STALIN

THE COLLECTED WORKS

VOLUME 5



WORKERS OF ALL COUNTRIES, UNITE!

THE COLLECTED WORKS OF JOSEF STALIN



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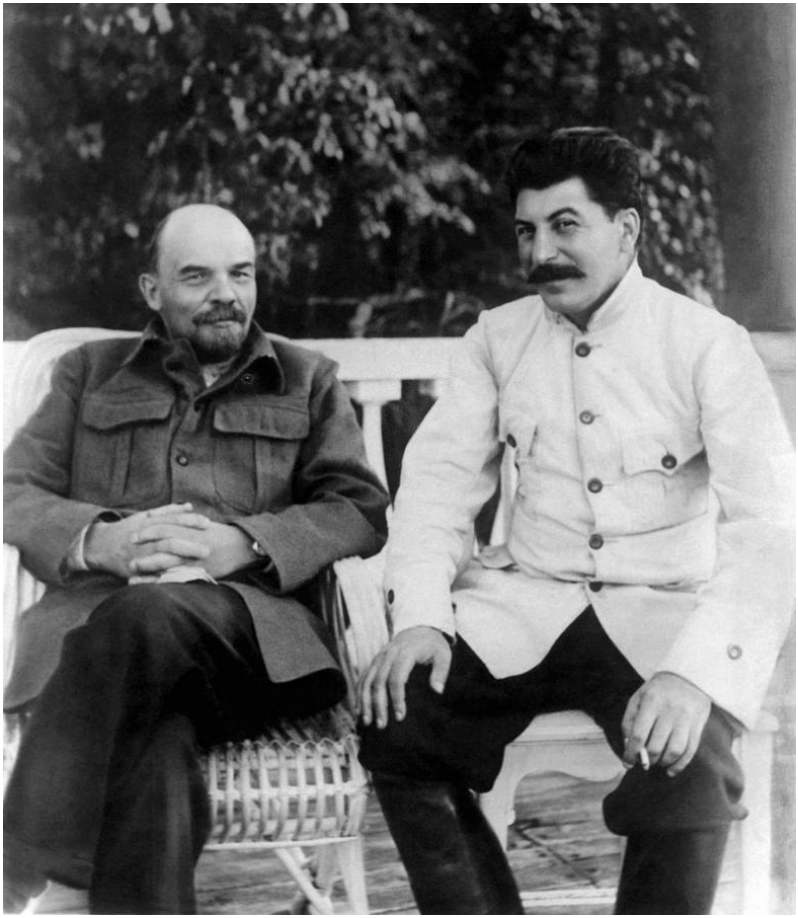
THE COLLECTED WORKS OF JOSEF STALIN

VOLUME FIVE

(1921-1923)



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Pictured above: Josef Stalin and Vladimir Lenin in 1922, photo taken by Maria Ulyanova, Lenin's sister. As Lenin's health declined, Stalin's role became larger and larger, eventually leading to his appointment as General Secretary in April 1922.

CONTENTS

Publisher's Note **xiii**

Original Preface **xv**

1921

Speech at the Opening of the Conference of Communists of the Tyurk Peoples of the R.S.F.S.R. **1**

Our Disagreements **4**

I. Two Methods of Approach to the Mass of the Workers **5**

II. Conscious Democracy and Forced "Democracy" **7**

The Immediate Tasks of the Party in the National Question **13**

I. The Capitalist System and National Oppression **13**

II. The Soviet System and National Freedom **16**

III. The Immediate Tasks of the R.C.P. **19**

The Tenth Congress of the R.C.P.(B.) **25**

1. Report on the Immediate Tasks of the Party in the National Question **26**

2. Reply to the Discussion **34**

A Letter to V. I. Lenin **38**

Concerning the Presentation of the National Question **40**

Greeting to the First Congress of Highland Women **47**

The Political Strategy and Tactics of the Russian Communists **49**

I. Definition of Terms and Subject of Investigation **49**

II. Historic Turns in the Development of Russia **53**

III. Questions **58**

The Immediate Tasks of Communism in Georgia and Transcaucasia **71**

The Party Before and After Taking Power **81**

The October Revolution and the National Policy of the Russian Communists **91**

The Prospects **94**

1922

To *Pravda* **103**

The Tenth Anniversary of *Pravda* **104**

1. The Lena Events **104**

2. The Foundation of *Pravda* **105**

3. The Organisational Significance of *Pravda* **106**

Comrade Lenin on Vacation. Notes **109**

Greetings to Petrograd, to the Soviet of Deputies **112**

The Question of the Union of the Independent National Republics **113**

The Union of the Soviet Republics **119**

The Formation of the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics **129**

1923

Concerning the Question of the Strategy and Tactics of the Russian Communists **133**

I. Preliminary Concepts **134**

1. Two Aspects of the Working-class Movement **134**

2. The Theory and Programme of Marxism **135**

3. Strategy **135**

4. Tactics **138**

5. Forms of Struggle **140**

6. Forms of Organisation **141**

7. The Slogan. the Directive **141**

II. The Strategic Plan **143**

1. Historic Turns. Strategic Plans **144**

2. The First Historic Turn and the Course Towards the Bourgeois-democratic Revolution in Russia **144**

3. The Second Historic Turn and the Course Towards the Dictatorship of the Proletariat in Russia **146**

4. The Third Historic Turn and the Course Towards the Proletarian Revolution in Europe **148**

National Factors in Party and State Affairs **151**

I **151**

II **160**

The Twelfth Congress of the R.C.P.(B.) **162**

1. The Organisational Report of the Central Committee of the R.C.P.(B.) **162**

2. Reply to the Discussion on the Central Committee's Organisational Report **182**

3. Report on National Factors in Party and State Affairs **193**

4. Reply to the Discussion on the Report on National Factors in Party and State Affairs **213**

5. Answer to the Amendments to the Resolution **221**

6. Supplement to the Report of the Commission on the National Question **224**

The Press as a Collective Organiser **226**

Confusion Worse Confounded... **230**

Fourth Conference of the Central Committee of the R.C.P.(B.) with Responsible Workers of the National Republics and Regions **234**

1. Draft Platform on the National Question for the Fourth Conference, Endorsed by the Political Bureau of the Central Committee **234**

The General Line of Party Work on the National Question **235**

Questions Connected with the Institution of a Second Chamber of the Central Executive Committee of the Union and with the Organisation of the People's Commissariats of the Union of Republics **236**

Measures for Drawing Working People of the Local Population into Party and Soviet Affairs **238**

Measures to Raise the Cultural Level of the Local Population **239**

Economic Construction in the National Republics and Regions from the Standpoint of the Specific National Features of Their Manner of Life **239**

Practical Measures for the Organisation of National Military Units **240**

The Organisation of Party Educational Work **241**

Selection of Party and Soviet Officials with a View to Implementing the Resolution on the National Question Adopted by the Twelfth Congress **241**

2. Rights and "Lefts" in the National Republics and Regions **241**

3. Practical Measures for Implementing the Resolution on the National Question Adopted by the Twelfth Party Congress **250**

4. Reply to the Discussion **260**

5. Reply to Speeches **269**

The October Revolution and the Question of the Middle Strata **271**

The Fifth Anniversary of the First Congress of Working Women and Peasant Women **276**

Speech at a Celebration Meeting at the Military Academy **279**

The Party's Tasks **281**

Discussion—a Sign of the Party's Strength **281**

Causes of the Discussion **282**

Defects in Internal Party Life **283**

The Causes of the Defects **285**

How Should the Defects in Internal Party Life Be Removed? **287**

The Discussion, Rafail, the Articles by Preobrazhensky and Sapronov, and Trotsky's Letter **294**

The Discussion **294**

Rafail **297**

Preobrazhensky's Article **299**

Sapronov's Article **301**

Trotsky's Letter **304**

A Necessary Comment **308**

Greetings to the Newspaper *Communist* **311**

Appendix 1: Declaration on the Formation of the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics **313**

Appendix 2: Treaty on the Formation of the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics **316**

Biographical Chronicle **323**



PUBLISHER'S NOTE

The continued and increase of attacks on women and their rights, especially by the American government, highlight the need for this volume. In this text, Stalin gives a speech on 'The Fifth Anniversary of the First Congress of Working Women and Peasant Women'. In it, he outlines the importance of uplifting and educating the working and peasant women.

While discussing how women make up half the population and also fighting for a socialist state, he says that the woman toiler "can be of assistance in this common task if she is politically conscious, if she is politically enlightened. But she may wreck the common task if she is downtrodden and ignorant, wreck it not maliciously, of course, but because of her ignorance." It is clear Stalin understood how absolutely critical it was to actively encourage women to take on the tasks of making a better and more just world.

Stalin also states that "working women and peasant women are free citizens, equal with working men and peasants." These words were written over 100 years ago, and yet women are still fighting for equality not only in civil society, but also among their socialist peers, where men often dominate leadership positions, which Stalin states was also an issue within the Party. "The work of the past five years has already resulted in the promotion of a number of leaders from the ranks of the peasant women." This speech in particular is critical to study in these times, as many socialist groups in the imperial core are dominated by men.

—Róisín Dubh, Iskra Books
April 24th, 2026

ORIGINAL PREFACE

Volume 5 contains works of J. V. Stalin written in the years 1921-23.

The volume consists chiefly of articles, reports and speeches on the Party's tasks in connection with the restoration of the national economy, on the new forms of the alliance of the working class and peasantry under the conditions of the New Economic Policy, on strengthening the organisational and ideological unity of the Party, on the forms and methods of contact between the Party and the masses ("Our Disagreements," "The Immediate Tasks of Communism in Georgia and Transcaucasia," "The Prospects," the reports to the Tenth and Twelfth Party Congresses).

The volume includes the synopsis of the pamphlet *The Political Strategy and Tactics of the Russian Communists* and the articles: "The Party Before and After Taking Power" and "Concerning the Question of the Strategy and Tactics of the Russian Communists," in which J. V. Stalin develops Lenin's doctrine on the political strategy and tactics of the Bolshevik Party.

A considerable number of the works in this volume are devoted to the development of the theory of the national question, to the Bolshevik Party's national policy, to the building of the Soviet multi-national state and the elaboration of the fundamental principles of the first Constitution of the U.S.S.R. (theses for the Tenth and Twelfth Party Congresses, the reports to the Tenth and Twelfth Party Congresses and to the Fourth Conference of the Central Committee of the Russian Communist Party (Bolsheviks) With Responsible Workers of the National Republics and Regions, reports to the Tenth All-Russian Congress of Soviets and to the First Congress of Soviets of the U.S.S.R., and the articles: "Concerning the Presentation of the National Question," "The October Revolution and the National Policy of the Russian Communists," etc.).

In this volume, the following are published for the first time: *The Political Strategy and Tactics of the Russian Communists* (synopsis of a pamphlet); "Draft Platform on the National Question"; report on "Practical Measures for Implementing the Resolution on the National Question Adopted by the Twelfth Party Congress"; Reply to the Discussion and Reply to Speeches at the Fourth Conference oI the Central Committee of the R.C.P.(B.) With Responsible Workers of the National Republics and Regions.

Marx-Engels-Lenin Institute
of the C.C., C.P.S.U.(B.)

1921-1923

SPEECH AT THE OPENING OF THE CONFERENCE OF COMMUNISTS OF THE TYURK PEOPLES OF THE R.S.F.S.R.[1]

(Record in the Minutes)

January 1, 1921

After declaring the conference open and mentioning the unsatisfactory character of the work of the Central Bureau which was to be elected anew, Comrade *Stalin* went on to describe briefly the conditions of the development of communism among the Tyurk peoples in the R.S.F.S.R.

The development of communism in Russia has a long history, covering several decades, of theoretical work and theoretical struggle within the Russian socialist movement. As a result of that struggle a compact group of leading elements was formed, possessing sufficient theoretical knowledge and firmness of principle to lead the Party membership.

In the eastern part of our country, however, communism arose only

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1 **Original editor:** The conference of Communists of the Tyurk peoples of the R.S.F.S.R., convened by the Central Committee of the R.C.P.(B.), took place in Moscow on January 1-2, 1921. It was attended by Party workers from Azerbaijan, Bashkiria, Turkestan, Tataria, Daghestan, the Terek Region, Kirghizia and the Crimea. It discussed the report of the Central Bureau of Communist Organisations of the Peoples of the East, and organisational and other questions. On January 2, J. V. Stalin delivered a report on the organisational question (no verbatim report was taken). On J. V. Stalin's report, the conference adopted "Regulations Governing the Central Bureau for Work Among the Tyurk Peoples of the R.S.F.S.R.," in conformity with which the Central Bureau of Communist Organisations of the Peoples of the East, which had existed since 1918, was transformed into the Central Bureau for Agitation and Propaganda Among the Tyurk Peoples of the R.S.F.S.R.

recently, in the course of the practical revolutionary struggle for socialism, without the preliminary theoretical stage of development. Hence, the weakness of Tyurk communism in the field of theory, a weakness that can be eliminated only by the creation of a literature, based on the principles of communism, in the Tyurk languages spoken in our country.

In the history of the development of Russian communism, the struggle against the nationalist deviation never played an important part. Having been in the past the ruling nation, the Russians, including the Russian Communists, did not suffer national oppression, did not, generally speaking, have to deal with nationalist tendencies in their midst, except for certain moods in the direction of "dominant-nation chauvinism," and therefore did not have to overcome, or hardly had to overcome, such tendencies.

The Tyurk Communists, on the other hand, sons of oppressed peoples who have gone through the stage of national oppression, always had to deal and still have to deal with the nationalist deviation, with nationalist survivals in their midst, and the immediate task of the Tyurk Communists is to overcome these survivals. This circumstance undoubtedly serves to retard the crystallisation of communism in the eastern part of our country.

But communism in the East also enjoys an advantage. In the practical work of introducing socialism, the Russian Communists had little or no experience of the advanced European countries to go by (Europe provided experience chiefly of the parliamentary struggle) and, consequently, they had to lay the road to socialism by their own efforts, so to speak, and inevitably made a number of mistakes.

Tyurk communism, on the other hand, arose in the course of the practical struggle for socialism, waged side by side with the Russian comrades, and the Tyurk Communists were able to utilise the practical experience of the Russian comrades and avoid mistakes. This circumstance serves as a guarantee that communism in the East has every chance of developing and gaining strength at a rapid rate.

All these circumstances determined the relatively mild policy of the Central Committee of the Party towards Tyurk communism, which is

still very young, a policy directed towards helping the firm communist elements in the East to combat the above-mentioned weaknesses and shortcomings of Tyurk communism.

The Central Bureau is the apparatus through which measures must be carried out to combat nationalist survivals and for the theoretical strengthening of communism in the eastern part of our country.

Pravda, No. 6,
January 12, 1921

OUR DISAGREEMENTS

Our disagreements on the trade-union question are not disagreements in principle about appraisal of the trade unions. The well-known points of our programme on the role of the trade unions, and the resolution of the Ninth Party Congress on the trade unions,[1] which Trotsky often quotes, remain (and will remain) in force. Nobody disputes that the trade unions and the economic organisations ought to and will permeate each other ("coalescence"). Nobody disputes that the present period of the country's economic revival dictates the necessity of gradually transforming the as yet nominal industrial unions into real industrial unions, capable of putting our basic industries on their feet. In short, our disagreements are not disagreements about matters of principle.

Nor do we disagree about the necessity of labour discipline in the trade unions and in the working class generally. The talk about a section of our Party "letting the reins slip out of its hands," and leaving the masses to the play of elemental forces, is foolish. The fact that Party elements play the leading role in the trade unions and that the trade unions play the leading role in the working class remains indisputable.

Still less do we disagree on the question of the quality of the membership of the Central Committees of the trade unions, and of the All-Russian Central Council of Trade Unions. All agree that the membership of these institutions is far from ideal, that the ranks of the trade unions have been depleted by a number of military and other mobilisa-

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1 **Original editor:** This refers to the programme of the R.C.P.(B.) adopted at the Eighth Party Congress, section: "The Economic Sphere," and to the resolution adopted by the Ninth Congress of the R.C.P.(B.) on "The Question of the Trade Unions and Their Organisation" (see "Resolutions and Decisions of C.P.S.U.(B.) Congresses, Conferences and Central Committee Plenums," Part I, 1941, pp. 289-91, 337-40).

tions, that the trade unions must get back their old officials and also get new ones, that they must be provided with technical resources, and so forth.

No, our disagreements are not in this sphere.

I. Two Methods of Approach to the Mass of the Workers

Our disagreements are about questions of the *means* by which to strengthen labour discipline in the working class, the *methods* of approach to the mass of the workers who are being drawn into the work of reviving industry, the *ways* of transforming the present weak trade unions into powerful, genuinely industrial unions, capable of reviving our industry.

There are two methods: the method of *coercion* (the military method), and the method of *persuasion* (the trade-union method). The first method by no means precludes elements of persuasion, but these are subordinate to the requirements of the coercion method and are auxiliary to the latter. The second method, in turn, does not preclude elements of coercion, but these are subordinate to the requirements of the persuasion method and are auxiliary to the latter. It is just as impermissible to confuse these two methods as it is to confuse the army with the working class.

A group of Party workers headed by Trotsky, intoxicated by the successes achieved by military methods in the army, supposes that those methods can, and must, be adopted among the workers, in the trade unions, in order to achieve similar successes in strengthening the unions and in reviving industry. But this group forgets that the army and the working class are two different spheres, that a method that is suitable for the army may prove to be unsuitable, harmful, for the working class and its trade unions.

The army is not a homogeneous mass; it consists of two main social groups, peasants and workers, the former being several times more numerous than the latter. In urging the necessity of employing chiefly

methods of coercion in the army, the Eighth Party Congress[2] based itself on the fact that our army consists mainly of peasants, that the peasants will not go to fight for socialism, that they can, and must, be compelled to fight for socialism by employing methods of coercion. This explains the rise of such purely military methods as the system of Commissars and Political Departments, Revolutionary Tribunals, disciplinary measures, appointment and not election to all posts, and so forth.

In contrast to the army, the working class is a homogeneous social sphere; its economic position disposes it towards socialism, it is easily influenced by communist agitation, it voluntarily organises in trade unions and, as a consequence of all this, constitutes the foundation, the salt, of the Soviet state. It is not surprising, therefore, that the practical work of our industrial unions has been based chiefly on methods of persuasion. This explains the rise of such purely trade-union methods as explanation, mass propaganda, encouragement of initiative and independent activity among the mass of the workers, election of officials, and so forth.

The mistake Trotsky makes is that he underrates the difference between the army and the working class, he puts the trade unions on a par with the military organisations, and tries, evidently by inertia, to transfer military methods from the army into the trade unions, into the working class. Trotsky writes in one of his documents:

> "The bare contrasting of military methods (orders, punishment) with trade-union methods (explanation, propaganda, independent activity) is a manifestation of Kautskian-Menshevik-Socialist-Revolutionary prejudices. [...] The very contrasting of labour organisations with military organisation in a workers' state is shameful surrender to Kautskyism."

That is what Trotsky says.

Disregarding the irrelevant talk about "Kautskyism," "Menshe-

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2 **Original editor:** On the Eighth Congress of the R.C.P.(B.) and its resolutions on the military and other questions, see *History of the C.P.S.U.(B.), Short Course*, Moscow, 1952, pp. 358-63, and also "Resolutions and Decisions of C.P.S.U.(B.) Congresses, Conferences and Central Committee Plenums," Part I, 1941, pp. 280-313. At this congress, J. V. Stalin delivered a speech on the military question (see *Works*, Vol. 4, pp. 258-59 [1953], pp. 204-06, [2025]); and he was a member of the Military Commission set up by the congress to draft the resolution on this question.

vism," and so forth, it is evident that Trotsky fails to understand the difference between labour organisations and military organisations, that he fails to understand that *in the period of the termination of the war and the revival of industry* it becomes necessary, inevitable, to contrast military with democratic (trade-union) methods, and that, therefore, to transfer military methods into the trade unions is a mistake, is harmful.

Failure to understand that lies at the bottom of the recently published polemical pamphlets of Trotsky on the trade unions.

Failure to understand that is the source of Trotsky's mistakes.

II. Conscious Democracy and Forced "Democracy"

Some think that talk about democracy in the trade unions is mere declamation, a fashion, called forth by certain phenomena in internal Party life, that, in time, people will get tired of "chatter" about democracy and everything will go on in the "old way."

Others believe that democracy in the trade unions is, essentially, a concession, a forced concession, to the workers' demands, that it is diplomacy rather than real, serious business.

Needless to say, both groups of comrades are profoundly mistaken. Democracy in the trade unions, i.e., what is usually called "normal methods of proletarian democracy in the unions," is the conscious democracy characteristic of mass working-class organisations, which presupposes *consciousness* of the necessity and utility of systematically employing methods of persuasion among the millions of workers organised in the trade unions. If that consciousness is absent, democracy becomes an empty sound.

While war was raging and danger stood at the gates, the appeals to "aid the front" that were issued by our organisations met with a ready response from the workers, for the mortal danger we were in was only too palpable, for that danger had assumed a very concrete form evident to everyone in the shape of the armies of Kolchak, Yudenich, Denikin, Pilsudski and Wrangel, which were advancing and restoring the power

of the landlords and capitalists. It was not difficult to rouse the masses at that time. But today, when the war danger has been overcome and the new, economic danger (economic ruin) is far from being so palpable to the masses, the broad masses cannot be roused merely by appeals. Of course, everybody feels the shortage of bread and textiles; but firstly, people do contrive to obtain both bread and textiles in one way or another and, consequently, the danger of a food and goods famine does not spur the masses to the same extent as the war danger did; secondly, nobody will assert that the masses are as conscious of the reality of the economic danger (shortage of locomotives and of machines for agriculture, for textile mills and iron and steel plants, shortage of equipment for electric power stations, and so forth) as they were of the war danger in the recent past. To rouse the millions of the working class for the struggle against economic ruin it is necessary to heighten their initiative, consciousness and independent activity; it is necessary by means of concrete facts to *convince* them that economic ruin is just as real and mortal a danger as the war danger was yesterday; it is necessary to draw millions of workers into the work of reviving industry through the medium of trade unions built on democratic lines. Only in this way is it possible to make the entire working class vitally interested in the struggle which the economic organisations are waging against economic ruin. If this is not done, victory on the economic front cannot be achieved.

In short, conscious democracy, the method of proletarian democracy in the unions, is the only correct method for the industrial unions.

Forced "democracy" has nothing in common with this democracy.

Reading Trotsky's pamphlet *The Role and Tasks of the Trade Unions*, one might think that he, in essence, is "also" in favour of the "democratic" method. This has caused some comrades to think that we do not disagree about the methods of work in the trade unions. But that is absolutely wrong, for Trotsky's "democracy" is forced, half-hearted and unprincipled, and, as such, merely supplements the military-bureaucratic method, which is unsuitable for the trade unions.

Judge for yourselves.

At the beginning of November 1920, the Central Committee

adopted, and the Communist group at the Fifth All-Russian Conference of Trade Unions carried through, a resolution stating that the "most vigorous and systematic struggle must be waged against the degeneration of centralism and militarised forms of work into bureaucracy, tyranny, officialdom and petty tutelage over the trade unions [...] that also for the Tsektran (the Central Committee of the Transport Workers Union, led by Trotsky) the time for the specific methods of administration for which the Central Political Administration of the Railways was set up, owing to special circumstances, is beginning to pass away," that, in view of this, the Communist group at the conference "advises the Tsektran to strengthen and develop normal methods of proletarian democracy in the union," and instructs the Tsektran "to take an active part in the general work of the All-Russian Central Council of Trade Unions and to be represented in it on an equal footing with other trade-union associations" (see *Pravda*, No. 255). In spite of that decision, however, during the whole of November, Trotsky and the Tsektran continued to pursue the old, semi-bureaucratic and semi-military line, continued to rely on the Central Political Administration of the Railways and the Central Political Administration of Water Transport, strove to "shake up," to blow up, the A.R.C.C.T.U. and upheld the privileged position of the Tsektran compared with other trade union associations. More than that. In a letter "to the members of the Political Bureau of the Central Committee," dated November 30, Trotsky, just as "unexpectedly," stated that "the Central Political Administration of Water Transport [...] *cannot possibly* be dissolved within the next two or three months." But what happened? Six days after that letter was written (on December 7), the same Trotsky, just as "unexpectedly," voted in the Central Committee for "the immediate abolition of the Central Political Administration of the Railways and the Central Political Administration of Water Transport, and the transfer of all their staffs and funds to the trade-union organisation on the basis of normal democracy." And he was one of the eight members of the Central Committee who voted for this against the seven who considered that the abolition of these institutions was no longer enough, and who demanded, in addition, that the existing composition of the Tsektran be changed. To save the existing composition of the Tsektran, Trotsky voted for the abolition of the Central Political Administrations

in the Tsektran.

What had changed during those six days? Perhaps the railway and water transport workers had matured so much during those six days that they no longer needed the Central Political Administration of the Railways and the Central Political Administration of Water Transport? Or, perhaps, an important change in the internal or external political situation had taken place in that short period? Of course not. The fact is that the water transport workers were vigorously demanding that the Tsektran should dissolve the Central Political Administrations and that the composition of the Tsektran itself should be changed; and Trotsky's group, fearing defeat and wishing at least to retain the existing composition of the Tsektran, was compelled to retreat, to make partial concessions, which, however, satisfied nobody.

Such are the facts.

It scarcely needs proof that this forced, half-hearted, unprincipled "democracy" has nothing in common with the "normal methods of proletarian democracy in the unions," which the Central Committee of the Party had recommended already at the beginning of November, and which are so essential for the revival of our industrial trade unions.

In his reply to the discussion at the meeting of the Communist group at the Congress of Soviets,[3] Trotsky protested against the introduction of a political element into the controversy about the trade unions, on the ground that politics had nothing to do with the matter. It must be said that in this Trotsky is quite wrong. It scarcely needs proof that in a workers' and peasants' state, not a single important decision affecting the whole country, and especially if it directly concerns the working class, can be carried through without in one way or another affecting the political

3 **Original editor:** This refers to the joint meeting of the R.C.P.(B.) groups at the Eighth Congress of Soviets, in the All-Russian Central Council of Trade Unions, and in the Moscow Gubernia Council of Trade Unions, that was held on December 30, 1920.

condition of the country. And, in general, it is ridiculous and shallow to separate politics from economics. For that very reason every such decision must be weighed up in advance *also* from the political point of view.

Judge for yourselves.

It can be now taken as proved that the methods of the Tsektran, which is led by Trotsky, have been condemned by the practical experience of the Tsektran itself. Trotsky's aim in directing the Tsektran and influencing the other unions through it was to reanimate and revive the unions, to draw the workers into the task of reviving industry. But what has he actually achieved? A conflict with the majority of the Communists in the trade unions, a conflict between the majority of the trade unions and the Tsektran, a virtual split in the Tsektran, the resentment of the rank-and-file workers organised in trade unions against the "Commissars." In other words, far from a revival of the unions taking place, the Tsektran itself is disintegrating. There can be no doubt that if the methods of the Tsektran were introduced in the other unions, we would get the same picture of conflict, splits and disintegration. And the result would be that we would have dissension and a split in the working class.

Can the political party of the working class ignore these facts? Can it be asserted that it makes no difference to the political condition of the country whether we have a working class solidly united in integral trade unions, or whether it is split up into different, mutually hostile groups? Can it be said that the political factor ought not to play any role in appraising the methods of approach to the masses, that politics have nothing to do with the matter?

Obviously not.

The R.S.F.S.R. and its associated republics now have a population of about 140,000,000. Of this population, 80 per cent are peasants. To be able to govern such a country, the Soviet power must enjoy the firm confidence of the working class, for such a country can be directed only through the medium of the working class and with the forces of the working class. But in order to retain and strengthen the confidence of the majority of the workers, it is necessary systematically to develop the consciousness, independent activity and initiative of the working class, sys-

tematically to educate it in the spirit of communism by organising it in trade unions and drawing it into the work of building a communist economy.

Obviously, it is impossible to do this by coercive methods and by "shaking up" the unions from above, for such methods split the working class (the Tsektran!) and engender distrust of the Soviet power. Moreover, it is not difficult to understand that, speaking generally, it is inconceivable that either the consciousness of the masses or their confidence in the Soviet power can be developed by coercive methods.

Obviously, only "normal methods of proletarian democracy in the unions," only methods of persuasion, can make it possible to unite the working class, to stimulate its independent activity and strengthen its confidence in the Soviet power, the confidence that is needed so much now in order to rouse the country for the struggle against economic ruin.

As you see, politics also speak in favour of methods of persuasion.

January 5, 1921

Pravda, No. 12,
January 19, 1921
Signed: *J. Stalin*

THE IMMEDIATE TASKS OF THE PARTY IN THE NATIONAL QUESTION

Theses for the Tenth Congress of the R.C.P.(B.) Endorsed by the Central Committee of the Party[1]

I. The Capitalist System and National Oppression

1. Modern nations are the product of a definite epoch—the epoch of rising capitalism. The process of elimination of feudalism and development of capitalism is at the same time a process of the constitution of people into nations. The British, French, Germans and Italians were formed into nations at the time of the victorious development of capitalism and its triumph over feudal disunity.
2. Where the formation of nations on the whole coincided in time with the formation of centralised states, the nations naturally assumed state forms, they developed into independent bourgeois national states. That is what happened in Britain (excluding Ireland), in France and Italy. In Eastern Europe, on the contrary, the formation of centralised states, accelerated by the needs of self-defence (invasion by Turks, Mongols, etc.), took place before feudalism was liquidated; hence, before the formation of nations. As a consequence, the nations here did not, and could not, develop

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1 **Original editor:** The theses: "The Immediate Tasks of the Party in the National Question" were discussed at a meeting of the Political Bureau of the Central Committee of the R.C.P.(B.) on February 5, 1921, and a commission headed by V. I. Lenin and J. V. Stalin was appointed to make the final draft. The theses were published in *Pravda*, No. 29, of February 10, 1921; they were also published as a separate pamphlet in the same year.

into national states; instead, several mixed, multi-national bourgeois states were formed, usually consisting of one strong dominant nation and of several weak, subject nations. Examples: Austria, Hungary, Russia.

3. In national states like France and Italy, which at first relied mainly on their own national forces, there was, generally speaking, no national oppression. In contrast to that, the multi-national states that are based on the domination of one nation—more exactly, of the ruling class of that nation—over the other nations are the original home and chief arena of national oppression and of national movements. The contradictions between the interests of the dominant nation and those of the subject nations are contradictions which, unless they are resolved, make the stable existence of a multi-national state impossible. The tragedy of the multi-national bourgeois state lies in that it cannot resolve these contradictions, that every attempt on its part to "equalise" the nations and to "protect" the national minorities, while preserving private property and class inequality, usually ends in another failure, in a further aggravation of national conflicts.
4. The further growth of capitalism in Europe, the need for new markets, the quest for raw materials and fuel, and finally, the development of imperialism, the export of capital and the necessity of securing important sea and railway routes, led, on the one hand, to the seizure of new territories by the old national states and to the transformation of the latter into multi-national (colonial) states, with their inherent national oppression and national conflicts (Britain, France, Germany, Italy); on the other hand, among the dominant nations in the old multi-national states they intensified the striving not only to retain the old state frontiers, but to expand them, to subjugate new (weak) nationalities at the expense of neighbouring states. This widened the national question and, finally, by the very course of developments merged it with the general question of the colonies; and national oppression was transformed from an intrastate question into an inter-state question, a question of the struggle (and war) between the "great" imperialist powers for

the subjugation of weak, unequal nationalities.

5. The imperialist war, which laid bare to the roots the irreconcilable national contradictions and internal bankruptcy of the bourgeois multi-national states, extremely intensified the national conflicts within the victor colonial states (Britain, France, Italy), caused the utter disintegration of the vanquished old multi-national states (Austria, Hungary, Russia in 1917), and finally, as the most "radical" bourgeois solution of the national question, led to the formation of new bourgeois national states (Poland, Czechoslovakia, Yugoslavia, Finland, Georgia, Armenia, etc.). But the formation of the new independent national states did not, and could not, bring about the peaceful co-existence of nationalities; it did not, and could not, eliminate either national inequality or national oppression, for the new national states, being based on private property and class inequality, cannot exist:
   a) without oppressing their national minorities (Poland, which oppresses Byelorussians, Jews, Lithuanians and Ukrainians; Georgia, which oppresses Ossetians, Abkhazians and Armenians; Yugoslavia, which oppresses Croatians, Bosnians, etc.);
   b) without enlarging their territories at the expense of their neighbours, which gives rise to conflicts and wars (Poland against Lithuania, the Ukraine and Russia; Yugoslavia against Bulgaria; Georgia against Armenia, Turkey, etc.);
   c) without submitting to the financial, economic and military domination of the "great" imperialist powers.
6. Thus, the post-war period reveals a sombre picture of national enmity, inequality, oppression, conflicts, war, and imperialist brutality on the part of the nations of the civilised countries, both towards one another and towards the unequal nations. On the one hand, there are a few "great" powers, which oppress and exploit all the dependent and "independent" (actually totally dependent) national states, and there is a struggle of these powers among themselves in order to monopolise the exploitation of the national states. On the other hand, there is a struggle of the dependent and

"independent" national states against the unbearable oppression of the "great" powers; there is a struggle of the national states among themselves in order to enlarge their national territories; there is a struggle of each national state against the national minorities that it is oppressing. Lastly, there is an intensification of the liberation movement in the colonies against the "great" powers and an aggravation of the national conflicts both within these powers and also within the national states which, as a rule, contain a number of national minorities.

Such is the "picture of the peace" bequeathed by the imperialist war.

Bourgeois society has proved to be utterly incapable of solving the national question.

II. The Soviet System and National Freedom

1. Whereas private property and capital inevitably disunite people, foment national strife and intensify national oppression, collective property and labour just as inevitably unite people, strike at the root of national strife and abolish national oppression. The existence of capitalism without national oppression is just as inconceivable as the existence of socialism without the liberation of the oppressed nations, without national freedom. Chauvinism and national strife are inevitable, unavoidable, so long as the peasantry (and the petty bourgeoisie in general), full of nationalist prejudices, follows the bourgeoisie; on the contrary, national peace and national freedom can be regarded as ensured if the peasantry follows the proletariat, i.e., if the proletarian dictatorship is ensured. Hence, the victory of the Soviets and the establishment of the proletarian dictatorship are a fundamental condition for abolishing national oppression, establishing national equality and guaranteeing the rights of national minorities.
2. The experience of the Soviet revolution has fully confirmed this thesis. The establishment of the Soviet system in Russia and the proclamation of the right of nations to secede changed completely the re-

lations between the labouring masses of the different nationalities in Russia, struck at the root of the old national enmity, removed the ground for national oppression and won for the Russian workers the confidence of their brothers of other nationalities not only in Russia, but also in Europe and Asia, and heightened this confidence into enthusiasm, into readiness to fight for the common cause. The establishment of Soviet republics in Azerbaijan and Armenia has led to the same results, for it has eliminated national conflicts and has settled the "age-old" enmity between the Turkish and Armenian, and between the Armenian and Azerbaijanian, labouring masses. The same must be said about the temporary victory of the Soviets in Hungary, Bavaria and Latvia. On the other hand, it can be confidently stated that the Russian workers could not have defeated Kolchak and Denikin, and the Azerbaijanian and Armenian Republics could not have got firmly on their feet, had they not eliminated national enmity and national oppression at home, had they not won the confidence and roused the enthusiasm of the labouring masses of the nationalities in the West and in the East. The strengthening of the Soviet republics and the abolition of national oppression are two sides of one and the same process of liberating the working people from imperialist bondage.

3. But the existence of Soviet republics, even of the smallest dimensions, is a deadly menace to imperialism. The menace lies not only in that by breaking away from imperialism the Soviet republics were transformed from colonies and semi-colonies into really independent states, thereby depriving the imperialists of some extra territory and extra income, but also, and primarily, in that the very existence of the Soviet republics, every step they take in suppressing the bourgeoisie and in strengthening the proletarian dictatorship, constitutes tremendous agitation against capitalism and imperialism, agitation for the liberation of the dependent countries from imperialist bondage, and is an insuperable element in the disintegration and disorganisation of capitalism in all its forms. Hence the inevitable struggle of "great" imperialist powers against the Soviet republics, the endeavour of the "great" powers to destroy these re-

publics. The history of the fight of the "great" powers against Soviet Russia, rousing against her one border-country bourgeois government after another, one group of counter-revolutionary generals after another, closely blockading Soviet Russia and, in general, trying to isolate her economically, eloquently testifies that in the present state of international relations, in the conditions of capitalist encirclement, not a single Soviet republic, standing alone, can regard itself as ensured against economic exhaustion and military defeat by world imperialism.

4. Therefore, the isolated existence of individual Soviet republics is unstable and precarious owing to their existence being threatened by the capitalist states. The common interests of defence of the Soviet republics, in the first place, the task of restoring the productive forces destroyed by the war, in the second place, and the necessary assistance the grain-growing Soviet republics must render those which do not grow grain, in the third place, all imperatively dictate the necessity of a state union of the individual Soviet republics as the only means of salvation from imperialist bondage and national oppression. The national Soviet republics which have liberated themselves from "their own" and the "foreign" bourgeoisie can maintain their existence and defeat the combined forces of imperialism only by uniting in a close state union, or they will not defeat them at all.
5. A federation of Soviet republics based on common military and economic interests is the general form of the state union that will make it possible:
    a) to ensure the integrity and economic development of each individual republic and of the federation as a whole;
    b) to embrace all the diversity as regards manner of life, culture and economic condition of the various nations and nationalities, which are at present at different stages of development, and to apply corresponding forms of federation;
    c) to arrange the peaceful co-existence and fraternal co-operation of the nations and nationalities which, in one way or another, have linked their fate with that of the federation.

Russia's experience in employing different forms of federation, ranging from federation based on Soviet autonomy (Kirghizia, Bashkiria, Tataria, the Highlands, Daghestan) to federation based on treaty relations with independent Soviet republics (the Ukraine, Azerbaijan), and permitting intermediate stages (Turkestan, Byelorussia), has fully proved the expediency and flexibility of federation as the general form of state union of the Soviet republics.

6. But federation can be stable and the results of federation effective only if it is based on mutual confidence and the voluntary consent of the federating countries. If the R.S.F.S.R. is the only country in the world where the experiment in the peaceful co-existence and fraternal co-operation of a number of nations and nationalities has been successful, it is because there are here neither dominant nor subject nations, neither metropolises nor colonies, neither imperialism nor national oppression; federation here rests on mutual confidence and the voluntary striving of the labouring masses of the different nations towards union. This voluntary character of the federation must be preserved without fail, for only such a federation can serve as the transitional stage to that higher unity of the toilers of all countries in a single world economic system, the necessity for which is becoming increasingly apparent.

III. The Immediate Tasks of the R.C.P.

1. The R.S.F.S.R. and the Soviet republics associated with it have a population of about 140,000,000. Of these non-Great-Russians number about 65,000,000 (Ukrainians, Byelorussians, Kirghiz, Uzbeks, Turkmenians, Tajiks, Azerbaijanians, Volga Tatars, Crimean Tatars, Bukharans, Khivans, Bashkirs, Armenians, Chechens, Kabardinians, Ossetians, Cherkesses, Ingushes, Karachais, Balkarians,[2] Kalmyks, Karelians, Avars, Darghini-

2 The last seven nationalities are united in the "Highland" group.

ans, Kasi-kumukhians, Kyurinians, Kumyks,[3] Mari, Chuvashes, Votyaks, Volga Germans, Buryats, Yakuts, etc.).

The policy of tsarism, the policy of the landlords and the bourgeoisie towards these peoples, was to kill whatever germs of statehood existed among them, to mutilate their culture, to restrict their languages, to keep them in ignorance, and lastly, as far as possible to Russify them. The result of this policy was the underdevelopment and political backwardness of these peoples.

Now that the landlords and the bourgeoisie have been overthrown and Soviet power has been proclaimed by the masses of the people in these countries too, the Party's task is to help the labouring masses of the non-Great-Russian peoples to catch up with central Russia, which has forged ahead, to help them:

a) to develop and strengthen their Soviet statehood in forms corresponding to the national complexion of these peoples;

b) to set up their courts, administration, economic organisations and organs of power, functioning in the native languages and staffed with local people familiar with the manner of life and the mentality of the local population;

c) to develop their press, schools, theatres, recreation clubs, and cultural and educational institutions generally, functioning in the native languages.

2. If from the 65,000,000 non-Great-Russian population we exclude the Ukraine, Byelorussia, a small part of Azerbaijan, and Armenia, which in some degree have been through the period of industrial capitalism, there remains a population of about 25,000,000, mainly Tyurks (Turkestan, the greater part of Azerbaijan, Daghestan, the Highlanders, Tatars, Bashkirs, Kirghiz, etc.), who have not gone through any capitalist development, have little or no industrial proletariat, and in most cases have retained their pastoral economy and patriarchal-tribal manner of life (Kirghizia, Bashkiria, North

3 The last five nationalities are united in the "Daghestanian" group.

Caucasus), or who have not gone beyond the primitive forms of a semi-patriarchal, semi-feudal manner of life (Azerbaijan, the Crimea, etc.) but have already been drawn into the common channel of Soviet development.

The Party's task in relation to the labouring masses of these peoples (in addition to the task indicated in Point 1) is to help them to eliminate the survivals of patriarchal-feudal relations and to draw them into the work of building a Soviet economy on the basis of Soviets of toiling peasants, by creating among these peoples strong communist organisations capable of utilising the experience of the Russian workers and peasants in Soviet-economic construction and, at the same time, capable of taking into account in their construction work all the specific features of the economic situation, the class structure, culture and manner of life of each nationality concerned, while refraining from mechanically transplanting from central Russia economic measures that are suitable only for a different, higher stage of economic development.

3. If from the 25,000,000, mainly Tyurk, population we exclude Azerbaijan, the greater part of Turkestan, the Tatars (Volga and Crimean), Bukhara, Khiva, Daghestan, part of the Highlanders (Kabardinians, Cherkesses and Balkarians) and several other nomad nationalities who have already become settled and have firmly established themselves in a definite territory, there remain about 6,000,000 Kirghiz, Bashkirs, Chechens, Ossetians and Ingushes, whose lands had until recently served as objects of colonisation by Russian settlers, who have managed to take from them the best arable land and are steadily pushing them into the barren desert.

   The policy of tsarism, the policy of the landlords and the bourgeoisie, was to colonise these districts as much as possible with kulak elements from among Russian peasants and Cossacks, converting the latter into a reliable support for dominant-nation strivings. The result of this policy was the gradual extinction of the native population (Kirghiz, Bashkirs) who had been driven into the wilderness.

The Party's task in relation to the labouring masses of these nationalities (apart from the tasks mentioned in Points 1 and 2) is to unite their efforts with those of the labouring masses of the local Russian population in the struggle for liberation from the kulaks in general, and from the rapacious Great-Russian kulaks in particular, to help them by every possible means to throw off the yoke of the kulak colonisers and in this way supply them with arable land necessary for a human existence.

4. In addition to the above-mentioned nations and nationalities which have a definite class structure and occupy a definite territory, there still exist in the R.S.F.S.R. floating national groups, national minorities, interspersed among compact majorities of other nationalities, and in most cases having neither a definite class structure nor a definite territory (Letts, Estonians, Poles, Jews and other national minorities). The policy of tsarism was to obliterate these minorities by every possible means, even by pogroms (the anti-Jewish pogroms).

   Now that national privileges have been abolished, that equality of rights for nations has been put into effect, and that the right of national minorities to free national development is guaranteed by the very character of the Soviet system, the Party's task in relation to the labouring masses of these national groups is to help them to make the fullest use of their guaranteed right to free development.

5. The communist organisations in the border regions are developing under somewhat peculiar conditions which retard the normal growth of the Party in these regions. On the one hand, the Great-Russian Communists who are working-in the border regions and who grew up during the existence of a "dominant" nation and did not suffer national oppression, often underrate the importance of specific national features in their Party work, or completely ignore them; they do not, in their work, take into account the specific features of the class structure, culture, manner of life and past history of the nationality concerned, and thus vulgarise and distort the Party's policy on the national question. This leads to a deviation from communism to a dominant-nation and colonialist outlook, to Great-Russian chauvinism. On the other hand, the

Communists from the local native population who experienced the harsh period of national oppression, and who have not yet fully freed themselves from the haunting memories of that period, often exaggerate the importance of specific national features in their Party work, leave the class interests of the working people in the shade, or simply confuse the interests of the working people of the nation concerned with the "national" interests of that nation; they are unable to separate the former from the latter and base their Party work on them. That, in its turn, leads to a deviation from communism towards bourgeois-democratic nationalism, which sometimes assumes the form of Pan-Islamism, Pan-Turkism[4] (in the East).

This congress, emphatically condemning both these deviations as harmful and dangerous to the cause of communism, considers it necessary to point out the special danger and special harmfulness of the first-mentioned deviation, the deviation towards a dominant nation, colonialist outlook. The congress reminds the Party that unless colonialist and nationalist survivals in its ranks are overcome it will be impossible to build up in the border regions strong, genuinely communist organisations which are linked with the masses and which unite in their ranks the proletarian elements of the lo-

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4 **Original editor:** *Pan-Islamism*—a reactionary religious and political ideology which arose in the second half of the XIX century in Sultan Turkey among the Turkish landlords, bourgeoisie, and clergy. Later on it spread among the propertied classes of the other Moslem peoples. Pan-Islamism professed the unification in one whole of all the peoples who worship Islam (Moslem religion). With the help of Pan-Islamism the ruling classes of the Moslem peoples were striving to strengthen their positions and to stifle the revolutionary movement of the toiling peoples of the East.

The aim of *Pan-Turkism* is to subject all the Turkish peoples to Turkish rule. It arose during the Balkan wars of 1912-13. During the war of 1914-18 it developed into an extremely aggressive and chauvinistic ideology. In Russia, after the October Socialist Revolution, Pan-Islamism and Pan-Turkism were utilised by counter-revolutionary elements for the purpose of combating the Soviet power.

Subsequently the Anglo-American imperialists utilised Pan-Islamism and Pan-Turkism as their agency in the preparation for an imperialist war against the U.S.S.R. and the People's Democracies and for the purpose of suppressing the national liberation movement.

cal native and Russian populations on the basis of internationalism. The congress therefore considers that the elimination of nationalist and, primarily, of colonialist vacillations in communism is one of the Party's most important tasks in the border regions.

6. As a result of the successes achieved on the war fronts, particularly after the liquidation of Wrangel, in some of the backward border regions where there is little or no industrial proletariat, there has been an increased influx of petty-bourgeois nationalist elements into the Party for the sake of a career. Taking into consideration the Party's position as the actual ruling force, these elements usually disguise themselves in communist colours and often pour into the Party in entire groups, carrying with them a spirit of thinly disguised chauvinism and disintegration, while the generally weak Party organisations in the border regions are not always able to resist the temptation to "expand" the Party by accepting new members.

   Calling for a resolute struggle against all pseudo-communist elements that attach themselves to the Party of the proletariat, the congress warns the Party against "expansion" through accepting intellectual, petty-bourgeois nationalist elements. The congress considers that the ranks of the Party in the border regions should be reinforced chiefly from the proletarians, the poor, and the labouring peasants of these regions, and that at the same time work should be conducted to strengthen the Party organisations in the border regions by improving the quality of their membership.

Pravda, No. 29,
February 10, 1921

THE TENTH CONGRESS OF THE R.C.P.(B.)[1]

MARCH 8-16, 1921

1 **Original editor:** The Tenth Congress of the R.C.P.(B.) was held on March 8-16, 1921. It discussed the reports of the Central Committee and the Central Control Commission, and also reports on the trade unions and their role in the economic life of the country, on the tax in kind, on Party affairs, on the immediate tasks of the Party in the national question, on Party unity and the anarcho-syndicalist deviation, etc. The political report of the Central Committee, and the reports on the tax in kind, on Party unity, and on the anarcho-syndicalist deviation, were made by V. I. Lenin. The congress summed up the discussion that had taken place on the trade-union question and by an overwhelming majority endorsed Lenin's platform. In its resolution on "Party Unity," drafted by V. I. Lenin, the congress condemned all the factional groups, ordered their immediate dissolution, and pointed out that Party unity was the fundamental condition for the success of the proletarian dictatorship. The congress adopted V. I. Lenin's resolution on "The Syndicalist and Anarchist Deviation in Our Party," which condemned the so-called "Workers' Opposition" and declared that propaganda of the ideas of the anarcho-syndicalist deviation was incompatible with membership of the Communist Party. The Tenth Congress adopted a decision to pass from the produce surplus appropriation system to the tax in kind, to pass to the New Economic Policy. J. V. Stalin's report on "The Immediate Tasks of the Party in the National Question" was heard on March 10. The congress unanimously adopted J. V. Stalin's theses on this question as a basis, and appointed a commission to elaborate them further. J. V. Stalin reported on the results of the commission's work at the evening session on March 15. The resolution that he proposed on behalf of the commission was unanimously adopted by the congress, which condemned the anti-Party deviations on the national question, i.e., dominant-nation (Great-Russian) chauvinism and local nationalism, as being harmful and dangerous to communism and proletarian internationalism. The congress particularly condemned dominant-nation chauvinism as being the chief danger. (Concerning the Tenth Congress of the R.C.P.(B.) see *History of the C.P.S.U.(B.), Short Course*, Moscow 1952, pp. 391-97. Concerning the resolutions adopted by the congress, see "Resolutions and Decisions of C.P.S.U.(B.) Congresses, Conferences and Central Committee Plenums," Part I, 1941, pp. 356-95.)

Verbatim Report,
Moscow, 1921.

1. Report on the Immediate Tasks of the Party in the National Question

March 10, 1921

Before proceeding to deal with the Party's concrete immediate tasks in the national question, it is necessary to lay down certain premises, without which the national question cannot be solved. These premises concern the emergence of nations, the origin of national oppression, the forms assumed by national oppression in the course of historical development, and then the methods of solving the national question in the different periods of development.

There have been three such periods.

The first period was that of the elimination of feudalism in the West and of the triumph of capitalism. That was the period in which people were constituted into nations. I have in mind countries like Britain (excluding Ireland), France and Italy. In the West—in Britain, France, Italy and, partly, Germany—the period of the liquidation of feudalism and the constitution of people into nations coincided, on the whole, with the period in which centralised states appeared; as a consequence of this, in the course of their development, the nations there assumed state forms. And since there were no other national groups of any considerable size within these states, there was no national oppression there.

In Eastern Europe, on the contrary, the process of formation of nations and of the liquidation of feudal disunity did not coincide in time with the process of formation of centralised states. I have in mind Hungary, Austria and Russia. In those countries capitalism had not yet developed; it was, perhaps, only just beginning to develop; but the needs of defence against the invasion of the Turks, Mongols and other Oriental peoples called for the immediate formation of centralised states capable of checking the onslaught of the invaders. Since the process of formation

of centralised states in Eastern Europe was more rapid than the process of the constitution of people into nations, mixed states were formed there, consisting of several peoples who had not yet formed themselves into nations, but who were already united in a common state.

Thus, the first period is characterised by nations making their appearance at the dawn of capitalism; in Western Europe purely national states arose in which there was no national oppression, whereas in Eastern Europe multi-national states arose headed by one, more developed, nation as the dominant nation, to which the other, less developed, nations were politically and later economically subjected. These multi-national states in the East became the home of that national oppression which gave rise to national conflicts, to national movements, to the national question, and to various methods of solving this question.

The second period in the development of national oppression and of methods of combating it coincided with the period of the appearance of imperialism in the West, when, in its quest for markets, raw materials, fuel and cheap labour power, and in its fight for the export of capital and for securing important railway and sea routes, capitalism burst out of the framework of the national state and enlarged its territory at the expense of its neighbours, near and distant. In this second period the old national states in the West—Britain, Italy and France—ceased to be national states, i.e., owing to having seized new territories, they were transformed into multi-national, colonial states and thereby became arenas of the same kind of national and colonial oppression as already existed in Eastern Europe. Characteristic of this period in Eastern Europe was the awakening and strengthening of the subject nations (Czechs, Poles and Ukrainians) which, as a result of the imperialist war, led to the break-up of the old, bourgeois multi-national states and to the formation of new national states which are held in bondage by the so-called great powers.

The third period is the Soviet period, the period of the abolition of capitalism and of the elimination of national oppression, when the question of dominant and subject nations, of colonies and metropolises, is relegated to the archives of history, when before us, in the territory of the R.S.F.S.R., nations are arising having equal rights to development, but which have retained a certain historically inherited inequality owing

to their economic, political and cultural backwardness. The essence of this national inequality consists in the fact that, as a result of historical development, we have inherited from the past a situation in which one nation, namely, the Great-Russian, is politically and industrially more developed than the other nations. Hence the actual inequality, which cannot be abolished in one year, but which must be abolished by giving the backward nations and nationalities economic, political and cultural assistance.

Such are the three periods of development of the national question that have historically passed before us.

The first two periods have one feature in common, namely: in both periods nations suffer oppression and bondage, as a consequence of which the national struggle continues and the national question remains unsolved. But there is also a difference between them, namely: in the first period the national question remains within the framework of each multi-national state and affects only a few, chiefly European, nations; in the second period, however, the national question is transformed from an intra-state question into an inter-state question—into a question of war between imperialist states to keep the unequal nationalities under their domination, to subject to their influence new nationalities and races outside Europe.

Thus, in this period, the national question, which formerly had been of significance only in cultured countries, loses its isolated character and merges with the general question of the colonies.

The development of the national question into the general colonial question was not a historical accident. It was due, firstly, to the fact that during the imperialist war the imperialist groups of belligerent powers themselves were obliged to appeal to the colonies from which they obtained man-power for their armies. Undoubtedly, this process, this inevitable appeal of the imperialists to the backward nationalities of the colonies, could not fail to rouse these races and nationalities for the struggle for liberation. The second factor that caused the widening of the national question, its development into the general colonial question embracing the whole world, first in the sparks and later in the flames of the

liberation movement, was the attempt of the imperialist groups to dismember Turkey and to put an end to her existence as a state. Being more developed as a state than the other Moslem peoples, Turkey could not resign herself to such a prospect; she raised the banner of struggle and rallied the peoples of the East around herself against imperialism. The third factor was the appearance of Soviet Russia, which achieved a number of successes in the struggle against imperialism and thereby naturally inspired the oppressed peoples of the East, awakened them, roused them for the struggle, and thus made it possible to create a common front of oppressed nations stretching from Ireland to India.

Such are all those factors which in the second stage of the development of national oppression not only prevented bourgeois society from solving the national question, not only prevented the establishment of peace among the nations, but, on the contrary, fanned the spark of national struggle into the flames of the struggle of the oppressed peoples, the colonies and the semi-colonies against world imperialism.

Obviously, the only regime that is capable of solving the national question, i.e., the regime that is capable of creating the conditions for ensuring the peaceful co-existence and fraternal co-operation of different nations and races, is the Soviet regime, the regime of the dictatorship of the proletariat.

It scarcely needs proof that under the rule of capital, with private ownership of the means of production and the existence of classes, equal rights for nations cannot be guaranteed; that as long as the power of capital exists, as long as the struggle for the possession of the means of production goes on, there can be no equal rights for nations, just as there can be no co-operation between the labouring masses of the different nations. History tells us that the only way to abolish national inequality, the only way to establish a regime of fraternal co-operation between the labouring masses of the oppressed and non-oppressed nations, is to abolish capitalism and establish the Soviet system.

Further, history shows that although individual peoples succeed in liberating themselves from their own national bourgeoisie and also from the "foreign" bourgeoisie, i.e., although they succeed in establishing the

Soviet system in their respective countries, they cannot, as long as imperialism exists, maintain and successfully defend their separate existence unless they receive the economic and military support of neighbouring Soviet republics. The example of Hungary provides eloquent proof that unless the Soviet republics form a state union, unless they unite and form a single military and economic force, they cannot withstand the combined forces of world imperialism either on the military or on the economic front.

A federation of Soviet republics is the needed form of state union, and the living embodiment of this form is the R.S.F.S.R.

Such, comrades, are the premises that I wanted to speak of here first of all, before proceeding to prove that our Party must take certain steps in the matter of solving the national question within the R.S.F.S.R.

Although, under the Soviet regime in Russia and in the republics associated with her, there are no longer either dominant or nations without rights, no metropolises or colonies, no exploited or exploiters, nevertheless, the national question still exists in Russia. The essence of the national question in the R.S.F.S.R. lies in abolishing the actual backwardness (economic, political and cultural) that some of the nations have inherited from the past, to make it possible for the backward peoples to catch up with central Russia in political, cultural and economic respects.

Under the old regime, the tsarist government did not, and could not, make any effort to develop the statehood of the Ukraine, Azerbaijan, Turkestan and other border regions; it opposed the development of the statehood, as well as of the culture, of the border regions, endeavouring forcibly to assimilate their native populations.

Further, the old state, the landlords and capitalists, left us a heritage of such downtrodden nationalities as the Kirghiz, Chechens and Ossetians, whose lands were colonised by Cossack and kulak elements from Russia. Those nationalities were doomed to incredible suffering and to extinction.

Further, the position of the Great-Russian nation, which was the dominant nation, has left traces of its influence even upon Russian Communists who are unable, or unwilling to draw closer to the labouring

masses of the local population, to understand their needs and to help them to extricate themselves from backwardness and lack of culture. I am speaking of those few groups of Russian Communists who, ignoring in their work the specific features of the manner of life and culture of the border regions, sometimes deviate towards Russian dominant-nation chauvinism.

Further, the position of the non-Russian nationalities which have experienced national oppression has not failed to influence the Communists among the local population who are sometimes unable to distinguish between the class interests of the labouring masses of their respective nations and so-called "national" interests. I am speaking of the deviation towards local nationalism that is sometimes observed in the ranks of the non-Russian Communists, and which finds expression in the East in, for example, Pan-Islamism and Pan-Turkism.

Lastly, we must save the Kirghiz, the Bashkirs and certain mountain races from extinction, we must provide them with the necessary land at the expense of the kulak colonisers.

Such are the problems and tasks which together constitute the essence of the national question in our country.

Having described these immediate tasks of the Party in the national question, I would like to pass to the general task, the task of adapting our communist policy in the border regions to the specific conditions of economic life that obtain mainly in the East.

The point is that a number of nationalities, chiefly Tyurk—comprising about 25,000,000 people—have not been through, did not manage to go through, the period of industrial capitalism, and, therefore, have no industrial proletariat, or scarcely any; consequently, they will have to skip the stage of industrial capitalism and pass from the primitive forms of economy to the stage of Soviet economy. To be able to perform this very difficult but by no means impossible operation, it is necessary to take into account all the specific features of the economic condition, and even of the historical past, manner of life and culture of these nationalities. It would be unthinkable and dangerous to transplant to the territories of these nationalities the measures that had force and

significance here, in central Russia. Clearly, in applying the economic policy of the R.S.F.S.R., it is absolutely necessary to take into account all the specific features of the economic condition, the class structure and the historical past confronting us in these border regions. There is no need for me to dwell on the necessity of putting an end to such incongruities as, for example, the order issued by the People's Commissariat of Food that pigs be included in the food quotas to be obtained from Kirghizia, the Moslem population of which has never raised pigs. This example shows how obstinately some people refuse to take into account peculiarities of the manner of life which strike the eye of every traveller.

I have just been handed a note requesting me to answer Comrade Chicherin's articles. Comrades, I think that Chicherin's articles, which I have read carefully, are nothing more than literary exercises. They contain four mistakes, or misunderstandings.

Firstly, Comrade Chicherin is inclined to deny the contradictions among the imperialist states; he overestimates the international unity of the imperialists and loses sight of, under-estimates, the internal contradictions among the imperialist groups and states (France, America, Britain, Japan, etc.), which exist and contain the seeds of war. He has over-estimated the unity of the imperialist upper circles and underestimated the contradictions existing within that "trust." But these contradictions do exist, and the activities of the People's Commissariat of Foreign Affairs are based on them.

Next, Comrade Chicherin makes a second mistake. He underestimates the contradictions that exist between the dominant great powers and the recently formed national states (Czechoslovakia, Poland, Finland, etc.), which are in financial and military subjection to those great powers. Comrade Chicherin has completely lost sight of the fact that, although those national states are in subjection to the great powers, or to be more exact, because of this, there are contradictions between the great powers and those states, which made themselves felt, for example, in the negotiations with Poland, Estonia, etc. It is precisely the function of the People's Commissariat of Foreign Affairs to take all these contradictions into account, to base itself on them, to manoeuvre within the framework of these contradictions. Most surprisingly, Comrade

Chicherin has under-estimated this factor.

The third mistake of Comrade Chicherin is that he talks too much about national self-determination, which has indeed become an empty slogan conveniently used by the imperialists. Strangely enough, Comrade Chicherin has forgotten that we parted with that slogan two years ago. That slogan no longer figures in our programme. Our programme does not speak of national self-determination, which is a very vague slogan, but of the right of nations to secede, a slogan which is more precise and definite. These are two different things. Strangely enough, Comrade Chicherin fails to take this factor into account in his articles and, as a result, all his objections to the slogan which has become vague are like firing blank shot, for neither in my theses nor in the Party's programme is there a single word about "self-determination." The only thing that is mentioned is the right of nations to secede. At the present time, however, when the liberation movement is flaring up in the colonies, that is for us a revolutionary slogan. Since the Soviet states are united voluntarily in a federation, the nations constituting the R.S.F.S.R. voluntarily refrain from exercising the right to secede. But as regards the colonies that are in the clutches of Britain, France, America and Japan, as regards such subject countries as Arabia, Mesopotamia, Turkey and Hindustan, i.e., countries which are colonies or semi-colonies, the right of nations to secede is a revolutionary slogan, and to abandon it would mean playing into the hands of the imperialists.

The fourth misunderstanding is the absence of practical advice in Comrade Chicherin's articles. It is easy, of course, to write articles, but to justify their title: "In Opposition to Comrade Stalin's Theses" he should have proposed something serious, he should at least have made some practical counter-proposals. But I failed to find in his articles a single practical proposal that was worth considering.

I am finishing, comrades. We have arrived at the following conclusions. Far from being able to solve the national question, bourgeois society, on the contrary, in its attempts to "solve" it, has fanned it into becoming the colonial question, and has created against itself a new front that stretches from Ireland to Hindustan. The only state that is capable of formulating and solving the national question is the state that is based on

the collective ownership of the means and instruments of production—the Soviet state. In the Soviet federative state there are no longer either oppressed or dominant nations, national oppression has been abolished; but owing to the actual inequality (cultural, economic and political) inherited from the old bourgeois order, inequality between the more cultured and less cultured nations, the national question assumes a form which calls for the working out of measures that will help the labouring masses of the backward nations and nationalities to make economic, political and cultural progress, that will enable them to catch up with central—proletarian—Russia, which has forged ahead. From this follow the practical proposals which constitute the third section of the theses on the national question which I have submitted. (*Applause.*)

2. Reply to the Discussion

March 10

Comrades, the most characteristic feature of this congress as regards the discussion on the national question is that we have passed from declarations on the national question, through the administrative redivision of Russia, to the practical presentation of the question. At the beginning of the October Revolution we confined ourselves to declaring the right of peoples to secede. In 1918 and in 1920 we were engaged in the administrative redivision of Russia on national lines with the object of bringing the labouring masses of the backward peoples closer to the proletariat of Russia. Today, at this congress, we are presenting, on a purely practical basis, the question of what policy the Party should adopt towards the labouring masses and petty-bourgeois elements in the autonomous regions and independent republics associated with Russia. Therefore, Zatonsky's statement that the theses submitted to you are of an abstract character astonished me. I have before me his own theses which, for some reason, he did not submit to the congress, and in them I have not been able to find a single practical proposal, literally, not one, except, perhaps, the proposal that the word "East-European" be substituted for "R.S.F.S.R.," and that the word "Russian" or "Great-Russian" be substituted for "All-Russian."

I have not found any other practical proposals in these theses.

I pass on to the next question.

I must say that I expected more from the delegates who have spoken. Russia has twenty-two border regions. Some of them have undergone considerable industrial development and differ little from central Russia in industrial respects; others have not been through the stage of capitalism and differ radically from central Russia; others again are very backward. It is impossible in a set of theses to deal with all this diversity of the border regions in all its concrete details. One cannot demand that theses of importance to the Party as a whole should bear only a Turkestan, an Azerbaijanian, or a Ukrainian character. Theses must seize on and include the common characteristic features of all the border regions, abstracted from the details. There is no other method of drawing up theses.

The non-Great-Russian nations must be divided into several groups, and this has been done in the theses. The non-Russian nations comprise a total of about 65,000,000 people. The common characteristic feature of all these non-Russian nations is that they lag behind central Russia as regards the development of their statehood. Our task is to exert all efforts to help these nations, to help their proletarians and toilers generally to develop their Soviet statehood in their native languages. This common feature is mentioned in the theses, in the part dealing with practical measures.

Next, proceeding further in concretising the specific features of the border regions, we must single out from the total of nearly 65,000,000 people of non-Russian nationalities some 25,000,000 Tyurks who have not been through the capitalist stage. Comrade Mikoyan was wrong when he said that in some respects Azerbaijan stands higher than the Russian provincial districts. He is obviously confusing Baku with Azerbaijan. Baku did not spring from the womb of Azerbaijan; it is a superstructure erected by the efforts of Nobel, Rothschild, Whishaw, and others. As regards Azerbaijan itself, it is a country with the most backward patriarchal-feudal relations. That is why I place Azerbaijan as a whole in the group of border regions which have not been through the capitalist stage, and in relation to which it is necessary to employ specific

methods of drawing them into the channel of Soviet economy. That is stated in the theses.

Then there is a third group which embraces not more than 6,000,000 people; these are mainly pastoral races, which still lead a tribal life and have not yet adopted agriculture. These are chiefly the Kirghiz, the northern part of Turkestan, Bashkirs, Chechens, Ossetians and Ingushes. The first thing to be done in relation to this group of nationalities is to provide them with land. The Kirghiz and Bashkirs here were not given the floor; the debate was closed. They would have told us more about the sufferings of the Bashkir highlanders, the Kirghiz and the Highlanders, who are dying out for want of land. But what Safarov said about this applies only to a group consisting of 6,000,000 people. Therefore, it is wrong to apply Safarov's practical proposals to all the border regions, for his amendments have no significance whatever for the rest of the non-Russian nationalities, which comprise about 60,000,000 people. Therefore, while raising no objection to the concretisation, supplementation and improvement of individual points moved by Safarov relating to certain groups of nationalities, I must say that these amendments should not be universalised. I must next make a comment on one of Safarov's amendments. In one of his amendments there has crept in the phrase "national-cultural self-determination":

> "Before the October Revolution," it says there, "the colonial and semi-colonial peoples of the eastern border regions of Russia, as a result of imperialist policy, had no opportunity whatever of sharing the cultural benefits of capitalist civilisation by means of their own national-cultural self-determination, education in their native languages," etc.

I must say that I cannot accept this amendment because it smacks of Bundism. National-cultural self-determination is a Bundist formula. We parted with nebulous slogans of self-determination long ago and there is no need to revive them. Moreover, the entire phrase is a most unnatural combination of words.

