congress of Soviets⁴⁹
December 23, 1921

(*Stormy applause. Cries of "Hurrah!", "Long live our leader, Comrade Lenin!", "Long live the leader of the world proletariat, Comrade Lenin!" Loud and prolonged applause.*) Comrades, I have to make a report on the foreign and domestic position of the republic. This is the first time I have been able to make such a report when a whole year has passed without one, at any rate, large-scale attack against our Soviet power by Russian or foreign capitalists. This is the first year that we have been able to enjoy a relative respite from intervention, even though to a limited extent, and that we have been able in some measure to apply our energies to our chief and fundamental tasks, namely, the rehabilitation of our war-devastated economy, to healing the wounds inflicted on Russia by the exploiting classes that had been in power, and to laying the foundations for socialist construction.

Firstly, in touching upon the question of the international position of our republic, I must repeat what I have already said, namely, that a certain equilibrium has been created in international relations, although it is highly unstable.

This is now evident. It is very strange for those of us who have lived through the revolution from its inception, who have experienced and observed our incredible difficulties in breaching the imperialist fronts, to see now the way in which things have developed. Probably, at that time none of us expected or could have expected that things would take such a turn.

We imagined (and it is perhaps well worth remembering this now because it will help us in our practical conclusions on the main economic problems) that future development would take a more simple, a more direct form, than the one it took. We told ourselves, we told the working class and the working people both of Russia and of other countries that there was no way out of the terrible and criminal imperialist slaughter except through revolution and that by breaking off the imperialist war by revolution we were opening up the only possible way out of this criminal slaughter for all peoples. It seemed to us then, and it could not seem otherwise, that this was the obvious, direct and easiest path to take. This direct path, which alone had enabled us to break free of imperialist ties, of imperialist crimes and of the imperialist war continuing to threaten the rest of the world, proved to be one which other nations were unable to take at least as quickly as we had thought they would. When, despite this, we now see what has taken place, when we see that there is only one Socialist Soviet Republic and that it is surrounded by a whole array of frenziedly hostile imperialist powers, we ask ourselves—how was it possible for this to happen?

One may reply without any exaggeration: this happened because basically our understanding of events was correct, because basically our appraisal of the imperialist slaughter and the confusion in the relations between the imperialist powers was correct. It is only due to this that such a strange situation has arisen, that we witness such an unstable, inexplicable, and yet to a certain extent, indis-

putable equilibrium. The fact of the matter is that, although completely surrounded by countries economically and militarily immensely more powerful than ourselves, whose open hostility to us quite often borders on frenzy, we nevertheless see that they were unable to bring about the actual and instant destruction of Soviet Russia on which for three years they had spent so much of their resources and their strength. When we ask ourselves how this could happen, how it could be that one of the most backward and very weak states succeeded in resisting the attacks of the openly hostile, most powerful countries in the world, when we try to examine this question, we see clearly that it was because we proved to be correct on the most fundamental issues. Our forecasts and calculations proved to be correct. It turned out that although the support of the working people of the world was not the swift and direct support that we had counted on, and which we had regarded as the basis of the whole of our policy, we did receive considerable support of another kind, not a direct support, not a swift support. It was precisely this support, precisely this sympathy both of the workers and peasants, the farm workers, throughout the world, even in countries most hostile to us, that were the final and most decisive sources, the decisive reasons for the complete failure of all the attacks directed against us. It was due to this that the alliance of the working people of all countries, which we had proclaimed, strengthened and which had been realised within the borders of our republic, that had an effect on all countries. No matter how precarious this support may be, as long as capitalism exists in other countries (this we must of course see clearly and frankly acknowledge), we may say that this support can already be relied on. Because of this sympathy and support that we now command, the intervention, which we endured during the past three years, which caused us so much incredible destruction and suffering, is, I will not say impossible—one has to be very cau-

tious and circumspect here—but, at any rate, it has to a great extent been made far more difficult for our enemies to carry out. And it is this that, in the final analysis, is responsible for the situation that we see now and which at first glance appears so strange and incomprehensible.

When we quite calmly weigh up the sympathy felt for Bolshevism and the socialist revolution, when we survey the international situation from the point of view of the balance of forces, irrespective of whether these forces favour a just or an unjust cause, whether they favour the exploiting class or the working people—we shall ignore this aspect and attempt an appraisal of how these forces are grouped on an international scale—then we shall see that they are grouped in a manner that basically confirms our predictions and calculations. These were: that capitalism is disintegrating and that after the war, which ended first with the Brest-Litovsk peace and subsequently the Versailles peace—and I don't know which is worse—even in the countries which emerged as victors the hatred and loathing for the war increases as time passes. And the further we get from the war, the clearer it becomes, not only to the working people, but to a very large extent also to the bourgeoisie of the victorious countries, that capitalism is disintegrating, that the world economic crisis has created an intolerable situation from which there is no escape, despite the victories achieved. That is why we, very much weaker than all the other powers, economically, politically and militarily, are at the same time stronger, because we are aware of, and correctly assess, all that emerges and must emerge from this imperialist confusion, from this bloody tangle and from those contradictions (to take only the currency contradictions, I will not mention the others) in which they have become enmeshed and are becoming enmeshed still more deeply, unable to see a way out.

Today we see how the representatives of the most moderate bourgeoisie, who are definitely and without doubt far

removed from socialist ideas, to say nothing of “that awful Bolshevism”, change their tune; we see how even such people change their tune as the famous writer Keynes, whose book has been translated into all languages, who himself took part in the Versailles negotiations, and who devoted himself heart and soul to helping his governments—even he, subsequently, has had to abandon this path, to give it up, while continuing to curse socialism. I repeat, he does not mention, nor does he wish to think about Bolshevism—but he tells the capitalist world: “What you are doing will lead you into a hopeless situation”, and he even proposes something like annulment of all debts.

Excellent, gentlemen! You should have followed our example long ago.

Only a few days ago we read in the newspapers a short report to the effect that one of the most experienced, exceedingly skilful and astute leaders of a capitalist government, Lloyd George, is, it appears, beginning to propose a similar step; and that seemingly America wishes to reply by saying: “Sorry, but we want to be repaid in full.” That being so, we say to ourselves: the affairs of these advanced and mighty states which are discussing such a simple measure so many years after the war are not too good. This was one of the easiest things we did—it was nothing to some of the other difficulties we overcame. (*Applause.*) When we see the growing confusion on this question we say that we are not afraid of their propaganda; although we by no means forget either the dangers surrounding us or our weakness, economically and militarily, compared to any one of these states who, jointly, quite openly and incessantly express their hatred for us. Whenever we express somewhat different views as to whether the existence of landlords and capitalists is justified they do not like it, and these views are declared to be criminal propaganda. I simply cannot understand this, for the same sort of propa-

ganda is conducted legally by all states that do not share our economic views and opinions. But propaganda which calls Bolshevism a monstrous, criminal, usurpatory thing—this monster defies description—this propaganda is conducted openly in all these countries. Recently, I had a meeting with Christensen who is a candidate for the U.S. Presidency on behalf of the Workers' and Peasants' Party there. Do not be misled by this name, comrades. It does not in the least resemble the workers' and peasants' party in Russia. It is a purely bourgeois party, openly and resolutely hostile to any kind of socialism, and is recognised as being perfectly respectable by all bourgeois parties. This Danish-born American, who received almost a million votes at the presidential elections (this is, after all, something in the United States), told me how in Denmark, when he tried to say among people "dressed like I am", and he was well-dressed, like a bourgeois, that the Bolsheviks were not criminals, "they nearly killed me". They told him that the Bolsheviks were monsters, usurpers, and that they were surprised that anyone could mention such people in decent society. This is the type of atmosphere of propaganda surrounding us.

We see, nevertheless, that some kind of equilibrium has been created. This is the objective political situation which is quite independent of our victories, which proves that we fathomed the depth of the contradictions connected with the imperialist war, and that we are gauging them more correctly than ever before, than other powers, who despite all their victories, despite all their strength, have not yet found a way out, nor see any. That is the substance of the international situation which accounts for what we now see. We have before us a highly unstable but, nevertheless, a certain, obvious, indisputable equilibrium. I do not know whether this is for long, and I do not think that anyone can know. That is why we, for our part, must display the utmost caution. And the first precept of our

policy, the first lesson that emerges from our governmental activities for the past year, the lesson which must be learned by all workers and peasants, is to be on the alert, to remember that we are surrounded by people, classes, governments which openly express the utmost hatred for us. We must remember that we are always a hair's breadth away from intervention. We shall do all that lies within our power to prevent this misfortune. We experienced such a burden of the imperialist war which is unlikely to have been experienced by any other nation. Then we bore the burden of the civil war forced on us by the ruling classes, who fought for the Russia of the emigrants, the Russia of the landlords, the Russia of the capitalists. We know, we know only too well, the incredible misfortunes that war brings to the workers and peasants. For this reason our attitude to this question must be most cautious and circumspect. We are ready to make the utmost concessions and sacrifices in order to preserve peace for which we have paid a high price. We are ready to make big concessions and sacrifices, but we are not prepared to make any kind of concessions or sacrifices, or do this forever. Let those, fortunately not numerous, representatives of the war parties and aggressive cliques of Finland, Poland, and Rumania who make great play of this, let them mark this well. (*Applause.*)

Anyone who has any political sense or acumen at all, will say that there has not been—nor can there be—a government in Russia, other than the Soviet Government, prepared to make such concessions and sacrifices in relation to nationalities which had been within our state, and also those which joined the Russian Empire. There is not, and cannot be, another government which would recognise as clearly as we do and declare so distinctly to one and all that the relation of old Russia, tsarist Russia, Russia of the war parties, that her relation to the nationalities populating Russia was criminal, that these relations were imper-

missible, that they aroused rightful and indignant protest and discontent of the oppressed nationalities. There is not, and cannot be, another government which would so openly admit this position, which would conduct this propaganda, propaganda against chauvinism, propaganda which recognises the guilt of old Russia, tsarist Russia, Kerensky Russia; a government which would conduct propaganda against the forcible incorporation of other nationalities in Russia. This is not mere words—this is a simple political fact, absolutely indisputable and plain for all to see. As long as there are no intrigues against us on the part of any nationality which would bind these nationalities to the imperialists, so long as they do not throw out a bridge in order to suppress us, we shall not be deterred by formalities. We shall not forget that we are revolutionaries. (*Applause.*) But there are facts incontrovertibly and indisputably showing that the smallest, completely unarmed nationality, however weak it may be, in Russia that has defeated the Mensheviks and Socialist-Revolutionaries, this nationality may and must absolutely rest assured that we have nothing but peaceful intentions towards it, that our propaganda about the criminality of the old policy of the old governments is not weakening, and that we are as firm as ever in our desire at all costs, and at the price of enormous sacrifices and concessions, to maintain peace with all nationalities that belonged to the former Russian Empire, but who did not wish to remain with us. We have proved this. No matter how great the curses rained on us from all sides we shall prove this. It seems to us that we have given excellent proof of this, and we declare to the meeting of representatives of workers and peasants of Russia, to the many millions of workers and peasants, that we shall preserve peace in the future with all our might; we shall not shrink from great sacrifices and concessions in order to uphold this peace.

