

VOICES OF REVOLT



V. I. LENIN

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VOICES OF REVOLT

VOLUME VIII



SPEECHES OF
V. I. LENIN

WITH A
CRITICAL INTRODUCTION



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EDITOR'S NOTE

INTERNATIONAL PUBLISHERS have undertaken the publication of the writings and speeches of V. I. Lenin. The first volume of the "Collected Works," which altogether will number thirty volumes, has already appeared under the title *Materialism and Empirio-Criticism*—a discussion of the philosophic foundations of Marxian Socialism. Volumes containing Lenin's writings dealing with the period of the World War and the Russian Revolution will be published in 1928. The translation of the volumes is made from revised and edited texts supplied by the Lenin Institute of Moscow.

The speeches included in this selection are a part of a larger volume, which will be published in 1928 under the title *Lenin Speaks*, and which will contain the most important speeches delivered by Lenin from the time he stepped on Russian soil in April, 1917, until his fatal illness in 1923.

A. T.

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FOREWORD

THERE are no speeches that could interest us more than the speeches delivered by the man who was the head, the heart and the leader of the revolution in which we are now living, the speeches of the orator of the proletarian revolution whose heart, head and leader Lenin not only *was*, but *is* and *will be*, until the great work has been completely accomplished and we enter into the "empire of liberty," namely, that of socialism.

It would be difficult for any one to feel the vividness and timeliness of the ideas of our great master Lenin at any time more than when one passes in review the hundreds of speeches delivered by him.

Lenin is not an "orator," a manipulator of artful phrases, a master of deliberate rhetorical devices. The element that attracts us most about his speeches and that moves us again and again is the content of the words, their truth, the convincing power of his ideas.

But it is a truth of a quite special type which is brought to bear in Lenin's speeches, it is a creative truth; each of these speeches is not only a piece of history, but we feel—and, if we have been so fortunate as actually to have heard them delivered, we remember—that each of these words has had its influence in history.

It was the great soul and will of Lenin, who united in himself all the best forces of the incipient proletarian revolution, which constantly gathered strength from the living powers of history, lent an attentive ear to the voices and the pace of the masses, observed the enemy, tirelessly gathered facts, and thus constructed for himself the image of that which really is, or is in process of becoming, which read—ever animated by the view of the great goal—from the masses of the workers that which they aspired to and could not help aspiring to, which formulated this will in words, informed the unclearly and unconsciously,

but impetuously advancing revolutionary class with a consciousness of its will and goal through his words, and thus released the acts, the performances of the organized mass, which have determined the history of our times.

Nowhere better than in his speeches do we find this process so clearly illustrated, in the case of Lenin. These speeches permit us to pass again through the history of their times, by placing us in the very center of the whirlpool of events in all the great turning points of the history of the proletarian revolution, in the point of history which saw the decision taken.

After a preparation that lasted not years but decades, a preparation conducted chiefly by the Bolsheviks, the second revolution broke out in Russia early in March, 1917, and swept away Tsarism. At this moment Lenin was far from home and from his party. Only a few weeks later, having barely received more than the first data concerning the events that have passed, he delivered his judgment, his system, his instruction, all in the same words:

"The Tsarist monarchy has been broken up, but by no means definitely destroyed.

"The bourgeois government of the Octobrists-Cadets, which wished to continue the imperialist war 'to the bitter end,' because this government was in reality the representative of the financial firm of 'England & France,' hastened to promise to the people the greatest possible number of liberties and gifts, as long as these promises were of any avail in maintaining this government's authority over the people and affording an opportunity for the continuation of the war.

"The Workers' and Soldiers' Council, the germ of the workers' government, represents the interests of the most impoverished masses of the population, *i.e.*, about nine-tenths of the population. Its slogan is; *Peace, Bread, and Liberty.*

"It is the struggle between these three forces that determines the situation that has now arisen and that constitutes the transition from the first to the second stage of the revolution.

"In the actual struggle against the Tsarist monarchy, in order to secure a true realization of liberty, not only in words, it is not the *workers* that must support the new government, but the *new government* that must 'support' the workers! For the real guarantee of liberty and of the complete annihilation of Tsarism is the *arming* of the *proletariat*. The solidification, extension, and development of the rôle,

the significance, and the power of the Workers' and Peasants' Councils.

"Any other statement would be a mere phrase, a lie, and is a deception practiced by petty politicians from the camp of the Liberals and the Radicals.

"Help the workers arm themselves, or at least do not disturb this process, and liberty will be indomitable in Russia; it will be impossible to reestablish the monarchy; the republic will be made secure.

"Any other procedure will deceive the people. Promises are cheap; promises are worth nothing. In all bourgeois revolutions, all the bourgeois petty politicians have always 'fed' the people with promises and stupefied the workers.

"Our revolution is a bourgeois revolution—just for this reason the workers must support the bourgeoisie—such is the declaration of the worthless politicians from the camp of the liquidators.

"Our revolution is a bourgeois revolution—so say we Marxists—and precisely for this reason the workers must open the eyes of the people to the deceptions practiced by the bourgeois politicians, must teach them to believe not in empty words, but to trust only in their own strength, in their own organization, in their own union, and in their weapons.

"Who are the allies of the proletariat in the present revolution?

"The proletariat has *two* allies: In the first place, it has the great majority of the population, tens of millions of persons, representing the semi-proletarian and, to a certain extent, the petty peasant sections of the people. These masses *need* peace, bread, liberty, land. These masses will inevitably be influenced to a certain extent by the bourgeoisie, and particularly, by the petty bourgeoisie, whom they most closely resemble in the conditions of their lives, since they fluctuate between the bourgeoisie and the proletariat. The terrible lessons of the war, which will be the more terrible, the more energetically the war is pushed by Guchkov, Lvov, Milyukov and Company, will force these masses over to the proletariat, will oblige them to march by the side of the latter. It must be our aim now, making use of the liberties afforded by the new régime and the Workers' and Soldiers' Councils, to instruct and clarify, as well as organize, particularly these masses. Councils of Peasants' Delegates, Councils of Farm Laborers—these are our most urgent tasks.

"In the second place, the proletariat of *all* the belligerent and all other countries is the ally of the Russian proletariat. At present the proletariat suffers terribly from the war in all countries. In its name, unfortunately, many pronouncements are being uttered everywhere in Europe, and in Russia by men like Plekhanov, Gvosdyev, Potresov, all

of whom are social-chauvinists who have deserted to the bourgeoisie. But the liberation of the proletariat from the influence of these men has made enormous strides in every month that has intervened since the war began, and the Russian Revolution will accelerate this process, inevitably, and on an enormous scale.

"With these two allies, the Russian proletariat, making use of the peculiarities of the present transition period, can and will advance, first, to the conquest of a democratic republic and to a complete victory of the peasants over the large landed proprietors and then, to *socialism*, the only system that can give *Peace, Bread and Liberty* to the nations that have been crucified by the war."

These are the counsels uttered by Lenin from abroad, and first published in *Pravda* of March 27 and 28 and April 3 and 4, 1917.

Soon, however, Lenin has an opportunity to state his opinion from closer home. He arrives in Russia. Hardly has he trod the soil of Petrograd than he feels the urge to impart to the beloved workers of this city, whose teacher he has been, the things that are in his mind. Standing on the top of an armored car, illuminated by the light of torches, he delivers his first speech on Russian soil after the March Revolution—the text of this speech has unfortunately not been preserved—and in it he expresses the thoughts that become decisive for the later course of the second revolution and for the victory of the third revolution in November, 1917. All the months that intervene are months spent in the service of these ideas. We find Lenin as a speaker addressing the delegates of the First Soviet Congress, or in soldiers' meetings, or addressing the Petrograd Party functionaries, or the delegates of the peasantry, and finally, we find him addressing the Party Conference. Everywhere his mighty words are leaders in the struggle against confusion, misunderstanding, opportunism, stupidity.

And here we find him in his full stature as an orator; this man never made use of beautiful tirades or rhetorical delicacies. No, his strength is rather in his ability to adjust himself on each occasion, by the use of the proper words, by the adducing of new facts, to his specific group of hearers, in his gradual intensification and expansion of his thoughts and his bringing them home to his hearers, until not he alone, but the entire party

and thousands and thousands of workers, peasants and soldiers share these ideas!

After severe struggles, the soviets, organized and led by the party, under the leadership of Lenin, carry off the victory over the Provisional Government. The watchword: "All Power to the Soviets!" has been fulfilled.

And Lenin sees the time coming in which the program drawn up during the first days of the March Revolution may actually be realized. Very concise and penetrating are the words with which he introduces the reading of the proposed decree of peace and the distribution of land, submitted by him to the Second Congress of Soviets. The decisive steps have been taken!

But the Revolution has only begun. The principal battle has been fought, but counter-revolution is again raising its menacing head.

Lenin now shows himself to be the iron revolutionist. A mighty strength breathes from the short speeches, embodying the full energy and self-consciousness of the proletarian revolution, which Lenin delivers on the subjects of the removal of General Dukhonin from his post, on the declaration of the Cadets (Constitutional Democrats) as enemies of the people, and on the dissolving of the Constituent Assembly.

In the interior of the country, the Bolsheviks are in control; but peace has not yet been concluded. The continuation of the war threatens to burst the bonds uniting the peasants with the soviet power. Peace must be created, but how? Lenin has grasped the situation. He knows there is no solution at this moment, but to conclude peace with Germany at any price. And he begins his campaign of words to secure this end. His first statement is delivered in the Central Committee of the Party. Lenin speaks with a sobriety that makes us tremble when we read the words to-day: "We cannot afford to wage war in any case; our strength is exhausted; the masses will not go to war any more." But he at once adds: for the time being. We shall recover again and shall again win the general confidence.

But the execution of these ideas is beset with difficulties. Lenin encounters serious resistance in his own party. Again

and again he is obliged to expound and amplify his ideas in further speeches. Again and again his thought conquers. Again a portion of his speech becomes the fact; again a word makes history.

The conclusion of the Peace of Brest-Litovsk on March 16, 1918, marks the end of a chapter of the Russian Revolution. Revolutionary Russia has definitely left the battlefield into which it had been hurled by the Tsar's government. Russia's participation in the imperialist war is at an end. The soldiers sent into the field by the Tsar return to their fields and to their factories. But the war is not over. It begins in the new form of a civil war. In Siberia the Czecho-Slovak corps, after having been transported eastward, with all its equipment, from the Ukraine, organizes an insurrection, allies itself with the Right Socialist-Revolutionaries (the former members of the Constituent Assembly) and with the "All-Russian Democratic Government," formed by this faction, and in the course of the summer of 1918 they capture the Urals and the Volga region. On July 6, the Left Socialist-Revolutionaries organize a revolt at Moscow, which is quickly put down, however. The Socialist-Revolutionary Directorate on the Volga is soon replaced by General Kolchak, who is supported by the Entente, and who assumes the control of the entire active struggle waged by the counter-revolution.

There ensues a civil war on the largest possible scale.

And the soviets have no army! An army has to be made, created, out of the ranks of the very workers and peasants who have just been demanding peace.

It becomes necessary to inaugurate an enormous program of agitation and organization. It is important to convince the masses of the inevitability of the civil war and of the necessity for the creation of a Red Army.

Again Lenin can be seen among the numerous agitators of the party, addressing mass meetings from many platforms. In the workers' quarters, in gatherings of the people, in factories and shop yards, his voice rings forth.

As a result of the unparalleled exertions of the entire Party, it is made possible to establish the Red Army, and with its aid

to annihilate the hydra-headed monster of the counter-revolutionary White Army.

But this struggle drags the country to the brink of exhaustion. There is no possibility at this era of engaging in any planful socialist reconstruction. All the forces of the country are concentrated at the task of securing a victorious conclusion of the civil war, and this period was rightly later termed "the period of military communism"; all resources were consumed to the last available penny, in order to make possible a dependable feeding, equipping and transporting of the fighting armies.

The last enemy has been defeated by the Red Army. But the burden of the civil war has weighed upon all layers of the population, and particularly the peasantry, in so severe a manner, that insurrections arise within the country. These troubles, the best known of which is the insurrection at Kronstadt, from March 2 to March 17, 1921, threaten to afford new starting points for the activities of the counter-revolution. It is necessary to take decisive steps looking to the elimination of the fundamental causes of these troubles.

The Party was then convulsed with a new discussion. There was a dispute as to the rôle of the trade unions in the transition to the peaceful work of revolutionary reconstruction. This discussion assumed extremely acute formulations; Lenin took very active and enthusiastic part in the discussion.

But Lenin was aware that this dispute, and particularly its uncommon acerbity, were only the expression of contradictions of profounder nature, and very objective in character, and that these contradictions would have to be disposed of, if one should aim at a proper solution of a subsidiary question such as that represented by the trade union policy.

And for Lenin, the central problem of the moment was the elimination of the tension between the proletariat and the peasantry, arising from the policy of the peasantry, a policy that had been rendered inevitable by the conditions of the civil war.

The civil war had obliged the Soviet power to relinquish the policy of slow and gradual transition into a unified, centralized, and planful economic organization, which had been followed since 1918. Particularly, the Soviet power was obliged to take

measures opposing the agricultural classes, in the form of a declaration of a grain monopoly, a rescinding of the former requisitions of grain, and the direct administrative interference of national authorities in the cultivation of the soil, measures which, owing to the peculiar conditions of Russian agriculture, necessarily brought the peasants into opposition with the state power that was headed by the proletariat.

Lenin proposed now to undertake decisive steps in this matter. The central measure, the measure he declared absolutely necessary, was the substitution of a *tax in kind* for the requisitions of grain, and the motive assigned by Lenin for the change was the necessity of restoring the peasant's free right to dispose of his own production in grain.

It was to this question that Lenin devoted his great speech delivered at the Tenth Congress of the Russian Communist Party on March 15, 1921, a speech pronounced at the very moment that the cannons thundered at Kronstadt. This speech shows with particular clearness the splendid combination of a great theoretician with a tactician and popular leader that was incorporated in Lenin. The thought expounded in the course of this speech was destined to play a particularly decisive part in the further course of the revolution.

In this speech, Lenin pointed out that it was necessary to abandon the methods of the period of military communism not only in the economic field, in which they had been forced upon the party by the civil war, but also in the field of ideology. The military communism had favored the development of tendencies of an ultra-Left, semi-anarchistic character within the communist movement. These tendencies necessarily expressed themselves more emphatically in the moment of the "temporary retreat" which was signified by the introduction of the "New Economic Policy." Thus we still find Lenin, at the Tenth Congress of the Russian Communist Party, and, a little later, at the Third Congress of the Communist International, speaking to oppose the Anarcho-Syndicalist vagaries and the "Leftist excesses."