Further, I have received a note alleging that we Communists are artificially cultivating a Byelorussian nationality. That is not true, for there exists a Byelorussian nation, which has its own language, different from Russian. Consequently, the culture of the Byelorussian people can be

raised only in its native language. We heard similar talk five years ago about the Ukraine, about the Ukrainian nation. And only recently it was said that the Ukrainian Republic and the Ukrainian nation were inventions of the Germans. It is obvious, however, that there is a Ukrainian nation, and it is the duty of the Communists to develop its culture. You cannot go against history. It is obvious that although Russian elements still predominate in the Ukrainian towns, in the course of time these towns will inevitably be Ukrainianised. About forty years ago, Riga had the appearance of a German city; but since towns grow at the expense of the countryside, and since the countryside is the guardian of nationality, Riga is now a purely Lettish city. About fifty years ago all Hungarian towns bore a German character; now they have become Magyarised. The same will happen in Byelorussia, where non-Byelorussians still predominate in the towns.

In conclusion, I propose that the congress elect a commission, containing representatives of the regions, for the purpose of further concretising those practical proposals in the theses that interest all our border regions. (*Applause.*)

A LETTER TO V. I. LENIN

Comrade Lenin,

During the last three days I have had the opportunity to read the symposium: *A Plan for the Electrification of Russia.*[1] My illness made this possible (it is an ill wind that blows nobody any good!). An excellent, well-compiled book. A masterly draft of a really *single* and really *state* economic plan, *not in quotation marks.* The only Marxist attempt in our time to place the Soviet superstructure of economically backward Russia on a really practical technical and production basis, the only possible one under present conditions.

You remember Trotsky's "plan" (his theses) of last year for the "economic revival" of Russia on the basis of the mass application of the labour of unskilled *peasant*-worker masses (the labour army) to the remnants of pre-war industry. How wretched, how backward, compared with the Goelro plan! A medieval handicraftsman who imagines he is an Ibsen hero called to "save" Russia by an ancient saga. [...] And of what value are the dozens of "single plans" which to our shame appear from time to time in our press—the childish prattle of preparatory-school pupils. [...] Or again, the philistine "realism" (in fact *Manilovism*) of Rykov, who continues to "criticise" the Goelro and is immersed to his ears in routine. [...]

In my opinion:

1. Not a single minute more must be wasted on idle talk about the plan.

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1 **Original editor:** The symposium entitled *A Plan for the Electrification of the R.S.F.S.R. Report of the State Commission for the Electrification of Russia to the Eighth Congress of Soviets* was published in December 1920 by the Scientific and Technical Department of the Supreme Council of National Economy.

2. A ***practical*** *start* on the work ***must be made*** immediately.
3. To this *start* must be devoted at least one-third of our work (two-thirds will be required for "current" needs) in transporting materials and men, restoring enterprises, distributing labour forces, delivering foodstuffs, organising supply bases and supply itself, and so on.
4. Since the staff of the Goelro, for all their excellent qualities, lack a sound practical outlook (a professorial impotence can be detected in the articles), we must without fail include in the planning commission live practical men who act on the principle—"Report the fulfilment," "Fulfil on time," etc.
5. *Pravda, Izvestia*, and especially *Ekonomicheskaya Zhizn*[2] must be instructed to popularise the *Plan for the Electrification* both as a whole and as regards its concrete points dealing with individual parts, bearing in mind that there is ***only one*** "single economic plan"—the *Plan for the Electrification*, and that all other "plans" are just idle talk, empty and harmful.

Yours,
Stalin

Written in March 1921
First published in: *Stalin.*
A Symposium on His Fiftieth Birthday.
Moscow-Leningrad, 1929

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2 **Original editor:** *Ekonomicheskaya Zhizn* (*Economic Life*)—a daily newspaper, organ of the economic and financial People's Commissariats and institutions of the R.S.F.S.R. and U.S.S.R. (Supreme Council of National Economy, Council of Labour and Defence, State Planning Commission, State Bank, People's Commissariat of Finance, and others); it was published from November 1918 to November 1937.

CONCERNING THE PRESENTATION OF THE NATIONAL QUESTION

The presentation of the national question as given by the Communists differs essentially from the presentation adopted by the leaders of the Second and Two-and-a-Half Internationals[1] and by all the various "Socialist," "Social-Democratic," Menshevik, Socialist-Revolutionary and other parties.

It is particularly important to note four principal points that are the most characteristic and distinguishing features of the new presentation of the national question, features which draw a line between the old and the new conceptions of the national question.

The *first point* is the merging of the national question, as a part, with the general question of the liberation of the colonies, as a whole. In the epoch of the Second International it was usual to confine the national question to a narrow circle of questions relating exclusively to the "civilised" nations. The Irish, the Czechs, the Poles, the Finns, the Serbs, the Armenians, the Jews and some other European nationalities—such was the circle of unequal nations in whose fate the Second International took an interest. The tens and hundreds of millions of people in Asia and Africa who are suffering from national oppression in its

1 **Original editor:** The Two-and-a-Half International—the "International Association of Labour and Socialist Parties"—was formed in Vienna in February 1921 at an inaugural conference of Centrist parties and groups which, owing to the pressure of the revolutionary-minded workers, had temporarily seceded from the Second International. While criticising the Second International in words, the leaders of the Two-and-a-Half International (F. Adler, O. Bauer, L. Martov, and others) in fact pursued an opportunist policy on all the major questions of the proletarian movement, and strove to use the association to counteract the growing influence of the Communists among the masses of the workers. In 1923, the Two-and-a-Half International rejoined the Second International.

crudest and most brutal form did not, as a rule, come within the field of vision of the "socialists." They did not venture to place whites and blacks, "uncultured" Negroes and "civilised" Irish, "backward" Indians and "enlightened" Poles on the same footing. It was tacitly assumed that although it might be necessary to strive for the liberation of the European unequal nations, it was entirely unbecoming for "respectable socialists" to speak seriously of the liberation of the colonies, which were "necessary" for the "preservation" of "civilisation." These socialists, save the mark, did not even suspect that the abolition of national oppression in Europe is inconceivable without the liberation of the colonial peoples of Asia and Africa from imperialist oppression, that the former is organically bound up with the latter. It was the Communists who first revealed the connection between the national question and the question of the colonies, who proved it theoretically and made it the basis of their practical revolutionary activities. That broke down the wall between whites and blacks, between the "cultured" and the "uncultured" slaves of imperialism. This circumstance greatly facilitated the co-ordination of the struggle of the backward colonies with the struggle of the advanced proletariat against the common enemy, imperialism.

The *second point* is that the vague slogan of the right of nations to self-determination has been replaced by the clear revolutionary slogan of the right of nations and colonies to secede, to form independent states. When speaking of the right to self-determination, the leaders of the Second International did not as a rule even hint at the right to secede—the right to self-determination was at best interpreted to mean the right to autonomy in general. Springer and Bauer, the "experts" on the national question, even went so far as to convert the right to self-determination into the right of the oppressed nations of Europe to cultural autonomy, that is, the right to have their own cultural institutions, while all *political* (and economic) power was to *remain* in the hands of the dominant nation. In other words, the right of the unequal nations to self-determination was converted into the privilege of the dominant nations to wield political power, and the question of secession was excluded. Kautsky, the ideological leader of the Second International, associated himself in the main with this essentially imperialist interpretation of self-determination

as given by Springer and Bauer. It is not surprising that the imperialists, realising how convenient this feature of the slogan of self-determination was for them, proclaimed the slogan their own. As we know, the imperialist war, the aim of which was to enslave peoples, was fought under the flag of self-determination. Thus the vague slogan of self-determination was converted from an instrument for the liberation of nations, for achieving equal rights for nations, into an instrument for taming nations, an instrument for keeping nations in subjection to imperialism. The course of events in recent years all over the world, the logic of revolution in Europe, and, lastly, the growth of the liberation movement in the colonies demanded that this, now reactionary slogan should be cast aside and replaced by another slogan, a revolutionary slogan, capable of dispelling the atmosphere of distrust of the labouring masses of the unequal nations towards the proletarians of the dominant nations and of clearing the way towards equal rights for nations and towards the unity of the toilers of these nations. Such a slogan is the one issued by the Communists proclaiming the right of nations and colonies to secede.

The merits of this slogan are that it:

1. removes all grounds for suspicion that the toilers of one nation entertain predatory designs against the toilers of another nation, and therefore creates a basis for mutual confidence and voluntary union;
2. tears the mask from the imperialists, who hypocritically prate about self-determination but who are striving to keep the unequal peoples and colonies in subjection, to retain them within the framework of their imperialist state, and thereby intensifies the struggle for liberation that these nations and colonies are waging against imperialism.

It scarcely needs proof that the Russian workers would not have gained the sympathy of their comrades of other nationalities in the West and the East if, having assumed power, they had not proclaimed the right of nations to secede, if they had not demonstrated in practice their readiness to give effect to this inalienable right of nations, if they had not renounced their "rights," let us say, to Finland (1917), if they had not withdrawn their troops from North Persia (1917), if they had not renounced all claims to certain parts of Mongolia, China, etc., etc.

It is equally beyond doubt that if the policy of the imperialists, skilfully concealed under the flag of self-determination, has nevertheless lately been meeting with defeat after defeat in the East, it is because, among other things, it has encountered there a growing liberation movement, which has developed on the basis of the agitation conducted in the spirit of the slogan of the right of nations to secede. This is not understood by the heroes of the Second and Two-and-a-Half Internationals, who roundly abuse the Baku "Council of Action and Propaganda"[2] for some slight mistakes it has committed; but it will be understood by everyone who takes the trouble to acquaint himself with the activities of that "Council" during the year it has been in existence, and with the liberation movement in the Asiatic and African colonies during the past two or three years.

The *third point* is the disclosure of the organic connection between the national and colonial question and the question of the rule of capital, of overthrowing capitalism, of the dictatorship of the proletariat. In the epoch of the Second International, the national question, narrowed down to the extreme, was usually regarded as an isolated question, unrelated to the coming proletarian revolution. It was tacitly assumed that the national question would be settled "naturally," before the proletarian revolution, by means of a series of reforms within the framework of capitalism; that the proletarian revolution could be accomplished without a radical settlement of the national question, and that, on the contrary, the national question could be settled without overthrowing the rule of capital, without, and before, the victory of the proletarian revolution. That essentially imperialist view runs like a red thread through the well-known works of Springer and Bauer on the national question. But the past decade has exposed the utter falsity and rottenness of this conception of the national question. The imperialist war has shown, and the revolutionary experience of recent years has again confirmed that:

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2 **Original editor:** The "Council of Action and Propaganda of the Peoples of the East" was formed by decision of the First Congress of the Peoples of the East, held in Baku in September 1920. The object of the council was to support and unite the liberation movement of the East. It existed for about a year.

1. the national and colonial questions are inseparable from the question of emancipation from the rule of capital;
2. imperialism (the highest form of capitalism) cannot exist without the political and economic enslavement of the unequal nations and colonies;
3. the unequal nations and colonies cannot be liberated without overthrowing the rule of capital;
4. the victory of the proletariat cannot be lasting without the liberation of the unequal nations and colonies from the yoke of imperialism.

If Europe and America may be called the front or the arena of the major battles between socialism and imperialism, the unequal nations and the colonies, with their raw materials, fuel, food and vast store of manpower, must be regarded as the rear, the reserve of imperialism. To win a war it is necessary not only to triumph at the front, but also to revolutionise the enemy's rear, his reserves. Hence, the victory of the world proletarian revolution may be regarded as assured only if the proletariat is able to combine its own revolutionary struggle with the liberation movement of the labouring masses of the unequal nations and the colonies against the rule of the imperialists and for the dictatorship of the proletariat. This "trifle" was overlooked by the leaders of the Second and Two-and-a-Half Internationals, who divorced the national and colonial question from the question of power in the epoch of growing proletarian revolution in the West.

The *fourth point* is that a new element has been introduced into the national question—the element of the actual (and not merely juridical) equalisation of nations (help and co-operation for the backward nations in raising themselves to the cultural and economic level of the more advanced nations), as one of the conditions necessary for securing fraternal co-operation between the labouring masses of the various nations. In the epoch of the Second International the matter was usually confined to proclaiming "national equality of rights"; at best, things went no further than the demand that such equality of rights should be put into effect. But national equality of rights, although a very important political

gain in itself, runs the risk of remaining a mere phrase in the absence of adequate resources and opportunities for exercising this very important right. It is beyond doubt that the labouring masses of the backward peoples are not in a position to exercise the rights that are accorded them under "national equality of rights" to the same degree to which they can be exercised by the labouring masses of advanced nations. The backwardness (cultural and economic), which some nations have inherited from the past, and which cannot be abolished in one or two years, makes itself felt. This circumstance is also perceptible in Russia, where a number of peoples have not gone through, and some have not even entered, the phase of capitalism and have no proletariat, or hardly any, of their own; where, although complete national equality of rights has already been established, the labouring masses of these nationalities are not in a position to make adequate use of the rights they have won, owing to their cultural and economic backwardness. This circumstance will make itself felt still more "on the morrow" of the victory of the proletariat in the West, when numerous backward colonies and semi-colonies, standing at most diverse levels of development, will inevitably appear on the scene. For that very reason the victorious proletariat of the advanced nations must assist, must render assistance, real and prolonged assistance, to the labouring masses of the backward nations in their cultural and economic development, so as to help them to rise to a higher stage of development and to catch up with the more advanced nations. Unless such aid is forthcoming it will be impossible to bring about the peaceful co-existence and fraternal co-operation of the toilers of the various nations and nationalities within a single world economic system that are so essential for the final triumph of socialism.

But from this it follows that we cannot confine ourselves merely to "national equality of rights," that we must pass from "national equality of rights" to measures that will bring about real equality of nations, that we must proceed to work out and put into effect practical measures in relation to:

1. the study of the economic conditions, manner of life and culture of the backward nations and nationalities;
2. the development of their culture;

3. their political education;
4. their gradual and painless introduction to the higher forms of economy;
5. the organisation of economic co-operation between the toilers of the backward and of the advanced nations.

Such are the four principal points which distinguish the new presentation of the national question given by the Russian Communists.

May 2, 1921

Pravda, No. 98,
May 8, 1921
Signed: *J. Stalin*

GREETING TO THE FIRST CONGRESS OF HIGHLAND WOMEN[1]

Convey my fraternal greetings to the First Congress of Working Women of the Highland Republic.[2] I deeply regret that I am unable to be present at the congress owing to ill health.

Comrade Highland Women, there has not been a single important movement for emancipation in the history of mankind in which women have not closely participated, for every step taken by an oppressed class along the road towards emancipation brings with it an improvement in the position of women. The movement for the emancipation of the slaves in ancient times, as well as the movement for the emancipation of the serfs in modern times, had in its ranks not only men, but also women—fighters and martyrs, who with their blood sealed their devotion to the cause of the toilers. Lastly, the present movement for the emancipation

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1 **Original editor:** The First Congress of Working Women of the Highland Socialist Soviet Republic was held in Vladikavkaz on June 16-18, 1921. There were present 152 women delegates: Chechens, Ossetians, Tatars, Kabardinians, Balkarians, etc., who came from remote highland villages. The congress discussed the following questions: the economic and legal position of women in the East before and after the revolution; the handicraft industries and the part played in them by the Highland women; public education and women of the East; mother and child welfare, etc. J. V. Stalin's telegram was read at the congress at the evening session of June 18. The congress sent a telegram of greetings to J. V. Stalin.

2 **Original editor:** The Autonomous Highland Socialist Soviet Republic was formed on the basis of a Decree of the All-Russian Central Executive Committee on January 20, 1921. Originally, the Highland A.S.S.R. consisted of the Chechen, Nazran, Vladikavkaz, Kabardinian, Balkarian and Karachayev territories. In the period 1921-24 a number of Autonomous National Regions were formed from the Highland A.S.S.R. By a Decree of the All-Russian Central Executive Committee on July 7, 1924, the Highland A.S.S.R. was dissolved.

of the proletariat—the profoundest and mightiest of all the emancipation movements of mankind—has brought to the fore not only heroines and women martyrs, but also a mass socialist movement of millions of working women, who are fighting victoriously under the common proletarian banner.

Compared with this mighty working-women's movement, the liberal movement of the bourgeois women intellectuals is a child's game, invented as a pastime.

I am convinced that the Congress of Highland Women will conduct its proceedings under the Red Flag.

Stalin

June 17, 1921

Bulletin of the First Congress of Eastern Working Women of the Highland Soviet Socialist Republic
Vladikavkaz, 1921



THE POLITICAL STRATEGY AND TACTICS OF THE RUSSIAN COMMUNISTS

Synopsis of a Pamphlet

I. Definition of Terms and Subject of Investigation

1. *The limits of operation of political strategy and tactics, their field of application.* If it is granted that the proletarian movement has two sides, objective and subjective, then the field of operation of strategy and tactics is undoubtedly limited to the subjective side of the movement. The ***objective*** side comprises the processes of development which take place outside of and around the proletariat independently of its will and of the will of its party, processes which, in the final analysis, determine the development of the whole of society. The ***subjective*** side comprises the processes which take place within the proletariat as the reflection in the consciousness of the proletariat of the objective processes, accelerating or retarding the latter, but not determining them.
2. The Marxist ***theory***, which primarily studies objective processes in their development and decline, defines the trend of development and points to the class or classes which are inevitably rising to power, or are inevitably falling, which must fall.
3. The Marxist ***programme***, based on deductions from the theory, defines the aim of the movement of the rising class, in the present case the proletariat, during a certain period in the development of capitalism, or during the whole of the capitalist period (the minimum programme and the maximum programme).

4. ***Strategy***, guided by the programme, and based on a calculation of the contending forces, internal (national) and international, defines the ***general route***, the ***general direction***, in which the revolutionary proletarian movement must be guided with a view to achieving the greatest results under the incipient and developing relation of forces. In conformity with this it outlines a plan of the disposition of the forces of the proletariat and of its allies on the social front (***general disposition***). "Outlining a plan of the disposition of forces" must not be confused with the actual (concrete and practical) operation of disposing, allocating the forces, which is carried out jointly by tactics and strategy. That does not mean that strategy is limited to defining the route and outlining a plan of the disposition of the fighting forces in the proletarian camp; on the contrary, it directs the struggle and introduces corrections in current tactics during the whole period of a turn, making skilful use of the available reserves, and manoeuvring with the object of supporting the tactics.
5. ***Tactics***, guided by strategy and by the experience of the revolutionary movement at home and in neighbouring countries, taking into account at every given moment the state of forces within the proletariat and its allies (higher or lower level of culture, higher or lower degree of organisation and political consciousness, existing traditions, forms of the movement, forms of organisation, *main* and *auxiliary*), and also in the enemy's camp, taking advantage of disharmony or any confusion in the enemy's camp—indicate such *definite ways* of winning the broad masses to the side of the revolutionary proletariat and of placing them in their fighting positions on the social front (in fulfilment of the plan for the disposition of forces outlined in the strategic plan) as will most surely prepare the success of strategy. In conformity with this, they issue or change the Party's slogans and directives.
6. ***Strategy*** alters at turns, radical changes, in history; it embraces the period from one turn (radical change) to another. Hence, it directs the movement towards the general objective that covers the interests of the proletariat during the whole of this period. Its aim is to ***win***

the war of classes that is waged during the whole of this period and, therefore, it remains unchanged during this period.

Tactics, on the other hand, are determined by the flows and ebbs on the basis of the given turn, the given strategic period, by the relation of the contending forces, by the forms of the struggle (movement), by the *tempo* of the movement, by the arena of the struggle at each given moment, in each given district. And since these factors change in conformity with the conditions of place and time during the period from one turn to another, tactics, which do not cover the whole war, but only individual battles, that lead to the winning or loss of the war, change (may change) several times in the course of the strategic period. A strategic period is longer than a tactical period. Tactics are subordinate to the interests of strategy. Speaking generally, tactical successes prepare for strategic successes. The function of tactics is to lead the masses into the struggle in such a way, to issue such slogans, to lead the masses to new positions in such a way, that the struggle should, in sum, result in the winning of the war, i.e., in strategic success. But cases occur when a tactical success frustrates, or postpones, strategic success. In view of this, it is necessary, in such cases, to forgo tactical successes.

Example. The agitation against the war that we conducted among the workers and soldiers at the beginning of 1917, under Kerensky, undoubtedly resulted in a tactical setback, for the masses dragged our speakers off the platforms, beat them up, and sometimes tore them limb from limb; instead of the masses being drawn into the Party, they drew away from it. But in spite of the tactical setback, this agitation brought nearer a big strategic success, for the masses soon realised that we were right in agitating against the war, and later this hastened and facilitated their going over to the side of the Party.

Or again. The Comintern's demand for a dissociation from the Reformists and Centrists in conformity with the twenty-one conditions,[1] undoubtedly involves a certain tactical setback for it delib-

1 **Original editor:** This refers to the twenty-one conditions of affiliation to the Communist International laid down by the Second Congress of the Comintern on August 6, 1920.

erately reduces the number of "supporters" of the Comintern and temporarily weakens the latter; but it leads to a big strategic gain by ridding the Comintern of unreliable elements, which will undoubtedly strengthen the Comintern, will weld its ranks more closely, i.e., will enhance its power generally.

7. *Agitation* ***slogan*** and *action* slogan. These must not be confused. It is dangerous to do so. In the period from April to October 1917, the slogan "All power to the Soviets" was an *agitation* slogan; in October it became an *action* slogan—after the Central Committee of the Party, at the beginning of October (October 10), adopted the decision on the "seizure of power." In its action in Petrograd in April, the Bagdatyev group was guilty of such a confusion of slogans.

8. ***Directive*** (general) is a direct call for action, at *a* ***certain time*** and in *a* ***certain place***, binding upon the Party. The slogan "All power to the Soviets" was a *propaganda* slogan at the beginning of April (the "theses"[2]); in June it became an *agitation* slogan; in October (October 10) it became an *action* slogan; but at the end of October it became an immediate *directive.* I am speaking of a general directive for the whole Party, having in mind that there must also be local directives detailing the general directive.

9. ***Vacillation of the petty bourgeoisie*** especially during intensification of political crises (in Germany during the Reichstag elections, in Russia under Kerensky in April, in June and in August, and again in Russia during the Kronstadt events, 1921[3]); this must be carefully studied, taken advantage of, taken into account, but to yield to it would be dangerous, fatal to the cause of the proletariat. Agitation slogans must not be changed because of such vacillation, but it is permissible, and sometimes necessary, to change or postpone a particular *directive*, and, perhaps, also a slogan (*of action*). Changing tactics "overnight" means precisely changing a *directive*, or even

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2 **Original editor:** This refers to V. I. Lenin's April Theses on "The Tasks of the Proletariat in the Present Revolution" (see *Works*, 4th Russ. ed., Vol. 24, pp. 1-7).

3 **Original editor:** This refers to the counter-revolutionary mutiny in Kronstadt in March 1921 (see *History of the C.P.S.U.(B.), Short Course*, Moscow 1952, pp. 385-86).

an action slogan, but not an agitation slogan. (Cf. the calling off of the demonstration on June 9, 1917, and similar facts.)

10. The art of the *strategist* and *tactician* lies in skilfully and opportunely transforming an agitation slogan into an action slogan, and in moulding, also opportunely and skilfully, an action slogan into definite, concrete, *directives.*

II. Historic Turns in the Development of Russia

1. ***The turn in 1904-05*** (the *Russo-Japanese* war revealed the utter instability of the autocracy on the one hand, and the might of the proletarian and peasant movement, on the other) and *Lenin's* book *Two Tactics*[4] as the strategic plan of the Marxists corresponding to this turn. A turn towards the bourgeois-democratic revolution (*this was the essence of the turn*). Not a bourgeois-liberal deal with tsarism under the hegemony of the Cadets, but a bourgeois-democratic revolution under the hegemony of the proletariat. (*This was the essence of the strategic plan.*) This plan took as its starting point that the bourgeois-democratic revolution in Russia would give an impetus to the socialist movement in the West, would unleash revolution there and help Russia to pass from the bourgeois to the socialist revolution (see also Minutes of the Third Party Congress, Lenin's speeches at the congress,[5] and also his analysis of the concept of dictatorship both at the congress and in the pamphlet *The Victory of the Cadets*[6]). *A calculation of the contending forces, internal and international, and, in general, an analysis of the economics and politics of the period of the turn are essential.* The February Revolution marked the culmination of this period by carrying out at least two-thirds of the strategic plan outlined in Two Tactics.

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4 **Original editor:** V. I. Lenin, *Two Tactics of Social-Democracy in the Democratic Revolution* (see *Works*, 4th Russ. ed., Vol. 9, pp. 1-119).

5 **Original editor:** See V. I. Lenin, *Works*, 4th Russ. ed., Vol. 8.

6 **Original editor:** V. I. Lenin, *The Victory of the Cadets and the Tasks of the Workers' Party* (see *Works*, 4th Russ. ed., Vol. 10, pp. 175-250).

2. ***The turn in February-March 1917 towards the Soviet revolution*** (the imperialist war, which swept away the autocratic regime, revealed the utter bankruptcy of capitalism and showed that a socialist revolution was absolutely inevitable as the only way out of the crisis).

   Difference between the "glorious" ***February*** Revolution brought about by the people, the bourgeoisie and Anglo-French capital (*this* revolution, since it transferred power to the Cadets, caused no changes of any importance in the international situation, for it was a continuation of the policy of Anglo-French capital), and the October Revolution, which overturned everything.

   Lenin's "Theses"—as the strategic plan corresponding to the new turn. Dictatorship of the proletariat as the way out. This plan took as its starting point that *"we shall begin the socialist revolution in Russia, overthrow our own bourgeoisie and in this way unleash the revolution in the West, and then the Western comrades will help us to complete our revolution."* It is essential to analyse the internal and international economics and politics of this turning-point period (the period of "dual power," coalition combinations, the Kornilov revolt as a symptom of the death of the Kerensky regime, unrest in Western countries due to discontent with the war).

3. *The turn in October 1917* (a turn not only in Russian, but in *world* history), establishment of the proletarian dictatorship in Russia (October-November-December 1917, and first half of 1918), ***as a breach of the international social front, against world imperialism, which caused a turn towards the liquidation of capitalism and the establishment of the socialist order on a world scale***, and as opening the era of civil war in place of imperialist war (the Decree on Peace, the Decree on Land, the Decree on the Nationalities, publication of the secret treaties, programme of construction, *Lenin's* speeches at the Second Congress of So-

viets,[7] *Lenin*'s pamphlet *The Tasks of the Soviet Power*,[8] economic construction).

Make an all-round analysis of the difference between the strategy and tactics of communism when not in power, when in opposition and the strategy and tactics of communism when in power.

International situation: continuation of the war between the two imperialist cliques as a favourable condition (after the conclusion of the Brest Peace) for the existence and development of Soviet power in Russia.

4. ***The course towards military operations against the interventionists (summer of 1918 to end of 1920)***, which began after the brief period of peaceful construction, i.e., after the Brest Peace. This course began after the Brest Peace, which reflected Soviet Russia's military weakness and emphasised the necessity of creating a Red Army in Russia to serve as the chief bulwark of the Soviet revolution. The hostile action of the Czechoslovaks, the occupation of Murmansk, Archangel, Vladivostok and Baku by Entente troops, and the Entente's declaration of war against Soviet Russia—all this definitely marked ***the turn from incipient peaceful construction to military operations, to defence of the centre of the world revolution from attacks by internal and external enemies.*** *(Lenin*'s speeches on the Brest Peace, etc.) Since the social revolution was a long time coming and we were left to our own resources, especially after the occupation of the above-mentioned districts, which met with no serious protest on the part of the proletarians of the West, we were obliged to conclude the indecent Brest Peace in order to obtain a respite during which to build our Red Army and defend the Soviet Republic by our own efforts.

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7 **Original editor:** See V. I. Lenin, *Works*, 4th Russ. ed., Vol. 26, pp. 217-29.

8 **Original editor:** This refers to V. I. Lenin's pamphlet *The Immediate Tasks of the Soviet Power* (see *Works*, 4th Russ. ed., Vol. 27, pp. 207-46).

*"**All for the front, all for the defence of the Republic."** Hence, the setting up of the Council of Defence*, etc. This was the war period, which left its impress upon the whole of Russia's internal and external life.

5. ***The course towards peaceful construction from the beginning of 1921***, after the defeat of Wrangel, peace with a number of bourgeois states, the treaty with Britain, etc.

   The war is over, but as the Western Socialists are not yet able to help us to restore our economy, we, being economically encircled by industrially more developed bourgeois states, are compelled to grant concessions, to conclude trade agreements with individual bourgeois states and concession agreements with individual capitalist groups; in this (economic) sphere also we are left to our own resources, we are obliged to manoeuvre. ***All for the restoration of the national economy***. (See *Lenin*'s well-known speeches and pamphlets.) The Council of Defence is transformed into the Council of Labour and Defence.

6. The stages in the Party's development up to 1917:

   a) *Welding of the main core, especially the "Iskra" group*, and so forth. Fight against Economism. The Credo.[9]

   b) *Formation of Party cadres* as the basis of the future workers' party on an all-Russian scale (1895-1903). The Second Party Congress.

   c) *The expansion of the cadres into a workers' party* and its reinforcement with new Party workers recruited in the course of the proletarian movement (1903-04). The Third Party Congress.

   d) *The fight of the Mensheviks against the Party cadres with the object of dissolving the latter among the non-Party masses* (the

9 **Original editor:** The "Credo"—the manifesto issued by the "Economist" group (see V. I. Lenin, "Protest of the Russian Social-Democrats," *Works*, 4th Russ. ed., Vol. 4, pp. 149-63).

"Labour Congress") and the fight of the Bolsheviks to preserve the Party cadres as the basis of the Party. The London Congress and defeat of the advocates of a Labour Congress.

e) *Liquidators and Party Supporters.* Defeat of the Liquidators (1908-10).

f) 1908-16 inclusive. *The period of the combination of illegal and legal forms* of activity and the growth of the Party organisations in all spheres of activity.

7. The Communist Party as a sort of *Order of Knights of the Sword* within the Soviet state, directing the organs of the latter and inspiring their activities.

   The importance of the *old guard* within this powerful Order. *Reinforcement of the old guard* with new forces who have been steeled during the past three or four years.

   Was Lenin right in waging an *uncompromising struggle against the conciliators*? Yes, for had he not done so, the Party would have been diluted and would have been not an organism, but a conglomeration of heterogeneous elements; it would not have been so welded and united internally; it would not have possessed that unexampled discipline and unprecedented flexibility without which it, and the Soviet state which it guides, could not have withstood world imperialism. *"The Party becomes strong by purging itself,"* rightly said Lassalle. Quality first and then quantity.

8. The question whether a proletarian party is needed or not, and of the role of the latter. The Party constitutes the officer corps and general staff of the proletariat, who direct the struggle of the latter in all its forms and in all spheres without exception, and combine the diverse forms of the struggle into one whole. To say that a Communist Party is not needed is equivalent to saying that the proletariat must fight without a general staff, without a leading core, who make a special study of the conditions of the struggle and work out the methods of fighting; it is equivalent to saying that it is better to fight without a general staff than with one, which is stupid.

III. Questions

1. ***The role of the autocracy before and after the Russo-Japanese war.*** The Russo-Japanese war exposed the utter rottenness and weakness of the Russian autocracy. The successful general political strike in October 1905 made this weakness absolutely clear (a colossus with feet of clay). Further, 1905 not only exposed the weakness of the autocracy, the feebleness of the liberal bourgeoisie and the might of the Russian proletariat, but also refuted the formerly current opinion that the Russian autocracy was the gendarme of Europe, that it was *strong enough to be* the gendarme of Europe. The facts showed that the Russian autocracy was unable to cope even with its own working class, without the aid of European capital. The Russian autocracy was, indeed, able to be the gendarme of Europe as long as the working class of Russia was dormant and as long as the Russian peasantry was quiescent, continuing to have faith in the Little Father, the tsar; but 1905, and above all the shooting on January 9, 1905, roused the Russian proletariat; and the agrarian movement in the same year undermined the muzhik's faith in the tsar. The centre of gravity of European counter-revolution shifted from the Russian landlords to the Anglo-French bankers and imperialists. The German Social-Democrats who tried to justify their betrayal of the proletariat in 1914 on the plea that the war was a progressive war against the Russian autocracy as the gendarme of Europe were actually making play with a shadow of the past, and playing dishonestly, of course, for the real gendarmes of Europe, who had sufficient forces and funds at their command to be gendarmes, were not in Petrograd, but in Berlin, Paris and London.

   It now became clear to everybody that Europe was introducing into Russia not only socialism, but also counter-revolution in the shape of loans to the tsar, etc., whereas, in addition to political émigrés, Russia was introducing revolution into Europe. (At all events, in

1905 Russia introduced the general strike into Europe as a weapon in the proletarian struggle.)

2. *"Ripeness of the fruit."* How is it possible to determine when the moment for revolutionary upheavals has arrived?

   When is it possible to say that the "fruit is ripe," that the period of preparation has ended and that action can begin?

   —a) When the revolutionary temper of the masses is brimming over and our *action slogans* and *directives* lag behind the movement of the masses (see Lenin's "For Going Into the Duma," the period before October 1905), when we restrain the masses with difficulty and not always successfully, for example, the Putilov workers and machine-gunners at the time of the July demonstrations in 1917 (see *Lenin*'s book *"Left-Wing" Communism* [...][10]);

   —b) When uncertainty and confusion, decay and disintegration in the enemy's camp have reached a climax; when the number of deserters and renegades from the enemy's camp grows by leaps and bounds; when the so-called neutral elements, the vast mass of the urban and rural petty bourgeoisie, are beginning definitely to turn away from the enemy (from the autocracy or the bourgeoisie) and are seeking an alliance with the proletariat; when, as a result of all this, the enemy's organs of administration, together with the organs of suppression, cease to function, become paralysed and useless, etc., thus leaving the road open for the proletariat to exercise its right to seize power;

   —c) When both these factors (points *a* and *b*) coincide in time, which, actually, is what usually happens.

   Some people think that it is enough to note the *objective* process of extinction of the class in power in order to launch the attack. But that is wrong. In addition to this, the *subjective* conditions necessary

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10 **Original editor:** V. I. Lenin, *"Left-Wing" Communism, an Infantile Disorder* (see *Works*, 4th Russ. ed., Vol. 31, pp. 1-97).

for a successful attack must have been prepared. It is precisely the task of strategy and tactics skilfully and opportunely to make the preparation of the subjective conditions for attacks fit in with the objective processes of the extinction of the power of the ruling class.

3. *Choice of the moment.* Correct choice of the moment, in so far as the moment to strike is really chosen by the Party and not imposed by events, presupposes the existence of two conditions: a) "ripeness of the fruit," and b) some glaring event, action by the government or some spontaneous outburst of a local character that can serve as a *suitable reason*, obvious to the broad masses, for striking the first blow, for beginning the attack. Failure to observe these two conditions may mean that the blow will not only fail to serve as the starting point for general attacks of increasing scale and intensity upon the enemy, will not only fail to grow into a thundering, crushing blow (and that is precisely the meaning and purpose of the proper choice of the moment), but, on the contrary, may degenerate into a ludicrous putsch, which the government, and the enemy generally, will welcome and exploit to raise their prestige, and which may become a pretext and starting point for wrecking the Party, or in any case, for demoralising it. For example, the proposal made by a section of the Central Committee to arrest the Democratic Conference,[11] but rejected by the Central Committee because it failed to comply (*totally* failed to comply) with the second requirement (see above), was inappropriate from the standpoint of choice of the moment.

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11 **Original editor:** The Democratic Conference was held in Petrograd, September 14-22, 1917. It was convened by the Menshevik and Socialist-Revolutionary leaders of the All-Russian Central Executive Committee of the Soviets of Workers' and Soldiers' Deputies and of the Executive Committee of the Soviets of Peasants' Deputies, and attended by representatives of the socialist parties, compromising Soviets, trade unions, Zemstvos, commercial and industrial circles and military units. The conference set up a Pre-parliament (The Provisional Council of the Republic) as an advisory body to the Provisional Government. With the assistance of the Pre-parliament the compromisers hoped to halt the revolution and to divert the country from the path of a Soviet revolution to the path of bourgeois constitutional development.

In general, care must be taken that the first blow (choice of the moment) does not turn into a putsch. To prevent this, it is essential that the two conditions indicated above are strictly observed.

4. *"Trial of strength."* Sometimes the Party, having made preparations for decisive actions and having accumulated, as it thinks, sufficient reserves, considers it expedient to undertake a trial action, to test the enemy's strength and to ascertain whether its own forces are ready for action. Such a trial of strength may be undertaken by the Party deliberately, by its own choice (the demonstration that it was proposed to hold on June 10, 1917, but was later called off and replaced by the demonstration on June 18), or may be forced upon it by circumstances, by premature action by the opposing side, or, in general, by some unforeseen event (the Kornilov revolt in August 1917 and the Communist Party's counteraction which served as a splendid trial of strength). A "trial of strength" must not be regarded merely as a demonstration, like a May Day demonstration; therefore, it must not be described merely as a *calculation of forces*; as regards its importance and possible results it is undoubtedly more than an ordinary demonstration, although less than an uprising—it is something between a demonstration and an uprising or a general strike. Under favourable circumstances it may develop into the first blow (choice of the moment), into an uprising (our Party's action at the end of October); under unfavourable circumstances it may put the Party in immediate danger of being wrecked (the demonstration of July 3-4, 1917). It is therefore most expedient to undertake a trial of strength when the "fruit is ripe," when the enemy's camp is sufficiently demoralised, when the Party has accumulated a certain number of reserves; briefly: when the Party is ready for an offensive, when the Party is not daunted by the possibility that circumstances may cause the trial of strength to become the first blow and then to become a general offensive against the enemy. When undertaking a trial of strength the Party must be ready for all contingencies.

5. *"Calculation of forces."* Calculation of forces is simply a demonstration which can be undertaken in almost any situation (for example, a May Day demonstration, with or without a strike). If a calcula-

tion of forces is not undertaken on the eve of an open upheaval, but at a more or less "peaceful" time, it can end at most in a skirmish with the government's police or troops, without involving heavy casualties for the Party or for the enemy. If, however, it is undertaken in the white-hot atmosphere of impending upheavals, it may involve the Party in a premature decisive collision with the enemy, and if the Party is still weak and unready for such collisions, the enemy can take advantage of such a "calculation of forces" to crush the proletarian forces (hence the Party's repeated appeals in September 1917: "don't allow yourselves to be provoked"). Therefore, in applying the method of a calculation of forces in the atmosphere of an already ripe revolutionary crisis, it is necessary to be very careful, and it must be borne in mind that if the Party is weak, the enemy can convert such a calculation into a weapon with which to defeat the proletariat, or at least, to weaken it seriously. And, on the other hand, if the Party is ready for action, and the enemy's ranks are obviously demoralised, then, having begun a "calculation of forces," the opportunity must not be lost to pass on to a "trial of strength" (assuming that the conditions for this are favourable—"ripeness of fruit," etc.) and then to launch the general assault.

6. *Offensive tactics* (tactics of wars of liberation, when the proletariat has already taken power).

7. *Tactics of orderly retreat.* How skilfully to retreat into the interior in face of obviously superior enemy forces in order to save if not most of the army, then at least its cadres (see *Lenin*'s book *"Left-Wing" Communism* [...]). How we were the last to retreat, for example, during the boycott of the Witte-Dubasov Duma. The difference between tactics of retreat and "tactics" of flight (compare the Mensheviks).

8. *Defence tactics*, as a necessary means of preserving cadres and accumulating forces in anticipation of future battles. They impose on the Party the duty of taking up positions on all fields of the struggle without exception, of bringing all kinds of weapon, i.e., all forms of organisation, into proper order, not neglecting a single one of them, even the seemingly most insignificant, for nobody can tell

in advance which field will be the first arena of battle, or which form of the movement, or form of organisation, will be the starting point and tangible weapon of the proletariat when the decisive battles open. In other words: in the period of defence and accumulation of forces, the Party must make itself fully prepared in anticipation of decisive battles. *In anticipation* of battles. [...] But this does not mean that the Party must wait with folded arms and become an idle spectator, degenerating from a revolutionary party (if it is in the opposition) into a wait-and-see party—no, in such a period it must avoid battles, not accept battle, *if it* has not yet accumulated the necessary amount of forces or if the situation is unfavourable for it, but *it must not miss a single opportunity*, under favourable conditions, of course, to force a battle upon the enemy when that is to the enemy's disadvantage, to keep the enemy in a constant state of tension, step by step to disorganise and demoralise his forces, step by step to exercise the proletarian forces in battles affecting the everyday interests of the proletariat, and in this way increase its own forces.

Only if this is done can defence be really *active* defence and the Party preserve all the attributes of a real *party of action* and not of a contemplative, wait-and-see party; only then will the Party avoid missing, overlooking, the moment for decisive action, avoid being taken unawares by events. The case of Kautsky and Co. overlooking the moment for the proletarian revolution in the West owing to their "wise" contemplative waiting tactics and still "wiser" passivity is a direct warning. Or again: the case of the Mensheviks and Socialist-Revolutionaries missing the opportunity to take power owing to their tactics of endless waiting on the questions of peace and land should also serve as a warning. On the other hand, it is also obvious that the tactics of active defence, the tactics of action, must not be abused, for that would create the danger of the Communist Party's tactics of revolutionary action being converted into tactics of "revolutionary" gymnastics, i.e., into tactics that lead not to the accumulating the forces of the proletariat and to their increased readiness for action, hence, not to the acceleration of the revolution, but to

the dissipation of the proletarian forces, to the deterioration of their readiness for action, and hence, to retarding the cause of the revolution.

9. *The general principles of communist strategy and tactics.* There are three such principles:

   a) The adoption, as a basis, of the conclusion, arrived at by Marxist theory and confirmed by revolutionary practice, that in capitalist countries the proletariat is the only completely revolutionary class, which is interested in the complete emancipation of mankind from capitalism and whose mission it is, therefore, to be the leader of all the oppressed and exploited masses in the struggle to overthrow capitalism. Consequently, all work must be directed towards the establishment of the dictatorship of the proletariat.

   b) The adoption, as a basis, of the conclusion, arrived at by Marxist theory and confirmed by revolutionary practice, that the *strategy and tactics of the Communist Party of any country* can be correct only if they are not confined to the interests of "their own" country, "their own" fatherland, "their own" proletariat, but, on the contrary, if, while taking into account the conditions and situation in their own country, they make the interests of the international proletariat, the interests of the revolution in other countries, the corner-stone, i.e., if, in essence, in spirit, they are internationalist, if they do "the utmost possible in one (their own) country *for* the development, support and awakening of the revolution *in all countries"* (see *Lenin*'s book *The Proletarian Revolution and the Renegade Kautsky*[12]).

   c) The adoption, as a starting point, of the repudiation of all doctrinairism (Right and Left) when changing strategy and tactics, when working out new strategic plans and tactical lines

12 **Original editor:** V. I. Lenin, *The Proletarian Revolution and the Renegade Kautsky* (see *Works*, 4th Russ. ed., Vol. 28, pp. 207-302).

(Kautsky, Axelrod, Bogdanov, Bukharin), repudiation of the contemplative method and the method of quoting texts and drawing historical parallels, artificial plans and lifeless formulas (Axelrod, Plekhanov); recognition that it is necessary to stand by the point of view of Marxism, not to "lie down on it," that it is necessary to "change" the world, not "merely to interpret" it, that it is necessary to lead the proletariat and be the conscious expression of the unconscious process, and not "contemplate the proletariat's rear" and drag at the tail of events (see *Lenin*'s "Spontaneity and Consciousness"[13] and the well-known passage in *Marx's Communist Manifesto*[14] to the effect that the Communists are the most far-sighted and advanced section of the proletariat).

Illustrate each of these principles with facts from the revolutionary movement in Russia and in the West, *especially the second principle, and the third.*

10. *Tasks*:

    a) *To win the vanguard of the proletariat to the side of communism* (i.e., build up cadres, create a Communist Party, work out the programme, the principles of tactics). Propaganda as the chief form of activity.

    b) *To win the broad masses of the workers and of the toilers generally to the side of the vanguard* (to bring the masses up to the fighting positions). Chief form of activity—practical action by the masses as a prelude to decisive battles.

11. *Rules*:

    a) *Master all forms of organisation of the proletariat without exception and all forms* (fields) *of the movement, of the struggle.* (Forms of the movement: parliamentary and extra-

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13 **Original editor:** This refers to V. I. Lenin's book *What Is To Be Done?* (see *Works*, 4th Russ. ed., Vol. 5, pp. 319-494).

14 **Original editor:** See Karl Marx and Frederick Engels, *Selected Works*, Vol. I, Moscow 1951, pp. 40-42.

parliamentary, legal and illegal.)

b) *Learn to adapt oneself to rapid changes from some forms of the movement to others*, or to supplement some forms with others; learn to *combine* legal forms with illegal, parliamentary with extra-parliamentary forms (example: the Bolsheviks' rapid transition from legal to illegal forms in July 1917; combination of the extra-parliamentary movement with action in the Duma during the Lena events).

12. *The Communist Party's strategy and tactics before and after taking power.* Four specific features.

a) *The most important* feature of the situation that arose in Europe in general, and in Russia in particular, after the October Revolution was the *breach of the international social front* (as a result of the victory over the Russian bourgeoisie) *in the region* of Russia carried out by the Russian proletariat (*rupture* with imperialism, *publication* of the secret treaties, civil war instead of imperialist war, the call to the troops to fraternise, the call to the workers to rise against their governments). That breach marked a *turn in world history*, for it directly menaced the entire edifice of international imperialism and radically changed the relation of the contending forces in the West in favour of the working class of Europe. This meant that the Russian proletariat and its Party changed from a *national* into an *international* force, and their former task of overthrowing their own national bourgeoisie was superseded by the new task of overthrowing the international bourgeoisie. Since the international bourgeoisie, sensing mortal danger, set itself the immediate task of *closing the Russian breach* and concentrated its unengaged forces (reserves) against Soviet Russia, the latter could not, in her turn, refrain from concentrating all her forces for defence, and was obliged to draw the main blow of the international bourgeoisie upon herself. All this greatly facilitated the struggle the Western proletarians were waging against their own bourgeoisie and increased tenfold their sympathy with the Russian proletariat as the *vanguard fighter of*

the international proletariat.

Thus, the accomplishment of the task of overthrowing the bourgeoisie in one country led to the new task of fighting on an international scale, of fighting on a different plane—to a fight waged by the proletarian state against hostile capitalist states; and the Russian proletariat, which hitherto had been one of the detachments of the international proletariat, henceforth became the advanced detachment, the vanguard, of the international proletariat.

Thus, the task of unleashing revolution in the West in order to make it easier for her, i.e., Russia, to complete her revolution, was transformed from a wish into a purely practical task of the day. This change in relations (particularly in international relations) brought about by October is ***entirely*** due to October. The February Revolution did not affect international relations in the least.

b) *The second important feature* of the situation that arose in Russia after October was the change in the position both of the proletariat and its Party within Russia. Formerly, before October, the proletariat's main concern was to organise all the fighting forces for overthrowing the bourgeoisie, i.e., its task was chiefly of a critical and destructive character. Now, after October, when the bourgeoisie is no longer in power, and the state has become proletarian, the old task has dropped out; its place has been taken by *the new task of organising all the working people* of Russia (the peasants, artisans, handicraftsmen, intellectuals, the backward nationalities in the R.S.F.S.R.) *for building the new Soviet Russia*, her economic and military organisations, on the one hand, and for crushing the resistance of the overthrown, but not yet completely crushed, bourgeoisie, on the other hand.[15]

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15 Correspondingly, some of the old forms of the movement have dropped out, such as strikes, uprisings, etc., and, correspondingly, the character and forms (functions) of the working-class organisations (the Party, Soviets, trade unions, co-operatives, cultural and educational institutions) have also changed.

c) Corresponding to the change in the proletariat's position within Russia, and in conformity with the new task, *a change has taken place in the policy of the proletariat in relation to the bourgeois and petty-bourgeois groups* and strata of the population of Russia. Formerly (on the eve of the overthrow of the bourgeoisie) the proletariat refused to enter into individual agreements with bourgeois groups, for such a policy would have strengthened the bourgeoisie, which was in power. Now, however, the proletariat is in favour of individual agreements, for they strengthen its power, cause disintegration among the bourgeoisie, help the proletariat to tame, to assimilate, individual groups of the bourgeoisie. The difference between *"reformism"* and *the policy of individual agreements* (the former absolutely rejects the method of revolutionary action, the latter does not, and when revolutionaries do employ it, they base it on the revolutionary method; the former is narrower, the latter is wider in scope). (See "reformism" and "agreements policy.")

d) Corresponding to the colossal growth of the strength and resources of the proletariat and the Communist Party, *the scope of the Communist Party's strategic activities increased.* Formerly the strategy of the Communist Party was limited to the drawing up of the strategic plan, to manoeuvring between the different forms of the movement and of proletarian organisations, and also between the different demands of the movement (slogans), advancing some, changing others, employing the scanty reserves in the shape of the contradictions between the different classes. As a rule, the scope and possibility of employing these reserves were restricted to narrow limits owing to the weakness of the Party. Now, however, after October, firstly, the *reserves have grown* (contradictions between the social groups in Russia, contradictions between classes and nationalities in the surrounding states, contradictions between the surrounding states, the growing socialist revolution in the West, the growing revolutionary movement

in the East and in the colonies generally, etc.); secondly, the means and *possibilities of manoeuvring have increased* (the old means have been supplemented with new ones in the shape, for example, of diplomatic activity, establishment of more effective connections both with the Western socialist movement and with the Eastern revolutionary movement); thirdly, *new and wider possibilities have arisen for employing reserves* owing to the increase of the strength and resources of the proletariat which, in Russia, has become the dominant *political force*, possessing its own armed forces, and in the international field has become the vanguard of the world revolutionary movement.

13. *Special*: a) the question of the *tempo* of the movement and its role in determining strategy and tactics; b) the question of *reformism*, of the policy of *agreements*, and the relation between them.

14. *"**Reformism**"* ("compromise"), *"**policy of agreements**"* and *"**individual agreements**"* are ***three different things*** (write about each separately). ***Agreements*** as concluded by the Mensheviks are unacceptable because they are based on *reformism*, i.e., on the *repudiation of revolutionary action*, whereas *agreements* as concluded by the Bolsheviks are based on the requirements of revolutionary action. For that very reason agreements as concluded by the Mensheviks become converted into a system, into a *policy of agreements*, whereas the Bolsheviks are only for individual, concrete agreements, and do not make them into a special policy of agreements.

15. *Three periods in the development of the Communist Party of Russia*:

    a) *the period of the formation of the vanguard (i. e., the party) of the proletariat, the period of mustering the Party's cadres* (in this period the Party was *weak*; it had a programme and general principles of tactics, but as a party of mass action it was *weak*);

    b) *the period of revolutionary mass struggle* under the leadership of the Communist Party. In this period the Party was transformed *from an organisation for mass agitation* into an organ-

isation for mass action; the period of *preparation* was superseded by the period of *revolutionary action*;

c) *the period after taking power, after the Communist Party had become the government party.*

16. The political ***strength of the Russian proletarian revolution*** lies in that the peasant agrarian revolution (overthrow of feudalism) took place here *under the leadership of the proletariat* (and not of the bourgeoisie), and, *as a consequence of this*, the bourgeois-democratic revolution served as the prologue of the proletarian revolution; in that the *connection* between the labouring elements of the peasantry and the proletariat, and the *support* the latter rendered the former, were not only ensured politically, but consolidated organisationally in the Soviets, and this aroused for the proletariat the sympathy of the vast majority of the population (and that is why ***it does not matter*** if the proletariat itself does not constitute the majority in the country).

The weakness of the proletarian revolutions in Europe (the continent) lies in that there the proletariat lacks ***this*** connection with and ***this*** support of the countryside; *there*, the peasants were *emancipated* from feudalism under the leadership of the bourgeoisie (and not of the proletariat, which was weak at the time), and this, combined with the indifference Social-Democracy displayed towards the interests of the countryside, for a long time ensured the bourgeoisie the sympathy of the majority of the peasants.[16]

July, 1921

PUBLISHED FOR THE FIRST TIME

16 This synopsis was used by the author for his pamphlet *The Foundations of Leninism*, published in 1924, and included in Volume 6 of J. V. Stalin's *Works.* Part I of the synopsis was used for the article "Concerning the Question of the Strategy and Tactics of the Russian Communists," published in 1923, and included in the present volume. Some of the theses of the synopsis were used by the author for the article "The Party Before and After Taking Power," published in August 1921, and also included in the present volume.

THE IMMEDIATE TASKS OF COMMUNISM IN GEORGIA AND TRANSCAUCASIA

Report to a General Meeting of the Tiflis Organisation of the Communist Party of Georgia[1]

July 6, 1921

Comrades, the committee of your organisation has instructed me to deliver a report to you on the immediate tasks of communism in Georgia.

The immediate tasks of communism are questions of tactics. But to be able to determine a party's tactics, particularly the tactics of a government party, it is first of all necessary to weigh up the general situation in which the party finds itself, which it must not ignore. What, then, is this situation?

It scarcely needs proof that with the outbreak of the Civil War the

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1 **Original editor:** J. V. Stalin arrived in Tiflis at the end of June 1921 from Nalchik (where he had been taking a cure) to attend a plenary session of the Caucasian Bureau of the Central Committee of the R.C.P.(B.) held jointly with representatives of the local Party and trade-union organisations. The session, which lasted from July 2 to July 7, discussed important questions of political and economic affairs in the Transcaucasian Soviet Republics. In the resolution it adopted on the report on the political situation, drafted under J. V. Stalin's direction, the Plenum defined the tasks of the Transcaucasian Communists and struck a decisive blow at the nationalist deviators. The Plenum adopted a decision to set up a commission to unite the economic activities of the Transcaucasian Soviet Republics. It also discussed the following questions: the condition of the Transcaucasian railway; currency circulation in the Transcaucasian Soviet Republics; the autonomy of Nagorny Karabakh; Ajaria; the situation in Abkhazia, etc. At a general meeting of the Tiflis Party organisation held on July 6, J. V. Stalin delivered a report on "The Immediate Tasks of Communism in Georgia and Transcaucasia." This report was published in the newspaper *Pravda Gruzii*, No. 108 of July 13, 1921, and in the same year was also published in pamphlet form by the Caucasian Bureau of the Central Committee of the R.C.P.(B.).

world split up into two opposite camps, the imperialist camp headed by the Entente, and the socialist camp headed by Soviet Russia; that in the first camp are all kinds of capitalist, "democratic" and Menshevik states, and in the second are the Soviet states, including Georgia. The principal feature of the situation in which the Soviet countries find themselves today is that the period of armed struggle between the two abovementioned camps ended with a more or less prolonged armistice between them; that the period of war has been superseded by a period of peaceful economic construction of the Soviet republics. Before, in the war period, so to speak, the Soviet republics operated under the general slogan "All for the war," for the Soviet republics were a beleaguered camp, blockaded by the imperialist states. In that period, the Communist Party devoted all its energy to throwing all active forces into the work of building the Red Army, into strengthening the front of the armed struggle against imperialism. Needless to say, in that period the Party was unable to concentrate its attention on economic construction. It may be said without exaggeration that in that period the economics of the Soviet countries were confined to the development of war industry and to the maintenance, as best they could, of certain branches of the national economy, also connected with the war. This, indeed, explains the economic ruin that we inherited from the war period of the Soviet states.

Now that we have entered the new period of economic construction, now that we have passed from war to peaceful labour, the old slogan "All for the war" is naturally replaced by a new slogan "All for the national economy." This new period imposes on the Communists the duty of throwing all forces on to the economic front, into industry, agriculture, food supply, the co-operatives, transport, etc. For if we fail to do this we shall be unable to overcome economic ruin.

Whereas the war period produced Communists of the military type—supply officers, mobilisation officers, operations officers, and so forth, in the new period, the period of economic construction, the Communist Party must, in drawing the broad masses into the task of economic revival, train a new type of Communist, a communist business-manager—managers of industry, agriculture, transport, the co-operatives, and so forth.

But, while developing the work of economic construction, Communists must not ignore two very important circumstances that we have inherited from the past. These circumstances are: firstly, the existence of highly industrialised bourgeois states surrounding the Soviet countries; secondly, the existence of a numerous peasant petty bourgeoisie within the Soviet states.

The point is that by the will of history the Soviet power has triumphed, not in the more highly developed countries, but in those relatively less developed in a capitalist respect. History has shown that it is much easier to overthrow the bourgeoisie in countries like Russia, where capitalism is relatively young, where the proletariat is strong and concentrated and the national bourgeoisie is weak, than in the classical countries of capitalism like Germany, Britain and France, where capitalism has existed for several centuries, and where the bourgeoisie has succeeded in becoming a powerful force that controls the whole of social life.

When the proletarian dictatorship is established in countries like Germany and Britain, it will, no doubt, be easier there to develop and complete the socialist revolution, i.e., it will be easier to organise socialist economy there, for industry is more developed there, it is more highly equipped technically, and the proletariat is relatively more numerous than in the present Soviet countries. For the time being, however, we are faced with the fact that, on the one hand, the proletarian dictatorship has been established in countries that are less developed industrially and have a numerous class of small commodity producers (peasants) and, on the other hand, that the bourgeois dictatorship exists in the countries that are more highly developed industrially and have a numerous proletariat. It would be unwise, thoughtless, to ignore this fact.

Since the Soviet countries have abundant sources of raw materials and fuel, while the industrially developed bourgeois countries are suffering from a shortage of these, individual capitalist groups in bourgeois states are undoubtedly interested in concluding agreements with the Soviet states with a view to exploiting these sources of raw materials and fuel on definite terms. On the other hand, since the small producer class in the Soviet states (the peasantry) needs manufactured goods (textiles,

agricultural machines), it is also undoubtedly interested in concluding an agreement with its proletarian government with a view to receiving such goods on a barter basis (in exchange for agricultural produce).

The Soviet Government, in its turn, is also interested in concluding temporary agreements both with individual capitalist groups in foreign countries, and with the class of small commodity producers in its own country, for such agreements will undoubtedly accelerate and facilitate the restoration of the productive forces that were destroyed by the war, and the development of electrification, the technical-industrial basis of the future socialist economy.

These circumstances dictate to the Communists of the Soviet states a policy of concluding temporary agreements both with individual capitalist groups in the West (with a view to exploiting their capital and technical forces), and with the petty bourgeoisie at home (with a view to obtaining the necessary raw materials and food products).

Some people may say that these tactics of concluding agreements with the bourgeoisie smack of Menshevism, for the Mensheviks in their activities employ the tactics of agreements with the bourgeoisie. But that is not correct. There is a wide gulf between the tactics of concluding agreements with individual bourgeois groups, now proposed by the Communists, and the Menshevik tactics of concluding agreements with the bourgeoisie. The Mensheviks usually propose the conclusion of agreements with the bourgeoisie when the capitalists are in power, when, in order to strengthen their power and to corrupt the proletariat, the capitalists in power are not averse from handing down from above some "reforms," small concessions to individual groups of the proletariat. Such agreements are harmful to the proletariat and profitable to the bourgeoisie, for they do not weaken but strengthen the power of the bourgeoisie, cause dissension among the proletariat and split its ranks. That is precisely why the Bolsheviks always opposed, and always will oppose, the Menshevik tactics of concluding agreements with the bourgeoisie when the latter is in power. That is precisely why the Bolsheviks regard the Mensheviks as vehicles of bourgeois influence on the proletariat.

In contrast to the Menshevik tactics, however, the tactics of concluding agreements proposed by the Bolsheviks are of an altogether different character, for they presuppose an entirely different situation, one in which the proletariat and not the bourgeoisie is in power; and the inevitable result of the conclusion of agreements between individual bourgeois groups and the proletarian government must be the strengthening of proletarian power, on the one hand, and the disintegration of the bourgeoisie, the taming of some of its groups, on the other. It is only necessary that the proletariat should keep a tight hold on the power it has won and make skilful use of the resources and knowledge of these bourgeois groups for the economic revival of the country.

You see that these tactics and the Menshevik tactics are as far apart as heaven and earth.

Thus, to throw all active forces on to the economic front and, by means of agreements with individual bourgeois groups, to make use of the latter's resources, knowledge and organising skill in the interests of the economic revival of the country—such is the first immediate task dictated by the general situation to the Communists in Soviet countries, including the Communists in Georgia.

It is not, however, sufficient to weigh up the general situation in order to be able to determine the tactics of individual Soviet countries, in this case, the tactics of Soviet Georgia. To be able to determine the tactics the Communists in each Soviet country must pursue, it is also necessary to take into account the particular, concrete conditions of existence of each country. What are the particular, concrete conditions of existence of Soviet Georgia, in which the Communist Party of Georgia has to operate?

A number of facts that characterise these conditions can be established beyond doubt.

First, it is beyond doubt that in view of the utter hostility of the capitalist states towards the Soviet countries, the totally isolated existence of Soviet Georgia, or of any other Soviet country, is inconceivable both from the military and from the economic point of view. The mutual economic and military support of the Soviet states is a condition without which the

development of these states is inconceivable.

Secondly, it is obvious that Georgia, which is suffering from a shortage of food products, needs Russian grain and cannot do without it.

Thirdly, Georgia, having no liquid fuel, obviously needs the oil products of Azerbaijan, and cannot do without them, in order to maintain her transport and industry.

Fourthly, it is also beyond doubt that, suffering from a shortage of goods for export, Georgia needs assistance from Russia in the form of gold for covering the deficit in the balance of trade.

Lastly, it is impossible to ignore the distinctive conditions created by the national composition of the population of Georgia: a large percentage of this population consists of Armenians, and in Tiflis, the capital of Georgia, they constitute as much as half the population. This, undoubtedly, under any form of government and in particular under the Soviet regime, makes it the duty of Georgia to maintain absolute peace and fraternal cooperation both with the Armenians in Georgia and with Armenia.

It scarcely needs proof that these, and many other concrete conditions of a similar kind, impose on Soviet Georgia, as well as upon Soviet Armenia and Azerbaijan, the duty of in some way uniting their economic activities, of uniting their economic efforts, in order, say, to improve transport, for joint action in foreign markets, organisation of land reclamation schemes (irrigation, drainage), etc. I shall not dwell on the necessity of mutual support and contact between the Transcaucasian independent Soviet republics, and between them and Soviet Russia, in the event of our having to defend ourselves against attacks from outside. All this is obvious and indisputable. And if I mention these commonplace truths it is only because certain circumstances have arisen during the past two or three years which hinder such union, which threaten to frustrate attempts at such union. I am referring to nationalism—Georgian, Armenian and Azerbaijanian—which has shockingly increased in the Transcaucasian republics during the past few years and is an obstacle to joint effort.

I remember the years 1905-17, when complete fraternal solidarity

was to be observed among the workers and among the labouring population of the Transcaucasian nationalities in general, when fraternal ties bound the Armenian, Georgian, Azerbaijanian and Russian workers into one socialist family. Now, upon my arrival in Tiflis, I have been astounded by the absence of the former solidarity between the workers of the nationalities of Transcaucasia. Nationalism has developed among the workers and peasants, a feeling of distrust of their comrades of other nationalities has grown strong: anti-Armenian, anti-Tatar, anti-Georgian, anti-Russian and every other sort of nationalism is now rife. The old ties of fraternal confidence are severed, or at least greatly weakened. Evidently, the three years of existence of nationalist governments in Georgia (Mensheviks), in Azerbaijan (Mussavatists[2]) and in Armenia (Dashnaks[3]) have left their mark. By pursuing their nationalist policy, by working among the toilers in a spirit of aggressive nationalism, these nationalist governments finally brought matters to the point where each of these small countries found itself surrounded by a hostile nationalist atmosphere, which deprived Georgia and Armenia of Russian grain and Azerbaijanian oil, and Azerbaijan and Russia of goods passing through Batum—not to speak of armed clashes (Georgian-Armenian war) and massacres (Armenian-Tatar), as the natural results of the nationalist policy. No wonder that in this poisonous nationalist atmosphere the old international ties have been severed and the minds of the workers poisoned by nationalism. And since the survivals of this nationalism have

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2 **Original editor:** Mussavatists—the members of the "Mussavat" Party, a nationalist party of the bourgeoisie and landlords in Azerbaijan, formed in 1912. In the period of the October Revolution and the Civil War it was the chief counter-revolutionary force in Azerbaijan. Supported by the Turkish, and later, by the British interventionists, the Mussavatists were in power in Azerbaijan from September 1918 to April 1920, when the Mussavat government was overthrown by the joint efforts of the Baku workers and the Azerbaijanian peasants, and of the Red Army, which came to their assistance.

3 **Original editor:** Dashnaks—the members of the "Dashnaktsutyun" Party, an Armenian bourgeois-nationalist party, formed in the 1890's. In 1918-20, the Dashnaks headed the bourgeois-nationalist government of Armenia and transformed that country into a British interventionist base for fighting Soviet Russia. The Dashnak government was overthrown in November 1920 as a result of the struggle waged against it by the working people of Armenia, who were assisted by the Red Army.

not yet been eliminated among the workers, this circumstance (nationalism) is the greatest obstacle to uniting the economic (and military) efforts of the Transcaucasian Soviet Republics. Well, I have said already that without such union, the economic progress of the Transcaucasian Soviet Republics, and especially of Soviet Georgia, is inconceivable. Hence the immediate task of the Communists of Georgia is to wage a ruthless struggle against nationalism, to restore the old fraternal international bonds that existed before the nationalist Menshevik government came on the scene, and thus to create that healthy atmosphere of mutual confidence which is necessary for uniting the economic efforts of the Transcaucasian Soviet Republics and for the economic revival of Georgia.

This does not mean, of course, that there ought no longer to be an independent Georgia, or an independent Azerbaijan, and so forth. In my opinion, the draft scheme that is circulating among some comrades for restoring the old gubernias (Tiflis, Baku, Erivan), to be headed by a single Transcaucasian government, is a utopia, and a reactionary utopia at that; for this scheme is undoubtedly prompted by the desire to turn back the wheel of history. To restore the old gubernias and to dissolve the national governments in Georgia, Azerbaijan and Armenia would be tantamount to restoring landlordism and liquidating the gains of the revolution. This has nothing in common with communism. It is precisely in order to dispel the atmosphere of mutual distrust, and to restore the bonds of fraternity between the workers of the nationalities of Transcaucasia and Russia, that the independence both of Georgia and of Azerbaijan and Armenia must be preserved. This does not preclude, but, on the contrary, presupposes the necessity of mutual economic and other support, and also the necessity of uniting the economic efforts of the independent Soviet republics on the basis of voluntary agreement, on the basis of a convention.

According to information I have received, it was recently decided in Moscow to render Georgia, Armenia and Azerbaijan some small assistance in the shape of a loan of 6,500,000 rubles in gold. Furthermore, I have learned that Georgia and Armenia are receiving oil products from Azerbaijan free of charge, something that is inconceivable in the life of bourgeois states, even such as are united by the notorious "Entente Cor-

diale."[4] It scarcely needs proof that these and similar acts do not weaken, but strengthen the independence of these states.