There are, however, limits beyond which one cannot go. We shall not permit peace treaties to be flouted. We shall not permit attempts to interfere in our peaceful work. On no account shall we permit this, and we shall rise to a man to defend our existence. (*Applause.*)

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

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

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

peasants and their achievements are concerned. (*Applause.*)

Comrades, having thus briefly outlined the most essential features of our international position, I shall now deal with the manner in which economic relations are developing in our country and in Western Europe, in the capitalist countries. The great difficulty here has been the absence of definite relations with the capitalist countries, which has made it impossible for us to establish stable economic relations. Events show very clearly that it is also impossible for the capitalist countries to do so. But today we are not in an altruistic mood, and our minds are more taken up with the problem of how to continue in existence in spite of the hostility of other countries.

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

Comrades, during the past four years we have heard so many threats, and such terrible ones, that none of them can frighten us any more. As for the blockade, experience has shown that it is an open question as to who suffers from it most, the blockaded or the blockaders. Experience has shown undoubtedly that for the first year on which I am able to report as a period of relative, elementary respite from direct brute force, we have not been recognised, we have been rejected, relations with us have been declared non-existent (let them be recognised as non-existent by the

bourgeois courts), but they nevertheless exist. I deem it my right to report to you what is, without the slightest exaggeration, one of the main results achieved in 1921, the year under discussion.

I do not know whether the report of the People's Commissariat for Foreign Affairs to the Ninth Congress of Soviets has been, or will be, distributed to you today. In my opinion, the defect in this report is that it is too bulky and is difficult to read to the end. But, perhaps, this is my own failing, and I have no doubt that the overwhelming majority of you, as well as all those who are interested in politics, will read it, even if not immediately. Even if you do not read it in its entirety, but only glance through its pages, you will see that Russia has sprouted, if one may so express it, a number of fairly regular and permanent commercial relations, representations, treaties, etc. True, we are not yet recognised *de jure*. This is still important, because the danger of the unstable equilibrium being upset, the danger of new attempts at invasion has, as I have said, increased; the relations, however, are a fact.

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

instrument of our intercourse with foreign countries.

The organisational improvements in our transport system during the past year are beyond doubt. In 1921 we transported by river much more than in 1920. The average run per vessel in 1921 was 1,000 pood-versts as compared with 800 pood-versts in 1920. Undoubtedly, we have made some progress in organisation. I must say that for the first time we are beginning to obtain assistance from abroad. We have ordered thousands of locomotives, and we have already received the first thirteen from Sweden and thirty-seven from Germany. It is a very small beginning, but a beginning, nevertheless. After all, we have ordered hundreds of tank cars, about 500 of which arrived here in the course of 1921. We are paying a high, an exorbitant price for these things, but still, it shows that we are receiving the assistance of the large-scale industry of the advanced countries; it shows that the large-scale industry of the capitalist countries is helping us to restore our economy, despite all these countries being governed by capitalists who hate us heart and soul. All of these capitalists are united by governments which continue to make statements in their press about how matters stand with the *de jure* recognition of Soviet Russia, and about whether or not the Bolshevik Government is a legitimate government. Lengthy research revealed that it is a legitimate government, but it cannot be recognised. I have no right to conceal the sad truth that we are not yet recognised, but I must tell you that commercial relations are nevertheless developing.

All these capitalist countries are in a position to make us pay through the nose, we pay more than the goods are worth, but for all that, they are helping our economy. Why is this? Why are they acting against their own inclinations and in contradiction to what they are constantly asserting in their press—and this press is more

than a match for ours in respect of circulation, and the force and venom with which it attacks us. They call us criminals, and all the same they help us. It turns out, therefore, that economically, they are bound up with us. It turns out, as I have already said, that our calculations, made on a grand scale, are more correct than theirs. This is not because they lack people capable of making correct calculations—they have far more than we have; it is because it is impossible to make proper calculations when one is heading for destruction. That is why I would like to supplement my remarks with a few figures to show how our foreign trade is developing. I shall quote only very brief figures that are easy to remember. If we take the three years 1918, 1919 and 1920, our total imports amounted to a little over 17,000,000 poods; in 1921 they amounted to 50,000,000 poods, that is to say, three times the amount imported in the three preceding years combined. Our exports in the first three years totalled 2,500,000 poods; for 1921 alone, they amounted to 11,500,000 poods. These figures are infinitesimally, miserably, ridiculously small; any well-informed person will at once say that they are indicative of poverty. And that is what they do indicate. But for all that, it is a beginning. And we, who have experienced attempts to strangle us outright, who for years have been hearing threats to the effect that all measures will be taken to prevent intercourse with us as long as we remain what we are, nevertheless see that something has proved more potent than these threats. We see that their forecast of economic development was wrong and ours was right. We have made a start, and we must now devote all our attention, exert all our efforts to continue this development without interruption.

I shall give you another small illustration of the progress we made in 1921. In the first quarter of 1921 imports amounted to about 3,000,000 poods, in the second quarter

to 8,000,000 poods, in the third quarter to 24,000,000 poods. So we are making progress. These figures are infinitesimally small, but they show a gradual increase. We see how they grew in 1921, which was a year of unprecedented difficulties. You know what that calamity, the famine, cost us, what incredible difficulties it is still causing in agriculture, industry and in our life generally. Nevertheless, in spite of the fact that our country has been devastated by war, has suffered tremendous hardship as a result of all the wars and of the rule of tsars and capitalists, we are now on the road that opens up a prospect of improvement, in spite of the unceasing hostility towards us. This is the main factor. That is why, when we read recently about the Washington Conference,⁵⁰ when we heard the news that the countries hostile to us will be obliged to convene a second conference next summer and to invite Germany and Russia to discuss the terms of a genuine peace, we said: Our terms are clear and definite; we have formulated them, we have published them. How much hostility shall we encounter? We have no illusions about that; but we know that the economic position of those who blockaded us has proved to be vulnerable. There is a force that is more potent than the wishes, the will and the decisions of any of the governments or classes that are hostile to us. That force is general, economic world relations, which compel them to establish intercourse with us. The farther they proceed along this path the wider and more rapid will be the development of what in today's report for 1921 I have been able to indicate to you only by some miserable figures.

I must now pass to our domestic economic situation. And here the important question that first needs to be dealt with is that of our economic policy. Our main task for 1921, the year under review, was to change to the New Economic Policy, to take the first steps along this path, to learn how to make them, to adjust our legislation

and administrative apparatus to it. The press has given you a mass of facts and information showing how the work has developed in this direction. You will not, of course, expect me to quote here additional facts or to give various figures. It is only necessary to determine what was the main thing that united us most of all, that is more vital from the point of view of the most important and radical question of the whole of our revolution and of all future socialist revolutions (if viewed generally on a world scale).

The most basic, most vital question is that of the attitude of the working class to the peasants; the alliance of the working class and the peasants; the ability of the advanced workers who have passed through a lengthy, difficult but rewarding school of experience in a large factory to organise matters so that they succeed in attracting to their side the mass of peasants, who have been ground down by capitalism, ground down by the landlords, ground down by their old poverty-stricken, paltry economy; to prove to them that only in alliance with the workers, no matter what the difficulties to be encountered and endured on this path, and they are many, and we cannot close our eyes to this—only through this alliance can the peasants do away with the age-old oppression by the landlords and capitalists. Only by strengthening the alliance of the workers and peasants can mankind be saved from events such as the recent imperialist slaughter, from the barbarous contradictions to be seen in the capitalist world today, where a miserable handful of the richest powers are being choked by their wealth, while the vast population of the globe suffers privations, being unable to benefit from the culture and the rich resources that lay before them, but cannot be made use of because of insufficient exchange.

Unemployment is the chief calamity in the advanced countries. There is no way out of this situation other than through the firm alliance of the peasants with the working

class that has passed through the difficult, but the only reliable and important school, the school of factory life, factory exploitation, factory solidarity—there is no other solution. We tested this alliance in political and military fields during the most difficult years of our republic. In 1921 for the first time, we test this alliance in the economic field. So far we have handled things very, very badly in the economic field, and this must be frankly admitted. We must recognise this shortcoming and not gloss it over. We must do everything possible to eliminate this shortcoming and to understand that the foundation of our New Economic Policy lies in this alliance. There are only two ways in which proper relations between the working class and the peasants can be established. If large-scale industry is flourishing, if it can immediately supply the small peasants with a sufficient amount of goods, or more than previously, and in this way establish proper relations between the supply of surplus agricultural goods coming from the peasants and manufactured goods, then the peasants will be fully satisfied, then the mass of peasants, the non-Party peasants, will acknowledge, by virtue of experience, that this new system is better than the capitalist system. If we are to speak of a flourishing large-scale industry, which is able to supply all the goods the peasants need instantly, this condition is present; if we look at the question on a world scale, then a flourishing large-scale industry capable of supplying the world with all kinds of goods exists, only it is not used for any other purpose than the manufacture of guns, shells and other armaments, employed with such success from 1914 to 1918. Then industry was geared to war and supplied mankind with its products so abundantly that 10 million people were killed and no less than 20 million maimed. This is something we have all seen, and, moreover, the war in the twentieth century is not like previous wars.

After this war, even among the victor countries, among people most hostile to any kind of socialism, who ruthlessly oppose the slightest socialist idea, a large number have been heard to say quite definitely that even if there were no wicked Bolsheviks in the world, it is hardly likely that another war of this kind could be permitted. This is said by the representatives of the most wealthy countries. This is what this rich, advanced, large-scale industry was used for. It served to maim people, and it had no time to supply the peasants with its goods. All the same we have a right to say that such an industry exists on a world scale. There are countries whose large-scale industry is so advanced that it could instantly satisfy the needs of hundreds of millions of backward peasants. We make this the basis of our calculations. From your daily observations you know, better than anyone else, what has been left of our large-scale industry which in any case was weak. In the Donets Basin, for example, which is the main centre of our large-scale industry, there was so much destruction in the Civil War, and so many imperialist governments established their rule there (how many of them did the Ukraine see!) that the only result could be that practically nothing remained of our large-scale industry. When, added to this, there is the misfortune of the 1921 crop failure, it becomes clear that the attempt to supply the peasants with goods from large-scale industry which had come under state control was unsuccessful. Once this attempt has failed, the only economic relation possible between the peasants and the workers, that is, between agriculture and industry, is exchange, trade. This is the heart of the matter. The replacement of requisitioning by the tax in kind—that, very simply, is the substance of our economic policy. When there is no flourishing large-scale industry which can be organised in such a way as to supply the peasants with goods immediately, then there is no other way for the gradual development of a powerful alliance of the workers

and peasants than through trade and the gradual advance of agriculture and industry above their present level, under the guidance and control of the workers' state. Sheer necessity has driven us to this path. And this is the sole basis and substance of our New Economic Policy.