Lenin's attention during his later years, in fact, up to the time of his death, is now given to the most essential details of

the execution and development of the New Economic Policy as adopted by the Tenth Congress of the Russian Communist Party. Lenin mercilessly criticizes the defects and shortcomings which are evident in great numbers as a result of an insufficient understanding of this policy on the part of party members who are incapable of liberating themselves from old methods or who go to excess in their application of the new.

And Lenin is found on the job as soon as it becomes necessary to declare that the retreat to the new tactical front has been concluded and that no further concessions are to be made. The speech delivered to the Communist faction of the Metal Workers' Union on March 6, 1922, represents as important a turning point as does the speech on the Tax in Kind, or that on the Peace of Brest-Litovsk. Among the masses of the workers a certain unrest had subsequently arisen, due to the proportions of the far-reaching consequences of the retreat. This restlessness had been encouraged by the tactics assumed by the Soviet delegation to the Genoa Conference of the Great Powers. Those sentences in Lenin's speech in which he declares that "the retreat begun by us can and will be stopped" ran like wildfire through the country and cemented the working class more firmly to the Party and to its leader Lenin than ever before.

Even then, Lenin was already fighting his hard struggle with the disease that was to conquer him two years later (1924). His opportunities for public appearance became rarer and rarer, but the result was that his infrequent speeches became all the more concentrated and pregnant with significance. It is in this spirit that we may regard the last speech of Lenin delivered before a plenary session of the Moscow Soviet. In this speech, Lenin draws a balance sheet of one and one-half years of operation of the New Economic Policy. In the simple language which he selects in order to address this audience, Lenin renders an account of what has been achieved, and turns the attention of the Workers' and Peasants' Delegates, who guide the destinies of the capital of the Soviet territory, to the weak points that still remain.

His last words are not without their tragic element. The task formulated by Lenin, namely, that of making the socialist

work of construction the order of the day, has now been begun, and we are all convinced that we shall solve this task. But we are not privileged to solve it "together" with Comrade Lenin. Socialist Russia, which will grow out of "Nep Russia," will find us without our great leader.

A. KURELLA.

THE IMMEDIATE SITUATION

(Delivered at the Petrograd Conference of the Russian Social-Democratic Labor Party (Bolsheviks), May 10, 1917, soon after Lenin's arrival in Russia)

WE have defined earlier than the other parties, and more accurately, the political line of action which has been, furthermore, emphasized in our resolutions. Life faced us with an entirely new situation. The greatest mistake made by revolutionists is in their habit of looking backward to older revolutions. But life provides too many new things, which it is necessary to introduce into the general system of events.

We have rightly estimated the moving forces of the revolution. The course of events has justified our old Bolshevik position, but our mistake has been in the fact that the comrades wished to remain "old" Bolsheviks. The movement of the masses was only among the proletariat and the peasants. The Western European bourgeoisie has always been against the revolution. This is the situation to which we had accustomed ourselves. But things are now different. The imperialist war has shattered the European bourgeoisie and this has resulted in the fact that the Anglo-French capitalists, for imperialist purposes, have become advocates of the Russian Revolution. The English capitalists first made a conspiracy with the Guchkovs, Milyukovs, and the upper circles of the army. The Anglo-French capitalists were on the side of the revolution. The European newspapers print whole columns of incidents concerning the meetings and the negotiations of England and France with "revolutionists" of the Guchkov type for the purpose of holding conferences. This ally of the

revolution is something entirely new. The situation resulted in the revolution's turning out differently than had been expected. We have obtained allies not only in the person of the Russian bourgeoisie, but even in that of the Anglo-French capitalists. When I mentioned the above in a lecture delivered abroad, a certain Menshevik said to me that we had been wrong, since it had become apparent that the bourgeoisie was necessary for the success of the revolution. I answered him that this would have been "necessary" only in order to have the revolution put through within the period of one week. Had not Milyukov declared before the revolution that if the victory lay along the road of revolution, he would be opposed to victory? We must not forget these words of Milyukov.

In short, the revolution in its first stage has turned out differently than any one could have expected. The Bolsheviki have given the answer to the question concerning the possibility of the "defense of the fatherland": If the bourgeois-chauvinist revolution was successful, the defense of the fatherland would in this case be impossible. The peculiarity of the situation now is in the dual power. In foreign parts, which are not reached by a single copy of any newspaper further left than *Reck*, and where the Anglo-French bourgeois newspapers speak of the full authority held by the Provisional Government and the "chaos" in the ranks of the Soviets of Workers' and Soldiers' Delegates, no one has any precise notion as to the nature of the dual authority. It is only here at home that we have learned that the Soviet of Workers' and Soldiers' Delegates has handed over the power to the Provisional Government. The Soviet of Workers' and Soldiers' Delegates is the realization of the dictatorship of the proletariat and the soldiers; most of the latter are peasants. Therefore this is a dictatorship of the proletariat and the peasants. But this "dictatorship" has made an alliance with the bourgeoisie. For this reason, we must undertake a revision of the "old" Bolshevism. The resulting situation shows us that the dictator-

ship of the proletariat and peasants has now coalesced with the authority of the bourgeoisie. The situation is a very peculiar one. There have never been any revolutions in which the representatives of the revolutionary proletariat and peasantry, once they were armed, have concluded an alliance with the bourgeoisie; in which, holding the power, they handed it over to the bourgeoisie. The bourgeoisie holds in its hands the strength of capital and the strength of organization. It is a cause for wonder that the workers have shown themselves to possess sufficient organization. The bourgeois revolution in Russia has ended, in as far as the power lay in the hands of the bourgeoisie. Here our "old" Bolsheviks raise the objection: "The bourgeois revolution is not over—we have no dictatorship of the proletariat and peasants." But the Soviet of Workers' and Soldiers' Delegates is precisely this dictatorship. The agrarian movement may result in either one of two ways. The peasants will take the land and the struggle between the village proletariat and the well-to-do peasantry will not take place. But this is hardly probable, since the class struggle cannot wait. To repeat now the words we uttered in 1905, and to say nothing concerning the class struggle in the village, would be equivalent to a betrayal of the proletarian cause. We have already observed in the resolutions of a number of peasant congresses that there is a tendency to wait with the solution of the agrarian question until the Constituent Assembly is in session; this is an accomplishment of the well-to-do peasantry who are favorable to the Cadets. The peasants are already taking the land. The Socialist-Revolutionists are putting obstacles in their way, and urging that they wait for the Constituent Assembly. We must now combine the demand to seize the land with the propaganda in favor of the creation of soviets of farm laborers' delegates. The bourgeois-democratic revolution is over. We must bring in a new agricultural program. The same struggle for power between the large land-holders and the small ones that we now witness

here will be repeated in the villages. Land is not all the peasant needs. The number of peasants that have no horses has increased. It is only we who are now propounding a true agrarian revolution, by telling the peasants that they should take the land at once. The land must be taken in an organized manner. The estates are not to be ruined. The agrarian movement consequently is only a prophecy, not yet a fact. It is the task of Marxists to enlighten the peasants on the matter of the agrarian program; the center of gravity of the program must be shifted to the Soviet of Farm Laborers' Delegates. But we must be ready for a possible union of the peasantry with the bourgeoisie, as has already been the case with the Soviet of Workers' and Soldiers' Delegates. Consequently, the agrarian movement must be clearly expounded. The well-to-do peasantry will of course feel itself drawn to the bourgeoisie, to the provisional government. It may stand more to the right than Guchkov.

At present, the success of the bourgeois power is apparent. The economic situation of the peasants separates them from the land-owners. The peasants do not need a right to the land. They need soviets of farm laborers' delegates. Those who advise the peasants to wait for the Constituent Assembly are deceiving them.

Our task is to draw sharp class lines in the petty bourgeois swamp: the bourgeoisie is carrying on its work excellently, giving promises of every kind where they are most effective, but as a matter of fact continuing its own class policy.

In the Soviet of Workers' and Soldiers' Delegates, the condition is this: the power has been handed to the Provisional Government, and the socialists themselves are contented to be put on "contact committees." This government, to be sure, consists of the best trusted men of their class, but it remains a certain definite class. The petty bourgeoisie delivered itself up to the government entirely. If we do not create a proletarian line of action, we shall betray the cause of the

proletariat. The bourgeoisie rules by the grace of deception or of force. At present it rules by flattery and deception, and this is putting the revolution to sleep. They make concessions in minor matters, but on big questions (the agrarian revolution) they do nothing. Any one who does not see that in Russia, outside of the Bolsheviks, revolutionary defensism has been victorious everywhere, does not see the fact that this revolutionary defensism is a selling out of all the principles of socialism in favor of the predatory interests of large-scale capital, disguising itself under the phrase "defense of the fatherland," a surrender of positions to the petty bourgeoisie. When I spoke of the "good faith" of the great numbers of revolutionary defense advocates, I had in mind not a moral category, but a class distinction. The class represented in the Soviet of Workers' and Soldiers' Delegates is not interested in predatory war. In Europe it is otherwise. There the peoples are oppressed; there the most opportunistic pacifists are often persecuted worse than we. In our country the Soviet of Workers' and Soldiers' Delegates is advancing its revolutionary "defense" position, not by force, but by reason of the confidence of the masses. Europe is one great military prison. Capital rules there with an iron hand. All over Europe, it is necessary to overthrow capital, not convince it. In Russia, the soldiers are armed; they themselves have permitted themselves to be deceived peacefully, to consent to the pretense that they are "defending themselves" against Emperor Wilhelm. Over there, in Europe, we find not the "good faith" of revolutionary defensism, as in Russia, where the people have handed over the power to the bourgeoisie, owing to their ignorance, their backwardness, their habit of bearing the lash by tradition. Steklov and Chkheidze, ostensibly leaders but actually appendages of the bourgeoisie, regardless of their good actions in the past, their name of Marxists, etc., are politically already dead. In our country, the power is in the hands of soldiers who are inclined to favor the defense of the

fatherland. Only the capitalists have a distinct class position; they are fighting for themselves. The soldiers are proletarians and peasants, and with them the case is different. Have they any interest in the conquest of Constantinople? No, their class interests are against the war. That is why we must educate them and change their minds. The crux of the political situation at the present moment is to know how to teach the truth to the masses. It is absurd to consider that we are "leaning" on the revolutionary masses, etc., etc.; it is useless as long as we have not explained to the soldiers or to the unenlightened masses the significance of the slogan: "*Down with the war!*" What is the Soviet of Workers' and Soldiers' Delegates? Its class significance is outright power. Of course, there is not complete political liberty among us. But there is no such liberty anywhere else as we now have in Russia. "*Down with the war!*" does not mean that we must throw away our bayonets. It merely means the transfer of power to another class. The important point of the whole current situation is to teach this thing. The essence of Blanquism consisted in aspiring to a seizure of power based on a minority. With us the case is different. We are yet a minority, but we recognize the necessity of conquering the majority. As distinguished from the anarchists, we feel the need of the state in the transition to socialism. The Paris Commune has afforded us the pattern of a state of the type of the Soviet of Workers' Delegates—the direct authority of organized and armed workers—the dictatorship of the workers and peasants. The function of the soviets, the significance of this dictatorship, is the organized use of force against counter-revolution, the safeguarding of the achievements of the revolution in the interests of the majority and based on the majority. There can be no dual authority in the government. The Soviets of Workers' Delegates are the type of government in which a police system is impossible. Now the entire nation governs itself; there is no possibility of a return to monarchy. The

army and the people must be fused into one—this is the success due to liberty. All must have the right to bear arms. In order to maintain liberty, we must arm every man in the population. That is what the Paris Commune means. We are not anarchists who deny the organization of the state, *i.e.*, who renounce the use of force altogether, and particularly the state of all the organized and armed workers,—the organization of the nation through its “soviets.” The course of things has thrown the dictatorship of the proletariat and peasants together with the dictatorship of the bourgeoisie. The next step is the dictatorship of the proletariat, but the proletariat is as yet not sufficiently organized and enlightened; it has still to be instructed. We need throughout the state such soviets of workers’, etc., delegates,—this is the need of the hour. There is no other way. And this is what the Paris Commune means. The Soviets of Workers’ Delegates are not trade union organizations; the bourgeoisie would wish to have them thus. The people see the thing differently and more correctly; they see that the soviet means power. They see that the way out of the war is a success of the Soviets of Workers’ Delegates. And this is the type of government through which we can advance to socialism. When a certain group seizes power, the step means very little as yet. The Russian Revolution has gone beyond this; there cannot be any other power than the soviet, and the bourgeoisie is afraid of the soviet. Until the soviets have seized power, we have taken nothing; the soviets must be put into authority by a living force. Otherwise we shall never get out of the war which the capitalists are waging by deceiving the people. Every country is on the brink of ruin; we must understand this; there is no other way out than the socialist revolution. The government must be overthrown; but not every one understands this in the right way. If the power of the Provisional Government is based on Soviets of Workers’ Delegates, it cannot be “simply” overthrown. It may be and should be

overthrown by conquering the majority in the soviets. We must either advance to a condition of universal authority for the Workers' and Soldiers' Delegates, or retreat back into the imperialistic war; there is no other way. Kautsky has denied the possibility of revolution in times of war, but the facts of life have already refuted him.

As for the nationalization of banks and the control over them, there is no doubt this is economically possible, and there is nothing in the way of it once the power is in the hands of the workers. Of course, in view of what I have already said, nothing in this situation should be taken as favoring any union of the proletariat with the "defensists."

As to the new name of the party; the word "Social-Democrat" is incorrect, is scientifically improper. Marx and Engels have more than once pointed this out. If they "tolerated" this word it is because the situation after the year 1871 was a rather peculiar one; there was required a gradual preparation of the masses of the people; revolutions were not on the order of the day. Democracy is also a form of state, and even the Paris Commune had advanced to a higher plane. And now the entire world is placed before a practical question—the transition to socialism. The Social-Democrat Plekhanov as well as other social-chauvinists all over the world have betrayed socialism. We must call ourselves the "Communist Party."

TO THE SOLDIERS

(Delivered at the meeting of the Izmailov Regiment, Petrograd, April 23, 1917)

COMRADES, Soldiers! The question of the government structure is now the order of the day. The capitalists, in whose hands the government power now is, desire a parliamentary bourgeois republic, *i.e.*, a form of government in which there is no Tsar, but in which the rule will remain in the hands of the capitalists who will govern the country by means of the old institutions, namely: the police, the bureaucrats, the standing army.

