
The
Soviets at Work

by
NIKOLAI LENIN



FIFTH EDITION

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Rand School of Social Science

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The
SOVIETS AT WORK

The International position of the Russian Soviet Republic
and the Fundamental Problems of the Socialist Revolution

By
NIKOLAI LENIN
PREMIER, RUSSIAN SOVIET REPUBLIC

FIFTH EDITION



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FOREWORD

The "Soviets at Work" is one of the most important documents which the Revolution in Russia has produced. It stands out not only for its incisive clearness but also because of its calm tone. While it is a piece of polemic literature, it is free from invective that marks most controversial writing.

The present, the fifth edition, has been extensively revised with the help of Dr. Dubrovsky, and the resultant work is a much-improved translation. While there are deviations from the texts as published in the first four editions, these are in no way modifications of Lenine's texts. They are in fact truer and clearer versions of the texts as originally published in Pravda.

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THE SOVIETS AT WORK

The Problems of the Soviet Government

Thanks to the peace obtained—in spite of its oppressiveness and all its insecurity—the Russian Soviet Republic is enabled for a certain time to concentrate its efforts on the most important and most difficult side of the Socialist revolution, the problem of organization.

This problem is presented clearly and precisely to the masses in the fourth section of the resolution adopted at the extraordinary Congress of the Soviets held at Moscow on March 16, 1916, the section which urges self-discipline of the workers and a merciless struggle against chaos and disorganization.

The insecurity of the peace obtained by the Russian Soviet Republic is not determined, of course, by the fact that it is now considering the renewal of military activity. With the exception of the bourgeois counter-revolutionists and their aids (the Mensheviks, etc.) no sensible statesman thinks of such a renewal. The insecurity of the peace is determined by the fact that in the imperialistic nations bordering on the West and on the East of Russia and possessing enormous military power, the upper hand may at any moment be gained by the military party, which is

tempted by the temporary weakness of Russia and incited by the anti-Socialist capitalists.

Under such conditions our real, and not assumed, guaranty of peace lies exclusively in the antagonisms among the various great powers. It is obvious that, in view of the weakness of such guaranty, our Socialist Soviet Republic is in an extremely precarious, undoubtedly critical international position. We must strain all our strength in order to utilize the respite granted to us by this situation to overcome the serious setbacks received by the whole social organism of Russia from the war, and to rehabilitate the economic resources of the country. Without such rehabilitation there can be no serious improvement in our ability to offer any kind of resistance.

It is also obvious that we will give valuable aid to a Socialist revolution in the West, delayed by a number of causes, only to the extent of our success in solving the organization problems confronting us.

A fundamental condition for the successful solution of our most urgent problems of organization is the complete comprehension by the political leaders of the people; i. e., by the members of the Russian Communist Party (Bolsheviks)¹ and then by all true representatives of the toiling masses, of the basic difference between the earlier bourgeois and the present Socialist revolution with respect to the problem under consideration.

¹ The Bolsheviks—formerly a faction within the Social-Democratic Labor Party, have recently changed their name to Communist Party to distinguish themselves from the other Social-Democratic groups.

The terms Bolsheviks and Mensheviks date back to 1903, when at a congress of the Russian Social-Democratic Labor Party a difference arose on a seemingly unimportant question (editorial supervision of the party organ), when upon a vote which decided the question, there naturally was a majority and minority. Those who were with the majority were nicknamed Bolsheviks and those with the minority Mensheviks, deriving their names from the Russian words Bolshinstvo and Menshinstvo, meaning majority and minority respectively.

Bourgeois and Socialist Revolutions Contrasted

The main task of the toiling masses in the bourgeois revolutions consisted in performing the negative, destructive work—the destruction of feudalism and the monarchy. The positive, constructive work of organizing a new society was the function of the propertied bourgeois minority of the population. And they accomplished this task, in spite of the resistance of the workers and the poorest peasants, with comparative ease, not only because the resistance of the exploited masses was then extremely weak on account of their unorganized state and their ignorance, but also because the fundamental organizing force of the anarchic capitalistic society is provided by the natural, extensive and intensive growth of the national and international market.

In every Socialist revolution, however, the main task of the proletariat, and of the poorest peasantry led by it—and, hence, also in the socialist revolution in Russia inaugurated by us on November 7, 1917²—consists in the positive and constructive work of establishing an extremely complex and delicate net of newly organized relationships covering the systematic production and distribution of products which are necessary for the existence of tens of millions of people. The successful realization of such a revolution depends on the original historical creative work of the majority of the population, and first of all of the majority of the toilers. The victory of the Socialist revolution will not be assured, unless the proletariat and the poorest peasantry manifests sufficient consciousness, idealism, self-sacrifice and persistence. With the creation of a new type of state, the Soviet, offering to the oppressed toiling masses the opportunity to participate actively in the free construction of a new society, we have solved only

² November 7, 1917, is the date of the successful Bolshevik *coup d'état*. The Kerensky coalition government was forced to abdicate on that day and the Soviet government, with the Bolshevik leaders, Nikolai Lenin and Leon Trotsky, at the helm, was instituted in its place.

a small part of the difficult task. The main difficulty is in the economic domain: to raise the productivity of labor, to establish strict and uniform state accounting and control of production and distribution, and actually to socialize production.

The Evolution of Bolshevism

The evolution of the Bolshevik party, which is today the governing party of Russia, shows with great clearness the nature of the crisis, which characterizes the present political situation and demands a new orientation by the Soviet authority; i. e., new methods applied to new problems.

The first problem of any rising party consists in convincing the majority of the population that its program and policies are correct. This was the most important problem during czarism and during the period of compromises of the Tchernovs and Zeretellis, with Kerensky and Koshkin.³ At present this problem, which is, of course, far from solved, is, in the main, settled for the majority of the workers and peasants of Russia, who definitely side with the Bolsheviks, as was shown beyond doubt by the last Congress of the Soviets in Moscow.

The second problem of our party was the conquest of political power and the suppression of the resistance of the exploiters. This problem is not yet settled, and we cannot ignore that fact, for the Monarchists and Cadets⁴ on one

³ Tchernov and Zeretelli, leaders of the moderate Socialist-Revolutionists and Social-Democrats (Mensheviks) respectively were members of the Kerensky government, which had also non-Socialist (Constitutionalists-Democrats) representatives. They favored coalition, while the Bolsheviks stood for a complete control of the government by the Soviets.