At a time when the main attention and the main forces were diverted to political and military problems, we simply had to press forward with great speed along with the vanguard, knowing that it would have support. The alliance of the peasants and workers in the fight for great political changes, for our great achievements of the past three years which put us at war with the dominant world powers, was made possible by the mere political and military burst because every peasant realised, felt and sensed that he was confronted by his age-old enemy, the landlord, who in one way or another was being aided by representatives of other parties. That is why this alliance was so solid and invincible.

In the economic field, the basis of this alliance has to be different. A change in the substance and form of the alliance is essential. If anyone from the Communist Party, from the trade unions, or merely anyone sympathetic to Soviet power has overlooked the necessity of change in the form and substance of this alliance, then so much the worse for him. Such oversights in a revolution are impermissible. The need for a change in the form of the alliance is demanded because the political and military alliance could not continue intact in the realm of economics when we have as yet no large-scale industry, when it has been ruined by a war never before known by any other country. Even in countries infinitely more wealthy than ours, in countries that had won, not lost in the war, the level of industry has not yet risen. A change in the form and substance of the alliance of the workers and peasants has become essential. We went much further forward in the political and military period than the purely

economic aspect of the alliance of the workers and peasants permitted us to do. We had to do this in order to defeat the enemy, and we had the right to do this. We were successful because we defeated our enemies in the field that existed at that time, in the political and military field, but we suffered a whole number of defeats in the economic field. There is no need to be afraid to admit this; on the contrary, we shall only learn how to be victorious when we do not fear to acknowledge our defeats and shortcomings, when we look truth, even the saddest truth, straight in the face. We have a right to be proud of our achievements in the first field, in the political and military field. They have gone down in history as a world victory, whose overall influence is yet to be felt. But economically, in the year under review, we only started the New Economic Policy and we are making a step forward in this regard. At the same time we are only just beginning to learn and are making very many more mistakes, looking back, being carried away by our past experience—splendid, lofty, magnificent, of world-wide significance, but which could not solve the economic problems now imposed on us in the conditions of a country where large-scale industry has been devastated; in conditions which demand that we learn, in the first place, to establish the economic link now necessary and inevitable. This link is trade. This is a very unpleasant discovery for Communists. It is quite likely that this discovery is extremely unpleasant, in fact it is certain that it is unpleasant, but if we are swayed by ideas of pleasantness or unpleasantness, we shall fall to the level of those would-be socialists of whom we saw plenty at the time of the Kerensky Provisional Government. It is hardly likely that “socialists” of this type still have any authority in our republic. And our strength has always been our ability to take the actual balance of forces into consideration and not

to be afraid of it no matter how unpleasant it might be for us.

Since large-scale industry is present on a world scale, there can be no doubt that a direct transition to socialism is possible—and nobody will deny this fact, just as nobody will deny that this large-scale industry either comes to a standstill and creates unemployment among the most flourishing and wealthy victors, or only manufactures shells for the extermination of people. And if, owing to the backwardness with which we came to the revolution, we have not reached the industrial development we need, are we going to give up, are we going to despair? No. We shall get on with the hard work because the path that we have taken is the right one. There is no doubt that the path of the alliance of the mass of the people is the sole path which will ensure that the peasants and workers work for themselves and not for the exploiters. In order to bring this about in our conditions we must have the only possible economic link, the link through the economy.

That is why we have retreated, that is why we have had to retreat to state capitalism, retreat to concessions, retreat to trade. Without this, proper relations with the peasants cannot be restored in conditions of devastation in which we have found ourselves. Without this we are threatened with the danger of the revolution's vanguard progressing swiftly so far ahead that it would lose touch with the peasants. There would be no union between it and the peasants and that would mean the ruin of the revolution. Our approach to this must be particularly careful because from this follows, first and foremost, what we call our New Economic Policy. That is why we have unanimously declared that we shall carry out this policy in earnest and for a long time, but, of course, as has already been correctly noted, not for ever. The New Economic Policy results from our poverty and devastation and the tremendous weakening of our large-scale industry.

I should now like to quote a few figures in order to prove that despite the difficulties and the many mistakes we made (and we have made a great number) nevertheless we are moving ahead. Comrades, I have not got the overall figures on the development of internal trade; I only wish to deal with information on the turnover of Centrosoyuz for three months. For September, Centrosoyuz's turnover amounted to 1 million gold rubles, for October 3 million and for November 6 million. Again, if taken as absolute, the figures are miserable, small; this must be frankly recognised, because it will be more harmful to harbour any illusions on this score. These are paltry figures, but in these conditions of devastation they undoubtedly show that there is a movement forward, and that we can fasten on to this economic basis. No matter how numerous the mistakes that are made by the trade unions, the Communist Party and the administrative bodies, we are becoming convinced that we can rid ourselves of them, and are gradually doing so, and that we are taking the path that is sure to lead to the restoration of relations between agriculture and industry. The growth of the productive forces can and must be achieved even on the level of petty-peasant economy and, for the time being, on the basis of small-scale industry, since it is so difficult to rehabilitate large-scale industry. We must achieve successes, and we are beginning to achieve them, but we need to remember that a different rate and different conditions of work obtain here; that here victory is more difficult. Here we cannot achieve our aims as quickly as we were able to in the political and military fields. Here we cannot proceed by bursts and bounds, and the periods involved are different—they are counted in decades. These are the periods in which we shall have to achieve successes in the economic war, in conditions of hostility instead of assistance from our neighbours.

This path of ours is the right one, for this is the path which, sooner or later, all other countries will inevitably come to follow. We have begun to follow this correct path. What we must do is to judge even the smallest step, take into account our slightest mistakes, and then we shall reach our goal along this path.

I ought now, comrades, to say a few words about our main preoccupation, agriculture, but I believe that you are to hear a far more detailed and fuller report on this question than I could make, and also on the famine to be made by Comrade Kalinin.

You are fully aware, comrades, of the incredible hardships of the 1921 famine. It was inevitable that the misfortunes of old Russia should have been carried over to our times, because the only solution of this problem is the rehabilitation of the productive forces, but not on the old, paltry, petty basis, but on a new basis, the basis of large-scale industry and electrification. Only in this way shall we be rid of our poverty and of endless famines. And it can instantly be seen that the periods by which we were able to measure our political and military victories, do not apply here. Surrounded by hostile countries, we have, nevertheless, pierced the blockade: no matter how meagre the help, we did get something. In all it amounts to 2,500,000 poods. This is all the help that we have received from abroad, that the foreign countries graciously presented to starving Russia. We were able to collect about 600,000 gold rubles in donations. It is a far too pitiful sum, and shows the mercenary attitude of the European bourgeoisie toward our famine. No doubt you have all read how, at the news of the famine, influential statesmen grandiloquently and solemnly declared that to take advantage of the famine in order to raise the question of old debts would be a devilish thing to do. I am not so sure that the devil is worse than modern imperialism. What I do know is that in actual fact, despite the famine, they

did try to recover their old debts on particularly severe conditions. We do not refuse to pay, and solemnly declare that we are prepared to discuss things in a business-like fashion. But you all understand, and there can be no doubt about this, that we shall never under any circumstances allow ourselves to be tied hand and foot in this matter without considering all its aspects, without taking into account reciprocal claims, without a business-like discussion.

I have to inform you that during recent days we have had considerable success in the struggle against the famine. You have no doubt read in the newspapers that America has allocated 20 million dollars for the relief of the starving in Russia, probably on the same conditions as A.R.A.—the American famine relief organisation. Krassin sent us a telegram a few days ago saying that the American Government is formally proposing to guarantee the dispatch to us over a period of three months of foodstuffs and seeds worth 20 million dollars, provided we, on our part, can agree to the expenditure of 10 million dollars (20 million gold rubles) for the same purpose. We immediately agreed to this and have telegraphed accordingly. And I think we may say that, during the first three months, we shall be able to supply the starving with seeds and food worth 30 million dollars, that is, 60 million gold rubles. This is, of course, very little; it is by no means sufficient for the terrible misfortune that has struck us. You all understand this perfectly well. But at any rate this is aid which will undoubtedly help to relieve our desperate need and desperate famine. And if in the autumn we were able to achieve certain successes in providing the starving areas with seeds, in extending the sown areas in general, then we now have hopes for far greater success in the spring.

In the autumn, approximately 75 per cent of winter crops were sown in the famine gubernias, 102 per cent in the gubernias partially hit by the crop failure, in the producing gubernias 123 per cent, and 126 per cent in the con-

suming gubernias. This, at any rate, proves that no matter how fantastically difficult our conditions were, nevertheless, we were able to give the peasants some help in extending the sown area and in the fight against the famine. Under present conditions we have every right to expect, without any exaggeration or fear of error, that we shall be able to give substantial aid to the peasants in seeds for the spring crop area. This aid, I repeat, will by no means be adequate. Under no circumstances shall we have enough for all our needs. This must be stated quite frankly. All the more reason, therefore, to do everything possible to extend this aid.

In this connection here are the final figures concerning our work to solve the food problem. Generally speaking, the tax in kind made things much easier for the peasants as a whole. This needs no proof. It is not simply a question of how much grain has been taken from the peasants, but that the peasant feels better provided for under the tax in kind, and his incentive to produce has increased. With increased productive forces the tax in kind has opened up wider horizons for an industrious peasant. Generally speaking, the results of the collection of the tax in kind for the year under review are such that we have to say: we must strain all efforts to avert failure.