We desire a different republic, far more suited to the interests of the people, far more democratic. The revolutionary workers and soldiers of Petersburg have overthrown Tsarism, and have cleaned out all the police from the capital. The workers of all the world look with pride and hope on the revolutionary workers and soldiers of Russia as on the first vanguard of the universal liberating army of the working class. Having begun the revolution, it is necessary to strengthen and continue it. We must not permit them to re-establish the police! All power in the government, from top to bottom, from the most wretched village to each ward of the City of Petersburg must belong to the Soviets of Workers', Soldiers', Farm Laborers' and Peasants' Delegates. The central government power must be united in these local soviets—whether you call them a Constituent Assembly or a National Assembly, or a Congress of Soviets, the name does not matter.

There must be no police; no bureaucrats, who have no responsibility to the people, who stand over the people; no

standing army, cut off from the people, but *only the people, armed from head to foot*, united in the soviets—it is they who must run the government. It is they who must establish the necessary order, it is they whose authority will not only be obeyed, but *also respected*, by workers and peasants.

Only this power, only the Soviets of Soldiers' and Workers' Delegates, can—not in the interests of the land-holders, nor in the bureaucratic manner—solve the great question of land. The land must not belong to the feudal owners. The land must be taken away at once by the peasant committees from the land-holders; they must guard all the inventory carefully from harm, and must see to it that the raising of grain is *increased* in order that the soldiers at the front may be better supplied. All the land must belong to the whole people, and this consummation must be realized by the local Soviets of Peasants' Delegates. In order that the rich peasants—themselves capitalists—may not insult and hoodwink the farm laborers and the poorest peasants, it will be necessary either to compound, unite, or fuse with them, on the one hand, or erect our own Soviet of Farm Laborers' Delegates.

Do not permit the police to be reëstablished; do not permit the government power or the control over the government to pass into the hands of bourgeois officeholders not chosen by election, and irremovable, and paid on a bourgeois scale; unite yourselves, weld yourselves firmly together, organize yourselves, trusting no one, depending only on your own intelligence and experience; and Russia will be able to move with firm, measured, certain steps toward the liberation both of our own country and of all humanity, from the yoke of capital as well as from the horrors of war. Our government, a government of capitalists, is continuing the war by reason of capitalist interests. Like the German capitalists, headed by their crowned murderer Wilhelm, so the capitalists of *all* the other countries are waging a war only for a division of the profits of the capitalists, for world rule. Hundreds of millions of people,

almost all the countries of the earth, have been dragged into this criminal war. Hundreds of billions of capital have been invested in "profitable" concerns, bringing to the peoples death, hunger, disillusionment, barbarism, and to capital scandalously high, insane profits. In order to free ourselves from this frightful war, and to conclude a truly democratic peace based not on force, there is only one possible way: the transfer of all the government power to the hands of the Soviets of Workers' and Soldiers' Delegates. The workers and the poorest peasants, who are not interested in the preservation of the profits of capitalism, in the conquest of weaker peoples, will be able truly to bring about that which the capitalists merely blabber about—namely, a conclusion of the war with a lasting peace which shall assure liberty to all peoples without exception.

WE MUST HAVE PEACE

(Delivered at the Second Congress of Soviets, November 8, 1917, in support of the Peace Decree. The following is an abridged text of the speech recorded by the Secretary of the Session)

THE question of peace is a burning question, the most urgent question of the present day. Much has been spoken and written concerning this question, and you all probably have considered it not a little. Permit me therefore to proceed to a reading of the declaration which is to be issued by the government you have chosen. . . .

The workers' and peasants' government, created by the Revolution of November 7, and basing itself on the Soviets of Workers', Soldiers' and Peasants' Delegates, must immediately begin peace negotiations. Our appeal must be directed both to the governments and to the peoples. We must not ignore the governments, since this might postpone the possibility of concluding peace, and a people's government cannot dare do this; but we have no right to refrain from turning simultaneously to the peoples concerned. Everywhere, governments and peoples are at daggers' ends, and for this reason we should aid the peoples in taking a hand in questions of war and peace. We shall, of course, insist with all our might on our entire program of peace without annexations and indemnities. We shall not relinquish this program, but we must strike from the hands of our enemies the possibility of declaring that their conditions are different, and that therefore it will be impossible for them to enter into negotiations with us. No, we must deprive them of this outworn excuse by

not putting our conditions in the form of an ultimatum. For this reason we have also included a statement that we will examine any conditions of peace, any propositions made. Of course, examining does not necessarily mean accepting. We shall transmit them for consideration to the Constituent Assembly, which will then be in a condition to decide what can be and what cannot be granted. We are struggling against hoodwinking by the governments, all of which talk about peace, in words only, but in reality are carrying on capitalist wars of conquest. Not a single government will say everything that it means. We are opposed to secret diplomacy and shall act openly before all the people. We do not close and have never closed our eyes to the difficulties. War cannot be ended by stopping the fight; war cannot be ended on one side only. We are proposing an armistice for three months, but are not rejecting a shorter period in order that the army, freed from the hardships of war, may begin to breathe freely for a time, at least, and furthermore, for the purpose of rendering possible the calling of popular meetings in all civilized countries, in order to discuss the conditions. In proposing immediately to conclude an armistice, we are appealing to the class-conscious workers of those countries which have done most for the development of the labor movement. We are appealing to the workers of England, who brought forth the Chartist movement; to the workers of France, who more than once have displayed the full strength of their class-consciousness in insurrections; and to the workers of Germany, who waged the struggle against the so-called Socialist Laws and have created powerful organizations.

In the Manifesto of March 27, we proposed to overthrow the bankers; but not only were they not overthrown, but an alliance was made with them. Now we have overthrown the government of the bankers.

The government and the bourgeoisie will resort to every means at their command in order to solidify themselves and

to put down the workers' and peasants' revolution in blood. But three years of war have sufficiently taught the masses. The soviet movement in other countries, the rebellion of the German fleet, which has been put down by the junkers of the hangman Wilhelm—all these things remind us that we are not living in the depths of Africa but in Europe, where news spreads very rapidly.

The labor movement will gain the upper hand and show the way to peace and socialism.

THE LAND TO THE TILLERS OF THE SOIL

(Delivered at the Second Congress of Soviets, November 8, 1917, in support of the Land Decree. The following is an abridged text of the speech recorded by the Secretary of the Session)

WE submit that the revolution has taught and emphasized how important it is that the land question be put clearly. The occurrence of the armed insurrection of the November Revolution shows clearly that the land must be turned over to the peasants. The government that has been overthrown, and the conciliation parties of the Mensheviks and Social-Revolutionaries, who under various pretexts postponed the solution of the land question and by this means brought the country to the edge of ruin and to a peasant insurrection, were guilty of a crime. Their words concerning pogroms and anarchy in the village ring with falsehood and shameful deception. When were pogroms and anarchy brought about by intelligent measures? If the government had proceeded intelligently, and if its measures had aimed to meet the needs of the poorest peasants, would there have been any insurrection of the peasant masses? But all the measures of the government, which have been approved by the Soviets led by Avksentiev and Dan, have opposed the peasants and forced them to rebel.

Having brought about an insurrection, they began to howl about the pogroms and the anarchy which they themselves had produced. They wanted to put it down with blood and iron, but were themselves overthrown by the armed insurrection of the revolutionary soldiers, sailors and workers. The govern-

ment of the workers' and peasants' revolution must in the first place solve the question of land—a question which will pacify and content immense numbers of poor peasants. I shall read to you those points of the decree which your Soviet Government must proclaim. In one of the points of this decree there is included an order to the land committees, based on 242 orders issued by local Soviets of Peasants' Delegates.

Here voices are raised which declare that the entire decree and demand were drafted by the Social-Revolutionaries. Suppose it is. But does it matter by whom it was drawn up, since, being a democratic government, we cannot ignore the declarations of the lowest strata of the people, even though we may be in disagreement with them?

In the crucible of life, in their application of it in actual life, in introducing it in the localities, the peasants themselves know the right thing to do. And even if the peasants should continue to act as appendages of the Social-Revolutionaries, even if they should give this party a majority in the Constituent Assembly, we shall still say: Never mind. Life is the best teacher; life teaches what is right, and let the peasants from their end, and let us from our end, give our solutions of this question. Life will force us to approach each other in the common stream of creative revolutionary action in our elaboration of new government forms. We must follow life closely; we must give full freedom of action to the masses of the people. The old government, which was destroyed in an armed uprising, desired to solve the land question with the aid of the old Tsarist bureaucracy. But, instead of solving the question, the bureaucracy merely fought with the peasants. The peasants have learned something in the course of our eight months of revolution. They wish to solve all the questions concerning land by themselves. For this reason we must come out against any amendments to this proposed law; we will not proceed to further details, because we are writing a decree, not a program of action. Russia is large, and the

conditions vary considerably; we believe that the peasantry itself knows better than we the right way to solve the question. Whether it will be in our sense, or in the sense of the Social-Revolutionist program, that is not the essential point. The point is to make the peasantry feel convinced that there are no more land-holders in the villages, that it is now for the peasants themselves to solve all the questions; it is for the peasants themselves to build up their life.

THE NATIONALIZATION OF THE BANKS

(Delivered at the All-Russian Central Executive Committee,
December 27, 1917)

The program of action which the Soviet Government outlined soon after its establishment met either with open opposition or criticism on the part of the other Socialist groups which continued for a time their participation in the Soviet Government. On this occasion a representative of the Internationalist Social-Democrats warned against the proposed decree to nationalize the banks before a complete plan was prepared and studied, and specialists were secured to take care of so intricate a problem as the handling of finance.

THE previous speaker has tried to frighten us with the statement that we are heading for real ruin, for a real abyss. But such bugbears are not new to us. The very newspaper which expresses the opinion of the speakers' group, *Novaya Zhizn*, said, before the November days, that nothing would come out of our revolution but pogroms and anarchistic insurrections. Therefore, the statement that we are proceeding on a false path is the expression of a bourgeois psychology, which even persons not interested in the bourgeoisie find it difficult to cast loose from. . . . (A shout from the Internationalist side: "Demagogy . . .") No, this is not demagogy, but your constant talking about the ax, that is real demagogy.

All the measures proposed in the decree are merely an actual safeguarding of control.

You speak of the complicated apparatus, of its backwardness and of the intricacy of the question—this is a very elementary fact, and every one knows it. If this truth is to be applied only as a hindrance to all socialistic initiatives, we declare that he who takes this path is a demagogue and a harmful demagogue. We wish to engage in an inspection of

bank safes and we are told by the learned specialists that there is nothing in them but papers and securities. Well, what harm if the representatives of the people should look them over?

If this is the case, why should these learned and critical specialists go into hiding? In all the discussions about the Soviet, they declare to us that they are in agreement with us, but only in principle. These are the tactics of the bourgeois intelligentsia, of all the "conciliation" elements, who ruin everything with their constant agreement in principle and disagreement in practice.

If you are so wise in all matters, and so experienced, why do you not help us? Why do we meet with no other attitude on your part, in our difficult task, but sabotage? You proceed from a correct scientific theory; but for us theory means the finding of a basis for actions to be undertaken, that we may have confidence in them; and not a basis for mortal terror. Of course, the beginning is difficult; and no doubt we often find serious situations; but we have coped with them, are coping with them, and shall cope with them. If your learned volumes are of no other use than to serve as a brake and as a constant fear of new steps, they are worthless.

No one outside of the Utopian Socialists has even claimed that it would be possible to conquer without opposition, without a dictatorship of the proletariat, and without the placing of an iron hand on the old world.

And you have accepted this dictatorship in principle; but when we translate this expression into the Russian language, and call it "the iron hand," and apply it to the actual situation, you at once begin to speak of the difficulty and dreadfulness of the thing.

You stubbornly refuse to see that this iron hand not only destroys but also creates. If we proceed from abstract principle to concrete acts, we shall register an unquestionable plus.

In order to introduce our control, we called together the

bank officials, and together with them worked out measures—to which they gave their consent—for obtaining loans under full control and responsibility. But among the bank employees there were persons to whom the interests of the people were dear, and these men told us: “They are deceiving you; take immediate steps to put a stop to their criminal activity; it is directed against you.” We took these steps.

We know this is a difficult thing. Not one of us, even those who have had training in economics, would undertake to put it through. We shall call upon specialists who have made a study of these things, but only when we have the keys in our hands. Then we may even be able to call upon consulting authorities from among the former millionaires. Any one who wishes to work will be respectfully requested to do so; but not to transform every revolutionary initiative into a dead letter; we shall not fall into such traps. We are pronouncing in good faith the words “the dictatorship of the proletariat,” and we shall make them a reality.

It was our intention to proceed in agreement with the banks; we gave them loans to finance the enterprises, but they carried on sabotage on an unheard-of scale; and our actual practice has induced us to introduce a control by means of other measures. Our comrade, the Left-Socialist-Revolutionist, has declared that he would vote in principle for an immediate nationalization of the banks, in order thereupon, in the shortest possible time, to elaborate practical measures. But this is wrong, since our proposition contains nothing beyond a statement of principles. Already the Supreme Council of National Economy is waiting to consider them, but their failure to confirm the decree will not now enable the banks to redouble their efforts to confuse the national economy.

The adoption of the decree cannot be postponed; otherwise we shall be opposed by sabotage and other hostile acts.

THE DISPERSION OF THE CONSTITUENT ASSEMBLY

*(Delivered at the All-Russian Central Executive Committee,
January 18, 1918)*

The Constituent Assembly which convened on January 17, 1918, refused to recognize the authority of the Central Executive Committee of the Soviet Government or to declare as laws of the land decrees issued by the Soviet Government since its establishment as a result of the November Revolution. The Socialists-Revolutionists and Mensheviks who made up the majority of the Assembly united in the opposition to the Soviet Government and demanded that the state power be transferred to the Assembly. Thereupon the Central Executive Committee ordered the Constituent Assembly dispersed.

COMRADES! The collision between the Soviet power and the Constituent Assembly has been prepared by the entire history of the Russian Revolution, which has been placed before unheard-of tasks of a socialist reconstruction of society. After the events of 1905 there was no longer any doubt that Tsarism was entering its last phase, and only succeeded in rescuing itself from the abyss by reason of the backwardness and ignorance of the village. The Revolution of 1917 was accompanied, on the one hand, by a transformation of the bourgeois imperialist party—by dint of the force of events—into a republican party, and, on the other hand, by the emergence of democratic organizations—soviets—already created in 1905, since socialists understood even at that early time that by means of the organization of these soviets something great, new and unheard of in the history of the world revolution was being accomplished. The soviets, to which the people succeeded in imparting complete independence, are a form of democracy without a parallel in any other country.