Thus, to eliminate nationalist survivals, to cauterise them with red-hot irons, and to create a healthy atmosphere of mutual confidence among the toilers of the Transcaucasian nationalities in order to facilitate and hasten the uniting of the economic efforts of the Transcaucasian Soviet Republics (without which the economic revival of Soviet Georgia is inconceivable), while preserving the independence of Soviet Georgia—such is the second immediate task dictated to the Communists of Georgia by the concrete conditions of existence of that country.

Lastly, the third immediate task, equally important and equally necessary, is to preserve the purity, staunchness and flexibility of the Communist Party of Georgia.

Comrades, you must remember that our Party is the government party, that often whole groups of unreliable careerist elements, alien to the proletarian spirit, get into or try to get into, the Party and carry into it the spirit of disintegration and conservatism. It is the vital task of the Communists to guard the Party against such elements. We must remember once and for all that the strength and weight of a party, and especially of the Communist Party, do not depend so much on the quantity of members as on their quality, on their staunchness and devotion to the cause of the proletariat. The Russian Communist Party has all-in-all 700,000 members. I can assure you, comrades, that it could raise its membership to 7,000,000 if it wished to do so, and if it did not know that 700,000 staunch Communists constitute a much stronger force than 7,000,000 unwanted and good-for-nothing fellow-travellers. If Russia has withstood the onslaught of world imperialism, if she has achieved a number of most important successes on the external fronts, and if in the course of two or three years she has developed into a force that is shaking the foundations of world imperialism, this is due, among other things, to the existence of the united Communist Party, forged out of hard steel and tempered in battle, which has never gone out for quantity of members, but which has made its first concern the improvement of their quality.

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4 **Original editor:** This refers to the military and political agreement concluded between Great Britain and France in 1904. It marked the beginning of the formation of the Entente, the imperialist alliance of Great Britain, France and tsarist Russia.

Lassalle was right when he said that the party becomes strong by purging itself of dross. On the other hand, there can be no doubt that the reason why the German Social-Democratic Party, for example, the biggest Social-Democratic Party in the world, proved to be a plaything in the hands of imperialism during the imperialist war and collapsed like a colossus with feet of clay after the war was that for years it had devoted itself to enlarging its organisations by admitting all sorts of petty-bourgeois trash, which killed its living spirit.

Thus, to preserve the staunchness and purity of its ranks, not to go out for quantity of Party members, systematically to improve the quality of the Party membership, to guard itself against an influx of intellectual, petty-bourgeois nationalist elements—such is the third and last immediate task of the Communist Party of Georgia.

I am finishing my report, comrades. I pass now to the conclusions:

1. Develop all-round economic construction work, concentrating all your forces on this work and utilising in it the forces and resources both of capitalist groups in the West and of petty-bourgeois groups at home.
2. Crush the hydra of nationalism and create a healthy atmosphere of internationalism in order to facilitate the union of the economic efforts of the Transcaucasian Soviet Republics, while preserving their independence.
3. Guard the Party against an influx of petty-bourgeois elements and preserve its staunchness and flexibility, systematically improving the quality of its membership.

Such are the three principal immediate tasks of the Communist Party of Georgia.

Only by carrying out these tasks will the Communist Party of Georgia be able to keep a tight hold on the helm and defeat economic ruin. (*Applause.*)

Pravda Gruzii (Tiflis), No. 108,
July 13, 1921



THE PARTY BEFORE AND AFTER TAKING POWER

Three periods must be noted in the development of our Party.

The *first* period was the period of *formation*, of the *creation* of our Party. It embraces the interval of time approximately from the foundation of *Iskra*[1] to the Third Party Congress inclusively (end of 1900 to beginning of 1905).

In this period the Party, as a driving force, was weak. It was weak not only because it itself was young, but also because the working-class movement as a whole was young and because the revolutionary situation, the revolutionary movement, was lacking, or little developed, particularly in the initial stages of this period (the peasantry was silent or did not go beyond sullen murmuring; the workers conducted only partial economic strikes or political strikes covering a whole town; the forms of the movement were of an underground or semi-legal character; the forms of working-class organisation were also mainly of an underground character).

The Party's strategy—since strategy presupposes the existence of reserves and the possibility of manoeuvring with them—was necessarily narrow and restricted. The Party confined itself to mapping the movement's strategic plan, i.e., the route that the movement should take; and the Party's reserves—the contradictions within the camp of the enemies inside and outside of Russia—remained unused, or almost unused, owing to the weakness of the Party.

The Party's tactics, since tactics presuppose the utilisation of all

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1 **Original editor:** *Iskra* (*The Spark*)—the first all-Russian illegal Marxist newspaper, founded by V. I. Lenin in 1900 (for the significance and role of *Iskra*, see *History of the C.P.S.U.(B.), Short Course*, Moscow 1952, pp. 55-68).

forms of the movement, forms of proletarian organisation, their combination and mutual supplementation, etc., with the object of winning the masses and ensuring strategic success, were also necessarily narrow and without scope.

In this period the Party focussed its attention and care upon the Party itself, upon its own existence and preservation. At this stage it regarded itself as a kind of self-sufficing force. That was natural: tsarism's fierce attacks upon the Party, and the Mensheviks' efforts to blow it up from within and to replace the Party cadres with an amorphous, non-Party body (recall the Mensheviks' campaign for a labour congress launched in connection with Axelrod's notorious pamphlet *A People's Duma and a Labour Congress*, 1905), threatened the Party's very existence and, as a consequence, the question of preserving the Party acquired paramount importance in this period.

The principal task of communism in Russia in that period was to recruit into the Party the best elements of the working class, those who were most active and most devoted to the cause of the proletariat; to form the ranks of the proletarian party and to put it firmly on its feet. Comrade Lenin formulates this task as follows: "to win the vanguard of the proletariat to the side of communism" (see *"Left-Wing" Communism* [...][2]).

The *second period* was the period of *winning the broad masses of the workers and peasants* to the side of the Party, to the side of the vanguard of the proletariat. It embraces the interval of time approximately from October 1905 to October 1917.

In this period the situation was much more complex and rich in events than in the preceding one. The defeats tsarism sustained on the battlefield in Manchuria and the revolution of October 1905, on the one hand, the termination of the Russo-Japanese war, the triumph of the counter-revolution and the liquidation of the gains of the revolution, on the other, and thirdly, the imperialist war, the revolution of February 1917 and the famous "dual power"—all these events stirred up all classes

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2 **Original editor:** N. Lenin, *"Left-Wing" Communism, an Infantile Disorder*, Petrograd 1920 (see V. I. Lenin, *Works*, 4th Russ. ed., Vol. 31, pp. 1-97).

in Russia and pushed them into the political arena one after the other, strengthened the Communist Party and awakened the broad masses of the peasants to political life. The proletarian movement was enriched by such powerful forms as the general political strike and armed uprising.

The peasant movement was enriched by the boycott of the landlords ("smoking" the landlords out of their country seats) which developed into insurrection.

The activities of the Party and of other revolutionary organisations were invigorated by the mastery of such forms of work as the extra-parliamentary, legal, open form.

Working-class organisation was enriched not only by a tried and important form like the trade unions, but also by such a powerful form of working-class organisation as the Soviets of Workers' Deputies, a form unprecedented in history.

The peasants followed in the footsteps of the working class and set up Soviets of Peasants' Deputies.

The Party's reserves were also enriched. It became clear in the course of the struggle that the peasantry could and would constitute an inexhaustible reserve for the proletariat and its party. It also became clear that the proletariat and its party would play the leading role in overthrowing the rule of capital.

In this period the Party was by no means as weak as it was in the preceding one; as a driving force, it became a most important factor. It could now no longer be a self-sufficing force, for its existence and development were now definitely assured; it changed from a self-sufficing force into an instrument for winning the masses of the workers and peasants, into an instrument for leading the masses in overthrowing the rule of capital.

In this period the Party's strategy acquired wide scope; it was directed primarily to gaining and utilising the peasantry as a reserve, and it achieved important success in this work.

The Party's tactics also acquired wide scope as a result of the enrichment of the movement of the masses, of their organisation, and of the activities of the Party and other revolutionary organisations, by new forms

which had previously been absent.

The Party's principal task in this period was to win the vast masses to the side of the proletarian vanguard, to the side of the Party, for the purpose of overthrowing the dictatorship of the bourgeoisie, for the purpose of seizing power. The Party now no longer focussed its attention upon itself, but upon the vast masses of the people. Comrade Lenin formulates this task as follows: "disposition of the vast masses" on the social front in such a way as to ensure victory "in the forthcoming decisive battles" (see the above-mentioned pamphlet by Comrade *Lenin*).

Such are the characteristic features of the first two periods in the development of our Party.

The difference between the first and the second period is undoubtedly great. But there is also something in common between them. Both in the first and in the second period the Party was nine-tenths, if not entirely, a *national* force, effective only for and within Russia (one of the detachments of the international organised proletariat). That is the first point. The second point is that both in the first and in the second period the Russian Communist Party was a party of upheaval, the party of revolution within Russia, hence in these periods the elements of criticism and destruction of the old order predominated in its work.

An entirely different picture is presented by the third period, the one we are in now.

The *third period* is the period of *taking and holding power* with the object, on the one hand, of drawing all the working people of Russia into the work of *building* socialist economy and the Red Army, and, on the other hand, of applying all forces and resources for *rendering assistance* to the international proletariat in its struggle to overthrow capital. This period embraces the interval of time from October 1917 to the present day.

The fact that the proletariat in Russia has taken power has created a very distinctive situation, both internationally and within Russia, such as the world has never seen before.

To begin with, October 1917 marked a breach in the world social

front and created a turn in the whole of world history. Picture to yourselves the boundless social front, stretching from the backward colonies to advanced America, and then the immense breach forced in this front by the Russian detachment of the international proletariat, a breach that menaces the existence of imperialism, that has upset all the plans of the imperialist sharks and has greatly, radically, eased the task of the international proletariat in its struggle against capital—such is the historical significance of October 1917. From that moment our Party was transformed from a *national* force into a predominantly *international* force, and the Russian proletariat was transformed from a backward detachment of the international proletariat into its *vanguard.* Henceforth, the tasks of the international proletariat are to widen the Russian breach, to help the vanguard, which has pushed forward, to prevent the enemies from surrounding the brave vanguard and cutting it off from its base. The task of international imperialism, on the contrary, is to close the Russian breach, to close it without fail. That is why our Party, if it wants to retain power, pledges itself to do "the utmost possible in one (its own—*J. St.*) country *for* the development, support and awakening of the revolution *in all countries"* (see *Lenin*'s book *The Proletarian Revolution and the Renegade Kautsky*[3]). That is why our Party, since October 1917, has been transformed from a national into an international force, into the Party of revolution on an *international* scale.

An equally radical change has taken place in the Party's position *within the country* as a result of October 1917. In the preceding periods the Party was an instrument for the destruction of the old order, for overthrowing capital in Russia. Now, on the contrary, in the third period, it has been transformed from a party of revolution within Russia into a party of construction, into a party for the creation of new forms of economy. In the past it recruited the best forces of the workers for the purpose of storming the old order; now it is recruiting them for the purpose of organising the food supply, transport and the basic industries. In the past it rallied the revolutionary elements of the peasantry for the purpose of overthrowing the landlords; now it is recruiting them

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3 **Original editor:** See V. I. Lenin, *Works*, 4th Russ. ed., Vol. 28, p. 269.

for the purpose of improving agriculture, of consolidating the alliance between the labouring elements of the peasantry and the proletariat which is in power. In the past it recruited the best elements of the belated nationalities for the struggle against capital; now it is recruiting them for the purpose of building the life of the labouring elements of these nationalities on the basis of co-operation with the Russian proletariat. In the past it destroyed the army, the old militarist army; now it must build up a new, a workers' and peasants' army, which is needed to protect the gains of the revolution from external enemies.

From a party of revolution within Russia, the Russian Communist Party has been transformed into a party of peaceful construction. That is why it has removed from the arsenal of the proletariat such forms of struggle as strikes and insurrection, which are now unnecessary in Russia.

In the past we could dispense with experts in military and economic affairs, for at that time the Party's activity was mainly critical, and it is easy to criticise. [...] Now, the Party cannot dispense with experts; in addition to utilising the old specialists it must train its *own* experts: mobilisation, supply and operations officers (for the army), food officials, agricultural experts, railway managers, co-operators, experts in industry and foreign trade (in the economic sphere). Without this we shall be unable to build.

A change has also taken place in the Party's position in that its forces and resources, its reserves, have grown and multiplied to a colossal degree.

The Party's reserves are:

1. The contradictions between the different social groups within Russia.
2. The contradictions and conflicts, which sometimes grow into military collisions, between the capitalist states around us.
3. The socialist movement in the capitalist countries.
4. The national-liberation movement in the backward and colonial countries.
5. The peasantry and the Red Army in Russia.
6. The diplomatic and foreign trade services.

7. The entire might of state power.

Such, in general, are the forces and potentialities within the framework of which—and this framework is sufficiently wide—the Party's strategy can manoeuvre, and on the basis of which the Party's tactics can carry out the day-to-day work of mobilising forces.

All these are the favourable aspects of October 1917.

But October also has an unfavourable aspect. The fact is that the proletariat took power in Russia under distinctive internal and external circumstances which left their impress on the entire work of the Party after power was taken.

Firstly, Russia is an economically backward country; it is very difficult for her to organise transport, develop industry, and electrify urban and rural industry by her own efforts unless she exchanges her raw materials for machinery and equipment from the Western countries. Secondly, to this day Russia is a socialist island surrounded by hostile, industrially more developed capitalist states. If Soviet Russia had as her neighbour one big industrially developed Soviet state, or several Soviet states, she could easily establish co-operation with those states on the basis of exchange of raw materials for machinery and equipment. But as long as that is not the case, Soviet Russia, and our Party which guides its government, are obliged to seek forms and methods of economic co-operation with the hostile capitalist groups in the West in order to obtain the necessary technical equipment until the proletarian revolution triumphs in one or several industrial capitalist countries. The concession form of relations and foreign trade—such are the means for achieving this aim. Without this it will be difficult to count on decisive successes in economic construction, in the electrification of the country. This process will undoubtedly be slow and painful, but it is inevitable, unavoidable, and what is inevitable does not cease to be inevitable because some impatient comrades get nervous and demand quick results and spectacular operations.

From the economic standpoint the present conflicts and military collisions between the capitalist groups, and also the struggle of the proletariat against the capitalist class, are based on the conflict between the present-day productive forces and the national imperialist framework of

their development and the capitalist forms of appropriation. The imperialist framework and the capitalist form of appropriation strangle the productive forces, prevent them from developing. The only way out is to organise world economy on the basis of economic co-operation between the advanced (industrial) and backward (fuel and raw material supplying) countries (and not on the basis of the plunder of the latter by the former). It is precisely for this purpose that the international proletarian revolution is needed. Without this revolution it is useless thinking of the organisation and normal development of world economy. But in order to be able to start (at least to *start*) organising world economy on proper lines, the proletariat must triumph at least in several advanced countries. So long as that is not the case, our Party must seek roundabout ways of co-operation with capitalist groups in the economic field.

That is why the Party, which has overthrown the bourgeoisie in our country and has raised the banner of the proletarian revolution, nevertheless considers it expedient to "untie" small production and small industry in our country, to permit the partial revival of capitalism, although making it dependent upon the state authority, to attract leaseholders and shareholders, etc., etc., until the Party's policy of "doing the utmost possible in one country *for* the development, support and awakening of the revolution *in all countries"* produces real results.

Such are the distinctive conditions, favourable and unfavourable, that were created by October 1917, and in which our Party is operating and developing in the third period of its existence.

These conditions determine the colossal might that our Party now possesses inside and outside Russia. They, too, determine the incredible difficulties and dangers that the Party is facing, and which it must overcome at all costs.

The Party's tasks in this period in the sphere of *foreign policy* are determined by its position as the party of international *revolution.* These tasks are:

1. To utilise all the contradictions and conflicts among the capitalist groups and governments which surround our country, with the object of disintegrating imperialism.

2. To stint no forces and resources to assist the proletarian revolution in the West.
3. To take all measures to strengthen the national-liberation movement in the East.
4. To strengthen the Red Army.

The Party's tasks in this period in the sphere of *home policy* are determined by its position *within* Russia as the party of *peaceful* construction. These tasks are:

1. To strengthen the alliance between the proletariat and the toiling peasantry by:
    a) recruiting for the work of state construction those elements of the peasantry which possess most initiative and business ability;
    b) assisting peasant farming by disseminating agricultural knowledge, repairing machines, and so forth;
    c) developing proper exchange of products between town and country;
    d) gradually electrifying agriculture.

    An important circumstance must be borne in mind. In contrast to the revolutions and proletarian parties in the West, a fortunate feature of our revolution, and a tremendous asset for our Party, is the fact that in Russia, the largest and most powerful strata of the petty bourgeoisie, namely the peasantry, were transformed from a potential reserve of the bourgeoisie into an actual reserve of the proletariat. This circumstance determined the weakness of the Russian bourgeoisie and served the interests of the Russian proletariat. It is mainly due to the fact that, in contrast to what occurred in the West, the liberation of the peasants from bondage to the landlords took place in Russia under the leadership of the proletariat. That served as the basis also for the alliance between the proletariat and the toiling peasantry in Russia. It is the duty of the Communists to cherish that alliance and to strengthen it.

2. To develop industry by:
    a) concentrating the maximum forces on the task of mastering the basic industries and improving supplies for the workers engaged in them;
    b) developing foreign trade with a view to importing machinery and equipment;
    c) attracting shareholders and leaseholders;
    d) creating at least a minimum food fund for manoeuvring;
    e) electrifying transport and large-scale industry. Such, in general, are the Party's tasks in its present period of development.

Pravda, No. 190,
August 28, 1921
Signed: *J. Stalin*



THE OCTOBER REVOLUTION AND THE NATIONAL POLICY OF THE RUSSIAN COMMUNISTS

The strength of the October Revolution lies, among other things, in that, unlike the revolutions in the West, it rallied around the Russian proletariat the many millions of the petty bourgeoisie, and, above all, its most numerous and powerful strata—the peasantry. As a result, the Russian bourgeoisie was isolated and left without an army, while the Russian proletariat became the arbiter of the destiny of the country. But for that the Russian workers would not have retained power.

Peace, the agrarian revolution and freedom for the nationalities—these were the three principal factors which served to rally the peasants of more than twenty nationalities in the vast expanse of Russia around the Red Flag of the Russian proletariat.

There is no need to speak here of the first two factors. Enough has been said about them in the literature on the subject, and indeed they speak for themselves. As for the third factor—the national policy of the Russian Communists—apparently, its importance has not yet been fully realised. It will therefore not be superfluous to say a few words on this subject.

To begin with, of the 140,000,000 of the population of the R.S.F.S.R. (Finland, Estonia, Latvia, Lithuania and Poland excluded), the Great Russians do not number more than 75,000,000. The remaining 65,000,000 belong to nations other than the Great-Russian.

Furthermore, these nations mainly inhabit the border regions, which are the most vulnerable from the military point of view; and these border regions abound in raw materials, fuel and foodstuffs.

Lastly, in industrial and military respects these border regions are less developed than central Russia (or are not developed at all), and, as a con-

sequence, they are not in a position to maintain their independent existence without the military and economic assistance of central Russia, just as central Russia is not in a position to maintain its military and economic power without assistance in fuel, raw materials and food from the border regions.

These circumstances, coupled with certain provisions of the national programme of communism, determined the character of the national policy of the Russian Communists.

The essence of this policy can be expressed in a few words: renunciation of all "claims" and "rights" to regions inhabited by non-Russian nations; recognition (not in words but in deeds) of the right of these nations to exist as independent states; a voluntary military and economic union of these nations with central Russia; assistance to the backward nations in their cultural and economic development, without which what is known as "national equality of rights" becomes an empty sound; all this based on the complete emancipation of the peasants and the concentration of all power in the hands of the labouring elements of the border nations—such is the national policy of the Russian Communists.

Needless to say, the Russian workers who came to power would not have been able to win the sympathy and confidence of their comrades of other nations, and above all of the oppressed masses of the unequal nations, had they not proved in practice their willingness to carry out such a national policy, had they not renounced their "right" to Finland, had they not withdrawn their troops from Northern Persia, had they not renounced the claims of the Russian imperialists to certain regions of Mongolia and China, and had they not assisted the backward nations of the former Russian Empire to develop their culture and statehood in their own languages.

That confidence alone could serve as the basis for that indestructible union of the peoples of the R.S.F.S.R., against which all "diplomatic" machinations and carefully executed "blockades" have proved impotent.

More than that. The Russian workers could not have defeated Kolchak, Denikin and Wrangel had they not enjoyed the sympathy and confidence of the oppressed masses of the border regions of former Rus-

sia. It must not be forgotten that the field of action of these mutinous generals was limited to border regions inhabited mainly by non-Russian nations, and the latter could not but hate Kolchak, Denikin and Wrangel for their imperialist policy and policy of Russification. The Entente, which intervened and supported these generals, could rely only on those elements in the border regions which were the vehicles of Russification. That served only to inflame the hatred of the people of the border regions for the mutinous generals and increased their sympathy for the Soviet power.

This circumstance accounted for the internal weakness of the Kolchak, Denikin and Wrangel rears, and therefore for the weakness of their fronts, that is, in the long run, for their defeat.

But the beneficial results of the national policy of the Russian Communists are not confined to the territory of the R.S.F.S.R. and the Soviet republics associated with it. They are also seen, indirectly, it is true, in the attitude of the neighbouring countries towards the R.S.F.S.R. The radical improvement in the attitude of Turkey, Persia, Afghanistan, India and other Eastern countries towards Russia, which was formerly a bogey to these countries, is a *fact* which even so valiant a politician as Lord Curzon does not now venture to dispute. It scarcely needs proof that if the national policy outlined above had not been systematically carried out in the R.S.F.S.R. during the four years of the existence of Soviet power, this radical change in the attitude of the neighbouring countries towards Russia would have been inconceivable.

Such, in the main, are the results of the national policy of the Russian Communists. And these results are especially clear today, on the fourth anniversary of Soviet power, when the hard war is over, when extensive construction work has begun, and when one involuntarily looks back along the path travelled in order to take it in at a single glance.

Pravda, No. 251,
November 6-7, 1921
Signed: *J. Stalin*



THE PROSPECTS

The international situation is of paramount importance in the life of Russia. It is so not only because Russia, like every other country in Europe, is linked by innumerable threads with the neighbouring capitalist countries, but also, and primarily, because, being a Soviet country and therefore a "menace" to the bourgeois world, she finds herself, as a result of the course of events, surrounded by a hostile camp of bourgeois states. It is obvious that the state of affairs in that camp, the relation of the contending forces within that camp, cannot but be of paramount importance for Russia.

The chief factor that characterises the international situation is that the period of open war has been replaced by a period of "peaceful" struggle, that there has arisen some degree of mutual recognition of the contending forces and an armistice between them, between the Entente, as the head of the bourgeois counter-revolution, on the one hand, and Russia, as the advanced detachment of the proletarian revolution, on the other. The struggle has shown that we (the workers) are *not yet* strong enough to put an end to imperialism forthwith. But the struggle has also shown that they (the bourgeoisie) are *no longer* strong enough to strangle Soviet Russia.

As a consequence of this, the "fright" or "horror" which the proletarian revolution aroused in the world bourgeoisie when, for example, the Red Army was advancing on Warsaw, has disappeared, evaporated. At the same time the boundless enthusiasm with which the workers of Europe received almost every bit of news about Soviet Russia is also disappearing.

A period of sober weighing up of forces has set in, a period of molecular work in training and accumulating forces for future battles.

That does not mean that the certain degree of equilibrium of forces that was established already at the beginning of 1921 has remained unchanged. Not at all.

Recovering from the blows of revolution sustained as a consequence of the imperialist war, and pulling itself together, the world bourgeoisie passed from defence to an attack on "its own" workers and, making skilful use of the industrial crisis, hurled the workers back into worse conditions of existence (reduction of wages, longer working day, mass unemployment). The results of that offensive were exceptionally severe for Germany where (besides everything else) the precipitous fall in the rate of exchange of the mark still further worsened the conditions of the workers.

That gave rise to a powerful movement within the working class (particularly in Germany) for the creation of a united workers' front and for the establishment of a workers' government, a movement that called for agreement and joint struggle against the common enemy on the part of all the more or less revolutionary groups among the working class, from the "moderates" to the "extremists." There is no ground for doubting that in the struggle for a workers' government the Communists will be in the front ranks, for such a struggle must lead to the further demoralisation of the bourgeoisie and to the conversion of the present Communist Parties into genuine mass workers' parties.

But the matter is by no means confined to the offensive of the bourgeoisie against "its own" workers. The bourgeoisie is aware that it cannot crush "its own" workers unless it curbs Russia. Hence the ever-increasing activity of the bourgeoisie in preparing a new offensive against Russia, a more complex and thorough offensive than all the previous ones.

Of course, trade and other treaties are being and will be concluded with Russia, and this is of immense importance for Russia. But it must not be forgotten that the trading and all other sorts of missions and associations that are now pouring into Russia, trading with her and aiding her, are at the same time most efficient spy agencies of the world bourgeoisie, and that, therefore, the world bourgeoisie now knows Soviet Russia, knows her weak and strong sides, better than at any time before, a cir-

cumstance fraught with grave danger in the event of new interventionist actions.

Of course, the friction over the Eastern question has been reduced to "misunderstandings." But it must not be forgotten that Turkey, Persia, Afghanistan and the Far East are being flooded with agents of imperialism, gold and other "blessings," in order to create an economic (and not only economic) cordon around Soviet Russia. It scarcely needs proof that the so-called "peace" conference in Washington[1] promises us nothing really peaceful.

Of course, we are on the "very best" terms with Poland, with Rumania and with Finland. But it must not be forgotten that these countries, especially Poland and Rumania, are vigorously arming with the assistance of the Entente, are preparing for war (against whom if not against Russia?), that now, as in the past, they constitute the immediate reserves of imperialism, that it was they who recently landed on Russian territory (for espionage purposes?) whiteguard Savinkov and Petlura detachments.

All these facts, and much more of a similar kind, are evidently separate links in the whole activity of preparing a new attack on Russia.

A combination of economic and military struggle, a combined assault from within and from without—such is the most likely form of this attack.

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1 **Original editor:** This refers to the conference on the limitation of armaments and on Pacific and Far Eastern questions that took place in Washington from November 12, 1921 to February 6, 1922. The conference was attended by representatives of the United States, Great Britain and her Dominions, Japan, France, Italy, China, Belgium, Holland and Portugal. Soviet Russia was not invited, notwithstanding the protest of the Soviet Government. The Washington Conference marked the culmination of the post-war re-division of the world, and was an attempt to establish a new correlation of imperialist forces in the Pacific. The agreements signed in Washington fixed the strength of the naval armaments of the imperialist powers and the latter's rights to islands in the Pacific and established the principle of the "open door" in China, i.e., "equal opportunity for the commerce and industry of all nations throughout the territory of China." Far from removing the contradictions among the imperialist powers, the Washington Conference intensified them.

Whether we succeed in making this attack impossible, or, if it is launched, in turning it into a deadly weapon against the world bourgeoisie, depends upon the vigilance of the Communists in the rear and in the army, upon the success of our work in the economic field and, lastly, upon the staunchness of the Red Army.

Such, in general, is the external situation.

No less complex and, if you like, "peculiar," is the internal situation in Soviet Russia. It may be described in these words: a struggle to strengthen the alliance between the workers and the peasants on a new, economic, basis for the development of industry, agriculture and transport, or in other words: a struggle to maintain and strengthen the dictatorship of the proletariat in a situation of economic ruin.

There is a theory current in the West that the workers can take and hold power only in a country where they constitute the majority, or, at all events, where the people engaged in industry constitute the majority. It is indeed on these grounds that Messrs. the Kautskys deny the "legitimacy" of the proletarian revolution in Russia, where the proletariat is in the minority. This theory is based on the tacit assumption that the petty bourgeoisie, primarily the peasantry, cannot support the workers in their struggle for power, that the mass of the peasantry constitutes a reserve of the bourgeoisie and not of the proletariat. The historical basis of this assumption lies in the fact that at critical moments in the West (France, Germany) the petty bourgeoisie (the peasantry) *were usually found* on the side of the bourgeoisie (1848 and 1871 in France, attempts at proletarian revolution in Germany after 1918).

The reasons for this are:

1. The bourgeois revolution took place in the West under the leadership of the bourgeoisie (at that time the proletariat merely served as the battering ram of the revolution); there the peasantry received land and emancipation from feudal bondage from the hands of the bourgeoisie, so to speak, and, as a consequence, the influence of the bourgeoisie over the peasantry was already then considered to be assured.
2. More than half a century elapsed from the beginning of the bour-

geois revolution in the West to the first attempts at proletarian revolution. During that period the peasantry managed to give rise to a powerful rural bourgeoisie, exercising strong influence in the countryside, which served as a connecting bridge between the peasantry and big urban capital, thereby strengthening the hegemony of the bourgeoisie over the peasantry.

It was in that historical situation that the above-mentioned theory arose.

An entirely different picture is revealed in Russia.

First, in contrast to the West, the bourgeois revolution in Russia (February-March 1917) took place under the leadership of the proletariat, in fierce battles against the bourgeoisie, in the course of which the peasantry rallied around the proletariat as around their leader.

Secondly, the attempt (successful) at proletarian revolution in Russia (October 1917), also in contrast to the West, did not begin half a century after the bourgeois revolution, but immediately after it, within a matter of 6-8 months, during which period it was, of course, impossible for a powerful and organised rural bourgeoisie to spring up from among the peasantry; moreover, the big bourgeoisie that was overthrown in October 1917 was never able to recover.

This latter circumstance still further strengthened the alliance between the workers and the peasants.

That is why the Russian workers, although constituting a minority of the population of Russia, nevertheless found themselves the masters of the country, won the sympathy and support of the vast majority of the population, primarily of the peasantry, and took and held power, whereas, in spite of all theories, the bourgeoisie found itself isolated, was left without the peasant reserves.

From this it follows that:

1. The above-mentioned theory that the proletariat "must constitute the majority" of the population is inadequate and incorrect from the standpoint of Russian reality, or, at all events, is interpreted in too simple and vulgar a manner by Messrs. the Kautskys.

2. Under the present historical conditions, the actual alliance between the proletariat and the toiling peasantry that was formed in the course of the revolution is the *basis* of Soviet power in Russia.
3. It is the duty of the Communists to maintain and strengthen that actual alliance.

The whole point in the present case is that the forms of this alliance are not always the same.

Previously, during the war, we had to deal with what was chiefly a *military-political* alliance, i.e., we expelled the landlords from Russia and gave the peasants the land for their use, and when the landlords went to war to recover "their property" we fought them and upheld the gains of the revolution; in return the peasants provided food for the workers and men for the army. That was one form of the alliance.

Now that the war is over and danger no longer threatens the land, the old form of alliance is not adequate any more. Another form of alliance is needed. Now it is no longer a matter of saving the land for the peasants, but of ensuring the peasants the right freely to dispose of the produce of that land. In the absence of such right there will inevitably be: a further diminution of the crop area, a progressive decline of agriculture, paralysis of transport and industry (due to food shortage), demoralisation of the army (due to food shortage), and, as a result of all this, the inevitable collapse of the actual alliance between the workers and the peasants. It scarcely needs proof that possession by the state of a certain minimum of grain stocks is the mainspring of the revival of industry and the preservation of the Soviet state. Kronstadt (the spring of 1921) was a warning that the old form of alliance was obsolete and that a new form was needed, an *economic* form, that would be of economic advantage both to the workers and to the peasants.

That is the key to an understanding of the New Economic Policy.

Abolition of the surplus appropriation system and of other similar obstacles was the first step along the new road that freed the hands of the small producer and gave an impetus to the production of more food, raw materials and other produce. It will not be difficult to understand the colossal importance of this step if it is borne in mind that Russia is mak-

ing the same mass onrush towards the development of productive forces as North America experienced after the Civil War. There is no doubt that, while releasing the productive energy of the small producer and ensuring certain advantages for him, this step will, however, put him in a position—bearing in mind that the state remains in control of transport and industry—in which he will be compelled to bring grist to the mill of the Soviet state.

But it is not enough to secure an increase in the production of food and raw materials. It is also necessary to collect, to accumulate, a certain minimum stock of these products necessary for the maintenance of transport, industry, the army, etc. Therefore, leaving aside the tax in kind, which simply supplements the abolition of the surplus appropriation system, we must regard as the second step the transfer of the collection of food and raw materials to the Central Union of Consumers' Co-operatives (Centrosoyuz). It is true that the lack of discipline in the local organisations of the Centrosoyuz, their inability to adapt themselves to the commodity market that has rapidly developed, the unsuitability of barter as a form of exchange and the rapid development of the money form, the shortage of currency, etc., have prevented the Centrosoyuz from fulfilling the assignments allotted to it. But there are no grounds for doubting that the role of the Centrosoyuz as the principal apparatus for the wholesale purchase of the chief items of food and raw materials will grow day by day. It is only necessary that the state should:

a) make the Centrosoyuz the centre for financing trade operations (other than state) within the country;

b) make the other forms of co-operative organisation which are still hostilely disposed to the state financially subordinate to the Centrosoyuz;

c) in some form or other give the Centrosoyuz access to foreign trade.

The opening of the State Bank as the organ for regulating the currency within the country must be regarded as the third step. The development of the commodity market and the currency leads to the following two chief results:

1. it will make commercial operations (private and state) and produc-

tion operations (wage rates, and so forth) completely dependent on the fluctuations of the ruble;

2. it will transform Russia's national economy from the isolated, self-contained economy it was during the blockade into an exchange economy that will trade with the outside world, i.e., that will depend on the fortuitous fluctuations of the exchange rate of the ruble.

But from this it follows that if the currency is not put in order and if the exchange rate of the ruble is not improved, our economic operations, both home and foreign, will be in a bad way. The State Bank as the regulator of the currency, capable of being not only a creditor but also a pump for extracting the colossal private savings which could be put into circulation and make it possible for us to do without new emissions—this State Bank is still "music of the future," although, according to all the data, it has a great future.

The next means of raising the exchange rate of the ruble must be an extension of our exports and an improvement of our desperately unfavourable balance of trade. It must be supposed that drawing the Centrosoyuz into foreign trade will be of assistance in this matter.

Furthermore, we need a foreign loan not only as a means of payment, but also as a factor that will enhance our credit abroad and, consequently, enhance confidence in our ruble.

Further, the mixed trading and transit and other companies that Sokolnikov wrote about in *Pravda* recently would undoubtedly also help matters. It must be observed, however, that the granting of industrial concessions and the development of the proper exchange of our raw materials for foreign machinery and equipment, about which so much was written in our press some time ago, while being factors promoting the development of money economy, are themselves wholly dependent upon a preliminary improvement of the exchange rate of our ruble.

Lastly, the fourth step must be the placing of our enterprises on a business basis, the closing and leasing out of the small non-paying enterprises, the singling out of the soundest of the big enterprises, drastic reduction of inflated staffs in government offices, the drawing up of a firm material and financial state budget and, as a result of all this, the expulsion

of the charity spirit from our enterprises and offices, the general tightening up of discipline among factory and office workers, and improvement and intensification of their labour.

Such, in general, are the measures that have been and are to be taken and which, in the aggregate, constitute the so-called New Economic Policy.

Needless to say, in carrying out these measures we, as was to be expected, have made a large number of mistakes, which have distorted their true character. Nevertheless, it can be taken as proved that it is precisely these measures that open the road along which we can promote the economic revival of the country, raise agriculture and industry and strengthen the *economic* alliance between the proletarians and the toiling peasants, in spite of everything, in spite of threats from without and famine within Russia.

The first results of the New Economic Policy in the shape of the incipient expansion of the crop area, the increase in the productivity of labour in the factories, and the improvement in the mood of the peasants (cessation of mass banditry) undoubtedly confirm this conclusion.

Pravda, No. 286,
December 18, 1921
Signed: *J. Stalin*



TO *PRAVDA*

Pravda was born in the waves of the revolutionary upsurge during the famous "Lena events." The appearance of *Pravda*, the newspaper for the masses of the workers, precisely during those days marked:

1. the passing of the period of general weariness in the country following the Stolypin regime of "peace and quiet,"
2. the mighty awakening of the Russian working class for a new revolution, the second after the 1905 revolution,
3. the beginning of the winning of the broad masses of the working class to the side of the Bolsheviks.

The *Pravda* of 1912 was the laying of the cornerstone of the victory of Bolshevism in 1917.

J. Stalin

Pravda, No. 98,
May 5, 1922

THE TENTH ANNIVERSARY OF *PRAVDA*

(Reminiscences)

1. The Lena Events

The Lena events were the result of the Stolypin regime of "pacification." The younger members of the Party, of course, have not experienced and do not remember the charms of this regime. As for the old ones, they, no doubt, remember the punitive expeditions of accursed memory, the savage raids on working-class organisations, the mass flogging of peasants, and, as a screen to all this, the Black-Hundred-Cadet Duma. Public opinion in shackles, general lassitude and apathy, want and despair among the workers, the peasantry downtrodden and terrified, with gangs of the police, landowners and capitalists rampant everywhere—such were the typical features of Stolypin's "pacification."

To the superficial observer it might have seemed that the epoch of revolution had passed away forever, and that a period of the "constitutional" development of Russia on the lines of Prussia had set in. The Menshevik Liquidators openly shouted that this was so and preached the necessity of organising a Stolypin legal workers' party. And certain old "Bolsheviks," who in their hearts sympathised with this preaching, made haste to desert the ranks of our Party. The triumph of the knout and the powers of darkness was complete. At that time the political life of Russia was described as an "abomination of desolation."

The Lena events burst into this "abomination of desolation" like a hurricane and revealed a new picture to everybody. It turned out that the Stolypin regime was not so stable after all, that the Duma was rousing the contempt of the masses, and that the working class had accumulated

sufficient energy to rush into battle for a new revolution. The shooting down of workers in the remote depths of Siberia (Bodaibo on the Lena) sufficed to call forth strikes all over Russia, and the St. Petersburg workers poured into the streets and at one stroke swept from the path the boastful Minister Makarov and his insolent slogan "So it was, so it will be." These were the first harbingers of the mighty movement that was then beginning. *Zvezda*[1] was right when it exclaimed at that time: "We live! Our scarlet blood seethes with the fire of unspent strength. [...]" The upsurge of a new revolutionary movement was evident.

It was in the waves of this movement that the mass working-class newspaper *Pravda* was born.

2. The Foundation of *Pravda*

It was in the middle of April 1912, one evening at Comrade Poletayev's house, where two members of the Duma (Pokrovsky and Poletayev), two writers (Olminsky and Baturin) and I, a member of the Central Committee (I, being in hiding, had found "sanctuary" in the house of Poletayev, who enjoyed "parliamentary immunity") reached agreement concerning *Pravda*'s platform and compiled the first issue of the newspaper. I do not remember whether Demyan Byedny and Danilov, two very close contributors to *Pravda*, were present at this conference.

The technical and financial prerequisites for the newspaper had al-

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1 **Original editor:** *Zvezda* (*The Star*)—a legal Bolshevik newspaper published in St. Petersburg from December 16, 1910 to April 22, 1912, first weekly and later two or three times a week. It was under the ideological guidance of V. I. Lenin, who regularly sent articles for it from abroad. Regular contributors to the paper were V. M. Molotov; M. S. Olminsky, N. G. Poletayev, N. N. Baturin, K. S. Yeremeyev and others. Contributions were also received from Maxim Gorky. In the spring of 1912, when J. V. Stalin was in St. Petersburg, the paper came out under his direction, and he wrote a number of articles for it (see *Works*, Vol. 2, pp. 231-54 [1953], pp. 188-208 [2022]). The circulation of individual issues of the paper reached 50,000 to 60,000. *Zvezda* paved the way for the publication of the Bolshevik daily *Pravda*. On April 22, 1912, the tsarist government suppressed *Zvezda*. It was succeeded by *Nevskaya Zvezda*, which continued publication until October 1912.

ready been provided thanks to the agitation conducted by *Zvezda*, the sympathy of the broad masses of the workers, and the mass voluntary collection of funds for *Pravda* in the mills and factories. Truly, *Pravda* came into being as a result of the efforts of the working class of Russia, and above all of St. Petersburg. Had it not been for these efforts, the newspaper could not have existed.

Pravda's complexion was clear: its mission was to popularise *Zvezda*'s programme among the masses. In its very first issue *Pravda* wrote: "Anyone who reads *Zvezda* and knows its contributors, who are also contributors to *Pravda*, will not find it difficult to understand the line *Pravda* will pursue."[2] The only difference between *Zvezda* and *Pravda* was that the latter, unlike the former, did not address itself to the advanced workers, but to the broad masses of the working class. It was *Pravda*'s function to help the advanced workers to rally around the Party's banner the broad strata of the Russian working class who had awakened for a fresh struggle but were still politically backward. That is precisely why one of the aims *Pravda* set itself at that time was to train writers from among the workers and to draw them into the work of directing the paper.

In its very first issue *Pravda* wrote: "We would like the workers not to confine themselves to sympathy alone, but to take an active part in the conduct of our newspaper. Let not the workers say that they are 'not used to' writing. Working-class writers do not drop ready-made from the skies, they can be trained only gradually, in the course of literary activity. All that is needed is to start on the job boldly: you may stumble once or twice, but in the end you will learn to write. [...]"[3]

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2 **Original editor:** Quoted from J. V. Stalin's article "Our Aims," published in *Pravda*, No. 1, April 22, 1912 (see *Works*, Vol. 2, p. 255 [1953], p. 209 [2022]).

3 **Original editor:** See J. V. Stalin, *Works*, Vol. 2, p. 256 [1953], p. 210 [2022].

3. The Organisational Significance of *Pravda*

Pravda made its appearance in that period of our Party's development when the underground organisation was entirely in the hands of the Bolsheviks (the Mensheviks had fled from it), but the legal forms of organisation—the group in the Duma, the press, sick-benefit societies, insurance societies, trade-union organisations—had not yet been completely won from the Mensheviks. It was a period in which the Bolsheviks were waging a determined struggle to expel the Liquidators (Mensheviks) from the legal working-class organisations. The slogan "Dismiss the Mensheviks from their posts" was then a most popular slogan of the working-class movement. The columns of *Pravda* bristled with reports of the expulsion from the insurance societies, sick-benefit societies and trade-union organisations of the Liquidators who at one time had entrenched themselves in them. All six deputies' seats in the workers' curia had been won from the Mensheviks. The Menshevik press was also in the same, or almost the same, hopeless position. It was truly a heroic struggle that the Bolshevik-minded workers waged for the Party, for the agents of tsarism were wide awake, hunting and rooting out the Bolsheviks, and the Party, driven deep underground, could not develop further unless it had a legal cover. More than that: under the political conditions prevailing at that time, the Party could not put out feelers towards the broad masses and rally them around its banner unless it won the legal organisations; it would have been cut off from the masses and would have been transformed into an isolated group, stewing in its own juice.

Pravda was the centre of this struggle for the Party principle, for the creation of a mass workers' party. It was not merely a newspaper that summed up the successes of the Bolsheviks in winning the legal workers' organisations; it was also the organising centre which united these organisations around the underground centres of the Party and directed the working-class movement towards a single definite goal. Already in his book *What Is To Be Done?* (1902), Comrade Lenin had written that a well-organised all-Russian militant newspaper must be not only a collective agitator, but also a collective organiser. That is exactly the kind of newspaper which *Pravda* became in the period of the struggle against the

Liquidators for the preservation of the underground organisation and for winning the legal organisations of the workers. If it is true that, had we not defeated the Liquidators we would not have had the Party which, strong in its unity and invincible because of its devotion to the proletariat, organised October 1917, then it is equally true that the persevering and devoted struggle of the old *Pravda* to a considerable degree prepared and hastened this victory over the Liquidators. In this sense the old *Pravda* was undoubtedly the herald of the future glorious victories of the Russian proletariat.

Pravda, No. 98,
May 5, 1922
Signed: *J. Stalin*



COMRADE LENIN ON VACATION

Notes

It seems to me that it would not be fitting now to write of "Comrade Lenin on Vacation," when the vacation is coming to an end and Comrade Lenin will soon return to work. Besides, my impressions are so many and so precious that it is not quite expedient to write about them in a brief note, as the editorial board of *Pravda* requests. However, I must write, for the editorial board insists on it.

I had occasion to meet at the front veteran fighters who, after fighting continuously for several days "on end," without sleep or rest, would come back from the firing line looking like shadows and drop like logs, but after having "slept the clock round" they would rise refreshed and eager for new battles, without which they "cannot live." When I first visited Comrade Lenin in July, not having seen him for six weeks, that was just the impression he made on me—that of a veteran fighter who had managed to get some rest after incessant and exhausting battles, and who had been refreshed by his rest. He looked fresh and recuperated, but still bore traces of overwork and fatigue.

"I am not allowed to read the newspapers," Comrade Lenin remarked ironically, "and I must not talk politics. I carefully avoid every scrap of paper lying on the table, lest it turn out to be a newspaper and lead to a breach of discipline."

I laughed heartily and praised him to the skies for his obedience to discipline. We proceeded to make merry over the doctors, who cannot understand that when professional men of politics get together they cannot help talking politics.

What struck one in Comrade Lenin was his thirst for information and his craving, his insuperable craving for work. It is clear that he had

been famished. The trial of the Socialist-Revolutionaries,[1] Genoa and The Hague,[2] the harvest prospects, industry and finance all these questions came up in swift succession. He was in no hurry to express his opinion, complaining that he was out of touch with events; for the most part he asked questions and took silent note. He became very cheerful on learning that the harvest prospects were good.

I found an entirely different picture a month later. This time Comrade Lenin was surrounded by stacks of books and newspapers (he had been given permission to read and talk politics to his heart's content). There was no longer any trace of fatigue, of overwork. There was no sign of that nervous craving for work—he was no longer famished. Calmness and self-assurance had fully returned. This was our old Lenin, screwing up his eyes and gazing shrewdly at his interlocutor. [...]

And this time our talk, too, was of a more lively character.

Home affairs [...] the harvest [...] the state of industry [...] the rate of exchange of the ruble [...] the budget. [...]

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1 **Original editor:** The trial of the Socialist-Revolutionaries by the Supreme Revolutionary Tribunal took place in Moscow, in 1922, from June 8 to August 7. Of the 34 accused, 11 were members of the Central Committee of the Socialist-Revolutionary Party. The trial established that from the very first days of the October Socialist Revolution, the Socialist-Revolutionary Party had fought against the Soviet power, had organised armed revolts and conspiracies, had supported the foreign interventionists and had committed terroristic acts against leaders of the Bolshevik Party and the Soviet Government.

2 **Original editor:** This refers to the international economic conferences held in Genoa (April 10-May 19, 1922) and at The Hague (June 15-July 20, 1922). The Genoa Conference was called for the purpose of determining the relations between the capitalist world and Soviet Russia. The conference was attended, on the one side, by representatives of Great Britain, Frame, Italy, Japan and of other capitalist states, and, on the other side, by representatives of Soviet Russia. The representatives of the capitalist countries presented the Soviet delegation with demands which, if conceded, would have meant transforming the land of Soviets into a colony of West-European capital (the demand for payment of all war and pre-war debts, for restitution to foreigners of nationalised property formerly owned by them, etc.). The Soviet delegation rejected the claims of the foreign capitalists. The matter was referred to a conference of experts that was convened at The Hague. The Hague Conference also failed to reach agreement owing to the irreconcilability of the points of view of the two sides.

"The situation is difficult. But the worst is over. The harvest will make a fundamental difference. It is bound to be followed by an improvement in industry and finance. The thing now is to relieve the state of unnecessary expenditure by retrenchment in our institutions and enterprises and by improving them. We must be particularly firm in this matter, and we shall squeeze through, we shall most certainly squeeze through."

Foreign affairs [...] the Entente [...] France's behaviour [...] Britain and Germany [...] the role of America . [...]

"They are greedy, and they hate one another profoundly. They will be at loggerheads yet. We need be in no hurry. Ours is a sure road: we are for peace and for agreement, but we are against enslavement and enslaving terms of agreement. We must keep a firm hand on the wheel and steer our own course, without yielding to either flattery or intimidation."

The Socialist-Revolutionaries and Mensheviks, and their rabid agitation against Soviet Russia . [...]

"Yes, they have made it their aim to defame Soviet Russia. They are facilitating the imperialists' fight against Soviet Russia. They have been caught in the mire of capitalism, and are sliding into an abyss. Let them flounder. They have long been dead as far as the working class is concerned."

The whiteguard press [...] the émigrés [...] the incredible fairy-tales about Lenin's death, with full details . [...]

Comrade Lenin smiled and remarked: "Let them lie if it is any consolation to them; one should not rob the dying of their last consolation."

September 15, 1922

Comrade Lenin on Vacation,
Illustrated supplement to *Pravda*,
No. 215, September 24, 1922
Signed: *J. Stalin*



GREETINGS TO PETROGRAD, TO THE SOVIET OF DEPUTIES

On the fifth anniversary of the birth of the proletarian dictatorship I greet Red Petrograd, the cradle of this dictatorship.

J. Stalin

Petrogradskaya Pravda, No. 25
November 5, 1922

THE QUESTION OF THE UNION OF THE INDEPENDENT NATIONAL REPUBLICS

Interview With a *Pravda* Correspondent

Interviewed by our correspondent on questions concerning the formation of the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics, Comrade *Stalin* gave the following explanations:[1]

Who initiated the movement for the union of the independent republics?

—The republics themselves initiated the movement. About three months ago, leading circles of the Transcaucasian republics already raised the question of forming a united economic front of Soviet Socialist Republics and of uniting them in a single union state. The question was then put before wide Party meetings in some districts of Azerbaijan, Georgia and Armenia and, as is evident from the resolutions that were passed, it roused unprecedented enthusiasm. At about the same time the question of union was raised in the Ukraine and in Byelorussia, and there too, as in Transcaucasia, it roused marked enthusiasm among wide Party circles.

These facts are indubitable evidence of the vitality of the movement and show that the question of uniting the republics has certainly matured.

What gave rise to the movement; what are its basic motives?

—The motives are chiefly economic. Assistance to peasant farming,

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1 **Original editor:** J. V. Stalin headed the commission set up by the Plenum of the Central Committee of the R.C.P.(B.) on October 6, 1922, to draft the Bill for uniting the R.S.F.S.R., the Ukrainian S.S.R., the Transcaucasian Federation and the Byelorussian S.S.R. into a Union of Soviet Socialist Republics. This commission directed all the preparations for the First Congress of Soviets of the U.S.S.R.

the raising of industry, improving means of transport and communication, financial questions, questions concerning concessions and other economic agreements, joint action in foreign markets as buyers or sellers of commodities—such are the questions that gave rise to the movement for the formation of a Union of Republics. The exhaustion of the internal economic resources of our republics as a result of the Civil War, on the one hand, and the absence of any considerable influx of foreign capital, on the other, have created a situation in which none of our Soviet republics is in a position to restore its national economy by its own unaided efforts. This circumstance makes itself specially felt now when for the first time since the termination of the Civil War the Soviet republics have set to work in earnest to solve their economic problems, and here, in the course of this work, have, for the first time, realised the utter inadequacy of the isolated efforts of the individual republics, and how utterly inevitable is the combination of those efforts and the economic union of the republics as the sole way of really restoring industry and agriculture.

But in order really to combine the economic efforts of the individual republics to the degree of uniting them in a single economic union, it is necessary to set up appropriate permanently functioning Union bodies capable of directing the economic life of these republics along one definite road. That is why the old economic and commercial treaties between these republics have now proved to be inadequate. That is why the movement for a Union of Republics has outgrown these treaties and has brought up the question of uniting the republics.

Do you think that this trend towards unity is an entirely new phenomenon, or has it a history?

—The movement for uniting the independent republics is not something unexpected and "unprecedented." It has a history. This unification movement has already passed through two phases of its development and has now entered the third.

The first phase was the period 1918-21, the period of intervention and civil war, when the existence of the republics was in mortal danger, and when the republics were compelled to combine their military efforts

in order to defend their existence. That phase culminated in the military union, the military alliance of the Soviet republics.

The second phase was at the end of 1921 and beginning of 1922, the period of Genoa and The Hague, when the Western capitalist powers, disappointed in the efficacy of intervention, attempted to secure the restoration of capitalist property in the Soviet republics not by military but by diplomatic means, when a united diplomatic front of the Soviet republics was the inevitable means by which alone they could withstand the onslaught of the Western powers. On this ground arose the well-known agreement between the eight independent friendly republics and the R.S.F.S.R.,[2] concluded before the opening of the Genoa Conference, which cannot be called anything else than the diplomatic union of the Soviet republics. Thus ended the second phase, the phase of the diplomatic union of our republics.

Today, the movement for uniting the national republics has entered the third phase, the phase of economic union. It is not difficult to understand that the third phase is the culmination of the two preceding phases of the movement for unification.

Does it follow from this that the union of the republics will end in re-union with Russia, in merging with her, as is happening with the Far Eastern Republic?

—No. It does not! There is a fundamental difference between the Far Eastern Republic[3] and the above-mentioned national republics:

a) whereas the former was established artificially (as a buffer), for tactical reasons (it was thought that the bourgeois-democratic form would serve as a reliable guarantee against the imperialist designs of

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2 **Original editor:** This refers to the agreement signed in Moscow on February 22, 1922, by the plenipotentiary representatives of the independent republics of Azerbaijan, Armenia, Georgia, Byelorussia, the Ukraine, Khorezm, Bukhara, the Far Eastern Republic and the R.S.F.S.R., authorising the R.S.F.S.R. to represent these republics at the European economic conference in Genoa.

3 **Original editor:** The Far Eastern Republic included the Pribaikal, the Transbaikal, the Amur Region, and the Maritime Province, Kamchatka, and the northern part of Sakhalin. It existed from April 1920 to November 1922.

Japan and other powers) and not at all on a national basis, the latter, on the contrary, arose as the natural result of the development of the respective nationalities, and have chiefly a national basis;

b) whereas the Far Eastern Republic can be abolished without in the least harming the national interests of the predominant population (for they are Russians, like the majority of the population of Russia), the abolition of the national republics would be a piece of reactionary folly, calling for the abolition of the non-Russian nationalities, their Russification, i.e., a piece of reactionary fanaticism that would rouse the protest even of obscurantist Russian chauvinists like the Black-Hundred member Shulgin.

This explains the fact that as soon as the Far Eastern Republic became convinced that the bourgeois-democratic form was useless as a guarantee against the imperialists, it was able to abolish itself and become a constituent part of Russia, a region, like the Urals or Siberia, without a Council of People's Commissars or Central Executive Committee, whereas the national republics, which are built on an entirely different basis, cannot be abolished, cannot be deprived of their Central Executive Committees and Councils of People's Commissars, of their national bases, as long as the nationalities which gave rise to them exist, as long as the national languages, culture, manner of life, habits and customs exist. That is why the union of the national Soviet republics into a single union state cannot end in their re-union, their merging, with Russia.

What, in your opinion, should be the character and form of the union of the republics into a single Union?

—The character of the union should be voluntary, exclusively voluntary, and every national republic should retain the right to secede from the Union. Thus, the voluntary principle must be made the basis of the Treaty on the Formation of the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics.

The parties to the treaty of union are: the R.S.F.S.R. (as an integral federal unit), the Transcaucasian Federation[4] (also as an integral federal

4 **Original editor:** The Transcaucasian Federation—the Federative Union of Socialist Soviet Republics of Transcaucasia, was founded on March 12, 1922, at a plenipo-

unit), the Ukraine and Byelorussia. Bukhara and Khorezm,[5] not being Socialist, but only People's Soviet Republics, may, perhaps, remain outside of the union until their natural development converts them into Socialist Republics.

The supreme organs of the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics are: the Union Central Executive Committee, to be elected by the constituent republics of the Union with representation in proportion to population; and the Union Council of People's Commissars, to be elected by the Union Central Executive Committee, as its executive organ.

The functions of the Union Central Executive Committee are: to draw up the fundamental guiding principles of the political and economic life of the republics and federations constituting the Union.

The functions of the Union Council of People's Commissars are:

a) direct and undivided control of the military affairs, foreign affairs, foreign trade, railways, and posts and telegraphs of the Union;

b) leadership of the activities of the Commissariats of Finance, Food, National Economy, Labour, and State Inspection of the republics and federations constituting the Union; the Commissariats of Internal Affairs, Agriculture, Education, Justice, Social Maintenance, and Public Health of these republics and federations are to remain under the undivided and direct control of these republics and federations.

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tentiary conference of representatives of the Central Executive Committees of Georgia, Azerbaijan and Armenia. In December 1922, the Federative Union was transformed into the Transcaucasian Socialist Federative Soviet Republic (T.S.F.S.R.). The Transcaucasian Federation existed until 1936. In conformity with the Constitution of the U.S.S.R. adopted in 1936, the Armenian, Azerbaijanian and Georgian Soviet Socialist Republics entered the U.S.S.R. as Union Republics. (Concerning the Transcaucasian Federation, see this volume, pp. 186-90, 204-08.)

5 **Original editor:** The Bukhara and Khorezm People's Soviet Republics were formed in 1920 as a result of the successful people's insurrections in the former Khanates of Bukhara and Khiva. At the end of 1924 and beginning of 1925, as a result of the demarcation of states in Central Asia on a national basis, the territory of the Bukhara and Khorezm Republics became part of the newly formed Turkmenian and Uzbek Union Soviet Socialist Republics, the Tajik Autonomous Soviet Socialist Republic and the Kara-Kalpak Autonomous Region.

Such, in my opinion, should be the general form of union in the Union of Republics, so far as it can be perceived in the movement for the union of the national republics.

Some people are of the opinion that in addition to the two Union organs (Central Executive Committee and Council of People's Commissars) it is necessary to set up a third Union organ, an intermediary one, an *Upper* Chamber, so to speak, in which all the nationalities should be equally represented; but there can be no doubt that this opinion will not meet with any sympathy among the national republics, if only for the reason that a two-chamber system, with an *Upper* Chamber, is incompatible with the structure of the Soviet system, at all events in its present stage of development.

How soon, in your opinion, will the Union of Republics be formed, and what will be its international significance?

—I think that the day of the formation of the Union of Republics is not far off. It is quite possible that the formation of the Union will coincide with the forthcoming convocation of the Tenth Congress of Soviets of the R.S.F.S.R.

As for the international significance of this Union, it scarcely needs special explanation. If the military alliance of the Soviet republics in the period of the Civil War enabled us to repulse the military intervention of our enemies, and the diplomatic alliance of those republics in the period of Genoa and The Hague facilitated our struggle against the diplomatic onslaught of the Entente, the union of the Soviet republics in a single union state will undoubtedly create a form of all-round military and economic co-operation that will greatly facilitate the economic progress of the Soviet republics and convert them into a citadel against attacks by international capitalism.

Pravda, No. 261,
November 18, 1922

THE UNION OF THE SOVIET REPUBLICS

Report Delivered at the Tenth All-Russian Congress of Soviets[1]

December 26, 1922

Comrades, a few days ago, before this congress began, the Presidium of the All-Russian Central Executive Committee received a number of resolutions from Congresses of Soviets of the Transcaucasian republics, the Ukraine and Byelorussia on the desirability and necessity of uniting these republics into a single union state. The Presidium of the All-Russian Central Executive Committee has had this question under consideration and has declared that such a union is opportune. As a result of its resolution, the question of uniting the republics is included in the agenda of this congress.

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1 **Original editor:** The Tenth All-Russian Congress of Soviets took place in Moscow on December 23-27, 1922. There were present 2,215 delegates, of whom 488 were delegates from the treaty republics—the Transcaucasian S.F.S.R., the Ukrainian S.S.R. and the Byelorussian S.S.R.—who had come to Moscow to attend the First Congress of Soviets of the U.S.S.R. and had been invited to attend the Tenth All-Russian Congress as guests of honour. The Tenth All-Russian Congress of Soviets discussed the following: report of the All-Russian Central Executive Committee and the Council of People's Commissars on the republic's home and foreign policy; report on the state of industry; report of the People's Commissariat of Agriculture (summary of work done to improve peasant farming); report of the People's Commissariat of Education; report of the People's Commissariat of Finance; proposal of the treaty Soviet republics on the creation of a Union of Soviet Socialist Republics. On December 26, J. V. Stalin delivered a report on uniting the Soviet republics. The resolution moved by him was adopted unanimously. After J. V. Stalin had delivered his report, the representatives of the Ukraine, Azerbaijan, Georgia, Armenia and Byelorussia addressed the congress and on behalf of their respective peoples welcomed the union of the Soviet republics into a single union state—the U.S.S.R.

The campaign for the union of the Soviet Socialist Republics began some three or four months ago. The initiative was taken by the Azerbaijanian, Armenian and Georgian Republics, which were later joined by the Ukrainian and Byelorussian Republics. The idea of the campaign is that the old treaty relations—the relations established by the conventions between the R.S.F.S.R. and the other Soviet republics—have served their purpose and are no longer adequate. The idea of the campaign is that we must inevitably pass from the old treaty relations to relations based on a closer union—relations which imply the creation of a single union state with corresponding Union executive and legislative organs, with a Central Executive Committee and a Council of People's Commissars of the Union. To put it briefly, it is now, in the course of the campaign, proposed that what was formerly decided from time to time, within the framework of convention relations, should be put on a permanent basis.

What are the reasons that impel the republics to take the path of union? What are the circumstances that have determined the necessity for union?

Three groups of circumstances have made the union of the Soviet republics into a single union state inevitable.

The first group of circumstances consists of facts relating to our internal economic situation.

First, the meagreness of the economic resources left at the disposal of the republics after seven years of war. This compels us to combine these meagre resources so as to employ them more rationally and to develop the main branches of our economy which form the backbone of Soviet power in all the republics.

Secondly, the historically evolved natural division of labour, the economic division of labour, between the various regions and republics of our federation. For instance, the North supplies the South and East with textiles, the South and East supply the North with cotton, fuel, and so forth. And this division of labour established between the regions cannot be eliminated by a mere stroke of the pen: it has been created historically by the whole course of economic development of the federation. And this division of labour, which makes the full development of the individ-

ual regions impossible as long as each republic leads a separate existence, is compelling the republics to unite in a single economic whole.

Thirdly, the unity of the principal means of communication in the entire federation, constituting the nerves and foundation of any possible union. It goes without saying that the means of communication cannot be allowed to have a divided existence, at the disposal of the individual republics and subordinated to their interests for that would convert the main nerve of economic life—transport—into a conglomeration of separate parts utilised without a plan. This circumstance also inclines the republics towards union into a single state.

Lastly, the meagreness of our financial resources Comrades, it must be bluntly stated that our financial position now, in the sixth year of existence of the Soviet regime, has far less opportunities for large-scale development than, for instance, under the old regime which had vodka, which we will not have, yielding 500,000,000 rubles per annum, and which possessed foreign credits to the amount of several hundred million rubles, which we also do not have. All this goes to show that with such meagre opportunities for our financial development we shall not succeed in solving the fundamental and current problems of the financial systems of our republics unless we join forces and combine the financial strength of the individual republics into a single whole.

Such is the first group of circumstances that are impelling our republics to take the path of union.

The second group of circumstances that have determined the union of the republics are facts relating to our international situation. I have in mind our military situation. I have in mind our relations with foreign capital through the Commissariat of Foreign Trade. Lastly, I have in mind our diplomatic relations with the bourgeois states. It must be remembered, comrades, that in spite of the fact that our republics have happily emerged from the condition of civil war, the danger of attack from without is by no means excluded. This danger demands that our military front should be absolutely united, that our army should be an absolutely united army, particularly now that we have taken the path, not of moral disarmament, of course, but of a real, material reduction of armaments.

Now that we have reduced our army to 600,000 men, it is particularly essential to have a single and continuous military front capable of safeguarding the republic against external danger.

Furthermore, apart from the military danger, there is the danger of the economic isolation of our federation. You know that although the economic boycott of our Republic failed after Genoa and The Hague, and after Urquhart,[2] no great influx of capital for the needs of our economy is to be observed. There is a danger of our republics being economically isolated. This new form of intervention, which is no less dangerous than military intervention, can be eliminated only by the creation of a united economic front of our Soviet republics in face of the capitalist encirclement.

Lastly, there is our diplomatic situation. You have all seen how, recently, on the eve of the Lausanne Conference,[3] the Entente states made every effort to isolate our federation. Diplomatically, they did not succeed. The organised diplomatic boycott of our federation was broken. The Entente was forced to reckon with our federation and to withdraw,

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2 **Original editor:** This refers to the negotiations of the Soviet Government with the British industrialist Urquhart for the conclusion of a concession agreement for the exploitation of mineral deposits in the Urals and in Kazakhstan. The draft agreement was rejected by the Council of People's Commissars on October 6, 1922, owing to the extortionate terms demanded by Urquhart, and also to the British Conservative Government's hostile policy towards Soviet Russia. The Soviet Government's refusal to conclude an agreement with Urquhart served the bourgeois press as a pretext for intensifying its anti-Soviet campaign.

3 **Original editor:** The Lausanne Conference (November 20, 1922 to July 24, 1923) was called on the initiative of France, Great Britain and Italy to discuss the Near Eastern question (conclusion of a peace treaty between Greece and Turkey, delimitation of Turkey's frontiers, adoption of a convention governing the Straits, etc.). In addition to the above-mentioned countries, the following were represented: Japan, Rumania, Yugoslavia, Greece, Bulgaria and Turkey (representatives of the United States were present as observers). Soviet Russia was invited to the conference only for the discussion of the question of the Straits (the Bosphorus, the Dardanelles). At the conference, in the Commission on the Straits, the Soviet delegation opposed the proposal that the Straits be open for warships both during peace and war, and submitted its own proposal that the Straits be completely closed to the warships of all powers except Turkey. This proposal was rejected by the commission.

to retreat to some extent. But there are no grounds for assuming that these and similar facts about the diplomatic isolation of our federation will not be repeated. Hence the necessity for a united front also in the diplomatic field.

Such is the second group of circumstances that are impelling the Soviet Socialist Republics to take the path of union.

Both the first and the second groups of circumstances have operated up to the present day, being in force during the whole period of the existence of the Soviet regime. Our economic needs, of which I have just spoken, as well as our military and diplomatic needs in the sphere of foreign policy were, undoubtedly, also felt before the present day. But those circumstances have acquired special force only now, after the termination of the Civil War, when the republics have for the first time obtained the opportunity to start economic construction, and for the first time realise how very meagre their economic resources are, and how very necessary union is as regards both internal economy and foreign relations. That is why now, in the sixth year of existence of the Soviet regime, the question of uniting the independent Soviet Socialist Republics has become an immediate one.

Finally, there is a third group of facts, which also call for union and which are associated with the structure of the Soviet regime, with the class nature of the Soviet regime. The Soviet regime is so constructed that, being international in its intrinsic nature, it in every way fosters the idea of union among the masses and itself impels them to take the path of union. Whereas capital, private property and exploitation disunite people, split them into mutually hostile camps, examples of which are provided by Great Britain, France and even small multi-national states like Poland and Yugoslavia with their irreconcilable internal national contradictions which corrode the very foundations of these states—whereas, I say, over there, in the West, where capitalist democracy reigns and where the states are based on private property, the very basis of the state fosters national bickering, conflicts and struggle, here, in the world of Soviets, where the regime is based not on capital but on labour, where the regime is based not on private property, but on collective property, where the regime is based not on the exploitation of man by man, but on the strug-

gle against such exploitation, here, on the contrary, the very nature of the regime fosters among the labouring masses a natural striving towards union in a single socialist family.