Here are the general, most concise results that I can give you based on the latest information supplied by the People's Commissariat for Food. We need at least 230 million poods. Of these, 12 million are needed for the starving, 37 million for seed, and 15 million for the reserve fund. We can obtain 109 million through the tax in kind, 15 million from the milling tax, 12½ million from the repayment of the seed loan, 13½ million from trade, 27 million from the Ukraine and 38 million poods from abroad—38 million, reckoning the 30 million from the source I have already mentioned to you, and in addition the 8 million poods we shall buy. This makes

a total of 215 million poods. So we still have a deficit, with not a single pood in reserve, nor is it certain that we shall be able to buy more from abroad. Our food plan has been calculated to the narrowest margin so that the least possible burden falls on the peasants who have been victims of the famine. If in 1920 we estimated that the state maintained 38 million people, now we have reduced this figure to 8 million. This can lead to only one conclusion: there must be 100 per cent collection of the tax in kind, i.e., it must at all costs be collected in full. For the peasants that have suffered so much, this represents a great burden and we do not forget this. I am perfectly well aware that the comrades in the localities who have themselves experienced all the difficulties of solving the food campaign problem, know better than I do what it means to collect the tax in kind in full just at this moment. But, as a result of our work during 1921, I must say on behalf of the government that this task, comrades, has to be carried out; this difficulty will have to be faced, this problem will have to be overcome. Otherwise we cannot meet the most basic, most elementary requirements of our transport and industry, we cannot ensure the very minimum, absolutely essential budget without which we cannot exist in our present condition of hostile encirclement and the highly unstable international balance of forces.

Without the most tremendous efforts, there is and can be no way out of the situation in which we find ourselves after being tortured by the imperialist and civil wars and after being persecuted by the ruling classes of all countries. Therefore, not shunning the bitter truth, we must state quite definitely, and bring this home to the workers in the localities on behalf of the Congress: "Comrades, the entire existence of the Soviet Republic and our very modest plan for rehabilitating transport and industry are based on the assumption that we shall fulfil our

general food procurement programme. It is vitally necessary, therefore, to collect the tax in kind in full."

Speaking of the plan I shall now deal with the present position of the state plan. I shall begin with fuel, which is the staple of industry and the basis of all our industrial work. Probably you have already received today, or will do so in a few days, a report on the work of our Gosplan, the State Planning Commission. You will receive a report on the Congress of Electrical Engineers which made a valuable contribution of most important material and an examination by Russia's best technical and scientific personnel of the plan that provides the only scientifically calculated short-cut to the rehabilitation of our large-scale industry, a plan that will take at least ten to fifteen years to fulfil. I have already said, and I shall not tire of repeating, that the periods we have to reckon with in our practical work today are different from those that we saw in the political and military sphere. Very many leading workers of the Communist Party and trade unions have understood this, but it is vital that everyone should do so. Incidentally, in Comrade Krzhizhanovsky's pamphlet—the report on the work of the Gosplan—which will be distributed to you tomorrow, you will see how the technical experts and agronomists together regard the question of the state plan in general. You will see that their approach is not our usual one of viewing things from a general political or economic point of view, but of regarding matters in the light of their joint experience as technical experts and agronomists and, incidentally, showing the limit to our retreat. In this pamphlet you will find an answer to this question from the point of view of the technical experts and agronomists; its contents are all the more valuable because you will find there how our general state planning organisation tackles the question of transport and industry as a result of its work during the year under review. Naturally, I cannot deal with this report here.

I should like to dwell only briefly on the state of the fuel plan, as in this instance, at the beginning of the 1921 review year, we suffered the most grave setback. It was precisely here, basing ourselves on the improved situation at the end of 1920, that we made the great error which led to the colossal crisis in transport in the spring of 1921, a crisis caused not only by a shortage of material resources, but by a miscalculation of the rate of development. The mistake of transferring our experience gained during the political and war periods to economic problems was already apparent then; it was an important, a fundamental mistake which, comrades, we still repeat at every step. Many mistakes are being made just now, and it must be said that if we do not thoroughly realise and rectify them, no matter how difficult it may be to do this, there can be no stable economic improvement. After the lesson we have had we are working out the fuel plan for the second half of 1921 with far greater care, regarding as impermissible the slightest exaggeration, and doing all we can to prevent it. The figures by the end of December, although still incomplete, given me by Comrade Smilga, who is in charge of all our fuel collection institutions, show that there is a deficit, but it is insignificant and indicates an improvement in the internal structure of our fuel budget, or its mineralisation, as the technical experts put it, that is, considerable success in supplying Russia with mineral fuel; after all a firm foundation for large-scale industry capable of serving as the basis for socialist society can only be built on mineral fuel.

This is how our fuel plan was calculated at the beginning of the second half of 1921. Converting firewood, 2,700,000 cubic sagene, into a conventional 7,000 calorific fuel, as we have always done, and as has been done on page 40 of Krzhizhanovsky's pamphlet, which will be distributed to you, we hope to obtain 297 million poods. The figures show that at the moment we have received nearly

234 million poods. This is an enormous deficiency to which I must draw your attention. During the year under review we have paid very careful attention to the work of our fuel institutions in the matter of firewood. It is precisely this work, however, that is mainly connected with the state of the peasant economy. It is precisely the peasant and his horse that bear the burden. Insufficient fuel and fodder, etc., greatly affect their work. That is why there is a shortage. That is why now, when we stand on the threshold of the winter fuel campaign, I must say once again: Comrades, you must take to the localities the slogan that the greatest concentration of effort is needed in this field of work. Our fuel budget has been based on the absolute minimum required to raise the level of industrial production, but it is vitally necessary that this absolute minimum be achieved, no matter how difficult the conditions.

Further. We estimated that we would receive 143 million poods of coal; we received 184 million poods. This is progress, the progress of the mineralisation of our fuel, the progress of the Donets Basin and other enterprises, where a whole number of comrades have worked selflessly and achieved practical results in improving large-scale industry. I shall give you a couple of figures concerning the Donets Basin, because this is the basis, the main centre of all our industry. Oil, we reckoned on receiving 80 million, which if converted into conventional fuel would be 120 million. Peat, we calculated at 40 million (19 million conventional fuel) and we received 50. So we had reckoned on receiving 579 million poods, but apparently we shall succeed in getting no more than 562 million poods. In general, there is a fuel shortage. True, it is not such a great shortage, possibly 3-4 per cent, but nevertheless it is a shortage. In any case, it has to be admitted that all this constitutes a direct threat to large-scale industry as some part of the minimum requirements will not be met. I think I have proved to you by this example, firstly, that

our planning bodies have not wasted their time, and that our plans will begin to be carried out very shortly, and at the same time that we are beginning to make just a little progress, and that in this respect the hardship and difficulty of our economic situation is still extremely great. Therefore the main slogan, the main battle-cry, the main appeal with which this Congress must proceed in its work and with which it must conclude its work, which the delegates must carry to the localities is: an all-out effort is still needed, no matter how difficult this may be, both in the industrial and in the agricultural field. An all-out effort is the only hope for the republic, the only way in which workers' and peasants' power can be maintained, preserved and stabilised. That we achieved no mean successes has been particularly shown, for instance, in the Donets Basin, where such comrades as Pyatakov in large-scale industry, and Rukhimovich in small-scale industry, worked with great devotion and great success, and for the first time the small-scale industry was in a position to produce something. In large-scale industry output per coal-hewer reached the pre-war level, which had not been the case earlier. The total output of the Donets Basin for 1920 was 272 million poods, and in 1921 it is estimated at 350 million poods. This is a very, very small figure compared to the maximum figure of pre-war times—1,700 million. But still this is something. It proves that there is an important advance. It is, after all, a step forward in the rehabilitation of large-scale industry, and we should not grudge any sacrifice to this end.

Now a couple of words about metallurgy. Here our situation is particularly difficult. We are producing possibly something like 6 per cent of pre-war production. That is the extent of the havoc and poverty to which the imperialist and civil wars have reduced Russia. But we are, of course, progressing. We are building centres like Yugostal, where Comrade Mezhlauk is also working with the utmost

devotion. Although our position is exceedingly difficult we can see here tremendous successes. In the first half of 1921, 70,000 poods of pig-iron were smelted monthly; in October, 130,000; in November, 270,000, that is, almost four times as much. We can see that there are no grounds for panic. We by no means close our eyes to the fact that the figures I have given represent a miserable, paltry level, but all the same they prove that no matter how exceptionally grave things were in 1921, no matter what extraordinary burdens fell on the working class and peasants, all the same we are progressing, we are on the right path, and by straining every nerve we can hope that there will be even greater improvement.

I should also like to give some figures on our progress in electrification. Unfortunately, so far, we have not been very successful. I have thought that I would be able to congratulate the Ninth Congress on the opening of the second big electric power station built by the Soviet government; the first was Shatura, and the second the Kashira station, which we had hoped to open in December.⁵¹ It would have produced, and can produce, 6,000 kw at first, which, with the 18,000 kw we have in Moscow, would have been a substantial help. But a number of obstacles prevented us from opening the station in December 1921; it will be opened very soon, in not more than a few weeks. You have probably seen the report published in *Ekonomicheskaya Zhizn*⁵² a few days ago and signed by engineer Levi, one of the most important participants at the Eighth All-Russian Electrical Engineering Congress, who is, in general, one of our most important workers. I shall give you a few figures from this report. Taking 1918 and 1919 together, 51 stations with a 3,500 kw capacity were opened. If we take 1920 and 1921 together, 221 stations with a 12,000 kw capacity were opened. When these figures are compared with Western Europe they of course seem extremely small and paltry. But they show how progress can be made even

in difficult conditions unprecedented in any country. A by no means unimportant role was played by the distribution of small power stations throughout the countryside. It must be frankly admitted that very often they were scattered. But there was some good in it, too. Thanks to these small stations new centres of modern large-scale industry were set up in the countryside. Although they may be of trifling significance they do show the peasants that Russia will not remain a country of manual labour, or of the primitive wooden plough, but will go forward to different times. And the mass of the peasants is gradually coming to understand that we must and can shift Russia to a different basis. The periods involved, as I have already pointed out, are measured in decades, but the work has already commenced, and the realisation of this is spreading among the mass of the peasants, partly just because the small stations grow faster than the larger ones. But if in 1921 there was a delay in the opening of one large electric power station, at the beginning of 1922 there will be two stations: the Kashira outside Moscow and the Utkina Zavod near Petrograd.⁵³ In this respect, at any rate, we have taken the path that ensures our progress, provided we approach the fulfilment of our tasks with our former zeal.

A couple of words about our other success connected with peat. The 1920 peat yield reached 93 million poods, in 1921, it was 139 million poods, possibly the only sphere in which we have far surpassed the pre-war level. Our resources of peat are inexhaustible, greater than those of any other country. But there have always been gigantic difficulties, and to some extent they still remain, in the sense that this work, which is arduous in general, was especially arduous in Russia. The hydraulic method of peat-cutting recommended by Comrades Radchenko, Menshikov and Morozov, of the Central Peat Board, has made the work easier. There have been great achievements in this

field. In 1921 there were only two peat pumps working—machines for the hydraulic extraction of peat, which relieve the workers of the back-breaking toil still involved in peat-cutting. Twenty of these machines have been ordered from Germany and will be received in 1922. Co-operation with an advanced European country has begun. We cannot ignore the possibilities for the development of peat-cutting which now open out before us. There is a greater abundance of bogs and peat reserves in Russia than anywhere else, and it is now possible to transform the back-breaking labour which only a few workers were prepared to undertake, into more normal work. Practical co-operation with a modern, advanced state, Germany, has been achieved because her factories are already working on machines designed to lighten this labour, machines which will most certainly start to operate in 1922. We must take this fact into account. We can do a great deal in this sphere if we all understand and all spread the idea that, given intensified efforts and mechanised labour, we in Russia have better opportunity than any other country to emerge from the economic crisis.