The revolution brought forth two forces—the unification

of the masses for the purpose of overthrowing Tsarism, and the organization of the toiling masses. When I hear the opponents of the November Revolution shouting about the unpractical and utopian ideas of socialism, I usually answer them with a plain and simple question: How about the soviets? Of what are these popular organizations the result, hitherto unheard of in the historical evolution of the world revolution? And to this question not one of them has given me or could have given me a definite answer. In their stubborn defense of the bourgeois system, they oppose these mighty organizations, which not one of the revolutions of the world has ever witnessed before. Every one who opposes the land-holders, will enter the Soviets of Peasants' Delegates. The soviets receive one and all; any one who wishes not to remain idle, enters upon the path of creative work. They cover the entire country with their network, and the tighter this net of people's soviets becomes, the less possible will be the exploitation of the representatives of the toiling masses, since the existence of the soviets is incompatible with the flourishing of the bourgeois system: that is the crux of all the contradictions of the representatives of the bourgeoisie who are waging their struggle against our soviets, and exclusively in the name of their own interests.

The transition from capitalism to the socialist system is accompanied by a long and stubborn conflict. The Russian Revolution, having overthrown Tsarism, was obliged to go much further; it could not afford to content itself with the achievement of a bourgeois republic, since the war and the unheard-of poverty resulting from it among the exhausted nations had created a soil for the outbreak of the social revolution, and there is therefore nothing more impudent than to say that the further course of the revolution and the further discontent of the masses has been brought about by any special party, by any individual person, or, as they lament, by the will of a "dictator." The revolutionary conflagration burst

forth only by reason of the poverty and unheard-of sufferings of Russia and of the conditions created by the war, which plainly and definitely faced the toiling masses with the alternative: either to take a bold, audacious and fearless step, or to perish—to die—of hunger. . . .

And the revolutionary conflagration had the result that the soviets, this prop of the proletarian revolution, were established. The Russian people accomplished a tremendous leap in the transition from Tsarism to the soviets. This is an undeniable and hitherto unparalleled fact, and at the very time when the bourgeois parliaments of all states and nations, bound together by the ties of capitalism and property, have nowhere and at no time offered any support to the revolutionary movement, the soviets, fanning the flame of revolution, imperatively command the people: fight, take everything into your own hands, organize yourselves. There is no doubt that in the process of revolutionary development called forth by the power of the soviets, there will be all kinds of mistakes and follies, but it is no secret to any one that any revolutionary movement inevitably and always is accompanied by a temporary appearance of chaos, destruction and disorder. . . . Bourgeois society is also war, is also a throat-cutting, and this situation has called forth and sharpened the conflict between the Constituent Assembly and the Soviets; all of these people who, reminding us of the time when we also stood for the Constituent Assembly, rebuke us for now dispersing it, are suffering from a complete lack of brains or understanding and using mere empty phrases, for no doubt the Constituent Assembly was considered by us to be superior to the organs of power represented in the Tsarism or the Kerensky republic. But, when the soviets came into being, they naturally, being popular revolutionary organizations, became immeasurably superior to any other parliament in all the world, and it is this situation that I emphasized as early as in April of last year. The soviets, in delivering a serious blow to bourgeois

and land-holding property, in aiding their final overthrow, in sweeping away all the remnants of the bourgeois society, have started us on a road which has brought the people to the building of a new life. We have already taken up this great construction, and we have done well to take it up. There is no doubt that the socialist revolution cannot be presented to the people at once in all its pristine, obvious and flawless perfection; that it cannot but be accompanied by civil war and by the phenomena of sabotage and opposition. And those who would teach us the opposite are either plain ordinary liars or people living in another world. The events of April 20, a day on which the people, of their own free will, without any *ukase* from any "dictator" or party, came out as one man against the conciliation "government"—this incident alone was enough to show all the weakness and instability of the bourgeois basis. The masses felt their strength, and on the basis of this strength there began that notorious ministerial intrigue for the purpose of deceiving the people, which soon passed its zenith, particularly after Kerensky, who had the secret predatory treaties with the imperialists in his pocket, ordered the troops to make an advance. All the activity of the "conciliators" was always understood as calculated to deceive the people, whose patience was beginning to be exhausted, and the result of all this was the November Revolution. The people were learning by experience, by fighting their way through errors, through the death penalty, through mass executions, and it was in vain that the executioners assured it that the insurrections of the toiling masses were due to machinations of the Bolsheviks or of some other "dictators." This is shown by the split in the lower layers of the masses of the people, in congresses, meetings, conferences, etc. The complete absorption of the November Revolution by the people has not yet been accomplished. This revolution pointed out in fact how the people must proceed to take over the land, the national wealth, and the means of production and trans-

portation, placing all these in the hands of the workers' and peasants' state. All power to the soviets!—we said then, and we fight for this slogan. The people desired to convoke the Constituent Assembly—and we convoked it. But it soon felt what this vaunted Constituent Assembly really represents. And now we have again fulfilled the will of the people, which declares: “All power to the soviets!” And we shall crush the saboteurs. When I went from the boiling cauldron, full of life, of Smolny Institute, to the Tauride Palace, I felt like a man who is suddenly surrounded by corpses and lifeless mummies. When they made use of all the available means in their struggle against socialism, applying even measures of force and sabotage, they transformed even the greatest pride of man—knowledge—into a tool for exploiting the toiling masses, and though they did to some extent impede the steps toward the socialist revolution in this manner, they could not break it, and will never be able to break it, for the power of the soviets is too great. The soviets have already begun to crush the ancient outlived remnants of the bourgeois system, not in a feudal manner, but in a proletarian and peasant manner.

Even the transfer of all power to the Constituent Assembly is the same kind of policy of “conciliation” with the malevolent bourgeoisie. The Russian soviets place the interests of the toiling masses much higher than the interests of the treasonable “conciliators,” though the latter may now be adorned in a new garb. The speeches of Chernov and Tseretelli, those outlived leaders, who are still attempting to continue all their silly talk about the cessation of the civil war, are drooling with age, with decrepitude, with senility. But as long as Kaledin exists, and as long as the slogan: “All power to the Constituent Assembly!”, is still used as a cloak for the slogan: “Down with the Soviet power!”—so long shall we be unable to escape from civil war, for we shall not give up the soviet power for anything in the world! . . . And when the Constituent

Assembly again stated its intention of setting aside all the burning and timely questions proposed to it by the soviets—we answered them that there could be not a moment's delay. And by the will of the Soviet power, the Constituent Assembly, which has failed to recognize the power of the people, is dispersed. The stakes of the Ryabushinskys have been lost, and their opposition can only sharpen the civil war and bring about a new and early outbreak of it.

The Constituent Assembly is dispersed, and the Soviet revolutionary republic will triumph regardless of what happens.

WE MUST HAVE A RESPITE

(Delivered at the Central Executive Committee, March 7, 1918, in support of the ratification of the oppressive peace terms presented by the Central Powers as a result of the Brest-Litovsk peace negotiations)

COMRADES, the conditions proposed to us by the representatives of German imperialism are unheard of in their severity, boundless in their tyranny, and predatory in the extreme. The German imperialists, availing themselves of Russia's weakness, are putting their knees on our chest. It is my duty, under these circumstances, in order that we may not conceal from ourselves the bitter truth, to inform you of my profound conviction that we have no other resort but to sign these conditions. Any other proposition that may be made to you will amount to nothing more nor less than a voluntary or involuntary invitation of even worse evils and a complete and progressive (if we may speak here of degrees) subjugation of the Soviet Republic, its reduction to slavery by German imperialism; or, they will amount to a sad attempt to evade the threatening, frightfully severe, but nevertheless actual reality. Comrades, you know very well, many of you from personal experience, that the burdens of the imperialist war have weighed on Russia—for irrefutable reasons known to all—more heavily and more balefully than on any other country; you know, therefore, that our army is as exhausted and worn out by the war as is no other army; that all the insinuations launched against us by the bourgeois press and the bourgeois parties, and those supporting them or inimical to the soviet power, to the effect that it was the Bolsheviki who disorganized the troops—**are**

mere nonsense. I shall again recall to your minds the proclamation issued to the troops by Krylenko, when he was still an ensign under Kerensky, on entering Petrograd, which was reprinted in *Pravda*, and in which Krylenko said the following: Let us have no insurrections; that is not what we are summoning you for; we are summoning you for political action; try to maintain yourselves in as organized a form as possible. Of such character were the appeals issued by one of our most fiery Bolsheviks, and one who was closest to the army. Everything that it was possible to do in order to maintain this exceptionally and almost impossibly exhausted army, everything that could be done to make it stronger, was done. And when now we find that while I have refrained, as for example during the past month, from any exposition of my views, which might have been considered pessimistic, when we find that on the subject of the army we have in the last month said everything that could be said and done everything that could be done to alleviate the situation, the actual facts have shown us that after three years of war our army neither will nor can fight any more. This is the fundamental reason—simple, obvious, no doubt bitter and humiliating in the extreme, but perfectly plain—why we, living side by side with imperialist highwaymen, are obliged to sign their peace conditions when they place their knees on our chest. That is why I speak in full consciousness of the responsibility I now incur. I repeat that there is no single representative of the soviet power that has any right to withdraw himself from this responsibility. Of course, it is pleasant and easy to talk to the workers, peasants and soldiers; it was delightful and pleasing to see how after the November *coup d'état* the revolution forged ahead; and now, when it becomes necessary to recognize the harsh, terrible but unquestionable truth—the impossibility of a revolutionary war—it is now wrong to evade this responsibility; we must assume it frankly. I consider myself bound; I consider it my duty to state frankly that which is, and

therefore I am convinced that the working class of Russia, which knows what war is and what it has cost the workers, and to what a degree of exhaustion and misery it has brought them, I do not doubt for a moment that they will recognize, together with us, the full and unparalleled severity, harshness, meanness of these peace conditions, and will nevertheless approve our conduct. They will say: it was your duty to propose an immediate and just peace; it was your duty to utilize every possible condition for postponing the conclusion of peace, in order to determine whether we should not be joined by other countries, whether we should not have the aid of the European proletariat, without whose assistance we shall never be able to attain a durable Socialist victory. We did everything possible to prolong the negotiations, we did even more than was possible; we went so far as to declare, after the Brest-Litovsk negotiations, that the war was over, being convinced—as were also many of you—that the condition of Germany would not permit her to engage in a savage and brutal attack on Russia. This time we suffered a serious defeat, and it is necessary to be able to look defeats in the face; the revolution until this moment has been forging ahead from victory to victory; now it has struck a serious snag. The German labor movement, which had assumed such rapid strides at the start, has been stopped for the moment. We know that the fundamental bases for this movement have not been removed and that they will again blossom forth and expand irresistibly as the all devouring war continues, since the savagery of imperialism reveals itself more profoundly and more obviously, opening the eyes even of persons most removed from politics or otherwise incapable of understanding socialist policy. This is the cause for the appearance of the desperate and tragic situation which has obliged us to accept peace at present and will oblige the toiling masses to declare: Yes, they have done right; they did everything they could to bring about a just peace and to postpone its conclusion; they were

obliged to submit to a peace of the most oppressive and unfavorable type, because the country has no other way out. Their position was such that they were obliged to fight for the very life of the Soviet Republic; if now they do not prosecute their intentions of proceeding on Petrograd and Moscow, it will be only because they are involved in a bloody and predatory war with England; in other words, because there is an internal crisis. If I am told that to-morrow, or the day after to-morrow, perhaps, the German imperialists will offer even worse conditions, I can say nothing else than that we shall have to be ready for them; of course, living side by side with savage beasts, the Soviet Republic will have to be prepared for invasions. If for the present we are unable to answer war with war, it is merely because we have not the strength, because in order to fight you must have the people with you. If the successes of the revolution will incline many of our comrades to speak in an opposite sense, this can yet not be interpreted as a mass phenomenon; it is not the expression of the will and opinion of the actual masses; if you go to the real working class, to the workers and peasants, you will see and hear just one answer: "We cannot carry on a war under any conditions; there are not the physical forces; we should choke in our own blood, as one of the soldiers has said." These masses understand us and approve us for having signed this forced peace, with its monstrous conditions. It is possible that the recuperating period of the masses will take not a little time; but persons who have been obliged to live through long years of revolutionary struggles during the period of the growth of the revolution and the period when the revolution had gone to pieces, when revolutionary appeals to the masses met with absolutely no response from them, will know that the revolution has always risen again; therefore we say: Yes, for the present the masses are not in a condition to wage war. For the present, every representative of the soviet power is in duty bound to declare the whole bitter truth

frankly to the people; there will be an end of this period of unheard-of difficulty, and three years' war, and the desperate ruin of Tsarism, and the people will once more find themselves able to offer resistance. At present, the oppressor stands before us; no doubt, the best answer to oppression is a revolutionary war, an insurrection; but unfortunately, history has taught us that oppression cannot always be answered by insurrection; but a renunciation of rebellion is not yet equivalent to a renunciation of the revolution; do not be misled by the provocations issued by the bourgeois newspapers, the opponents of the soviet power; these speak of nothing else than a "disgraceful peace" and shout "Shame!" on this peace; yet this bourgeoisie is proudly welcoming the German conquerors. They say: "These Germans, after all, will come in and restore order"; that is what they want; yet they continue uttering their shouts of an "outrageous peace; a shameful peace"! They wish the soviet power to enter into a struggle, an impossible struggle, knowing that we have no strength and that the conflict will end in our complete enslavement by the German imperialists, in order that they may then arrange matters with the German henchmen; but they are expressing only their class interests since they know that the soviet power is gaining strength. These voices, these shouts against the peace, are the best proof in my eyes that those who oppose this peace have not only handed themselves over to ridiculous illusions, but are actually the victims of provocation. No, we must look the dangerous truth straight in the face: there stands the oppressor before us, his knee on our chest, and we shall wage war with all the resources of a revolutionary struggle. But at present we are in a desperately difficult situation; our ally cannot rush to our aid. The international proletariat cannot come just now, but it will come. This revolutionary movement which at present cannot offer any military resistance to the enemy, will rise again and will offer this resistance later, but resistance will be offered.

THE DECISIVE STRUGGLE

(Delivered at a mass meeting in the Butyrki District (Moscow), August 2, 1918)

COMRADES! To-day the destinies of Socialist Russia are being discussed in various parts of Moscow.

The enemies of Soviet Russia encircle us with a tight ring of iron. The far-flung ensign of the Russian Social Revolution affords the international imperialists no peace of mind, and they have launched a war on the soviet power, the power of the workers and peasants.

You will recall, comrades, that at the beginning of the revolution the French and English did not tire of repeating that they were "allies" of a free Russia. And this is how these "allies" have acted. By means of treachery and deception, they took possession of the Murman coast, then they seized Kem, and began to shoot down our comrades, the soviet workers.

They enjoyed the very active assistance of the Czecho-Slovaks, who were hurled against us by Anglo-French gold. Fluttering about the Anglo-French gold, together with them, were our "saviours of the fatherland": Dutov, Alexeyev, and others. The Soviet Government declared: We wish to fight neither the Germans, nor the English and the French; we have no desire to kill workers and peasants of any country, they are not our enemies. We have another enemy—the international bourgeoisie. And our slogans are being raised in all countries. The "defeatist" movement has already come up in Germany; mass strikes are in progress in Italy and in Austria; mass arrests of socialists are taking place in America.