⁴ The Constitutionalists-Democrats, the party of the bourgeois liberals, led by Professor Paul N. Miluykov, who was Foreign Minister in the first Provisional Government, derive the name Cadets from the two Russian initials of their full name.

hand, and the Mensheviks⁵ and Socialist-Revolutionists⁶ of the right—who echo and follow them—on the other hand, continue their attempts to unite for the overthrow of the Soviet power. But, in the main, the problem created by the resistance of the exploiters was already solved in the period between November 7, 1917, and (approximately) February, 1918—the time of the surrender of Bogajevsky.⁷

The Problems of Management

We are now confronted by the third problem, which is the most urgent and which characterizes the present period

⁵ The Mensheviks are the moderate wing of the Russian Social-Democratic Labor Party, and have always opposed the Bolsheviks on questions of tactics. The war and the Revolution have widened the gulf which separated them, though both elements considered themselves as belonging to one Marxian Socialist movement. Since the beginning of the war the Mensheviks themselves were split into two factions, the one led by George V. Plechanov, which was nationalist, and the other led by Martov, which was internationalist. During the first eight months of the Revolution (March-November), the Mensheviks were in control of the Soviets, while the Bolsheviks were the opposition, demanding the break of the Mensheviks with the bourgeois parties. It was this policy that finally led to the victory of the Bolsheviks over the Mensheviks in the Soviet.

⁶ The Party of Socialist-Revolutionists was the other Socialist party in Russia. It represented the non-Marxian Socialist movement. While the Social-Democrats were primarily active among the city workers, the Socialist-Revolutionists interested themselves in the agrarian problem and spread their organization among the peasants. With this party was also connected the Terrorist group, which was responsible for the various assassinations under the old regime. As with the Social-Democrats, the war and the Revolution have brought about a split among the Socialist-Revolutionists. Corresponding to the Plechanov group among the Social-Democrats, were the elements among the Socialist-Revolutionists, led by Mme. Breshko-Breskovsky, known as Babushka (little mother), who supported Kerensky, also a member of this party. The moderate Internationalist group led by Victor Tchernov formed the center and the radical elements led by Spiridonova formed the left wing.

⁷ Reference is here made to the surrender of the leader of the Don Cossacks during one of the counter-revolutionary attempts in the region under General Kaledin, the Hetman of the Don Cossacks.

—the industrial organization of Russia. We had to deal with it and have been *solving* it ever since November 7, 1917. But heretofore, as long as the resistance of the exploiters manifested itself in open civil warfare, the problem of management could not become the principal, the central problem.

At present it has become the central problem. We, the Bolshevik party, have convinced Russia. We have won Russia from the rich for the poor, from the exploiters for the toilers. And now it is our task to manage Russia. The special difficulty of the present period consists in understanding the peculiarities of the transition from the problem of convincing the people and suppressing the exploiters by force, to the problem of management.

For the first time in the history of the world, the Socialist party has succeeded in completing, essentially, the task of winning power and suppressing the exploiters, and in approaching to the problem of management. We must prove worthy of this, the most difficult (and the most promising) problem of the Socialist revolution. We must not fail to see that, besides the ability to convince the masses and to win in civil war, our success depends on our ability to organize. This is the most difficult problem. It means the organization of the economic foundations of life for millions of people on a new basis. And it is the most promising problem, for only after its solution shall we be able to say that Russia has become not only a Soviet, but a Socialist republic.

The objective situation described above, which was created by the extremely oppressive and insecure peace, by the terrible disorganization, unemployment and starvation, which we have inherited from the war and from the rule of the bourgeoisie (represented by Kerensky and his supporters—the Mensheviks and Social-Revolutionists of the Right), has inevitably produced an extreme weariness in and even exhaustion of the toiling masses. It is but natural that they insistently demand some rest. The res-

toration of the productive forces destroyed by the war and by the management of the bourgeoisie; the curing of wounds received from the war, speculation and the attempts of the bourgeoisie to re-establish the overthrown power of the exploiters; the economic rehabilitation of the country; the maintenance of elementary order—these are the urgent problems to which we must turn. It may seem paradoxical, but the fact is that in view of the above-mentioned objective conditions there can be no doubt that at the present moment the Soviet power cannot make secure the transformation of Russia toward Socialism, unless it can solve in a practical way these most elementary problems of social life—in spite of the resistance of the bourgeoisie, the Mensheviks and the Social-Revolutionists of the Right. In view of the concrete peculiarities of the present situation and in view of the existence of the Soviet power with its laws on socialization of the land, on labor control, etc., the practical solution of these elementary problems would mean that we will have overcome the organization difficulties of the first steps toward Socialism.

“Keep accurate and conscientious accounts; conduct business economically; do not loaf; do not steal; maintain strict discipline at work.” These slogans, which were justly ridiculed by revolutionary proletarians when they were used by the bourgeoisie to cover its domination as a class of exploiters, have now, after the overthrow of the bourgeoisie, become our urgent and principal slogans. And the practical realization of these slogans by the toiling masses is, on the one hand, the sole condition for the salvation of the country, which has been shattered by the imperialistic war and by the imperialists (headed by Kerensky), and on the other hand, the practical realization of these slogans by the Soviet power, with its methods, and on the basis of its laws, is necessary and sufficient for the final victory of Socialism. This, however, is not comprehended by those who contemptuously refuse to urge such “common” and “trivial” slogans. In our agricultural country, which only a year ago overthrew czarism and

less than half a year ago freed itself from the Kerenskys, there remained, naturally, a good deal of unconscious anarchism, which is increased by the bestiality and barbarity accompanying every prolonged and reactionary war, and a good deal of despair and aimless anger has accumulated. If we should add to this the treasonable policy of the servants of the bourgeoisie, the Mensheviks, the Social-Revolutionists of the Right, etc., it will become clear that energetic and persistent efforts must be exerted by the best and most conscious workers and peasants to effect a complete change in the mood of the masses and to turn them to a regular, uninterrupted and disciplined labor. Only such a change accomplished by the masses of proletarians and near-proletarians can complete the victory over the bourgeoisie, and especially over the more persistent and numerous peasant bourgeoisie.