I want to emphasise another aspect of our economic policy. In assessing our New Economic Policy it is not enough to pay attention to what may be of particular importance. Of course, the essence of our New Economic Policy is the alliance of the proletariat and the peasants, its essence is the union of the vanguard of the proletariat with the broad mass of the peasants. Thanks to the New Economic Policy the development of the productive forces has begun—at all costs, and without delay. Gaining knowledge is another aspect of the New Economic Policy. The New Economic Policy is a form that will enable us to gain knowledge of how to manage our economy in real earnest; up to now we have worked extraordinarily badly in this respect. Of course, it is difficult for a Communist leader, for a trade union leader of the working people

to realise that for us at the moment trade is the touchstone of our economic life, the only possible basis for union of the vanguard of the proletariat with the peasants, the only possible link which will permit us to begin economic development in a united front. If we take any merchant trading under state and legal control (our court is a proletarian one, and it can watch each private businessman in order to see that the laws are not interpreted for them as in bourgeois states; recently there was an example of this in Moscow,⁵⁴ and you all know that we shall multiply these examples, severely punishing any attempts of these private businessmen to violate our laws), we shall see that all the same, this merchant, this private businessman, eager for his 100 per cent profit, will do business—for example, he will acquire raw material for industry, in a way that Communists or trade union workers would never be able to do. That is the significance of the New Economic Policy. There is your lesson. It is a very serious one, and we must all learn it. It is an extremely harsh school. It is not like listening to lectures or passing examinations. It is a difficult problem, a stern economic struggle, in circumstances of poverty, in circumstances of unparalleled difficulties, shortage of bread, famine and cold; this is the real school we must pass through. Every attempt to brush this task aside, every attempt to turn a blind eye to it, to stand aside, will be the most criminal and most dangerous presumption on the part of Communists and trade unionists. All of us, comrades, who are ruling Soviet Russia, are apt to sin in this way, and we must admit this quite frankly in order to rid ourselves of this shortcoming.

We are undertaking our economic construction on the basis of yesterday's experience, and it is here that we make our main mistake. I shall quote you a French proverb which says that people's shortcomings are usually tied up with their merits. A man's shortcomings are, as it were,

an extension of his merits. But if the merits persist longer than they are needed, are displayed when and where they are no longer needed, they become shortcomings. Very likely almost all of you have observed this in private and public life, and we now note in the whole development of our revolution, of our Party and our trade unions, which are the mainstay of our Party, in the entire government machinery ruling Russia, we see this shortcoming, which, as it were, is the extension of our merits. Our great merit was that in the political and military field we took a step of historic importance, that has gone down in world history as the turning-point of two epochs. Whatever sufferings lie ahead this cannot be taken away from us. Thanks only to the proletarian revolution, thanks only to the fact that the Soviet system replaced the old system, we emerged from the imperialist war and our misfortunes. This cannot be taken away from us—this is the undoubted, unalterable, inalienable merit, which no efforts or onslaughts of our enemies can take away from us, but which if it persists where it is no longer needed, becomes the most dangerous shortcoming.

The enthusiastic upsurge of the workers and peasants at their present level of class-consciousness was sufficient to solve political and military problems. They all understood that the imperialist war was strangling them. There was no need for a higher level of consciousness, for a new level of organisation in order to understand this. Enthusiasm, drive, heroism, which have remained and will remain for ever as a monument of what a revolution does and what it can do, helped to solve these problems. That is how we achieved our political and military successes, and this merit now becomes our most dangerous shortcoming. We look back and think that economic problems can be solved in the same manner. But there is the mistake; when the situation has changed and different problems have to be solved, we cannot look back and attempt to solve them by

yesterday's methods. Don't try—you won't succeed! We must realise this mistaken attitude. There are Communist Party and trade union workers who very often turn their backs on and wave aside the humble, difficult work of many years in economic management, which demands forbearance, bitter experiences, long effort, punctuality and perseverance, whether as government workers, or as yesterday's fighters, and excuse themselves with recollections of the great things they did yesterday—these people remind me of the fable of the geese who boasted that they had "saved Rome", but to whom the peasant replied using a long switch, "Leave your ancestors in peace, and what good have you done, geese?" No one will deny that in 1917-18-19-20 we solved our political and military problems with the heroism and success that opened a new epoch in world history. This belongs to us, and there is no one, either in the Party or in the trade unions, who is attempting to take this away from us—but an entirely different task now faces government and trade union workers.

At the present moment you are surrounded by capitalist powers who will not help you, but will hamper you; at the present moment you work in conditions of poverty, ruin, famine and calamity. You must either learn to work at a different rate, calculating the work to be done in decades and not months, making use of the worn-out mass of the people who cannot keep pace with the revolutionary-heroic momentum in their daily work; either you learn to do this, or you will deserve to be called geese. When a trade union or a political worker makes the general statement: we, the trade unions, the Communist Party, run things—that is good. In the political and military sphere we did this splendidly, but in the economic field we do it very badly. We must realise this and do better. "Stop wagging your tongue" is what I will say to any trade union worker who puts the general question whether the trade unions should take part in production. (*Applause.*) Far better reply

to the question in a practical way and tell me (if you hold a responsible position, are a man in authority, a Communist Party or a trade union worker) where you have organised production well, how many years it took you to organise it, how many people are under you—a thousand or ten thousand. Give me a list of those whom you have assigned to the work of economic management, which you have completed, instead of starting twenty different jobs without completing a single one because you had no time." It happens that we in Soviet Russia lack the habit of completing economic tasks, so as to be able to boast of success a few years later, and not to be afraid to learn from the merchant who will make one hundred per cent profit and a bit more; instead we write a wonderful resolution about raw materials and say that we are representatives of the Communist Party, the trade union, the proletariat. Forgive me, but what is the proletariat? It is the class which is working in large-scale industry. Where is your large-scale industry? What kind of proletariat is it? Where is your industry? Why is it at a standstill? Because there is no raw material? But did you succeed in collecting it? No. Write a resolution that it should be collected, and you will find yourself in a mess. And people will say, how stupid, and so you resemble the geese whose ancestors saved Rome.

History has given us the task of completing the great political revolution by slow, hard and laborious economic work, covering a very long period of time. Great political changes in history have always demanded a long period of assimilation. All great political changes have come about through the enthusiasm of the vanguard, whom the people followed spontaneously, not quite consciously. This development could not be otherwise in a society that was oppressed by tsars, landlords and capitalists. And we fulfilled this part of the work, i.e., the political revolution, in a manner that makes its world-historical significance indisputable. Subsequently, following the great political revolu-

tion, however, another task arises which must be understood: this revolution has to be assimilated, has to be put into effect, and we must not plead that the Soviet system is bad, and that it must be rebuilt. We have a tremendous number of enthusiasts who want to rebuild in any kind of way, and these reconstructions lead to calamities of a kind which I have never known in all my life. I am very well aware of the shortcomings of our government machinery so far as mass organisational work is concerned, and for every ten shortcomings that any of you can point out to me, I can immediately cite you a hundred more. The point, however, is not that it should be improved by rapid reorganisation, but that this political transformation has to be assimilated to arrive at a different level of economic efficiency. That is the whole point. It is not necessary to rebuild, but, on the contrary, it is necessary to help correct the many shortcomings present in the Soviet system and in the whole system of management, so as to help tens of millions of people. We need the aid of all the peasants to assimilate our great political victory. We need to look at things soberly and realise that victory has been won, but it has not yet become part of the economy of everyday life and the living conditions of the people. This work will take many decades and will require colossal efforts. It cannot be carried out at the same rate, speed, and under the same conditions which existed during the war.

Before concluding I want to apply this lesson—that shortcomings are sometimes the extension of our merits—to one of our institutions, namely, to the Cheka. You all know, comrades, the violent hatred towards this institution on the part of the Russian emigrants and those numerous representatives of the ruling classes of the imperialist countries, who live alongside these Russian emigrants. And no wonder! It was our effective weapon against the numerous plots and numerous attacks on Soviet

power made by people who were infinitely stronger than we. The capitalists and landlords retained all their international ties and all the support; they were supported by states incomparably more powerful than our state. You know from the history of these conspiracies how these people acted. You know that the only way in which we could reply to these people was by repression, merciless, swift and instant with the support and sympathy of the workers and peasants. That is the merit of our Cheka. We shall always emphasise this whenever we hear, directly or indirectly, as we often do from abroad, the howls of those Russians, who can say the word "Cheka" in all languages, and regard it as an example of Russian barbarism.

Gentlemen, Russian and foreign capitalists! We know that you will never come to love this institution. No wonder! It was able to repulse your intrigues and plots better than anyone else, at a time when you throttled us, invaded us from all sides, when you organised internal plots and committed every possible crime in order to frustrate our peaceful work. Our only response is through an institution aware of the plotters' every move and able to mete out immediate retaliation instead of engaging in persuasion. As long as there are exploiters in the world who have no desire to hand over their landlord and capitalist rights to the workers on a plate, the power of the working people cannot survive without such an institution. We are keenly aware of this, but we also know that a man's merits may become his shortcomings, and we know that prevailing conditions insistently demand that the work of this organisation be limited to the purely political sphere, that it concentrate its efforts on tasks in which it is aided by the situation and the circumstances. If the attempts of the counter-revolution resemble their previous attempts—and we have no proof that the mentality of our adversaries has altered in this respect, we have no grounds for believing this—we shall be able to reply in such a way that will

make it clear that we are in earnest. The Soviet government grants admission to foreign representatives who come here under the pretext of giving aid, but they turn round and help overthrow Soviet power; there have been examples of this. Our government will not find itself in this position, thanks to the fact that we shall value and make use of an institution like the Cheka. This we can guarantee to one and all. But at the same time we categorically state that it is essential to reform the Cheka, define its function and powers, and limit its work to political problems. The task now confronting us is the development of commerce, which is required by the New Economic Policy, and this demands greater revolutionary legality. Naturally, if we had made this the all-important task when we were attacked and Soviet power was taken by the throat, we would have been pedants; we would have been playing at revolution, but would not be making the revolution. The closer we approach conditions of unshakable and lasting power, the further commerce develops, the more imperative it is to put forward the firm slogan of greater revolutionary legality, the narrower becomes the sphere of activity of the institution which matches the plotters blow for blow. This conclusion results from the experience, observation and reflection of the government for the past year.