Is it not significant that whereas over there, in the West, in the world of bourgeois democracy, we are witnessing the gradual decline and disintegration of the multi-national states into their component parts (as in the case of Great Britain, which has to settle matters with India, Egypt and Ireland, how, I do not know, or as in the case of Poland, which has to settle matters with its Byelorussians and Ukrainians, how, I do not know either), here, in our federation, which unites no fewer than thirty nationalities, we, on the contrary, are witnessing a process by which the state ties between the independent republics are becoming stronger, a process which is leading to an ever closer union of the independent nationalities in a single independent state! Thus you have two types of state union, of which the first, the capitalist type, leads to the disintegration of the state, while the second, the Soviet type, on the contrary, leads to a gradual but enduring union of formerly independent nationalities into a single independent state.

Such is the third group of facts that are impelling the individual republics to take the path of union.

What should be the form of the union of the republics? The principles of the union are outlined in the resolutions which the Presidium of the All-Russian Central Executive Committee has received from the Soviet Republics of the Ukraine, Byelorussia and Transcaucasia.

Four Republics are to unite: the R.S.F.S.R. as an integral federal unit, the Transcaucasian Republic, also as an integral federal unit, the Ukraine, and Byelorussia. Two independent Soviet Republics, Khorezm and Bukhara, which are not Socialist Republics, but People's Soviet Republics, remain for the time being outside this union solely and exclusively because these republics are not yet socialist. I have no doubt, comrades, and I hope that you too have no doubt, that, as they develop internally towards socialism, these republics will also join the union state which is now being formed.

It might seem to be more expedient for the R.S.F.S.R. not to join

the Union of Republics as an integral federal unit, but that the republics comprising it should join individually, for which purpose it would evidently be necessary to dissolve the R.S.F.S.R. into its component parts. I think that this way would be irrational and inexpedient, and that it is precluded by the very course of the campaign. First, the effect would be that, parallel with the process that is leading to the union of the republics, we would have a process of disuniting the already existing federal units, a process that would upset the truly revolutionary process of union of the republics which has already begun. Secondly, if we took this wrong road we would arrive at a situation in which we would have to separate out of the R.S.F.S.R., in addition to the eight autonomous republics, a specifically Russian Central Executive Committee and a Russian Council of People's Commissars, and this would lead to considerable organisational perturbations, which are entirely unnecessary and harmful at the present time, and which are not in the least demanded by either the internal or external situation. That is why I think that the parties to the formation of the union should be the four Republics: the R.S.F.S.R., the Transcaucasian Federation, the Ukraine, and Byelorussia.

The treaty of union must be based on the following principles: Commissariats of Foreign Trade, Military and Naval Affairs, Foreign Affairs, Transport, and Posts and Telegraphs shall be set up only within the Council of People's Commissars of the Union. The People's Commissariats of Finance, National Economy, Food, Labour, and State Inspection shall continue to function within each of the contracting republics, with the proviso that they operate in accordance with the instructions of the corresponding central Commissariats of the Union. This is necessary in order that the forces of the labouring masses of the republics may be united under the direction of the Union centre as regards food supply, the Supreme Council of National Economy, the People's Commissariat of Finance, and the People's Commissariat of Labour. Lastly, the remaining Commissariats, i.e., the Commissariats of Internal Affairs, Justice, Education, Agriculture, and so on—there are six in all—which are directly connected with the manner of life, customs, special forms of land settlement, special forms of legal procedure, and with the language and culture of the peoples forming the republics, must be left as independent Commissariats

under the control of the Central Executive Committees and Councils of People's Commissars of the contracting republics. This is necessary in order to provide a real guarantee of freedom of national development for the peoples of the Soviet republics.

Such, in my opinion, are the principles that must be made the basis of the treaty that is shortly to be signed between our republics.

Accordingly, I move the following draft resolution, which has been approved by the Presidium of the All-Russian Central Executive Committee:

1. The union of the Russian Socialist Federative Soviet Republic, the Ukrainian Socialist Soviet Republic, the Transcaucasian Socialist Federative Soviet Republic and the Byelorussian Socialist Soviet Republic into a Union of Soviet Socialist Republics is to be regarded as opportune.
2. The union is to be based on the principle of voluntary consent and equal rights of the republics, each of which shall retain the right freely to secede from the Union of Republics.
3. The delegation from the R.S.F.S.R., in collaboration with the delegations from the Ukraine, the Transcaucasian Republic and Byelorussia, is to be instructed to draft a declaration on the formation of the Union of Republics, setting forth the considerations which dictate the union of the republics into a single union state.
4. The delegation is to be instructed to draw up the terms on which the R.S.F.S.R. is to enter the Union of Republics and when examining the treaty of union, is to adhere to the following principles:
    a) the formation of the appropriate Union legislative and executive organs;
    b) the merging of the Commissariats of Military and Naval Affairs, Transport, Foreign Affairs, Foreign Trade, and Posts and Telegraphs;
    c) the subordination of the Commissariats of Finance, Food, National Economy, Labour, and Workers' and Peasants' Inspection of the contracting republics to the instructions of the corresponding Commissariats of the Union of Republics;
    d) complete guarantee of national development for the peoples belonging to the contracting republics.
5. The draft treaty is to be submitted for the approval of the All-Russian Central Executive Committee represented by its Presidium before it is

submitted to the First Congress of the Union of Republics.

6. On the basis of the approval of the terms of union by the All-Russian Central Executive Committee, the delegation is to be empowered to conclude a treaty between the R.S.F.S.R. and the Socialist Soviet Republics of the Ukraine, Transcaucasia and Byelorussia for the formation of the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics.
7. The treaty is to be submitted for ratification to the First Congress of the Union of Republics.

Such is the draft resolution I submit for your consideration.

Comrades, since the Soviet republics were formed, the states of the world have split into two camps: the camp of socialism and the camp of capitalism. In the camp of capitalism there are imperialist wars, national strife, oppression, colonial slavery and chauvinism. In the camp of the Soviets, the camp of socialism, there are, on the contrary, mutual confidence, national equality of rights and the peaceful co-existence and fraternal co-operation of peoples. Capitalist democracy has been striving for decades to eliminate national contradictions by combining the free development of nationalities with the system of exploitation. So far it has not succeeded, and it will not succeed. On the contrary, the skein of national contradictions is becoming more and more entangled, threatening capitalism with death. Here alone, in the world of the Soviets, in the camp of socialism, has it been possible to eradicate national oppression and to establish mutual confidence and fraternal co-operation between peoples. And only after the Soviets succeeded in doing this did it become possible for us to build up our federation and to defend it against the attack of the enemies, both internal and external.

Five years ago the Soviet power succeeded in laying the foundation for the peaceful co-existence and fraternal co-operation of peoples. Now, when we here are deciding the question of the desirability and necessity of union, the task before us is to erect on this foundation a new edifice by forming a new and mighty union state of the working people. The will of the peoples of our republics, who recently assembled at their congresses and unanimously resolved to form a Union of Republics, is incontestable proof that the cause of union is on the right road, that it is based on the great principle of voluntary consent and equal rights for nations. Let us

hope, comrades, that by forming our Union Republic we shall create a reliable bulwark against international capitalism, and that the new Union State will be another decisive step towards the union of the working people of the whole world into a World Soviet Socialist Republic. (*Prolonged applause. The "Internationale" is sung.*)

Pravda, No. 295,
December 28, 1922

THE FORMATION OF THE UNION OF SOVIET SOCIALIST REPUBLICS

Report Delivered at the First Congress of Soviets of the U.S.S.R.[1]

December 30, 1922

Comrades, this day marks a turning point in the history of the Soviet power. It places a landmark between the old period, now past, when the Soviet republics, although they acted in common, yet each followed its own path and was concerned primarily with its own preservation, and the new period, already begun, when an end is being put to the isolated existence of the Soviet republics, when the republics are being united into a single union state for a successful struggle against economic ruin, and when the Soviet power is concerned not only with its preservation, but with developing into an important international force, capable of influencing the international situation and of modifying it in the interests of the working people.

What was the Soviet state five years ago? A small, scarcely noticeable entity, which evoked the derision of all its enemies and the pity of many of its friends. That was the period of wartime ruin, when the Soviet power relied not so much upon its own strength as upon the impotence of its opponents; when the enemies of the Soviet power, split into

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1 **Original editor:** The First Congress of Soviets of the U.S.S.R. took place in Moscow on December 30, 1922. There were present 1,727 delegates from the R.S.F.S.R., 364 from the Ukrainian S.S.R., 91 from the Transcaucasian Federation and 33 from the Byelorussian S.S.R. The congress discussed J. V. Stalin's report on the formation of the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics, it ratified the Declaration and the Treaty of Union on the Formation of the U.S.S.R., and elected the Central Executive Committee of the U.S.S.R.

two coalitions, the Austro-German coalition and the Anglo-French coalition, were engaged in mutual warfare and were not in a position to turn their weapons against the Soviet power. In the history of the Soviet power that was the period of wartime ruin. In the struggle against Kolchak and Denikin, however, the Soviet power created the Red Army and successfully emerged from the period of wartime ruin.

Later, the second period in the history of the Soviet power began, the period of struggle against economic ruin. This period is by no means over yet, but it has already borne fruit, for during this period the Soviet power has successfully coped with the famine which afflicted the country last year. During this period we have witnessed a considerable advance in agriculture and a considerable revival of the light industries. Cadres of industrial leaders have already come to the fore and are the object of our hope and trust. But that is far from enough for the purpose of overcoming economic ruin. To vanquish and eliminate that ruin the forces of all the Soviet republics must be pooled; all the financial and economic potentialities of the republics must be concentrated on the task of restoring our basic industries. Hence the necessity for uniting the Soviet republics into a single union state. Today is the day of the union of our republics into a single state for the purpose of pooling all our forces for the restoration of our economy.

The period of combating wartime ruin gave us the Red Army, one of the foundations of the existence of the Soviet power. The next period, the period of struggle against economic ruin, is giving us a new framework of state existence—the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics, which will undoubtedly promote the work of restoring Soviet economy.

What is the Soviet power now? A great state of the working people which evokes among our enemies not derision but the gnashing of teeth.

Such are the results of the development of the Soviet power during the five years of its existence.

But, comrades, today is not only a day for summing up, it is at the same time the day of triumph of the new Russia over the old Russia, the Russia that was the gendarme of Europe, the Russia that was the hangman of Asia. Today is the day of triumph of the new Russia, which has

smashed the chains of national oppression, organised victory over capital, created the dictatorship of the proletariat, awakened the peoples of the East, inspires the workers of the West, transformed the Red Flag from a Party banner into a State banner, and rallied around that banner the peoples of the Soviet republics in order to unite them into a single state, the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics, the prototype of the future World Soviet Socialist Republic.

We Communists are often abused and accused of being unable to build. Let the history of the Soviet power during these five years of its existence serve as proof that Communists are also able to build. Let today's Congress of Soviets, whose function it is to ratify the Declaration and Treaty of Union of the Republics that were adopted at the Conference of Plenipotentiary Delegations yesterday, let this Union Congress demonstrate to all who have not yet lost the ability to understand, that Communists are as well able to build the new as they are to destroy the old.

Here, comrades, is the Declaration that was adopted yesterday, at the Conference of Plenipotentiary Delegations.[2] I shall read it (see appendix No. 1).

And here is the text of the Treaty that was adopted at the same conference. I shall read it (see appendix No. 2).

Comrades, on the instructions of the Conference of Plenipotentiary Delegations of the Soviet Republics I move that you ratify the texts I have just read of the Declaration and Treaty on the Formation of the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics.

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2 **Original editor:** The Conference of Plenipotentiary Delegations of the R.S.F.S.R., the Ukrainian S.S.R., the Byelorussian S.S.R. and of the Transcaucasian S.F.S.R. took place on December 29, 1922. The conference examined and adopted the Declaration and the Treaty on the Formation of the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics. J. V. Stalin made a report to the conference on the order of proceedings at the First Congress of Soviets of the U.S.S.R. The conference instructed J. V. Stalin to deliver at the congress the report on the formation of the U.S.S.R. In the morning of December 30, the plenipotentiary delegations signed the Declaration and the Treaty on the Formation of the U.S.S.R.

Comrades, I propose that you adopt them with the unanimity characteristic of Communists, and thereby add a new chapter to the history of mankind. (*Applause.*)

Pravda, No. 298,
December 31, 1922

CONCERNING THE QUESTION OF THE STRATEGY AND TACTICS OF THE RUSSIAN COMMUNISTS[1]

This article is based on the lectures "On the Strategy and Tactics of the Russian Communists" that I delivered at different times at the workers' club in the Presnya District and to the Communist group at the Sverdlov University.[2] I have decided to publish it not only because I think it is my duty to meet the wishes of the Presnya and Sverdlov comrades, but also because it seems to me that the article itself will be of some use for our new generation of Party workers. I consider it necessary to say, however, that this article does not claim to present anything new in substance compared with what has already been said several times in the Russian Party press by our leading comrades. The present article must be regarded as a condensed and schematic exposition of the fundamental views of Com-

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1 **Original editor:** J. V. Stalin's article "Concerning the Question of the Strategy and Tactics of the Russian Communists" was published on March 14, 1923, in *Pravda*, No. 56, which was devoted to the 25th anniversary of the Russian Communist Party (Bolsheviks), and also in *Petrogradskaya Pravda*, Nos. 57, 58 and 59, of March 14, 15 and 16, 1923 and in the magazine *Kommunisticheskaya Revolutsia*, No. 7 (46), of April 1, 1923. Later, a part of this article, under the heading: "The October Revolution and the Strategy of the Russian Communists" was published in the book: Stalin, *The October Revolution*, Moscow 1932.

2 **Original editor:** The Sverdlov University—the Workers' and Peasants' Communist University named after Y. M. Sverdlov.

In 1918, on the initiative of Y. M. Sverdlov, the All-Russian Central Executive Committee organised short-term courses for agitators and propagandists. In January 1919, these courses were renamed the School for Soviet Work. By a decision adopted at the Eighth Congress of the R.C.P.(B.), the school was made the basis for setting up the Central School for Soviet and Party Work. In the latter half of 1919 this school was transformed into the Sverdlov Workers' and Peasants' Communist University.

rade Lenin.

I. Preliminary Concepts

1. Two Aspects of the Working-class Movement

Political strategy, as well as tactics, is concerned with the working-class movement. But the working-class movement itself consists of two elements: the objective or spontaneous element, and the subjective or conscious element. The objective, spontaneous element is the group of processes that take place independently of the conscious and regulating will of the proletariat. The economic development of the country, the development of capitalism, the disintegration of the old regime, the spontaneous movements of the proletariat and of the classes around it, the conflict of classes, etc.—all these are phenomena whose development does not depend on the will of the proletariat. That is the objective side of the movement. Strategy has nothing to do with those processes, for it can neither stop nor alter them; it can only take them into account and proceed from them. That is a field which has to be studied by the theory of Marxism and the programme of Marxism.

But the movement has also a subjective, conscious side. The subjective side of the movement is the reflection in the minds of the workers of the spontaneous processes of the movement; it is the conscious and systematic movement of the proletariat towards a definite goal. It is this side of the movement that interests us because, unlike the objective side, it is entirely subject to the directing influence of strategy and tactics. Whereas strategy is unable to cause any change in the course of the objective processes of the movement, here, on the contrary, on the subjective, conscious side of the movement, the field of application of strategy is broad and varied, because strategy can accelerate or retard the movement, direct it along the shortest path or divert it to a more difficult and painful path, depending on the perfections or shortcomings of strategy itself.

To accelerate or retard the movement, facilitate or hinder it—such is the field and the limits within which political strategy and tactics can be applied.

2. The Theory and Programme of Marxism

Strategy itself does not study the objective processes of the movement. Nevertheless, it must know them and take them into account correctly if gross and fatal errors in the leadership of the movement are to be avoided. The objective processes of the movement are studied, in the first place, by the theory of Marxism and also by the programme of Marxism. Hence, strategy must base itself entirely on the data provided by the theory and programme of Marxism.

From a study of the objective processes of capitalism in their development and decline, the theory of Marxism arrives at the conclusion that the fall of the bourgeoisie and the seizure of power by the proletariat are inevitable, that capitalism must inevitably give way to socialism. Proletarian strategy can be called truly Marxist only when its operations are based on this fundamental conclusion of the theory of Marxism.

Proceeding from the data of theory, the programme of Marxism determines the aims of the proletarian movement, which are scientifically formulated in the points of the programme. The programme may be designed to cover the whole period of capitalist development and have in view the overthrow of capitalism and the organisation of socialist production, or only one definite phase of the development of capitalism, for instance, the overthrow of the survivals of the feudal-absolutist system and the creation of conditions for the free development of capitalism. Accordingly, the programme may consist of two parts: a maximum and a minimum. It goes without saying that strategy designed for the minimum part of the programme is bound to differ from strategy designed for the maximum part; and strategy can be called truly Marxist only when it is guided in its operations by the aims of the movement as formulated in the programme of Marxism.

3. Strategy

The most important function of strategy is to determine the main direction which ought to be taken by the working-class movement, and along

which the proletariat can most advantageously deliver the main blow at its enemy in order to achieve the aims formulated in the programme. A strategic plan is a plan of the organisation of the decisive blow in the direction in which the blow is most likely to achieve the maximum results.

The principal features of political strategy could easily be described by drawing an analogy with military strategy: for instance, in the fight against Denikin during the Civil War. Everybody remembers the end of 1919, when Denikin's forces were standing near Tula. At that time an interesting dispute arose among our military men about the point from which the decisive blow at Denikin's armies should be delivered. Some military men proposed that the line Tsaritsyn-Novorossiisk be chosen for the main direction of the blow. Others, on the contrary, proposed that the decisive blow be delivered along the line Voronezh-Rostov, to proceed along this line and thus cut Denikin's armies in two and then crush each part separately. The first plan undoubtedly had its merits in that it provided for the capture of Novorossiisk, which would have cut off the retreat of Denikin's armies. But, on the one hand, it was faulty because it assumed our advance through districts (the Don Region) which were hostile to Soviet power, and thus would have involved heavy casualties; on the other hand, it was dangerous because it opened for Denikin's armies the road to Moscow via Tula and Serpukhov. The only correct plan for the main blow was the second one, because, on the one hand, it assumed the advance of our main group through districts (Voronezh Gubernia-Donets Basin) which were friendly towards Soviet power and, therefore, would not involve any considerable casualties; on the other hand, it would disrupt the operations of Denikin's main group of forces which were moving towards Moscow. The majority of the military men declared in favour of the second plan, and this determined the fate of the war against Denikin.

In other words, determining the direction of the main blow means deciding in advance the nature of operations during the whole period of the war, i.e., deciding in advance, to the extent of nine-tenths, the fate of the whole war. That is the function of strategy.

The same must be said about political strategy. The first serious, collision between the political leaders of the Russian proletariat on the question of the main direction of the proletarian movement took place at the beginning of the twentieth century, during the Russo-Japanese war. At that time, as we know, one section of our Party (the Mensheviks) held the view that the main direction of the proletarian movement in its struggle against tsarism should be along the line of a bloc between the proletariat and the liberal bourgeoisie; the peasantry was omitted, or almost entirely omitted from the plan as a major revolutionary factor, while the leading role in the general revolutionary movement was assigned to the liberal bourgeoisie. The other section of the Party (the Bolsheviks) maintained, on the contrary, that the main blow should proceed along the line of a bloc between the proletariat and the peasantry, and that the leading role in the general revolutionary movement should be assigned to the proletariat, while the liberal bourgeoisie should be neutralised.

If, by analogy with the war against Denikin, we depict our whole revolutionary movement, from the beginning of this century to the February Revolution in 1917, as a war waged by the workers and peasants against tsarism and the landlords, it will be clear that the fate of tsarism and of the landlords largely depended upon which of the two strategic plans (the Menshevik or the Bolshevik) would be adopted, and upon which direction would be chosen as the main direction of the revolutionary movement.

Just as during the war against Denikin military strategy, by deciding the main direction of the blow, determined to the extent of nine-tenths the character of all subsequent operations, including the liquidation of Denikin's armies, so here, in the sphere of the revolutionary struggle against tsarism, our political strategy, by deciding that the main direction of the revolutionary movement should follow the Bolshevik plan, determined the character of our Party's work during the whole period of the open struggle against tsarism, from the time of the Russo-Japanese war down to the February Revolution in 1917.

The function of political strategy is, primarily, on the basis of the

data provided by the theory and programme of Marxism, and taking into account the experience of the revolutionary struggle of the workers of all countries, correctly to determine the main direction of the proletarian movement of the given country in the given historical period.

4. Tactics

Tactics are a part of strategy, subordinated to and serving it. Tactics are not concerned with the war as a whole, but with its individual episodes, with battles and engagements. Strategy strives to win the war, or to carry through the struggle, against tsarism let us say, to the end; tactics, on the contrary, strive to win particular engagements and battles, to conduct particular campaigns successfully, or particular operations, that are more or less appropriate to the concrete situation of the struggle at each given moment.

A most important function of tactics is to determine the ways and means, the forms and methods of fighting that are most appropriate to the concrete situation at the given moment and are most certain to prepare the way for strategic success. Consequently, the operation and results of tactics must be regarded not in isolation, not from the point of view of their immediate effect, but from the point of view of the aims and possibilities of strategy.

There are times when tactical successes facilitate the achievement of strategic aims. Such was the case, for instance, on the Denikin front at the end of 1919, when our troops liberated Orel and Voronezh, when the successes of our cavalry at Voronezh and of our infantry at Orel created a situation favourable for delivering the blow at Rostov. Such was the case in August 1917 in Russia, when the Petrograd and Moscow Soviets came over to the side of the Bolsheviks and thereby created a new political situation, which subsequently facilitated the blow delivered by our Party in October.

There are also times when tactical successes, brilliant from the point of view of their immediate effect but not corresponding to the strategic

possibilities, create an "unexpected" situation, fatal to the whole campaign. Such was the case with Denikin at the end of 1919 when, carried away by the easy success of a rapid and striking advance on Moscow, he stretched his front from the Volga to the Dnieper, and thereby prepared the way for the defeat of his armies. Such was the case in 1920, during the war against the Poles, when, under-estimating the strength of the national factor in Poland, and carried away by the easy success of a striking advance, we undertook a task that was beyond our strength, the task of breaking into Europe via Warsaw, which rallied the vast majority of the Polish population against the Soviet forces and so created a situation which nullified the successes of the Soviet forces at Minsk and Zhitomir and damaged the Soviet Government's prestige in the West.

Lastly, there are also times when a tactical success must be ignored and when tactical losses and reverses must be deliberately incurred in order to ensure future strategic gains. This often happens in time of war, when one side, wishing to save its army cadres and to withdraw them from the onslaught of superior enemy forces, begins a systematic retreat and surrenders whole cities and regions without a fight in order to gain time and to muster its forces for new decisive battles in the future. Such was the case in Russia in 1918, during the German offensive, when our Party was forced to accept the Brest Peace, which was a tremendous setback from the point of view of the immediate political effect at that moment, in order to preserve the alliance with the peasants, who were thirsting for peace, to obtain a respite, to create a new army and thereby ensure strategic gains in the future.

In other words, tactics must not be subordinated to the transient interests of the moment, they must not be guided by considerations of immediate political effect, still less must they desert firm ground and build castles in the air. Tactics must be devised in accordance with the aims and possibilities of strategy.

The function of tactics is primarily to determine—in accordance with the requirements of strategy, and taking into account the experience of the workers' revolutionary struggle in all countries—the forms and

methods of fighting most appropriate to the concrete situation of the struggle at each given moment.

5. Forms of Struggle

The methods of warfare, the forms of war, are not always the same. They change in accordance with the conditions of development, primarily, in accordance with the development of production. In the time of Genghis Khan the methods of warfare were different from those in the time of Napoleon III; in the twentieth century they are different from those in the nineteenth century.

The art of war under modern conditions consists in mastering all forms of warfare and all the achievements of science in this sphere, utilising them intelligently, combining them skilfully, or making timely use of one or another of these forms as circumstances require.

The same must be said about the forms of struggle in the political sphere. The forms of struggle in the political sphere are even more varied than the forms of warfare. They change in accordance with the development of economic life, social life and culture, with the condition of classes, the relation of the contending forces, the kind of government and, finally, with international relations, and so forth. The illegal form of struggle under absolutism, combined with partial strikes and workers' demonstrations; the open form of struggle when "legal possibilities" exist, and workers' mass political strikes; the parliamentary form of struggle at the time, say, of the Duma, and extra-parliamentary mass action which sometimes develops into armed uprising; lastly, state forms of struggle, after the proletariat has taken power and obtains the opportunity to utilise all the resources and forces of the state, including the army—such, in general, are the forms of struggle that are brought to the fore by the practical experience of the revolutionary struggle of the proletariat.

It is the task of the Party to master all forms of struggle, to combine them intelligently on the battlefield and skilfully to intensify the struggle in those forms which are specially suitable in the given situation.

6. Forms of Organisation

The forms of organisation of armies and the different arms of the service are usually adapted to the forms and methods of warfare. When the latter change, the former change. In a war of manoeuvre the issue is often decided by massed cavalry. In positional warfare, on the contrary, cavalry plays either no part at all, or plays a subordinate part; heavy artillery and aircraft, gas and tanks decide everything.

The task of the art of war is to ensure having all arms of the service, bring them to perfection and skilfully combine their operations.

The same can be said about the forms of organisation in the political sphere. Here, as in the military sphere, the forms of organisation are adapted to the forms of the struggle. Secret organisations of professional revolutionaries in the period of absolutism; educational, trade-union, co-operative and parliamentary organisations (the Duma group, etc.) in the period of the Duma; factory and workshop committees, peasant committees, strike committees, Soviets of Workers' and Soldiers' Deputies, revolutionary military committees, and a broad proletarian party which unites all these forms of organisation, in the period of mass action and insurrection; finally, the state form of organisation of the proletariat in the period when power is concentrated in the hands of the working class—such, in general, are the forms of organisation on which, under certain conditions, the proletariat can and must rely in its struggle against the bourgeoisie.

The task of the Party is to master all these forms of organisation, bring them to perfection and skilfully combine their operations at each given moment.

7. The Slogan. the Directive

Skilfully formulated decisions which express the aims of the war, or of individual engagements, and which are popular among the troops, are sometimes of decisive importance at the front as a means of inspiring the army to action, of maintaining its morale, and so forth. Appropriate orders, slogans, or appeals to the troops are as important for the whole

course of a war as first-class heavy artillery, or first-class fast-moving tanks.

Slogans are still more important in the political sphere, when one has to deal with tens and hundreds of millions of the population, with their diverse demands and requirements.

A slogan is a concise and clear formulation of the aims of the struggle, near or remote, given by the leading group, let us say, of the proletariat, by its party. Slogans vary in accordance with the different aims of the struggle, aims embracing either a whole historical period or individual stages and episodes of the given historical period. The slogan "Down with the autocracy" which was first advanced by the "Emancipation of Labour" group[3] in the 'eighties of the last century, was a *propaganda* slogan, since its aim was to win over to the Party individuals and groups of the most steadfast and sturdy fighters. In the period of the Russo-Japanese war, when the instability of the autocracy became more or less evident to large sections of the working class, this slogan became an *agitation* slogan, for it was designed to win over vast masses of the toilers. In the period just before the February Revolution of 1917, when tsarism had already become completely discredited in the eyes of the masses, the slogan "Down with the autocracy" was transformed from an agitation slogan into an *action* slogan, since it was designed to move vast masses into the assault on tsarism. During the February Revolution this slogan became a Party *directive*, i.e., a direct call to seize certain institutions and certain positions of the tsarist system on a definite date, for it was already a matter of overthrowing and destroying tsarism. A directive is the Party's direct call for action, at a certain time and in a certain place, binding upon all members of the Party and, if the call correctly and aptly formulates the demands of the masses, and if the time is really ripe for it, it is usually taken up by the broad masses of the toilers.

To confuse slogans with directives, or an agitation slogan with an action slogan, is as dangerous as premature or belated action, which is

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3 **Original editor:** The "Emancipation of Labour" group—the first Russian Marxist group, formed in Geneva, in 1883, by G. V. Plekhanov. (Concerning the activities of this group and the historical role it played, see *History of the C.P.S.U.(B.), Short Course*, Moscow 1952, pp. 23-34.)

sometimes fatal. In April 1917, the slogan "All power to the Soviets" was an *agitation* slogan. The well-known demonstration which took place in Petrograd in April 1917 under the slogan "All power to the Soviets," and which surrounded the Winter Palace, was an attempt, premature and therefore fatal, to convert this slogan into an *action* slogan.[4] That was a very dangerous example of the confusion of an agitation slogan with an action slogan. The Party was right when it condemned the initiators of this demonstration, for it knew that the conditions necessary for the transformation of this slogan into an action slogan had not yet arisen, and that premature action on the part of the proletariat might result in the defeat of its forces.

On the other hand, there are cases when the Party is faced with the necessity of cancelling or changing "overnight" an adopted slogan (or directive) for which the time is ripe, in order to guard its ranks against a trap set by the enemy, or with the necessity of postponing the execution of the directive to a more favourable moment. Such a case arose in Petrograd in June 1917, when, because the situation had changed, the Central Committee of our Party "suddenly" cancelled the workers' and soldiers' demonstration, which had been carefully prepared and fixed to take place on June 10.

It is the Party's duty skilfully and opportunely to transform agitation slogans into action slogans, or action slogans into definite and concrete directives, or, if the situation demands it, to display the necessary flexibility and determination to cancel the execution of any given slogan in good time, even if it is popular and the time is ripe for it.

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4 **Original editor:** During the mass political demonstration in Petrograd on April 20-21, 1917, a group of members of the Petrograd Committee of the Bolshevik Party (Bagdatyev and others), despite the Central Committee's instructions that the demonstration was to be a peaceful one, put forward the slogan of the immediate overthrow of the Provisional Government. The Central Committee condemned the action of these "Left" adventurers (see V. I. Lenin, *Works*, 4th Russ. ed., Vol. 24, pp. 181-82).

II. The Strategic Plan

1. Historic Turns. Strategic Plans

The Party's strategy is not something constant, fixed once and for all. It alters in accordance with the turns in history, with historic changes. These alterations in strategy find expression in the fact that with each separate turn in history a separate strategic plan is drawn up corresponding to that turn, and effective during the whole period from that turn to the next. The strategic plan defines the direction of the main blow to be delivered by the revolutionary forces and the corresponding disposition of the vast masses on the social front. Naturally, a strategic plan suitable for one period of history, which has its own specific features, cannot be suitable for another period of history, which has entirely different specific features. Corresponding to each turn in history is the strategic plan essential for it and adapted to its tasks.

The same may be said about the conduct of war. The strategic plan that was drawn up for the war against Kolchak could not have been suitable for the war against Denikin, which called for a new strategic plan, which, in its turn, would not have been suitable for, say, the war against the Poles in 1920, because the direction of the main blows, as well as the disposition of the main fighting forces, could not but be different in each of these three cases.

The recent history of Russia knows of three main historic turns, which gave rise to three different strategic plans in the history of our Party. We consider it necessary to describe them briefly in order to show how the Party's strategic plans in general change in conformity with new historic changes.

2. The First Historic Turn and the Course Towards the Bourgeois-democratic Revolution in Russia

This turn began at the beginning of the present century, in the period of the Russo-Japanese war, when the defeat of the tsar's armies and the

tremendous political strikes of the Russian workers stirred up all classes of the population and pushed them into the arena of the political struggle. This turn came to an end in the days of the February Revolution in 1917.

During this period two strategic plans were at issue in our Party: the plan of the Mensheviks (Plekhanov-Martov, 1905), and the plan of the Bolsheviks (Comrade Lenin, 1905).

The Menshevik strategy planned the main blow at tsarism along the line of a coalition between the liberal bourgeoisie and the proletariat. Proceeding from the fact that at that time the revolution was regarded as a bourgeois revolution, this plan assigned the hegemony (leadership) of the movement to the liberal bourgeoisie and doomed the proletariat to the role of "extreme left opposition," to the role of "prompter" to the bourgeoisie, while the peasantry, one of the major revolutionary forces, was entirely, or almost entirely, left out of account. It is easy to understand that since this plan left out of account the millions of peasants in a country like Russia it was hopelessly utopian, and since it placed the fate of the revolution in the hands of the liberal bourgeoisie (the hegemony of the bourgeoisie) it was reactionary, for the liberal bourgeoisie was not interested in achieving the complete victory of the revolution, it was always ready to end the matter by a deal with tsarism.

The Bolshevik strategy (see Comrade *Lenin*'s book *Two Tactics*[5]) planned the revolution's main blow at tsarism along the line of a coalition between the proletariat and the peasantry, while the liberal bourgeoisie was to be neutralised. Proceeding from the fact that the liberal bourgeoisie was not interested in the complete victory of the bourgeois-democratic revolution, that it preferred a deal with tsarism at the expense of the workers and peasants to the victory of the revolution, this plan assigned the hegemony of the revolutionary movement to the proletariat as the only completely revolutionary class in Russia. This plan was remarkable not only because it took into account correctly

5 **Original editor:** V. I. Lenin, *Two Tactics of Social-Democracy in the Democratic Revolution* (see *Works*, 4th Russ. ed., Vol. 9, pp. 1-119).

the driving forces of the revolution, but also because it contained in embryo the idea of the dictatorship of the proletariat (the hegemony of the proletariat), because it brilliantly foresaw the next, higher phase of the revolution in Russia and facilitated the transition to it.

The subsequent development of the revolution right up to February 1917 fully confirmed the correctness of this strategic plan.

3. The Second Historic Turn and the Course Towards the Dictatorship of the Proletariat in Russia

The second turn began with the February Revolution in 1917, after tsarism was overthrown, when the imperialist war had exposed the fatal ulcers of capitalism all over the world; when the liberal bourgeoisie, incapable of taking in its hands the actual government of the country, was compelled to confine itself to holding formal power (the Provisional Government); when the Soviets of Workers' and Soldiers' Deputies, after getting actual power into their hands, had neither the experience nor the will to make the necessary use of it; when the soldiers at the front and the workers and peasants in the rear were groaning under the burdens of the war and economic disruption; when the "dual power" and "contact committee"[6] regime, torn by internal contradictions and capable neither of waging war nor of bringing about peace, not only failed to find "a way out of the impasse" but confused the situation still more. This period ended with the October Revolution in 1917.

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6 **Original editor:** The "Contact Committee," consisting of Chkheidze, Steklov, Sukhanov, Filippovsky and Skobelev (and later Chernov and Tsereteli), was set up by the Menshevik and Socialist-Revolutionary Executive Committee of the Petrograd Soviet of Workers' and Soldiers' Deputies on March 7, 1917, for the purpose of establishing contact with the Provisional Government, of "influencing" it and of "supervising" its activities. Actually, the "Contact Committee" helped to carry out the Provisional Government's bourgeois policy and tried to restrain the masses of the workers from waging a revolutionary struggle to transfer all power to the Soviets. The "Contact Committee" existed until May 1917, when representatives of the Mensheviks and Socialist-Revolutionaries actually entered the Provisional Government.

Two strategic plans were at issue in the Soviets at that time: the Menshevik-Socialist-Revolutionary plan, and the Bolshevik plan.

The Menshevik-Socialist-Revolutionary strategy, vacillating at first between the Soviets and the Provisional Government, between revolution and counter-revolution, took final shape at the time of the opening of the Democratic Conference (September 1917). It took the line of the gradual but steady removal of the Soviets from power and the concentration of all power in the country in the hands of the "Pre-parliament," the prototype of a future bourgeois parliament. The questions of peace and war, the agrarian and labour questions, as well as the national question, were shelved, pending the convocation of the Constituent Assembly, which, in its turn, was postponed for an indefinite period. "All power to the Constituent Assembly"—this was how the Socialist-Revolutionaries and the Mensheviks formulated their strategic plan. It was a plan for the preparation of a bourgeois dictatorship, a combed and brushed-up, "perfectly democratic" dictatorship it is true, but a bourgeois dictatorship for all that.

The Bolshevik strategy (see Comrade *Lenin*'s "Theses," published in April 1917[7]) planned the main blow along the line of liquidating the power of the bourgeoisie by the combined forces of the proletariat and the poor peasants, along the line of organising the dictatorship of the proletariat in the shape of a Soviet Republic. Rupture with imperialism and withdrawal from the war; liberation of the oppressed nationalities of the former Russian Empire; expropriation of the landlords and capitalists; preparation of the conditions for organising socialist economy—such were the elements of the Bolsheviks' strategic plan in that period. "All power to the Soviets"—this was how the Bolsheviks then formulated their strategic plan. This plan was important not only because it took into account correctly the actual driving forces of the new, proletarian revolution in Russia, but also because it facilitated and accelerated the unleashing of the revolutionary movement in the West.

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7 **Original editor:** V. I. Lenin, "The Tasks of the Proletariat in the Present Revolution" (see *Works*, 4th Russ. ed., Vol. 24, pp. 1-7).

Subsequent developments right up to the October Revolution fully confirmed the correctness of this strategic plan.

4. The Third Historic Turn and the Course Towards the Proletarian Revolution in Europe

The third turn began with the October Revolution, when the mortal combat between the two imperialist groups in the West had reached its climax; when the revolutionary crisis in the West was obviously growing; when the bourgeois government in Russia, bankrupt and entangled in contradictions, fell under the blows of the proletarian revolution; when the victorious proletarian revolution broke with imperialism and withdrew from the war, and thereby made bitter enemies in the shape of imperialist coalitions in the West; when the new Soviet Government's decrees on peace, the confiscation of the landlords' land, the expropriation of the capitalists and the liberation of the oppressed nationalities earned for it the confidence of millions of toilers throughout the world. This was a turn on an international scale, because, for the first time, the international front of capital was breached, the question of overthrowing capitalism was for the first time put on a practical footing. This transformed the October Revolution from a national, Russian force into an international force, and the Russian workers from a backward detachment of the international proletariat into its vanguard, which by its devoted struggle rouses the workers of the West and the oppressed countries of the East. This turn has not yet come to the end of its development, for it has not yet developed on an international scale, but its content and general direction are already sufficiently clear.

Two strategic plans were at issue in political circles in Russia at that time: the plan of the counter-revolutionaries, who had drawn into their organisations the active sections of the Mensheviks and Socialist-Revolutionaries, and the plan of the Bolsheviks.

The counter-revolutionaries and active Socialist-Revolutionaries and Mensheviks planned along the line of uniting in one camp all the discontented elements: the old army officers in the rear and at the front, the bourgeois-nationalist governments in the border regions, the capitalists and landlords who had been expropriated by the revolution, the agents of the Entente who were preparing for intervention, and so forth. They steered a course towards the overthrow of the Soviet Government by means of revolts or foreign intervention, and the restoration of the capitalist order in Russia.

The Bolsheviks, on the contrary, planned along the line of internally strengthening the dictatorship of the proletariat in Russia and extending the sphere of operation of the proletarian revolution to all countries of the world by combining the efforts of the proletarians of Russia with the efforts of the proletarians of Europe and with the efforts of the oppressed nations of the East against world imperialism. Highly noteworthy is the exact and concise formulation of this strategic plan given by Comrade Lenin in his pamphlet *The Proletarian Revolution and the Renegade Kautsky*, namely: *"To do the utmost possible in one country* (one's own—*J. St.*) *for the development, support and awakening of the revolution in all countries."* The value of this strategic plan lies not only in that it took into account correctly the driving forces of the world revolution, but also in that it foresaw and facilitated the subsequent process of transformation of Soviet Russia into the focus of attention of the revolutionary movement throughout the world, into the banner of liberation of the workers in the West and of the colonies in the East.

The subsequent development of the revolution all over the world, and also the five years' existence of Soviet power in Russia, have fully confirmed the correctness of this strategic plan. The fact that the counter-revolutionaries, Socialist-Revolutionaries and Mensheviks, who made several attempts to overthrow the Soviet Government, are now emigres, while the Soviet Government and the international proletarian organisation are becoming the major instruments of the policy of the

world proletariat, and other facts of this kind, are obvious testimony in favour of the Bolsheviks' strategic plan.

Pravda, No. 56,
March 14, 1923
Signed: *J. Stalin*

NATIONAL FACTORS IN PARTY AND STATE AFFAIRS

Thesis for the Twelfth Congress of the Russian Communist Party (Bolsheviks), Approved by the Central Committee of the Party[1]

I

1. Already in the last century the development of capitalism revealed the tendency to internationalise the modes of production and exchange, to eliminate national isolation, to bring peoples into closer economic relations, and gradually to unite vast territories into a single connected whole. The further development of capitalism, the development of the world market, the establishment of the great sea and rail routes, the export of capital, and so on, still further strengthened this tendency and bound peoples of the most diverse types by the ties of international division of labour and all-round mutual dependence. In so far as this process was a reflection of the colossal development of productive forces, in so far as it helped to destroy national aloofness and the opposition of interests of the various peoples, it was and is a progressive process, for it is creating the material prerequisites for the future world socialist economic system.

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1 **Original editor:** The draft of the theses on the national question for the Twelfth Party Congress was discussed at a Plenum of the Central Committee of the R.C.P.(B.) on February 21, 1923. A commission headed by J. V. Stalin was set up to make the final draft. On March 22, the Political Bureau of the Central Committee of the R.C.P.(B.) examined and endorsed the theses, and on March 24 they were published in *Pravda*, No. 65.

2. But this tendency developed in peculiar forms that were completely at variance with its intrinsic historical significance. The mutual dependence of peoples and the economic union of territories took place in the course of the development of capitalism not as a result of the co-operation of nations as entities with equal rights, but by means of the subjugation of some nations by others, by means of the oppression and exploitation of less developed nations by more developed nations. Colonial plunder and annexations, national oppression and inequality, imperialist tyranny and violence, colonial slavery and national subjection, and, finally, the struggle among the "civilised" nations for domination over the "uncivilised" peoples—such were the forms within which the development of closer economic relations of peoples took place. For that reason we find that, side by side with the tendency towards union, there arose a tendency to destroy the forcible forms of such union, a struggle for the liberation of the oppressed colonies and dependent nationalities from the imperialist yoke. Since the latter tendency signified a revolt of the oppressed masses against imperialist forms of union, since it demanded the union of nations on the basis of co-operation and voluntary union, it was and is a progressive tendency, for it is creating the spiritual prerequisites for the future world socialist economy.
3. The struggle between these two principal tendencies, expressed in forms that are natural to capitalism, filled the history of the multi-national bourgeois states during the last half-century. The irreconcilable contradiction between these tendencies within the framework of capitalist development was the underlying cause of the internal unsoundness and organic instability of the bourgeois colonial states. Inevitable conflicts: within such states and inevitable wars between them; the disintegration of the old colonial states and the formation of new ones; a new drive for colonies and a new disintegration of the multi-national states leading to a new refashioning of the political map of the world—such are the results of this fundamental contradiction. The break-up of the old Russia, of Austria-Hungary and of Turkey, on the one hand,

and the history of such colonial states as Great Britain and the old Germany, on the other; and, lastly, the "great" imperialist war and the growth of the revolutionary movement of the colonial and unequal nations—all these and similar facts clearly point to the instability and insecurity of the multi-national bourgeois states.

Thus, the irreconcilable contradiction between the process of economic union of peoples and the imperialist methods of accomplishing this union was the cause of the inability, helplessness and impotence of the bourgeoisie in finding a correct approach to the solution of the national question.

4. Our Party took these circumstances into account and based its policy in the national question on the right of nations to self-determination, the right of peoples to independent state existence. The Party recognised this inalienable right of nations from the moment it came into being, at its first congress (in 1898), when the contradictions of capitalism in connection with the national question were not yet fully and clearly defined. Later it invariably re-affirmed its national programme in special decisions and resolutions of its congresses and conferences, up to the October Revolution. The imperialist war, and the mighty revolutionary movement in the colonies to which it gave rise, only provided new confirmation of the correctness of the Party's decisions on the national question. The gist of these decisions is:

    a) emphatic repudiation of every form of coercion in relation to nationalities;

    b) recognition of the equality and sovereignty of peoples in determining their destinies;

    c) recognition of the principle that a durable union of peoples can be achieved only on the basis of co-operation and voluntary consent;

    d) proclamation of the truth that such a union can be realised only as the result of the overthrow of the power of capital.

In the course of its work our Party never tired of advancing this programme of national liberation in opposition to the frankly oppressive policy of tsarism, and also to the half-hearted, semi-imperialist policy of the Mensheviks and Socialist-Revolutionaries. Whereas the tsarist Russification policy created a gulf between tsarism and the non-Russian nationalities of the old Russia, and whereas the semi-imperialist policy of the Mensheviks and Socialist-Revolutionaries caused the best elements among these nationalities to desert Kerenskyism, the liberation policy pursued by our Party won for it the sympathy and support of the broad masses among those nationalities in their struggle against tsarism and the imperialist Russian bourgeoisie. There can scarcely be any doubt that this sympathy and support was one of the decisive factors that determined the victory our Party achieved in the October days.

5. The October Revolution gave practical effect to our Party's decisions on the national question. By overthrowing the power of the landlords and capitalists, the chief vehicles of national oppression, and by putting the proletariat in power, the October Revolution at one blow shattered the chains of national oppression, upset the old relations between peoples, struck at the root of the old national enmity, cleared the way for the co-operation of peoples, and won for the Russian proletariat the confidence of its brothers of other nationalities not only in Russia, but also in Europe and Asia. It scarcely needs proof that had it not won this confidence, the Russian proletariat could not have defeated Kolchak and Denikin, Yudenich and Wrangel. On the other hand, there is no doubt that the oppressed nationalities could not have achieved their liberation if the dictatorship of the proletariat had not been established in central Russia. National enmity and national conflicts are inevitable, unavoidable, as long as capital is in power, as long as the petty bourgeoisie, and above all the peasantry of the formerly "dominant" nation, permeated as they are with nationalist prejudices, follow the capitalists; and, on the contrary, national peace and national freedom may be considered assured if the peasantry and the other petty-bourgeois sections of the population follow the proletariat,

that is, if the dictatorship of the proletariat is assured. Hence, the victory of the Soviets and the establishment of the dictatorship of the proletariat are the basis, the foundation, on which the fraternal co-operation of peoples within a single state union can be built up.

6. But the results of the October Revolution are not limited to the abolition of national oppression and the creation of a basis for the union of peoples. In the course of its development the October Revolution also evolved the forms of this union and laid down the main lines for the union of the peoples in a single union state. In the first period of the revolution, when the labouring masses among the nationalities first began to feel that they were independent national units, while the threat of foreign intervention had not yet become a real danger, co-operation between the peoples did not yet have a fully defined, well-established form. During the Civil War and intervention, when the requirements of the military self-defence of the national republics came into the forefront, while questions of economic construction were not yet on the order of the day, co-operation took the form of a military alliance. Finally, in the post-war period, when questions of the restoration of the productive forces destroyed by the war came into the forefront, the military alliance was supplemented by an economic alliance. The union of the national republics into the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics marks the concluding stage in the development of the forms of co-operation, which have now assumed the character of a military, economic and political union of peoples into a single, multi-national, Soviet state.

   Thus, in the Soviet system the proletariat found the key to the correct solution of the national question, discovered the way to organise a stable multi-national state on the basis of national equality of rights and voluntary consent.

7. But finding the key to the correct solution of the national question does not yet mean solving it fully and finally, does not yet mean giving the solution concrete and practical shape. In order to put into effect correctly the national programme advanced by the October Revolution, it is also necessary to surmount the obstacles which

we have inherited from the past period of national oppression, and which cannot be surmounted at one stroke, in a short space of time.

This heritage consists, firstly, in the survivals of dominant-nation chauvinism, which is a reflection of the former privileged position of the Great Russians. These survivals still persist in the minds of our Soviet officials, both central and local; they are entrenched in our state institutions, central and local; they are being reinforced by the "new," Smyena Vekh,[2] Great-Russian chauvinist spirit, which is becoming stronger and stronger owing to the N.E.P. In practice they find expression in an arrogantly disdainful and heartlessly bureaucratic attitude on the part of Russian Soviet officials towards the needs and requirements of the national republics. The multi-national Soviet state can become really durable, and the co-operation of the peoples within it really fraternal, only if these survivals are vigorously and irrevocably eradicated from the practice of our state institutions. Hence, the first immediate task of our Party is vigorously to combat the survivals of Great-Russian chauvinism.

This heritage consists, secondly, in the actual, i.e., economic and cultural, inequality of the nationalities of the Union of Republics. The legal national equality won by the October Revolution is a great gain for the peoples, but it does not in itself solve the whole national problem. A number of republics and peoples, which have not gone through, or had scarcely entered, the stage of capitalism, which have no proletariat of their own, or scarcely any, and which are therefore backward economically and culturally, are incapable of making full use of the rights and opportunities afforded them by national

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2 **Original editor:** Smyena Vekh (Change of Landmarks)—a bourgeois political trend that arose in 1921 among the Russian whiteguard émigrés abroad. It was headed by a group consisting of N. Ustryalov, Y. Kluchnikov, and others, who published the magazine *Smyena Vekh* (at first a symposium was published with this title): The Smyena-Vekhist ideology expressed the views of that section of the bourgeoisie which had abandoned the open armed struggle against the Soviet Government. They considered that with the adoption of the New Economic Policy the Soviet system would gradually change into bourgeois democracy.

equality of rights; they are incapable of rising to a higher level of development and thus catching up with the nationalities which have forged ahead unless they receive real and prolonged assistance from outside. The causes of this actual inequality lie not only in the history of these peoples, but also in the policy pursued by tsarism and the Russian bourgeoisie, which strove to convert the border regions into areas producing nothing but raw materials and exploited by the industrially developed central districts. This inequality cannot be removed in a short space of time, this heritage cannot be eliminated in a year or two. The Tenth Congress of our Party already pointed out that "the abolition of actual national inequality is a lengthy process involving a stubborn and persistent struggle against all survivals of national oppression and colonial slavery."[3] But to overcome it is absolutely necessary. And it can be overcome only by the Russian proletariat rendering the backward peoples of the Union real and prolonged assistance in their economic and cultural advancement. Otherwise there can be no grounds for expecting the establishment of proper and durable co-operation of the peoples within the framework of the single union state. Hence, the second immediate task of our Party lies in the struggle to abolish the actual inequality of the nationalities, the struggle to raise the cultural and economic level of the backward peoples.

This heritage consists, lastly, in the survivals of nationalism among a number of nations which have borne the heavy yoke of national oppression and have not yet managed to rid their minds of old national grievances. These survivals find practical expression in a certain national aloofness and the absence of full confidence of the formerly oppressed peoples in measures proceeding from the Russians. However, in some of the republics which consist of several nationalities, this defensive nationalism often becomes converted into aggressive nationalism, into blatant chauvinism on the part of a

3 **Original editor:** See the resolution of the Tenth Congress of the R.C.P.(B.) on "The Immediate Tasks of the Party in the National Question" in "Resolutions and Decisions of C.P.S.U.(B.) Congresses, Conferences and Central Committee Plenums," Part I, 1941, p. 386.

strong nationality directed against the weak nationalities of these republics. Georgian chauvinism (in Georgia) directed against the Armenians, Ossetians, Ajarians and Abkhazians; Azerbaijanian chauvinism (in Azerbaijan) directed against the Armenians; Uzbek chauvinism (in Bukhara and Khorezm) directed against the Turkmenians and Kirghiz—all these forms of chauvinism, which, moreover, are fostered by the conditions of the N.E.P. and by competition, are a grave evil which threatens to convert some of the national republics into arenas of squabbling and bickering. Needless to say, all these phenomena hinder the actual union of the peoples into a single union state. In so far as the survivals of nationalism are a distinctive form of defence against Great-Russian chauvinism, the surest means of overcoming them lies in a vigorous struggle against Great-Russian chauvinism. In so far, however, as these survivals become converted into local chauvinism directed against the weak national groups in individual republics, it is the duty of Party members to wage a direct struggle against these survivals. Thus, the third immediate task of our Party is to combat nationalist survivals and, primarily, the chauvinist forms of these survivals.

8. We must regard as one of the clear expressions of the heritage of the past the fact that a considerable section of Soviet officials in the centre and in the localities appraise the Union of Republics not as a union of state units with equal rights whose mission it is to guarantee the free development of the national republics, but as a step towards the liquidation of those republics, as the beginning of the formation of what is called the "one and indivisible." Condemning this conception as anti-proletarian and reactionary, the congress calls upon members of the Party vigilantly to see to it that the union of the republics and the merging of the Commissariats are not utilised by chauvinistically-minded Soviet officials as a screen for their attempts to ignore the economic and cultural needs of the national republics. The merging of the Commissariats is a test for the Soviet apparatus: if this experiment were in practice to assume a dominant-nation tendency, the Party would be compelled to adopt the most resolute measures against such a distortion, even to the

extent of raising the question of annulling the merging of certain Commissariats until such time as the Soviet apparatus has been properly re-trained, so that it will pay genuinely proletarian and genuinely fraternal attention to the needs and requirements of the small and backward nationalities.

9. Since the Union of Republics is a new form of coexistence of peoples, a new form of their co-operation within a single union state, from which the survivals described above must be eliminated in the course of the joint activities of the peoples, the supreme organs of the Union must be formed in such a way as fully to reflect not only the common needs and requirements of all the nationalities of the Union, but also the special needs and requirements of each individual nationality. Therefore, in addition to the existing central organs of the Union, which represent the labouring masses of the entire Union irrespective of nationality, a special organ should be created representing the nationalities on the basis of equality. Such a structure of the central organs of the Union would make it fully possible to lend an attentive ear to the needs and requirements of the peoples, to render them the necessary aid in good time, to create an atmosphere of complete mutual confidence, and thus eliminate the above-mentioned heritage in the most painless way.

10. On the basis of the above, the congress recommends that the members of the Party secure the accomplishment of the following practical measures:

a) within the system of higher organs of the Union a special organ should be instituted that will represent all the national republics and national regions without exception on the basis of equality;

b) the Commissariats of the Union should be constructed in such a way as to ensure the satisfaction of the needs and requirements of the peoples of the Union;

c) the organs of the national republics and regions should be staffed mainly with people from among the local inhabitants who know the language, manner of life, habits and customs of the peoples concerned.

II

1. The development of our Party organisations in the majority of the national republics is proceeding under conditions not entirely favourable for their growth and consolidation. The economic backwardness of these republics, the small size of their national proletariat, the shortage, or even absence, of cadres of old Party workers belonging to the local population, the lack of serious Marxist literature in the native languages, the weakness of Party educational work, and, further, the presence of survivals of radical-nationalist traditions, which have not yet been completely effaced, have given rise among the local Communists to a definite deviation towards overrating the specifically national features and underrating the class interests of the proletariat, to a deviation towards nationalism. This phenomenon is becoming particularly dangerous in republics where there are several nationalities, where, among the Communists of a stronger nationality, it frequently assumes the form of a deviation towards chauvinism directed against the Communists of the weak nationalities (Georgia, Azerbaijan, Bukhara, Khorezm). The deviation towards nationalism is harmful because, by hindering the process of liberation of the national proletariat from the ideological influence of the national bourgeoisie, it impedes the work of uniting the proletarians of the various nationalities into a single internationalist organisation.
2. On the other hand, the presence both in the central Party institutions and in Communist Party organisations of the national republics of numerous cadres of old Party workers of Russian origin who are unfamiliar with the habits, customs and language of the labouring masses of these republics, and who for this reason are not always attentive to their requirements, has given rise in our Party to a deviation towards underrating the specifically national features and the national language in Party work, to an arrogant and disdainful attitude towards these specific features—a deviation

towards Great-Russian chauvinism. This deviation is harmful not only because, by hindering the formation of communist cadres from local inhabitants who know the national language, it creates the danger that the Party may become isolated from the proletarian masses of the national republics, but also, and primarily, because it fosters and breeds the above-mentioned deviation towards nationalism and impedes the struggle against it.

3. Condemning both these deviations as harmful and dangerous to the cause of communism, and drawing the attention of the Party members to the exceptional harmfulness and exceptional danger of the deviation towards Great-Russian chauvinism, the congress calls upon the Party speedily to eliminate these survivals of the past from our Party work.

The congress instructs the Central Committee to carry out the following practical measures:

a) to form advanced Marxist study circles among the local Party workers of the national republics;

b) to develop a literature based on Marxist principles in the native languages;

c) to strengthen the University of the Peoples of the East and its local branches;

d) to establish under the Central Committees of the national Communist Parties groups of instructors recruited from among local Party workers;

e) to develop a Party literature for the masses in the native languages;

f) to intensify Party educational work in the republics;

g) to intensify work among the youth in the republics.

Pravda, No. 65,
March 24, 1923
Signed: *J. Stalin*

THE TWELFTH CONGRESS OF THE R.C.P.(B.) [1]

April 17-25, 1923

Verbatim Report,
Moscow, 1923

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1 **Original editor:** The Twelfth Congress of the R.C.P.(B.) was held on April 17-25, 1923. This was the first congress since the October Socialist Revolution that V. I. Lenin was unable to attend. The congress discussed the reports of the Central Committee, of the Central Control Commission and of the Russian delegation in the Executive Committee of the Comintern, and also reports on: industry, national factors in Party and state affairs taxation policy in the countryside, delimitation of administrative areas, etc. In its decisions the congress took into account all the directives given by V. I. Lenin in his last articles and letters. The congress summed up the results of the two years of the New Economic Policy and gave a determined rebuff to Trotsky, Bukharin and their adherents, who interpreted the N.E.P. as a retreat from the socialist position. The congress devoted great attention to the organisational and national questions. At the evening sitting on April 17, J. V. Stalin delivered the Central Committee's organisational report. In the resolution it adopted on this report, the congress endorsed Lenin's plan for the reorganisation of the Workers' and Peasants' Inspection and the Central Control Commission, and noted an improvement in the organisational apparatus of the Central Committee and in all organisational activities. J. V. Stalin's report on "National Factors in Party and State Affairs" was heard on April 23. The debate on this report continued during April 23 and 24, and further discussion was referred to the committee on the national question that was set up by the congress, and which conducted its proceedings under the direct guidance of J. V. Stalin. On April 25, the congress passed the resolution submitted by the committee. This resolution was based on J. V. Stalin's theses. The congress exposed the nationalist deviators and called on the Party resolutely to combat the deviations on the national question—Great-Russian chauvinism and local bourgeois nationalism. (Concerning the Twelfth Congress of the R.C.P.(B.), see *History of the C.P.S.U.(B.), Short Course*, Moscow 1952, pp. 403-06. For the resolutions of the congress see "Resolutions and Decisions of C.P.S.U.(B.) Congresses, Conferences and Central Committee Plenums," Part I, 1941, pp. 472-524.)

1. The Organisational Report of the Central Committee of the R.C.P.(B.)

April 17

Comrades, I think that the Central Committee's report published in *Izvestia of the Central Committee*[2] is quite sufficient as far as details are concerned, and there is no need to repeat it here, in the Central Committee's organisational report.

I think that the Central Committee's organisational report should consist of three parts.

The first part should deal with the Party's organisational ties with the working class, with those ties and apparatuses of a mass character which surround the Party, and by means of which the Party exercises leadership of the working class, and the working class is transformed into the army of the Party.

The second part of the report should, in my opinion, deal with those organisational ties and apparatuses of a mass character by means of which the working class is linked with the peasantry. This is the state apparatus. By means of the state apparatus the working class, led by the Party, exercises leadership of the peasantry.

The third and last part should deal with the Party itself, as an organism living its own separate life, and as the apparatus which issues slogans and supervises their implementation.

I pass to the first part of the report. I speak of the Party as the vanguard, and of the working class as the army of our Party. It may seem from this analogy that the relations here are the same as in the military

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2 **Original editor:** *Izvestia of the Central Committee of the Russian Communist Party (B.)*—an information bulletin, founded by decision of the Eighth Congress of the R.C.P.(B.), which appeared from May 28, 1919 to October 10, 1929 (the first twenty issues appeared as supplements to Pravda). Gradually it changed from an information bulletin to a central Party magazine, and in 1929 it began to appear as the magazine *Partiinoye Stroyitelstvo* (*Party Affairs*). The "Report of the Central Committee of the R.C.P. to the Twelfth Party Congress" was published in *Izvestia of the Central Committee*, No. 4 (52), April 1923.

sphere, i.e., that the Party issues orders, that slogans are sent out by telegraph, and the army, i.e., the working class, carries out those orders. Such a view would be radically wrong. The point is that in the political sphere matters are much more complicated. In the military sphere, the commanders themselves create the army, they themselves enrol it. In the political sphere, however, the Party does not create its army, it finds it ready-made; that army is the working class. The second difference is that in the military sphere the commanders not only create the army, but provide it with food, clothing and footwear. That is not the case in the political sphere. The Party does not provide food, clothing and footwear for its army, the working class. For that very reason, matters are much more complicated in the political sphere. For that very reason, in the political sphere, it is not the class that depends upon the Party, but vice versa. That is why, in the political sphere, in order that the vanguard of the class, i.e., the Party, may exercise leadership, it must surround itself with a wide network of non-Party, mass apparatuses to serve as its feelers, by means of which it conveys its will to the working class, and the latter is converted from a diffuse mass into the army of the Party.

And so I pass to an examination of these apparatuses, these transmission belts, which link the Party with the class, to see what these apparatuses are, and what the Party has succeeded in doing during the past year to strengthen them.

The first and principal transmission belt, the first and principal transmission apparatus by means of which the Party links itself with the working class, is the trade unions. During the past year of activity, as is shown by the figures dealing with what has been done to strengthen this principal transmission belt which connects the Party with the class, the Party has increased, has strengthened its influence in the leading bodies of the trade unions. I am not referring to the All-Union Central Council of Trade Unions. Everybody knows what its composition is. Nor am I referring to the Central Committees of the trade unions. I have in mind, chiefly, the Gubernia Trade-Union Councils. Last year, at the Eleventh Congress of our Party, 27 per cent of the chairmen of Gubernia Trade-Union Councils were Party members of pre-October standing; this year the figure is over 57 per cent. Not a very great achievement, but

an achievement nevertheless. It shows that leading elements of our Party of pre-October standing hold in their hands the main threads of the unions with the aid of which they link the Party with the working class.

I shall not deal with the composition of the workers' trade unions as a whole. The figures show that at the time of the last congress the total membership of the trade unions was about 6,000,000. This year, at the time of the present congress, the total membership is 4,800,000. That looks like a step backward, but it only appears to be so. Last year—permit me to tell the truth here! —the union membership figures were inflated. The figures that were given did not correctly reflect the actual situation. The figures given at this congress, although smaller than last year's, are more real, and are nearer the truth. I regard this as a step forward, in spite of the fact that the membership of the trade unions has diminished. Thus, the transformation of the trade unions from unreal and bureaucratic bodies into real live unions, having a common life with their leading bodies, on the one hand, and the increase in the percentage of leading Party elements in the Gubernia Trade-Union Councils from 27 per cent to 57 per cent on the other—such is the success we have to record in our Party's activities in strengthening the trade unions during the past year.

It cannot be said, however, that everything went well in this sphere. The primary units of the trade unions—the factory committees—are not yet ours everywhere. For example, of the 146 factory committees in the Kharkov Gubernia, 70 have not a single Communist in them. But such cases are rare. In general it must be admitted that the development of the trade unions, as regards the growth of the Party's influence in the gubernia and in the lower units, undoubtedly shows progress. This front can be regarded as secure for the Party. In the trade-union sphere we have no strong opponents.

The second transmission belt, the second transmission apparatus of a mass character by means of which the Party links itself with the class, is the co-operatives. First of all I have in mind the consumers' co-operatives, their working-class members; and then the rural co-operatives, those in which the rural poor are organised. At the time of the Eleventh Congress the workers' sections affiliated to the Centrosoyuz had a total member-

ship of about 3,000,000. This year, at the time of the present congress, there is a slight increase: the total membership is 3,300,000. This is very little. But for all that, under present conditions, under the conditions of the N.E.P., it is a step forward. Counting three consumers in each worker's family, it works out that about 9,000,000 of the working-class population are organised as consumers in the consumers' co-operatives, in which our Party's influence is growing from day to day. [...]

At the last congress we had no data about the size of the Party's forces in the consumers' co-operatives; 2-3-5 per cent, not more. At the time of the present congress not less than 50 per cent of the members of the gubernia organs of the Centrosoyuz are Communists. This too is a step forward.

The situation is not quite so good in the rural co-operatives. These co-operatives are certainly growing. Last year, at the time of the congress, not less than 1,700,000 peasant households belonged to rural co-operatives. This year, at the time of the present congress, not less than 4,000,000 peasant households belong to them. These include a certain section of the rural poor, which gravitates towards the proletariat. Precisely for this reason it is of interest to ascertain to what extent the Party's influence has grown in the rural co-operatives. We have no figures for last year. This year, it appears (although it seems to me that the figures are doubtful), not less than 50 per cent of the members of the gubernia organs of the rural co-operatives are Communists. If that is true, it is a colossal step forward. The situation is not quite so good in the lower units; we are still unable to liberate the primary co-operative organisations from the influence of forces hostile to us.

The third transmission belt which links the class with the Party is the Youth Leagues. The colossal importance of the Youth League, and of the youth in general, for our Party's development scarcely needs proof. The figures we have at our disposal show that last year, at the time of the Eleventh Congress, the Youth League had a membership of not less than 400,000. Later, in the middle of 1922, when staffs were reduced, before the system of reserving places in the factories for young workers had been fully introduced, and before the Youth League had been able to adapt itself to the new conditions, the membership dropped to 200,000. Now,

especially since last autumn, we have a colossal increase in the membership of the Youth League. It has a membership of not less than 400,000. The most welcome thing is that the increase is primarily due to the influx of young workers. The Youth Leagues are growing primarily in those districts where our industry is reviving.

You know that the Youth League's chief activity among the workers lies in the factory apprenticeship schools. The relevant figures show that last year, at the time of the Eleventh Congress, we had about 500 factory apprenticeship schools, with a total of 44,000 pupils. By January of this year we had over 700 schools, with a total of 50,000 pupils. The main thing, however, is that the increase comes from working-class members of the Youth League.

Like the previously mentioned front—the rural co-operative front—the youth front must be regarded as being under special threat because the attacks of our Party's enemies are specially persistent in this field. It is on these two fronts that the Party and its organisations must exert all efforts to secure predominating influence.

I pass next to the delegate meetings of working women. This, too, is for our organisations a, perhaps, inconspicuous, but very important, highly essential, transmission mechanism, which links our Party with working-class women. The figures at our disposal show the following: last year, at the time of the Eleventh Congress, we had in 57 gubernias and three regions about 16,000 women delegates, predominantly working women. This year, at the time of the present congress, in the same gubernias and regions, we have not less than 52,000 women delegates, of whom 33,000 are working women. This is a colossal step forward. It must be borne in mind that this is a front to which we have devoted little attention up till now, although it is of colossal importance for us. Since there is progress here, since there is a basis for strengthening this apparatus too, for extending and directing the Party's feelers with the object of undermining the influence of the priests among the youth whom these women are bringing up, it must naturally be one of the Party's immediate tasks to develop the maximum energy also on this front, which is undoubtedly in danger.