A New Phase in the Struggle with Capitalism

We have defeated the bourgeoisie, but it is not yet destroyed and not even completely conquered. We must therefore resort to a new and higher form of the struggle with the bourgeoisie; we must turn from the very simple problem of continuing the expropriation of the capitalists to the more complex and difficult problem—the problem of creating conditions under which the bourgeoisie could neither exist nor come anew into existence. It is clear that this problem is infinitely more complicated and that we can have no Socialism until it is solved.

Comparing our revolution with the revolutions of Western Europe, we are now approximately at the point which was reached in France in 1793 and 1871. We have a right to be proud of the fact that we have reached this point and that in one respect we have, undoubtedly, gone somewhat further; i. e.: we have decreed and established throughout Russia a higher type of state—the Soviet rule. But we cannot possibly rest satisfied with these achievements, for we have only begun the transformation toward Socialism, and in this respect we have not yet accomplished anything decisive.

Of decisive importance is the organization of strict and uniform accounting and control of production and distribution. But, we have not yet effected accounting and control in those enterprises and in those branches and departments of economic effort which we have taken away from the bourgeoisie. Without this there can be no question of the second condition, just as essential to the establishment of Socialism, i. e.: the increase of the productivity of labor on a national scale.

It would therefore be impossible to define the problem of the present period by the simple formula: "to continue the offensive against capitalism." In view of the fact that we have, undoubtedly, not conquered capitalism, and that it is absolutely necessary to continue the attack on this enemy of the workers, such a definition would be vague and it would not indicate the peculiarity of the present period, when in the interests of a successful final offensive it is necessary to "halt" the offensive for the present.

This can be explained by comparing our position in the war against capitalism with the position of a victorious army which has captured, let us say, half or two-thirds of the enemy's territory and is compelled to halt the offensive in order to recuperate, to increase the supply of ammunition, to repair and to strengthen the communication lines, to build new store-houses, to bring up new reserves, etc. A halt in the offensive of the victorious army under such conditions is necessary in order to win the remaining territory from the enemy; *i. e., in the interests of complete victory.* Whoever fails to understand that just such a "halt" in the offensive against capitalism is dictated to us by the objective situation of the present period, does not understand anything in the present situation.

Of course, we can speak only metaphorically of a "halt" in the offensive against capitalism. In an ordinary war it is possible to issue a general order to halt the offensive; it is possible actually to stop the movement forward. In the war against capitalism the movement forward cannot be stopped, and there can be no question of our renouncing

any further expropriation of capital. We are considering here the question of changing the basis of our economic and political structure. Heretofore, measures for the immediate expropriation of the expropriators were preeminent. At present preeminence must be given to the organization of accounting and control in those enterprises in which the capitalists have already been expropriated.

Were we to attempt now to continue the expropriation of capital at the same rate as heretofore, we would surely be defeated. It is clear to every thinking person that our work of organizing proletarian accounting and control has not kept pace with the work of the direct "expropriation of the expropriators." If we now turn all our efforts to organizing accounting and control, we shall be able to solve this problem; we shall overcome our shortcomings and win our "campaign" against capitalism.

But is not the admission that we have difficulties to overcome equivalent to an admission that some mistakes have been made? Not at all. We will again use a military example. If the enemy can be defeated and forced back by the use of light cavalry only, this should be done. And if this can be done successfully only up to a certain line, it is quite conceivable that beyond this line it becomes necessary to bring up the heavy artillery. Admitting that it is now necessary to overcome our difficulties by bringing up the heavy artillery, we do not admit that the victorious cavalry attack was a mistake.

We have been frequently reproached by the servants of the bourgeois for conducting a "Red Guard" attack on capitalism. An absurd reproach, worthy indeed of servants of the money pouch! The "Red Guard" attack on capitalism was at that time absolutely dictated by the circumstances: first, capitalists were offering military resistance through Kerensky and Kransnov, Savinkov and Gotz (Gegechkori is even now offering such resistance), Dutov

and Bogajevsky.⁸ Military resistance can be crushed only by military means, and the Red Guards were contributing to the noblest and greatest cause in history, the cause of emancipation of the exploited toilers from the oppression of the exploiters.

Secondly, we could not then give preeminence to the method of management instead of the methods of suppression because the art of management is not inherent in people, but is gained through experience. At that time we did not have this experience. We have it now!

Thirdly, then we could not have at our disposal specialists in different branches of science, for they were either fighting in the ranks of the Bogajevskys, or were still in a position to offer systematic and persistent passive resistance through sabotage.

Does this mean that the "Red Guard" attack on Capital is the right method always in all circumstances, and that we have no other methods of combating capitalism? To think so would be too naive. We have won with light cavalry, but we also have heavy artillery at our disposal. We have been winning by methods of suppression. We will be able to win also by methods of management. We should be able to change the methods of fighting with the change of circumstances. We do not for a moment reject the "Red Guard" suppression of the Savinkovs and Gegchkoris as well as of any other bourgeois counter-revolutionist. But we will not be so stupid as to give preeminence to the "Red Guard" methods.

The Need of Specialists

At present, when the epoch of "Red Guard" attacks is in the main completed (and completed victoriously), it is becoming urgent for the proletarian state authority to make

⁸ Persons representing bourgeois counter-revolutionary elements and Socialist groups actively opposing the Bolsheviks, and directly or indirectly aiding the counter-revolutionists.

use of the bourgeois specialists for the purpose of re-
plowing the soil so that no bourgeoisie can grow on it.

This is a peculiar stage of development, and in order definitely to defeat capitalism, we should be able to adapt the forms of our struggle to the peculiar conditions of such a period.