In conclusion, I must say, comrades, that we have placed on a correct footing the problem which we are solving this year and which up to now we have solved so badly—to bring the workers and peasants into a sound economic alliance, even in conditions of extreme poverty and devastation; we have taken the correct line, and there can be no doubt about this. And this is not only a Russian task, but a world task.

This task which we are solving now, for the time being on our own, seems to be a purely Russian task, but in reality it is a task which all socialists will face. Capitalism is dying and in its death throes it can still condemn tens

and hundreds of millions of people to unparalleled torment, but there is no power that can prevent its downfall. The new society, which will be based on the alliance of the workers and peasants, is inevitable. Sooner or later it will come—twenty years earlier or twenty years later, and when we labour on the solution of our New Economic Policy, we are helping to work out for this society the forms of alliance between the workers and peasants. We shall solve this problem and we shall create an alliance of the workers and peasants that is so sound that no power on earth will break it. (*Stormy, prolonged applause.*)

Pravda No. 292,
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Vol. 33, pp. 117-52

DRAFT DECISION
OF THE ALL-RUSSIAN CENTRAL EXECUTIVE
COMMITTEE ON THE REPORT OF THE DELEGATION
TO THE GENOA CONFERENCE⁵⁵

The All-Russian Central Executive Committee's draft resolution on Joffe's report should be compiled approximately as follows:

1. The delegation of the All-Russian Central Executive Committee has carried out its work correctly in taking its stand on the full sovereignty of the R.S.F.S.R.—opposing attempts to impose bondage on the country and restore private property—and in concluding a treaty with Germany.

2. The international political and economic situation bears the following features:

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

3. Economic—the “victor” countries, exceedingly powerful and enriched by the war (=by plunder), have not been able to re-establish even the former capitalist relations three and a half years after the war [currency chaos; non-fulfilment of the Treaty of Versailles and the impossibility

of its fulfilment; non-payment of debts to the United States, *etc., etc.* (in greater detail)].

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

5. The other articles of the Cannes conditions, as well as the memoranda, *etc.*, of the powers at Genoa, are in contradiction to this and are, therefore, still-born.

6. True equality of the two property systems—if only as a temporary state, until such times as the entire world abandons private property and the economic chaos and wars engendered by it for the higher property system—is found only in the Treaty of Rapallo.⁵⁶

The All-Russian Central Executive Committee, therefore:

welcomes the Treaty of Rapallo as the only correct way out of the difficulties, chaos and danger of wars (as long as there remain two property systems, one of them as obsolete as capitalist property);

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

instructs the Council of People's Commissars and the People's Commissariat for Foreign Affairs to pursue a policy that is in this spirit;

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

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

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V. I. Lenin's *Collected Works*

Vol. 33, pp. 319-20

INTERVIEW GIVEN TO MICHAEL FARBMAN,
OBSERVER AND MANCHESTER GUARDIAN
CORRESPONDENT

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

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

Answer. I consider it absolutely incorrect to describe Herriot's reception in Moscow and the Franco-Russian negotiations as a change, even a slight one, in Soviet Russia's policy in general, or as being anti-British in particular. We undoubtedly value very highly both Herriot's reception in Moscow and the step taken towards a *rapprochement* with France or towards negotiations with her, which have now become possible, probable and, I should like to believe, essential. Any *rapprochement* with France is something we very much desire, especially in view of the fact that Russia's commercial interests imperatively demand closer relations with this strong Continental power. But we are convinced that this *rapprochement* does not in the least imply that some change must necessarily take place in our policy towards Britain. We believe fully friendly relations with both powers to be quite possible, and that is our aim. We believe that the development of commercial relations will inevitably go a very long way towards the

achievement of this aim. We believe that the interests of Britain and France, rightly understood, will likewise operate in that direction. We believe that the mutual interests of both Britain and France, insofar as they have points of contact with Russia, do not under any circumstances contain elements of inevitable hostility between Britain and France. On the contrary, we even think that peaceful and friendly relations between these powers and Russia contain a guarantee (I am almost prepared to say—the strongest guarantee) that peace and friendship between Britain and France will last a long time, and that all possible, and under present circumstances probable, differences between France and Britain will most speedily and truly find a happy solution.

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

Answer. Of course, the termination of the Graeco-Turkish War, which had Britain's support, is a factor that, to a certain extent, improves the chances of an Anglo-Russian agreement being concluded. We strove for such an agreement even before that war ended and shall now continue to strive for it with the utmost energy. True, some of the problems connected with the termination of that war are objects of our disagreement with Britain. But, first of all, the peace which has followed the Graeco-Turkish War is in our opinion such an advantage to international politics in general that we hope for an improvement in the general conditions under which they are conducted, thanks to the Graeco-Turkish peace. Secondly, we do not consider the differences between Britain and ourselves to be in any way insurmountable. On the contrary, we expect that, with the Near East problem entering various stages, the near future will show us to what extent we are right in hoping that the end of the Graeco-Turkish War

will also be the end of the conflicts and differences which placed that war in the forefront of international politics. We are doing everything in our power to make the end of that war also the end of all friction and disagreement with Britain, and we hope that the interests of the British Government will rise on this occasion, too, above any promptings and the frequently insincere utterances of the anti-Russian press.

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

Answer. I consider Russia's participation in the settlement of the Near East question⁵⁷ to have nothing to do with prestige. I hope that our international politics as a whole over a period of five years have shown completely that we are quite indifferent to questions of prestige and that we are incapable of putting forward any demand whatsoever or of worsening the real chances of peace between states solely on account of prestige. I am confident that in no other country are the masses so indifferent to prestige and even so prepared to treat the question of prestige as such with happy ridicule. We are of the opinion that modern diplomacy will rapidly come to regard questions of prestige precisely in this way.

Our Near East policy is a matter of Russia's most real, immediate and vital interests and of the interest of a number of states federated with her. If all these states did not succeed in getting their demand to participate in the Near East Conference satisfied, there would remain a huge mass of elements of hostility, conflict and discontent; their non-participation would involve such difficulties in purely commercial affairs between Eastern Europe on the one hand and all other states on the other, that either there would remain

no grounds whatever for peaceful coexistence or that such existence would be extraordinarily difficult.

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

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

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

First, the satisfaction of Turkey's national aspirations. We consider that this is essential, and not only in the interests of national independence. Our five years' experience in settling the national question in a country that contains a tremendous number of nationalities such as could hardly be found in any other country, gives us the full conviction that under such circumstances the only correct attitude to the interests of nations is to meet those interests in full and provide conditions that exclude any possibility of conflicts on that score. Our experience has left us with the firm conviction that only outstanding attention to the interests of various nations can remove grounds for conflicts, can remove mutual mistrust, can remove the danger of any intrigues and create that confidence, especially on the part of workers and peasants speaking different languages, without which there absolutely cannot be peaceful relations between peoples or anything like a successful development of everything that is of value in present-day civilisation.

Secondly, our programme includes the closing of the Straits to all warships in times of peace and of war. This is in the direct commercial interests of all powers, not only

of those whose territory is in the immediate vicinity of the Straits, but of all others, too. It must be remembered that all over the world there has been an inordinate amount of pacifist talk, an unusual number of pacifist phrases and assurances, and even vows against war and against peace, although there is unusually little preparedness on the part of the majority of states, especially on the part of the modern civilised states, to take any realistic steps, even the most simple, to ensure peace. On this, and on similar questions, we should like to see a minimum of general assurances, solemn promises and wordy formulas, and the greatest possible number of the simplest and most obvious solutions and measures that would actually lead to peace, if we do not speak of the complete elimination of the war danger.

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

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

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

Answer. We are, of course, opposed to the League of Nations, and I do not think that it is only our economic and political system with its specific features that accounts for our negative attitude towards the League; the interests of peace, regarded from the point of view of the concrete conditions of modern international politics in general, also fully justify that negative attitude. The League of Nations bears so many marks of its world war origin, it is so intimately bound up with the Treaty of Versailles and is so marked by the absence of anything resembling the establishment of the real equality of rights between nations, anything

resembling a real chance of their peaceful coexistence, that I think our negative attitude to the League can be understood and does not stand in need of further comment.

6. *Question.* Does the refusal to ratify the agreement with Urquhart⁵⁸ mean a victory of the "Left Communists"? What are the objective conditions which would make possible a resumption of negotiations and the ratification of the agreement with Urquhart?

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

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

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

The resumption of negotiations and the subsequent ratification of an agreement with Urquhart depend primarily on the elimination of the flagrant injustices committed against Russia by Britain in curtailing her right to participate in the Near East Conference. As far as the concrete terms submitted to us by Urquhart are concerned, I have not yet had time to look into this matter in sufficient detail, and

can only say that the government has decided to let the supporters and opponents of this agreement have their say in our press as soon as possible, in order to obtain, from the objective and motivated discussion, material for the overall verification of all the pros and cons and for a decision on the issue in a manner that best accords with Russia's interests.

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

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

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

From this you can see how absolutely unfounded are the rumours that we are putting an end to the New Economic

Policy and how utterly false are the accusations made by the anti-Russian press in Britain, which is trying by the most unheard-of distortion and deception to present our policy in a false light. Actually, there has never been any mention in any government circles whatsoever of ending the New Economic Policy and returning to the old. Incidentally, the whole work of the government during the session of the All-Russian Central Executive Committee now in progress is aimed at obtaining the widest possible legislative sanction for what is known as the New Economic Policy, so as to eliminate all possibility of any deviation from it.

October 27, 1922

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NOTES

¹ *The Second All-Russian Congress of Soviets of Workers' and Soldiers' Deputies* opened on October 25 (November 7), 1917. The Second Congress of Soviets announced that power in Russia had passed to the Soviets, adopted decrees on peace and on the land and formed the first Soviet Government—the Council of People's Commissars. Lenin delivered speeches on peace and land and was elected Chairman of the Council of People's Commissars.

p. 5

² That is, during the existence of the counter-revolutionary bourgeois Provisional Government that came to power after the overthrow of the autocracy in Russia in February 1917.

p. 7

³ *Chartist movement*—a widespread revolutionary movement of the English workers in the nineteenth century. It derived its name from the word "Charter" which contained the movement's political demands. The views of the majority of its participants were rather utopian. This and the lack of a definite programme and tactics constituted the movement's weak point. Despite its defeat, however, Chartism exercised a strong influence on the development of the British and international working-class movement.

p. 8

⁴ *The Anti-Socialist Law* was promulgated in Germany in 1878. Under this law all organisations of the Social-Democratic Party, all workers' mass organisations, and the working-class press were banned, and the banishment of Social-Democrats was begun. The law was annulled in 1890 under the pressure of the mass working-class movement.

p. 8

⁵ Lenin refers to the Manifesto of the Petrograd Soviet "To the Peoples of the Whole World", adopted on March 14 (27), 1917. The Mensheviks and Socialist-Revolutionaries, who seized the

leadership of the Petrograd Soviet after the February revolution in 1917, were forced to endorse the Manifesto under the pressure of the revolutionary people demanding an end to the war.