I pass to the schools. I refer to the political schools, the Soviet-Party schools and the Communist Universities. These are also an apparatus with the aid of which the Party spreads communist education, trains the educational commanding personnel who sow the seeds of socialism, the seeds of communism, among the working population and thereby link the Party with the working class by spiritual ties. The figures show that last year about 22,000 students attended the Soviet-Party schools. This year there are not less than 33,000, counting also those attending the urban political education schools that are financed by the Central Political Education Department. As regards the Communist Universities, which are of enormous importance for communist education, the increase is small: there were about 6,000 students, now there are 6,400. The Party's task is to exert greater efforts on this front, to intensify activity in training, in forging commanding staffs for communist education.

I pass to the press. The press is not a mass apparatus, a mass organisation, nevertheless, it establishes an imperceptible link between the Party and the working class, a link which is as strong as any mass transmission apparatus. It is said that the press is the sixth power. I do not know whether that is so or not, but that it is a potent one and carries great weight is beyond dispute. The press is a most powerful weapon by means of which the Party daily, hourly, speaks in its own language, the language it needs to use, to the working class. There are no other means of stretching spiritual threads-between the Party and the class, there is no other apparatus of equal flexibility. That is why the Party must pay special attention to this sphere, and it must be said that here we have already achieved some success. Take the newspapers. According to figures issued, last year we had 380 newspapers; this year we have no less than 528. The total circulation last year was 2,500,000, but this was a semi-artificial, not a live circulation. Last summer, when subsidies to the press were reduced and the press was faced with the necessity of standing on its own feet, the circulation dropped to 900,000. At the time of the present congress we have a circulation of about 2,000,000. Thus, it is becoming less artificial, the press is living on its own resources and is a sharp weapon in the hands of the Party; it gives it contact with the masses, otherwise the circulation could not increase and the increase be maintained.

I pass to the next transmission apparatus—the army. People are accustomed to regard the army as an apparatus of defence or attack. I, however, regard the army as a mustering centre of the workers and peasants. The history of all revolutions tells us that the army is the only mustering centre where workers and peasants from different gubernias, and who are strangers to one another, come together, and having come together, hammer out their political opinions. It is not by chance that big mobilisations and important wars always give rise to social conflicts, to mass revolutionary movements, of one kind or another. This occurs because it is in the army that peasants and workers from the most widely separated parts meet one another for the first time. Ordinarily, peasants from Voronezh do not meet Petrograd people, and men from Pskov never see men from Siberia; but in the army they do meet. The army is a school, a mustering centre of the workers and peasants, and from this point of view the Party's strength and influence in the army is of colossal importance, and in this respect the army is a tremendous apparatus that links the Party with the workers and the poor peasants. The army is the only mustering centre for the whole of Russia, for the entire federation, where people of different gubernias and regions come together, learn, and are drawn into political life. In this extremely important mass transmission apparatus the following changes have taken place: at the time of the last congress, Communists in the army numbered 7.5 per cent; this year the figure has reached 10.5 per cent. During this period the army was reduced in size, but in quality it has improved. The Party's influence has grown; in this principal mustering centre, too, we have achieved a victory as regards the growth of communist influence.

Last year, of the commanding staff, taking the latter as a whole, down to platoon commanders, 10 per cent were Communists; this year 13 per cent are Communists. Excluding platoon commanders, the corresponding figures of the proportion of Communists among the commanding staff are: 16 per cent last year, and 24 per cent this year.

Such are the transmission belts, the mass apparatuses, which surround our Party, and by linking it with the working class enable it to become a vanguard and the working class to become an army.

Such is the network of connections and transmission points by means of which the Party, as distinct from a military commanding staff, is transformed into a vanguard, and the working class is transformed from a diffuse mass into a real political army.

The successes shown by our Party in these spheres in strengthening these connections are due not only to the fact that the Party has grown in experience in this matter, and not only to the fact that the means of influencing these transmission apparatuses have been improved, but also to the fact that the general political state of the country has assisted, facilitated this.

Last year we had the famine, the results of the famine, depression in industry, dispersion of the working class, and so forth. This year, on the contrary, we have had a good harvest, a partial revival of industry, a beginning of the process of the re-concentration of the proletariat, and an improvement in the conditions of the workers. The old workers who had been compelled earlier to disperse to the villages are coming back to the mills and factories, and all this is creating a favourable political situation for the Party to conduct extensive work in strengthening the above-mentioned connecting apparatuses.

I pass to the second part of the report: concerning the Party and the state apparatus. The state apparatus is the chief mass apparatus linking the working class in power, represented by its party, with the peasantry, and which enables the working class, represented by its party, to lead the peasantry. I link this part of my report directly with the two well-known articles by Comrade Lenin.[3]

It seemed to many people that the idea Comrade Lenin elaborated in those two articles is entirely new. I think that the idea that is elaborated in those articles is one with which Vladimir Ilyich was already pre-occupied last year. You no doubt remember the political report he made last year. He said that our policy was correct, but the apparatus was not working

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3 **Original editor:** J. V. Stalin is referring to V. I. Lenin's articles "How We Should Reorganise the Workers' and Peasants' Inspection" and "Better Fewer, But Better" (see *Works*, 4th Russ. ed., Vol. 33, pp. 440-60).

properly and, therefore, the car was not running in the right direction, it swerved. I remember that Shlyapnikov, commenting on this, said that the drivers were no good. That is wrong, of course, absolutely wrong. The policy is correct, the driver is excellent, and the type of car is good, it is a Soviet car, but some of the parts of the state car, i.e., some of the officials in the state apparatus, are bad, they are not our men. That is why the car does not run properly and, on the whole, we get a distortion of the correct political line. We get not implementation but distortion. The state apparatus, I repeat, is of the right type, but its component parts are still alien to us, bureaucratic, half tsarist-bourgeois. We want to have a state apparatus that will be a means of serving the mass of the people, but some persons in this state apparatus want to convert it into a source of gain for themselves. That is why the apparatus as a whole is not working properly. If we fail to repair it, the correct political line by itself will not carry us very far; it will be distorted, and there will be a rupture between the working class and the peasantry. We shall have a situation in which, although we shall be at the steering wheel, the car will not obey. There will be a crash. These are the ideas Comrade Lenin elaborated as far back as a year ago, and which only this year he formulated in a harmonious system in the proposal to reorganise the Central Control Commission and the Workers' and Peasants' Inspection in such a way that the reorganised inspection apparatus should be transformed into a device for re-arranging all the parts of the car, for replacing the old useless parts with new ones, which must be done if we really want the car to go in the right direction.

That is the essence of Comrade Lenin's proposal.

I could mention a fact like the inspection of the Orekhovo-Zuyevo Trust, organised on Soviet lines, the function of which was to turn out the utmost quantity of manufactured goods to be supplied to the peasants, whereas this trust, organised on Soviet lines, delivered the goods it manufactured into private hands to the detriment of the state. The car was not going in the right direction.

I could mention the following fact, which Comrade Voroshilov told me the other day. We have an institution that is called the Industrial Bureau. There was an institution like that in the South-East. This apparatus had a staff of about 2,000. The function of this apparatus was to direct

industry in the South-East. Comrade Voroshilov told me in despair that it was a difficult job to manage this apparatus, that to do so they had to set up an additional small apparatus, i.e., to manage the managing apparatus, Well, we found some good men: Voroshilov, Eismont and Mikoyan, who set about making a thorough investigation. And it turned out that instead of a staff of 2,000, one of 170 was enough. And what happened? It turns out that it is working much better than before. Formerly, the apparatus ate up all it produced. Now it is serving industry. A multitude of facts of this kind could be quoted, more than there are hairs on my head.

All these facts point only to one thing, namely, that our Soviet apparatuses, although of the right type, are frequently staffed with people whose habits and traditions upset our essentially correct political line. That is why the whole mechanism is not working properly, and the result is a great political setback, the danger of a rupture between the proletariat and the peasantry.

The matter stands as follows: either we improve the economic apparatuses, reduce their staffs, simplify them, make them cheaper to run, staff them with people who are akin to the Party in spirit, and then we shall achieve the purpose for which we introduced the so-called N.E.P., i.e., industry will turn out the maximum quantity of manufactured goods to supply the countryside and receive the produce it needs, and in this way we shall establish a bond between peasant economy and industrial economy; or we fail to do this, and there will be a crash.

Or again: either the state apparatus itself, the tax-collecting apparatus, will be simplified, reduced, and the thieves and scoundrels driven out of it, and then we shall be able to take less from the peasants than we do now and the national economy will come through the strain; or this apparatus will become an end in itself, as was the case in the South-East, and all that is taken from the peasants will go to maintain the apparatus itself, and then there will be a political crash.

These, I am convinced, are the considerations that guided Vladimir Ilyich when he wrote those articles.

There is yet another side to Comrade Lenin's proposals. His aim is not only to improve the apparatus and to increase the Party's leading

role in it to the utmost—for the Party built the state and it is its duty to improve it; but evidently he also has in mind the moral side. His aim is that there should not be left in the country a single official, no matter how highly-placed, concerning whom the ordinary man might say: he is above the law. This moral aspect is the third aspect of Ilyich's proposal; it is precisely this proposal that sets the task of purging not only the state apparatus, but also the Party, of those traditions and habits of domineering bureaucrats which discredit our Party.

I now pass to the question of choosing staffs, i.e., the question which Ilyich spoke about already at the Eleventh Congress. If it is clear to us that as regards its composition, habits and traditions our state apparatus is no good, and that this threatens to cause a rupture between the workers and the peasants, then it is clear that the Party's leading role must find expression not only in the issue of directives, but also in the appointment to certain posts of people who are capable of understanding our directives and capable of carrying them out honestly. That no impassable borderline can be drawn between the Central Committee's political work and its organisational work needs no proof.

Hardly anyone of you would assert that it is enough to give a correct political line and the matter is finished. No, that is only half the matter. After a correct political line has been given it is necessary to choose staffs in such a way as to fill the various posts with people who are capable of carrying out the directives, able to understand the directives, able to accept these directives as their own and capable of putting them into effect. Otherwise the policy becomes meaningless, becomes mere gesticulation. That is why the Registration and Distribution Department, i.e., the organ of the Central Committee whose function it is to register our principal workers, at the bottom as well as at the top, and to distribute them, acquires immense importance. Until now this department has confined itself to registering and distributing comrades for Uyezd Committees, Gubernia Committees and Regional Committees. Beyond this, to put it bluntly, it did not stick its nose. Now that the war is over and there are no more mass, wholesale mobilisations, now that these have become quite purposeless—as was proved by the mobilisation of a thousand Party workers that was thrust upon the shoulders of the Central Committee

last year, and which failed, because under present conditions, when our work has become more thorough and we are steering towards specialisation, when the qualifications of every single individual must be thoroughly scrutinised, wholesale mobilisations only make things worse and the localities gain nothing from them—now, the Registration and Distribution Department cannot confine itself to the Gubernia and Uyezd Committees.

I could quote several figures. The Eleventh Congress instructed the Central Committee to mobilise not less than a thousand Moscow Party workers. The Central Committee registered for mobilisation about 1,500. Owing to sickness and all sorts of other reasons, only 700 were mobilised; of these, according to the opinions expressed by the districts, 300 proved to be more or less suitable. Thus you have a fact which shows that the old type of wholesale mobilisation, such as was carried out in the past, is no longer suitable, because our Party work has become more thorough, it has become specialised for the different branches of the national economy, and to shift people about from place to place indiscriminately means, firstly, dooming them to idleness, and secondly, failing to satisfy even the minimum requirements of the organisations which demand new workers.

I would like to quote a few figures from a study of our industrial commanding staffs given in the pamphlet[4] by Sorokin, who works in the Registration and Distribution Department. But before quoting these figures I must speak about the reform of this department which the Central Committee carried out in the course of its work on the registration of responsible workers. Formerly, as I have already said, the Registration and Distribution Department confined itself to the Gubernia and Uyezd Committees. Now that our work has become more thorough and construction work is expanding everywhere, it must not confine itself to the Uyezd and Gubernia Committees. It must now cover all branches of the administration without exception, and the entire industrial commanding

4 **Original editor:** J. V. Stalin is referring to the pamphlet *The Commanders of Our Industry (Based on the Data of the Registration and Distribution Department of the Central Committee of the R.C.P.*), Moscow 1923.

personnel by means of which the Party keeps control of our economic apparatus and exercises its leadership. With this in view, the Central Committee decided to enlarge the staffs of the Registration and Distribution Departments both at the centre and in the localities, so that their chiefs could have deputies for the economic and Soviet spheres respectively, and assistants to register commanding staffs according to factories, trusts and business organisations, local and central, in the Soviets and in the Party.

The effect of this reform soon made itself felt. In a short space of time it was possible to register the industrial commanding staff, consisting of about 1,300 factory managers. Of these, 29 per cent are Party members and 70 per cent non-Party. It might seem that non-Party persons predominate in importance in the basic enterprises, but that is not true. It appears that the Communists, the 29 per cent, are managers of the largest enterprises which employ a total of over 300,000 workers, while the non-Party persons, the 70 per cent, are managers of enterprises which embrace not more than 250,000 industrial workers. The small enterprises are managed by non-Party people, the big ones are managed by Party members. Further, among the managers who are Party members, those from the working class outnumber the others by three to one. This shows that unlike the top of the industrial structure—the Supreme Council of National Economy and its departments where there are few Communists, at the bottom, in the basic units, Communists, and primarily workers, have begun to take control of the enterprises. An interesting point is that as regards quality and suitability, there were more proficient factory managers among the Communists than among the non-Party people. This shows that in distributing Communists among the enterprises, the Party is guided not by purely Party considerations, not only by the aim of increasing the Party's influence in the enterprises, but also by practical considerations. Not only the Party as such, but the whole of our economic construction gains by this, for it turns out that there are far more proficient factory managers among the Communists than among the non-Party people.

That, then, is the first experiment in registering our industrial commanding staff, a new experiment, which, as I have said, covers by no means all the enterprises, for the 1,300 factory managers registered

in this pamphlet represent only about half the number of enterprises that still have to be registered. But the experiment shows that this is an inexhaustibly rich field, and that the work of the Registration and Distribution Department must be expanded to the utmost so as to enable the Party to staff the managements of our basic enterprises with Communists and thereby exercise its leadership of the state apparatus.

The comrades are no doubt familiar with the proposals on the organisational question which the Central Committee is submitting for the consideration of the congress, proposals concerning both the Party and the Soviet sides. As regards the Soviet side, about which I have just spoken in the second part of my report, the Central Committee proposes that this question be submitted for detailed discussion to a special committee, which should study both the Party and the Soviet sides of the question and then submit its findings to the congress.

I pass to the third part of the report: on the Party as an organism, and the Party as an apparatus.

First of all I must say a word or two about the numerical strength of our Party. The figures show that last year, at the time of the Eleventh Congress, the Party had a membership of several tens of thousands over 400,000. This year, owing to the subsequent reduction of the Party membership, to the fact that in a number of regions the Party rid itself of non-proletarian elements, the membership has become smaller, it is a little below 400,000. This is not a loss, but a gain, for the social composition of the Party has improved. The most interesting thing in our Party's development as regards the improvement in its social composition is that the former tendency of the non-proletarian elements in the Party to grow faster than the working-class element ceased in the year under review; there was a turn for the better, a definite swing was to be noted towards an increase in the percentage of the working-class element of the membership over the non-proletarian element. This is precisely the success we strove for before the purge, and which we have now achieved. I will not say that we have already done all that should be done in this sphere; that is far from being the case. But we have achieved a turn for the better, we have achieved a certain minimum of uniformity, we have ensured the working-class composition of the Party, and evidently we shall have

to continue this line of further reducing the non-proletarian elements in the Party and further increasing the proletarian elements. The measures by which the Central Committee proposes to achieve a further improvement in the Party membership are outlined in the Central Committee's proposals; I shall not repeat them. Evidently, we shall have to strengthen the barriers against an influx of non-proletarian elements, for at the present time, under the conditions of the N.E.P., when the Party is certainly exposed to the corrupting influence of N.E.P. elements, it is necessary to achieve the utmost uniformity in our Party's membership, or, at all events, a decisive preponderance of working-class over non-working-class elements. The Party must do this, it is its duty to do this, if it wants to remain the party of the working class.

I pass to the question of the life and activities of the Gubernia Committees. Often a note of irony creeps into some of the articles published in the press about the Gubernia Committees; the latter are often ridiculed and their activities are underrated. I, however, must say, comrades, that the Gubernia Committees are the main bulwark of our Party, that without the Gubernia Committees, without their guidance of Soviet and Party work, the Party would have no ground to stand on. In spite of all their shortcomings, in spite of the defects they still suffer from, in spite of the so-called squabbling and wrangling in the Gubernia Committees, taken as a whole they are the main bulwark of our Party.

How are the Gubernia Committees living and developing? About ten months ago I read letters from Gubernia Committees showing that the secretaries of our Gubernia Committees were then still confused about economic matters, that they had not yet adapted themselves to the new conditions. I have also read letters written ten months later; I read them with pleasure, with joy, because it is evident from them that the Gubernia Committees have matured, they have got into their stride, they have taken up construction work in earnest, they have put the local budgets in order, they have taken control of local economic development, they have really managed to take the lead of the entire economic and political life of their respective gubernias. This, comrades, is a great gain. The Gubernia Committees undoubtedly have their defects, but I must say that if they had not gained this Party and economic experience, if

there had not been this tremendous step forward in the sense of the growth of maturity of the Gubernia Committees in directing local economic and political life, we could not even dream of the Party ever undertaking the leadership of the state apparatus.

There is talk about squabbling and friction in the Gubernia Committees. I must say that in addition to their bad sides, squabbling and friction have their good sides. The chief cause of the squabbling and wrangling is the effort of the Gubernia Committees to create within themselves a united, compact core capable of directing affairs smoothly. This aim and striving are quite healthy and legitimate, although they are often pursued by methods that are out of harmony with the aim. This is due to the diversity of our Party membership? to the fact that we have in our Party old hands and new, proletarians and intellectuals, people from the centre and from the border districts, and people of various nationalities; and all these diverse elements in the Gubernia Committees introduce there diverse customs and traditions and this gives rise to friction and squabbling. For all that, although it assumes impermissible forms, nine-tenths of this squabbling and friction is prompted by the healthy striving to create a solid core capable of directing the work. It needs no proof that if there were no such leading groups in the Gubernia Committees, if things were so arranged that the "good" and the "bad" counter-balanced each other, there would be no leadership in the gubernias, the tax in kind would not be collected, and we would be unable to carry through any campaigns. Such is the healthy side of the squabbling, which must not be obscured by the fact that it sometimes assumes ugly forms. This does not mean, of course, that the Party must not combat squabbling, especially when it arises on personal grounds.

That is how matters stand with the Gubernia Committees.

Below the Gubernia Committees, however, the Party, unfortunately, is not yet as strong as it might appear to be. Our Party's chief weakness, as far as the apparatus is concerned, lies precisely in the weakness of our Uyezd Committees, in the absence of reserves, namely, of uyezd secretaries. I think that the reason why we have not yet taken complete control of the principal apparatuses which link our Party with the working class—the apparatuses I spoke about in the first part of my report (I have

in mind the lower Party units, the co-operatives, the women's delegate meetings, the Youth Leagues, etc.), the reason why the gubernia organs have not yet taken complete control of these apparatuses, is precisely that we are too weak in the uyezds.

I think that this is a fundamental question.

I think that one of our Party's fundamental tasks is to set up under the auspices of the Central Committee a school for training uyezd secretaries from among the most devoted and capable people, from among the peasants and workers. If the Party could by next year build around itself a reserve of 200 or 300 uyezd secretaries who could be sent to assist the Gubernia Committees in directing activities in the uyezds, it would thereby ensure guidance of all the mass transmission apparatuses. There would not then be a single consumers' co-operative, a single rural co-operative, a single factory or works committee, a single women's delegate meeting, a single Youth League unit, a single mass apparatus in which the Party's influence would not predominate.

Now about the regional organs. The past year has shown that the Party and the Central Committee were right in setting up regional organs, partly elected and partly appointed. When discussing the general question of delimiting administrative areas, the Central Committee arrived at the conclusion that in building up the regional Party organs, the Party must pass gradually from the principle of appointment to the principle of election, having in mind that such a change will undoubtedly create a favourable moral atmosphere around the Regional Party Committees and make it easier for the Central Committee to lead the Party.

I pass to the question of improving the Party's central organs. You have no doubt read the Central Committee's proposal that the functions of the Secretariat of the Central Committee should be quite clearly and precisely delimited from the functions of the Organising Bureau and of the Political Bureau. It is scarcely necessary to deal with this question separately, because it is perfectly clear. But there is one question—the enlargement of the Central Committee itself—which we have discussed several times inside the Central Committee, and which at one time gave rise to serious controversy. Some members of the Central Committee are

of the opinion that the Central Committee should not be enlarged, but, on the contrary, reduced. I shall not give their reasons; let the comrades speak for themselves. I shall briefly give the reasons in favour of enlarging the Central Committee.

The present state of affairs in the central apparatus of our Party is as follows: we have 27 members on the Central Committee. The Central Committee meets once every two months; but within the Central Committee there is a core of 10-15 persons who have become so skilled in the matter of directing the political and economic activities of our organs that they are in danger of becoming something in the nature of high priests in the art of leadership. This may be a good thing, but it has a very dangerous side: these comrades who have acquired great experience in leadership may become infected by self-conceit, may isolate themselves and become divorced from work among the masses. If some members of the Central Committee, or, say, the core of fifteen, have acquired such experience and have become so skilled that in drawing up instructions they make no mistakes in nine cases out of ten, that is a very good thing. But if they have not around themselves a new generation of future leaders who are closely connected with the work in the localities, all the chances are that these highly-skilled men will become ossified and divorced from the masses.

Secondly, the core within the Central Committee that has gained great experience in the art of leadership is growing old; we must have people to take their place. You are aware of the state of Vladimir Ilyich's health. You know that the other members, too, of the main core of the Central Committee are pretty well worn out. The trouble is that we have not yet the new cadres to take their place. The training of Party leaders is a very difficult matter, it takes years, 5 to 10 years, more than 10. It is much easier to conquer a country with the aid of Comrade Budyonny's cavalry than to train two or three leaders from the rank and file capable of becoming real leaders of the country. And it is high time to think about training young leaders to take the place of the old. There is only one way of doing this, namely, to draw new, fresh forces into the work of the Central Committee and to promote them in the course of work, to promote the most capable and independent of them, those whose heads are screwed on in

the right way. Leaders cannot be trained by means of books. Books help to make progress, but they do not create leaders. Leading workers mature only in the course of the work itself. Only by electing new members to the Central Committee, by letting them experience the entire burden of leadership, shall we be able to train the replacements whom we need so much in the present state of things. That is why I think that the congress would make a profound mistake if it disagreed with the Central Committee's proposal that it be enlarged to at least forty members.

In concluding my report I must mention a fact which is not conspicuous—perhaps because it is too well known—but which should be mentioned because it is very important. I mean the unity of our Party, that unexampled solidarity which enabled our Party to avoid a split during such a turn as the introduction of the N.E.P. Not a single party in the world, not a single political party, could have made such an abrupt turn without confusion, without a split, without some group or other falling out of the cart. It is well known that when a turn like this is made, some group or other falls out of the cart, and confusion, if not a split, begins in the party. We had such a turn in the history of our Party in 1907 and 1908, when, after 1905 and 1906, having been accustomed to revolutionary struggle, we did not want to go over to humdrum legal activity, we did not want to go into the Duma, to make use of legal institutions, to strengthen our positions in legal organisations and, in general, refused to adopt new methods. This turn was not as abrupt as the introduction of the N.E.P., but, evidently because we were then still a young party and had not yet gained experience in manoeuvring, the result was that two whole groups fell out of the cart at that time. Our present turn towards the N.E.P. after our policy of the offensive is an abrupt turn. And yet, during such a turn, when the proletariat was obliged temporarily to give up the offensive and retire to its former positions, was obliged to turn towards the peasantry in the rear in order not to lose contact with it, when the proletariat had to think about strengthening, reinforcing, its reserves in the East and in the West—during such an abrupt turn the Party not only avoided a split, but made the turn without confusion.

It testifies to the Party's unexampled flexibility, unity and solidarity.

It is a guarantee that our Party will triumph.

Last year our enemies croaked about disintegration in our Party, and they are croaking about it this year too. Nevertheless, while entering on the New Economic Policy we retained our positions, we have kept the threads of the national economy in our hands, and the Party continues to march forward, united to a man, whereas it is our enemies who are actually undergoing disintegration and liquidation. You have no doubt heard, comrades, that a congress of the Socialist-Revolutionaries took place in Moscow recently.[5] That congress decided to appeal to our congress to open the door of our Party to the Socialist-Revolutionaries. You have no doubt also heard that Georgia, the former citadel of Menshevism, where the Menshevik Party has no less than 10,000 members, that stronghold of Menshevism is already collapsing and about 2,000 members have left the Menshevik ranks. That would seem to show that it is not our Party that is disintegrating, but that it is our enemies who are disintegrating. And lastly, you no doubt know that one of the most honest and practical of the Menshevik leaders—Comrade Martynov—has left the ranks of the Mensheviks, and the Central Committee has accepted him as a member of our Party and moves that this congress endorse this acceptance. (*Some applause.*) All these facts show, comrades, not that things are bad in our Party, but that disintegration has set in among our enemies all along the line, while our Party has remained solid and united, it has stood the test of a momentous turn, and is marching forward with flying colours. (*Loud and prolonged applause.*)

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5 **Original editor:** The All-Russian Congress of Rank-and-File Members of the Socialist-Revolutionary Party was held in Moscow on March 18-20, 1923. The congress admitted that the Socialist-Revolutionary Party had definitely disintegrated, and declared that its leading bodies in emigration had no right to speak in the name of a non-existent Party.

2. Reply to the Discussion on the Central Committee's Organisational Report

April 19

Comrades, my reply to the discussion will consist of two parts. In the first part I shall deal with the Central Committee's organising work, since it was criticised by speakers. In the second part I shall deal with those of the Central Committee's organisational proposals which speakers did not criticise, and with which the congress evidently agrees.

First I shall say a few words about the critics of the Central Committee's report.

About Lutovinov. He is displeased with the regime in our Party: there is no free speech in our Party, there is no legality, no democracy. He knows, of course, that never in the past six years has the Central Committee prepared for a congress so democratically as it prepared for this one. He knows that immediately after the February Plenum, the members of the Central Committee and the candidate members of the Central Committee dispersed to all parts of our federation and delivered reports on the work of the Central Committee. He, Lutovinov, must know that four issues of the Discussion Sheet[6] have already appeared, and in them the Central Committee's activities are analysed and interpreted quite at random, I repeat, at random. But that is not enough for Lutovinov. He wants "real" democracy; he wants to have at least all the major questions discussed in all the units, from the bottom up; he wants the whole Party to be stirred up on every question and to take part in the discussion of it. But, comrades, now that we are in power, now that we have no fewer than 400,000 members and no fewer than 20,000 Party units, I do not know what that sort of thing would lead to. The Party would be transformed into a debating society that would be eternally talking and would decide

6 **Original editor:** The Discussion Sheet was published as a supplement to *Pravda* before the Twelfth Congress of the R.C.P.(B.) under the heading "Pre-Congress Discussion Sheet." Five issues appeared in all, four before the congress and one while the congress was in session (*Pravda*, Nos. 46, 65, 75, 82 and 86, of March 1 and 24 and April 5, 15 and 20, 1923).

nothing. But above all our Party must be a party of action, for we are in power.

Furthermore, Lutovinov forgets that although we are in power within the federation and enjoy all the advantages of legality, from the international standpoint, however, we are going through a period similar to that which we went through in 1912, when the Party was semi-legal, or rather, illegal, when the Party had a few legal footholds in the shape of the group in the Duma, in the shape of legal newspapers and clubs, but at the same time was surrounded by enemies, and was striving to accumulate forces in order to push forward, and to enlarge the legal framework. We are now going through a similar period on an international scale. We are surrounded by enemies—that is evident to everybody. The imperialist wolves who surround us are wide awake. Not a moment passes without our enemies trying to capture some gap through which to crawl and do us damage. There are no grounds for asserting that the enemies who surround us are not conducting some kind of preparatory work for a blockade, or for intervention. Such is the situation. Is it possible in such a situation to discuss all questions of war and peace in public? To discuss a question at meetings of 20,000 Party units is tantamount to discussing it in public. What would have become of us had we discussed in public all our preliminary work for the Genoa Conference? We would have gone down with a crash. It must be borne in mind that in a situation, when we are surrounded by enemies, a sudden stroke, an unexpected manoeuvre on our part, swift action, decides everything. What would have become of us if instead of discussing our political campaign at the Lausanne Conference in a narrow circle of trusted Party people, we had discussed all this work publicly, had exposed our hand? Our enemies would have taken all the weak and strong points into account, they would have defeated our campaign, and we would have left Lausanne in disgrace. What would become of us if we were to discuss publicly in advance the questions of war and peace, the most important of all important questions? For, I repeat, to discuss questions at meetings of 20,000 units is tantamount to discussing them in public. We would be smashed in no time. It is obvious, comrades, that for both organisational and political reasons Lutovinov's so-called democracy is a fantasy, is

democratic Manilovism. It is false and dangerous. Lutovinov's road is not ours.

I pass on to Osinsky. He pounced upon the phrase in my statement that in enlarging the Central Committee we must get independent people on it. Yes, yes, Sorin, independent, but not freelances. Osinsky thinks that on this point I established some sort of a link with Osinsky, with democratic centralism.[7] I did say that the Central Committee should be reinforced with comrades who are independent. I did not say independent of what, knowing in advance that it is unwise to deal exhaustively with all points in the main speech, that something should be left for the speech in reply to the discussion. (*Laughter. Applause.*) We need independent people in the Central Committee, but not people independent of Leninism—no comrades, God forbid! We need independent people, people free from personal influences, free from the habits and traditions of the internal struggle in the Central Committee that we have acquired, and which sometimes cause anxiety in the Central Committee. You remember Comrade Lenin's article. He says in it that we are faced with the prospect of a split. Since that passage in Comrade Lenin's article might have caused the organisations to think that a split is already maturing in the Party, the members of the Central Committee unanimously decided to dispel doubts that might arise and said that there is no split in the Central Committee, which is quite in accordance with the facts. But the Central Committee also said that the prospect of a split is not excluded. That, too, is quite correct. In the course of its work during the past six years the Central Committee has acquired (and was bound to acquire) certain habits and traditions of struggle within it which sometimes create an atmosphere that is not quite good. I felt this atmosphere at one of the last plenary meetings of the Central Committee in February, and I remarked at the time that the intervention of people from the districts often decides the whole matter. We need people who are independent of those traditions and of those personal influences in order that, on becoming

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7 **Original editor:** J. V. Stalin is referring to the anti-Party group known as the "Democratic Centralism" group (see *History of the C.P.S.U.(B.), Short Course*, Moscow 1952, pp. 370, 390).

members of the Central Committee and bringing into it the experience of practical work and contact with the districts, they should serve as the mortar, so to speak, to cement the Central Committee as a single and indivisible collective body leading our Party. We need such independent comrades, free from the old traditions that have become established in the Central Committee, precisely as people who will introduce a new, refreshing element that will cement the Central Committee, and avert any possibility of a split within it. That is what I meant when I spoke about independent people.

Comrades, I cannot ignore the thrust that Osinsky made at Zinoviev. He praised Comrade Stalin, he praised Kamenev, but he kicked Zinoviev, calculating that it will be enough to get rid of one for the time being, and that the turn of the others will come later. He has set out to break up the core that has been formed within the Central Committee in the course of years of work in order gradually, step by step, to break up the whole. If Osinsky seriously thinks of pursuing that aim, if he seriously thinks of launching such attacks against individual members of the core of our Central Committee, I must warn him that he will collide with a wall against which, I am afraid, he will break his head.

Lastly, about Mdivani. May I be permitted to say a few words about this question, which has bored the whole congress. He talked about the Central Committee's vacillations. He said that one day it decides to unite the economic efforts of the three Transcaucasian republics, the next day it decides that these republics should unite in a federation, and the day after that it takes a third decision that all the Soviet republics should unite in a Union of Republics. That is what he calls the Central Committee's vacillations. Is that right? No, comrades, that is not vacillation, it is system. The independent republics first drew together on an economic basis. That step was taken as far back as 1921. After it was found that the experiment of drawing together the republics was producing good results the next step was taken—federation, particularly in a place like Transcaucasia, where it is impossible to dispense with a special organ of national peace. As you know, Transcaucasia is a country where there were Tatar-Armenian massacres while still under the tsar, and war under the Mussavatists, Dashnaks and Mensheviks. To put a stop to that strife an or-

gan of national peace was needed, i.e., a supreme authority whose word would carry weight. It was absolutely impossible to create such an organ of national peace without the participation of representatives of the Georgian nation. And so, several months after the economic efforts were united, the next step was taken—a federation of republics, and a year after that yet another step was taken, marking the final stages in the process of uniting the republics—a Union of Republics was formed. Where is there vacillation in that? It is the system of our national policy. Mdivani has simply failed to grasp the essence of our Soviet policy, although he regards himself as an old Bolshevik.

He asked a number of questions, insinuating that the major questions concerning the national aspect of affairs in Transcaucasia, and particularly in Georgia, were decided either by the Central Committee or by individuals. The fundamental question in Transcaucasia is the question of the federation of Transcaucasia. Permit me to read a small document that gives the history of the directive of the Central Committee of the R.C.P. on the Transcaucasian Federation.

On November 28, 1921, Comrade Lenin sent me a draft of his proposal for the formation of a federation of the Transcaucasian republics. It states:

"1. to recognise the federation of the Transcaucasian republics as absolutely correct in principle and its realisation as absolutely necessary, although it would be premature to apply it in practice immediately, i.e., it would require several weeks for discussion and propaganda, and for carrying it through from below;

"2. to instruct the Central Committees of Georgia, Armenia and Azerbaijan to carry out this decision."

I wrote to Comrade Lenin and suggested that there should be no hurry about this, that we ought to wait a little to give the local people a certain period of time to carry through the federation. I wrote to him:

"Comrade Lenin, I am not opposed to your resolution, if you agree to accept the following amendment: instead of the words 'would require several weeks for discussion,' in Point 1, say: 'would require a certain period of time for discussion,' and so on, in accordance with your resolu-

tion. The point is that in Georgia it is impossible to 'carry through' federation 'from below' by 'Soviet procedure' in 'several weeks,' since the Soviets in Georgia are only just beginning to be organised. They are not yet completely built. A month ago they did not exist at all, and to call a Congress of Soviets there in 'several weeks' is inconceivable; and, well, a Transcaucasian federation without Georgia would be a federation on paper only. I think we must allow two or three months for the idea of federation to triumph among the broad masses of Georgia. *Stalin."*

Comrade Lenin answered: "I accept this amendment."

Next day that proposal was adopted by the votes of Lenin, Trotsky, Kamenev, Molotov and Stalin. Zinoviev was absent, his place was taken by Molotov. The decision was adopted by the Political Bureau at the end of 1921, as you see, unanimously. The struggle which the group of Georgian Communists headed by Mdivani is waging against the Central Committee's directive concerning federation dates back to that time. You see, comrades, that the case is not as Mdivani presented it. I quote this document against those unseemly insinuations which Mdivani made here.

The second question: how is the fact to be explained that the group of comrades headed by Mdivani has been recalled by the Central Committee of the Party, what is the reason of that? There are two chief and, at the same time, formal reasons. I must say this because reproaches have been levelled at the Central Committee, and at me in particular.

The first reason is that the Mdivani group has no influence in its own Georgian Communist Party, that it is repudiated by the Georgian Communist Party itself. This Party has held two congresses: the first congress was held at the beginning of 1922, and the second was held at the beginning of 1923. At both congresses the Mdivani group, and its idea of rejecting federation, was emphatically opposed by its own Party. At the first congress, I think, out of a total of 122 votes he obtained somewhere about 18; and at the second congress, out of a total of 144 votes he obtained about 20. Mdivani was persistently refused election to the Central Committee; his position was systematically rejected. On the first occasion, at the beginning of 1922, we in the Central Committee brought pressure to bear upon the Communist Party of Georgia and compelled it

against its will to accept these old comrades (Mdivani is certainly an old comrade, and so is Makharadze), thinking that the two groups, the majority and the minority, would eventually work together. In the interval between the first and second congresses, however, there were a number of conferences, city and all-Georgian, at which the Mdivani group was everywhere severely trounced by its own Party, until finally, at the last congress, Mdivani barely scraped together 18 votes out of 140.

The Transcaucasian Federation is an organisation that affects not only Georgia, but the whole of Transcaucasia. As a rule, the Georgian Party congress is followed by a Transcaucasian congress. There we have the same picture. At the last Transcaucasian congress, out of a total of, I think, 244 votes, Mdivani barely obtained about 10 votes. Such are the facts. What is the Central Committee of the Party to do in such a situation, where the Party, the Georgian organisation itself, cannot stand the Mdivani group? I understand our policy in the national question to be a policy of concessions to non-Russians and to national prejudices. That policy is undoubtedly correct. But is it permissible to go on without end thwarting the will of the Party in which the Mdivani group has to work? In my opinion it is not. On the contrary, we must as far as possible harmonise our actions with the will of the Party in Georgia. That is what the Central Committee did when it recalled certain members of this group.

The second reason that prompted the Central Committee to recall certain comrades of this group is that they repeatedly disobeyed the decisions of the Central Committee of the R.C.P. I have already told you the history of the decision concerning federation; I have already said that without this organ national peace is impossible; that in Transcaucasia only the Soviet Government succeeded in establishing national peace by creating the federation. That is why we in the Central Committee regarded that decision as being absolutely binding. But what do we see? That the Mdivani group disobeys that decision. More than that, it opposes it. That has been established both by Comrade Dzerzhinsky's commission and by the Kamenev-Kuibyshev commission. Even now, after the decision of the March Plenum concerning Georgia, Mdivani is con-

tinuing to oppose federation. What is that if not contempt for the Central Committee's decisions?

Such are the circumstances that compelled the Central Committee of the Party to recall Mdivani.

Mdivani tries to make it appear that, in spite of his recall, he is the victor. If that is victory, I don't know what defeat is. You know, of course, that Don Quixote, of blessed memory, also regarded himself as the victor when he was knocked head over heels by windmill sails. I have a notion that certain comrades who are working in a certain piece of Soviet territory called Georgia are not all there in their upper storeys.

I pass on to Comrade Makharadze. He declared here that he is an old Bolshevik in the national question, that he belongs to the school of Lenin. That is not true, comrades. At the conference held in April 1917,[8] Comrade Lenin and I fought against Comrade Makharadze. He was then against the self-determination of nations, against the basis of our programme, against the right of nations to exist as independent states. He upheld that standpoint and fought the Party. Later he changed his opinion (that, of course, is to his credit), but still, he should not have forgotten this! He is not an old Bolshevik in the national question, but rather a fairly young one.

Comrade Makharadze put to me a parliamentary interpellation: do I admit, or does the Central Committee admit, that the organisation of the Georgian Communists is a real organisation which is to be trusted, and if so, does the Central Committee agree to this organisation having the right to raise questions and put forward its proposals? If all that is admitted, does the Central Committee consider that the regime that has been established there, in Georgia, is intolerable?

I shall answer this parliamentary interpellation.

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8 **Original editor:** This refers to the Seventh (April) All-Russian Conference of the R.S.D.L.P.(B.) which took place on April 24-29, 1917. At this conference J. V. Stalin delivered a report on the national question. The resolution on this report was drafted by V. I. Lenin. (For the resolutions of the congress see "Resolutions and Decisions of C.P.S.U.(B.) Congresses, Conferences and Central Committee Plenums," Part I, 1941, pp. 225-39.)

Of course, the Central Committee trusts the Communist Party of Georgia—whom else should it trust?! The Communist Party of Georgia represents the essence, the best elements, of the Georgian people, without whom it would be impossible to govern Georgia. But every organisation consists of a majority and a minority. We have not a single organisation in which there is not a majority and a minority. And in practice we see that the Central Committee of the Communist Party of Georgia consists of a majority which is carrying out the Party line, and of a minority which does not always carry out this line. Obviously, we are referring to trust in the organisation as represented by its majority.

The second question: Have the national Central Committees the right to initiative, to raise questions; have they the right to make proposals?

Of course they have. That is obvious. What I do not understand is, why did Comrade Makharadze not present us with any facts to prove that the Central Committee of the Communist Party of Georgia is not allowed to raise questions, is not allowed to make proposals and to discuss them? I am not aware of any such facts. I think that Comrade Makharadze would submit such materials to the Central Committee if he had any at all.

The third question: can the regime that has been created in Georgia be tolerated?

Unfortunately, the question lacks concreteness. What regime? If he means the regime under which the Soviet power in Georgia has recently been ejecting the nobles from their nests, and also Mensheviks and counter-revolutionaries, if he means that regime, then, in my opinion, there is nothing bad about it. It is our Soviet regime. If, however, he means that the Transcaucasian Territorial Committee has created conditions making it impossible for the Communist Party of Georgia to develop, I have no facts to show that this is so. The Georgian Central Committee that was elected at the last congress of the Georgian Communist Party by 110 votes against 18, did not raise this question with us. It is working in complete harmony with the Transcaucasian Territorial Committee of our Party. If there is a small group, a trend, in short, members

of the Party, who are dissatisfied with the Party regime, they ought to submit the relevant material to the Central Committee. Two commissions have already been to Georgia to investigate such complaints, one that of Dzerzhinsky, and the other that of Kamenev and Kuibyshev. We can set up a third commission if need be.

With this I conclude the first part of my reply to the discussion on the Central Committee's organisational activities during the past year.

I pass on to the second part, to the proposals on organisation which the Central Committee has submitted for the consideration of the congress. As far as I know, none of the speakers has criticised any of the proposals submitted by the Central Committee. I interpret this as an expression of complete agreement with the proposals the Central Committee has submitted for your consideration. Nevertheless, I would like to help, and to move a number of amendments. I shall submit these amendments to the committee which the Central Committee thinks should be set up, to the Organisational Committee, in which Comrade Molotov will be in charge of the main work as regards Party affairs, and Comrade Dzerzhinsky as regards Soviet affairs.

The first amendment is that the number of candidate members of the Central Committee be increased from five to at least fifteen.

The second amendment is that special attention be devoted to strengthening and enlarging the Registration and Distribution departments both at the top and bottom levels, because these bodies are now acquiring enormous, first-rate importance, because they are the most effective means by which the Party can keep hold of all the threads of our economy and of the Soviet apparatus.

The third amendment is that the congress should approve the proposal to set up under the auspices of the Central Committee a school for training uyezd secretaries, so that by the end of the year the Gubernia Committees may have 200 to 300 uyezd secretaries at their disposal.

And the fourth amendment concerns the press. I have nothing concrete to propose on this point, but I would like the congress to pay particular attention to the task of raising the press to the proper level. It is making progress, it has made big progress, but not as much as is needed.

The press must grow day in and day out—it is our Party's sharpest and most powerful weapon.

In conclusion, a few words about the present congress. Comrades, I must say that I have not for a long time seen a congress so united and inspired by a single idea as this one is. I regret that Comrade Lenin is not here. If he were here he would be able to say: "I tended the Party for twenty-five years and made it great and strong." (*Prolonged applause.*)

3. Report on National Factors in Party and State Affairs

April 23

Comrades, this is the third time since the October Revolution that we are discussing the national question: the first time was at the Eighth Congress, the second was at the Tenth, and the third at the Twelfth. Does this indicate that some fundamental change has taken place in our views on the national question? No, our fundamental outlook on the national question has remained what it was before and after the October Revolution. But since the Tenth Congress the international situation has changed in that the heavy reserves of the revolution which the countries of the East now constitute have acquired greater importance. That is the first point. The second point is that since the Tenth Congress our Party has also witnessed certain changes in the internal situation in connection with the New Economic Policy. All these new factors must be taken into account and the conclusions must be drawn from them. It is in this sense that it can be said that the national question is being presented at the Twelfth Congress in a new way.

The international significance of the national question. You know, comrades, that by the will of history we, the Soviet federation, now represent the advanced detachment of the world revolution. You know that we were the first to breach the general capitalist front, that it has been our destiny to be ahead of all others. You know that in our advance we got as far as Warsaw, that we then retreated and entrenched ourselves in the positions we considered strongest. From that moment we passed to the New Economic Policy, from that moment we took into account the

slowing down of the international revolutionary movement, and from that moment our policy changed from the offensive to the defensive. We could not advance after we had suffered a reverse at Warsaw (let us not hide the truth); we could not advance, for we would have run the risk of being cut off from the rear, which in our case is a peasant rear; and, lastly, we would have run the risk of advancing too far ahead of the reserves of the revolution with which destiny has provided us, the reserves in the West and the East. That is why we made a turn towards the New Economic Policy within the country, and towards a slower advance outside; for we decided that it was necessary to have a respite, to heal our wounds, the wounds of the advanced detachment, the proletariat, to establish contact with the peasant rear and to conduct further work among the reserves, which were lagging behind us—the reserves in the West and the heavy reserves in the East which are the main rear of world capitalism. It is these reserves—heavy reserves, which at the same time are the rear of world imperialism—that we have in mind when discussing the national question.

One thing or the other: either we succeed in stirring up, in revolutionising, the remote rear of imperialism—the colonial and semi-colonial countries of the East—and thereby hasten the fall of imperialism; or we fail to do so, and thereby strengthen imperialism and weaken the force of our movement. That is how the question stands.

The fact of the matter is that the whole East regards our Union of Republics as an experimental field. Either we find a correct practical solution of the national question within the framework of this Union, either we here, within the framework of this Union, establish truly fraternal relations and true co-operation among the peoples—in which case the whole East will see that our federation is the banner of its liberation, is its advanced detachment, in whose footsteps it must follow—and that will be the beginning of the collapse of world imperialism. Or we commit a blunder here, undermine the confidence of the formerly oppressed peoples in the proletariat of Russia, and deprive the Union of Republics of the power of attraction which it possesses in the eyes of the East—in which case imperialism will win and we shall lose.

Therein lies the international significance of the national question.

The national question is also of importance for us from the standpoint of the internal situation, not only because the former dominant nation numbers about 75,000,000 and the other nations 65,000,000 (not a small figure, anyway), and not only because the formerly oppressed nationalities inhabit areas that are the most essential for our economic development and the most important from the standpoint of military strategy, but above all because during the past two years we have introduced what is known as the N.E.P., as a result of which Great-Russian nationalism has begun to grow and become more pronounced, the Smena-Vekhist idea has come into being, and one can discern the desire to accomplish by peaceful means what Denikin failed to accomplish, i.e., to create the so-called "one and indivisible."

Thus, as a result of the N.E.P., a new force is arising in the internal life of our country, namely, Great-Russian chauvinism, which entrenches itself in our institutions, which penetrates not only the Soviet institutions, but also the Party institutions, and which is to be found in all parts of our federation. Consequently, if we do not resolutely combat this new force, if we do not cut it off at the root—and the N.E.P. conditions foster it—we run the risk of being confronted by a rupture between the proletariat of the former dominant nation and the peasants of the formerly oppressed nations—which will mean undermining the dictatorship of the proletariat.

But the N.E.P. fosters not only Great-Russian chauvinism—it also fosters local chauvinism, especially in those republics where there are several nationalities. I have in mind Georgia, Azerbaijan, Bukhara and partly Turkestan; in each of these there are several nationalities, the advanced elements of which may soon begin to compete among themselves for supremacy. Of course, this local chauvinism as regards its strength is not such a danger as Great-Russian chauvinism. But it is a danger nevertheless, for it threatens to convert some of the republics into arenas of national squabbling and to weaken the bonds of internationalism there.

Such are the international and internal circumstances that make the national question one of great, of first-rate, importance in general, and at the present moment in particular.

What is the class essence of the national question? Under the present conditions of Soviet development, the class essence of the national question lies in the establishment of correct mutual relations between the proletariat of the former dominant nation and the peasantry of the formerly oppressed nationalities. The question of the bond has been more than sufficiently discussed here, but when this question was discussed in connection with the report of Kamenev, Kalinin, Sokolnikov, Rykov and Trotsky, what was mainly in mind was the relations between the Russian proletariat and the Russian peasantry. Here, in the national sphere, we have a more complex mechanism. Here we are concerned with establishing correct mutual relations between the proletariat of the former dominant nation, which is the most cultured section of the proletariat in our entire federation, and the peasantry, mainly of the formerly oppressed nationalities. This is the class essence of the national question. If the proletariat succeeds in establishing with the peasantry of the other nationalities relations that can eradicate all remnants of mistrust towards everything Russian, a mistrust implanted and fostered for decades by the policy of tsarism—if, moreover, the Russian proletariat succeeds in establishing complete mutual understanding and confidence, in effecting a genuine alliance not only between the proletariat and the Russian peasantry, but also between the proletariat and peasantry of the formerly oppressed nationalities, the problem will be solved. To achieve this, proletarian power must become as dear to the peasantry of the other nationalities as it is to the Russian peasantry. And in order that Soviet power may become dear also to the peasants of these nationalities, it must be understood by these peasants, it must function in their native languages, the schools and governmental bodies must be staffed with local people who know the language, habits, customs and manner of life of the non-Russian nationalities. Soviet power, which until very recently was Russian power, will become a power which is not merely Russian but inter-national, a power dear to the peasants of the formerly oppressed nationalities, only when and to the degree that the institutions and governmental bodies in the republics of these countries begin to speak and function in the native languages.

That is one of the fundamentals of the national question in general, and under Soviet conditions in particular.

What is the characteristic feature of the solution of the national question at the present moment, in 1923? What form have the problems requiring solution in the national sphere assumed in 1923? The form of establishing co-operation between the peoples of our federation in the economic, military and political spheres. I have in mind inter-national relations. The national question, at the basis of which lie the tasks of establishing correct relations between the proletariat of the former dominant nation and the peasantry of the other nationalities, assumes at the present time the special form of establishing the co-operation and fraternal co-existence of those nations which were formerly disunited and which are now uniting in a single state.

Such is the essence of the national question in the form it has assumed in 1923.

The concrete form of this state union is the Union of Republics, which we already discussed at the Congress of Soviets at the end of last year, and which we then established.

The basis of this Union is the voluntary consent and the juridical equality of the members of the Union. Voluntary consent and equality—because our national programme starts out from the clause on the right of nations to exist as independent states, what was formerly called the right to self-determination. Proceeding from this, we must definitely say that no union of peoples into a single state can be durable unless it is based on absolutely voluntary consent, unless the peoples themselves wish to unite. The second basis is the juridical equality of the peoples which form the Union. That is natural. I am not speaking of actual equality—I shall come to that later—for the establishment of actual equality between nations which have forged ahead and backward nations is a very complicated, very difficult, matter that must take a number of years. I am speaking now about juridical equality. This equality finds expression in the fact that all the republics, in this case the four republics: Transcaucasia, Byelorussia, the Ukraine and the R.S.F.S.R., forming the Union, enjoy the benefits of the Union to an equal degree and at the same time

to an equal degree forgo certain of their independent rights in favour of the Union. If the R.S.F.S.R., the Ukraine, Byelorussia and the Transcaucasian Republic are not each to have its own People's Commissariat of Foreign Affairs, it is obvious that the abolition of these Commissariats and the establishment of a common Commissariat of Foreign Affairs for the Union of Republics will entail a certain restriction of the independence which these republics formerly enjoyed, and this restriction will be equal for all the republics forming the Union. Obviously, if these republics formerly had their own People's Commissariats of Foreign Trade, and these Commissariats are now abolished both in the R.S.F.S.R. and in the other republics in order to make way for a common Commissariat of Foreign Trade for the Union of Republics, this too will involve a certain restriction of the independence formerly enjoyed in full measure, but now curtailed in favour of the common Union, and so on, and so forth. Some people ask a purely scholastic question, namely: do the republics remain independent after uniting? That is a scholastic question. Their independence is restricted, for every union involves a certain restriction of the former rights of the parties to the union. But the basic elements of independence of each of these republics certainly remain, if only because every republic retains the right to secede from the Union at its own discretion.

Thus, the concrete form the national question has assumed under the conditions at present prevailing in our country is how to achieve the co-operation of the peoples in economic, foreign and military affairs. We must unite the republics along these lines into a single union called the U.S.S.R. Such are the concrete forms the national question has assumed at the present time.

But that is easier said than done. The fact of the matter is that under the conditions prevailing in our country, there are, in addition to the factors conducive to the union of the peoples into one state, a number of factors which hinder this union.

You know what the conducive factors are: first of all, the economic coming together of the peoples that was established prior to Soviet power and which was consolidated by Soviet power; a certain division of labour between the peoples, established before our time, but consolidated by us,

by the Soviet power. That is the basic factor conducive to the union of the republics into a Union. The nature of Soviet power must be regarded as the second factor conducive to union. That is natural. Soviet power is the power of the workers, the dictatorship of the proletariat, which by its very nature disposes the labouring elements of the republics and peoples which form the Union to live in friendly relations with one another. That is natural. And the third factor conducive to union is the imperialist encirclement, forming an environment in which the Union of Republics is obliged to operate.

But there are also factors which hinder, which impede, this union. The principal force impeding the union of the republics into a single union is that force which, as I have said, is growing in our country under the conditions of the N.E.P.: Great-Russian chauvinism. It is by no means accidental, comrades, that the Smena-Vekhites have recruited a large number of supporters among Soviet officials. That is by no means accidental. Nor is it accidental that Messieurs the Smena-Vekhites are singing the praises of the Bolshevik Communists, as much as to say: You may talk about Bolshevism as much as you like, you may prate as much as you like about your internationalist tendencies, but we know that you will achieve what Denikin failed to achieve, that you Bolsheviks have resurrected, or at all events will resurrect, the idea of a Great Russia. All that is not accidental. Nor is it accidental that this idea has even penetrated some of our Party institutions. At the February Plenum, where the question of a second chamber was first raised, I witnessed how certain members of the Central Committee made speeches which were inconsistent with communism—speeches which had nothing in common with internationalism. All this is a sign of the times, an epidemic. The chief danger that arises from this is that, owing to the N.E.P., dominant-nation chauvinism is growing in our country by leaps and bounds, striving to obliterate all that is not Russian, to gather all the threads of government into the hands of Russians and to stifle everything that is not Russian. The chief danger is that with such a policy we run the risk that the Russian proletarians will lose the confidence of the formerly oppressed nations which they won in the October days, when they overthrew the landlords and the Russian capitalists, when they smashed the chains of national op-

pression within Russia, withdrew the troops from Persia and Mongolia, proclaimed the independence of Finland and Armenia and, in general, put the national question on an entirely new basis. Unless we all arm ourselves against this new, I repeat, Great-Russian chauvinism, which is advancing, creeping, insinuating itself drop by drop into the eyes and ears of our officials and step by step corrupting them, we may lose down to the last shreds the confidence we earned at that time. It is this danger, comrades, that we must defeat at all costs. Otherwise we are threatened with the prospect of losing the confidence of the workers and peasants of the formerly oppressed peoples, we are threatened with the prospect of a rupture of the ties between these peoples and the Russian proletariat, and this threatens us with the danger of a crack being formed in the system of our dictatorship.

Do not forget, comrades, that if we were able to march against Kerensky with flying colours and overthrow the Provisional Government it was because, among other things, we were backed by the confidence of the oppressed peoples that were expecting liberation at the hands of the Russian proletarians. Do not forget such reserves as the oppressed peoples, who are silent, but who by their silence exert pressure and decide a great deal. This is often not felt, but these peoples are living, they exist, and they must not be forgotten. Do not forget that if we had not had in the rear of Kolchak, Denikin, Wrangel and Yudenich the so-called "aliens," if we had not had the formerly oppressed peoples, who disorganised the rear of those generals by their tacit sympathy for the Russian-proletarians—comrades, this is a special factor in our development, this tacit sympathy, which nobody hears or sees, but which decides everything—if it had not been for this sympathy, we would not have knocked out a single one of these generals. While we were marching against them, disintegration began in their rear. Why? Because those generals depended on the Cossack colonising elements, they held out to the oppressed peoples the prospect of further oppression, and the oppressed peoples were therefore pushed into our arms, while we unfurled the banner of the liberation of these oppressed peoples. That is what decided the fate of those generals; such is the sum-total of the factors which, although overshadowed by our armies' victories, in the long run decided everything. That must not be forgot-

ten. That is why we must make a sharp turn towards combating the new chauvinist sentiments and pillory those bureaucrats in our institutions and those Party comrades who are forgetting what we gained in October, namely, the confidence of the formerly oppressed peoples, a confidence that we must cherish.

It must be understood that if a force like Great-Russian chauvinism blossoms and spreads, there will be no confidence on the part of the formerly oppressed peoples, we shall have no co-operation within a single union, and we shall have no Union of Republics.

Such is the first and most dangerous factor that is impeding the union of the peoples and republics into a single union.

The second factor, comrades, which is also hindering the union of the formerly oppressed peoples around the Russian proletariat, is the actual inequality of nations that we have inherited from the period of tsarism.

We have proclaimed juridical equality and are practising it; but juridical equality, although in itself of very great importance in the history of the development of the Soviet republics, is still far from being actual equality. Formally, all the backward nationalities and all the peoples enjoy just as many rights as are enjoyed by the other, more advanced, nations which constitute our federation. But the trouble is that some nationalities have no proletarians of their own, have not undergone industrial development, have not even started on this road, are terribly backward culturally and are entirely unable to take advantage of the rights granted them by the revolution. This, comrades, is a far more important question than that of the schools. Some of our comrades here think that the knot can be cut by putting the question of schools and language in the forefront. That is not so, comrades. Schools will not carry you very far. These schools are developing, so are the languages, but actual inequality remains the basis of all the discontent and friction. Schools and language will not settle the matter; what is needed is real, systematic, sincere and genuine proletarian assistance on our part to the labouring masses of the culturally and economically backward nationalities. In addition to schools and language, the Russian proletariat must take all measures to create in the bor-

der regions, in the culturally backward republics—and they are not backward because of any fault of their own, but because they were formerly regarded as sources of raw materials—must take all measures to ensure the building of centres of industry in these republics. Certain attempts have been made in this direction. Georgia has taken a factory from Moscow and it should start operating soon. Bukhara has taken one factory, but could have taken four. Turkestan is taking one large factory. Thus, all the facts show that these economically backward republics, which possess no proletariat, must with the aid of the Russian proletariat establish their own centres of industry, even though small ones, in order to create in these centres groups of local proletarians to serve as a bridge between the Russian proletarians and peasants and the labouring masses of these republics. In this sphere we have a lot of work to do, and schools alone will not settle the matter.

But there is still a third factor that is impeding the union of the republics into a single union: the existence of nationalism in the individual republics. The N.E.P. affects not only the Russian, but also the non-Russian population. The New Economic Policy is developing private trade and industry not only in the centre of Russia, but also in the individual republics. And it is this same N.E.P., and the private capital associated with it, which nourish and foster Georgian, Azerbaijanian, Uzbek and other nationalism. Of course, if there were no Great-Russian chauvinism—which is aggressive because it is strong, because it was also strong previously and has retained the habit of oppressing and humiliating—if there were no Great-Russian chauvinism, then, perhaps, local chauvinism also, as a retaliation to Great-Russian chauvinism, would exist only in a much reduced form, in miniature, so to speak; because, in the final analysis, anti-Russian nationalism is a form of defence, an ugly form of defence against Great-Russian nationalism, against Great-Russian chauvinism. If this nationalism were only defensive, it might not be worth making a fuss about. We could concentrate the entire force of our activities, the entire force of our struggle, against Great-Russian chauvinism, in the hope that as soon as this powerful enemy is overcome, anti-Russian nationalism will be overcome with it; for, I repeat, in the last analysis, this nationalism is a reaction to

Great-Russian nationalism, a retaliation to it, a certain form of defence. Yes, that would be so if anti-Russian nationalism in the localities were nothing more than a reaction to Great-Russian nationalism. But the trouble is that in some republics this defensive nationalism is turning into aggressive nationalism.

Take Georgia. Over 30 per cent of her population are non-Georgians. They include Armenians, Abkhazians, Ajarians, Ossetians and Tatars. The Georgians are at the head. Among some of the Georgian Communists the idea has sprung up and is gaining ground that there is no particular need to reckon with these small nationalities; they are less cultured, less developed, they say, and there is therefore no need to reckon with them. That is chauvinism—harmful and dangerous chauvinism; for it may turn the small republic of Georgia into an arena of strife. In fact, it has already turned it into an arena of strife.

Azerbaijan. The basic nationality here is the Azerbaijanian, but there are also Armenians. Among a section of the Azerbaijanians there is also a tendency, sometimes quite unconcealed, to think that the Azerbaijanians are the indigenous population and the Armenians intruders, and therefore, it is possible to push the Armenians somewhat into the background, to disregard their interests. That is chauvinism too. It undermines the equality of nationalities on which the Soviet system is based.

Bukhara. In Bukhara there are three nationalities—Uzbeks, the basic nationality; Turkmenians, a "less important" nationality from the point of view of Bukharan chauvinism; and Kirghiz, who are few in number here and, apparently, "less important."

In Khorezm you have the same thing: Turkmenians and Uzbeks. The Uzbeks are the basic nationality and the Turkmenians "less important."

All this leads to conflict and weakens the Soviet regime. This tendency towards local chauvinism must also be cut off at the root. Of course, compared with Great-Russian chauvinism, which in the general scheme of the national question comprises three-quarters of the whole, local chauvinism is not so important; but for local work, for the local people, for the peaceful development of the national republics themselves,

this chauvinism is a matter of first-rate importance.

Sometimes this chauvinism begins to undergo a very interesting evolution. I have in mind Transcaucasia. You know that Transcaucasia consists of three republics embracing ten nationalities. From very early times Transcaucasia has been an arena of massacre and strife and, under the Mensheviks and Dashnaks, it was an arena of war. You know of the Georgian-Armenian war. You also know of the massacres in Azerbaijan at the beginning and at the end of 1905. I could mention a whole list of districts where the Armenian majority massacred all the rest of the population, consisting of Tatars. Zangezur, for instance. I could mention another province—Nakhichevan. There the Tatars predominated, and they massacred all the Armenians. That was just before the liberation of Armenia and Georgia from the yoke of imperialism. (Voice: "That was their way of solving the national question.") That, of course, is also a way of solving the national question. But it is not the Soviet way. Of course, the Russian workers are not to blame for this state of mutual national enmity, for it is the Tatars and Armenians who are fighting, without the Russians. That is why a special organ is required in Transcaucasia to regulate the relations between the nationalities.

It may be confidently stated that the relations between the proletariat of the formerly dominant nation and the toilers of all the other nationalities constitute three-quarters of the whole national question. But one-quarter of this question must be attributed to the relations between the formerly oppressed nationalities themselves.

And if in this atmosphere of mutual distrust the Soviet Government had failed to establish in Transcaucasia an organ of national peace capable of settling all friction and conflict, we would have reverted to the era of tsarism, or to the era of the Dashnaks, the Mussavatists, the Mensheviks, when people maimed and slaughtered one another. That is why the Central Committee has on three occasions affirmed the necessity of preserving the Transcaucasian Federation as an organ of national peace.

There has been and still is a group of Georgian Communists who do not object to Georgia uniting with the Union of Republics, but who do object to this union being effected through the Transcaucasian Feder-

ation. They, you see, would like to get closer to the Union, they say that there is no need for this partition wall in the shape of the Transcaucasian Federation between themselves—the Georgians—and the Union of Republics, the federation, they say, is superfluous. This, they think, sounds very revolutionary.

But there is another motive behind this. In the first place, these statements indicate that on the national question the attitude towards the Russians is of secondary importance in Georgia, for these comrades, the deviators (that is what they are called), have no objection to Georgia joining the Union directly; that is, they do not fear Great-Russian chauvinism, believing that its roots have been cut in one way or another, or, at any rate, that it is not of decisive importance. Evidently, what they fear most is the federation of Transcaucasia. Why? Why should the three principal nations which inhabit Transcaucasia, which fought among themselves so long, massacred each other and warred against each other, why should these nations, now that Soviet power has at last united them by bonds of fraternal union in the form of a federation, now that this federation has produced positive results, why should they now break these federal ties? What is the point, comrades?

The point is that the bonds of the Transcaucasian Federation deprive Georgia of that somewhat privileged position which she could assume by virtue of her geographical position. Judge for yourselves. Georgia has her own port—Batum—through which goods flow from the West; Georgia has a railway junction like Tiflis, which the Armenians cannot avoid, nor can Azerbaijan avoid it, for she receives her goods through Batum. If Georgia were a separate republic, if she were not part of the Transcaucasian Federation, she could present something in the nature of a little ultimatum both to Armenia, which cannot do without Tiflis, and to Azerbaijan, which cannot do without Batum. There would be some advantages for Georgia in this. It was no accident that the notorious savage decree establishing frontier cordons was drafted in Georgia. Serebryakov is now being blamed for this. Let us allow that he is to blame, but the decree originated in Georgia, not in Azerbaijan or Armenia.

Then there is yet another reason. Tiflis is the capital of Georgia, but the Georgians there are not more than 30 per cent of the population,

the Armenians not less than 35 per cent, and then come all the other nationalities. That is what the capital of Georgia is like. If Georgia were a separate republic the population could be reshifted somewhat—for instance, the Armenian population could be shifted from Tiflis. Was not a well-known decree adopted in Georgia to "regulate" the population of Tiflis, about which Comrade Makharadze said that it was not directed against the Armenians? The intention was to reshift the population so as to reduce the number of Armenians in Tiflis from year to year, making them fewer than the Georgians, and thus convert Tiflis into a real Georgian capital. I grant that they have rescinded the eviction decree, but they have a vast number of possibilities, a vast number of flexible forms—such as "de-congestion"—by which it would be possible, while maintaining a semblance of internationalism, to arrange matters in such a way that Armenians in Tiflis would be in the minority.

It is these geographical advantages that the Georgian deviators do not want to lose, and the unfavourable position of the Georgians in Tiflis itself, where there are fewer Georgians than Armenians, that are causing our deviators to oppose federation. The Mensheviks simply evicted Armenians and Tatars from Tiflis. Now, however, under the Soviet regime, eviction is impossible; therefore, they want to leave the federation, and this will create legal opportunities for independently performing certain operations which will result in the advantageous position enjoyed by the Georgians being fully utilised against Azerbaijan and Armenia. And all this would create a privileged position for the Georgians in Transcaucasia. Therein lies the whole danger.

Can we ignore the interests of national peace in Transcaucasia and allow conditions to be created under which the Georgians would be in a privileged position in relation to the Armenian and Azerbaijanian Republics? No. We cannot allow that.

There is an old, special system of governing nations, under which a bourgeois authority favours certain nationalities, grants them privileges and humbles the other nations, not wishing to be bothered with them. Thus by favouring one nationality, it uses it to keep down the others. Such, for instance, was the method of government employed in Austria. Everyone remembers the statement of the Austrian Minister Beust, who

summoned the Hungarian Minister and said: "You govern your hordes and I will cope with mine." In other words: you curb and keep down your nationalities in Hungary and I will keep down mine in Austria. You and I represent privileged nations, let's keep down the rest.