Without the direction of specialists in different branches of science, such as technical men, the transformation toward Socialism is impossible, for Socialism demands a conscious mass movement toward a comparatively higher productivity of labor on the basis which has been attained by capitalism. Socialism must accomplish this movement forward in its own way, by its own methods—to make it more definite—by Soviet methods. But the specialists are inevitably bourgeois, on account of the whole environment of social life which made them specialists. If our proletariat, having obtained power, had rapidly solved the problem of accounting, control and organization on a national scale (this was impossible on account of the war and the backwardness of Russia), then having crushed the sabotage of the capitalists, we would have obtained, through uniform accounting and control the complete submission of the bourgeois specialists. In view of the considerable delay in establishing accounting and control, although we have succeeded in defeating sabotage, we have not yet created an environment which would put at our disposal the bourgeois specialists. Many *saboteurs* are coming into our service, but the best organizers and the biggest specialists can be used by the state either in the old bourgeois way (that is, for a higher salary) or in the new proletarian way (that is, by creating such an environment of uniform accounting and control which would inevitably and naturally attract and gain the submission of specialists.) We were forced now to make use of the old bourgeois method and to agree to a very high remuneration for the services of the biggest of the bourgeois specialists. All those who are acquainted with the facts understand this, but not all give sufficient thought to the significance of such a measure on

the part of the Proletarian State. It is clear that such a measure is a compromise, that it is a defection from the principles of the Paris Commune and of any proletarian rule, which demand the reduction of salaries to the standard of remuneration of the average workers—principles which demand that “career hunting” be fought by deed, not by words.

Furthermore, it is clear that such a measure is not merely a halt in a certain part and to a certain degree, of the offensive against capitalism (for capitalism is not a quantity of money but a definite social relationship), but also a step backward by our Socialist Soviet state which has from the very beginning proclaimed and carried on a policy of reducing high salaries to the standard of wages of the average worker.

Of course, the lackeys of the bourgeoisie, particularly of the petty kind, like the Mensheviks and the Social-Revolutionists of the Right, will sneer at our admission that we are taking a step backward. But we should pay no attention to sneers. We must study the peculiarities of the highly difficult and new road to Socialism without concealing our mistakes and weaknesses. We must try to overcome our deficiencies in time. To conceal from the masses that attracting bourgeois specialists by extremely high salaries is a defection from the principles of the Commune, would mean that we had lowered ourselves to the level of bourgeois politicians who rule by practicing deception. To explain openly how and why we have taken a step backward and then to discuss publicly ways and means to overcome our deficiencies, is to educate the masses and to learn from experience, to learn together with them how to build Socialism. There has hardly been a single military campaign in history in which the victor has not made mistakes, suffered partial defeats, and temporarily retreated at some time. And the “campaign” against capitalism which we have undertaken is a million times more difficult than the most difficult military campaign, and it would be foolish and disgraceful to become dejected on account of a temporary and partial retreat.

The Reward of Specialists

Let us take up the question from the practical side. Let us assume that the Russian Soviet Republic must have a thousand first-class scientists and specialists of recognized skill and with practical experience in different departments of science, to direct the work of the people in order to accomplish most quickly the economic rehabilitation of the country. Let us assume that these great "stars" must be paid 25,000 rubles each per annum. Let us assume that this sum must be doubled (supposing premiums to be granted for particularly successful and rapid accomplishment of the most important tasks of organization and technique) or even made four times as large (supposing that we must get several hundred better paid foreign specialists). Well then, can this expenditure of 50,000,000 or 100,000,000 rubles a year for the reorganization of the work of the people along the lines of the latest scientific developments be considered excessive or unbearable for the Soviet Republic? Of course not. The vast majority of the enlightened workers and peasants will approve such an expenditure, knowing from practical life that our backwardness compels us to lose billions, and that we have not yet attained such a high degree of organization, accounting and control which would cause the universal and voluntary participation of these "stars" of the bourgeois intelligentsia⁹ in our work.

Of course, there is another side to this question. The corrupting influence of high salaries is beyond dispute—both on the Soviets (the more so since the swiftness of the revolution made it possible for a certain number of adventurers and thieves to join the Soviets, who together with the incapable and dishonest among certain commissaries would not object to becoming "star grafters") and on the mass of workers. But all thinking and honest workers and peasants will agree with us and will admit that we

⁹ Middle class intellectuals form a separate entity in Russian society.

are unable to get rid at once of the evil heritage of capitalism; that the Soviet Republic can be freed from "tribute" of 50,000,000 or a 100,000,000 rubles (a tribute for our own backwardness in the organization of accounting and control from the bottom up) only by organization, by increasing discipline among ourselves, by getting rid of all those who "keep the traditions of capitalism" i. e., the loafers, parasites and grafters. If the enlightened and advanced workers and peasants succeed, with the help of the Soviet institutions, in organizing and disciplining themselves, and in creating a powerful labor discipline in one year, then we will in one year do away with this "tribute" (which may be reduced even earlier) depending on the measure of success attained in creating labor discipline and organization among the workers and peasants. The sooner we ourselves, workers and peasants, learn better labor discipline and a higher technique of toil, making use of the bourgeois specialists for this purpose, the sooner we will get rid of the need of paying tribute to these specialists.

Workers Must Learn Problems of Management

Our work of organization, under the direction of the proletariat, of state accounting and control of production and distribution, is considerably behind our work of direct expropriation of the expropriators. We understand this is fundamentally necessary for understanding the peculiarities of the present period and of the problems dictated by these to the Soviets. The centre of gravity of the struggle with the bourgeoisie is shifted to the organization of accounting and control. This must be taken into account in order to determine correctly the urgent economic and financial problems concerning the nationalization of banks, monopolization of foreign trade, state control of currency, the introduction of a satisfactory wealth and income tax from the proletarian standpoint, and the introduction of obligatory labor service.

We are extremely backward in regard to Socialist reforms in these fields (and they are very important fields),

and we are backward for no other reason than this—that accounting and control, in general, are not sufficiently organized. Of course, this problem is one of the most difficult, and with the economic disorganization produced by the war, its solution must take a long time, and it should not be overlooked that just here the bourgeoisie—and especially the numerous petty and peasant bourgeoisie—gives us a good deal of trouble, disturbing the establishment of control; disturbing, for instance, the grain monopoly, gaining opportunities for speculation and speculative trade. What we have already decreed is yet far from adequate realization, and the main problem of today consists precisely in concentrating all efforts upon the actual, practical realization of the reforms which have already become the law, but have not yet become a reality.