And, feeling their ruin approaching, the capitalists and landholders are exerting their last energies in order to crush the revolutionary movement. The Russian capitalists are extending their hands to the Anglo-French capitalists and landholders.

There are now two fronts: on the one hand, there are the workers and peasants; on the other, the capitalists. The last decisive struggle is beginning.

In 1871 the bourgeoisie overthrew the power of the Paris workers. But the number of class-conscious workers was then very small, and also few revolutionary champions. This time, the bourgeoisie will not succeed in carrying off the victory. The workers hold the factories and works firmly in their hands; the peasantry will not give up the land to the old landholders. And in defense of these conquests we are ready to declare war on all the marauders and speculators.

They threaten us not only with machine guns and cannons, but also with hunger.

While we declare war on the rich, we say: "Peace to the cottages!" We shall take away all the supplies from the speculators, and shall not leave the solution of the poverty of the workers to mere chance.

WE SHALL CARRY ON

(Delivered at a mass meeting in the Sokolniki District (Moscow), August 9, 1918)

THE war is in its fifth year and every one now understands for whom the war meant any advantage.

He who was rich became richer; he who was poor has now been pressed under the yoke of capitalism in the literal sense of the word. This war cost bloody sacrifices to the poor people, and, in return, they obtained only hunger, unemployment, and a tighter noose about their necks than ever before.

The war was begun by the bandits of England and Germany, who found that it was beginning to be impossible for them to live on the same planet, and each of them had decided to put down the other at the price of rivers of blood taken from the workers. Each of these bandits assures us that he is animated by a desire for the good of the people, but as a matter of fact he is working only for the good of his own pocket.

England seizes the colonies stolen by Germany, as well as a part of Palestine and Mesopotamia. Germany, in turn, seizes Poland, Kurland, Lithuania, and the Ukraine. The millionaires of Germany and England have become ten times as rich; yet they have made a miscalculation anyway.

Clutching each other's throats in mortal conflict, these bandits have been hurled into an abyss. They are already unable to stop the war which is inevitably driving the nations to revolution.

The Russian Revolution threw a spark into every country of the world, and drove an already demoralized imperialism to the very brink of ruin.

Comrades! Our position is hard, but we must overcome everything and hold aloft in our hands the banner of the socialist revolution which we have raised.

The workers of all countries look to us with hope. You can hear their voices call: Maintain yourselves a little longer, they say. You are surrounded by foes. But we shall come to your aid and shall finally cast the imperialist bandits into the abyss with all our might.

We hear this voice and we take this oath: "Yes, we shall carry on, we shall struggle at our posts with all our might and shall not lay down our arms in the presence of the international counter-revolution which now attacks us."

THE CAUSES OF THE WORLD WAR

(Delivered at a mass meeting in the Assembly Hall of the Polytechnic Museum (Moscow), August 23, 1918)

IN what does our program consist? In the achievement of socialism. At the present moment of world war, there is as yet no prospect of an emergence from this war, or of a victory of socialism. But there are many who do not understand this. The majority of mankind at present is opposed to the bloody war, but they are unable to grasp its indissoluble connections with the capitalist system. The horrors of the present war are manifest even to the eyes of the bourgeoisie, but the bourgeoisie is incapable of connecting the end of the war with the end of the capitalist system. . . . But this fundamental thought has been the constant distinction between the Bolsheviks and the revolutionary socialists of all countries, on the one hand, and those who wish to favor the earth with the blessings of peace, conserving unshaken the capitalist order of society, on the other hand.

Why are wars waged? We know that most wars have been waged in the interests of dynasties and have therefore been called dynastic wars. But sometimes wars are waged in the interests of the oppressed. Spartacus inaugurated a war for the defense of the enslaved classes. Such wars were waged during the epoch of colonial subjection, an epoch which has not yet ceased, as well as in the epoch of slavery, etc. These wars were righteous wars; these wars cannot be condemned.

But when we speak of the present European War in terms of condemnation, it is for the simple reason that this war is waged by the class of the oppressors.

What is the goal pursued by this war? If we may believe the diplomats of all countries, the war is waged on the part of France and England for the purpose of defending the small nations against the barbarians, the Huns—the Germans; while on the part of Germany, the war is waged against the barbarous Cossacks, who threaten the Kultur of the German nation, as well as for the purpose of defending the fatherland from hosts of invading enemies.

We, however, are aware that this war was carefully prepared for, that it came slowly to maturity, and that it was inevitable. It was just as inevitable as is the ultimate war between America and Japan. In what does this inevitability consist?

It consists in the fact that capitalism had concentrated the riches of the earth in the hands of certain states which had divided the earth down to the last acre. Any further division, any further enrichment, had to be accomplished at the expense of those already enriched, by one government at the expense of the other. The only decision in such a question was of course that of force—and the war between the world bandits therefore became inevitable.

Up to the present time the principal going concerns engaged in this war were the firms of "England" and "Germany." England was the most powerful colonial nation. Although the population of England itself is not more than forty millions, its colonies have a population of over four hundred millions. Not so long ago, by right of conquest, England seized additional colonies, additional land areas, and has profited by their exploitation. But, economically speaking, England has been outdistanced in the last fifty years by Germany. The industries of Germany were eclipsing those of England. The immense state capitalism of Germany had united with its bureaucratism, and Germany beat the record.

There was no other means of deciding the struggle for primacy between these two giants than the resort to force.

While England had at times, by the right of the stronger, taken land away from Holland, Portugal, etc., it was now Germany that had come out upon the scene with the declaration that its turn had now come to enrich itself at the expense of others.

That is the question at stake; it was a struggle for the division of the world between the strongest. And, by reason of the fact that each side possessed capital amounting to hundreds of millions, the struggle between them was transformed into a world struggle.

We are aware how many secret crimes were committed in this war. The secret treaties published by us have shown that the phrases disseminated in order to justify the conduct of the war were words only and that every government, including Russia also, was connected with other governments by a series of dirty treaties promising enrichment to each at the expense of the small and weak nations. As a result, he who had been strong became still richer; he who was weak was eliminated entirely.

It is childish to attempt to hold individual persons guilty for the inception of the war; it is a mistake to accuse Kings and Tsars of having created the present war. The war was made by capital. Capitalism had run into a blind alley. This blind alley was nothing more nor less than the imperialism which dictated a war between those competing for the ownership of the world.

It was a tremendous lie to declare war for the liberation of small nations. Both bandits, though they regard each other with the most bloodthirsty glances, are equally vicious in their attitude toward the small nations.

And we declare: there is no exit from the imperialist war except by means of a civil war.

When we spoke on this subject in 1914, they answered us that this was like a straight line prolonged into space, but our analysis has been confirmed by all the subsequent events.

At the present moment we behold the generals of chauvinism left without an army. Not so long ago, in France, which has suffered most from the war, and which was closest to the truth in its slogan "defense of the fatherland"—since the enemy was at the gates of Paris—in this country the "defensists" have suffered a shipwreck; as a matter of fact, chauvinism came to grief owing to the vacillating group, men like Longuet; although that does not matter so much. We are aware that in the first days of the revolution in Russia the power fell into the hands of persons who spoke in words only, but who had in their pockets these very Tsarist treaties.

And if the development of parties in Russia to the Left has proceeded somewhat more swiftly, this development was aided by just that cursed system which had been in existence up to the revolution, and our revolution of 1905.

In Western Europe, where an intelligent and calculating capitalism is in power, ruling by means of its powerful and rigid organization, the liberation from the nationalist illusions is proceeding more slowly. But it would be foolish to fail to observe that the imperialist war is dying a slow and painful death.

But information that is entirely trustworthy is at hand, to the effect that disorganization has seized the German army, and that the latter is in the clutches of uncertainty. In fact, it could not be otherwise. As soon as the soldier wakes up and begins to understand that all this maiming and murdering is only for the sake of the interests of the bourgeoisie, it is impossible for disorganization not to seize the masses of the people.

The French army, which maintained itself longer than the others and more firmly than the others, has also shown that the process of disorganization is not a stranger to it. The trial of Malvy has also raised the curtain from events taking place in France and has shown that thousands of soldiers had refused to fight at the front.

All these things are forerunners of events like those that are taking place in Russia. Only, the civilized nations are affording us pictures of a more savage civil war than Russia could have shown. Finland is an example of this; Finland—the most democratic country in Europe, the country in which women first held the right of suffrage—this country disposed of the Red Army in the most savage and merciless manner, and the latter did not yield without a struggle. This picture shows how savage is the destiny that is in wait for the cultured nations.

You yourselves can see how absurd is the accusation that the Bolsheviki are guilty of the disorganization of the Russian army.

We constitute only a single detachment, which has advanced a few steps beyond the other detachments of the workers, not because we have been better than the others, but because the idiotic policy of our bourgeoisie has enabled the working classes of Russia to shake off the yoke more quickly than in other countries. Now, struggling for the socialist system in Russia, we are struggling for the socialism of the whole world. At present in all countries, in all meetings of workers, in all workers' gatherings, no one speaks of anything but of the Bolsheviki; they know us; they know that we are at this moment doing the work of the whole world, discharging a task that is theirs as well as ours.

By abolishing private property in land, by nationalizing the enterprises, the banks, which are at this moment engaged in the task of organizing industry, we have exposed ourselves to shouts from all sides to the effect that we are making many mistakes. Yet, the workers themselves are creating socialism, and however many the mistakes we may have made, we shall learn in actual practice and shall prepare the ground for the rise of the art of making revolutions without mistakes.

It is for this reason that we encounter such insane hatred! It is for this reason that French imperialism does not hesitate

to hurl tens and hundreds of millions into the task of supporting the counter-revolution; for the counter-revolution will bring with it the return of the Russian debts to France, debts amounting to thousands of millions, which have been renounced by the workers and the peasants.

At the present moment, the entire bourgeois press is engaged in filling its columns with lies to the effect that the Council of People's Commissars has gone to Tula, and that ten days ago it was seen at Kronstadt, etc., etc.; that Moscow is on the eve of a downfall, and that the Soviet authorities have run away.

The entire bourgeoisie, all the former Romanovs, all the capitalists and land-holders are for the Czecho-Slovaks, since they are connecting the mutiny of the latter with the possibility that the Soviet power may fall. The allies know all this, and they are preparing for one of the most serious conflicts. They found no nucleus in Russia, and now they have discovered it in the Czecho-Slovaks. But this is no reason for taking the mutiny of the Czecho-Slovaks too lightly. This mutiny was followed by a number of counter-revolutionary happenings, a number of uprisings by *kulak* and White Guard elements, which mark the latest pages of our revolutionary history. The situation of the Soviet power is serious. We should not close our eyes to this fact. But if you will glance about, you cannot fail to be impressed with a conviction that we will come out victorious.

Germany has suffered a number of defeats, and it is not a secret that these defeats are the result of "betrayals" by German soldiers. French soldiers have refused to fight at the front at the moment of the utmost danger, because of the arrest of Comrade Henriot, whom the government was obliged to liberate, in order to make the troops move forward, etc., etc.

We have suffered many losses. The Peace of Brest-Litovsk was a serious wound; we expected a revolution in Germany;

and thus far the revolution has not come. It is going on now; revolution moves unconditionally and irresistibly. But only a fool can ask for the precise moment at which revolution will blaze in the West. It is impossible to calculate or predict a revolution; it comes out all by itself. It is maturing now and must break forth. Did any one think, a week before the March Revolution (1917) that it was ready to blaze forth? Did any one think, at the moment when the insane monk led the people to the Tsar's palace,¹ that this was the beginning of the Revolution of 1905? But revolution grows slowly and must inevitably make itself felt.

And we must maintain the Soviet power until it begins; our mistakes must serve as lessons to the proletariat of the West, to international socialism. A victory at the Czecho-Slovak front may mean salvation not only for the Russian Revolution but for the international revolution. And we are already in possession of data informing us that our army, which has been boundlessly betrayed by its generals; our army which is immeasurably exhausted, that this army on the arrival of our comrades, the communists, the workers, is beginning to be victorious, is beginning to show a revolutionary enthusiasm in the struggle against the international bourgeoisie.

And we believe that the victory is with us, and that, having won the victory, we shall make socialism secure.

¹ Father Gapon, on January 22, 1905.

ON EQUALITY

(*Delivered at a mass meeting in the former Michelson Factory
(Moscow), August 30, 1918*)

WE Bolsheviks are constantly accused of violating the slogans of equality and fraternity. Let us go into this question in detail.

What was the authority which took the place of the Tsar's authority? It was the authority of Guchkov and Milyukov, which began to prepare for a Constituent Assembly in Russia. What was it that really lay behind this work in favor of a liberation of the people from its yoke of a thousand years? Simply the fact that Guchkov and the other leaders gathered around them a host of capitalists who were pursuing their own imperialist purposes. And when the clique of Kerensky, Chernov, etc., gained power, this new government, hesitating and deprived of any base to stand on, fought only for the basic interests of the bourgeoisie, closely allied to it. The power actually passed into the hands of the *kulaks*, and nothing into those of the toiling masses. We have witnessed the same phenomenon in other countries also. Let us take America, the freest and most civilized country. America is a democratic republic. And what is the result? We have the shameless rule of a clique not of millionaires but of multi-millionaires, and the entire nation is enslaved and oppressed. If the factories and works, the banks and all the riches of the nation belong to the capitalists; if, by the side of the democratic republic we observe a perpetual enslavement of millions of toilers and a continuous poverty, we have a right to ask: Where is all your lauded equality and fraternity?

Far from it! The rule of democracy is accompanied by an unadulterated savage banditry. We understand the true nature of so-called democracies.

The secret treaties of the French Republic, of England, and of the other democracies, have clearly convinced us of the real nature, the underlying facts of this business. Their aims and interests are just as criminally predatory as are those of Germany. The war has opened our eyes. We now "know" very well that the "defender of the fatherland" conceals under his skin a vile bandit and thief. This attack of the bandit must be opposed with a revolutionary action, with revolutionary creativeness. To be sure, it is very difficult at an exceptional time like this to bring about a union, particularly of the peasant revolutionary elements, but we have faith in the creative energy and the social zeal of the vanguard of the revolution—the proletariat of the factories and shops. The workers have already well grasped the fact that as long as they permit their minds to revel in the phantasms of a democratic republic and a Constituent Assembly, they will have to hand out fifty million rubles a day in advance for military aims that will be destructive to themselves, and for just so long will it be impossible for them to find any outlet from the capitalist oppression. Having grasped this, the workers created their soviets. It was life itself, real, actual life, which taught the workers to understand that as long as the landholders had intrenched themselves so well in palaces and magic castles, for so long would freedom of assembly be a mere fiction and would mean only a freedom to meet perhaps in the other world. You will agree that to promise freedom to the workers and at the same time to leave the castles, the land, the factories and all the resources in the hands of the capitalists and land-holders—that this has nothing to do with liberty and equality. We have only one slogan, one watchword: Every one who works has a right to enjoy the good things of life. Idlers, parasites, those who suck out the blood of the

toiling masses, must be deprived of these blessings. And our cry is: To the workers—everything; to the toilers—everything!