The same was the case with the Poles in Austria itself. The Austrians favoured the Poles, granted them privileges, in order that the Poles should help the Austrians strengthen their position in Poland; and in return they allowed the Poles to strangle Galicia.

This system of singling out some nationalities and granting them privileges in order to cope with the rest is purely and specifically Austrian. From the point of view of the bureaucracy, it is an "economical" method of governing, because it has to bother only with one nationality; but from the political point of view it means certain death to the state, for to violate the principle of equality of nationalities and to grant privileges to any one nationality means dooming one's national policy to certain failure.

Britain is now ruling India in exactly the same way. To make it easier, from the point of view of the bureaucracy, to deal with the nationalities and races of India, Britain divided India into British India (240,000,000 population) and Native India (72,000,000 population). Why? Because Britain wanted to single out one group of nations and grant it privileges in order the more easily to govern the remaining nationalities. In India there are several hundred nationalities, and Britain decided that, rather than bother with these nationalities, it was better to single out a few nations, grant them certain privileges and through them govern the rest; for, firstly, the discontent of the other nations would be directed against these favoured ones and not against Britain, and, secondly, it would be cheaper to have to "bother" with only two or three nations.

That is also a system of governing, the British system. What does it lead to? To the "cheapening" of the apparatus—that is true. But, comrades, leaving aside bureaucratic conveniences, it means certain death to British rule in India; this system harbours inevitable death, as surely as twice two make four, the death of British rule and British domination.

It is on to this dangerous path that our comrades, the Georgian deviators, are pushing us by opposing federation in violation of all the laws of

the Party, by wanting to withdraw from the federation in order to retain an advantageous position. They are pushing us on to the path of granting them certain privileges at the expense of the Armenian and Azerbaijanian Republics. But this is a path we cannot take, for it means certain death to our entire policy and to Soviet power in the Caucasus.

It was no accident that our comrades in Georgia sensed this danger. This Georgian chauvinism, which had passed to the offensive against the Armenians and Azerbaijanians, alarmed the Communist Party of Georgia. Quite naturally, the Communist Party of Georgia, which has held two congresses since it came into legal existence, on both occasions unanimously rejected the stand of the deviator comrades, for under present conditions it is impossible to maintain peace in the Caucasus, impossible to establish equality, without the Transcaucasian Federation. One nation must not be allowed more privileges than another. This our comrades have sensed. That is why, after two years of contention, the Mdivani group is a small handful, repeatedly ejected by the Party in Georgia itself.

It was also no accident that Comrade Lenin was in such a hurry and was so insistent that the federation should be established immediately. Nor was it an accident that our Central Committee on three occasions affirmed the need for a federation in Transcaucasia, having its own Central Executive Committee and its own executive authority, whose decisions would be binding on the republics. It was no accident that both commissions—Comrade Dzerzhinsky's and that of Kamenev and Kuibyshev—on their arrival in Moscow stated that federation was indispensable.

Lastly, it is no accident either that the Mensheviks of *Sotsialisticheskiy Vestnik*[9] praise our deviator comrades and laud them to the skies for opposing federation: birds of a feather flock together.

I pass to an examination of the ways and means by which we must eliminate these three main factors that are hindering union: Great-

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9 **Original editor:** *Sotsialisticheskiy Vestnik* (*Socialist Courier*)—organ of the Menshevik whiteguard émigrés, founded by Martov in February 1921. Until March 1933 it was published in Berlin, from May 1933 to June 1940 in Paris, and later in America. It is the mouthpiece of the most reactionary imperialist circles.

Russian chauvinism, actual inequality of nations and local nationalism, particularly when it is growing into chauvinism. Of the means that may help us painlessly to rid ourselves of all this heritage of the past which is hindering the peoples from coming together I shall mention three.

The first means is to adopt all measures to make the Soviet regime understood and loved in the republics, to make the Soviet regime not only Russian but inter-national. For this it is necessary that not only the schools, but all institutions and all bodies, both Party and Soviet, should step by step be made national in character, that they should be conducted in the language that is understood by the masses, that they should function in conditions that correspond to the manner of life of the given nation. Only on this condition will we be able to convert the Soviet regime from a Russian into an inter-national one, understood by and near and dear to the labouring masses of all the republics, particularly those which are economically and culturally backward.

The second means that can help us in painlessly getting rid of the heritage from tsarism and the bourgeoisie is to construct the Commissariats of the Union of Republics in such a way as to enable at least the principal nationalities to have their people on the collegiums, and to create a situation in which the needs and requirements of the individual republics will be met without fail.

The third means: it is necessary to have among our supreme central organs one that will serve to express the needs and requirements of all the republics and nationalities without exception.

I want especially to draw your attention to this last means.

If within the Central Executive Committee of the Union we could create two chambers having equal powers, one of which would be elected at the Union Congress of Soviets, irrespective of nationality, and the other by the republics and national regions (the republics being equally represented, and the national regions also being equally represented) and endorsed by the same Congress of Soviets of the Union of Republics, I think that then our supreme institutions would express not only the class interests of all the working people without exception, but also purely national needs. We would have an organ which would express

the special interests of the nationalities, peoples and races inhabiting the Union of Republics. Under the conditions prevailing in our Union, which as a whole unites not less than 140,000,000 people, of whom about 65,000,000 are non-Russians, in such a country it is impossible to govern unless we have with us, here in Moscow, in the supreme organ, emissaries of these nationalities, to express not only the interests common to the proletariat as a whole, but also special, specific, national interests. Without this it will be impossible to govern, comrades. Unless we have this barometer, and people capable of formulating these special needs of the individual nationalities, it will be impossible to govern.

There are two ways of governing a country. One way is to have a "simplified" apparatus, headed, say, by a group of people, or by one man, having hands and eyes in the localities in the shape of governors. This is a very simple form of government, under which the ruler, in governing the country, receives the kind of information that can be received from governors and comforts himself with the hope that he is governing honestly and well. Presently, friction arises, friction grows into conflicts and conflicts into revolts. Later, the revolts are crushed. Such a system of government is not our system, and in addition, although a simple one, it is too costly. But there is another system of government, the Soviet system. In our Soviet country we are operating this other system of government, the system which enables us to foresee with accuracy all changes, all the circumstances among the peasants, among the nationals, among the so-called "aliens" and among the Russians; this system of supreme organs possesses a number of barometers which forecast every change, which register and warn against a Basmach movement,[10] a bandit movement, Kronstadt, and all possible storms and disasters. That is the Soviet system of government. It is called Soviet power, people's power, because, relying on the common people, it is the first to register any change, it takes the

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10 **Original editor:** The Basmach movement—a counter-revolutionary nationalist movement in Central Asia (Turkestan, Bukhara and Khorezm) in 1918-24. Headed by beys and mullahs, it took the form of open political banditry. Its aim was to sever the Central Asian republics from Soviet Russia and to restore the rule of the exploiting classes. It was actively supported by the British imperialists, who were endeavouring to transform Central Asia into their colony.

appropriate measures and rectifies the line in time, if it has become distorted, criticises itself and rectifies the line. This system of government is the Soviet system, and it requires that the system of our higher agencies should include agencies expressing absolutely all national needs and requirements.

The objection is made that this system will complicate the work of administration, that it means setting up more and more bodies. That is true. Hitherto we had the Central Executive Committee of the R.S.F.S.R., then we created the Central Executive Committee of the Union, and now we shall have to split the Central Executive Committee of the Union into two. But it can't be helped. I have already said that the simplest form of government is to have one man and to give him governors. But now, after the October Revolution, we cannot engage in such experiments. The system has become more complex, but it makes government easier and lends the whole governmental system a profoundly Soviet character. That is why I think that the congress must agree to the establishment of a special body, a second chamber within the Central Executive Committee of the Union, since it is absolutely essential.

I do not say that this is a perfect way of arranging co-operation between the peoples of the Union; I do not say that it is the last word in science. We shall put forward the national question again and again, for national and international conditions are changing, and may change again. I do not deny the possibility that perhaps some of the Commissariats that we are merging in the Union of Republics will have to be separated again if, after being merged, experience shows that they are unsatisfactory. But one thing is clear, namely, that under present conditions, and in the present circumstances, no better method and no more suitable organ is available. As yet we have no better way or means of creating an organ capable of registering all the oscillations and all the changes that take place within the individual republics than that of establishing a second chamber.

It goes without saying that the second chamber must contain representatives not only of the four republics that have united, but of all the peoples; for the question concerns not only the republics which have for-

mally united (there are four of them), but all the peoples and nationalities in the Union of Republics. We therefore require a form that will express the needs of all the nationalities and republics without exception.

I shall sum up, comrades.

Thus, the importance of the national question is determined by the new situation in international affairs, by the fact that here, in Russia, in our federation we must solve the national question in a correct, a model way, in order to set an example to the East, which constitutes the heavy reserves of the revolution, and thereby increase their confidence in our federation and its attraction for them.

From the standpoint of the internal situation, the conditions created by the N.E.P. and the growing Great-Russian chauvinism and local chauvinism also oblige us to emphasise the special importance of the national question.

I said, further, that the essence of the national question lies in establishing correct relations between the proletariat of the formerly dominant nation and the peasantry of the formerly subject nations, and that from this point of view the concrete form of the national question at the present moment is expressed by having to find ways and means of arranging the co-operation of the peoples within a Union of Republics, within a single state.

I spoke, further, of the factors which are conducive to such a coming together of the peoples. I spoke of the factors impeding such a union. I dwelt especially on Great-Russian chauvinism, as a force that is gaining in strength. That force is a basic danger, capable of undermining the confidence of the formerly oppressed peoples in the Russian proletariat. It is a most dangerous enemy, which we must overcome; for once we overcome it, we shall have overcome nine-tenths of the nationalism which has survived, and which is growing in certain republics.

Further. We are faced with the danger that certain groups of comrades may push us on to the path of granting privileges to some nationalities at the expense of others. I have said that we cannot take this path, because it may undermine national peace and kill the confidence of the masses of the other nations in Soviet power.

I said, further, that the chief means that will enable us most painlessly to eliminate the factors that hinder union lies in the creation of a second chamber of the Central Executive Committee, of which I spoke more openly at the February Plenum of the Central Committee, and which is dealt with in the theses in a more veiled form in order to enable the comrades themselves, perhaps, to indicate some other more flexible form, some other more suitable organ, capable of expressing the interests of the nationalities.

Such are the conclusions.

I think that it is only in this way that we shall be able to achieve a correct solution of the national question, that we shall be able to unfurl widely the banner of the proletarian revolution and win for it the sympathy and confidence of the countries of the East, which are the heavy reserves of the revolution, and which can play a decisive role in the future battles of the proletariat against imperialism. (*Applause.*)

4. Reply to the Discussion on the Report on National Factors in Party and State Affairs

April 25

Comrades, before proceeding to report on the work of the committee on the national question, permit me to deal with two main points in answer to the speakers in the discussion on my report. It will take about twenty minutes, not more.

The first point is that a group of comrades headed by Bukharin and Rakovsky has over-emphasised the significance of the national question, has exaggerated it, and has allowed it to overshadow the social question, the question of working-class power.

It is clear to us, as Communists, that the basis of all our work lies in strengthening the power of the workers, and that only after that are we confronted by the other question, a very important one but subordinate to the first, namely, the national question. We are told that we must not offend the non-Russian nationalities. That is perfectly true;

I agree that we must not offend them. But to evolve out of this a new theory to the effect that the Great-Russian proletariat must be placed in a position of inequality in relation to the formerly oppressed nations is absurd. What was merely a figure of speech in Comrade Lenin's well-known article, Bukharin has converted into a regular slogan. Nevertheless, it is clear that the political basis of the dictatorship of the proletariat is primarily and chiefly the central, industrial regions, and not the border regions, which are peasant countries. If we exaggerate the importance of the peasant border regions, to the detriment of the proletarian districts, it may result in a crack in the system of the dictatorship of the proletariat. That is dangerous, comrades. We must not exaggerate things in politics, just as we must not underrate them.

It should be borne in mind that in addition to the right of nations to self-determination, there is also the right of the working class to consolidate its power, and the right of self-determination is subordinate to this latter right. There are cases when the right of self-determination conflicts with another, a higher right—the right of the working class that has come to power to consolidate its power. In such cases—this must be said bluntly—the right of self-determination cannot and must not serve as an obstacle to the working class in exercising its right to dictatorship. The former must yield to the latter. That was the case in 1920, for instance, when in order to defend working-class power we were obliged to march on Warsaw.

It must therefore not be forgotten when handing out all sorts of promises to the non-Russian nationalities, when bowing and scraping before the representatives of these nationalities, as certain comrades have done at the present congress, it must be borne in mind that, in our external and internal situation, the sphere of action of the national question and the limits of its jurisdiction, so to speak, are restricted by the sphere of action and jurisdiction of the "labour question," as the most fundamental question.

Many speakers referred to notes and articles by Vladimir Ilyich. I do not want to quote my teacher, Comrade Lenin, since he is not here, and I am afraid that I might, perhaps, quote him wrongly and inappropriately. Nevertheless, I am obliged to quote one passage, which is axiomatic and

can give rise to no misunderstanding, in order that no doubt should be left in the minds of comrades with regard to the relative importance of the national question. Analysing Marx's letter on the national question in an article on self-determination, Comrade Lenin draws the following conclusion:

> "Marx had no doubt about the subordinate significance of the national question as compared with the 'labour question.'"[11]

Here are only two lines, but they are decisive. And that is what some of our comrades who are more zealous than wise should drill into their heads.

The second point is about Great-Russian chauvinism and local chauvinism. Rakovsky and especially Bukharin spoke here, and the latter proposed that the clause dealing with the harmfulness of local chauvinism should be deleted. Their argument was that there is no need to bother with a little worm like local chauvinism when we are faced by a "Goliath" like Great-Russian chauvinism. In general, Bukharin was in a repentant mood. That is natural: he has been sinning against the nationalities for years, denying the right to self-determination. It was high time for him to repent. But in repenting he went to the other extreme. It is curious that Bukharin calls upon the Party to follow his example and also repent, although the whole world knows that the Party is in no way involved, for from its very inception (1898) it recognised the right to self-determination and therefore has nothing to repent of. The fact of the matter is that Bukharin has failed to understand the essence of the national question. When it is said that the fight against Great-Russian chauvinism must be made the corner-stone of the national question, the intention is to indicate the duties of the Russian Communist; it implies that it is the duty of the Russian Communist himself to combat Russian chauvinism. If the struggle against Russian chauvinism were undertaken not by the Russian but by the Turkestanian or Georgian Communists, it would be interpreted as anti-Russian chauvinism. That would confuse the whole issue and strengthen Great-Russian chauvinism. Only the Rus-

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11 **Original editor:** See V. I. Lenin, *The Right of Nations to Self-Determination*, *Works*, 4th Russ. ed., Vol. 20, p. 406.

sian Communists can undertake the fight against Great-Russian chauvinism and carry it through to the end.

And what is intended when a struggle against local chauvinism is proposed? The intention is to point to the duty of the local Communists, the duty of the non-Russian Communists, to combat their own chauvinists. Can the existence of deviations towards anti-Russian chauvinism be denied? Why, the whole congress has seen for itself that local chauvinism exists, Georgian, Bashkir and other chauvinism, and that it must be combated. Russian Communists cannot combat Tatar, Georgian or Bashkir chauvinism; if a Russian Communist were to undertake the difficult task of combating Tatar or Georgian chauvinism it would be regarded as a fight waged by a Great-Russian chauvinist against the Tatars or the Georgians. That would confuse the whole issue. Only the Tatar, Georgian and other Communists can fight Tatar, Georgian and other chauvinism; only the Georgian Communists can successfully combat Georgian nationalism or chauvinism. That is the duty of the non-Russian Communists. That is why it is necessary to refer in the theses to the double task, that of the Russian Communists (I refer to the fight against Great-Russian chauvinism) and that of the non-Russian Communists (I refer to their fight against anti-Armenian, anti-Tatar, anti-Russian chauvinism). Otherwise, the theses will be one-sided, there will be no internationalism, whether in state or Party affairs.

If we combat only Great-Russian chauvinism, it will obscure the fight that is being waged by the Tatar and other chauvinists, a fight which is developing in the localities and which is especially dangerous now, under the conditions of the N.E.P. We cannot avoid fighting on two fronts, for we can achieve success only by fighting on two fronts—on the one hand, against Great-Russian chauvinism, which is the chief danger in our work of construction, and, on the other hand, against local chauvinism; unless we wage this double fight there will be no solidarity between the Russian workers and peasants and the workers and peasants of the other nationalities. Failure to wage this fight may result in encouraging local chauvinism, a policy of pandering to local chauvinism, which we cannot allow.

Permit me here too to quote Comrade Lenin. I would not have done so, but since there are many comrades at our congress who quote Comrade Lenin right and left and distort what he says, permit me to read a few words from a well-known article of his:

> "The proletariat must demand freedom of political secession for the colonies and nations that are oppressed by 'its' nation. Unless it does this, proletarian internationalism will remain a meaningless phrase; neither mutual confidence nor class solidarity between the workers of the oppressing and the oppressed nations will be possible."[12]

These are, so to say, the duties of proletarians of the dominant or formerly dominant nation. Then he goes on to speak of the duties of proletarians or Communists of the formerly oppressed nations:

> "On the other hand, the Socialists of the oppressed nations must particularly fight for and put into effect complete and absolute unity, including organisational unity, between the workers of the oppressed nation and the workers of the oppressing nation. Otherwise, it is impossible to uphold the independent policy of the proletariat and its class solidarity with the proletariat of other countries against all the subterfuges, treachery and trickery of the bourgeoisie. For the bourgeoisie of the oppressed nations constantly converts the slogans of national liberation into a means for deceiving the workers."

As you see, if we are to follow in Comrade Lenin's footsteps—and some comrades here have sworn by him—both theses must be retained in the resolution—both the thesis on combating Great-Russian chauvinism and that on combating local chauvinism—as two aspects of one phenomenon, as theses on combating chauvinism in general.

With this I conclude my answers to those who have spoken here.

Permit me now to report on the work of the committee on the national question. The committee took the Central Committee's theses as a basis. It left six points of these theses, namely, 1, 2, 3, 4, 5, and 6, entirely unaltered. There was a dispute in the committee, primarily, on the question whether or not the autonomous republics should first be taken out of the R.S.F.S.R. and the independent republics in the Caucasus out of the Transcaucasian Federation, in order that they should then join the

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12 **Original editor:** V. I. Lenin, *The Socialist Revolution and the Right of Nations to Self-Determination* (see *Works*, 4th Russ. ed., Vol. 22, p. 136).

Union of Republics individually. This was the proposal of a section of the Georgian comrades, but, as is known, it is a proposal which meets with no sympathy from the Georgian, Armenian and Azerbaijanian delegations. The committee discussed this question and by an overwhelming majority decided in favour of retaining the proposition given in the theses, namely, that the R.S.F.S.R. should remain an integral unit, that the Transcaucasian Federation should also remain an integral unit and each should enter the Union of Republics as such. Not all the proposals submitted by this section of the Georgian comrades were put to the vote, because, seeing that the proposals met with no sympathy, their authors withdrew them. The dispute on this question was a serious one.

The second question on which there was a dispute was the question how the second chamber should be constituted. One section of the comrades (the minority) proposed that the second chamber should not consist of representatives of all the republics, nationalities and regions, but that it should be based on the representation of four republics, namely: the R.S.F.S.R., the Transcaucasian Federation, Byelorussia and the Ukraine. The majority rejected this proposal and the committee decided against it on the grounds that it would be more advisable to form the second chamber on the principle of equal representation of all the republics (both independent and autonomous) and of all national regions. I shall not present the arguments on this point, for Rakovsky, the representative of the minority, intends to speak here in order to substantiate his proposal, which the committee rejected. After he has spoken I shall present my arguments.

There was also a dispute, not very heated, on the question whether the theses should be amended so as to point to the necessity of looking to the West as well as to the East in solving the national question. This amendment was put to the vote. It was the minority's amendment, moved by Rakovsky. The committee rejected it. I shall speak on this question too after Rakovsky has spoken.

I shall read the amendments that we accepted. Six points were adopted as they stood. In Point 7, paragraph 2, line 3, before the words: "Hence, our Party's first immediate task is vigorously to combat," the following is to be inserted:

"The situation in a number of national republics (Ukraine, Byelorussia, Azerbaijan, Turkestan) is complicated by the fact that a considerable section of the working class, which is the main bulwark of the Soviet system, belongs to the Great-Russian nationality. In these districts the establishment of the bond between town and country, between the working class and the peasantry, encounters extremely powerful obstacles in the shape of survivals of Great-Russian chauvinism in both Party and Soviet organs. Under these circumstances, talk about the superiority of Russian culture, and advancement of the argument that the higher Russian culture must inevitably triumph over the culture of the more backward peoples (Ukrainian, Azerbaijanian, Uzbek, Kirghiz, etc.) are nothing but an attempt to perpetuate the domination of the Great-Russian nationality."

I accepted this amendment because it improves the theses.

The second amendment also relates to Point 7. Before the words: "Otherwise there can be no grounds for expecting," the following is to be added:

"This assistance must find expression primarily in the adoption of a number of practical measures for forming in the republics of the formerly oppressed nationalities industrial centres with the maximum participation of the local population. Lastly, in conformity with the resolution of the Tenth Congress, this assistance must be accompanied by a struggle of the labouring masses to strengthen their own social positions in opposition to the local and immigrant exploiting upper sections, which are growing as a consequence of the N.E.P. Since these republics are mainly agricultural districts, the internal social measures must consist primarily in allotting the labouring masses land out of the available state land fund."

Further, in the same Point 7, middle of paragraph 2, where it speaks of Georgian chauvinism, Azerbaijanian chauvinism, etc., insert: "Armenian chauvinism, etc." The Armenian comrades did not want the Armenians to be left out in the cold, they wanted their chauvinism to be mentioned too.

Further, in Point 8 of the theses, after the words "one and indivisible," insert:

"We must regard as a similar heritage of the past the striving of some of the government departments of the R.S.F.S.R. to subordinate to themselves the independent Commissariats of the autonomous republics and to prepare the ground for the liquidation of the latter."

Further in Point 8, insert:

"and proclaiming the absolute necessity of the existence and further development of the national republics."

Further, Point 9. It should begin as follows:

"The Union of Republics, formed on the principles of equality and voluntary consent of the workers and peasants of the various republics, is the first experiment of the proletariat in regulating the mutual international relations of independent countries, and the first step towards the creation of the future World Soviet Republic of Labour."

Point 10 has a sub-point "a"; a new sub-point "a" was inserted before it, in the following terms:

"a) in the building up of the central organs of the Union, equality of rights and duties of the individual republics should be ensured both in their relations with one another and in their relations with the central authority of the Union."

Then follows sub-point "b", worded as the former sub-point "a":

"b) within the system of higher organs of the Union a special organ should be instituted that will represent all the national republics and national regions without exception on the basis of equality, providing as far as possible for the representation of all the nationalities within these republics."

Then comes what was sub-point "b" and is now sub-point "c", worded as follows:

"c) the executive organs of the Union should be constructed on principles that will ensure the actual participation in them of representatives of the republics and the satisfaction of the needs and require-

ments of the peoples of the Union."

Then comes sub-point "d", an addendum:

"d) the republics should be accorded sufficiently wide financial and, in particular, budgetary powers, enabling them to display initiative in state administration and cultural and economic matters."

Then comes the former sub-point "c" as sub-point e".

"e) the organs of the national republics and regions should be staffed mainly with people from among the local inhabitants who know the language, manner of life, habits and customs of the peoples concerned."

Further, a second sub-point has been added, namely, "f":

"f) special laws should be passed ensuring the use of the native languages in all state organs and in all institutions serving the local and national population and national minorities—laws that will prosecute and punish with all revolutionary severity all violators of national rights, particularly the rights of national minorities."

Then comes sub-point "g", an addendum:

"g) educational activities in the Red Army should be increased with the aim of inculcating the ideas of the fraternity and solidarity of the peoples of the Union, and the adoption of practical measures to organise national military units, all precautions to be taken to ensure the complete defensive capacity of the republics."

Such are all the addenda that were adopted by the committee and to which I have no objection, since they make the theses more concrete.

As regards Part II, no really important amendments were introduced. There were some slight amendments, which the commission elected by the committee on the national question decided to refer to the future Central Committee.

Thus, Part II remains in the shape in which it was distributed in the printed materials.

5. Answer to the Amendments to the Resolution

April 25

Although Rakovsky has changed two-thirds of the resolution he moved in the committee and has cut it down to a quarter, I am nevertheless emphatically opposed to his amendment, and for the following reason. Our theses on the national question are constructed in such a way that we, as it were, turn to face the East, having in view the heavy reserves that are latent there. We have linked the entire national question with the article of Ilyich, who, as far as I know, does not say a single word about the West, because the centre of the national question does not lie there, but in the colonies and semi-colonies of the East. Rakovsky argues that, having turned towards the East, we must also turn towards the West. But that is impossible, comrades, and unnatural, because, as a rule, people face either one way or another; it is impossible to face two ways at the same time. We cannot and must not upset the general tone of the theses, their Eastern tone. That is why I think that Rakovsky's amendment should be rejected.



I regard this amendment as being of cardinal significance. I must say that if the congress accepts it, the theses will be turned upside down. Rakovsky proposes that the second chamber be constructed in such a way that it should consist of representatives of state entities. He regards the Ukraine as a state entity, but not Bashkiria. Why? We are not abolishing the Councils of People's Commissars in the republics. Is not the Central Executive Committee of Bashkiria a state institution?! Then why is Bashkiria not a state? Will the Ukraine cease to be a state after she has entered the Union? State fetishism has confused Rakovsky. Since the nationalities have equal rights, since they have their own languages, habits, manner of life and customs, since these nationalities have set up their own state institutions—Central Executive Committees and Councils of People's Commissars—is it not obvious that all these

national units are state entities? I think that we cannot depart from the principle of equality between the republics and nationalities in the second chamber, particularly in relation to the Eastern nationalities.

Evidently, Rakovsky is captivated by the Prussian system of federation. The German federation is built in such a way that there is no equality whatever between the states. I propose that we should arrange matters in such a way that in addition to class representation—I mean the first chamber, which is to be elected at the All-Union Congress of Soviets—we should have representation of the nationalities on the basis of equality. The Eastern peoples, which are organically connected with China, with India, being connected with them by language, religion, customs, etc., are of primary importance for the revolution. The relative importance of these small nationalities is much higher than that of the Ukraine.

If we make a slight mistake in the Ukraine, the effect upon the East will not be great. But we have only to make one slight mistake in a small country, in Ajaristan (120,000 population), for the effect to be felt in Turkey, to be felt in the whole of the East, for Turkey is most closely connected with the East. We have only to commit a slight mistake in the small Kalmyk Region, the inhabitants of which are connected with Tibet and China, for the effect on our work to be far worse than that of a mistake committed in relation to the Ukraine. We are faced with the prospect of a mighty movement in the East, and we must direct our work primarily towards rousing the East and avoid doing anything that could even remotely, even indirectly, belittle the importance of any, even the smallest, individual nationality in the Eastern border regions. That is why I think that it would be more just, more expedient and of greater advantage for the revolution from the standpoint of governing a big country like the Union of Republics with a population of 140,000,000, it would be better, I say, to arrange matters so that in the second chamber there should be equal representation of all the republics and national regions. We have eight autonomous republics and also eight independent republics; Russia will join as a republic, we have fourteen regions. All these will constitute the second chamber that will express all the requirements and needs of the nationalities and facilitate the government of such a big country.

That is why I think that Rakovsky's amendment should be rejected.

6. Supplement to the Report of the Commission on the National Question

April 25

Comrades, when reporting to you on the work of the committee on the national question I forgot to mention two other small addenda, which certainly must be mentioned. To paragraph 10, point "b", where it says that a special organ should be instituted that will represent all the national republics and national regions without exception on the basis of equality, it is necessary to add: "providing as far as possible for all the nationalities within these republics," because in some of the republics that will be represented in the second chamber there are several nationalities. For example, Turkestan. There, in addition to Uzbeks, there are Turkmenians, Kirghiz and other nationalities, and the representation must he so arranged that each of these nationalities is represented.

The second addendum is to Part II, at the very end. It reads:

"In view of the tremendous importance of the activities of responsible workers in the autonomous and independent republics, and in the border regions in general (the establishment of contact between the working people in the given republic and the working people in the whole of the rest of the Union), the congress instructs the Central Committee to be particularly careful that such responsible workers are selected as will fully ensure the actual implementation of the Party's decisions on the national question."

And now a word or two about a remark Radek made in his speech. I am saying this at the request of the Armenian comrades. In my opinion that remark is contrary to the facts. Radek said here that the Armenians oppress, or might oppress, the Azerbaijanians in Azerbaijan and, vice versa, the Azerbaijanians might oppress the Armenians in Armenia. I must say that such things do not happen. The opposite happens: in Azerbaijan, the Azerbaijanians, being the majority, oppress the Armeni-

ans and massacre them, as happened in Nakhichevan, where nearly all the Armenians were massacred; and the Armenians in Armenia massacred nearly all the Tatars. That happened in Zangezur. As for the minority in a foreign state oppressing the people who belong to the majority—such unnatural things have never happened.

THE PRESS AS A COLLECTIVE ORGANISER

In his article "To the Roots" (see *Pravda*, No. 98), Ingulov touched upon the important question of the significance of the press for the state and the Party. Evidently, in order to reinforce his view he referred to the Central Committee's organisational report, where it says that the press "establishes an imperceptible link between the Party and the working class, a link which is as strong as any mass transmission apparatus," that "the press is a most powerful weapon by means of which the Party daily, hourly, speaks to the working class."[1]

But in his attempt to solve the problem, Ingulov made two mistakes: firstly, he distorted the meaning of the passage from the Central Committee's report; secondly, he lost sight of the very important role that the press plays as an organiser. I think that, in view of the importance of the question, a word or two should be said about these mistakes.

1. The meaning of the report is not that the Party's role is confined to *speaking* to the working class, whereas the Party should *converse* with and not only speak to it. This contrasting of the formula "speak to" to the formula "converse with" is nothing more than mere juggling. In practice the two constitute an indissoluble whole, expressed in continuous interaction between the reader and the writer, between the Party and the working class, between the state and the masses of the working people. This has been taking place from the very inception of the mass proletarian party, from the time of the old *Iskra*. Ingulov is wrong in thinking that this interaction began only a few years after the working class had taken power in Russia. The point of the passage quoted from the Central Committee's report does not lie in "speaking," but in the fact that the

1 **Original editor:** See this volume, p. 168.

press "establishes a link between the Party and the working class," a link "which is as strong as any mass transmission apparatus." The point of the passage lies in the organisational significance of the press. That is precisely why the press, as one of the transmission belts between the Party and the working class, was included in the Central Committee's *organisational* report. Ingulov failed to understand the passage and involuntarily distorted its meaning.

2. Ingulov emphasises the role of the press in agitation and in the exposure of abuses, believing that the function of the periodical press is confined to this. He refers to a number of abuses in our country and argues that exposure in the press, agitation through the press, is the "root" of the problem. It is clear, however, that important as the agitational role of the press may be, at the present moment its organisational role is the most vital factor in our work of construction. The point is not only that a newspaper must agitate and expose, but primarily that it must have a wide network of collaborators, agents and correspondents all over the country, in all industrial and agricultural centres, in all uyezds and volosts, so that threads should run from the Party through the newspaper to all the working-class and peasant districts without exception, so that the interaction between the Party and the state on the one hand, and the industrial and peasant districts on the other, should be complete. If a popular newspaper such as, let us say, *Bednota*[2] were, from time to time, to call conferences of its principal agents in different parts of our country for the purpose of exchanging opinions and of summing up experience, and if each of these agents, in his turn, were to call conferences of his correspondents in his districts, centres and volosts for the same purpose, that would be a first important step forward not only in establishing organisational connection between the Party and the working class, between the state and the most remote parts of our country, but also in improving and enlivening the press itself, in improving and enlivening all the staffs of our pe-

2 **Original editor:** *Bednota* (*The Poor*)—a daily newspaper, organ of the Central Committee of the C.P.S.U.(B.), published from March 1918 to January 1931.

> riodical press. In my opinion, such conferences are of far more real importance than "all-Russian" and other congresses of journalists. To make the newspapers collective organisers on behalf of the Party and the Soviet regime, a means of establishing connection with the masses of the working people in our country and of rallying them around the Party and the Soviet regime—such is now the immediate task of the press.

It will not be superfluous to remind the reader of a few lines in Comrade Lenin's article "Where To Begin" (written in 1901) on the organising role of the periodical press in the life of our Party:

> "The role of a newspaper is not limited, however, merely to the spreading of ideas, merely to political education and attracting political allies. A newspaper is not only a collective propagandist and collective agitator, but also a collective organiser. In this respect it can be compared to the scaffolding erected around a building in construction, which marks the contours of the structure, facilitates communication between the builders and permits them to distribute the work and to view the common results achieved by their organised labour. With the aid of and in connection with a newspaper there will automatically develop a permanent organisation that will engage not only in local but also in regular general activities, training its members carefully to watch political events, to appraise their significance and the influence they exercise upon various strata of the population, and to devise suitable means by which the revolutionary Party could influence these events. The technical task alone—of ensuring a regular supply of copy for the newspaper and its proper distribution—will make it necessary to create a network of local agents of the united Party, agents who will have live contact with one another, who will be acquainted with the general state of affairs, get accustomed to carrying out regularly the detailed functions of all-Russian work and test their strength in the organisation of various revolutionary actions. This network of agents will form the skeleton of precisely the organisation we need, namely, one that is sufficiently large to embrace the whole country; sufficiently wide and many-sided to effect a strict and detailed division of labour; sufficiently tried and tempered to be able unswervingly to carry on *its own* work under all circumstances, at all 'turns,' and in all contingencies; sufficiently flexible to be able to avoid open battle against an enemy of overwhelming strength, when he has concentrated all his forces at one spot, and yet able to take advantage of the unwieldiness of this enemy and to attack him when and where least expected."[3]

At that time Comrade Lenin spoke of a newspaper as an instrument

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3 **Original editor:** V. I. Lenin, *Works*, 4th Russ. ed., Vol. 5, pp. 10-11).

for building our Party. But there are no grounds for doubting that what Comrade Lenin said is wholly applicable to the present conditions of our Party and state affairs.

In his article, Ingulov lost sight of this important organising role of the periodical press. That is his chief mistake.

How could it happen that one of our principal press workers lost sight of this important function? Yesterday, a comrade said to me that, apparently, in addition to the aim of solving the problem of the press, Ingulov had another aim, an ulterior one, namely, "to hit at someone, and to do a good turn to someone else." I myself do not undertake to say that this is so, and I am far from denying the right of anyone to set himself ulterior aims in addition to immediate ones. But ulterior aims must not for a moment be allowed to obscure the immediate task of revealing the *organising* role of the press in our Party and state affairs.

Pravda, No. 99,
May 6, 1923
Signed: *J. Stalin*

CONFUSION WORSE CONFOUNDED...

In my article in *Pravda*, No. 99[1] on the organising role of the press, I pointed to two mistakes that Ingulov made on the question of the press. In his article in reply (see *Pravda*, No. 101), Ingulov makes the excuse that his were not mistakes, but "misunderstandings." I am willing to call Ingulov's mistakes "misunderstandings." The trouble is, however, that Ingulov's rejoinder contains three new mistakes, or, if you like, three new "misunderstandings," which, unfortunately, cannot possibly be ignored in view of the special importance of the press.

1. Ingulov asserts that in his first article he did not consider it necessary to concentrate on the question of the organising role of the press, and that he pursued a "limited aim," namely, of ascertaining "who makes our Party newspaper." All right. But, in that case, why did Ingulov quote as a heading to his article a passage from the Central Committee's organisational report, a passage which speaks exclusively about the organising role of our periodical press? One thing or the other: either Ingulov did not understand the meaning of the passage, or he built his entire article in despite of and running counter to the precise meaning of the passage from the Central Committee's organisational report concerning the organising significance of the press. In either case, Ingulov's mistake is glaring.
2. Ingulov asserts that "two or three years ago our press was not connected with the masses," "did not connect the Party with them," that, in general, connections between the press and the masses "did not exist." It is sufficient to read this assertion of Ingulov's carefully to realise how utterly incongruous, lifeless and divorced from real-

1 **Original editor:** See this volume, pp. 226-29.

ity it is. Indeed, if our Party press, and through it the Party itself, "had not been connected" with the masses of the workers "two or three years ago," is it not obvious that our Party would not have been able to withstand the internal and external enemies of the revolution, that it would have been buried, reduced to nothing, "in no time"? Just think: the Civil War is at its height, the Party is beating off the enemy, gaining a number of brilliant successes; the Party, through the press, calls upon the workers and peasants to defend their socialist homeland; tens, hundreds of thousands of working people respond to the Party's call in hundreds of resolutions and go to the front, ready to sacrifice their lives; but Ingulov, knowing all this, nevertheless finds it possible to assert that "two or three years ago our press was not connected with the masses, and consequently, did not connect the Party with them." Isn't that ridiculous? Have you ever heard of a Party "not connected with the masses" through a mass press being able to rouse into action tens and hundreds of thousands of workers and peasants? But since the Party, nevertheless, did rouse into action tens and hundreds of thousands of working people, is it not obvious that the mass party could not possibly have done that without the aid of the press? Yes, somebody certainly did lose contact with the masses, but it was not our Party and not its press; it was somebody else. The press must not be maligned! The fact of the matter is that the Party certainly was connected with the masses through its press "two or three years ago," and it could not have been otherwise; but that connection was comparatively weak, as was justly noted by the Eleventh Congress of our Party. The task now is to widen this connection, to strengthen it in every way, to make it firmer and more regular. That is the whole point.

3. Ingulov asserts further that "two or three years ago there was no interaction between the Party and the working class through the press." Why? Because, it appears, at that time "our press, day after day, issued a call to struggle, reported the measures taken by the Soviet Government and the decisions of the Party, but there was no response from the working-class reader." That is what he says: "there was no response from the working-class reader."

It is incredible, monstrous, but it is a fact.

Everybody knows that when the Party issued through the press the call "All to aid transport!" the masses responded unanimously, sent hundreds of resolutions to the press expressing sympathy and readiness to uphold the transport system, and sent tens of thousands of their sons to maintain it. But Ingulov does not agree to regard this as a response of the working-class reader, he does not agree to call it interaction between the Party and the working class through the press, because this interaction took place not so much through correspondents as directly between the Party and the working class, through the press, of course.

Everybody knows that when the Party issued the call "Fight the famine!" the masses unanimously responded to the Party's call, sent innumerable resolutions to the Party press, and sent tens of thousands of their sons to fight the kulaks. Ingulov, however, does not agree to regard this as a response of the working-class reader and as interaction between the Party and the working class through the press, because this interaction did not take place "according to rule," certain correspondents were by-passed, etc.

It turns out, according to Ingulov, that if tens and hundreds of thousands of workers respond to the call of the Party press, that is not interaction between the Party and the working class, but if in response to the same call the Party press receives written replies from a score or so of correspondents, that is real, genuine interaction between the Party and the working class. And that is called defining the organising role of the Party press! For God's sake, Ingulov, don't confuse the Marxist interpretation of interaction with the bureaucratic interpretation.

If, however, interaction between the Party and the working class through the press is looked at through the eyes of a Marxist, and not of a bureaucrat, it will be clear that this interaction has always taken place, both "two or three years ago," and before that, and it could not but take place, for otherwise the Party could not have retained the leadership of the working class, and the working class could not have retained power. Obviously, the point now is to make this interaction more continuous and lasting. Ingulov not only underrated the organising significance of

the press, he also misrepresented it, replacing the Marxist conception of interaction between the Party and the working class through the press by the bureaucratic, superficially technical conception. And this is what he would call a "misunderstanding." [...]

As regards Ingulov's "ulterior aims," which he emphatically denies, I must say that his second article has not dispelled the doubts on that score that I expressed in my previous article.

Pravda, No. 102,
May 10, 1923
Signed: *J. Stalin*

FOURTH CONFERENCE OF THE CENTRAL COMMITTEE OF THE R.C.P.(B.) WITH RESPONSIBLE WORKERS OF THE NATIONAL REPUBLICS AND REGIONS[1]

June 9-12, 1923

Verbatim Report,
Moscow, 1923

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1 **Original editor:** The Fourth Conference of the Central Committee of the R.C.P.(B.) With Responsible Workers of the National Republics and Regions was convened on J. V. Stalin's initiative and took place in Moscow on June 9-12, 1923. In addition to the members and candidate members of the Central Committee of the R.C.P.(B.), there were present 58 representatives of the national republics and regions. The chief item on the agenda was J. V. Stalin's report on "Practical Measures for Implementing the Resolution on the National Question Adopted by the Twelfth Party Congress." Representatives of twenty Party organisations of the national republics and regions reported on the situation in the localities. The conference also examined the Central Control Commission's report on the anti-Party and anti-Soviet activities of Sultan-Galiyev. (For the resolutions passed by this conference see "Resolutions and Decisions of C.P.S.U.(B.) Congresses, Conferences and Central Committee Plenums," Part I, 1941, pp. 525-30.)

1. Draft Platform on the National Question for the Fourth Conference, Endorsed by the Political Bureau of the Central Committee[2]

The General Line of Party Work on the National Question

The line of Party work on the national question as regards combating deviations from the position adopted by the Twelfth Party Congress must be defined by the relevant points of the resolution on the national question adopted by that congress, namely, Point 7 of Part I of the resolution, and Points 1, 2 and 3 of Part II.

One of the Party's fundamental tasks is to rear and develop in the national republics and regions young communist organisations consisting of proletarian and semi-proletarian elements of the local population; to do everything to assist these organisations to stand firmly on their feet, to acquire real communist education and to unite the genuinely internationalist communist cadres, even though they may be few at first. The Soviet regime will be strong in the republics and regions only when really important communist organisations are firmly established there.

But the Communists themselves in the republics and regions must bear in mind that the situation there, if only because of the different social composition of the population, is markedly different from the situation in the industrial centres of the Union of Republics and that, for this reason, it is often necessary to employ different methods of work in the border regions. In particular, here, in the endeavour to win the support of the labouring masses of the local population, it is necessary to a larger extent than in the central regions to meet halfway the revolutionary democratic elements, or even those who are simply loyal in their attitude to the Soviet regime. The role of the local intelligentsia in the republics

2 **Original editor:** The draft platform on the national question was written by J. V. Stalin at the end of May 1923 in connection with the preparations for the Fourth Conference, and it was endorsed by the Political Bureau of the Central Committee of the R.C.P.(B.) on June 4. The Draft was adopted by the conference as the resolution on J. V. Stalin's report on "Practical Measures for Implementing the Resolution on the National Question Adopted by the Twelfth Party Congress."

and regions differs in many respects from that of the intelligentsia in the central regions of the Union of Republics. There are so few local intellectual workers in the border regions that all efforts must be made to win every one of them to the side of the Soviet regime.

A Communist in the border regions must remember that he is a Communist and *therefore*, acting in conformity with the local conditions, must make concessions to those local national elements who are willing and able to work loyally within the framework of the Soviet system. This does not preclude, but, on the contrary, presupposes a systematic ideological struggle for the principles of Marxism and for genuine internationalism, and against a deviation towards nationalism. Only in this way will it be possible successfully to eliminate local nationalism and win broad strata of the local population to the side of the Soviet regime.

Questions Connected with the Institution of a Second Chamber of the Central Executive Committee of the Union and with the Organisation of the People's Commissariats of the Union of Republics

Judging by as yet incomplete data, there are in all seven such questions:

a) *The composition of the second chamber.* This chamber must consist of representatives of the autonomous and independent republics (four or more from each) and of representatives of the national regions (one from each will be enough). It is desirable that matters be arranged in such a way that members of the first chamber should not, as a rule, be at the same time members of the second chamber. The representatives of the republics and regions must be endorsed by the Congress of Soviets of the Union of Republics. The first chamber should be called the Union Soviet, the second—the Soviet of Nationalities.

b) *The rights of the second chamber in relation to the first.* The two chambers should have equal rights, each having power to initiate legislation, with the proviso that no Bill introduced in either of the chambers can become law unless it receives the consent of both

chambers, voting separately. In the event of disagreement, the questions in dispute should be referred to a conciliation commission of the two chambers, and if no agreement is reached they should be put to another vote at a joint sitting of the two chambers. If the disputed Bill thus amended fails to obtain a majority of the two chambers, the matter should be referred to a special or to an ordinary Congress of Soviets of the Union of Republics.

c) *The jurisdiction of the second chamber.* The questions to come within the jurisdiction of the second (as of the first) chamber are indicated in Point 1 of the Constitution of the U.S.S.R. The legislative functions of the Presidium of the Central Executive Committee of the Union and of the Council of People's Commissars of the Union are to remain in force.

d) *The Presidium of the Central Executive Committee of the Union of Republics.* There should be one Presidium of the Central Executive Committee. It should be elected by both chambers of the Central Executive Committee, provision being made, of course, for representation of the nationalities, at least for the largest ones. The proposal of the Ukrainians for setting up two presidiums with legislative functions, one for each chamber of the Central Executive Committee, in place of a single Presidium of the Central Executive Committee of the Union, is inadvisable. The Presidium is the supreme authority in the Union, functioning constantly, continuously, from session to session. The formation of two presidiums with legislative functions would mean a divided supreme authority, and this would inevitably create great difficulties in practice. The chambers should have their presidiums, which, however, should not possess legislative functions.

e) *The number of merged Commissariats.* In conformity with the decisions of previous plenums of the Central Committee, there should be five *merged* Commissariats (Foreign Affairs, Foreign Trade, War, Transport, and Posts and Telegraphs), and also five *directive* Commissariats (People's Commissariat of Finance, Supreme Council of National Economy, People's Commissariat of Food, People's Commissariat of Labour, Workers' and Peasants' Inspection), the rest of

the Commissariats should be quite autonomous. The Ukrainians propose that the Commissariats of Foreign Affairs and of Foreign Trade be transferred from the merged to the directive category, i.e., that these Commissariats be left in the republics parallel with the Union Commissariats of Foreign Affairs and of Foreign Trade, but subordinate to their directives. This proposal cannot be accepted, if we are really going to form a single Union State capable of coming before the outside world as a united whole. The same must be said about concession agreements, the conclusion of which must be concentrated in the Union of Republics.

f) *The structure of the People's Commissariats of the Union of Republics.* The collegiums of these People's Commissariats should be enlarged by the inclusion of representatives of the biggest and most important nationalities.

g) *The budget rights of the republics.* The republics should be given more independence in regard to their budgets, within the limits of the share allotted to them, the dimensions of the share to be specially determined.

Measures for Drawing Working People of the Local Population into Party and Soviet Affairs

Judging by incomplete data, it is already possible to propose four measures:

a) To purge the state and Party apparatuses of nationalist elements (this refers primarily to the Great-Russian nationalists, but it also refers to the anti-Russian and other nationalists). The purge must be carried out with caution, on the basis of proved data, under the control of the Central Committee of the Party.

b) To conduct systematic and persevering work to make the state and Party institutions in the republics and regions national in character, i.e., gradually to introduce the local languages in the conduct of affairs, making it obligatory for responsible workers to learn the local languages.

c) To choose and enlist for the Soviet institutions the more or less loyal elements among the local intelligentsia. At the same time our responsible workers in the republics and regions must train cadres of Soviet and Party officials from among the members of the Party.

d) To arrange non-Party conferences of workers and peasants at which People's Commissars, and responsible Party workers in general, should report on the most important measures taken by the Soviet Government.

Measures to Raise the Cultural Level of the Local Population

It is necessary, for example:

a) to organise clubs (non-Party) and other educational institutions to be conducted in the local languages;

b) to enlarge the network of educational institutions of all grades to be conducted in the local languages;

c) to draw into school work the more or less loyal school-teachers of local origin;

d) to create a network of societies for the dissemination of literacy in the local languages;

e) to organise publishing activity.

Economic Construction in the National Republics and Regions from the Standpoint of the Specific National Features of Their Manner of Life

It is necessary, for example:

a) to regulate and, where necessary, to stop the transference of populations;

b) as far as possible to provide land for the local working population out of the state land fund;

c) to make agricultural credit available to the local population;

d) to expand irrigation work;

e) to give the co-operatives, and especially the producers' co-operatives, all possible assistance (with a view to attracting handicraftsmen);

f) to transfer factories and mills to republics in which suitable raw materials abound;

g) to organise trade and technical schools for the local population;

h) to organise agricultural courses for the local population.

Practical Measures for the Organisation of National Military Units

It is necessary to proceed at once with the organisation of military schools in the republics and regions for the purpose of training within a certain time commanders from among the local people who could later serve as a core for the organisation of national military units. It goes without saying that a satisfactory Party and social composition of these national units, particularly of the commanders, must be ensured. Where there are old military cadres among the local people (Tataria, and, partly, Bashkiria), it would be possible to organise regiments of national militia at once. Georgia, Armenia and Azerbaijan already have, I think, a division each. In the Ukraine and in Byelorussia it would be possible, at once, to form one division of militia in each (particularly in the Ukraine).

The question of forming national military units is one of prime importance, both as regards defence against possible attacks by Turkey, Afghanistan, Poland, etc., and as regards the possibility of the Union of Republics being compelled to take action against neighbouring states. The importance of national military units from the standpoint of the internal situation in the Union of Republics needs no proof. It must be supposed that in this connection the numerical strength of our army will have to be increased by approximately 20-25 thousand men.

The Organisation of Party Educational Work

It is necessary, for example:

a) to organise schools for elementary political education in the native languages;

b) to create a Marxist literature in the native languages;

c) to have a well-organised periodical press in the native languages;

d) to widen the activities of the University of the Peoples of the East at the centre and in the localities and to provide this university with the necessary funds;

e) to organise a Party debating society at the University of the Peoples of the East, and to enlist the cooperation of members of the Central Committee living in Moscow;

f) to intensify work in the Youth League and among women in the republics and regions.

Selection of Party and Soviet Officials with a View to Implementing the Resolution on the National Question Adopted by the Twelfth Congress

It is necessary to bring into the Registration and Distribution, Agitation and Propaganda, Organisation, Women's, and Instructors' Departments of the Central Committee, a definite number of people (two or three in each) from the nationalities to facilitate the Central Committee's current Party work in the border regions, and properly to distribute Party and Soviet officials among the republics and regions so as to ensure the implementation of the line on the national question adopted by the Twelfth Congress of the R.C.P.

2. Rights and "Lefts" in the National Republics and Regions

Speech on the First Item of the Conference Agenda: "The Sultan-Galiyev Case"
June 10

I have taken the floor in order to make a few comments on the speeches of the comrades who have spoken here. As regards the principles involved in the Sultan-Galiyev case, I shall endeavour to deal with them in my report on the second item of the agenda.

First of all, with regard to the conference itself. Someone (I have forgotten who exactly it was) said here that this conference is an unusual event. That is not so. Such conferences are not a novelty for our Party. The present conference is the fourth of its kind to be held since the establishment of Soviet power. Up to the beginning of 1919 three such conferences were held. Conditions at that time permitted us to call such conferences. But later, after 1919, in 1920 and 1921, when we were entirely taken up with the civil war, we had no time for conferences of this kind. And only now that we have finished with the civil war, now that we have gone deeply into the work of economic construction, now that Party work itself has become more concrete, especially in the national regions and republics, has it again become possible for us to call a conference of this kind. I think the Central Committee will repeatedly resort to this method in order to establish full mutual understanding between those who are carrying out the policy in the localities and those who are making that policy. I think that such conferences should be called, not only from all the republics and regions, but also from individual regions and republics for the purpose of drawing up more concrete decisions. This alone can satisfy both the Central Committee and the responsible workers in the localities.

I heard certain comrades say that I warned Sultan-Galiyev when I had the opportunity of acquainting myself with his first secret letter, addressed, I think, to Adigamov, who for some reason is silent and has not uttered a word here, although he should have been the first to speak and the one to have said most. I have been reproached by these comrades with

having defended Sultan-Galiyev excessively. It is true that I defended him as long as it was possible, and I considered, and still consider, that it was my duty to do so. But I defended him only up to a certain point. And when Sultan-Galiyev went beyond that point I turned away from him. His first secret letter shows that he was already breaking with the Party, for the tone of his letter is almost white-guard; he writes about members of the Central Committee as one can write only about enemies. I met him by chance in the Political Bureau, where he was defending the demands of the Tatar Republic in connection with the People's Commissariat of Agriculture. I warned him then, in a note I sent him, in which I called his secret letter an anti-Party one, and in which I accused him of creating an organisation of the Validov type; I told him that unless he desisted from illegal, anti-Party work he would come to a bad end, and any support from me would be out of the question. He replied, in great embarrassment, that I had been misled; that he had indeed written to Adigamov, not, however, what was alleged, but something else; that he had always been a Party man and was so still, and he gave his word of honour that he would continue to be a Party man in future. Nevertheless, a week later he sent Adigamov a second secret letter, instructing him to establish contact with the Basmachi and with their leader Validov, and to "burn" the letter. The whole thing, therefore, was vile, it was sheer deception, and it compelled me to break off all connection with Sultan-Galiyev. From that moment Sultan-Galiyev became for me a man beyond the pale of the Party, of the Soviets, and I considered it impossible to speak to him, although he tried several times to come to me and "have a talk" with me. As far back as the beginning of 1919, the "Left" comrades reproached me with supporting Sultan-Galiyev, with trying to save him for the Party, with wanting to spare him, in the hope that he would cease to be a nationalist and become a Marxist. I did, indeed, consider it my duty to support him for a time. There are so few intellectuals, so few thinking people, even so few literate people generally in the Eastern republics and regions, that one can count them on one's fingers. How can one help cherishing them? It would be criminal not to take all measures to save from corruption people of the East whom we need and to preserve them for the Party. But there is a limit to everything. And the limit in this case was reached when Sultan-Galiyev crossed over from the communist camp to the camp of

the Basmachi. From that time on he ceased to exist for the Party. That is why he found the Turkish ambassador more congenial than the Central Committee of our Party.

I heard a similar reproach from Shamigulov, to the effect that, in spite of his insistence that we should finish with Validov at one stroke, I defended Validov and tried to preserve him for the Party. I did indeed defend Validov in the hope that he would reform. Worse people have reformed, as we know from the history of political parties. I decided that Shamigulov's solution of the problem was too simple. I did not follow his advice. It is true that a year later Shamigulov's forecast proved correct: Validov did not reform, he went over to the Basmachi. Nevertheless, the Party gained by the fact that we delayed Validov's desertion from the Party for a year. Had we settled with Validov in 1918, I am certain that comrades like Murtazin, Adigamov, Khalikov and others would not have remained in our ranks. (*Voice*: "Khalikov would have remained.") Perhaps Khalikov would not have left us, but a whole group of comrades working in our ranks would have left with Validov. That is what we gained by our patience and foresight.

I listened to Ryskulov, and I must say that his speech was not altogether sincere, it was semi-diplomatic (*voice*: "Quite true!"), and in general his speech made a bad impression. I expected more clarity and sincerity from him. Whatever Ryskulov may say, it is obvious that he has at home two secret letters from Sultan-Galiyev, which he has not shown to anyone, it is obvious that he was associated with Sultan-Galiyev ideologically. The fact that Ryskulov dissociates himself from the criminal aspect of the Sultan-Galiyev case, asserting that he is not involved with Sultan-Galiyev in the course leading to Basmachism, is of no importance. That is not what we are concerned with at this conference. We are concerned with the intellectual, ideological ties with Sultan-Galiyevism. That such ties did exist between Ryskulov and Sultan-Galiyev is obvious, comrades; Ryskulov himself cannot deny it. Is it not high time for him here, from this rostrum, at long last to dissociate himself from Sultan-Galiyevism emphatically and unreservedly? In this respect Ryskulov's speech was semi-diplomatic and unsatisfactory.

Enbayev also made a diplomatic and insincere speech. Is it not a fact that, after Sultan-Galiyev's arrest, Enbayev and a group of Tatar responsible workers, whom I consider splendid practical men in spite of their ideological instability, sent a demand to the Central Committee for his immediate release, fully vouching for him and hinting that the documents taken from Sultan-Galiyev were not genuine? Is that not a fact? But what did the investigation reveal? It revealed that all the documents were genuine. Their genuineness was admitted by Sultan-Galiyev himself, who, in fact, gave more information about his sins than is contained in the documents, who fully confessed his guilt, and, after confessing, repented. Is it not obvious that, after all this, Enbayev ought to have emphatically and unreservedly admitted his mistakes and to have dissociated himself from Sultan-Galiyev? But Enbayev did not do this. He found occasion to jeer at the "Lefts," but he would not emphatically, as a Communist should, dissociate himself from Sultan-Galiyevism, from the abyss into which Sultan-Galiyev had landed. Evidently he thought that diplomacy would save him.

Firdevs's speech was sheer diplomacy from beginning to end. Who the ideological leader was, whether Sultan-Galiyev led Firdevs, or whether Firdevs led Sultan-Galiyev, is a question I leave open, although I think that ideologically Firdevs led Sultan-Galiyev rather than the other way round. I see nothing particularly reprehensible in Sultan-Galiyev's exercises in theory. If Sultan-Galiyev had confined himself to the ideology of Pan-Turkism and Pan-Islamism it would not have been so bad and I would say that this ideology, inspite of the ban pronounced by the resolution on the national question passed by the Tenth Party Congress, could be regarded as tolerable, and that we could confine ourselves to criticising it within the ranks of our Party. But when exercises in ideology end in establishing contacts with Basmach leaders, with Validov and others, it is utterly impossible to justify Basmach practices here on the ground that the ideology is innocent, as Firdevs tries to do. You can deceive nobody by such a justification of Sultan-Galiyev's activities. In that way it would be possible to find a justification for both imperialism and tsarism, for they too have their ideologies, which sometimes look innocent enough. One cannot reason in that way. You are not facing a tribunal, but a con-

ference of responsible workers, who demand of you straightforwardness and sincerity, not diplomacy.

Khojanov spoke well, in my opinion. And Ikramov did not speak badly either. But I must mention a passage in the speeches of these comrades which gives food for thought. Both said that there was no difference between present-day Turkestan and tsarist Turkestan, that only the signboard had been changed, that Turkestan had remained what it was under the tsar. Comrades, if that was not a slip of the tongue, if it was a considered and deliberate statement, then it must be said that in that case the Basmachi are right and we are wrong. If Turkestan is in fact a colony, as it was under tsarism, then the Basmachi are right, and it is not we who should be trying Sultan-Galiyev, but Sultan-Galiyev who should be trying us for tolerating the existence of a colony in the framework of the Soviet regime. If that is true, I fail to understand why you yourselves have not gone over to Basmachism. Evidently, Khojanov and Ikramov uttered that passage in their speeches without thinking, for they cannot help knowing that present-day Soviet Turkestan is radically different from tsarist Turkestan. I wanted to point to that obscure passage in the speeches of these comrades in order that they should try to think this over and rectify their mistake.

I take upon myself some of the charges Ikramov made against the work of the Central Committee, to the effect that we have not always been attentive and have not always succeeded in raising in time the practical questions dictated by conditions in the Eastern republics and regions. Of course, the Central Committee is overburdened with work and is unable to keep pace with events everywhere. It would be ridiculous to think that the Central Committee can keep pace with everything. Of course, there are few schools in Turkestan. The local languages have not yet become current in the state institutions, the institutions have not been made national in character. Culture in general is at a low level. All that is true. But can anybody seriously think that the Central Committee, or the Party as a whole, can raise the cultural level of Turkestan in two or three years? We are all shouting and complaining that Russian culture, the culture of the Russian people, which is more cultured than the other peoples in the Union of Republics, is at a low level. Ilyich has repeatedly

stated that we have little culture, that it is impossible to raise Russian culture appreciably in two or three, or even ten years. And if it is impossible to raise Russian culture appreciably in two or three, or even ten years, how can we demand a rapid rise of culture in the non-Russian backward regions with a low level of literacy? Is it not obvious that nine-tenths of the "blame" falls on the conditions, on the backwardness, and that you cannot but take this into account?

About the "Lefts" and the Rights.

Do they exist in the communist organisations in the regions and republics? Of course they do. That cannot be denied.

Wherein lie the sins of the Rights? In the fact that the Rights are not and cannot be an antidote to, a reliable bulwark against, the nationalist tendencies which are developing and gaining strength in connection with the N.E.P. The fact that Sultan-Galiyevism did exist, that it created a certain circle of supporters in the Eastern republics, especially in Bashkiria and Tataria, leaves no doubt that the Right-wing elements, who in these republics comprise the overwhelming majority, are not a sufficiently strong bulwark against nationalism.

It should be borne in mind that our communist organisations in the border regions, in the republics and regions, can develop and stand firmly on their feet, can become genuine internationalist, Marxist cadres, only if they overcome nationalism. Nationalism is the chief ideological obstacle to the training of Marxist cadres, of a Marxist vanguard, in the border regions and republics. The history of our Party shows that the Bolshevik Party, its Russian section, grew and gained strength in the fight against Menshevism; for Menshevism is the ideology of the bourgeoisie, Menshevism is a channel through which bourgeois ideology penetrates into our Party, and had the Party not overcome Menshevism it could not have stood firmly on its feet. Ilyich wrote about this a number of times. Only to the degree that it overcame Menshevism in its organisational and ideological forms did Bolshevism grow and gain strength as a real leading party. The same must be said of nationalism in relation to our communist organisations in the border regions and republics. Nationalism is playing the same role in relation to these organisations as Menshevism

in the past played in relation to the Bolshevik Party. Only under cover of nationalism can various kinds of bourgeois, including Menshevik, influences penetrate our organisations in the border regions. Our organisations in the republics can become Marxist only if they are able to resist the nationalist ideas which are forcing their way into our Party in the border regions, and are forcing their way because the bourgeoisie is reviving, the N.E.P. is spreading, nationalism is growing, there are survivals of Great-Russian chauvinism, which also give an impetus to local nationalism, and there is the influence of foreign states, which support nationalism in every way. If our communist organisations in the national republics want to gain strength as genuinely Marxist organisations they must pass through the stage of fighting this enemy in the republics and regions. There is no other way. And in this fight the Rights are weak. Weak because they are infected with scepticism with regard to the Party and easily yield to the influence of nationalism. Herein lies the sin of the Right wing of the communist organisations in the republics and regions.

But no less, if not more, sinful are the "Lefts" in the border regions. If the communist organisations in the border regions cannot grow strong and develop into genuinely Marxist cadres unless they overcome nationalism, these cadres themselves will be able to become mass organisations, to rally the majority of the working people around themselves, only if they learn to be flexible enough to draw into our state institutions all the national elements that are at all loyal, by making concessions to them, and if they learn to manoeuvre between a resolute fight against nationalism in the Party and an equally resolute fight to draw into Soviet work all the more or less loyal elements among the local people, the intelligentsia, and so on. The "Lefts" in the border regions are more or less free from the sceptical attitude towards the Party, from the tendency to yield to the influence of nationalism. But the sins of the "Lefts" lie in the fact that they are incapable of flexibility in relation to the bourgeois-democratic and the simply loyal elements of the population, they are unable and unwilling to manoeuvre in order to attract these elements, they distort the Party's line of winning over the majority of the toiling population of the country. But this flexibility and ability to manoeuvre between the fight against nationalism and the drawing of all the elements that are at all loyal into

our state institutions must be created and developed at all costs. It can be created and developed only *if* we take into account the entire complexity and the specific nature of the situation encountered in our regions and republics; *if* we do not simply engage in transplanting the models that are being created in the central industrial districts, which cannot be transplanted mechanically to the border regions; *if* we do not brush aside the nationalist-minded elements of the population, the nationalist-minded petty bourgeois; and *if* we learn to draw these elements into the general work of state administration. The sin of the "Lefts" is that they are infected with sectarianism and fail to understand the paramount importance of the Party's complex tasks in the national republics and regions.

While the Rights create the danger that by their tendency to yield to nationalism they may hinder the growth of our communist cadres in the border regions, the "Lefts" create the danger for the Party that by their infatuation with an over-simplified and hasty "communism" they may isolate our Party from the peasantry and from broad strata of the local population.

Which of these dangers is the more formidable? If the comrades who are deviating towards the "Left" intend to continue practising in the localities their policy of artificially splitting the population—and this policy has been practised not only in Chechnya and in the Yakut Region, and not only in Turkestan . [...] (*Ibrahimov*: "They are tactics of differentiation.") Ibrahimov has now thought of substituting the tactics of differentiation for the tactics of splitting, but that changes nothing. If, I say, they intend to continue practising their policy of splitting the population from above; if they think that Russian models can be mechanically transplanted to a specifically national milieu regardless of the manner of life of the inhabitants and of the concrete conditions; if they think that in fighting nationalism everything that is national must be thrown overboard; in short, if the "Left" Communists in the border regions intend to remain incorrigible, I must say that of the two, the "Left" danger may prove to be the more formidable.

This is all I wanted to say about the "Lefts" and the Rights. I have run ahead somewhat, but that is because the whole conference has run ahead and has anticipated the discussion of the second item.

We must chastise the Rights in order to make them fight nationalism, to teach them to do so in order to forge real communist cadres from among local people. But we must also chastise the "Lefts" in order to teach them to be flexible and to manoeuvre skilfully, so as to win over the broad masses of the population. All this must be done because, as Khojanov rightly remarked, the truth lies "in between" the Rights and the "Lefts."

3. Practical Measures for Implementing the Resolution on the National Question Adopted by the Twelfth Party Congress

Report on the Second Item of the Agenda
June 10

Comrades, you have no doubt already received the draft platform[3] of the Political Bureau of the Central Committee on the national question. (*Voices*: "Not everybody has it.") This platform concerns the second item of the agenda with all the sub-items. At all events, everybody has received the conference agenda in the shape of the Central Committee's coded telegram.

The Political Bureau's proposals may be divided into three groups.

The first group of questions concerns the reinforcement of the communist cadres in the republics and regions from among local people.

The second group of questions concerns everything connected with the implementation of the concrete decisions on the national question adopted by the Twelfth Congress, namely: questions about drawing working people of the local population into Party and Soviet affairs; questions about measures necessary for raising the cultural level of the local population; questions about improving the economic situation in the republics and regions with due regard to specific features of the manner of life; and lastly, questions about the co-operatives in the regions

3 **Original editor:** See this volume, pp. 235-41.

and republics, the transfer of factories, the creation of industrial centres, and so on. This group of questions concerns the economic, cultural and political tasks of the regions and republics, with due regard to local conditions.

The third group of questions concerns the Constitution of the Union of Republics in general, and in particular the question of amending this Constitution with a view to setting up a second chamber of the Central Executive Committee of the Union of Republics. As you know, this last group of questions is connected with the forthcoming session of the Central Executive Committee of the Union of Republics.

I pass to the first group of questions—those concerning the methods of training and reinforcing Marxist cadres from among local people, who will be capable of serving as the most important and, in the long run, as the decisive bulwark of Soviet power in the border regions. If we examine the development of our Party (I refer to its Russian section, as the main section) and trace the principal stages in its development, and then, by analogy, draw a picture of the development of our communist organisations in the regions and republics in the immediate future, I think we shall find the key to the understanding of the specific features in these countries which distinguish the development of our Party in the border regions.