In order to continue further the nationalization of the banks and to move steadily toward the transformation of the banks into centres of social bookkeeping under Socialism, we must first of all be successful in increasing the number of branches of the People's Bank, in attracting deposits, in making it easier for the public to deposit and withdraw money, in removing the possibility of panics, in discovering and executing the grafters and crooks, etc. We must first actually accomplish the simplest tasks, organize well what is already in our possession—and only then prepare for the more complex.

We must improve and regulate the state monopolies in grain, leather, etc., which we have already established—and thereby *prepare* for the state monopolization of the foreign trade; without such a monopoly we will not be able to “get rid of” foreign capital except by the payment of a “tribute.” Whatever possibility of Socialist construction exists, depends on whether we shall be able to protect our internal economic independence during the transition period by paying some “tribute” to foreign capital.

We are also extremely backward in the collection of taxes in general, and of wealth and income taxes in par-

ticular. The levying of contributions on the bourgeoisie—a measure which in principle is undoubtedly acceptable, and deserving of proletarian approval—shows that we are in this respect still nearer to the methods of conquest (of Russia) from the rich for the poor, than to the methods of management. But, to become stronger and to make our position firm, we must adopt the last named methods; we must substitute for the contributions exacted from the bourgeoisie, steadily and regularly collected wealth and income taxes, which will give more to the proletarian state and which requires of us greater organization and better regulated accounting and control.

The delay in introducing obligatory labor service is another proof that the most urgent problem is precisely the preparatory organization work which, on one hand, should definitely secure our gains, and which, on the other hand, is necessary to prepare the campaign to “surround capital” and to “compel its surrender.” The introduction of obligatory labor service should be started immediately, but it should be introduced gradually and with great caution, testing every step by practical experience, and, of course, introducing first of all obligatory labor service for the rich. The introduction of a labor record book and a consumption-budget record book for every bourgeois, including the village bourgeois, would be a long step forward toward a complete “siege” of the enemy and toward the creation of a really *universal* accounting and control over production and distribution.

The Significance of the Struggle for State Accounting and Control

The state, an organ of oppression and robbery of the people, left us as a heritage on the part of the people a great hatred for and distrust of everything connected with the state. To overcome this is a very difficult task, which only the Soviets can master, but which requires even from them considerable time and tremendous perseverance. This “heritage” has a particularly painful effect on the ques-

tion of accounting and control—the fundamental question for a Socialist revolution after the overthrow of the bourgeoisie. It will inevitably take some time before the masses begin to feel themselves free after the overthrow of the land owners and the bourgeoisie, and before they comprehend—not from books, but from their own experience through the Soviets—that without thorough state accounting and control of production and distribution the authority of the toilers, and their freedom, cannot last, and a return to the yoke of capitalism is inevitable.

All the habits and traditions of the bourgeoisie, and especially of the petty bourgeoisie, are also opposed to state control, and are for the inviolability of “sacred private property” and of “sacred” private enterprise.

It is especially clear to us now how correct is the Marxian proposition that Anarchism and Anarcho-Syndicalism are bourgeois tendencies, irreconcilable with Socialism, with a proletarian dictatorship and with Communism. The present struggle is for the purpose of instilling into the masses the idea of Soviet state control and accounting, for the realization of this idea, for a break with the accursed past, which accustomed the people to look upon the work of getting food and clothing as a “private” affair and on purchase and sale as something that “concerns only myself.” This is a most momentous struggle, of universal historical significance, a struggle of Socialist consciousness against bourgeois-anarchistic “freedom.” We have introduced labor control as a law, but it is barely beginning to be realized or even to penetrate the consciousness of the proletarian masses. That unaccountability in production and distribution is fatal for the first steps toward Socialism, that it means corruption, that carelessness in accounting and control is a direct assistance to the German and Russian Kornilovs, who can overthrow the authority of the toilers only in case we do not solve the problem of accounting and control, and who with the aid of the peasant bourgeoisie, the cadets, the Mensheviks and the Socialist-Revolutionists of the Right are watching us, waiting for

their opportunity—this is not adequately emphasized in our agitation, and is not given sufficient thought and is not sufficiently discussed by the advanced workers and peasants. And as long as labor control has not become a fact, as long as the advanced workers have not carried out a successful and merciless campaign against those who violate this control or who are careless with regard to control—we cannot move from the first step (from labor control) to the second step toward Socialism; i. e., to the regulation of production by the workers.

A Socialist state can come into existence only as a net of production and consumption communes, which keep conscientious accounts of their production and consumption, economize labor, at the same time steadily increasing its productivity and thus making it possible to lower the workday to seven, six or even less hours. Anything less than rigorous, *universal*, thorough accounting and control of grain and of the production of grain, and later also of all other necessary products, will not do. We have inherited from capitalism mass organizations which can facilitate the transition to mass accounting and control of distribution—the consumers' cooperatives. They are developed in Russia less than in the more advanced countries, but they comprise more than 10,000,000 members. The decree on consumers' associations which was recently issued is extremely significant, showing clearly the peculiarity of the position and of the problem of the Socialist Soviet Republic at the present time.

The decree is an agreement with the bourgeois co-operatives and with the workmen's co-operatives adhering to the bourgeois standpoint. It is noteworthy, in the first place, that representatives of these institutions not only participated in the deliberations on this decree, but had practically a determining voice, for parts of the decree which met determined opposition from these institutions were rejected. Secondly and essentially, the compromise consists in the rejection by the Soviet authority of the principles of free admission to the co-operatives (the only consistent prin-

inciple from the proletarian standpoint) and that the whole population of a given locality should be united in a single co-operative. The defection from this, the only Socialist principles, which are in accord with the problem of doing away with classes, allows the existence of "working class co-operatives" (which, in this case, call themselves "class" co-operatives only because they submit to the class interests of the bourgeoisie.) Lastly, the proposition of the Soviet government completely to exclude the bourgeoisie from the administration of the co-operatives was also considerably weakened, and only owners of capitalistic commercial and industrial enterprises are excluded from the administration.