We know that all this is difficult to bring about. We know what savage opposition we shall encounter on the part of the bourgeoisie; but we believe in the final victory of the proletariat; for, once it has freed itself from the terrible quandary of the threats of military imperialism and once it has erected, on the ruins of the structure it has overthrown, the new structure of the Socialist Republic, it cannot but gain the victory.

And, as a matter of fact, we find a merging of forces in progress everywhere. Owing to our abolition of private property in land, we now find an active fraternization going on between the proletariat of the city and of the village. The clarification of the class consciousness of the workers is also advancing apace in a far more definite manner than before, in the West also: the workers of England, France, Italy, and other countries, are responding more and more to the appeals and demands which bear witness to the early victory of the cause of international revolution. And our task of the day is this: that of performing our revolutionary work regardless of all the hypocrisy, the base shouts of rage and the sermons delivered by the murderous bourgeoisie. We must turn all our efforts on the Czecho-Slovak front, in order to disperse at once this band of cut-throats which cloaks itself in the slogans of liberty and equality and shoots down hundreds and thousands of workers and peasants.

We have only one recourse:

Victory or death!

OUR RELATION TO THE PEASANTS

(Delivered at the Tenth Congress of the Russian Communist Party, March 15, 1921, in support of substituting taxation for requisition in the villages)

COMRADES, the question of the substitution of a tax for requisitions is first and foremost a political question, since the point of this question is in the relations between the working class and the peasantry. The formulation of this question means that we are obliged to subject to a more careful and reasonable supplementary revision and to a certain reformulation the relations of these two important classes, the struggle between which or the agreement between which will determine the destinies of our entire revolution. There is no need for my dwelling in detail on the question of the reasons for such a revision. You all know very well how the outcome of recent events has made the situation of the peasantry particularly hard and acute and has inevitably reinforced its tendency away from the proletariat and toward the bourgeoisie, by reason of the increasing distress produced by the war, the disorganization of demobilization, and the crop failures.

A word or two on the theoretical significance or on the theoretical approach to this question. There is no doubt that the socialist revolution in a country where the immense majority of the population belongs to the petty land-holder producers, is possible only by reason of a number of special transition measures, which would be entirely unnecessary in countries having a developed capitalism, where the wage earners in industry and agriculture constitute an immense majority.

In countries with a highly developed capitalism, there has been for decades a developed class of wage workers engaged in agriculture. Only such a class can serve as a support to an immediate transition to socialism, socially, economically and politically. Only in countries in which this class is sufficiently developed will the transition from capitalism to socialism be possible. In a great number of utterances, in all our addresses, in the entire press, we have pointed out that the condition in Russia is different, that in Russia we have a minority of industrial workers, an immense majority of petty land-holders. The social revolution in such a country may meet with ultimate success only under two conditions: in the first place, under the condition that a simultaneous social revolution in one of the several advanced countries will come to its support.

As you well know, we are now much further along in the matter of this condition than formerly, but we are still far from having made it a reality.

The second condition is the attainment of an agreement between the proletariat, which is effecting its dictatorship or maintaining the government power in its hands, and the majority of the peasant population. This agreement is a very broad concept, involving a great number of measures and transitions. We must point out here that we must state this thing clearly in all our propaganda and agitation. Persons who understand politics as meaning petty steps sometimes leading to actual deception, must meet with the most decisive condemnation in our midst. Classes cannot be deceived. We have done much in three years to elevate the political consciousness in the masses. The masses themselves have learned much in their hard fight. We must—in accordance with our point of view, our ten years of revolutionary experience, the lessons of our revolution—put the question very directly: the interests of the classes are different; the petty land-holders do not have the same wishes as the workers.

We know that only an agreement with the peasantry will be able to save the socialist revolution in Russia, as long as revolution has not broken out in other countries, and therefore we must say this frankly at all our meetings, in all our papers. We must not try to conceal anything; we must say frankly that the peasantry are discontented with the form of relationship with it established by us, that they do not wish this form of relation, and that it will not continue. There is no doubt of this. The wish of the peasantry has been definitely expressed. This is the wish of the immense masses of the toiling population. We must consider this condition and we are politicians brave enough to say frankly: Let us revise this thing.

We must say: If you wish to go backward, to reestablish private property and freedom of trade in their entirety, this will be equivalent to a swift and inevitable surrender to the power of the feudal land-holders and capitalists, as is proved by a great number of historical examples and revolutionary examples. Even a little instruction in the rudiments of communism, in the fundamentals of political economy, will emphasize the inevitability of this fact. Let us consider this question: Is it profitable for the peasantry to part company with the proletariat, to take backward steps, while allowing the rest of the country to liberate itself more and more from the capitalists and landlords? Think it over; let's consider this thing together.

And we believe that if we examine this matter properly, the calculation—in spite of the profound gulf existing in their economic interest between the proletariat and the petty landholder—will be in our favor.

However difficult may be our situation with regard to resources, the task of satisfying the middle peasantry must nevertheless be solved. The peasantry has more middle class elements than it had before; contradictions have been smoothed out; the land has been parceled out and its exploita-

tion has been made more uniform; the *kulak* has been cut off and to a considerable extent expropriated. More in Russia than in Ukraine, less in Siberia; but on the whole the available statistics show without a possibility of contradiction that the village has been leveled, has been equalized, *i.e.*, the sharp distinctions between the *kulak* and the cropless peasant have been smoothed out. Everything has become more equal; the peasantry has on the whole become a middle peasantry.

Can we make this middle peasantry as such content with its economic conditions, with its economic roots? If any one of the communists has dreamed that in the course of three years we should be able to transform the economic basis, the economic roots of the petty land-holders, this man must of course have been a visionary, and—why should we conceal the matter?—we have had not a few such visionaries in our midst. And we cannot even say that such visionaries are a bad thing. Where and in what country would it be possible to start a socialist revolution without visionaries? Practical life has of course shown what an immense part may be played by all kinds of experiences and initiatives in the domain of the collective management of agricultural establishments. But practice has also pointed out that these experiences as such have played a negative rôle also, when persons, moved by the best intentions and aspirations, have gone into the villages to set up communes, collective establishments, without any understanding of management, because they had no experience in collective work. You know very well how many examples we have had of such attempts. I repeat that this condition should not surprise us, for the task of remolding the petty farmer, of rebuilding his entire psychology, all his habits, is a task requiring generations. The solution of this question of the petty land-holder, the curing, as it were, of his entire psychology, can be performed on a material basis, by technical methods, by using tractors and machines in agriculture on a huge scale, by an immense system of electrification.

These are the things that would remold our petty land-holder radically and with immense swiftness. Though I say that generations would be needed, please remember that generations are not centuries. You know very well that the task of supplying tractors, machines, and an electrification system to an immense country is one requiring, under the most favorable circumstances, decades at least. This is the actual objective situation.

The question now is: What are we to do? We must attempt to satisfy the demands of the peasants who are discontented, who are displeased, and lawfully displeased, and who cannot but be displeased. We must say: "Yes, this situation cannot continue any longer." How must we satisfy them and what does it mean to satisfy them? Where shall we find an answer to the question of what will satisfy them? Of course, from their own demands, which we know very well. But we must go through these demands and reduce to economic science all we know concerning the economic demands of the landholder. We shall at once find that to satisfy the petty landholder two things are necessary: first, *there must be a certain liberty of exchange, a certain liberty for the private petty trader*; in the second place, *we must supply goods and products*. But what is the good of an exchange when there is nothing to exchange; or of freedom of trade, when there is nothing to trade in! This will remain a paper aspiration, and classes are not satisfied with paper aspirations, but with material things. We must take these conditions thoroughly to heart. As to how we are to get the goods—let us speak of that later. We must be able to supply them; this we must insist on. But what is this freedom of trade? Freedom of trade means the right of exchange, and the right of exchange means a step back to capitalism. Freedom of trade, freedom of exchange, means an exchange of goods between the various petty owners. All of us who have studied even the rudiments of Marxism know that this exchange, this freedom of trade

inevitably results in a division of the producer into a holder of capital and a holder of labor power, a division into capitalist and wage-worker, *i.e.*, the reestablishment of the capitalist wage slavery, which never was born from the brow of Jove, but everywhere in the world grows directly out of the commodities system of agriculture. We know this very well in theory, and in Russia every man who has regarded life and considered the economic conditions of the petty land-holder cannot fail to regard this fact.

It will be asked whether it is possible for the Communist Party to recognize freedom of trade and proceed to its establishment. Have we not here an irreconcilable contradiction? Our answer must be that the question will of course present immense difficulties in its solution. I can foresee, and I know from conversations with the comrades, that the preliminary draft for substituting a tax for the requisitions, the draft which has been handed to you, first of all involves legal and inevitable questions as to the permission of exchanges within the limits of the local economic turnover. What does this mean? What are these limits; how shall this be brought about? Any one expecting to receive an answer to this question at the present congress is very much mistaken. We shall obtain an answer to this question from our legislation. *It is our task only to lay down the fundamental principle, to formulate the slogan.* Our party is the governing party, and a resolution passed by a party congress will be obligatory on the whole republic, and it is for us now to decide on this question in principle. *We must decide this question in principle and enlighten the peasantry on the subject, for the sowing season is at hand.* Furthermore, we must set in motion our entire party apparatus, all our theoretical forces, all our practical experience, to examine into ways and means of doing this. Can this be done, theoretically speaking; can the freedom of trade be reestablished within certain limits, in other words, a freedom of capitalism for the petty holders, without

by this step undermining the roots of the political power of the proletariat? Is it possible? It is possible; the question is one of ways and means. If we should be able to obtain even a small quantity of goods and hold them in the hands of the government, in the hands of the proletariat which has the political power, and to throw these goods into exchange—we as a government should have added an economic power to our political power. The throwing of these goods into the exchange process will revive the petty agriculture, which has at present gone to pieces under the blows of the hard conditions of war, of disorganization, and under the obvious impossibility of developing the petty agriculture. A little encouraging impulse, suited to its economic basis, *i.e.*, the petty individual economy, will be an awakener. But this will not mean a possibility of going beyond the local limits in freedom of trade. If this exchange will give the state in return for its products a certain minimum quantity of grain sufficient to cover the demands of the city, the factory, and industry, an economic exchange will have begun in a way to enable the state power to remain in the hands of the proletariat and grow even stronger. The peasant asks that he be shown in actual practice that the worker who holds in his hands the factories, the works, the industry, can set up an exchange with the peasants. And, on the other hand, an immense agricultural country, having the poorest means of communication, having immeasurable distances and varying agricultural conditions, etc., necessarily requires a certain freedom of trade on a local scale between local agriculture and local industry.

In this connection it would be an outright mistake, in fact, it would be a great crime, for us to see and not to understand that we have not observed these measures, that we have not known how to observe them. But precisely this was the necessity forced upon us. We have thus far been living under war conditions of such unparalleled severity, that there was nothing left to us even in the economic field but to act in a military

way. And the marvel is that our exhausted country has been able to maintain such a war and this miracle is not one that has descended from heaven, but has been brought about on the basis of the economic interests of the working class and the peasantry, who have performed this miracle by their own mass enthusiasm; it was this miracle that made possible the resistance to the feudal land-holders and capitalists. But it is nevertheless an undoubted fact, one that must not be concealed in our agitation and propaganda, namely, that we have gone faster than was necessary from a theoretical or political standpoint. We can permit freedom of local trade on an orderly scale without destroying the political power of the proletariat, in fact, we may thus even strengthen it. The mode of doing this is a technical detail. It is my function to show you that it is theoretically conceivable. The proletariat which holds the governing power in its hands, if it has any resources for such a procedure, is perfectly able to put them on the market and thus to satisfy the middle peasant to a certain extent, to satisfy him on the basis of a local economic exchange.

Now for a few words on the local economic exchange. I must first touch on the question of the coöperatives. Of course, we need the coöperatives in the local economic exchange. Our program emphasizes the fact that the best apparatus for distribution are the coöperatives which we inherited from capitalism, and we must preserve them. This is stated in our program. Have we made use of the coöperatives? Not sufficiently; again, either because of our mistakes, or because of the military situation. The coöperatives, producing individuals that are better versed in economic matters, have by this very fact turned out for the most part men who are Mensheviks and Social-Revolutionists in politics. This is a chemical law; you can do nothing about it. The Mensheviks and Social-Revolutionists are people who are consciously or unconsciously reëstablishing capitalism and giving aid to

Yudenich. This is also a law. We must fight against it. But if we are to fight, let us fight as in war. We had to defend ourselves and we defended ourselves. But can we continue to remain in the present condition? Of course not. And it would be a mistake for us to tie our hands with these conditions. That is why I propose the following very short resolution with regard to the coöperatives; I shall read it now:

“Whereas the resolution of the Ninth Congress of the Russian Communist Party on the subject of the coöperatives was based entirely on the recognition of the principle of requisitions, for which the tax in kind has now been substituted, the Tenth Congress of the Russian Communist Party hereby resolves:

“To repeal the aforesaid resolution.

“The Congress instructs the Central Committee to formulate a decision to be adopted by party and soviet instances, for the purpose of improving and developing the structure and activity of the coöperatives in accordance with the program of the Russian Communist Party, and as adapted to the substitution of the tax in kind for the requisitions.”

But the resolution of the Ninth Congress ties our hands when it says: “We must submit to the Provision Committees!” These committees were a splendid institution, but to subordinate the coöperatives to them and to tie our own hands in making necessary changes in our relations with the petty landholders, would be equivalent politically to a serious mistake. We must instruct the elected Central Committee to elaborate and establish norms and changes. In this matter, speaking theoretically, we face a number of transition stages, of transition measures. One thing is clear, the resolution of the Ninth Congress presupposed that our movement would continue to follow a straight line. But it has turned out, as so often turns out in the history of revolutions, that the movement has moved in a zigzag. It would be a political mistake to tie our hands with such a resolution. In repealing it, we are stat-

ing that we need a guiding program which will emphasize the importance of the coöperative apparatus.