The principal task in the first period of our Party's development, the development of its Russian section, was to create cadres, Marxist cadres. These Marxist cadres were made, forged, in our fight with Menshevism. The task of these cadres then, at that period—I am referring to the period from the foundation of the Bolshevik Party to the expulsion from the Party of the Liquidators, as the most pronounced representatives of Menshevism—the main task was to win over to the Bolsheviks the most active, honest and outstanding members of the working class, to create cadres, to form a vanguard. The struggle here was waged primarily against tendencies of a bourgeois character—especially against Menshevism—which prevented the cadres from being combined into a single unit, as the main core of the Party. At that time it was not yet the task of the Party, as an immediate and vital need, to establish wide connections with the vast masses of the working class and the toiling

peasantry, to win over those masses, to win a majority in the country. The Party had not yet got so far.

Only in the next stage of our Party's development, only in its second stage, when these cadres had grown, when they had taken shape as the basic core of our Party, when the sympathies of the best elements among the working class had already been won, or almost won—only then was the Party confronted with the task, as an immediate and urgent need, of winning over the vast masses, of transforming the Party cadres into a real mass workers' party. During this period the core of our Party had to wage a struggle not so much against Menshevism as against the "Left" elements within our Party, the "Otzovists" of all kinds, who were attempting to substitute revolutionary phraseology for a serious study of the specific features of the new situation which arose after 1905, who by their over-simplified "revolutionary" tactics were hindering the conversion of our Party cadres into a genuine mass party, and who by their activities were creating the danger of the Party becoming divorced from the broad masses of the workers. It scarcely needs proof that without a resolute struggle against this "Left" danger, without defeating it, the Party could not have won over the vast labouring masses.

Such, approximately, is the picture of the fight on two fronts, against the Rights, i.e., the Mensheviks, and against the "Lefts"; the picture of the development of the principal section of our Party, the Russian section.

Comrade Lenin quite convincingly depicted this essential, inevitable development of the Communist Parties in his pamphlet *"Left-Wing" Communism, an Infantile Disorder*. There he showed that the Communist Parties in the West must pass, and are already passing, through approximately the same stages of development. We, on our part, shall add that the same must be said of the development of our communist organisations and Communist Parties in the border regions.

It should, however, be noted that, despite the analogy between what the Party experienced in the past and what our Party organisations in the border regions are experiencing now, there are, after all, certain important specific features in our Party's development in the national republics and regions, features which we must without fail take into account, for if

we do not take them carefully into account we shall run the risk of committing a number of very gross errors in determining the tasks of training Marxist cadres from among local people in the border regions.

Let us pass to an examination of these specific features.

The fight against the Right and "Left" elements in our organisations in the border regions is necessary and obligatory, for otherwise we shall not be able to train Marxist cadres closely connected with the masses. That is clear. But the specific feature of the situation in the border regions, the feature that distinguishes it from our Party's development in the past, is that in the border regions the forging of cadres and their conversion into a mass party are taking place not under a bourgeois system, as was the case in the history of our Party, but under the Soviet system, under the dictatorship of the proletariat. At that time, under the bourgeois system, it was possible and necessary, because of the conditions of those times, to beat *first of all* the Mensheviks (in order to forge Marxist cadres) and *then* the Otzovists (in order to transform those cadres into a mass party); the fight against those two deviations filled two entire periods of our Party's history. Now, under present conditions, we cannot possibly do that, for the Party is now in power, and being in power, the Party needs in the border regions reliable Marxist cadres from among local people who are connected with the broad masses of the population. Now we cannot *first of all* defeat the Right danger with the help of the "Lefts," as was the case in the history of our Party, and *then* the "Left" danger with the help of the Rights. Now we have to wage a fight on both fronts *simultaneously*, striving to defeat both dangers so as to obtain as a result in the border regions trained Marxist cadres of local people connected with the masses. At that time we could speak of cadres who were not yet connected with the broad masses, but who were to become connected with them in the next period of development. Now it is ridiculous even to speak of that, because under the Soviet regime it is impossible to conceive of Marxist cadres not being connected with the broad masses in one way or another. They would be cadres who would have nothing in common either with Marxism or with a mass party. All this considerably complicates matters and dictates to our Party organisations in the border regions the need for waging a simultaneous struggle against the Rights

and the "Lefts." Hence the stand our Party takes that it is necessary to wage a fight on two fronts, against both deviations simultaneously.

Further, it should be noted that the development of our communist organisations in the border regions is not proceeding in isolation, as was the case in our Party's history in relation to its Russian section, but under the direct influence of the main core of our Party, which is experienced not only in forming Marxist cadres, but also in linking those cadres with the broad masses of the population and in revolutionary manoeuvring in the fight for Soviet power. The specific feature of the situation in the border regions in this respect is that our Party organisations in these countries, owing to the conditions under which Soviet power is developing there, can and must manoeuvre their forces for the purpose of strengthening their connections with the broad masses of the population, utilising for this purpose the rich experience of our Party during the preceding period. Until recently, the Central Committee of the R.C.P. usually carried out manoeuvring in the border regions directly, over the heads of the communist organisations there, sometimes even by-passing those organisations, drawing all the more or less loyal national elements into the general work of Soviet construction. Now this work must be done by the organisations in the border regions themselves. They can do it, and must do it, bearing in mind that that is the best way of converting the Marxist cadres from among local people into a genuine mass party capable of leading the majority of the population of the country.

Such are the two specific features which must be taken strictly into account when determining our Party's line in the border regions in the matter of training Marxist cadres, and of these cadres winning over the broad masses of the population.

I pass to the second group of questions. Since not all the comrades have received the draft platform, I will read it and explain.

First, "measures for drawing the proletarian and semi-proletarian elements into Party and Soviet affairs." Why is this needed? It is needed to bring the Party, and particularly the Soviet, apparatus closer to the population. These apparatuses must function in the languages that are understood by the broad masses of the people, otherwise it will be impossible

to bring them closer to the population. Our Party's task is to make Soviet power near and dear to the masses, but this task can be fulfilled only by making this power understood by the masses. Those who are at the head of the state institutions, and the institutions themselves, must function in the language understood by the people. The chauvinistic elements who are destroying the feeling of friendship and solidarity between the peoples in the Union of Republics must be expelled from these institutions; our institutions, both in Moscow and in the republics, must be purged of such elements, and local people who know the language and customs of the population must be placed at the head of the state institutions in the republics.

I remember that two years ago, the Chairman of the Council of People's Commissars in the Kirghiz Republic was Pestkovsky, who could not speak the Kirghiz language. Already at that time this circumstance gave rise to enormous difficulties in the matter of strengthening the ties between the Government of the Kirghiz Republic and the masses of the Kirghiz peasants. That is precisely why the Party arranged for a Kirghiz to be Chairman of the Council of People's Commissars of the Kirghiz Republic.

I also remember that last year a group of comrades from Bashkiria proposed that a Russian comrade be put forward as Chairman of the Council of People's Commissars of Bashkiria. The Party emphatically rejected this proposal and secured the nomination of a Bashkir for this post.

The task is to pursue this line, and, in general, the line of gradually making the governmental institutions national in character in all the national republics and regions, and first of all in such an important republic as the Ukraine.

Secondly, "to choose and enlist the more or less loyal elements among the local intelligentsia, while at the same time training Soviet cadres from among the members of the Party." This proposition does not call for special explanation. Now that the working class is in power and has rallied the majority of the population around itself, there are no grounds for fearing to draw the more or less loyal elements, even including former "Octo-

brists," into the work of Soviet construction. On the contrary, all these elements must without fail be drawn into the work in the national regions and republics in order to assimilate and Sovietise them in the course of the work itself.

Thirdly, "to arrange non-Party conferences of workers and peasants at which members of the Government should report on the measures taken by the Soviet Government." I know that many People's Commissars in the republics, in the Kirghiz Republic, for example, are unwilling to visit the districts, to attend meetings of peasants, to speak at meetings and inform the broad masses about what the Party and the Soviet Government are doing in connection with questions that are particularly important to the peasants. We must put a stop to this state of affairs. Non-Party conferences of workers and peasants must be convened without fail, and at them the masses must be informed about the Soviet Government's activities. Unless this is done we cannot even dream of bringing the state apparatus closer to the people.

Further, "measures to raise the cultural level of the local population." Several measures are proposed, but, of course, the list cannot be regarded as exhaustive. These measures are: a) "to organise clubs (non-Party) and other educational institutions to be conducted in the local languages"; b) "to enlarge the network of educational institutions of all grades to be conducted in the local languages "; c) "to enlist the services of the more or less loyal school-teachers"; d) "to create a network of societies for the dissemination of literacy in the local languages"; e) "to organise publishing activity." All these measures are clear and intelligible and, therefore, do not need special explanation.

Further, "economic construction in the national republics and regions from the standpoint of the specific national features of their manner of life." The relevant measures proposed by the Political Bureau are: a) "to regulate and, where necessary, to stop the transference of populations"; b) "to provide land for the local *working* population out of the state land fund"; c) "to make agricultural credit available to the local population"; d) "to expand irrigation work"; e) "to transfer factories and mills to republics in which raw materials abound"; f) "to organise trade and technical schools"; g) "to organise agricultural courses," and lastly, h) "to

give the co-operatives, and especially the producers' co-operatives, all possible assistance (with a view to attracting handicraftsmen)."

I must dwell on the last point owing to its special importance. In the past, under the tsar, development proceeded in such a way that the kulaks grew, agricultural capital developed, the bulk of the middle peasants were in a state of unstable equilibrium, while the broad masses of the peasants, the broad masses of small peasant proprietors, writhed in the clutches of ruin and poverty. Now, however, under the dictatorship of the proletariat, when credit, the land and power are in the hands of the working class, development cannot proceed along the old lines, notwithstanding the conditions of the N.E.P., notwithstanding the revival of private capital. Those comrades are absolutely wrong who assert that in view of the development of the N.E.P. we must again go through the old history of developing kulaks at the cost of wholesale ruin for the majority of the peasants. That path is not our path. Under the new conditions, when the proletariat is in power and holds in its hands all the basic threads of our economy, development must proceed along a different path, along the path of uniting the small proprietors of the villages in all kinds of co-operative societies, which will be backed by the state in their struggle against private capital; along the path of gradually drawing the millions of small peasant proprietors into socialist construction through the co-operatives; along the path of gradually improving the economic conditions of the small peasant proprietors (and not of impoverishing them). In this respect, "all possible assistance to the co-operatives" in the border regions, in these predominantly agricultural countries, is of prime importance for the future economic development of the Union of Republics.

Further, "practical measures for the organisation of national military units." I think that we have delayed considerably in drawing up measures of this kind. It is our duty to organise national military units. Of course, they cannot be organised in a day; but we can, and must, proceed at once to set up military schools in the republics and regions for the purpose of training within a certain period, from among local people, commanders who could later serve as a core for the organisation of national mili tary units. It is absolutely necessary to start this and to push it forward. If we had reliable national military units with reliable commanders in republics

like Turkestan, the Ukraine, Byelorussia, Georgia, Armenia and Azerbaijan, our republic would be in a far better position than it is now both in regard to defence and in regard to the contingency of our having to take action. We must start this work at once. Of course, this will involve an increase in the strength of our army by 20-25 thousand men, but this cannot be regarded as an insuperable obstacle.

I shall not dwell at length on the remaining points (see the draft platform), for their significance is self-evident and needs no explanation.

The third group of questions consists of those connected with the institution of a second chamber of the Central Executive Committee of the Union and the organisation of the People's Commissariats of the Union of Republics. Here the principal questions, the most conspicuous ones, are singled out and, of course, the list of such questions cannot be regarded as complete.

The Political Bureau conceives the second chamber as a component part of the Central Executive Committee of the U.S.S.R. Proposals were made that, in addition to the existing Central Executive Committee, there should be set up a Supreme Soviet of Nationalities separate from the Central Executive Committee. This project was rejected and the Political Bureau decided that it was more advisable to divide the Central Executive Committee itself into two chambers: the first, which can be called the Union Soviet, to be elected by the Congress of Soviets of the Union of Republics, and the second, which should be called the Soviet of Nationalities, to be elected by the Central Executive Committees of the republics and by the regional congresses of national regions in the proportion of five representatives from each republic and one from each region, the elected representatives to be endorsed by the Congress of Soviets of the Union of Republics.

As regards the rights of the second chamber in relation to the first, we decided on the principle of equal rights for the two chambers. Each chamber is to have a presidium, but these presidiums are not to have legislative functions. The two chambers meet together and elect a joint Presidium, which will be vested with supreme authority in the intervals between sessions of the Central Executive Committee. No Bill introduced in either

of these chambers will acquire the force of law unless it is passed by both chambers; that is to say, there is to be complete equality between the two chambers.

Further, about the Presidium of the Central Executive Committee. I have briefly dealt with this. The Political Bureau is of the opinion that the existence of two legislative presidiums cannot be permitted. If the Presidium is the supreme authority, it cannot be divided into two or more parts; the supreme authority must be a single entity. In view of this, it is considered advisable to form a joint Presidium of the Central Executive Committee of the U.S.S.R. out of the presidiums of the first and second chambers, plus some members to be elected at a joint sitting of the two chambers, i.e. at the plenary sitting of the Central Executive Committee.

Further, the question of the number of merged Commissariats. You know that, according to the old Constitution ratified at the Congress of Soviets of the Union of Republics last year, the administration of military affairs, foreign affairs, foreign trade, posts and telegraphs, and the railways, is concentrated in the hands of the Council of People 's Commissars of the Union of Republics, while the other five Commissariats are directive bodies, i.e., the Supreme Council of National Economy, the People's Commissariat of Food, the People's Commissariat of Finance, the People's Commissariat of Labour, and the Workers' and Peasants' Inspection are subordinate to two authorities, while the remaining six Commissariats are independent. This project was criticised by some of the Ukrainians, Rakovsky, Skrypnik, and others. The Political Bureau, however, rejected the proposal of the Ukrainians that the People's Commissariat of Foreign Affairs and the People's Commissariat of Foreign Trade be transferred from the category of merged Commissariats to the directive category and, in the main, accepted the principal clauses of the Constitution in keeping with the decisions adopted last year.

Such, in general, are the considerations that guided the Political Bureau in drawing up the draft platform.

I think that on the question of the Constitution of the Union of Republics and of the second chamber, the conference will have to limit itself to a brief exchange of opinions, the more so that this question is be-

ing studied by a commission of the Plenum of the Central Committee.[4] The question of the practical measures to implement the resolutions of the Twelfth Congress will, in my opinion, have to be discussed in greater detail. As for the question of strengthening the local Marxist cadres, we shall have to devote the greater part of the debate to this matter.

I think that it would be advisable before opening the debate to hear the reports of the comrades from the republics and regions on the basis of the information they have brought from their localities.

4. Reply to the Discussion

June 12

First of all I would like to say a few words about the reports made by the comrades, and about the character of the conference in general, in the light of the reports presented. Although this is the fourth conference of this kind held since Soviet power came into existence, it is the only one that can be called a full conference, having heard more or less full and substantiated reports from the republics and regions. It is evident from the reports that the communist cadres in the regions and republics have grown more mature and are learning to work independently. I think that the wealth of information the comrades have given us, the experience of the work performed in the regions and republics which the comrades related to us here, should certainly be brought to the knowledge of the whole of our Party in the shape of the minutes of this conference. The people have grown more mature and are making progress, they are learning to govern—such is the first conclusion to be drawn from the reports, the first impression that one gets from them.

Passing to the contents of the reports, we can divide the material pre-

4 **Original editor:** This refers to the commission appointed by the Plenum of the Central Committee of the R.C.P.(B.) on February 24, 1923, to draw up practical proposals concerning the formation of the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics. The commission was headed by J. V. Stalin and contained representatives of the Party organisations of all the Union Republics. It directed the drafting of the Constitution of the U.S.S.R.

sented into two groups: reports from the Socialist Republics, and reports from the People's, non-Socialist, Republics (Bukhara, Khorezm).

Let us proceed to examine the first group of reports. It is evident from these reports that as regards bringing the Party and, particularly, the state apparatus closer to the language and manner of life of the people, Georgia must be considered the most developed and advanced republic. Next to Georgia comes Armenia. The other republics and regions are behind them. Such, to my mind, is the indisputable conclusion. This is due to the fact that Georgia and Armenia are more highly cultured than the others. The percentage of literates in Georgia is fairly high—as much as 80; in Armenia it is not less than 40. That is the secret why these two countries are ahead of the other republics. From this it follows that the more literate and cultured a country, a republic, or a region is, the closer is the Party and Soviet apparatus to the people, to its language, to its manner of life. All this, provided other conditions are equal, of course. This is obvious, and there is nothing new in this conclusion; and precisely because there is nothing new in it, this conclusion is often forgotten and, not infrequently, efforts are made to attribute cultural backwardness, and hence, backwardness in state affairs, to "mistakes" in the Party's policy, to conflicts, and so forth, whereas the basis of all this is insufficient literacy, lack of culture. If you want to make your country an advanced country, that is, to raise the level of its statehood, then increase the literacy of the population, raise the culture of your country, the rest will come.

Approaching the matter from that angle, and appraising the situation in the individual republics in the light of these reports, it must be admitted that the situation in Turkestan, the present state of affairs there, is the most unsatisfactory, and is the most alarming. Cultural backwardness, a terribly low percentage of literacy, divorce of the state apparatus from the language and manner of life of the peoples of Turkestan, a terribly slow tempo of development—such is the picture. And yet it is obvious that, of all the Soviet republics, Turkestan is the most important from the standpoint of revolutionising the East; and not only because Turkestan presents a combination of nationalities most closely connected with the East, but also because, owing to its geographical situ-

ation, it cuts right into the heart of the East, which is the most exploited, and which has accumulated in its midst the most explosive material for the fight against imperialism. That is why present-day Turkestan is the weakest point of Soviet power. The task is to transform Turkestan into a model republic, into an outpost for revolutionising the East. That is precisely why it is necessary to concentrate attention on Turkestan with a view to raising the cultural level of the masses, to making the state apparatus national in character, and so forth. We must carry out this task at all costs, sparing no effort, and shrinking from no sacrifice.

The second weak point of Soviet power is the Ukraine. The state of affairs there as regards culture, literacy, etc., is the same, or almost the same, as in Turkestan. The state apparatus is as remote from the language and manner of life of the people as it is in Turkestan. And yet the Ukraine has the same significance for the peoples of the West as Turkestan has for the peoples of the East. The situation in the Ukraine is still more complicated by certain specific features of the country's industrial development. The point is that the basic industries, coal and metallurgy, appeared in the Ukraine not from below, not as a result of the natural development of her national economy, but from above; they were introduced, artificially implanted, from outside. Consequently the proletariat in those industries is not of local origin, its language is not Ukrainian. The result of this is that the exercise of cultural influence by the towns upon the countryside and the establishment of the bond between the proletariat and the peasantry are considerably hindered by these differences in the national composition of the proletariat and the peasantry. All these circumstances must be taken into account in the work of transforming the Ukraine into a model republic. And in view of her enormous significance for the peoples of the West, it is absolutely essential to transform her into a model republic.

I pass to the reports on Khorezm and Bukhara. I shall not speak about Khorezm because of the absence of the Khorezm representative; it would be unfair to criticise the work of the Khorezm Communist Party and of the Government of Khorezm merely on the basis of the information at the disposal of the Central Committee. What Broido said here about Khorezm concerns the past. It has little relation to the present situ-

ation in Khorezm. Concerning the Party there, he said that fifty per cent of the members are merchants and the like. Perhaps that was the case in the past, but at the present time the Party is being purged; not a single "uniform Party card" has yet been issued to Khorezm; properly speaking, there is no Party there, it will be possible to speak of a Party only when the purge is completed. It is said that there are several thousand members of the Party there. I think that after the purge not more than some hundreds of Party members will be left. The situation was exactly the same in Bukhara last year, when 16,000 members were registered in the Party there; after the purge not more than a thousand were left.

I pass to the report on Bukhara. Speaking of Bukhara, I must first of all say a word or two about the general tone and character of the reports presented. I consider that, on the whole, the reports on the republics and regions were truthful and, on the whole, did not diverge from reality. Only one report diverged very widely from reality, that was the report on Bukhara. It was not even a report, it was sheer diplomacy, for everything that is bad in Bukhara was obscured, glossed over, whereas everything that glitters on the surface and strikes the eye was pushed into the foreground, for display. Conclusion—all's well in Bukhara. I think that we have gathered at this conference not for the purpose of playing at diplomacy with one another, of making eyes at one an other, while surreptitiously trying to lead one another by the nose, but for the purpose of telling the whole truth, of revealing, exposing all the evils in the communist way, and of devising means for improvement. Only in this way can we make progress. In this respect, the report on Bukhara differs from the other reports by its untruthfulness. It was not by chance that I asked the reporter here about the composition of the Council of Nazirs in Bukhara. The Council of Nazirs is the Council of People's Commissars. Are there any dekhans, i.e., peasants, on it? The reporter did not answer. But I have information about this; it turns out that there is not a single peasant in the Bukhara Government. The nine, or eleven, members of the government include the son of a rich merchant, a trader, an intellectual, a mullah, a trader, an intellectual, another trader, but not a single dekhan. And yet, as is well known, Bukhara is exclusively a peasant country.

This question is directly related to the question of the Bukhara Government's policy. What is the policy of this government that is headed by Communists? Does it serve the interests of the peasantry, of its own peasantry? I would like to mention only two facts which illustrate the policy of the Bukhara Government that is headed by Communists. From a document signed by highly responsible comrades and old members of the Party it is evident, for example, that of the credits the State Bank of Bukhara has granted since it came in existence, 75 per cent have gone to private merchants, whereas the peasant co-operatives have received 2 per cent. In absolute figures it works out like this: 7,000,000 gold rubles to the merchants, and 220,000 gold rubles to the peasants. Further, in Bukhara the land has not been confiscated. But the Emir's cattle were confiscated [...] for the benefit of the peasants. But what do we find? From this same document it appears that about 2,000 head of cattle were confiscated for the benefit of the peasants, but of this number the peasants received only about 200; the rest were sold, to wealthy citizens of course.

And this government calls itself a Soviet, a People's, government! It scarcely needs proof that in the activities of the Bukhara Government just described there is nothing either of a People's or of a Soviet character.

The reporter painted a very radiant picture of the attitude of the Bukhara people towards the R.S.F.S.R. and the Union of Republics. According to what he said, all is well in this respect too. The Bukhara Republic, it appears, wants to join the Union. Evidently the reporter thinks that it is enough to want to enter the Union of Republics for the gates to be flung open. No, comrades, the matter is not so simple. You have to ask first whether you will be allowed to enter the Union of Republics. To be able to join the Union you must first show the peoples of the Union that you have earned the right to join; you have to win this right. I must remind the Bukhara comrades that the Union of Republics must not be regarded as a dumping ground.

Lastly, to conclude the first part of my reply to the discussion on the reports, I should like to touch upon a characteristic feature of them. Not one of the reporters answered the question that is on the agenda of this conference, namely: whether there are unused, unengaged reserves of lo-

cal people. Nobody answered this question, nobody even touched upon it, except Grinko, who, however, is not a reporter. And yet this question is of first-rate importance. Are there in the republics, or in the regions, local responsible workers who are free, who are not being used? If there are, why are they not being used? If there are no such reserves, and yet a shortage of workers is experienced, with what national elements are the vacant places in the Party or Soviet apparatuses being filled? All these questions are of the highest importance for the Party. I know that in the republics and regions there are some leading workers, mostly Russians, who sometimes block the way for local people, hinder their promotion to certain posts, push them into the background. Such cases happen, and this is one of the causes of discontent in the republics and regions. But the greatest and basic cause of discontent is that there are terribly few unengaged reserves of local people fit for the work; most likely there are none at all. That is the whole point. Since there is a shortage of local workers, it is obviously necessary to engage non-local workers for the work, people of other nationalities, for time will not wait; we must build and govern, and cadres of local people grow slowly. I think that here the workers from the regions and republics showed a certain guile in saying nothing about this. And yet it is obvious that nine-tenths of the misunderstandings are due to the shortage of responsible workers from among local people. Only one conclusion can be drawn from this: the Party must be set the urgent task of accelerating the formation of cadres of Soviet and Party workers from among local people.

From the reports I pass to the speeches. I must observe, comrades, that not one of the speakers criticised the statement of principles in the draft platform submitted by the Political Bureau. (*Voice*: "It is above criticism.") I take this as evidence of the conference's agreement, of the conference's solidarity with the principles that are formulated in this part of the platform. (*Voices*: "Quite true!")

Trotsky's addendum, which he spoke about, or insertion (it concerns the part dealing with principles), ought to be adopted, for it in no way alters the character of that part of the resolution; more than that, it naturally follows from it. The more so because, in essence, Trotsky's addendum is a repetition of the well-known point in the resolution on the na-

tional question adopted by the Tenth Congress, where it is said that Petrograd and Moscow models must not be mechanically transplanted to the regions and republics. It is, of course, a repetition, but I think that sometimes it does no harm to repeat certain things. In view of this, I do not intend to dwell at length on that part of the resolution which deals with principles. Skrypnik's speech gives some ground for the conclusion that he interprets that part in his own way, and in face of the main task—to combat Great-Russian chauvinism, which is the chief danger—he tries to obscure the other danger, the danger of local nationalism. But such an interpretation is profoundly mistaken.

The second part of the Political Bureau's platform concerns the questions of the character of the Union of Republics, and of certain amendments to the Constitution of the Union of Republics from the standpoint of instituting a so-called second chamber. I must say that on this point the Political Bureau disagrees somewhat with the Ukrainian comrades. What is formulated in the Political Bureau's draft platform, the Political Bureau adopted unanimously. But some points are disputed by Rakovsky. This, incidentally, was apparent in the Commission of the Plenum of the Central Committee. Perhaps we ought not to discuss this, because this question is not to be settled here. I have already reported on this part of the platform; I said that this question was being studied by the Commission of the Plenum of the Central Committee and by the Commission of the Presidium of the Central Executive Committee of the Union.[5] But since the question has been raised I cannot ignore it.

It is wrong to say that the question of confederation or federation is a trivial one. Was it accidental that, when examining the well-known draft Constitution adopted at the Congress of the Union of Republics, the Ukrainian comrades deleted from it the phrase which said that the republics "are uniting into a single union state"? Was that accidental? Did they not do that? Why did they delete that phrase? Was it accidental

5 **Original editor:** This refers to the commission appointed by the Presidium of the Central Executive Committee of the U.S.S.R. to draft the Constitution of the U.S.S.R. It consisted of twenty-five representatives of the Union Republics. J. V. Stalin was a member from the R.S.F.S.R. The plenary sittings of the commission, at which the draft Constitution was discussed, took place on June 8-16, 1923.

that the Ukrainian comrades proposed in their counter-draft that the People's Commissariat of Foreign Trade and the People's Commissariat of Foreign Affairs should not be merged but be transferred to the directive category? What becomes of the single union state if each republic retains its own People's Commissariat of Foreign Affairs and People's Commissariat of Foreign Trade? Was it accidental that in their counter-draft the Ukrainians reduced the power of the Presidium of the Central Executive Committee to nil by splitting it up between two presidiums of the two chambers? All these amendments of Rakovsky's were registered and examined by the Commission of the Plenum of the Central Committee, and rejected. Why, then, repeat them here? I regard this persistence on the part of some of the Ukrainian comrades as evidence of a desire to obtain in the definition of the character of the Union something midway between a confederation and a federation, with a leaning towards confederation. It is obvious, however, that we are creating not a confederation, but a federation of republics, a single union state, uniting military, foreign, foreign trade and other affairs, a state which in no way diminishes the sovereignty of the individual republics.

If the Union is to have a People's Commissariat of Foreign Affairs, a People's Commissariat of Foreign Trade, and so forth, and the republics constituting the Union are also to have all these Commissariats, it is obvious that it will be impossible for the Union as a whole to come before the outside world as a single state. One thing or the other: either we merge these apparatuses and face the external enemy as a single Union, or we do not merge them and create not a union state, but a conglomeration of republics, in which case every republic must have its own parallel apparatus. I think that in this matter truth is on the side of Comrade Manuilsky, and not on the side of Rakovsky and Skrypnik.

From questions of state I pass to questions of a purely concrete, practical character, connected partly with the Political Bureau's practical proposals, and partly with the amendments that may be moved here by the comrades who are engaged in practical work. Being the reporter on behalf of the Political Bureau, I did not, and could not, say that the list of concrete, practical proposals made by the Political Bureau is exhaustive. On the contrary, I said at the very outset that there may be omissions in the

list, and that additions were inevitable. Skrypnik is proposing one such addition in relation to the trade unions. That one is acceptable. I also accept some of the additions proposed by Comrade Mikoyan. As regards a fund for publishing work, and for the press in general in some of the backward republics and regions, an amendment is certainly needed. That question was overlooked. So also was the question of schools in some regions, and even republics. Primary schools are not included in the State Budget. This is certainly an omission, and there may be a heap of such omissions. I therefore suggest to the comrades engaged in practical work, who spoke a lot about the state of their organisations, but made less effort to propose something concrete, to think about this and to submit their concrete addenda, amendments, etc., to the Central Committee, which will unify them, insert them in the relevant points and circulate them to the organisations.

I cannot pass over in silence a proposal made by Grinko to the effect that certain easier conditions should be created to facilitate local people among the less cultured and, perhaps, less proletarian nationalities entering the Party and being promoted to its leading bodies. The proposal is correct and, in my opinion, it ought to be adopted.

I conclude my reply to the discussion with the following motion: that the Political Bureau's draft platform on the national question be adopted as a basis, Trotsky's amendment to be taken into consideration. That the Central Committee be requested to classify amendments of a practical character that have been, or may be, proposed, and to embody them in the relevant points of the platform; that the Central Committee be requested to have the draft platform, the minutes, the resolution and the most important documents left by the reporters printed in a week's time and distributed to the organisations. That the draft platform be adopted without setting up a special commission.

I have not touched on the question of setting up a commission on the national question under the Central Committee. Comrades, I have some doubt about the advisability of creating such an organisation, firstly because the republics and regions will certainly not provide top-level workers for this body. I am sure of that. Secondly, I think that the Regional Committees and national Central Committees will not agree to yield to

the Central Committee's commission even a particle of their rights in the distribution of responsible workers. At the present time, when distributing forces, we usually consult the Regional Committees and national Central Committees. If this commission is set up, the centre of gravity will naturally shift to it. There is no analogy between a commission on the national question and commissions on questions concerning the co-operatives, or work among the peasants. Commissions on work in the countryside, and on co-operatives, usually draw up general instructions. On the national question, however, we need not general instructions, but the indication of concrete steps to be taken in each republic and region, and this a general commission will be unable to do. It is doubtful whether any commission can draw up and adopt any decisions for, let us say, the Ukrainian Republic: two or three men from the Ukraine cannot act as substitutes for the Central Committee of the C.P.(B.) of the Ukraine. That is why I think that a commission will not produce any effective results. The step that is here proposed—to appoint people from the nationalities to the chief departments of the Central Committee—is to my mind quite sufficient for the time being. If no particular success is achieved within the next six months, the question can then be raised of setting up a special commission.

5. Reply to Speeches

June 12

Since I have been attacked (*laughter*), permit me to answer the point about the "one and indivisible." None other than Stalin, in the resolution on the national question, denounced the "one and indivisible" in Point 8. Obviously, what was meant was not "indivisible," but federation, whereas the Ukrainians are trying to force confederation upon us. That is the first question.

The second question is about Rakovsky. I repeat, for I have already said it once, that the Constitution that was adopted at the First Congress of Soviets of the U.S.S.R. says that such and such republics *"are uniting into a single union state"*—"the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics."

The Ukrainians sent their counter-draft to the Central Committee. That draft says: such and such *republics "are forming a Union of Socialist Republics."* The words "are uniting into a single union state" were thrown out. Six words were thrown out. Why? Was that accidental? What has become of federation? I also perceive the germ of confederalism in Rakovsky's action in throwing out of the clause in the Constitution that was adopted at the First Congress, the words describing the Presidium as being "vested with supreme authority in the intervals between sessions," and in dividing power between the presidiums of two chambers, i.e., reducing the Union power to a fiction. Why did he do that? Because he is opposed to the idea of a union state, opposed to real Union power. That is the second question.

The third: in the draft proposed by the Ukrainians, the People's Commissariat of Foreign Affairs and the People's Commissariat of Foreign Trade are not merged, but are transferred from the merged category to the directive category.

Such are the three reasons which cause me to perceive the germ of confederation in Rakovsky's proposals. Why is there such a divergence between your proposals and the text of the Constitution, which the Ukrainian delegation also accepted? (*Rakovsky*: "We've had the Twelfth Congress.")

Excuse me. The Twelfth Congress rejected your amendments and adopted the wording: "uniting the republics into a single union state."

I can see that during the period from the First Congress of the Union of Republics to the Twelfth Party Congress and the present Conference, some of the Ukrainian comrades have undergone a certain evolution from federalism to confederalism. Well, I am in favour of federation, i.e., opposed to confederation, i.e., opposed to the proposals made by Rakovsky and Skrypnik.



THE OCTOBER REVOLUTION AND THE QUESTION OF THE MIDDLE STRATA

The question of the middle strata is undoubtedly one of the basic questions of the workers' revolution. The middle strata are the peasantry and the small urban working people. The oppressed nationalities, nine-tenths of whom consist of middle strata, should also be put in this category. As you see, these are the strata whose economic status puts them midway between the proletariat and the capitalist class. The relative importance of these strata is determined by two circumstances: firstly, these strata constitute the majority, or, at any rate, a large minority of the population of the existing states; secondly, they constitute the important reserves from which the capitalist class recruits its army against the proletariat. The proletariat cannot retain power unless it enjoys the sympathy and support of the middle strata, primarily of the peasantry, especially in a country like our Union of Republics. The proletariat cannot even seriously contemplate seizing power if these strata have not been at least neutralised, if they have not yet managed to break away from the capitalist class, and if the bulk of them still serve as the army of capital. Hence the fight for the middle strata, the fight for the peasantry, which was a conspicuous feature of the whole of our revolution from 1905 to 1917, a fight which is still far from ended, and which will continue to be waged in the future.

One of the reasons for the defeat of the 1848 Revolution in France was that it failed to evoke a sympathetic response among the French peasantry. One of the reasons for the fall of the Paris Commune was that it encountered the opposition of the middle strata, especially of the peasantry. The same must be said of the Russian revolution of 1905.

Basing themselves on the experience of the European revolutions, certain vulgar Marxists, headed by Kautsky, came to the conclusion that

the middle strata, especially the peasantry, are almost the born enemies of the workers' revolution, that, therefore, we must reckon with a lengthier period of development, as a result of which the proletariat will become the majority of the nation and the proper conditions for the victory of the workers' revolution will thereby be created. On the basis of that conclusion, they, these vulgar Marxists, warned the proletariat against "premature" revolution. On the basis of that conclusion, they, from "motives of principle," left the middle strata entirely at the disposal of capital. On the basis of that conclusion, they prophesied the doom of the Russian October Revolution, on the grounds that the proletariat in Russia constituted a minority, that Russia was a peasant country, and, therefore, a victorious workers' revolution in Russia was impossible.

It is noteworthy that Marx himself had an entirely different appraisal of the middle strata, especially of the peasantry. Whereas the vulgar Marxists, washing their hands of the peasantry and leaving it entirely at the political disposal of capital, noisily bragged about their "firm principles," Marx, the most true to principle of all Marxists, persistently advised the Communist Party not to lose sight of the peasantry, to win it over to the side of the proletariat and to make sure of its support in the future proletarian revolution. We know that in the 'fifties, after the defeat of the February Revolution in France and in Germany, Marx wrote to Engels, and through him to the Communist Party of Germany:

> "The whole thing in Germany will depend on the possibility of backing the proletarian revolution by some second edition of the Peasant War."[1]

That was written about the Germany of the 'fifties, a peasant country, where the proletariat comprised a small minority, where the proletariat was less organised than the proletariat was in Russia in 1917, and where the peasantry, owing to its position, was less disposed to support a proletarian revolution than the peasantry in Russia in 1917.

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1 **Original editor:** J. V. Stalin is here quoting Karl Marx's letter to Frederick Engels of April 16, 1856 as given in the book: Karl Marx and Frederick Engels, *Letters*, Moscow 1922 (see Karl Marx and Frederick Engels, *Selected Works*, Vol. II, Moscow 1951, p. 412).

The October Revolution undoubtedly represented that happy combination of a "peasant war" and a "proletarian revolution" of which Marx wrote, despite all the "highly principled" chatterboxes. The October Revolution proved that such a combination is possible and can be brought about. The October Revolution proved that the proletariat can seize power and retain it, if it succeeds in wresting the middle strata, primarily the peasantry, from the capitalist class, if it succeeds in converting these strata from reserves of capital into reserves of the proletariat.

In brief: the October Revolution was the first of all the revolutions in the world to bring into the forefront the question of the middle strata, and primarily of the peasantry, and the first to solve it successfully, despite all the "theories" and lamentations of the heroes of the Second International.

That is the first merit of the October Revolution, if one may speak of merit in such a connection.

But the matter did not stop there. The October Revolution went further and tried to rally the oppressed nationalities around the proletariat. We have already said above that nine-tenths of the populations of these nationalities consist of peasants and of small urban working people. That, however, does not exhaust the concept "oppressed nationality." Oppressed nationalities are usually oppressed not only as peasants and as urban working people, but also as nationalities, i.e., as the toilers of a definite nationality, language, culture, manner of life, habits and customs. The double oppression cannot help revolutionising the labouring masses of the oppressed nationalities, cannot help impelling them to fight the principal force of oppression—capital. This circumstance formed the basis on which the proletariat succeeded in combining the "proletarian revolution" not only with a "peasant war," but also with a "national war." All this could not fail to extend the field of action of the proletarian revolution far beyond the borders of Russia; it could not fail to jeopardise the deepest reserves of capital. Whereas the fight for the middle strata of a given dominant nationality is a fight for the immediate reserves of capital, the fight for the emancipation of the oppressed nationalities could not help becoming a fight to win particular reserves of capital, the deepest of them, a fight to liberate the colonial and unequal peoples from the

yoke of capital. This latter fight is still far from ended. More than that, it has not yet achieved even the first decisive successes. But this fight for the deep reserves was started by the October Revolution, and it will undoubtedly expand, step by step, with the further development of imperialism, with the growth of the might of our Union of Republics, and with the development of the proletarian revolution in the West.

In brief: the October Revolution actually initiated the fight of the proletariat for the deep reserves of capital in the shape of the masses of the people in the oppressed and unequal countries; it was the first to raise the banner of the struggle to win these reserves. That is its second merit.

In our country the peasantry was won over under the banner of socialism. The peasantry received land at the hands of the proletariat, defeated the landlords with the aid of the proletariat and rose to power under the leadership of the proletariat; consequently, it could not but feel, could not but realise, that the process of its emancipation was proceeding, and would continue, under the banner of the proletariat, under its red banner. This could not but convert the banner of socialism, which was formerly a bogey to the peasantry, into a banner which won its attention and aided its emancipation from subjection, poverty and oppression.

The same is true, but to an even greater degree, of the oppressed nationalities. The battle-cry for the emancipation of the nationalities, backed by such facts as the liberation of Finland, the withdrawal of troops from Persia and China, the formation of the Union of Republics, the moral support openly given to the peoples of Turkey, China, Hindustan and Egypt—this battle-cry was first sounded by the people who were the victors in the October Revolution. The fact that Russia, which was formerly regarded by the oppressed nationalities as a symbol of oppression, has now, after it has become socialist, been transformed into a symbol of emancipation, cannot be called an accident. Nor is it an accident that the name of the leader of the October Revolution, Comrade Lenin, is now the most beloved name pronounced by the downtrodden, oppressed peasants and revolutionary intelligentsia of the colonial and unequal countries. In the past, the oppressed and downtrodden slaves of the vast Roman Empire regarded Christianity as a rock of salvation. We are now reaching the point where socialism

may serve (and is already beginning to serve!) as the banner of liberation for the millions who inhabit the vast colonial states of imperialism. It can hardly be doubted that this circumstance has greatly facilitated the task of combating prejudices against socialism, and has cleared the way for the penetration of socialist ideas into the most remote corners of the oppressed countries. Formerly it was difficult for a Socialist to come out openly among the non-proletarian, middle strata of the oppressed or oppressor countries; but today he can come forward openly and advocate socialist ideas among these strata and expect to be listened to, and even heeded, for he is backed by so cogent an argument as the October Revolution. That, too, is a result of the October Revolution.

In brief: the October Revolution cleared the way for socialist ideas among the middle, non-proletarian, peasant strata of all nationalities and races; it made the banner of socialism popular among them. That is the third merit of the October Revolution.

Pravda, No. 253,
November 7, 1923
Signed: *J. Stalin*

THE FIFTH ANNIVERSARY OF THE FIRST CONGRESS OF WORKING WOMEN AND PEASANT WOMEN[1]

Five years ago, the Central Committee of our Party convened in Moscow the First All-Russian Congress of Working Women and Peasant Women. Over a thousand delegates, representing not less than a million women toilers, gathered at the congress. That congress was a landmark in our Party's work among women toilers. The inestimable merit of that congress was that it laid the foundation for *organising* political enlightenment of the working women and peasant women in our Republic.

Some people might think that there is nothing exceptional about that, that the Party has always engaged in the political enlightenment of the masses, including women, that the political enlightenment of women cannot be of great importance, seeing that we have united cadres consisting of workers and peasants. That opinion is radically wrong. Now that power has passed into the hands of the workers and peasants, the political enlightenment of women toilers is of paramount importance.

And for the following reasons.

Our country has a population of about 140,000,000; of these, no less than half are women, mainly working women and peasant women, who are downtrodden, unenlightened and ignorant. Since our country

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1 **Original editor:** The First All-Russian Congress of Working Women and Peasant Women took place in Moscow on November 16-21, 1918, and was attended by 1,147 women delegates. On November 19, V. I. Lenin addressed the congress. The congress expressed the wish that the Party Committees should set up special departments for work among women. After the congress, by a decision of the Central Committee of the R.C.P.(B.), the Party Committees set up Commissions for Agitation and Propaganda Among Women, and the Central Committee of the R.C.P.(B.) set up a Central Commission to direct this work.

has earnestly set to work to build the new, Soviet life, is it not obvious that the women, who constitute half its population, will be like a weight on its feet every time a step forward is taken if they remain downtrodden, unenlightened and ignorant?

The working woman stands side by side with the working man. Together with him she is carrying out the common task of building our industry. She can be of assistance in this common task if she is politically conscious, if she is politically enlightened. But she may wreck the common task if she is downtrodden and ignorant, wreck it not maliciously, of course, but because of her ignorance.

The peasant woman stands side by side with the peasant. Together with him she is carrying out the common task of developing our agriculture, of making it prosperous, of making it flourish. She can be of tremendous assistance in this matter if she rids herself of her ignorance. On the other hand, she may hinder the whole matter if she remains the captive of ignorance.

Working women and peasant women are free citizens, equal with working men and peasants. They take part in the election of our Soviets and co-operatives, and they can be elected to these bodies. The working women and peasant women can improve our Soviets and co-operatives, strengthen and develop them, if they are politically enlightened. But they can weaken and undermine them if they are ignorant.

Lastly, the working women and peasant women are mothers; they are rearing our youth—the future of our country. They can either warp a child's soul or rear for us a younger generation that will be of healthy mind and capable of promoting our country's progress, depending upon whether the mothers sympathise with the Soviet system or whether they follow in the wake of the priests, the kulaks, the bourgeoisie.

That is why the political enlightenment of working women and peasant women is now, when the workers and peasants have set to work to build the new life, a matter of paramount importance for the achievement of real victory over the bourgeoisie.

That is why the significance of the First Congress of Working Women and Peasant Women, which initiated the work of political

enlightenment among women toilers, is really inestimable.

Five years ago, at the First Congress of Working Women and Peasant Women, the Party's immediate task was to draw hundreds of thousands of *working women* into the common task of building the new, Soviet life; and in the front ranks stood the working women in the industrial districts, for they were the most active and politically conscious elements among the women toilers. It must be admitted that no little has been done in this respect during the past five years, although much still remains to be done.

The Party's immediate task now is to draw the millions of *peasant women* into the common task of building our Soviet life. The work of the past five years has already resulted in the promotion of a number of leaders from the ranks of the peasant women. Let us hope that the ranks of the peasant women leaders will be reinforced with additional enlightened peasant women. Let us hope that the Party will successfully cope with this task too.

November 10, 1923

Magazine *Kommunistka*, No. 11,
November, 1923
Signed: *J. Stalin*

SPEECH AT A CELEBRATION MEETING AT THE MILITARY ACADEMY

(Brief Newspaper Report)
November 17, 1923

At the celebration of the fourth anniversary of our Red Cavalry, a speech was delivered by the founder of the Cavalry Army and its honorary Red Army man, Comrade *Stalin.*

Comrade *Stalin* emphasised that at the time when the basic nucleus of the cavalry, the embryo of the future Cavalry Army, was being organised, its initiators came into conflict with the opinion of leading military circles and military experts who denied the necessity of organising any cavalry at all.

The most characteristic page of the history of the Cavalry Army was written in the summer of 1919, when our cavalry became a combination of masses of cavalry with masses of machine guns. The celebrated "tachanka"[1] is the symbol of that combination.

However numerous our cavalry may be, if in its operations it is unable to combine the power of the horse with the power of machine guns and artillery, it will cease to be a formidable force.

The most glorious page in the history of the Cavalry Army was written at the close of 1919, when twelve regiments of our cavalry routed some twenty-two enemy regiments at the approaches to Voronezh. That event marked the actual conversion of our Cavalry Corps into a Cavalry Army.

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1 **Translator:** A light horse-drawn cart on which a machine gun was mounted.

The characteristic feature of that period was that at that stage our cavalry acquired still another quality which enabled it to achieve victory over Denikin's cavalry, namely: it attached to itself several infantry units, which it usually transported in carts, and employed as a screen against the enemy, so as to be able to take a short rest under cover of this screen, recuperate its strength, and then strike another blow at the enemy. That was the combination of cavalry with infantry—the latter being an auxiliary force. This combination, this additional new quality, transformed our cavalry into a formidable mobile force, which struck terror in the enemy.

In conclusion, Comrade *Stalin* said: "Comrades, I am not the kind of man to go into raptures, but I must say that if our Cavalry Army retains these new qualities, our cavalry and its leader, Comrade Budyonny, will be invincible."

Izvestia, No. 265,
November 20, 1923

THE PARTY'S TASKS

Report Delivered at an Enlarged Meeting of the Krasnaya Presnya District Committee of the R.C.P.(B.) With Group Organisers, Members of the Debating Society and of the Bureau of the Party Units

December 2, 1923

Comrades, first of all I must say that I am delivering a report here in my personal capacity and not in the name of the Central Committee of the Party. If the meeting is willing to hear such a report, I am at your service. (*Voices*: "Yes.") This does not mean that I disagree with the Central Committee in any way on this question; not at all. I am speaking here in my personal capacity only because the commission of the Central Committee for drafting measures to improve the internal situation in the Party[1] is to present its findings to the Central Committee in a day or two; these findings have not yet been presented, and therefore I have as yet no formal right to speak in the name of the Central Committee, although I am sure that what I am about to say to you will, in the main, express the Central Committee's position on these questions.

Discussion—a Sign of the Party's Strength

The first question I would like to raise here is that of the significance of the discussion that is now taking place in the press and in the Party units. What does this discussion show? What does it indicate? Is it a storm

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1 **Original editor:** This refers to the commission set up in conformity with the decision of the Political Bureau and of the Plenum of the Central Committee of the R.C.P.(B.) which took place on September 23-25, 1923.

that has burst into the calm life of the Party? Is this discussion a sign of the Party's disintegration, its decay, as some say, or of its degeneration, as others say?

I think, comrades, that it is neither one nor the other: there is neither degeneration nor disintegration. The fact of the matter is that the Party has grown more mature during the past period; it has adequately rid itself of useless ballast; it has become more proletarian. You know that two years ago we had not less than 700,000 members; you know that several thousand members have dropped out, or have been kicked out, of the Party. Further, the Party membership has improved, its quality has risen in this period as a result of the improvement in the conditions of the working class due to the revival of industry, as a result of the return of the old skilled workers from the countryside, and as a result of the new wave of cultural development that is spreading among the industrial workers.

In short, owing to all these circumstances, the Party has grown more mature, its quality has risen, its needs have grown, it has become more exacting, it wants to know more than it has known up to now, and it wants to decide more than it has up to now.

The discussion which has opened is not a sign of the Party's weakness, still less is it a sign of its disintegration or degeneration; it is a sign of strength, a sign of firmness, a sign of the improvement in the quality of the Party's membership, a sign of its increased activity.

Causes of the Discussion

The second question that confronts us is: what has caused the question of internal Party policy to become so acute precisely in the present period, in the autumn of this year? How is this to be explained? What were the causes? I think, comrades, that there were two causes.

The first cause was the wave of discontent and strikes over wages that swept through certain districts of the republic in August of this year. The fact of the matter is that this strike wave exposed the defects in our organisations; it revealed the isolation of our organisations—both Party and trade-union—from the events taking place in the factories. And in

connection with this strike wave the existence was discovered within our Party of several secret organisations of an essentially anti-communist nature, which strove to disintegrate the Party. All these defects revealed by the strike wave were exposed to the Party so glaringly, and with such a sobering effect, that it felt the necessity for internal Party changes.

The second cause of the acuteness of the question of internal Party policy precisely at the present moment was the wholesale release of Party comrades to go on vacation. It is natural, of course, for comrades to go on vacation, but this assumed such a mass character, that Party activity became considerably weaker precisely at the time when the discontent arose in the factories, and that greatly helped to expose the accumulated defects just at this period, in the autumn of this year.

Defects in Internal Party Life

I have mentioned defects in our Party life that were exposed in the autumn of this year, and which brought up the question of improving internal Party life. What are these defects in internal Party life? Is it that the Party line was wrong, as some comrades think; or that, although the Party's line was correct, in practice it departed from the right road, was distorted because of certain subjective and objective conditions?

I think that the chief defect in our internal Party life is that, although the Party's line, as expressed in the decisions of our congresses, is correct, in the localities (not everywhere, of course, but in certain districts) it was put into practice in an incorrect way. While the proletarian-democratic line of our Party was correct, the way it was put into practice in the localities resulted in cases of bureaucratic distortion of this line.

That is the chief defect. The existence of contradictions between the basic Party line as laid down by the Congresses (Tenth, Eleventh and Twelfth), and the way our organisations put this line into practice in the localities—that is the foundation of all the defects in internal Party life.

The Party line says that the major questions of our Party activities, except, of course, those that brook no delay, or those that are military or diplomatic secrets, must without fail be discussed at Party meetings.

That is what the Party line says. But in Party practice in the localities, not everywhere, of course, it was considered that there is really no great need for a number of questions concerning internal Party practice to be discussed at Party meetings since the Central Committee and the other leading organisations will decide these questions.

The Party line says that our Party officials must without fail be elected unless there are insuperable obstacles to this, such as absence of the necessary Party standing, and so forth. You know that, according to the Party rules, secretaries of Gubernia Committees must have a pre-October Party standing, secretaries of Uyezd Committees must have at least three years', and units secretaries a year's, Party standing. In Party practice, however, it was often considered that since a certain Party standing was needed, no real elections were needed.

The Party line says that the Party membership must be kept informed about the work of the economic organisations, the factories and trusts, for, naturally, our Party units are morally responsible to the non-Party masses for the defects in the factories. Nevertheless, in Party practice it was considered that since there is a Central Committee which issues directives to the economic organisations, and since these economic organisations are bound by those directives, the latter will be carried out without control from below by the mass of the Party membership.

The Party line says that responsible workers in different branches of work, whether Party, economic, trade-union, or military workers, notwithstanding their specialisation in their own particular work, are interconnected, constitute inseparable parts of one whole, for they are all working in the common cause of the proletariat, which cannot be torn into parts. In Party practice, however, it was considered that since there is specialisation, division of labour according to properly Party activity and economic, military, etc., activity, the Party officials are not responsible for those working in the economic sphere, the latter are not responsible for the Party officials, and, in general, that the weakening and even loss of connection between them are inevitable.

Such, comrades, are, in general, the contradictions between the Party line, as registered in a number of decisions of our Congresses, from the

Tenth to the Twelfth, and Party practice.

I am far from blaming the local organisations for this distortion of the Party line, for, when you come to examine it, this is not so much the fault as the misfortune of our local organisations. The nature of this misfortune, and how things could have taken this turn, I shall tell you later on, but I wanted to register this fact in order to reveal this contradiction to you and then try to propose measures for improvement.

I am also far from considering our Central Committee to be blameless. It, too, has sinned, as has every institution and organisation; it, too, shares part of the blame and part of the misfortune: blame, at least, for not, whatever the reason, exposing these defects in time, and for not taking measures to eliminate them.

But that is not the point now. The point now is to ascertain the causes of the defects I have just spoken about. Indeed, how did these defects arise, and how can they be removed?

The Causes of the Defects

The first cause is that our Party organisations have not yet rid themselves, or have still not altogether rid themselves, of certain survivals of the war period, a period that has passed, but has left in the minds of our responsible workers vestiges of the military regime in the Party. I think that these survivals find expression in the view that our Party is not an independently acting organism, not an independently acting, militant organisation of the proletariat, but something in the nature of a system of institutions, something in the nature of a complex of institutions in which there are officials of lower rank and officials of higher rank. That, comrades, is a profoundly mistaken view that has nothing in common with Marxism; that view is a survival that we have inherited from the war period, when we militarised the Party, when the question of the independent activity of the mass of the Party membership had necessarily to be shifted into the background and military orders were of decisive importance. I do not remember that this view was ever definitely expressed; nevertheless, it, or elements of it, still influences our work. Comrades,

we must combat such views with all our might, for they are a very real danger and create favourable conditions for the distortion in practice of the essentially correct line of our Party.

The second cause is that our state apparatus, which is bureaucratic to a considerable degree, exerts a certain amount of pressure on the Party and the Party workers. In 1917, when we were forging ahead, towards October, we imagined that we would have a Commune, a free association of working people, that we would put an end to bureaucracy in government institutions, and that it would be possible, if not in the immediate period, then within two or three short periods, to transform the state into a free association of working people. Practice has shown, however, that this is still an ideal which is a long way off, that to rid the state of the elements of bureaucracy, to transform Soviet society into a free association of working people, the people must have a high level of culture, peace conditions must be fully guaranteed all around us so as to remove the necessity of maintaining a large standing army, which entails heavy expenditure and cumbersome administrative departments, the very existence of which leaves its impress upon all the other state institutions. Our state apparatus is bureaucratic to a considerable degree, and it will remain so for a long time to come. Our Party comrades work in this apparatus, and the situation—I might say the atmosphere—in this bureaucratic apparatus is such that it helps to bureaucratise our Party workers and our Party organisations.

The third cause of the defects, comrades, is that some of our units are not sufficiently active, they are backward, and in some cases, particularly in the border regions, they are even wholly illiterate. In these districts, the units display little activity and are politically and culturally backward. That circumstance, too, undoubtedly creates a favourable soil for the distortion of the Party line.

The fourth cause is the absence of a sufficient number of trained Party comrades in the localities. Recently, in the Central Committee, I heard the report of a representative of one of the Ukrainian organisations. The reporter was a very capable comrade who shows great promise. He said that of 130 units, 80 have secretaries who were appointed by the Gubernia Committee. In answer to the remark that this organisation was

acting wrongly in this respect, the comrade pleaded that there were no literate people in the units, that they consisted of new members, that the units themselves ask for secretaries to be sent them, and so forth. I may grant that half of what this comrade said was an overstatement, that the matter is not only that there are no trained people in the units, but also that the Gubernia Committee was overzealous and followed the old tradition. But even if the Gubernia Committee was correct only to the extent of fifty per cent, is it not obvious that if there are such units in the Ukraine, how many more like them must there be in the border regions, where the organisations are young, where there are fewer Party cadres and less literacy than in the Ukraine? That is also one of the factors that create favourable conditions for the distortion in practice of the essentially correct Party line.

Lastly, the fifth cause—insufficient information. We sent out too little information, and this applies primarily to the Central Committee, possibly because it is overburdened with work. We receive too little information from the localities. This must cease. This is also a serious cause of the defects that have accumulated within the Party.

How Should the Defects in Internal Party Life Be Removed?

What measures must be adopted to remove these defects?

The first thing is tirelessly, by every means, to combat the survivals and habits of the war period in our Party, to combat the erroneous view that our Party is a system of institutions, and not a militant organisation of the proletariat, which is intellectually vigorous, acts independently, lives a full life, is destroying the old and creating the new.

Secondly, the activity of the mass of the Party membership must be increased; all questions of interest to the membership in so far as they can be openly discussed must be submitted to it for open discussion, and the possibility ensured of free criticism of all proposals made by the different Party bodies. Only in this way will it be possible to convert Party discipline into really conscious, really iron discipline; only in this way will it

be possible to increase the political, economic and cultural experience of the mass of Party members; only in this way will it be possible to create the conditions necessary to enable the Party membership, step by step, to promote new active workers, new leaders, from its ranks.

Thirdly, the principle of election must be applied in practice to all Party bodies and official posts, if there are no insuperable obstacles to this such as lack of the necessary Party standing, and so forth. We must eliminate the practice of ignoring the will of the majority of the organisations in promoting comrades to responsible Party posts, and we must see to it that the principle of election is actually applied.

Fourthly, there must exist under the Central Committee and the Gubernia and Regional Committees permanently functioning conferences of responsible workers in all fields of work—economic, Party, trade-union and military; these conferences must be held regularly and discuss any question they consider it necessary to discuss; the interconnection between the workers in all fields must not be broken; all these workers must feel that they are all members of a single Party family, working in a common cause, the cause of the proletariat, which is indivisible; the Central Committee and the local organisations must create an environment that will enable the Party to acquire and test the experience of our responsible workers in all spheres of work.

Fifthly, our Party units in the factories must be drawn into dealing with the various questions relating to the course of affairs in the respective enterprises and trusts. Things must be so arranged that the units are kept informed about the work of the administrations of our enterprises and trusts and are able to exert an influence on this work. You, as representatives of units, are aware how great is the moral responsibility of our factory units to the non-Party masses for the course of affairs in the factories. For the unit to be able to lead and win the following of the non-Party masses in the factory, for it to be able to bear responsibility for the course of affairs in the factory—and it certainly has a moral responsibility to the non-Party masses for defects in the work of the factory—the unit must be kept informed about these affairs, it must be possible for it to influence them in one way or another. Therefore, the units must be drawn into the discussion of economic questions relating to their factories, and

economic conferences of representatives of the factory units in a given trust must be called from time to time to discuss questions relating to the affairs of the trust. This is one of the surest ways both of enlarging the economic experience of the Party membership and of organising control from below.

Sixthly, the quality of the membership of our Party units must be improved. Zinoviev has already said in an article of his that here and there the quality of the membership of our Party units is below that of the surrounding non-Party masses.

That statement, of course, must not be generalised and applied to all the units. It would be more exact to say the following for example: our Party units would be on a much higher cultural level than they are now, and would have much greater authority among non-Party people, if we had not denuded these units, if we had not taken from them people we needed for economic, administrative, trade-union and all sorts of other work. If our working-class comrades, the cadres we have taken from the units during the past six years, were to return to their units, does it need proof that those units would stand head and shoulders above all the non-Party workers, even the most advanced? Precisely because the Party has no other cadres with which to improve the state apparatus, precisely because the Party will be obliged to continue using that source, our units will remain on a somewhat unsatisfactory cultural level unless we take urgent measures to improve the quality of their membership. First of all, Party educational work in the units must be increased to the utmost; furthermore, we must get rid of the excessive formalism our local organisations sometimes display in accepting working-class comrades into the Party. I think that we must not allow ourselves to be bound by formalism; the Party can, and must, create easier conditions for the acceptance of new members from the ranks of the working class. That has already begun in the local organisations. The Party must take this matter in hand and launch an organised campaign for creating easier access to the Party for new members from workers at the bench.

Seventhly, work must be intensified among the non-Party workers. This is another means of improving the internal Party situation, of increasing the activity of the Party membership. I must say that our organ-

isations are still paying little attention to the task of drawing non-Party workers into our Soviets. Take, for example, the elections to the Moscow Soviet that are being held now. I consider that one of the big defects in these elections is that too few non-Party people are being elected. It is said that there exists a decision of the organisation to the effect that at least a certain number, a certain percentage, etc., of non-Party people are to be elected; but I see that, in fact, a far smaller number is being elected. It is said that the masses are eager to elect only Communists. I have my doubts about that, comrades. I think that unless we show a certain degree of confidence in the non-Party people they may answer by becoming very distrustful of our organisations. This confidence in the non-Party people is absolutely necessary, comrades. Communists must be induced to withdraw their candidatures. Speeches must not be delivered urging the election only of Communists; non-Party people must be encouraged, they must be drawn into the work of administering the state. We shall gain by this and in return receive the reciprocal confidence of the non-Party people in our organisations. The elections in Moscow are an example of the degree to which our organisations are beginning to isolate themselves within their Party shell instead of enlarging their field of activity and, step by step, rallying the non-Party people around themselves.

Eighthly, work among the peasants must be intensified. I do not know why our village units, which in some places are wilting, are losing their members and are not trusted much by the peasants (this must be admitted)—I do not know why, for instance, two practical tasks cannot be set these units: firstly, to interpret and popularise the Soviet laws which affect peasant life; secondly, to agitate for and disseminate elementary agronomic knowledge, if only the knowledge that it is necessary to plough the fields in proper time, to sift seed, etc. Do you know, comrades, that if every peasant were to decide to devote a little labour to the sifting of seed, it would be possible without land improvement, and without introducing new machines, to obtain an increase in crop yield amounting to about ten poods per dessiatin? And what does an increase in crop yield of ten poods per dessiatin mean? It means an increase in the gross crop of a thousand million poods per annum. And all this could be achieved without great effort. Why should not our village units take up this mat-

ter? Is it less important than talking about Curzon's policy? The peasants would then realise that the Communists have stopped engaging in empty talk and have got down to real business; and then our village units would win the boundless confidence of the peasants.

There is no need for me to stress how necessary it is, for improving and reviving Party life, to intensify Party and political educational work among the youth, the source of new cadres, in the Red Army, among women delegates, and among non-Party people in general.

Nor will I dwell upon the importance of increasing the interchange of information, about which I have already spoken, of increasing the supply of information from the top downwards and from below upwards.

Such, comrades, are the measures for improvement, the course towards internal Party democracy which the Central Committee set as far back as September of this year, and which must be put into practice by all Party organisations from top to bottom.

I would now like to deal with two extremes, two obsessions, on the question of workers' democracy that were to be noted in some of the discussion articles in *Pravda*.

The first extreme concerns the election principle. It manifests itself in some comrades wanting to have elections "throughout." Since we stand for the election principle, let us go the whole hog in electing! Party standing? What do we want that for? Elect whomever you please. That is a mistaken view, comrades. The Party will not accept it. Of course, we are not now at war; we are in a period of peaceful development. But we are now living under the NEP. Do not forget that, comrades. The Party began the purge not during, but after the war. Why? Because, during the war, fear of defeat drew the Party together into one whole, and some of the disruptive elements in the Party were compelled to keep to the general line of the Party, which was faced with the question of life or death. Now these bonds have fallen away, for we are not now at war; now we have the NEP, we have permitted a revival of capitalism, and the bourgeoisie is reviving. True, all this helps to purge the Party, to strengthen it; but on the other hand, we are being enveloped in a new atmosphere by the nascent and growing bourgeoisie, which is not

very strong yet, but which has already succeeded in beating some of our co-operatives and trading organisations in internal trade. It was precisely after the introduction of the NEP that the Party began the purge and reduced its membership by half; it was precisely after the introduction of the NEP that the Party decided that, in order to protect our organisations from the contagion of the NEP, it was necessary, for example, to hinder the influx of non-proletarian elements into the Party, that it was necessary that Party officials should have a definite Party standing, and so forth. Was the Party right in taking these precautionary measures, which restricted "expanded" democracy? I think it was. That is why I think that we must have democracy, we must have the election principle, but the restrictive measures that were adopted by the Eleventh and Twelfth Congresses, at least the chief ones, must still remain in force.

The second extreme concerns the question of the limits of the discussion. This extreme manifests itself in some comrades demanding unlimited discussion; they think that the discussion of problems is the be all and end all of Party work and forget about the other aspect of Party work, namely, action, which calls for the *implementation* of the Party's decisions. At all events, this was the impression I gained from the short article by Radzin, who tried to substantiate the principle of unlimited discussion by a reference to Trotsky, who is alleged to have said that "the Party is a voluntary association of like-minded people." I searched for that sentence in Trotsky's works, but could not find it. Trotsky could scarcely have uttered it as a finished formula for the definition of the Party; and if he did utter it, he could scarcely have stopped there. The Party is not only an association of like-minded people; it is also an association of like-acting people, it is a militant association of like-acting people who are fighting on a common ideological basis (programme, tactics). I think that the reference to Trotsky is out of place, for I know Trotsky as one of the members of the Central Committee who most of all stress the active side of Party work. I think, therefore, that Radzin himself must bear responsibility for this definition. But what does this definition lead to? One of two possibilities: *either* that the Party will degenerate into a sect, into a philosophical school, for only in such narrow organisations is complete like-mindedness possible; *or* that it will become a permanent debating so-

ciety, eternally discussing and eternally arguing, until the point is reached where factions form and the Party is split. Our Party cannot accept either of these possibilities. This is why I think that the discussion of problems is needed, a discussion is needed, but limits must be set to such discussion in order to safeguard the Party, to safeguard this fighting unit of the proletariat, against degenerating into a debating society.

In concluding my report, I must warn you, comrades, against these two extremes. I think that if we reject both these extremes and honestly and resolutely steer the course towards internal Party democracy that the Central Committee set already in September of this year, we shall certainly achieve an improvement in our Party work. (*Applause.*)

Pravda, No. 277,
December 6, 1923

THE DISCUSSION, RAFAIL, THE ARTICLES BY PREOBRAZHENSKY AND SAPRONOV, AND TROTSKY'S LETTER

The Discussion

The discussion on the situation within the Party that opened a few weeks ago is evidently drawing to a close; that is, as far as Moscow and Petrograd are concerned. As is known, Petrograd has declared in favour of the line of the Party. The principal districts of Moscow have also declared in favour of the Central Committee's line. The general city meeting of active workers of the Moscow organisation held on December 11 fully endorsed the organisational and political line of the Central Committee of the Party. There is no ground for doubting that the forthcoming general Party conference of the Moscow organisation will follow in the footsteps of its districts. The opposition, which is a bloc of a section of the "Left" Communists (Preobrazhensky, Stukov, Pyatakov, and others) with the so-called Democratic Centralists (Rafail, Sapronov, and others), has suffered a crushing defeat.

The course of the discussion, and the changes that the opposition went through during the period of the discussion, are interesting.