If the proletariat, acting through the Soviets, should successfully establish accounting and control on a national scale, there would be no need for such compromise. Through the Food Departments of the Soviets, through their organs of supply, we would unite the population in one co-operative directed by the proletariat, without the assistance from bourgeois co-operatives, without concessions to the purely bourgeois principle which compels the labor co-operatives to remain side by side with the bourgeois co-operatives instead of wholly subjecting these bourgeois co-operatives, fusing both.

Entering into such an agreement with the bourgeois co-operatives, the Soviet authority has concretely defined its tactical problems and characteristic methods of action for the present stage of development; i. e.: directing the bourgeois elements, using them, making certain individual concessions to them, we are creating conditions for a movement forward which will be slower than we at first supposed, but at the same time more steadfast, with a more solidly protected base and communication line, and with better fortifications of the conquered positions. The Soviets can (and should) now measure their successes in the work of Socialist construction, by very simple and practical tests: "In exactly what number of communities (communes, or villages, blocks, etc.) and to what extent does

the development of the co-operatives approach the state when they will compromise the whole population?"

Higher Productivity of Labor

In every Socialist revolution—after the proletariat has solved the problem of winning power, and to the extent to which the problem of expropriating the expropriators and of suppressing their resistance is solved—it becomes necessary to turn first of all to the fundamental problem of the creation of a higher social system than capitalism; namely, to raise the productivity of labor, and in connection with this (and for this), to improve its organization. Our Soviet power is just in such a position when, thanks to the victories over the exploiters, from Kerensky to Kornilov, it has become possible for it to approach this problem directly and to take hold of it. And here it becomes at once clear that though it is possible to seize the central state power in a few days, though it is possible to suppress the military resistance and the sabotage of the exploiters even in the distant corners of a large country in several weeks, a sound solution of the problem of increasing the productivity of labor requires at least (especially after a most distressing and destructive war) several years. The decisive character of this work is determined by purely objective circumstances.

To increase the productivity of labor we must first of all secure the material basis of a large industry: the development of the production of fuel, iron, machinery and of the chemical industry. The Russian Soviet Republic is in such an advantageous position that it possesses, even after the Brest-Litovsk peace, colossal stores of ore (on the Ural), of fuel in western Siberia (hard coal), in Caucasia and in the southeast (petroleum), in central Russia (turf), vast resources of lumber, water-power and raw material for the chemical industry (Karabugaz) and so on. The exploitation of these natural resources by the latest technical methods will furnish a basis for an unprecedented development of production.

Higher productivity of labor depends, firstly, on the improvement of the educational and cultural state of the masses of the population. This improvement is now taking place with unusual swiftness, but is not perceived by those who are blinded by the bourgeois routine and are unable to comprehend what a longing for light and initiative is now pervading the masses of the people, thanks to the Soviet organizations. Secondly, economic improvement depends on higher discipline of the toilers, on higher skill, efficiency and intensity of labor and its better organization.

In this respect our situation is especially bad and even hopeless—if we should take the word of those who are frightened by the bourgeoisie or who are paid to serve it. These people do not understand that there has never been nor can ever be a revolution in which the adherents of the old regime have not wailed about disorganization, anarchy, etc. It is natural that among the masses who have just overthrown an incredibly barbarous oppression, there is profound and widespread unrest and ferment, that the development of a new basis of labor discipline is a very long process; that before the landowners and the bourgeoisie had been overcome, such development could not even begin.

But without being affected by this, often false, despair which is spread by the bourgeoisie and the bourgeois intellectuals (who have given up hope of retaining their old privileges), we should by no means conceal any manifest evils. On the contrary, we will expose them and we will improve the Soviet methods of combating them, for the success of Socialism is inconceivable without the victory of proletarian conscious discipline over the instinctive petty bourgeois anarchy, the real guaranty of a possible restoration of Kerenskyism and Kornilovism.

The most conscious vanguard of the Russian proletariat has already turned to the problem of increasing labor discipline. For instance, the central committee of the Metallurgical Union and the Central Council of the Trade Unions have begun work on respective measures and drafts of de-

crees. This work should be supported and advanced by all means. We should immediately introduce piece work and try it out in practice. We should try out every scientific and progressive suggestion of the Taylor system; we should compare the earnings with the general total of production or the exploitation results of railroad and water transportation and so on.

The Russian is a poor worker in comparison with the workers of the advanced nations, and this could not be otherwise under the regime of the czar and other remnants of feudalism. To learn how to work—this problem the Soviet authority should present to the people in all its comprehensiveness. The last word of capitalism in this respect, the Taylor system—as well as all progressive measures of capitalism—combine the refined cruelty of bourgeois exploitation and a number of most valuable scientific attainments in the analysis of mechanical motions during work, in dismissing superfluous and useless motions, in determining the most correct methods of the work, the best systems of accounting and control, etc. The Soviet Republic must adopt valuable scientific and technical advances in this field. The possibility of Socialism will be determined by our success in combining the Soviet rule and the Soviet organization of management with the latest progressive measures of capitalism. We must introduce in Russia the study and the teaching of the Taylor system and its systematic trial and adaptation. While working to increase the productivity of labor, we must at the same time take into account the peculiarities of the transition period from capitalism to Socialism, which require, on one hand, that we lay the foundation for the Socialist organization of *emulation*, and, on the other hand, require the use of compulsion so that the slogan of the dictatorship of the proletariat should not be weakened by the practice of a too mild proletarian government.

Socialism and Emulation

Among the absurd falsehoods which the bourgeois likes to spread about Socialism, is the one that Socialists deny

the value of *emulation*. In reality only Socialism, destroying classes and, hence, the enslavement of the masses, for the first time opens up opportunities for *emulation* on a mass scale. And only the Soviet organization, passing from the formal democracy of a bourgeois republic to the actual participation in management of the toiling masses, for the first time puts emulation on a broad basis. This is much easier to accomplish on the political than on the economic field, but for the success of Socialism the latter is the more important.