The Manifesto urged the working people of the belligerent countries to come out in favour of peace. The Manifesto, however, did not expose the predatory character of the war, did not advance any practical measures to be adopted in the struggle for peace, and, in fact, justified the continuation of the imperialist war by the bourgeois Provisional Government.

p. 10

⁶ This refers to the mutiny in the German navy at Wilhelmshaven in July-August 1917, the demand being the termination of the imperialist war. The government of Wilhelm II savagely put down the mutiny.

p. 10

⁷ *The Moscow Regional Bureau of the R.S.D.L.P.(B.)* united, in 1917 and at the beginning of 1918, the Party organisations of the Central industrial region. During the period when the Party was struggling for peace with Germany, necessary for the young and still weak Soviet Republic, the "Left Communists" (who favoured the continuation of the war with Germany) had temporarily seized control of the Moscow Regional Bureau.

The schismatic, anti-Soviet resolution Lenin speaks of was passed at a meeting of the Bureau attended by only a limited number of its members and which took place after the Central Committee of the Party had accepted the new peace terms imposed by Germany on Soviet Russia.

p. 15

⁸ The peace treaty with the German bloc (Germany, Austria-Hungary, Turkey and Bulgaria) was signed by Soviet Russia at Brest-Litovsk on March 3, 1918. The terms of the Brest peace were extremely harsh for Soviet Russia. A territory of more than 58,000 square miles (Poland, Lithuania, part of Latvia and Estonia) was to be severed from Russia. Germany occupied a large part of Byelorussia and the whole of the Ukraine. Big territories in Transcaucasia were also annexed in favour of Turkey. Russia was to pay a high indemnity to Germany. Despite its harsh character, the Brest peace gave the Soviet Republic the breathing-space it needed to gather forces and defeat the counter-revolutionary bourgeoisie and the interventionist forces in the Civil War that began soon afterwards. After the revolution in Germany (November 1918), the Brest peace was annulled.

p. 15

⁹ This refers to the vote on the question of peace with Germany that took place at a meeting of the Party Central Committee jointly with the Party functionaries on February 3, 1918.

p. 19

¹⁰ This refers to the first Russian revolution—the bourgeois-democratic revolution of 1905-07.

p. 25

¹¹ *The Fourth Extraordinary All-Russian Congress of Soviets*, held in Moscow on March 14-16, 1918, was convened to ratify the Brest Peace Treaty. Lenin made a report on the subject. Kamkov, representative of the Left Socialist-Revolutionaries, spoke against the ratification. By an overwhelming majority the Congress adopted Lenin's resolution. In addition, the Congress decided to transfer the country's capital from Petrograd to Moscow.

p. 31

¹² *Cadets*—members of the Constitutional-Democratic Party, the leading party of the Russian liberal-monarchist bourgeoisie. The Cadet Party was founded in October 1905, its membership including representatives of the bourgeoisie, Zemstvo landlords and bourgeois intellectuals. To deceive the working people, the Cadets called themselves "the party of people's freedom", but in fact they did not go beyond the demand for a constitutional monarchy. The Cadets considered their main aim to be the struggle against the revolutionary movement and sought to share power with the tsar and the feudal landlords. During the First World War the Cadets actively supported the tsarist government's foreign policy of conquest. During the bourgeois-democratic revolution of February 1917 they tried to save the monarchy. The Cadets, who occupied a leading position in the bourgeois Provisional Government, pursued an anti-popular, counter-revolutionary policy, favourable to the U.S., British and French imperialists. Following the victory of the Great October Socialist Revolution the Cadets became irreconcilable enemies of Soviet power and participated in all the armed counter-revolutionary actions and campaigns of the interventionist forces. When the interventionist forces and whiteguards were defeated, the Cadets fled abroad, where they continued their anti-Soviet, counter-revolutionary activity.

p. 35

¹³ The February revolution of 1917 in Russia resulted in the establishment of dual power. Alongside the revolutionary-democratic dictatorship of the proletariat in the shape of the Soviets of Workers' and Soldiers' Deputies, there existed the bourgeois Provisional

Government. In words, the Provisional Government proclaimed a policy of peace, but in deeds, it did not even think of Russia withdrawing from the imperialist war. In an attempt to strengthen its positions, the Provisional Government decided in June 1917 to launch an offensive at the front. In the event of the offensive being successful, the bourgeoisie counted on stepping up propaganda in favour of the defence of the country, on putting an end to the dual power and on establishing their counter-revolutionary dictatorship. At the time, however, the fighting capacity of the Russian army was very low owing to the lack of technique, weapons and ammunition. Furthermore—and this is the main thing—the soldiers did not want to fight. Many units refused to obey the order to begin an offensive [dated June 18 (July 1), 1917]. Following several partial successes, the widely advertised offensive fell through, the army having lost 60,000 men. This criminal order was given after the Provisional Government received support from the First All-Russian Congress of Soviets, June 3 (16), 1917, at which the parties of compromise—the Mensheviks, Socialist-Revolutionaries, etc.—had a majority.

p. 42

- ¹⁴ *The Central Rada*—a bourgeois nationalist organisation founded in Kiev in April 1917, at a congress of the Ukrainian bourgeois and petty-bourgeois parties and groups. After the Great October Socialist Revolution the Rada declared itself to be the supreme organ of the "Ukrainian People's Republic" and embarked on the path of open struggle against Soviet power.

In view of the obviously hostile attitude of Central Rada to the Soviets, the Council of People's Commissars decided, on December 3 (16), 1917, to present an ultimatum to the Rada and simultaneously to address a manifesto to the Ukrainian people. In the course of discussion these two documents were combined to form one document entitled "Manifesto to the Ukrainian People with an Ultimatum to the Ukrainian Rada".

In January 1918, the Kiev workers responded to the Bolsheviks' call and rose in revolt against the counter-revolutionary Rada. Soviet power was proclaimed in Kiev, and the Rada was driven out of the city.

p. 45

- ¹⁵ On December 22, 1917 (January 4, 1918) the Soviet Government recognised the independence of Finland which had formerly been part of the Russian Empire. In mid-February 1918 the revolutionary government of the socialist Finnish Republic proposed that the Soviet Government should conclude a friendship treaty with Finland. A Russian-Finnish agreement committee was set up to

draw up the terms. The draft treaty submitted by the committee was discussed at several sessions of the Council of People's Commissars. Lenin made several amendments to it. The treaty with revolutionary Finland was published on March 10, 1918.

p. 50

- ¹⁶ *The Sixth Extraordinary All-Russian Congress of Soviets of Workers', Peasants', Cossacks' and Red Army Deputies* met in Moscow from November 6 to November 9, 1918. Lenin was elected its honorary chairman.

Lenin spoke at the first session of the Congress, November 6, on the anniversary of the October Socialist Revolution and at the second session, November 8, on the international situation. The Congress unanimously endorsed the resolution written by Lenin and adopted on October 22, 1918, at a Joint Meeting of the All-Russian Central Executive Committee, the Moscow Soviet, and Moscow Factory Committees and Trade Unions.

The Congress addressed the governments at war with Soviet Russia proposing to start peace negotiations.

p. 53

- ¹⁷ Lenin refers to the dispatch of Russian troops by Tsar Nicholas I to help the Austrian emperor crush the Hungarian Revolution.

p. 62

- ¹⁸ Lenin refers to the suppression by the tsar's troops of the Polish insurrection of 1863.

p. 62

- ¹⁹ This refers to the counter-revolutionary revolt of the Czechoslovak Corps, made up of war prisoners during the First World War (Czechoslovakia was then part of Austria-Hungary). The Corps was formed by the Provisional Government in 1917 for war against Germany. Following the October Socialist Revolution, the Russian and foreign counter-revolutionaries used the Corps to fight Soviet power.

p. 64

- ²⁰ This refers to the sudden refusal of the Dutch Government to allow the entry into Holland of the R.S.F.S.R. plenipotentiary (who was already on his way to the country) despite the previous agreement to exchange representation and despite the fact that the R.S.F.S.R. representative had a visa from the Dutch consul in Moscow.

p. 64

²¹ *L'Echo de Paris*—an extremely reactionary, bourgeois daily, published in Paris between 1884 and 1938.

p. 66

²² *The Third International (III-me Internationale)*—the weekly organ of a group of French Communists; published in Moscow in 1918-19.

p. 66

²³ Peace negotiations with Bullitt, who came to Moscow on the instructions of U.S. President Wilson, were conducted by the Soviet Government in March 1919. The Soviet Government introduced a number of amendments into the American and British proposals, after which the final draft agreement was drawn up. The Soviet Government's proposals were not accepted by the governments of the U.S.A. and Britain because in the spring Kolchak's army began an offensive, and they hoped that Kolchak would smash Soviet Russia.

p. 71

²⁴ This draft resolution was drawn up by Lenin at a meeting of the Eighth All-Russian Conference of the R.C.P.(B.) on December 2, 1919. With minor corrections the draft was adopted by the conference and then read by Lenin on December 5 in his report to the Seventh All-Russian Congress of Soviets (see pp. 103-04 of the present volume). The Congress unanimously adopted it as a peace proposal to the Entente countries. The Congress resolution was published in the press on December 6, 1919.

The Congress peace proposal was sent out to the Entente countries on December 10, 1919, but the British, French, U.S. and Italian governments refused to consider it.

p. 73

²⁵ *The Seventh All-Russian Congress of Soviets* was held in Moscow on December 5-9, 1919 and was attended by 1,366 delegates, of whom 1,278 were Communists. The Congress agenda included the following items: 1. Report of the All-Russian Central Executive Committee and the Council of People's Commissars; 2. The military situation; 3. The Communist International; 4. The food situation; 5. The fuel question; 6. The building of the Soviet system locally and in the centre; 7. Elections of an All-Russian Central Executive Committee.