The opposition began by demanding nothing more nor less than a revision of the main line in internal Party affairs and internal Party policy which the Party has been pursuing during the past two years, during the whole NEP period. While demanding the full implementation of the resolution passed by the Tenth Congress on internal Party democracy, the opposition at the same time insisted on the removal of the restrictions (prohibition of groups, the Party-standing rule, etc.) that were adopted

by the Tenth, Eleventh and Twelfth Party Congresses. But the opposition did not stop at this. It asserted that the Party has practically been turned into an army type of organisation, that Party discipline has been turned into military discipline, and demanded that the entire staff of the Party apparatus be shaken up from top to bottom, that the principal responsible workers be removed from their posts, etc. Of strong language and abuse of the Central Committee there was, of course, no lack. The columns of *Pravda* were replete with articles, long and short, accusing the Central Committee of all the mortal sins. It is a wonder that it was not accused of causing the earthquake in Japan.

During this period the Central Committee as a whole did not intervene in the discussion in the columns of *Pravda*, leaving the members of the Party full freedom to criticise. It did not even think it necessary to repudiate the absurd charges that were often made by critics, being of the opinion that the members of the Party are sufficiently politically conscious to decide the questions under discussion themselves.

That was, so to speak, the first period of the discussion.

Later, when people got tired of strong language, when abuse ceased to have effect and the members of the Party demanded a business-like discussion of the question, the second period of the discussion set in. This period opened with the publication of the resolution of the Central Committee and the Central Control Commission on Party affairs.[1] On the basis of the decision of the October Plenum of the Central Committee,[2] which endorsed the course towards internal Party democracy, the Political Bureau of the Central Committee and the Presidium of the Central Control Commission drew up the well-known resolution indicating the

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1 **Original editor:** This resolution was adopted at a joint meeting of the Political Bureau of the Central Committee of the R.C.P.(B.) and of the Presidium of the Central Control Commission, held on December 5, 1923, and was published in *Pravda*, No. 278, of December 7, 1923.

2 **Original editor:** This refers to the joint plenum of the Central Committee and the Central Control Commission of the R.C.P.(B.), held on October 25-27, 1923, in conjunction with representatives of ten Party organisations. (For the resolution adopted by this Plenum, see "Resolutions and Decisions of C.P.S.U.(B.) Congresses, Conferences and Central Committee Plenums," Part I, 1941, pp. 531-32.)

conditions for giving effect to internal Party democracy. This marked a turning point in the discussion. It now became impossible to keep to general criticism. When the Central Committee and the Central Control Commission presented their concrete plan the opposition was faced with the alternative of either accepting this plan or of presenting a parallel, equally concrete, plan of its own for giving effect to internal Party democracy. At once it was discovered that the opposition was unable to counter the Central Committee's plan with a plan of its own that would satisfy the demands of the Party organisations. The opposition began to retreat. The demand for cancellation of the main line of the past two years in internal Party affairs ceased to be part of the opposition's arsenal. The demand of the opposition for the removal of the restrictions on democracy that were adopted by the Tenth, Eleventh and Twelfth Party Congresses also paled and faded. The opposition pushed into the background and moderated its demand that the apparatus be shaken up from top to bottom. It deemed it wise to substitute for all these demands the proposals that it was necessary "to formulate precisely the question of factions," "to arrange for the election of all Party bodies which hitherto have been appointed," "to abolish the appointment system," etc. It is characteristic that even these much moderated proposals of the opposition were rejected by the Krasnaya Presnya and Zamoskvorechye district Party organisations, which endorsed the resolution of the Central Committee and the Central Control Commission by overwhelming majorities.

This was, so to speak, the second period of the discussion.

We have now entered the third period. The characteristic feature of this period is the further retreat, I would say the disorderly retreat, of the opposition. This time, even the latter's faded and much moderated demands have dropped out of its resolution. Preobrazhensky's last resolution (the third, I think), which was submitted to the meeting of active workers of the Moscow organisation (over 1,000 present), reads as follows:

> "Only the speedy, unanimous and sincere implementation of the Political Bureau's resolutions and, in particular, the renovation of the internal Party apparatus by means of new elections, can guarantee our Party's transition to the new course without shocks and internal struggle, and strengthen the actual solidarity and unity of its ranks."

The fact that the meeting rejected even this very innocuous proposal of the opposition cannot be regarded as accidental. Nor was it an accident that the meeting, by an overwhelming majority, adopted a resolution "to endorse the political and organisational line of the Central Committee."

Rafail

I think that Rafail is the most consistent and thorough going representative of the present opposition, or, to be more exact, of the present opposition bloc. At one of the discussion meetings Rafail said that our Party has practically been turned into an army organisation, that its discipline is army discipline, and that, in view of this, it is necessary to shake up the entire Party apparatus from top to bottom, because it is unfit and alien to the genuine Party spirit. It seems to me that these or similar thoughts are floating in the minds of the members of the present opposition, but for various reasons they dare not express them. It must be admitted that in this respect Rafail has proved to be bolder than his colleagues in the opposition.

Nevertheless, Rafail is absolutely wrong. He is wrong not only from the formal aspect, but also, and primarily, in substance. If our Party has indeed been turned, or is even only beginning to be turned, into an army organisation, is it not obvious that we would now have neither a Party in the proper sense of the term, nor the dictatorship of the proletariat, nor the revolution?

What is an army?

An army is a self-contained organisation built from above. The very nature of an army presupposes the existence at its head of a General Staff, which is appointed from above, and which forms the army on the principle of compulsion. The General Staff not only forms the army, but also supplies it with food, clothing, footwear, etc. The material dependence of the entire army on the General Staff is complete. This, incidentally, is the basis of that army discipline, breach of which entails a specific form of the supreme penalty—death by shooting. This also explains the fact that

the General Staff can move the army wherever and whenever it pleases, guided only by its own strategic plans.

What is the Party?

The Party is the advanced detachment of the proletariat, built from below on the voluntary principle. The Party also has its General Staff, but it is not appointed from above, it is elected from below by the whole Party. The General Staff does not form the Party; on the contrary, the Party forms its General Staff. The Party forms itself on the voluntary principle. Nor does there exist that material dependence of the Party as a whole upon its General Staff that we spoke of above in relation to the army. The Party General Staff does not provide the Party with supplies, does not feed and clothe it. This, incidentally, explains the fact that the Party General Staff cannot move the ranks of the Party arbitrarily wherever and whenever it pleases, that the Party General Staff can lead the Party as a whole only in conformity with the economic and political interests of the class of which the Party is itself a part. Hence the specific character of Party discipline, which, in the main, is based on the method of persuasion, as distinct from army discipline, which, in the main, is based on the method of compulsion. Hence the fundamental difference between the supreme penalty in the Party (expulsion) and the supreme penalty in the army (death by shooting).

It is sufficient to compare these two definitions to realise how monstrous is Rafail's mistake.

The Party, he says, has been turned into an army organisation. But how is it possible to turn the Party into an army organisation if it is not materially dependent upon its General Staff, if it is built from below on the voluntary principle, and if it itself forms its General Staff? How, then, can one explain the influx of workers into the Party, the growth of its influence among the non-Party masses, its popularity among working people all over the world?

One of two things:

Either the Party is utterly passive and voiceless—but then how is one to explain the fact that such a passive and voiceless party is the leader of the

most revolutionary proletariat in the world and for several years already has been governing the most revolutionary country in the world?

Or the Party is active and displays initiative—but then one cannot understand why a party, which is so active, which displays such initiative, has not by now overthrown the military regime in the Party, assuming that such a regime actually reigns in the Party.

Is it not clear that our Party, which has made three revolutions, which routed Kolchak and Denikin, and is now shaking the foundations of world imperialism, that this Party would not have tolerated for one week that military regime and order-and-obey system that Rafail talks about so lightly and recklessly, that it would have smashed them in a trice, and would have introduced a new regime without waiting for a call from Rafail?

But: a frightful dream, but thank God only a dream. The fact of the matter is, firstly, that Rafail confused the Party with an army and an army with the Party, for, evidently, he is not clear in his mind about what the Party and what an army is. Secondly, the fact of the matter is that, evidently, Rafail himself does not believe in his discovery; he is forced to utter "frightful" words about an order-and-obey system in the Party so as to justify the principal slogans of the present opposition: a) freedom to form factional groups; and b) removal from their posts of the leading elements of the Party from top to bottom.

Evidently, Rafail feels that it is impossible to push through these slogans without the aid of "frightful" words.

That is the whole essence of the matter.

Preobrazhensky's Article

Preobrazhensky thinks that the chief cause of the defects in internal Party life is that the main Party line in Party affairs is wrong. He asserts that "for two years now, the Party has been pursuing an essentially wrong line in its internal Party policy," that "the Party's main line in internal Party affairs and internal Party policy during the N.E.P. period" has proved to be wrong.

What has been the Party's main line since the N.E.P. was introduced? At its Tenth Congress, the Party adopted a resolution on workers' democracy. Was the Party right in adopting such a resolution? Preobrazhensky thinks it was right. At the same Tenth Congress the Party imposed a very severe restriction on democracy in the shape of the ban on the formation of groups. Was the Party right in imposing such a restriction? Preobrazhensky thinks that the Party was wrong, because, in his opinion, such a restriction shackles independent Party thinking. At the Eleventh Congress the Party imposed further restrictions on democracy in the shape of the definite Party-standing rule, etc. The Twelfth Party Congress only reaffirmed these restrictions. Was the Party right in imposing these restrictions as a safeguard against petty-bourgeois tendencies under the conditions created by the N.E.P.? Preobrazhensky thinks that the Party was wrong, because, in his opinion, these restrictions shackled the initiative of the Party organisations. The conclusion is obvious: Preobrazhensky proposes that the Party's main line in this sphere that was adopted at the Tenth and Eleventh Congresses under the conditions created by the N.E.P. should be rescinded.

The Tenth and Eleventh Congresses, however, took place under the direct leadership of Comrade Lenin. The resolution of the Tenth Congress prohibiting the formation of groups (the resolution on unity) was moved and steered through the congress by Comrade Lenin. The subsequent restrictions on democracy in the shape of the definite Party-standing rule, etc., were adopted by the Eleventh Congress with the close participation of Comrade Lenin. Does not Preobrazhensky realise that, in effect, he is proposing that the Party line under the conditions created by the NEP, the line that is organically connected with Leninism, should be rescinded? Is not Preobrazhensky beginning to understand that his proposal to rescind the Party's main line in Party affairs under the conditions created by the NEP is, in effect, a repetition of some of the proposals in the notorious "anonymous platform,"[3] which demanded the revision of Leninism?

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3 **Original editor:** This refers to an anonymous platform issued just before the Twelfth Congress of the R.C.P.(B.) by an underground counter-revolutionary organisation which called itself the "Workers' Group." (This group was formed in Moscow, in 1923, by Myasnikov and Kuznetsov, who had been expelled from the Party. It had few members, and it was dissolved in the autumn of 1923.)

It is sufficient to put these questions to realise that the Party will not follow in Preobrazhensky's footsteps.

What, indeed, does Preobrazhensky propose? He proposes nothing more nor less than a reversion to Party life "on the lines of 1917-18." What distinguished the years 1917-18 in this respect? The fact that, at that time, we had groups and factions in our Party, that there was an open fight between the groups at that time, that the Party was then passing through a critical period, during which its fate hung in the balance. Preobrazhensky is demanding that this state of affairs in the Party, a state of affairs that was abolished by the Tenth Congress, should be restored, at least "partly." Can the Party take this path? No, it cannot. Firstly, because the restoration of Party life on the lines that existed in 1917-18, when there was no NEP, does not, and cannot, meet the Party's needs under the conditions prevailing in 1923, when there is the NEP. Secondly, because the restoration of the former situation of factional struggle would inevitably result in the disruption of Party unity, especially now that Comrade Lenin is absent.

Preobrazhensky is inclined to depict the conditions of internal Party life in 1917-18 as something desirable and ideal. But we know of a great many dark sides of this period of internal Party life, which caused the Party very severe shocks. I do not think that the internal Party struggle among the Bolsheviks ever reached such intensity as it did in that period, the period of the Brest Peace. It is well known, for example, that the "Left" Communists, who at that time constituted a separate faction, went to the length of talking seriously about replacing the existing Council of People's Commissars by another Council of People's Commissars consisting of new people belonging to the "Left" communist faction. Some of the members of the present opposition—Preobrazhensky, Pyatakov, Stukov and others—then belonged to the "Left" communist faction.

Is Preobrazhensky thinking of "restoring" those old "ideal" conditions in our Party?

It is obvious, at all events, that the Party will not agree to this "restoration."

Sapronov's Article

Sapronov thinks that the chief cause of the defects in internal Party life is the presence in the Party's apparatuses of "Party pedants," "schoolmistresses," who are busy "teaching the Party members" according to "the school method," and are thus hindering the real training of the Party members in the course of the struggle. Although dubbing the responsible workers in our Party apparatus "schoolmistresses," Sapronov does not think of asking where these people came from, and how it came to pass that "Party pedants" gained control of the work of our Party. Advancing this more than reckless and demagogic proposition as proved, Sapronov forgot that a Marxist cannot be satisfied with mere assertions, but must first of all understand a phenomenon, if it really exists at all, and explain it, in order then to propose effective measures for improvement. But evidently Sapronov does not care a rap about Marxism. He wants at all costs to malign the Party apparatus—and all the rest will follow. And so, in Sapronov's opinion, the evil will of "Party pedants" is the cause of the defects in our internal Party life. An excellent explanation, it must be admitted.

Only we do not understand:

1. How could these "schoolmistresses" and "Party pedants" retain the leadership of the most revolutionary proletariat in the world?
2. How could our "Party schoolchildren" who are being taught by these "schoolmistresses" retain the leadership of the most revolutionary country in the world?

At all events it is clear that it is easier to talk about "Party pedants" than to understand and appreciate the very great merit of our Party apparatus.

How does Sapronov propose to remedy the defects in our internal Party life? His remedy is as simple as his diagnosis. "Change our officers," remove the present responsible workers from their posts—such is Sapronov's remedy. This he regards as the principal guarantee that internal Party democracy will be practised. From the point of view of democracy, I am far from denying the importance of new elections as a means

of improving our internal Party life; but to regard that as the principal guarantee means to understand neither internal Party life nor its defects. In the ranks of the opposition there are men like Byeloborodov, whose "democracy" is still remembered by the workers in Rostov; Rosenholtz, whose "democracy" was a misery to our water transport workers and railwaymen; Pyatakov, whose "democracy" made the whole of the Donets Basin not only cry out, but positively howl; Alsky, with the nature of whose "democracy" everybody is familiar; Byk, from whose "democracy" Khorezm is still groaning. Does Sapronov think that if the places of the "Party pedants" are taken by the "esteemed comrades" enumerated above, democracy will triumph in the Party? Permit me to have some doubts about that.

Evidently, there are two kinds of democracy: the democracy of the mass of Party members, who are eager to display initiative and to take an active part in the work of Party leadership, and the "democracy" of disgruntled Party big-wigs who think that dismissing some and putting others in their place is the essence of democracy. The Party will stand for the first kind of democracy and will carry it out with an iron hand. But the Party will throw out the "democracy" of the disgruntled Party big-wigs, which has nothing in common with genuine internal Party democracy, workers' democracy.

To ensure internal Party democracy it is necessary, first of all, to rid the minds of some of our responsible workers of the survivals and habits of the war period, which cause them to regard the Party not as an independently acting organism, but as a system of official institutions. But these survivals cannot be got rid of in a short space of time.

To ensure internal Party democracy it is necessary, secondly, to do away with the pressure exerted by our bureaucratic state apparatus, which has about a million employees, upon our Party apparatus, which has no more than 20,000-30,000 workers. But it is impossible to do away with the pressure of this cumbersome machine and gain mastery over it in a short space of time.

To ensure internal Party democracy it is necessary, thirdly, to raise the cultural level of our backward units, of which there are quite a number,

and to distribute our active workers correctly over the entire territory of the Union; but that, too, can not be achieved in a short space of time.

As you see, to ensure complete democracy is not so simple a matter as Sapronov thinks, that is, of course, if by democracy we mean not Sapronov's empty, formal democracy, but real, workers', genuine democracy.

Obviously, the entire Party from top to bottom must exert its will to ensure and put into effect genuine internal Party democracy.

Trotsky's Letter

The resolution of the Central Committee and the Central Control Commission on internal Party democracy, published on December 7, was adopted unanimously. Trotsky voted for this resolution. It might have been expected, therefore, that the members of the Central Committee, including Trotsky, would come forward in a united front with a call to Party members for unanimous support of the Central Committee and its resolution. This expectation, however, has not been realised. The other day Trotsky issued a letter to the Party conferences which cannot be interpreted otherwise than as an attempt to weaken the will of the Party membership for unity in supporting the Central Committee and its position.

Judge for yourselves.

After referring to bureaucracy in the Party apparatus and the danger of degeneration of the old guard, i.e., the Leninists, the main core of our Party, Trotsky writes:

> "The degeneration of the 'old guard' has been observed in history more than once. Let us take the latest and most glaring historical example: the leaders and the parties of the Second International. We know that Wilhelm Liebknecht, Bebel, Singer, Victor Adler, Kautsky, Bernstein, Lafargue, Guesde, and others, were the immediate and direct pupils of Marx and Engels. We know, however, that all those leaders—some partly, and others wholly—degenerated into opportunism." [...] "We, that is, we 'old ones,' must say that our generation, which naturally plays a leading role in the Party, has no self-sufficient guarantee against the gradual and imperceptible weakening of the proletarian and revo-

> lutionary spirit, assuming that the Party tolerates a further growth and consolidation of the bureaucratic-apparatus methods of policy which are transforming the younger generation into passive educational material and are inevitably creating estrangement between the apparatus and the membership, between the old and the young." [...] "The youth—the Party's truest barometer—react most sharply of all against Party bureaucracy." [...] "The youth must capture the revolutionary formulas by storm. [...]"

First, I must dispel a possible misunderstanding. As is evident from his letter, Trotsky includes himself among the Bolshevik old guard, thereby showing readiness to take upon himself the charges that may be hurled at the old guard if it does indeed take the path of degeneration. It must be admitted that this readiness for self-sacrifice is undoubtedly a noble trait. But I must protect Trotsky from Trotsky, because, for obvious reasons, he cannot, and should not, bear responsibility for the possible degeneration of the principal cadres of the Bolshevik old guard. Sacrifice is a good thing, of course, but do the old Bolsheviks need it? I think that they do not.

Secondly, it is impossible to understand how opportunists and Mensheviks like Bernstein, Adler, Kautsky, Guesde, and the others, can be put on a par with the Bolshevik old guard, which has always fought, and I hope will continue to fight with honour, against opportunism, the Mensheviks and the Second International. What is the cause of this muddle and confusion? Who needs it, bearing in mind the interests of the Party and not ulterior motives that by no means aim at defence of the old guard? How is one to interpret these insinuations about opportunism in relation to the old Bolsheviks, who matured in the struggle against opportunism?

Thirdly, I do not by any means think that the old Bolsheviks are absolutely guaranteed against the danger of degeneration any more than I have grounds for asserting that we are absolutely guaranteed against, say, an earthquake. As a *possibility*, such a danger can and should be assumed. But does this mean that such a danger is real, that it exists? I think that it does not. Trotsky himself has adduced no evidence to show that the danger of degeneration is a real danger. Nevertheless, there are a number of elements within our Party who are capable of giving rise to a real danger of degeneration of certain ranks of our Party. I have in mind that section of the Mensheviks who joined our Party *unwillingly*, and who have not

yet got rid of their old opportunist habits. The following is what Comrade Lenin wrote about these Mensheviks, and about this danger, at the time of the Party purge:

> "Every opportunist is distinguished for his adaptability [...] and the Mensheviks, as opportunists, adapt themselves 'on principle,' so to speak, to the prevailing trend among the workers and assume a protective colouring, just as a hare's coat turns white in the winter. It is necessary to know this specific feature of the Mensheviks and take it into account. And taking it into account means purging the Party of approximately ninety-nine out of every hundred of the Mensheviks who joined the Russian Communist Party after 1918, i.e., when the victory of the Bolsheviks first became probable and then certain." (see Vol. XXVII, p. 13.)

How could it happen that Trotsky, who lost sight of this and similar, really existing dangers, pushed into the foreground a possible danger, the danger of the degeneration of the Bolshevik old guard? How can one shut one's eyes to a real danger and push into the foreground an unreal, possible danger, if one has the interests of the Party in view and not the object of undermining the prestige of the majority in the Central Committee, the leading core of the Bolshevik old guard? Is it not obvious that "approaches" of this kind can only bring grist to the mill of the opposition?

Fourthly, what reasons did Trotsky have for *contrasting* the "old ones," who may degenerate, to the "youth," the Party's "truest barometer"; for *contrasting* the "old guard," who may become bureaucratic, to the "young guard," which must "capture the revolutionary formulas by storm"? What grounds had he for drawing this contrast, and what did he need it for? Have not the youth and the old guard always marched in a united front against internal and external enemies? Is not the unity between the "old ones" and the "young ones" the basic strength of our revolution? What was the object of this attempt to discredit the old guard and demagogically to flatter the youth if not to cause and widen a fissure between these principal detachments of our Party? Who needs all this, if one has the interests of the Party in view, its unity and solidarity, and not an attempt to shake this unity for the benefit of the opposition?

Is that the way to defend the Central Committee and its resolution on internal Party democracy, which, moreover, was adopted

unanimously?

But evidently, that was not Trotsky's object in issuing his letter to the Party conferences. Evidently there was a different intention here, namely: diplomatically to support the opposition in its struggle against the Central Committee of the Party while pretending to support the Central Committee's resolution.

That, in fact, explains the stamp of duplicity that Trotsky's letter bears.

Trotsky is in a bloc with the Democratic Centralists and with a section of the "Left" Communists—therein lies the political significance of Trotsky's action.

Pravda, No. 285,
December 15, 1923
Signed: *J. Stalin*

A NECESSARY COMMENT

(Concerning Rafail)

In my article in *Pravda* (No. 285) "The Discussion, Rafail, etc." I said that according to a statement Rafail made at a meeting in the Presnya District "our Party has practically been turned into an army organisation, its discipline is army discipline and, in view of this, it is necessary to shake up the entire Party apparatus from top to bottom, because it is unfit." Concerning this, Rafail says in his article in *Pravda* that I did not correctly convey his views, that I "simplified" them "in the heat of debate," and so forth. Rafail says that he merely drew an analogy (comparison) between the Party and an army, that analogy is not identity. "The system of administration in the Party is analogous to the system of administration in an army—this does not mean," he says, "that it is an exact copy; it only draws a parallel."

Is Rafail right?

No. And for the following reasons.

First. In his speech at the meeting in the Presnya District, Rafail did not simply compare the Party with an army, as he now asserts, but actually identified it with an army, being of the opinion that the Party is built on the lines of an army. I have before me the verbatim report of Rafail's speech, revised by the speaker. There it is stated: "Our entire Party is built on the lines of an army from top to bottom." It can scarcely be denied that we have here not simply an analogy, but an identification of the Party's structure with that of an army; the two are placed on a par.

Can it be asserted that our Party is built on the lines of an army? Obviously not, for the Party is built from below, on the voluntary principle; it is not materially dependent on its General Staff, which the Party elects. An army, however, is, of course, built from above, on the basis of compul-

sion; it is completely dependent materially upon its General Staff, which is not elected, but appointed from above. Etc., etc.

Secondly. Rafail does not simply compare the system of administration in the Party with that in an army, but puts one on a par with the other, identifies them, without any "verbal frills." This is what he writes in his article: "We assert that the system of administration in the Party is *identical* with the system of administration in an army not on any extraneous grounds, but on the basis of an objective analysis of the state of the Party." It is impossible to deny that here Rafail does not confine himself to drawing an analogy between the administration of the Party and that of an army, for he "simply" identifies them, "without verbal frills."

Can these two systems of administration be identified? No, they cannot; for the system of administration in an army, as a system, is incompatible with the very nature of the Party and with its methods of influencing both its own members and the non-Party masses.

Thirdly. Rafail asserts in his article that, in the last analysis, the fate of the Party as a whole, and of its individual members, depends upon the Registration and Distribution Department of the Central Committee, that "the members of the Party are regarded as mobilised, the Registration and Distribution Department puts *everybody* in his job, *nobody* has the slightest right to choose his work, and it is the Registration and Distribution Department, or 'General Staff,' that determines the amount of supplies, i.e., pay, form of work, etc." Is all this true? Of course not! In peace time, the Registration and Distribution Department of the Central Committee usually deals in the course of a year with barely eight to ten thousand people. We know from the Central Committee's report to the Twelfth Congress of the R.C.P.[1] that, in 1922, the Registration and Distribution Department of the Central Committee dealt with 10,700 people (i.e., half the number it dealt with in 1921). If from this number we subtract 1,500 people sent by their local organisations to various educational institutions, and the people who went on sick leave (over 400),

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1 **Original editor:** J. V. Stalin is here referring to the "Report of the Central Committee of the R.C.P. to the Twelfth Party Congress," published in the bulletin *Izvestia of the Central Committee of the R.C.P.(B.)*, No. 4 (52), April 1923.

there remain something over 8,000. Of these, the Central Committee, in the course of the year, distributed 5,167 responsible workers (i.e., less than half of the total number dealt with by the Registration and Distribution Department). But at that time the Party as a whole had not 5,000, and not 10,000, but about 500,000 members, the bulk of whom were not, and could not, be affected by the distribution work of the Registration and Distribution Department of the Central Committee. Evidently, Rafail has forgotten that in peace time the Central Committee usually distributes only responsible workers, that the Registration and Distribution Department of the Central Committee does not, cannot, and should not, determine the "pay" of all the members of the Party, who now number over 400,000. Why did Rafail have to exaggerate in this ridiculous way? Evidently, in order to prove "with facts" the "identity" between the system of administration in the Party and that in an army.

Such are the facts.

That is why I thought, and still think, that Rafail "is not clear in his mind about what the Party and what an army is."

As regards the passages Rafail quotes from the decisions of the Tenth Congress, they have nothing to do with the present case, for they apply only to the survivals of the war period in our Party and not to the alleged "identity between the system of administration in the Party and that in an army."

Rafail is right when he says that mistakes must be corrected, that one must not persist in one's mistakes. And that is precisely why I do not lose hope that Rafail will, in the end, correct the mistakes he has made.

Pravda, No. 294,
December 28, 1923
Signed: *J. Stalin*

GREETINGS TO THE NEWSPAPER *COMMUNIST*[1]

I heartily congratulate the newspaper *Communist* on the appearance of its thousandth issue. May it be a reliable beacon, lighting up for the masses of working people of the East the path to the complete triumph of communism.

Stalin
Secretary of the Central Committee
of the R.C.P.

Bakinsky Rabochy, No. 294 (1022),
December 30, 1923

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1 **Original editor:** *Communist*—a daily newspaper, organ of the Central Committee and of the Baku Committee of the Azerbaijanian Communist Party (Bolsheviks), published in the Azerbaijanian language. The first number was issued illegally by the Bolshevik organisation in'Azerbaijan on August 29, 1919, after which the paper was suppressed by the Mussavat government. Publication was resumed on April 30, 1920, after the establishment of Soviet power in Azerbaijan. J. V. Stalin's greetings were published in the Azerbaijanian language in the newspaper *Communist* on December 29, 1923, and in the Russian language in the newspaper *Bakinsky Rabochy* (*Baku Worker*), on December 30, 1923, and *Zarya Vostoka* (*Dawn of the East*), on January 3, 1924.



Appendix 1

DECLARATION ON THE FORMATION OF THE UNION OF SOVIET SOCIALIST REPUBLICS

Since the Soviet republics were formed, the states of the world have split into two camps: the camp of capitalism and the camp of socialism.

There, in the camp of capitalism, we have national animosity and inequality, colonial slavery and chauvinism, national oppression and pogroms, imperialist brutalities and wars.

Here, in the camp of socialism, we have mutual confidence and peace, national freedom and equality, the peaceful co-existence and fraternal co-operation of peoples.

The attempts made by the capitalist world during the course of decades to solve the problem of nationalities by combining the free development of peoples with the system of exploitation of man by man have proved fruitless. On the contrary, the skein of national contradictions is becoming more and more entangled and is threatening the very existence of capitalism. The bourgeoisie has proved to be incapable of bringing about the co-operation of peoples.

Only in the camp of the Soviets, only in the conditions of the dictatorship of the proletariat, which has rallied the majority of the population around itself, has it been possible to eradicate national oppression, to create an atmosphere of mutual confidence, and to lay the foundation for the fraternal co-operation of peoples.

It was these circumstances alone that enabled the Soviet republics to repel the attacks of the imperialists of the whole world, home and foreign.

It was these circumstances alone that enabled them to bring the Civil War to a successful conclusion, to preserve their existence and begin peaceful economic construction.

But the years of war have left their traces. Ruined fields, idle factories, shattered productive forces and exhausted economic resources left as a heritage by the war render inadequate the individual efforts of the individual republics to build up their economy. The restoration of the national economy has proved to be impossible while the republics continue to exist separately.

On the other hand, the instability of the international situation and the danger of new attacks render inevitable the creation of a united front of the Soviet republics in face of the capitalist encirclement.

Lastly, the very structure of Soviet power, which is international in its class nature, impels the toiling masses of the Soviet republics to unite into a single socialist family.

All these circumstances imperatively demand the union of the Soviet republics into a single union state, capable of ensuring external security, internal economic progress and the unhampered national development of the peoples.

The will of the peoples of the Soviet republics, who recently assembled at their Congresses of Soviets and unanimously resolved to form a "Union of Soviet Socialist Republics," is a reliable guarantee that this Union is a voluntary association of peoples enjoying equal rights, that each republic is guaranteed the right of freely seceding from the Union, that admission to the Union is open to all Socialist Soviet Republics, whether now existing or hereafter to arise, that the new union state will prove to be a worthy crown to the foundation for the peaceful co-existence and fraternal co-operation of the peoples that was laid in October 1917, and that it will serve as a sure bulwark against world capitalism and as a new and decisive step towards the union of the working people of all countries into a World Socialist Soviet Republic.

Declaring all this before the whole world, and solemnly proclaiming the firmness of the foundations of Soviet power as expressed in the Constitutions of the Socialist Soviet Republics by whom we have been em-

powered, we, the delegates of these republics, acting in accordance with our mandates, have resolved to sign a treaty on the formation of a "Union of Soviet Socialist Republics."



Appendix 2

TREATY ON THE FORMATION OF THE UNION OF SOVIET SOCIALIST REPUBLICS

The Russian Socialist Federative Soviet Republic (R.S.F.S.R.), the Ukrainian Socialist Soviet Republic (Ukr. S.S.R.), the Byelorussian Socialist Soviet Republic (B.S.S.R.) and the Transcaucasian Socialist Federative Soviet Republic (T.S.F.S.R.—Georgia, Azerbaijan and Armenia) conclude the present treaty of union providing for uniting into a single union state—"the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics"—on the following principles:

1. Within the jurisdiction of the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics, as represented by its supreme organs, are the following:
    a) representation of the Union in foreign relations;
    b) modification of the external boundaries of the Union;
    c) conclusion of treaties providing for the admission of new republics into the Union;
    d) declaration of war and conclusion of peace;
    e) obtaining state loans abroad;
    f) ratification of international treaties;
    g) establishment of systems of foreign and home trade;
    h) establishment of the principles and the general plan of the national economy of the Union as a whole and conclusion of concession agreements;
    i) regulation of transport, posts and telegraphs;

j) establishment of the principles of organisation of the armed forces of the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics;

k) ratification of the single state budget of the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics, establishment of a monetary, currency and credit system and a system of All-Union, Republican and local taxes;

l) establishment of the general principles of land settlement and tenure as well as of the exploitation of mineral wealth, forests and waters throughout the territory of the Union;

m) enactment of All-Union legislation on resettlement;

n) establishment of the principles of court structure and court procedure, as well as civil and criminal legislation for the Union;

o) enactment of basic labour laws;

p) establishment of general principles of public education;

q) establishment of general measures for the protection of public health;

r) establishment of a system of weights and measures;

s) organisation of statistics for the whole Union;

t) enactment of fundamental laws relating to the rights of foreigners in respect to citizenship of the Union;

u) the right of general amnesty;

v) annulment of decisions violating the Treaty of Union on the part of Congresses of Soviets, Central Executive Committees and Councils of People's Commissars of the Union Republics.

2. The supreme organ of power in the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics is the Congress of Soviets of the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics and, in the intervals between congresses, the Central Executive Committee of the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics.

3. The Congress of Soviets of the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics

consists of representatives of town Soviets on the basis of one deputy for every 25,000 voters, and of representatives from Gubernia Congresses of Soviets on the basis of one deputy for every 125,000 inhabitants.

4. Delegates to the Congress of Soviets of the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics are elected at Gubernia Congresses of Soviets.
5. Ordinary Congresses of Soviets of the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics are convened by the Central Executive Committee of the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics once a year; extraordinary Congresses are convened by the Central Executive Committee of the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics at its own discretion, or upon the demand of not less than two Union Republics.
6. The Congress of Soviets of the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics elects a Central Executive Committee consisting of representatives of the Union Republics in proportion to the population of each and to a total number of 371 members.
7. The ordinary sessions of the Central Executive Committee of the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics are convened three times a year. Extraordinary sessions are convened by decision of the Presidium of the Central Executive Committee of the Union, or upon the demand of the Council of People's Commissars of the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics, or of the Central Executive Committee of a Union Republic.
8. Congresses of Soviets and sessions of the Central Executive Committee of the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics are convened in the capitals of the Union Republics in accordance with the procedure established by the Presidium of the Central Executive Committee of the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics.
9. The Central Executive Committee of the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics elects a Presidium, which is the supreme organ of power of the Union in the intervals between the sessions of the Central Executive Committee of the Union.
10. The Presidium of the Central Executive Committee of the Union

of Soviet Socialist Republics is elected to the number of 19 members, from among whom the Central Executive Committee of the Union elects four chairmen of the Central Executive Committee of the Union, corresponding to the number of Union Republics.

11. The executive organ of the Central Executive Committee of the Union is the Council of People's Commissars of the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics (the C.P.C. of the Union), elected by the Central Executive Committee of the Union for the period of the mandate of the latter, and consists of:

    The Chairman of the Council of People's Commissars of the Union;

    The Vice-Chairmen;

    The People's Commissar of Foreign Affairs;

    The People's Commissar of Military and Naval Affairs;

    The People's Commissar of Foreign Trade;

    The People's Commissar of Transport;

    The People's Commissar of Posts and Telegraphs;

    The People's Commissar of the Workers' and Peasants' Inspection;

    The Chairman of the Supreme Council of National Economy;

    The People's Commissar of Labour;

    The People's Commissar of Food;

    The People's Commissar of Finance.

12. In order to uphold revolutionary law within the territory of the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics and to unite the efforts of the Union Republics in combating counter-revolution, a Supreme Court is set up under the Central Executive Committee of the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics with the functions of supreme judicial control, and under the Council of People's Commissars of the Union a joint organ of State Political Administration is set up, the Chairman of which is a member of the Council of People's Commissars of the Union with voice but no vote.

13. The decrees and decisions of the Council of People's Commissars of the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics are binding on all the Union Republics and have immediate effect throughout the territory of the Union.
14. The decrees and decisions of the Central Executive Committee and of the Council of People's Commissars of the Union are published in the languages in common use in the Union Republics (Russian, Ukrainian, Byelorussian, Georgian, Armenian and Tyurk).
15. The Central Executive Committees of the Union Republics may appeal against the decrees and decisions of the Council of People's Commissars of the Union to the Presidium of the Central Executive Committee of the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics, without, however, suspending their operation.
16. Decisions and orders of the Council of People's Commissars of the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics may be annulled only by the Central Executive Committee of the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics and its Presidium; orders of the various People's Commissars of the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics may be annulled by the Central Executive Committee of the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics, by its Presidium, or by the Council of People's Commissars of the Union.
17. Orders of the People's Commissars of the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics may be suspended by the Central Executive Committees, or by the Presidiums of the Central Executive Committees of the Union Republics, only in exceptional cases, if the said orders are obviously at variance with the decisions of the Council of People's Commissars or the Central Executive Committee of the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics. When suspending an order, the Central Executive Committee, or the Presidium of the Central Executive Committee, of the Union Republic concerned shall immediately notify the Council of People's Commissars of the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics and the competent People's Commissar of the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics.

18. The Council of People's Commissars of a Union Republic consists of:

    The Chairman of the Council of People's Commissars;

    The Vice-Chairmen;

    The Chairman of the Supreme Council of National Economy;

    The People's Commissar of Agriculture;

    The People's Commissar of Food;

    The People's Commissar of Finance;

    The People's Commissar of Labour;

    The People's Commissar of Internal Affairs;

    The People's Commissar of Justice;

    The People's Commissar of the Workers' and Peasants' Inspection;

    The People's Commissar of Education;

    The People's Commissar of Public Health;

    The People's Commissar of Social Maintenance;

    The People's Commissar for the Affairs of Nationalities; and also, with voice but no vote, representatives of the Union People's Commissariats of Foreign Affairs, Military and Naval Affairs, Foreign Trade, Transport, and Posts and Telegraphs.

19. The Supreme Council of National Economy and the People's Commissariats of Food, Finance, Labour and the Workers' and Peasants' Inspection of each of the Union Republics, while being directly subordinate to the Central Executive Committees and the Councils of People's Commissars of the respective Union Republics, are guided in their activities by the orders of the corresponding People's Commissars of the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics.

20. Each of the republics constituting the Union has its own budget, as an integral part of the general budget of the Union endorsed by the Central Executive Committee of the Union. The budgets of the republics, both revenue and expenditure sides, are fixed by the Central

Executive Committee of the Union. The items of revenue, and the size of allocations from revenue which go to make up the budgets of the Union Republics, are determined by the Central Executive Committee of the Union.

21. A common Union citizenship is established for all citizens of the Union Republics.
22. The Union of Soviet Socialist Republics has its flag, arms and state seal.
23. The capital of the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics is the City of Moscow.
24. The Union Republics will amend their Constitutions in conformity with the present treaty.
25. Ratification, alteration and supplementation of the Treaty of Union is within the exclusive jurisdiction of the Congress of Soviets of the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics.
26. Every Union Republic retains the right freely to secede from the Union.

BIOGRAPHICAL CHRONICLE

(1921-1923)

1921

January 1-2

J. V. Stalin directs the proceedings of the Conference of Communists of the Tyurk Peoples of the R.S.F.S.R.; he delivers a speech at the opening of the conference and makes the report on the organisational question.

January 5

J. V. Stalin writes the article "Our Disagreements," published in *Pravda*, No. 12, of January 19, 1921.

January 14

J. V. Stalin makes a report on the current situation at a meeting in the theatre of the First Naval Coast Defence Detachment (Petrograd).

January 17

J. V. Stalin speaks at an enlarged session of the Moscow Committee of the R.C.P.(B.) on the role of the trade unions in industry, in opposition to the theses proposed by Trotsky and Bukharin, and in support of the Leninist "Platform of the Ten."

January 18

J. V. Stalin speaks at the enlarged session of the Moscow Committee of the R.C.P.(B.) in opposition to the proposal to transform the regular army into a militia, and in support of the proposal to strengthen the regular army.

January 19

J. V. Stalin presides at a meeting of the Council of Nationalities of the People's Commissariat for the Affairs of Nationalities and is elected to the commission set up to draft the regulations governing the Council.

February 5

J. V. Stalin's theses on "The Immediate Tasks of the Party in the National Question" are discussed at a meeting of the Political Bureau of the Central Committee of the R.C.P.(B.); a commission headed by V. I. Lenin and J. V. Stalin is appointed to make the final draft of the theses.

February 7

J. V. Stalin and V. I. Lenin, with the other members of the commission, edit the theses on the national question to be submitted to the Tenth Congress of the R.C.P.(B.).

February 10

J. V. Stalin's theses on "The Immediate Tasks of the Party in the National Question" are published in *Pravda*, No. 29.

February 12

J. V. Stalin has an interview with representatives of the Daghestan A.S.S.R.

February 15

J. V. Stalin sends a telegram to G. K. Orjonikidze, in Baku, containing the directives of the Central Committee of the R.C.P.(B.) to the Revolutionary Military Council of the Eleventh Army, and asking for daily reports on the course of events in the Caucasus.

February 16

J. V. Stalin sends an enquiry to G. K. Orjonikidze about the state of affairs in Georgia, Armenia and Azerbaijan.

February 28

J. V. Stalin writes a note to V. I. Lenin on the need to defend Batum against the Turks.

March 3

J. V. Stalin sends by direct wire V. I. Lenin's greetings and directives to the Georgian Communists.

March 5

J. V. Stalin makes a report to a meeting of the Council of Nationalities of the People's Commissariat for the Affairs of Nationalities on the results of the work of the commission appointed to draft the Statute of the Council of Nationalities.

March 8-16

J. V. Stalin takes part in the work of the Tenth Congress of the R.C.P.(B.).

March 8

The Tenth Congress of the R.C.P.(B.) elects J. V. Stalin a member of the congress presidium.

March 9

J. V. Stalin takes part in the negotiations between the Soviet Government and a Turkish delegation.

March 10

J. V. Stalin makes the report on "The Immediate Tasks of the Party in the National Question" at the Tenth Congress of the R.C.P.(B.).

March 13

V. I. Lenin writes a note to J. V. Stalin proposing that delegates at the Tenth Congress of the R.C.P.(B.) be sent to take part in the suppression of the Kronstadt mutiny.

March 14

The Tenth Congress of the R.C.P.(B.) elects J. V. Stalin a member of the Central Committee of the R.C.P.(B.).

March 15

J. V. Stalin makes a statement at the Tenth Congress of the R.C.P.(B.) on behalf of the commission appointed to draft the resolution on the national question.

March 16

The Plenum of the Central Committee of the R.C.P.(B.) elects J. V. Stalin a member of the Political Bureau and of the Organisational Bureau of the Central Committee of the Party.

March

J. V. Stalin writes a letter to V. I. Lenin about the plan for the electrification of Russia.

April 16

J. V. Stalin sends V. I. Lenin his observations on the draft regulations governing the Central Fuel Administration.

April 19

J. V. Stalin attends a meeting of the Council of People's Commissars and is elected a member of the commission appointed to draft a decision on extending the powers of the Azerbaijanian Oil Committee.

April 22

J. V. Stalin submits to the Presidium of the All-Russian Central Executive Committee the draft of a proposal by the People's Commissariat for the Affairs of Nationalities on the formation of a Komi Autonomous Region.

April 25

At a meeting of the Council of Nationalities of the People's Commissariat for the Affairs of Nationalities, J. V. Stalin reports on the amendments made by the Presidium of the All-Russian Central Executive Committee to the "Statute of the Council of Nationalities," and takes part in the discussion on the question of forming the Komi Autonomous Region.

May 2

J. V. Stalin writes the article "Concerning the Presentation of the National Question," published in *Pravda*, No. 98, of May 8, 1921.

May 5

J. V. Stalin makes a statement to a meeting of the Collegium of the People's Commissariat for the Affairs of Nationalities on a draft decree making it obligatory for all People's Commissariats to submit to the People's Commissariat for the Affairs of Nationalities proposed laws and decisions affecting different nationalities.

May 10

J. V. Stalin speaks at a meeting of the Council of People's Commissars on the question of the local departments of the Workers' and Peasants' Inspection.

May 16

J. V. Stalin presides at a meeting of the Collegium of the People's Commissariat for the Affairs of Nationalities. The Collegium decides to convene a congress of Yakut working people to discuss the question of forming a Yakut Autonomous Region.

May 16-25

J. V. Stalin takes part in the work of the commission appointed by the Central Committee of the R.C.P.(B.) to prepare for and conduct the Fourth All-Russian Congress of Trade Unions.

May 18

J. V. Stalin, on the instructions of the Central Committee of the R.C.P.(B.), speaks at a meeting of the Communist group at the Fourth All-Russian Congress of Trade Unions in opposition to a resolution proposed by the anarcho-syndicalist group on the report of the Presidium of the All-Russian Central Council of Trade Unions to the congress.

May 19

J. V. Stalin takes part in the work of the commission appointed by a plenary session of the Central Committee of the R.C.P.(B.) to investigate Tomsky's anti-Party conduct at the Fourth All-Russian Congress of Trade Unions.

End of May

J. V. Stalin goes to Nalchik to take a cure.

June 12

J. V. Stalin sends greetings to the Fourth Congress of Soviets of the Kabardinian territory.

June 17

J. V. Stalin telegraphs greetings to the First Congress of Highland Women.

End of June

J. V. Stalin leaves Nalchik for Tiflis to take part in the work of a plenary session of the Caucasian Bureau of the Central Committee of the R.C.P.(B.).

July 2-7

J. V. Stalin takes part in the work of the plenary session of the Caucasian Bureau of the Central Committee of the R.C.P.(B.).

July 4

V. I. Lenin telegraphs G. K. Orjonikidze enquiring why J. V. Stalin's vacation was interrupted, and asking to be sent the opinion of the doctors on Stalin's state of health.

July 6

J. V. Stalin makes a report at a general meeting of the Tiflis Party organisation on "The Immediate Tasks of Communism in Georgia and Transcaucasia." The report was published in the newspaper *Pravda Gruzii*, No. 108, of July 13, 1921.

July 7, 8, 14

J. V. Stalin takes part in the work of the Plenum of the Central Committee of the C.P.(B.) of Georgia. On his proposal, the Plenum discusses the policy of the Communist Party of Georgia as regards restoring the national economy and strengthening the Soviet power.

July 25

V. I. Lenin enquires of G. K. Orjonikidze about the number of days J. V. Stalin's vacation was interrupted, and asks for the name and address of the doctor treating J. V. Stalin.

August 8

J. V. Stalin leaves Nalchik for Moscow.

August 18

V. I. Lenin orders the State Planning Commission to render J. V. Stalin assistance in obtaining information on all economic affairs, particularly on the gold-mining industry and on the Baku oil industry.

August 22

The Central Committee of the R.C.P.(B.) places J. V. Stalin in general charge of the Agitation and Propaganda Department of the Central Committee.

August 28

J. V. Stalin's article "The Party Before and After Taking Power" is published in *Pravda*, No. 190.

September 6-8

J. V. Stalin takes part in the proceedings of the commission appointed by the Central Committee of the R.C.P.(B.) to improve the work of the central administration of the railways.

September 22

At a meeting of the Presidium of the All-Russian Central Executive Committee, J. V. Stalin is elected a member of the commission on the question of the division of land between the Highland population (Chechens) and the Cossacks.

September 27

J. V. Stalin receives V. I. Lenin's letter "Concerning the Question of the Tasks of the Workers' and Peasants' Inspection, Their Interpretation and Execution," and writes V. I. Lenin a "Reply on Inspection."

November 3

At a meeting of the Presidium of the All-Russian Central Executive Committee, J. V. Stalin is elected to the commission appointed to make preparations for the Ninth All-Russian Congress of Soviets.

November 5

J. V. Stalin's article "The October Revolution and the National Policy of the Russian Communists" is published in the newspaper *Zhizn Natsionalnostei* (*Life of the Nationalities*), No. 24 (122).

November 13

J. V. Stalin delivers a lecture at the club of the Krasnaya Presnya District Party Committee on "The Political Strategy and Tactics of the Communists and the New Economic Policy".

November 17

J. V. Stalin takes part in the meeting of the Presidium of the All-Russian Central Executive Committee which examines the question of agricultural communes, artels and societies for the joint cultivation of the land.

November 18

The Central Committee of the R.C.P.(B.) appoints J. V. Stalin as one of the editors of its organ, *Vestnik Agitatsii i Propagandy* (*Bulletin of Agitation and Propaganda*).

November 28

J. V. Stalin receives from V. I. Lenin the draft of a proposal for the formation of a federation of Transcaucasian republics, and writes his observations on it and an amendment to it. V. I. Lenin accepts the amendment.

November 29

The Political Bureau of the Central Committee of the R.C.P.(B.) adopts the resolution proposed by V. I. Lenin and J. V. Stalin on the federation of the Transcaucasian republics.

December 18

J. V. Stalin's article "The Prospects" is published in *Pravda*, No. 286.

December 20

J. V. Stalin and the other members of the Council of People's Commissars sign the draft of the Council's decision on the plan for the electrification of the R.S.F.S.R.

December 23

The Ninth All-Russian Congress of Soviets elects J. V. Stalin to its presidium.

December 28

The Ninth All-Russian Congress of Soviets elects J. V. Stalin a member of the All-Russian Central Executive Committee.

December 29

The First Session of the All-Russian Central Executive Committee, Ninth Convocation, elects J. V. Stalin a member of the Presidium of the All-Russian C.R.C. and appoints him People's Commissar for the Affairs of Nationalities and People's Commissar of the Workers' and Peasants' Inspection.

December

J. V. Stalin takes part in the proceedings of the commission of the Central Committee of the R.C.P.(B.) on work in the countryside.

1922

January 9

J. V. Stalin presides at a meeting of the Collegium of the People's Commissariat for the Affairs of Nationalities and speaks on the question of forming a Karachayevo-Cherkess Region.

January 14

J. V. Stalin sends V. M. Molotov the draft of a circular letter to be sent by the Central Committee of the R.C.P.(B.) to the Communist Party of Turkestan.

January 16

At a meeting of the Political Bureau of the Central Committee of the R.C.P.(B.), J. V. Stalin proposes that a conference of Chairmen of the Central Executive Committees of the independent republics be called to discuss the question of joint representation at the Genoa Conference.

January 21

J. V. Stalin presides at a meeting of the Collegium of the People's Commissariat of the Workers' and Peasants' Inspection and speaks on the question of revising the budget for 1922.

January 27

J. V. Stalin takes part in the proceedings of the Second Extraordinary Session of the All-Russian Central Executive Committee, Ninth Convocation, which discusses the question of sending a delegation to the Genoa Conference.

January 28

J. V. Stalin speaks at the inaugural meeting of the "Society of Old Bolsheviks" on the rules of the society. J. V. Stalin presides at a meeting of the Collegium of the People's Commissariat of the Workers' and Peasants' Inspection and speaks on the question of drawing up instructions concerning the regulations for regional agents of this Commissariat.

February 14

J. V. Stalin and A. D. Tsyurupa receive a group of professors representing higher technical educational institutions.

February 22

J. V. Stalin writes to the Georgian Communists urging the necessity of taking practical measures to carry out V. I. Lenin's instruction to strengthen the Georgian Red Army.

February 28

J. V. Stalin receives a message from V. I. Lenin requesting that the People's Commissariat of the Workers' and Peasants' Inspection draw up a scheme of control of private associations and enterprises by the Workers' and Peasants' Inspection.

March 21

J. V. Stalin receives a letter from V. I. Lenin proposing that members of the staff of the People's Commissariat of the Workers' and Peasants' Inspection be called in to assist the staff of the Council of People's Commissars in verifying the execution of decisions.

March 27-April 2

J. V. Stalin takes part in the proceedings of the Eleventh Congress of the R.C.P.(B.).

March 27

The Eleventh Congress of the R.C.P.(B.) elects J. V. Stalin a member of its presidium.

March 28

The Eleventh Congress of the R.C.P.(B.) elects J. V. Stalin a member of the commission to investigate the case of "The 22" (the former "Workers' Opposition" group).

March 29-30

J. V. Stalin takes part in the work of the commission appointed by the Eleventh Congress of the R.C.P.(B.) to investigate the case of "The 22" (the former "Workers' Opposition" group).

March 31

The Eleventh Congress of the R.C.P.(B.) elects J. V. Stalin a member of the commission appointed to make the final draft of the resolution on the Party's financial policy.

April 2

The Eleventh Congress of the R.C.P.(B.) elects J. V. Stalin a member of the Central Committee of the Party.

April 3

The Plenum of the Central Committee of the R.C.P.(B.), on the proposal of V. I. Lenin, elects J. V. Stalin General Secretary of the Central Committee of the Party.

April 28

J. V. Stalin writes a letter to V. I. Lenin proposing changes in the system of supplying the peasants with seed.

May 4

J. V. Stalin writes the article "The Tenth Anniversary of *Pravda* (Reminiscences)," published in *Pravda*, No. 98, May 5, 1922.

May 5

J. V. Stalin's greetings to *Pravda* on its tenth anniversary are published in *Pravda*, No. 98.

May 12-17

J. V. Stalin takes part in the proceedings of the commission appointed by the Central Committee of the R.C.P.(B.) to draw up regulations governing the relations between the central organs of the Ukrainian S.S.R. and of the R.S.F.S.R.

May 19

A letter of the Central Committee of the R.C.P.(B.) to the Executive Committee of the Comintern concerning united front tactics, signed by J. V. Stalin, is published in *Pravda*, No. 110.

June 7

J. V. Stalin takes part in the proceedings of the Second Enlarged Plenum of the Executive Committee of the Comintern.

June 15

The letter of the Central Committee of the R.C.P.(B.) to the Communists of the Kirghiz Republic, signed by J. V. Stalin, is published in the magazine *Zhizn Natsionalnostei*, No. 12 (147).

July 9

Pravda, No. 151, publishes the letter—signed by J. V. Stalin—of the Central Committee of the R.C.P.(B.) to all Gubernia Committees, Regional Committees and National and Regional Bureaux of the Central Committee on carrying out the campaign to collect the tax in kind.

July 13

J. V. Stalin visits V. I. Lenin in Gorki.

July 14

J. V. Stalin sends a telegram to G. K. Orjonikidze about the state of health of V. I. Lenin.

August 3

J. V. Stalin presides at a meeting of the Organisational Commission of the Plenum of the Central Committee of the R.C.P.(B.), which discussed matters concerning the Twelfth Party Conference.

August 4-7

J. V. Stalin takes part in the proceedings of the Twelfth All-Russian Conference of the R.C.P.(B.).

August 4

The Twelfth Conference of the R.C.P.(B.) elects J. V. Stalin to its presidium.

August 5

V. I. Lenin summons J. V. Stalin to Gorki and asks him to convey his greetings to the Twelfth All-Russian Party Conference. J. V. Stalin conveys V. I. Lenin's greetings at the evening sitting of the conference.

August 11

The Central Committee of the Party appoints a commission, headed by J. V. Stalin, to prepare for the Plenum of the Central Committee of the R.C.P.(B.) the question of the relations between the R.S.F.S.R., the Ukrainian S.S.R., the Byelorussian S.S.R. and the Transcaucasian Federation.

September 15

J. V. Stalin writes his impressions of his visit to V. I. Lenin in Gorki.

September 23-24

J. V. Stalin takes part in the work of the commission appointed by the Central Committee of the R.C.P.(B.) on the question of the relations between the R.S.F.S.R, the Ukrainian S.S.R., the Byelorussian S.S.R. and the Transcaucasian Federation.

September 27

J. V. Stalin discusses with V. I. Lenin the question of uniting the Soviet republics into a union state.

October 6

J. V. Stalin delivers a report at the Plenum of the Central Committee of the R.C.P.(B.) on the relations between the R.S.F.S.R., the Ukrainian S.S.R., the Byelorussian S.S.R. and the Transcaucasian Federation. The Plenum appoints a commission, headed by J. V. Stalin, to direct the preparations for the union of the Soviet republics into a single union state.

October 16

J. V. Stalin informs the Central Committee of the Communist Party of Georgia of the decision adopted by the Plenum of the Central Committee of the R.C.P.(B.) on retaining the Transcaucasian Federation and uniting it with the R.S.F.S.R. and the Ukrainian and Byelorussian Republics in a Union of Soviet Socialist Republics.

October 30

The Central Committee of the Party appoints J. V. Stalin as a delegate to the Fourth Congress of the Comintern.

November 5

J. V. Stalin's greetings to Petrograd on the occasion of the fifth anniversary of the October Revolution are published in the newspaper *Petrogradskaya Pravda*, No. 251.

November 18

J. V. Stalin's interview with a *Pravda* correspondent on the question of the union of the independent national republics is published in *Pravda*, No. 261.

November 21-28

Under J. V. Stalin's direction, the commission appointed by the Plenum of the Central Committee of the R.C.P.(B.) draws up "The Fundamental Points of the Constitution of the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics."

November 30

J. V. Stalin delivers a report on the Union of Republics at a meeting of the Political Bureau of the Central Committee of the R.C.P.(B.). On J. V. Stalin's report, the Political Bureau endorses "The Fundamental Points of the Constitution of the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics."

December 5

At a meeting of the commission appointed by the Plenum of the Central Committee of the R.C.P.(B.), J. V. Stalin is elected to the subcommission for drafting the text of the Constitution of the Union of Republics and the Declaration.

Between December 5 and 16

J. V. Stalin writes the draft "Declaration on the Formation of the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics."

December 16

The commission appointed by the Plenum of the Central Committee of the R.C.P.(B.), presided over by J. V. Stalin, adopts the draft Treaty on the Formation of the U.S.S.R., and the draft Declaration submitted by J. V. Stalin.

December 18

J. V. Stalin delivers a report to the Plenum of the Central Committee of the R.C.P.(B.) on the y of Union to be concluded by the Soviet republics. The Plenum appoints a commission, headed by J. V. Stalin, to make preparations for the First Congress of Soviets of the U.S.S.R.

December 20

J. V. Stalin directs the proceedings of the commission appointed to make preparations for the First Congress of Soviets of the U.S.S.R.

December 23-27

J. V. Stalin takes part in the work of the Tenth All-Russian Congress of Soviets.

December 23

The Tenth All-Russian Congress of Soviets elects J. V. Stalin to its presidium.

December 26

J. V. Stalin delivers a report at the Tenth All-Russian Congress of Soviets on the question of uniting the Soviet republics. J. V. Stalin addresses a meeting of the Communist group at the Tenth All-Russian Congress of Soviets on the question of forming the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics.

December 27

The Tenth All-Russian Congress of Soviets elects J. V. Stalin a member of the All-Russian Central Executive Committee and a delegate of the R.S.F.S.R.to the First Congress of Soviets of the U.S.S.R.

December 28

The First Session of the All-Russian Central Executive Committee, Tenth Convocation, elects J. V. Stalin to the Presidium of the All-Russian C.E.C. and appoints him People's Commissar for the Affairs of Nationalities.

December 29

J. V. Stalin makes a statement to the Conference of Plenipotentiary Delegations of the R.S.F.S.R., the Ukrainian S.S.R., the Transcaucasian Federation and the Byelorussian S.S.R. on the order of the proceedings of the First Congress of Soviets of the U.S.S.R. The conference instructs J. V. Stalin to deliver a report to the Congress on the formation of the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics.

December 30

The First Congress of Soviets of the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics elects J. V. Stalin to its presidium. J. V. Stalin delivers a report to the First Congress of Soviets of the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics on the formation of the U.S.S.R. The congress elects J. V. Stalin a member of the Central Executive Committee of the U.S.S.R. J. V. Stalin delivers a speech at the First Session of the Central Executive Committee of the U.S.S.R., First Convocation, and is elected a member of the Presidium of the C.E.C.

December 31

J. V. Stalin's New Year wishes for 1923 are published in *Izvestia*, No. 1.

1923

January 2

J. V. Stalin takes part in the proceedings of the commission appointed by the Commissariat for the Affairs of Nationalities to examine the question of forming a Buryat-Mongolian A.S.S.R.

January 10

The Presidium of the Central Executive Committee of the U.S.S.R. elects J. V. Stalin to the commission appointed to draw up a plan of organisation of the People's Commissariats of the U.S.S.R.

January 23

J. V. Stalin delivers a lecture at the Sverdlov Communist University on "The Party's Strategy and Tactics."

February 4

J. V. Stalin submits to the Political Bureau of the Central Committee of the R.C.P.(B.) a proposal that a second chamber be formed in the Central Executive Committee of the U.S.S.R., to be an organ representing the interests of all the peoples of the U.S.S.R.

February 21-24

J. V. Stalin takes part in the work of the Plenum of the Central Committee of the R.C.P.(B.).

February 21

A plenary session of the Central Committee of the R.C.P.(B.) discusses J. V. Stalin's draft theses on the national question for the Twelfth Party Congress. A commission headed by J. V. Stalin is appointed to make the final draft of the theses. The Plenum of the Central Committee of the R.C.P.(B.) elects J. V. Stalin to the commission to make the final draft of the Central Committee's theses on the organisational question for the Twelfth Party Congress.

February 24

The Plenum of the Central Committee of the R.C.P.(B) appoints a commission, headed by J. V. Stalin, to direct the drafting of the Constitution of the U.S.S.R.

March 11-12

On the instructions of the Political Bureau of the Central Committee of the R.C.P.(B.), J. V. Stalin telegraphs all the Gubernia Committees, Regional Committees, Central Committees of national Communist Parties and members of the Central Committee informing them of the state of health of V. I. Lenin.

March 14

J. V. Stalin's article "Concerning the Question of the Strategy and Tactics of the Russian Communists" is published in *Pravda*, No. 56, which is devoted to the twenty-fifth anniversary of the R.C.P.(B.).

March 22

J. V. Stalin submits to the Political Bureau of the Central Committee of the R.C.P.(B.) theses on the national question for the Twelfth Party Congress. The Political Bureau decides to publish them as theses approved by the Central Committee of the R.C.P.(B.).

March 24

J. V. Stalin's theses "National Factors in Party and State Affairs" are published in *Pravda*, No. 65.

April 3

The Tenth Moscow Gubernia Party Conference elects J. V. Stalin as a delegate to the Twelfth Congress of the R.C.P.(B.).

April 17-25

J. V. Stalin takes part in the work of the Twelfth Congress of the R.C.P.(B.).

April 17

The Twelfth Congress of the R.C.P.(B.) elects J. V. Stalin to its presidium. J. V. Stalin delivers the Central Committee's organisational report at the Twelfth Congress of the R.C.P.(B.).

April 19

J. V. Stalin replies to the discussion at the Twelfth Congress of the R.C.P.(B.) on the Central Committee's organisational report.

April 23

J. V. Stalin reports at the Twelfth Congress of the R.C.P.(B.) on "National Factors in Party and State Affairs."

April 24

The Twelfth Congress of the R.C.P.(B.) elects J. V. Stalin to the Central Committee of the Party.

April 25

J. V. Stalin directs the work of the committee on the national question of the Twelfth Congress of the R.C.P.(B.) and speaks in that committee on questions connected with the Constitution of the U.S.S.R. J. V. Stalin replies to the discussion at the Twelfth Congress of the R.C.P.(B.) on the report on "National Factors in Party and State Affairs."

April 26

A plenary session of the Central Committee of the R.C.P.(B.) elects J. V. Stalin a member of the Political Bureau and of the Organisational Bureau and a representative on the Central Control Commission, and appoints him General Secretary of the Central Committee of the Party.

May 6

J. V. Stalin's article "The Press as a Collective Organiser" is published in *Pravda*, No. 99.

May 10

J. V. Stalin's article "Confusion Worse Confounded..." is published in *Pravda*, No. 102.

May 24

The Political Bureau of the Central Committee of the R.C.P.(B.) appoints J. V. Stalin a representative of the R.S.F.S.R. on the enlarged commission of the Presidium of the Central Executive Committee of the U.S.S.R. for drafting the Constitution of the U.S.S.R.

May-June

J. V. Stalin takes part in the work of the enlarged commission of the Presidium of the Central Executive Committee of the U.S.S.R. for drafting the Constitution.

June 4

J. V. Stalin makes a statement at a meeting of the Political Bureau of the Central Committee of the R.C.P.(B.) on the preparations for the Fourth Conference of the Central Committee of the R.C.P.(B.) With Responsible Workers of the National Republics and Regions. The Political Bureau endorses the draft platform on the national question proposed by J. V. Stalin.

June 9-12

J. V. Stalin directs the work of the Fourth Conference of the Central Committee of the R.C.P.(B.) With Responsible Workers of the National Republics and Regions.

June 10

At the Fourth Conference of the Central Committee of the R.C.P.(B.) With Responsible Workers of the National Republics and Regions, J. V. Stalin delivers a speech on the Rights and "Lefts" in the national republics and regions, and a report on the practical measures for implementing the resolution on the national question adopted by the Twelfth Congress of the R.C.P.(B.).

June 12

J. V. Stalin replies to the discussion on his report to the Fourth Conference of the Central Committee of the R.C.P.(B.) With Responsible Workers of the National Republics and Regions.

June 14

At a meeting of the enlarged commission of the Presidium of the Central Executive Committee of the U.S.S.R. for drafting the Constitution of the U.S.S.R., J. V. Stalin speaks on the principle of common citizenship throughout the U.S.S.R.

June 22-23

J. V. Stalin takes part in the work of the Plenum of the Central Control Commission of the R.C.P.(B.).

June 26

J. V. Stalin delivers a report on the Constitution of the U.S.S.R. to the Plenum of the Central Committee of the R.C.P.(B.).

July 8

Pravda, No. 151, publishes the appeal of the Central Committee of the R.C.P.(B.), signed by J. V. Stalin, requesting that all notes, letters, memoranda and other documents written by V. I. Lenin be sent to the Lenin Institute that is being organised in Moscow.

July 14

Pravda, No. 156, publishes the appeal "To All Peoples and Governments of the World," signed by J. V. Stalin and the other members of the Presidium of the Central Executive Committee, issued in connection with the ratification of the Constitution of the U.S.S.R. by the C.E.C.

September 23-25

J. V. Stalin directs the work of the Plenum of the Central Committee of the R.C.P.(B.).

October 25-27

J. V. Stalin directs the work of the joint Plenum of the Central Committee and the Central Control Commission of the R.C.P.(B.), held in conjunction with representatives of ten Party organisations.

November 7

J. V. Stalin's article "The October Revolution and the Question of the Middle Strata" is published in *Pravda*, No. 253.

November 10

J. V. Stalin writes the article "The Fifth Anniversary of the First Congress of Working Women and Peasant Women," published in the magazine *Komnunistka* (*Woman Communist*), No. 11, November 1923.

November 17

J. V. Stalin delivers a speech at a meeting at the Military Academy, held to celebrate the fourth anniversary of the Cavalry Army.

December 2

J. V. Stalin delivers a report on "The Party's Tasks" at an enlarged meeting of the Krasnaya Presnya District Committee of the R.C.P.(B.).

Before December 5

J. V. Stalin takes part in the work of the sub-commission of the Central Committee of the R.C.P.(B.) for drafting the resolution on Party affairs. The resolution was adopted at a joint session of the Political Bureau of the R.C.P.(B.) and the Presidium of the Central Control Commission on December 5, and published in *Pravda*, No. 278, December 7.

December 15

Pravda, No. 285, publishes J. V. Stalin's article "The Discussion, Rafail, the Articles by Preobrazhensky and Sapronov, and Trotsky's Letter," and the statement of the Central Committee of the R.C.P.(B.), signed by J. V. Stalin, to all the organisations of the R.C.P.(B.) concerning the discussion on the internal situation in the Party.

December 28

J. V. Stalin's article "A Necessary Comment (Concerning Rafail)" is published in *Pravda*, No. 294.

POLITICS / HISTORY

THE COLLECTED WORKS OF STALIN, VOLUME 5 continues the essential chronicles of the beginnings of the Soviet state in the years 1921 to 1923, including the formal establishment of the Union of the Soviet Socialist Republics in 1922. A period dealing with the intense difficulties (and remarkable successes) of resistance to the imperialist assault upon the burgeoning socialist project. The speeches, articles, reports and other writings collected in Volume 5 reveal the breadth of Stalin's contributions, interests, and activities in this period, all prior to his becoming General Secretary of the Soviet Union.

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