In repealing it, we are saying: "Adapt yourselves to the substitution of the tax in kind for the requisitions." But when shall we introduce this measure? Not before the harvest, *i.e.*, not for several months. Will the measure be identical in the various provinces? By no means. To attempt to subject Central Russia, the Ukraine and Siberia to the same single mechanical plan would be a great error. I propose that this fundamental thought on the freedom of local exchange be drawn up in the form of a decision of this congress. I think surely that we shall very soon have a circular from the Central Committee, which will say—and much better than I can say it: "Destroy nothing; don't rush things; do not hasten your decisions; act in such manner as to satisfy the middle peasantry as much as you can, without encroaching on the interests of the proletariat. Try this thing and that, learn from practical experience, and then communicate your findings to us, and we shall organize a special commission, or several commissions if necessary, which will study the material you have gathered. In order to be able to follow up the results of our experience, we shall need a tenfold verification of the measures we adopt."

We may be asked where goods will be supplied. And we shall be able to supply them, since our economic position on an international scale has been improved to an enormous degree. As to just how we shall be able to do the thing, that is another question, but a certain possibility does exist.

I repeat: the type of economic relations which this bloc of allied governments obtains from above, affords a possibility for the proletarian government power to undertake free trade with the peasants below. I know, and have already had occasion to say, that this question has already been productive of some mirth. In Moscow there is a whole crowd of bureaucratic intellectuals who are trying to create a "public opinion."

They have already begun to make merry; this is how communism came into being, somewhat like a man with crutches under him and with a bandage covering his face, and of communism remained only an enigmatical picture. I have heard enough of jokes of this type, but they are merely bureaucratic jokes, not to be taken seriously. When Russia came out of the war, she was in a state very much like that of a man who has been beaten into a half-dead condition. For seven years Russia was being beaten, and, thank God, we are moving along on our crutches. That is our present state! It would be wrong to imagine that we are already prepared to throw away our crutches. So long as there is no revolution in other countries, we shall not be able to dispense with our crutches for decades, and we shall have to sacrifice not only a miserable hundred millions but thousands of millions of rubles, taking them from our limitless resources, from our great sources of raw materials, merely in order to obtain the aid of a powerful and developed capitalism. And we shall get back all our outlay, with interest added. To maintain the proletarian power in a country in an unheard-of state of exhaustion, with an immensely predominant peasantry, in an equal state of exhaustion, without the aid of capital, even though it may cost us a hundred per cent, will be impossible. We must understand this. In other words, either we shall have this type of economic relations, or none at all. Any one who would put the situation differently, understands nothing at all of practical economy and is disposing of the question with ingenious falsehoods. We must recognize this fact of exhaustion and impotence. Seven years of war must have had their influence on us, if four years of war have already succeeded in shaking the most advanced countries.

In our backward country, seven years of war have left us in a condition of outright incapacity. This incapacity, this situation means, practically, a complete inability to work. What we need is an economic revival. I shall communicate

the question I have received from Comrade Lezhava, from which we shall see that a few hundred thousand puds of provision supplies of various types have already been purchased and are being imported as fast as possible from Lithuania, Finland and Latvia. To-day we received news that a contract has been signed in London, covering 18,500,000 puds of coal, which we decided to buy in order to revive both the Petersburg and the textile industries. If we can get goods for the peasant, no doubt this may be a violation of our program, no doubt it is incorrect, but we must communicate a reviving impulse, since the nation is so exhausted that there will be no other way of getting it to work.

Something must still be said concerning individual exchange of goods. When we speak of freedom of exchange, this means an individual turnover of goods, *i.e.*, it means aiding the *kulak*. What will come of this? We must not close our eyes to the fact that the substitution of the tax for the requisitions means that the *kulaks* of the given system will be able to flourish ever more than before. They may sprout up where they could not exist before. But we must not fight this condition with measures of prohibition, but with government unity and government measures. If you can give the government machines, you are aiding the government, and when you provide machines or an electrification system, you will cut down tens or hundreds of thousands of petty *kulaks*. If you cannot provide the machinery, then provide a certain quantity of goods. If you have these goods, you will maintain power, but if you will delay, cut off, prevent this possibility, you will be cutting off any opportunity for exchange, in other words, you will fail to satisfy the middle peasantry. The peasantry in Russia has become more of the middle type and there is no need for fear that the exchange will become individual exchange. Each one can give something to the state in exchange for what he gets. One will be able to give his surplus grain; another will give vegetables; a third will bind

himself to do work in payment. In general, the fact is we must satisfy the middle peasantry in an economic sense and undertake a free exchange, otherwise it will be impossible to preserve the power of the proletariat in Russia by economic means, owing to the delay in the international revolution. This fact must be faced frankly; we must not be afraid to talk of it. In the draft before us, as you will see, there are a number of inconsistencies, contradictions, for which reason we have concluded with the words: "The Congress, approving in general the motion introduced by the Central Committee for the substitution of a tax in kind for the requisitions, instructs the Central Committee of the Party to adjust this proposition as early as possible." We know very well it is not a unified document; we have not been able to make it so; we have not finished this work of detail. The All-Russian Central Executive Committee and the Council of People's Commissars will work out in detail the forms of enforcing the tax and will propose an appropriate law. If you adopt this measure to-day, it will be adopted at the first session of the All-Russian Central Executive Committee, which again will publish not a law, but only a new form of ordinance, which the Council of People's Commissars and the Council of Labor and Defense will transmute into a law, and what is more important, they will also give practical instructions. This is important in order that the provinces may understand the significance of the thing and be prepared to cope with it.

Why must we substitute a tax in kind for the requisitions? *The requisition proposed to take the entire surplus, and to establish an obligatory state monopoly. We could not do otherwise; we were in a condition of extreme poverty. Theoretically, it is not obligatory, for a state monopoly is best from the point of view of socialism, but only as a transition measure in a peasant country, which has industry and in which the industry is working. And when there is a certain quantity of commodities, it is necessary to apply a system of tax and*

free exchange. This exchange will serve as a stimulus, an awakener, an impulse to the peasantry. The farmer can and should exert himself in his own interest in order that he may not be deprived of all his surplus, but only of a tax which should expediently be fixed in advance. The important thing is that it should serve as a stimulus, an awakener, an impulse, to the petty land-holder. *We must build up our national economy directly on the economy of the middle peasants,* which we have not been able to make over for these three years, and which we shall not be able to make over for another decade. The government was faced with a definite food responsibility. *Our requisitions last year were increased. The tax should be less.*

If there is a crop failure, we cannot take the surplus, for there will be no surplus. It would be equivalent to taking the food from the peasant's mouth. If there is a crop failure, well—we shall all starve a little and—the state will be saved; in fact, if we are not able to take from persons who have not enough for themselves, the state will fail. This is the task of our propaganda among the peasants. If the harvest will yield surpluses up to five hundred millions, they will cover our requirements and will furnish a certain surplus fund. The whole point is to give the peasants a stimulus, an incentive from the economic point of view. We must say to the farmer: Farmer, give your products and the government will impose the smallest possible tax. Therefore we propose to take this resolution as a basis and to give instructions as to details. The workers in the provinces will make an effort to work out the details. It will be impossible to determine everything to the end, since the task is yet unsolved, since life is too complicated. It is an extremely difficult thing to determine on transition measures; it has not been possible to do so quickly and without digressions. We shall not lose courage; we shall make our way. No intelligent peasant can fail to understand that we as a government represent the working class and those toilers with

whom the toiling peasantry—in other words, nine-tenths of the peasantry—can come to terms, that every step backward means a return to the old Tsarist government. The experience of Kronstadt has shown this. They do not want the White Guards back, but there is no other government if they do not want our government. And their situation is one that will be the best possible propaganda for us and against any other new government.

We now have an opportunity to adjust our relations with the peasantry and we must put this thing through practically, intelligently, boldly, flexibly. We know our apparatus of Provision Committees; we know it is one of our best organizations. Comparing it with the others, we find that it is the best mechanism, and must be preserved, but the mechanism must be subordinated to policy. Our magnificent Provision Committees will be worthless if we cannot adjust our relations with the peasantry. In fact, this splendid system will turn out as an aid not to our class, but to Denikin and Kolchak. When the political situation requires determined measures, flexibility, bold transition, the leaders should recognize the fact. A sound mechanism should be available for any maneuvers. But if the rigid mechanism should turn out to be ossified, to be a hindrance to motion, struggle will be inevitable. We must therefore apply all our forces, in order to attain our aim unconditionally, in order to attain a complete subordination of mechanics to politics. Politics means the relation between the classes; it will solve the destinies of the republic. An organization, as an auxiliary device, is the more sound, the more adaptable it can be made to tactics. If it cannot fulfil this demand, it is no good for anything. And I invite you to bear in mind the fundamental fact that the requisitions, in their details and interpretations, were a work of several months. And now we must bear in mind the important fact that we must see to it that the radio launches this message at night to every corner of the earth: the Con-

gress of the governing party in principle is substituting a tax for the requisitions, thus imparting a number of incentives to the petty land-holder, to expand his operations, to increase the land sown; that the Congress in taking this path is creating a system of relations between the proletariat and the peasantry and is thus expressing its confidence that by this means a durable relation between the proletariat and the peasantry will be attained.

FROM NEP RUSSIA TO SOCIALIST RUSSIA

(Delivered at the Plenary Session of the Moscow Provincial Soviet, November 19, 1922)

In November, 1922, Lenin was recuperating from a year's severe illness which removed him altogether from his work. He was permitted to appear in public only under medical supervision. The Moscow workers were anxious to see and hear him again. With a doctor and nurse by his side Lenin spoke at the Fourth Congress of the Communist International then in session at Moscow. A few days later he appeared for the last time before a workers' audience, when he delivered an address before the Moscow Soviet which is reproduced below. He later suffered a relapse from which he never recovered. He remained prostrate till his death on January 21, 1924.

I REGRET very much—and apologize for it—that I have not been able to attend these sessions earlier. As I remember, you prepared some weeks ago to give me an opportunity to attend the Moscow Soviet. It was impossible for me to do this since, after my illness, beginning in December of last year, I had lost my ability to work, for a considerable period (to use the expression adopted by my specialists) and as a result of my diminished power to work, I was obliged to postpone my present public appearance from week to week. I was obliged also to transfer a considerable amount of my work, which you will remember I had first burdened Comrade Tsurupa with, and later Comrade Rykov, to the shoulders—finally, of Comrade Kamenev. I must admit that—continuing the comparison with which I have begun—Comrade Kamenev was obliged to bear two loads. To be sure, if I may be permitted to use the same comparison again, my steed turned out to be an exceptionally willing and spirited one, but it is not right for

him to bear two loads, and I am now patiently awaiting the day when Comrades Tsurupa and Rykov may return, and we may share this work in a more or less equitable manner. Because of my diminished working power, I have been obliged to absent myself from my work for a far longer time than I should have liked. In December, 1921, when I was compelled to break off work altogether, we were approaching the end of the year. We were passing through the transition to the New Economic Policy, and it was already plain that this transition, though we had undertaken it in the early part of 1921, was going to be quite a task, I might say, an immense task.

More than a year and a half have passed since we introduced this change, when we were obliged to relocate most things in new places and to shift many matters in accordance with the new conditions, particularly the conditions of the New Economic Policy.

In our foreign policy, we have had altogether few changes. In this field, we have continued the course we had taken earlier, and I consider that I can say to you with a clear conscience that we have followed this course with complete consistency and with great success. Nor do I need to speak to you in detail of this; the taking of Vladivostok and the subsequent demonstration and the public announcements which you have read in the papers in recent days have shown most clearly that we had no alterations to make in this relation. We stand on the road, a road which follows a clear and definitely plotted course, and have secured our successes in the presence of the governments of all the world, although a number of them have hitherto been ready to state that they would not wish to sit around the same table with us. None the less, economic relations, to be followed by diplomatic relations, are being prepared, should be prepared, and will be set in motion immediately. Any government opposing this consummation runs the risk of losing time and perhaps even—

which is very important—the risk of getting into an awkward situation. We are now aware of this not only from the newspapers. I think that the comrades can convince themselves even from the trains arriving from abroad how great this change has been. In this connection, if I may use an old figure of speech, we have not needed to transfer to any other trains, or to any other conveyance.

And now, in the matter of our domestic policy, the transfer which we made in the spring of 1921, which was dictated to us by conditions of extraordinary force and convincing power, with the result that there were no objections and no disagreements among us as to the necessity of this change, no doubt this transfer continues to cause us certain difficulties, I might say, even great difficulties. Not that we had any doubts as to the necessity of a change—there were no such doubts—not because we doubted whether the experiment of this New Economic Policy of ours would show the successes we expected. There were no doubts on this score—I may say this quite definitely—neither in the ranks of our own party nor in the ranks of the immense masses of non-partisan workers and peasants.

The question presents no difficulties in this respect. The difficulties arise because we are being faced with a task that is obliging us to resort to the employment of new persons very frequently, and to introduce extraordinary measures and extraordinary methods. We still have doubts as to the correctness of this or that, as to whether the changes are heading in one direction or another, and I must say that some things have continued to prevail for quite a considerable time. The “New Economic Policy”—a strange name! This policy was called the New Economic Policy because it is a step backward. We are here giving way, but we are doing it in order to move forward again, and then to take a new start and bound forward with great speed. It is only under this condition that we retired to the point of introducing our New Economic Policy.

Just where and how we must now reconstruct our ranks, re-adapt ourselves, reorganize ourselves, in order to make a more stubborn advance after our retreat—this we do not yet know. In order to bring all these activities to a normal state, we must, in the words of the proverb, ponder not ten but a hundred times before we make up our minds. In order to dispose of these incredible difficulties facing us in the realization of all our tasks and questions, we must ponder much. You know very well how many sacrifices were made for the attainment of our success; you know how the civil war dragged on and how many forces it deprived us of. And here the taking of Vladivostok has shown us—no doubt Vladivostok is far away but it is *our* city!—has proved to all of us the general tendency in our favor, in favor of our achievements. Both here in Moscow and there in Vladivostok we have the Russian Socialist Federated Soviet Republic. This tendency freed us both from our domestic enemies and our foreign enemies, who were attacking us. I am referring to Japan.

We have gained a very definite diplomatic position, and this position means nothing more or less than a diplomatic position recognized by the entire world. You all understand this. You can see the results before you, but think of the time it has cost us! We have now gained the recognition of our rights by our enemies, both in the economic as well as in the commercial policy, as is shown by the conclusion of the trade agreements.