Let us take publicity as a means for stimulating *emulation*. A bourgeois republic establishes this only formally, actually subjecting the press to capital, amusing the "mob" with spicy political trifles, concealing occurrences in the factories, commercial transactions, etc., as a "business secret," protecting "sacred property." The Soviets abolished commercial secrecy and entered on a new road, but have done almost nothing to make use of publicity in the interests of economic *emulation*. We must systematically endeavor that—along with the merciless suppression of the thoroughly dishonest and insolently slanderous bourgeois press—work shall be carried on to create a press which will not amuse and fool the masses with spicy political trifles, but which will bring to the attention of the masses, and will help them to study seriously, the questions of everyday economics. Every factory, every village, is a production and consumption commune having the right and duty to apply the general Soviet regulations in its own way (not in the sense of violating the regulations, but in the sense of a diversity of forms in carrying them out), to solve in its own way the problem of accounting in production and distribution. Under capitalism, this was the "private affair" of the individual capitalist or landowner. Under the Soviets, this is not a private affair, but the most important national affair.

And we have hardly begun the immense and difficult, but also promising and important work of stimulating *emulation* between the communes, to introduce reports and

publicity in the process of the production of bread, clothing, etc., to transform the dry, dead bureaucratic reports into live examples—either repulsive or attractive. Under the capitalistic system of production the significance of an individual example, say, of some group of producers was inevitably extremely limited, and it was only a petty bourgeois illusion to dream that capitalism could be “reformed” by the influence of models of virtuous establishments. After the political power has passed into the hands of the proletariat and after the expropriation of the expropriators has been accomplished, the situation is radically changed, and—as has been many times pointed out by the most eminent Socialists—the force of an example can for the first time exert a mass effect. Model communes should and will serve the purpose of training, teaching and stimulating the backward communes. The press should serve as a weapon of Socialist construction, giving publicity in all details to the successes of the model communes, studying the principles of their success, their methods of economy, and, on the other hand, “blacklisting” those communes which persist in keeping the “traditions of capitalism;” i. e., anarchy, loafing, disorder and speculation. Statistics under capitalism were exclusively in the hands of government employes or narrow specialists—we must bring them to the masses, we must popularize them so that the toilers gradually learn to understand and to see for themselves what work and how much work is needed and how much rest they can have. In this way a comparison between the results of the enterprise of different communes will become a subject of general interest and study; the foremost communes will be immediately rewarded (by reducing the workday for a certain period, by raising the wages, offering them a greater quantity of cultural or *historical* advantages and treasures, etc.).

Counter-Revolutions Are Inevitable

The appearance on the historical stage of a new class in the role of a leader of society never occurs on the one hand without a period of upheavals, struggles and storms, on

the other hand, without a period of false steps, experiments, wavering and hesitation with regard to the choice of new methods that will fit the new objective circumstances. The perishing feudal nobility took revenge on the bourgeoisie, which was conquering and displacing it, not only by conspiracies, attempts at insurrections and restoration, but also by torrents of ridicule at the inability, clumsiness and blunders of the "insolent upstarts" who dared to take hold of the "sacred helm" of the state without the ancient training of the princes, barons, nobility and aristocracy for this work—quite like the revenge of the Kornilovs and Kerenskys, Gotz and Martovs,¹⁰ and other heroes of bourgeois morality or bourgeois scepticism, on the working class of Russia for its "insolent" attempt to seize power.

Of course, many months and years must pass before the new social class, a class heretofore oppressed and crushed by want and ignorance, can get accustomed to the new situation, can take account of everything, regulate its work and produce its own organizers. It is self-evident that the party which leads the revolutionary proletariat could not have gained experience in organizing large enterprises including millions and tens of millions of citizens; that to change the old habits of agitation must take a good deal of time. But it is not impossible, and—provided we have a clear understanding of the necessity of the change, a firm determination to accomplish it, and persistence in pursuing a great and difficult end—we will attain it. There is a great deal of organizing talent in the "people"; i. e., among the workers and among the peasants who are not exploiters; they have been oppressed, ruined and discarded in thousands by capitalism; we do not as yet know how to find them, how to encourage, assist them and give them prominence. But we will learn how, provided we start learning this with all the revolutionary zeal, without which no revolution can be victorious.

¹⁰ See note 8.

No profound and powerful popular movement in history ever escaped paying a price to the scum; the inexperienced innovators have been preyed upon by adventurers and crooks, boasters and shouters; there have been stupid confusion, unnecessary bustle. Individual "leaders" would undertake twenty tasks at once, completing none of them. Let the poodles of bourgeois society from Bielorussoff to Martov yelp and bark on account of every additional splinter going to waste while the big old forest is cut down. Let them bark. That is what poodles are there for. We will go ahead, trying very cautiously and patiently to test and discover real organizers, people with sober minds and practical sense, who combine loyalty to Socialism with the ability to organize quietly (and in spite of confusion and noise) efficient and harmonious joint work of a large number of people under the Soviet organization. Only such persons should, after many trials, advancing them from the simplest to the most difficult tasks, be promoted to responsible posts to direct the work of the people, to direct the management. We have not yet learned this. We will learn this.

Efficiency and Proletarian Dictatorship

The resolution of the last (Moscow) Congress of the Soviets, advocates, as the most important problem at present, the creation of "efficient organization" and higher discipline. Such resolutions are now readily supported by everybody. But that their realization requires compulsion, and compulsion in the form of a dictatorship, is ordinarily not comprehended. And yet, it would be the greatest stupidity and the most absurd opportunism to suppose that the transition from capitalism to Socialism is possible without compulsion and dictatorship. The Marxian theory has long ago criticized beyond misunderstanding this petty bourgeois-democratic and anarchistic nonsense. And Russia of 1917-1918 confirms in this respect the Marxian theory so clearly, palpably and convincingly that only those who are hopelessly stupid or who have firmly determined to ignore the truth can still err in this respect. Either a

Kornilov dictatorship (if Kornilov be taken as the Russian type of a bourgeois Cavaignac), or a dictatorship of the proletariat—no other alternative is possible for a country which is passing through an unusually swift development with unusually difficult transitions and which suffers from desperate disorganization created by the most horrible war. All middle courses are advanced—in order to deceive the people—by the bourgeois, who are not in a position to tell the truth and admit openly that they need a Kornilov, or—through stupidity—by the petty bourgeois democrats, the Tchernovs, Zeretellis and Martovs, prattling of a united democracy, of the dictatorship of democracy, of a single democratic front and similar nonsense. Those who have not learned even from the course of the Russian revolution of 1917-1918 that middle courses are impossible, must be given up as hopeless.