At the opening session Lenin delivered the report of the Central Executive Committee and the Council of People's Commissars; next day he made concluding remarks on the report; on December 8, Lenin spoke in the Congress organising section, and on December 9, he made a concluding speech.

p. 75

²⁶ The German Government broke off diplomatic relations with the R.S.F.S.R. on November 5, 1918 and expelled the Soviet Embassy from Berlin under the false pretext that the official Soviet representatives conducted propaganda against German government institutions. Diplomatic relations between Germany and the R.S.F.S.R. were not resumed until 1922.

p. 79

²⁷ *The Dreyfus case*—a frame-up trial organised in 1894 by the reactionary-monarchist circles of the French militarists against an officer of the General Staff, Dreyfus, a Jew, on the trumped-up charge of espionage and high treason. Dreyfus was court-martialled and sentenced to life imprisonment. The public movement in France, to force a review of the Dreyfus affair, was developing amidst the severe struggle between the republicans and monarchists and led, in the end, to the acquittal of Dreyfus in 1906. Lenin called the Dreyfus affair "one of the many thousands of fraudulent tricks of the reactionary military caste".

p. 89

²⁸ Lenin read the announcement, published in the central newspapers on January 18, 1920, about the decision of the governments of the Entente countries to lift the blockade against Soviet Russia and to allow these countries to trade with Russia. The announcement emphasised that this decision "by no means signifies a change in the policy of the Allies as regards the Soviet Government".

p. 106

²⁹ The documents referred to by Lenin were furnished by the white-guard officer Oleinikov who deserted to the side of the Soviets. He carried these documents from Paris, from Sazonov, via Sweden to Yudenich.

The people mentioned in the documents are: Sazonov—Minister for Foreign Affairs in the tsarist government and representative of Kolchak and Denikin in Paris; Gulkevich—Kolchak's representative in Sweden; Bakhmetev—Kolchak's ambassador in Washington; Sukin—Kolchak's Minister for Foreign Affairs in Omsk; Sablin—Kolchak's chargé d'affaires in London; Knox—general, representative of the British Government with Kolchak; Guchkov—former minister in the Provisional Government.

p. 111

³⁰ This refers to the negotiations conducted by the Red Cross on the exchange of prisoners-of-war, the return of refugees, etc.

p. 114

³¹ Lenin has in mind the appeal of the R.S.F.S.R. Council of People's Commissars addressed to the Government and people of Poland and published in the central newspapers on January 30, 1920. In addition, on February 2, the All-Russian Central Executive Committee adopted an appeal to the Polish people at a meeting of the first session of the C.E.C. (seventh convocation). The appeal exposed the slanders spread by the imperialist governments about the supposedly annexationist intentions of Soviet Russia in relation to Poland and emphasised the Soviet Government's unswerving desire for peace and for establishing friendly, good-neighbour relations with independent Poland.

p. 115

³² The *Bashkir Autonomous Soviet Republic* was formed as a result of an agreement between the Soviet Government and the Bashkir Government. Under the agreement on the Soviet Autonomous Bashkiria, published on March 23, 1919, the Bashkir Republic entered the R.S.F.S.R. on a federative basis.

p. 117

³³ The *Tatar Autonomous Soviet Republic* was formed on May 27, 1920. The decree by the All-Russian Central Executive Committee and the Council of People's Commissars on the formation of the republic was signed by Lenin and Kalinin.

p. 117

³⁴ The questions were broadcast to Lenin by the Berlin representative of the American bourgeois newspaper *New York Evening Journal*. Lenin's reply was sent by radio-telegram to Berlin, from where it was transmitted to New York on February 21, 1920. The same evening it was published in *The New York Evening Journal*. Lenin's radio-telegram was also reprinted in the German communist and socialist press.

p. 130

³⁵ The special correspondent of the London conservative newspaper *Daily Express*, who was in Copenhagen, addressed Lenin requesting him to answer four questions. Lenin's reply was received in Copenhagen on February 22 and the next day it was published in *Daily Express*.

p. 134

³⁶ The *Joint Meeting of the All-Russian Central Executive Committee, the Moscow Soviet and Representatives of Moscow Trade Unions and Factory Committees*, held on May 5, 1920, was convened in connection with the attack of the Polish Whites on Soviet Russia.

The meeting was also attended by 300 Petrograd Communist workers leaving for the Polish front. The one question discussed was the situation on the Polish front. The meeting unanimously adopted a resolution calling on the workers and peasants to mobilise all their efforts to rout bourgeois-landlord Poland.

p. 136

³⁷ This refers to the conference of the Entente countries held in San Remo (Italy) in April 1920. The conference discussed the draft peace treaty with Turkey, the fulfilment of the Treaty of Versailles by Germany, etc.

p. 138

³⁸ Early in 1920 some Red Army units were made into armies of labour to be utilised in economic construction. Because of the war against bourgeois-landlord Poland and Wrangel, they were again put on a war footing.

p. 141

³⁹ Lenin refers to the First Congress of the Peoples of the East held in Baku between September 1 and 7, 1920. The Congress was attended by 1,891 delegates (including 1,273 Communists) representing 37 nationalities. On the national and the colonial question the Congress expressed its solidarity with the resolution adopted by the Second Congress of the Communist International.

p. 156

⁴⁰ See Note 19.

p. 172

⁴¹ Lenin refers to the counter-revolutionary whiteguard-Socialist-Revolutionary government formed in June 1918 in Samara, Ufa, Simbirsk, Kazan and the Central Volga Area. The government, which called itself the Constituent Assembly Committee, lasted until December 1918.

p. 173

⁴² Lenin refers to the resolutions of the Ninth All-Russian Conference of the R.C.P.(B.) (see *C.P.S.U. in Resolutions and Decisions of Congresses, Conferences and Central Committee Plenary Meetings*, 7th Russ. ed., Part I, 1954, pp. 506-13).

p. 178

⁴³ See Lenin, "Report on the Immediate Tasks of the Soviet Government" and "Concluding Remarks on the Report", delivered at a meeting of the All-Russian Central Executive Committee on April 29, 1918 (*Collected Works*, 4th Russ. ed., Vol. 27, pp. 249-81).

p. 200

⁴⁴ See Lenin, "On the Trade Unions" (*Collected Works*, 4th Russ. ed., Vol. 32, p. 14).

p. 201

⁴⁵ The twenty-one conditions for admission to the Third International were worked out by Lenin and adopted by the Second Congress of the Communist International in August 1920.

p. 210

⁴⁶ The trade agreement with Britain was signed on March 16, 1921.

p. 212

⁴⁷ Lenin refers to the counter-revolutionary Kronstadt mutiny which began on February 28, 1921. The Tenth Party Congress sent 300 of its delegates to help put down the mutiny. On March 18 it was completely quelled.

p. 214

⁴⁸ By the Democratic Committee in Samara, Lenin means the Constituent Assembly Committee (see Note 41).

p. 216

⁴⁹ *The Ninth All-Russian Congress of Soviets* was held in Moscow on December 23-28, 1921 and was attended by 1,991 delegates. Lenin delivered the report of the All-Russian Central Executive Committee and the Council of People's Commissars on the home and foreign policy of the Soviet Republic on the evening of December 23. The Congress unanimously approved the Soviet Government's activities for the period under review. It adopted a declaration on the international position of the R.S.F.S.R. based on Lenin's instructions. The Congress also adopted the "Instructions on the Questions of Economic Work", drawn up by Lenin, and a number of decisions on industry and agriculture.

p. 225

⁵⁰ *The Washington Conference* was held between November 12, 1921 and February 6, 1922. The U.S.A., which initiated the Conference, managed to strengthen its political, naval and economic positions in the Far East. Soviet Russia was not invited to attend the Conference. The Washington Conference aggravated still more the contradictions between the imperialist countries.

p. 239

⁵¹ The building of the Shatura Power Station named after Lenin began in 1919. The first section with a capacity of 5,000 kw came into operation in 1920.

According to the plan, the construction of the Kashira Power Station was to be completed by the end of 1921. On June 4, 1922

the building of the first section (12,000 kw) was finished, and the station was put into commission. Lenin attached very great importance to the Kashira Power Station. He gave instructions as to its construction, helped provide it with man-power, the necessary equipment, fuel, etc.

p. 255

⁵² *Ekonomicheskaya Zhizn (Economic Affairs)*—a daily newspaper published in Moscow from November 1918 to November 1937.

p. 255

⁵³ *The Krasny Oktyabr (Red October) Power Station* (former Utkina Zavod) was completed in 1922, the first section (10,000 kw) being put into operation on October 8, 1922.

p. 256

⁵⁴ Lenin refers to the trial (Moscow, December 15-18, 1921) of 35 private businessmen charged with violating the Labour Code, exploiting juveniles and women, extending the working day beyond the limits stipulated, and breaking other Soviet laws.

p. 258

⁵⁵ *The Genoa Conference* (the International Economic Conference) met at Genoa from April 10 to May 19, 1922, and was attended by representatives of Soviet Russia, Britain, France, Italy, Belgium, Japan, Germany and 21 other states. The U.S.A. was represented by an "observer".

At the Conference the imperialist powers tried to take advantage of Soviet Russia's economic difficulties to impose shackling agreements on her. They demanded payment of all tsarist debts, including the pre-war debts, restitution of nationalised enterprises to foreign owners, etc.

An emergency session of the All-Russian Central Executive Committee on January 27, 1922, appointed Lenin head of the Soviet delegation. Although Lenin could not go to Genoa himself, he directed the entire work of the Soviet delegation, instructing it on the questions to be raised at the Conference and on the contents of the memoranda submitted on behalf of the Soviet Government.

The Soviet delegation rejected the arrogant claims of the imperialists and proposed universal disarmament and annulment of all war debts. Owing to the hostile attitude of France and Britain towards Soviet Russia, the Conference had to abandon its work. The questions under discussion were referred to a conference of experts, which met at The Hague in June-July 1922. Like the Genoa Conference, the Hague talks failed to yield any results.

Lenin set forth the fundamental tasks of the Soviet Government in foreign policy, in connection with the Genoa and The Hague conferences, in his speeches at a meeting of the Communist group of the All-Russian Metal Workers' Congress and at the Eleventh Party Congress.

p. 266

⁵⁶ *The Treaty of Rapallo*—a Soviet-German treaty signed on April 16, 1922 during the Genoa Conference. It envisaged the establishment of diplomatic relations between the countries and their mutual refusal to reimburse war expenditure. The German Government also relinquished its claims to return to the former German owners the enterprises nationalised by the Soviet Government.

p. 267

⁵⁷ This refers to the Lausanne Conference held from November 20, 1922 to July 24, 1923.

p. 271

⁵⁸ This refers to the negotiations with the big British capitalist Leslie Urquhart on the concession agreement to mine natural resources in the Urals and Siberia. A draft agreement was proposed but on October 6, 1922 it was turned down by the Council of People's Commissars in view of the British Government's hostile policy towards Soviet Russia and the shackling terms of the agreement.

p. 274

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В. И. ЛЕНИН

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