We can now see why it is so incredibly difficult for us to move forward on the path of the New Economic Policy on which we embarked a year and a half ago. We are living under the conditions of a government so greatly disorganized by war, so greatly driven from any reasonably normal course of activity, so greatly subjected to trials and tribulations, that we are now willy-nilly obliged to begin all our work with a very small percentage, with a pre-war percentage of accom-

plishment. This measure we must assign to the conditions of our life, sometimes somewhat impatiently, angrily, and always we find that immense difficulties face us. The task we have just set for ourselves appears all the more huge, when we compare it with the conditions of an ordinary bourgeois government. We set ourselves this task because we understood that we had no reason to hope for aid from the wealthy powers, which ordinarily is forthcoming under such circumstances. After the civil war we were practically subjected to a boycott, *i.e.*, we were told: "The economic relations which we are in the habit of granting and which are the regular thing in the capitalist world, we shall not grant to you."

A year and a half have passed since we entered upon our New Economic Policy, and a much longer time has passed since we concluded our first international agreement; yet, this boycott continues to be practiced against us by the entire bourgeoisie and by all the governments. We could not count on any other conduct in entering on our new economic conditions, and yet we had no doubt that we must change our course and yet meet with success simultaneously. This is the more the case, the plainer it becomes that any aid that might be granted us and that will be granted us on the part of the capitalist powers will not only not eliminate these conditions, but will, in all probability in most cases, even accentuate and sharpen these conditions. "All alone," was what we said to ourselves. "All alone," is what almost every one of the capitalist governments with whom we have had any sort of transactions at all, with whom we have established any sort of relations, with whom we have begun any kind of conversations, has said to us. This is precisely the peculiar difficulty of the situation. We must recognize this difficulty. We elaborated our national system in more than three years of incredibly difficult labor, full of incredible heroism. Under the conditions in which we have lived thus far, we have at times been obliged to consider whether we were not destroying

something that should not be destroyed, whether we should not suffer too many losses, for there were quite a number of losses, since this struggle which we then undertook (as you well know—wherefore I need not dwell on it at length) was not an ordinary war, but a life-and-death struggle with the old order of society against which we were waging war in order to assure ourselves the right to existence, to peaceful development. We have obtained it. This is not a mere statement of ours, not a testimony of eye witnesses who may be accused of sympathy with us. No, this testimony has been afforded in most cases by those who were not at all sympathetic to our position, but rather to that of Denikin, of the heroes of Vladivostok, of the occupation. We must now proceed to our tasks with full concentration, and understand that the main business at present is that of not surrendering our old achievements. We shall not give up a single one of our old achievements. Simultaneously, we shall be faced with entirely new problems; the old may turn out to be an outright hindrance. It will be extremely difficult to grasp this problem, but we must grasp it in order to learn how to work, and the proper time—so to speak—for making a complete about-face. I think, comrades, that these words and slogans are clear, since during the period of almost a year that I have had to be absent, there have been a number of occasions, hundreds of instances, in which you have had to speak and think on this subject, since you had the whole business—the object of your labor—in your own hands; and I am convinced that your discussions on this subject can lead you only to one conclusion: we are now required to show even more agility than we have thus far devoted to the civil war.

We need not renounce the old. A great number of concessions that brought us closer to the capitalist powers has afforded those powers a full opportunity to enter into relations with us, safeguarding their profits perhaps even more than they should have been safeguarded. These last few days the news-

papers have discussed the question of the concessions offered to the Englishman Urquhardt, who has hitherto been almost ceaselessly engaged in helping the civil war against us. He said: "We shall attain our objects in the civil war against Russia, against that very Russia which has dared to take this thing and that away from us." And after all this we have succeeded in entering into relations with him. We haven't refused these relations; we have accepted these relations with the greatest joy; but we have declared: "We beg your pardon, sir, but we shall not give back what we have conquered. Our Russia is so great, our economic possibilities so enormous, and, furthermore, we consider ourselves in the right in not renouncing your amiable propositions, but we shall consider them like cool-headed business people." To be sure, our first conversation did not bear fruit, since there was no possibility of our agreeing to his proposition for political reasons; we were obliged to answer with a refusal. For the English had not admitted the possibility of our participation in discussions of the question of the Straits, the Dardanelles; we were obliged to answer with a refusal; but now, after having given this refusal, we feel it our duty to take up a consideration of this question fundamentally. We considered whether this would be favorable to us or not; whether it would be favorable to agree to this concession; and if favorable, then under what conditions. We should now speak of the price. These things must show you clearly, Comrades, to what extent we are now obliged to approach questions in a different manner than before. Formerly, the communist said: "I shall give up my life!", which seemed very simple to him, although the matter was not always quite so simple. We communists are now facing an entirely different task. We are now obliged to weigh all things, and each one of us must learn to be cautious. We must learn to calculate under capitalist conditions how we shall safeguard our existence, how we shall obtain advantage from our opponents, who will of course bargain, who will

never cease to bargain, and who will of course bargain for our skin. We also shall not forget this, and shall not imagine that any of the representatives of trade can ever transform themselves into perfect lambs, after which transformation they will offer us blessings for nothing. This will not be the case; we have no hope of such conditions; but let us weigh things in order that, having accustomed ourselves to offer resistance, we may now, having retraced our steps, show ability even to trade, to survive, to emerge from our difficult economic situation. That is our extremely hard task. It is for this end that we work. I should like all of us to have a clear conception of how great is the gulf between the old tasks and the new ones. However great this gulf may be, we learned to maneuver during the war, and we must understand that the maneuver which is now to be executed, and in which we now are involved, is of the utmost difficulty. But this maneuver seems to be the last. We must exert all our strength and show that we have not only learned our science of yesterday and are still repeating it. On the contrary, we have begun to learn anew and we shall learn so thoroughly that we shall attain successes obvious to the eyes of all. It is for the sake of this learning anew—I think—that we must now again give to one another a solemn promise that under the New Economic Policy we retired, and that we retired in such way as not to give up anything new, and at the same time, in order to give the capitalists such opportunities as to make any government, however hostile it might be with regard to us, enter into transactions and relations with us. Comrade Krassin, who had many conversations with Urquhardt, the head and prop of the entire intervention, said that Urquhardt, after a number of efforts to impose the old system upon us once more at any cost, took a seat at the table next to him (Krassin) and began to say: "Concession for what? How much? For how many years?" Of course, this is still very far from putting us in a position of having concluded a number

of concession transactions, and of being on the point of thus entering into perfectly clear and—from the standpoint of bourgeois society—inflexible contract relations; but we can already see that we shall attain this condition; in fact, that we have all but attained it. It is this, Comrades, that you must understand, without being conceited about it. We have not yet attained in full measure that which will make us strong, independent, confidently assured that we need fear no capitalistic negotiations, confidently assured that hard though the business may be, we shall grasp its fundamental trait and solve it. For this reason, the work in this field—both in the political field and in the party—which we have begun, must be continued; for this reason we must proceed from the old methods to completely new methods.

The old methods have remained with us, and our task now is to change them. We cannot do this at a single stroke, but we must formulate the question so as to rightly reassign those communists that we have. These communists must be made to control the departments to which they have been assigned and not, as is so often the case in our country, be controlled by the old methods. Let us not cloak anything in secrecy; this thing requires plain statement. Here are certain tasks before us, certain difficulties; and here is the time at hand to enter our new path of activity, a path that will lead us to socialism, not as to an ikon painted in brilliant colors. We must take the right direction; and in order that everything may be verified, in order that the masses and the entire population shall be able to compare our path and shall say: "Yes, this is better than the old way"; that is the task we have set for ourselves. Our Party, a small group of persons as compared with the total population of the country, has assumed this task. This little insignificant grain has set itself the task of remaking everything, and it *is* remaking everything. We have already shown that this is not a Utopia, but a living fact. We have all seen this; it has been done. We must

remake conditions in such a way that the majority of the toiling masses, the peasants and the workers, will say: "You need not praise yourselves; we shall praise you; we shall say that you have attained better results, in the face of which not a single sensible man can ever think of returning to the old system." But we have not yet reached this condition. *For this reason, the New Economic Policy continues to be the principal slogan of the present day, far more important than anything else.* We shall not forget a single one of the slogans we learned yesterday. We can say this with perfect confidence, without a shade of hesitation, to any man that asks us, and any step we take proves it. But we have still to adapt ourselves to the New Economic Policy. All its negative sides, which I need not enumerate to you, since you know them, we must wipe out; we must learn to reduce them to a certain definite minimum; we must learn to construct all things in a responsible and cautious manner. Our legislation affords us a perfect opportunity to do this. Shall we be able to rise to this situation? This is by no means a solved question. But we are learning. Every issue of our Party organ contains dozens of articles, all of them reporting: in this factory or that, belonging to this manufacturer or that, such and such conditions prevail, and here where we have our own manager, a communist comrade, such and such conditions are found. Will this yield profit or not; is it justified or not? We have penetrated to the very heart of our everyday problems, and this is an immense achievement. Socialism is already no longer a question of the remote future, no longer an abstract picture, or an ikon to be worshiped. When we regarded ikons we remained with the old opinions, often bad ones. We have brought socialism down to everyday life, and here we must take cognizance of it. That is the problem of our day, the problem of our epoch. Permit me to conclude with an expression of confidence that however difficult this problem may be, however new as compared with our former problems,

and however great the difficulties it may cause us—we shall all together, not to-morrow but in a few years, we shall all together solve this question, be the cost what it may—namely, the question of making NEP Russia into a Socialist Russia.

THE END

EXPLANATORY NOTES

Alexeyev, Mikhail (1857-1918): Chief of staff of the Russian army during the War; counter-revolutionary general; organized an army in southeastern Russia against the Soviet government in 1918.

Avksentiev, N. D. (born 1878): Socialist-Revolutionist leader; member of the Kerensky government; active in anti-Soviet propaganda abroad.

Blanquism: Named after Auguste Blanqui (1805-1881), French revolutionist active in the Revolutions of 1830, 1848, and 1871, who stressed particularly secret plots and uprisings.

Chernov, Victor (born 1876): Leader of Russian Socialist-Revolutionists; member of Kerensky government and chairman of Constituent Assembly, 1918, dissolved by the Soviet government; bitter opponent of Bolsheviks and actively engaged in counter-revolutionary activities against the Soviet Union.

Chkheidze, N. S. (1864-1926): Leader of Mensheviks; member of third and fourth Dumas; chairman of Petrograd Soviet after March Revolution; favored coalition with bourgeois parties; active among Georgian Menshevik groups abroad till his death in Paris.

Czecho-Slovaks in Russia: War prisoners who were organized into a counter-revolutionary army in Russia in 1918, supported by foreign governments.

Dan, F. (born 1871): Menshevik leader, active in anti-Soviet propaganda abroad.

Defensists: Socialists who favored Russia's participation in the war against Germany.

Denikin, Anton (born 1872): Counter-revolutionary general during Civil War, 1918-20, ceded command to General Wrangel, April 4, 1920; now living in England.

Dutov: Counter-revolutionary Cossack general.

Guchkov, Alexander (born 1862): Large industrialist and leader of Octobrists (party of big bourgeoisie, organized to support the Tsar's Manifesto of October 30, 1905). Speaker of third Duma

and member of first Provisional government. Counter-revolutionist, living abroad.

Gvosdyev, K. A.: Menshevik who supported the war and was Assistant Minister of Labor in the Kerensky government; now employed in the Railways Commissariat.

Internationalists: Socialists in Russia who during the World War refused to support the government in the prosecution of the war, opposed to joining with other bourgeois parties or favoring a neutralization of the class struggle. The Internationalists occupied the middle ground between the Mensheviks and the Bolsheviks, always refusing to take a definite stand in favor of the Soviets' taking over power. Some joined the Bolsheviks on the eve of the decisive struggle in November, others after the establishment of the Soviet government. Many returned to the Menshevik camp and are opponents of the Soviet government.

Kaledin, Alexei (1861-1918): Counter-revolutionary general.

Kamenev, L. B. (born 1883): Old Bolshevik who after the November Revolution occupied various government posts; delegate to the Brest-Litovsk Peace Conference, Chairman of the Moscow Soviet, Vice-Chairman of the Council of Commissars, and Ambassador to Italy; expelled from the Communist Party and removed from important government posts because of organizing Opposition, 1927.

Kautsky, Karl (born 1854): Leading Marxian theoretician before the War; author of many Marxian classics and editor of *Neue Zeit* for about thirty years; bitter opponent of the Communist movement and the Soviet government; now living in Vienna.

Kerensky, A. F. (born 1881): Prominent Socialist-Revolutionist, member of several Dumas, representing peasant elements; entered first Provisional government, later became head of the Coalition Cabinet, which was in power until the organization of the Soviet government; favored continuation of Russia's participation in the War and collaboration with bourgeois parties; actively engaged in anti-Soviet propaganda abroad, in which interest he visited the United States in 1926.

Kolchak, Vladimir (1874-1920): Admiral, head of the counter-revolutionary government in Siberia; executed by his own soldiers.

Krassin, Leonid (1870-1926): Old Bolshevik, entrusted with various important government posts after the November Revolution, particularly in the diplomatic field; Commissar of Foreign Trade; Ambassador to England; Ambassador to France.

Krylenko, Nikolai (born 1885): While ensign in the Navy, was made commander of the Russian army and navy after the November Revolution; at present Chief Prosecuting Attorney of the Soviet government.

Kulak: Russian for *first*—a tight-fisted wealthy peasant exploiting poorer peasants.

Longuet, Jean (born 1876): Son of a member of Paris Commune, and grandson of Karl Marx; leader of French Pacifist Socialists during the War.

Lvov, Prince G. E. (1861-1925): Large land-owner, zemstvo leader and Liberal member of the fourth Duma; head of first Provisional government from March to July, 1917.

Malvy, Louis Jean (born 1875): French member of cabinet, imprisoned during the War as German agent; afterwards freed and charges dismissed.

Milyukov, Professor Paul (born 1859): Leader of Constitutional-Democratic Party (Liberal bourgeoisie) between 1905 and 1917; Foreign Minister in first Provisional government after March Revolution, from which post he was soon forced to resign by the Petrograd Soviet, because of his imperialist policies. At present editor of an anti-Soviet paper in Paris.

Novaya Zhizn: The paper published in Petrograd in 1917 under the editorship of Maxim Gorky and others, which represented the policies of the Internationalist Social Democrats and others occupying the middle ground between the Mensheviks and Bolsheviks during that period. Many of the contributors to the paper later joined the Communist Party, while others went with the Mensheviks.

Paris Commune: Revolutionary government established at the close of the Franco-Prussian War by the workers of Paris and maintained between March 18 and May 15, 1871; for a detailed analysis of the Commune, see Karl Marx: *Civil War in France*.

Plekhanov, George (1850-1918): Founder of Marxian Socialism in Russia; later Menshevik leader and internationally recognized Marxian theoretician; during the War supported Russia's imperialist aims, and after the November Revolution bitter opponent of the Soviet government.

Potresov, A. N. (born 1869): One of the founders of Marxian Socialism in Russia; later Menshevik and pro-war Socialist; political emigrant opposed to the Soviet government.

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