On the other hand, it is not hard to see that during any transition from capitalism to Socialism a dictatorship is necessary for two main reasons. In the first place, it is impossible to conquer and destroy capitalism without the merciless suppression of the resistance of the exploiters, who cannot be at once deprived of their wealth, of their advantages in organization and knowledge, and who will, therefore, during quite a long period inevitably attempt to overthrow the hateful (to them) authority of the poor. Secondly, every great revolution, and especially a Socialist revolution, even if there were no external war, is inconceivable without an internal war, with thousands and millions of cases of wavering and of desertion from one side to the other, and with a state of the greatest uncertainty, instability and chaos. And, of course, all elements of decay of the old order, inevitably very numerous and connected largely with the petty bourgeoisie (for the petty bourgeoisie is the first victim of every war and every crisis) cannot fail to “give themselves away” during such a profound transformation. And these elements of decay cannot appear otherwise than through the increase of crimes, ruffian-

ism, bribery, speculation and other indecencies. It takes time and an iron hand to get rid of this.

There never was a great revolution in history in which the people have not instinctively felt this and have not displayed a salutary firmness, shooting thieves on the spot. The trouble with the previous revolutions was this—that the revolutionary zeal of the masses, which kept them vigilant and gave them strength to suppress mercilessly the elements of decay, did not last long. The social, the class cause of such weakness of revolutionary zeal lay in the weakness of the proletariat, which is the only class capable (if sufficiently numerous, conscious and disciplined) of attracting the majority of the exploited toilers (the majority of the poor, if we should use a simpler and more popular expression) and of retaining the power for a sufficiently long time to suppress completely both all exploiters and all elements of decay.

This historical experience of all revolutions, the universal historical, economic and political lesson was summed up by Marx in his brief, sharp, exact and vivid formula: the dictatorship of the proletariat. And that the Russian revolution has correctly approached this universal historical problem has been proved by the victorious march of the Soviet organization among all the peoples and tongues of Russia. For the Soviet rule is nothing else than the organized form of the dictatorship of the proletariat, the dictatorship of the advanced class awakening to a new Democracy, to independent participation in the administration of the state, tens and tens of millions of exploited toilers, who through their experience are discovering that the disciplined and class-conscious vanguard of the proletariat is their most reliable leader.

But "dictatorship" is a great word. And great words must not be used in vain. A dictatorship is an iron rule, with revolutionary daring and swift and merciless in the suppression of the exploiters as well as of the thugs (hooligans.) And our rule is too mild, quite frequently resembling putty rather than iron. We must not for a moment

forget that the bourgeois and petty bourgeois environment is offering resistance to the Soviet rule in two ways: on the one hand, by external pressure—by the methods of the Savinkovs, Gotz, Gegechkoris and Kornilovs, by conspiracies and insurrections, with their ugly “ideologic” reflection, by torrents of falsehood and calumny in the press of the Cadets, Socialists-Revolutionists of the Right and Mensheviks; on the other hand, this environment exerts internal pressure, taking advantage of every element of decay, of every weakness, to bribe, to increase the lack of discipline, dissoluteness, chaos. The nearer we get to the complete military suppression of the bourgeoisie, the more dangerous become for us the petty bourgeois anarchic inclinations. And these inclinations cannot be combated only by propaganda and agitation, by the organization of *emulation*, by the selection of organizers; they must also be combated by compulsion.

To the extent to which the principal problem of the Soviet rule changes from military suppression to administration—suppression and compulsion will, as a rule, be manifested in trials, and not in shooting on the spot. And in this respect the revolutionary masses have taken, after November 7, 1917, the right road and have proved the vitality of the revolution, when they started to organize their own workmen's and peasants' tribunals, before any decrees were issued dismissing the bourgeois-democratic judicial apparatus. But our revolutionary and popular tribunals are excessively and incredibly weak. It is apparent that the popular view of courts—which was inherited from the regime of the landowners and the bourgeoisie—as not belonging to the workers, has not yet been completely destroyed. It is not sufficiently appreciated that the courts serve to attract all the poor to administration (for judicial activity is one of the functions of state administration); that the court is an organ of the rule of the proletariat and of the poorest peasantry; that the court is a means of training in discipline. There is a lack of appreciation of the simple and obvious fact that, if the chief misfor-

tunes of Russia are famine and unemployment, these misfortunes cannot be overcome by any outbursts of enthusiasm, but only by thorough and universal organization and discipline, in order to increase the production of bread for men and fuel for industry, to transport it in time and to distribute it in the right way. That therefore responsibility for the pangs of famine and unemployment falls on everyone who violates the labor discipline in any enterprise and in any business. That those who are responsible should be discovered, tried and punished without mercy. The petty bourgeois environment, which we will have to combat persistently now, shows particularly in the lack of comprehension of the economic and political connection between famine and unemployment and the prevailing dissoluteness in organization and discipline—in the firm hold of the view of the small proprietor that “nothing matters, if only I gain as much as possible.”

This struggle of the petty bourgeois environment against proletarian organizations is displayed with particular force in the railway industry, which embodies, probably, most clearly the economic ties created by large capitalism. The “office” element furnishes *saboteurs* and grafters in large numbers; the proletarian element, its best part, is fighting for discipline. But between these two elements there are, of course, many who waver, who are “weak,” who are unable to resist the “temptation” of speculation, bribery and personal advantage, at the expense of the industry, the uninterrupted work of which is necessary to overcome famine and unemployment.

A characteristic struggle occurred on this basis in connection with the last decree on railway management, the decree which granted dictatorial (or “unlimited”) power to individual directors. The conscious (and mostly, probably, unconscious) representatives of petty bourgeois dissoluteness contended that the granting of “unlimited” (i. e. dictatorial) power to individuals was a defection from the principle of board administration, from the democratic and other principles of the Soviet rule. Some of the So-

cialist-Revolutionists of the Left carried on a plainly demagogic agitation against the decree on dictatorship, appealing to the evil instincts and to the petty bourgeois desire for personal gain. The question thus presented is of really great significance; first, the question of principle is, in general, the appointment of individuals endowed with unlimited power, the appointment of dictators, in accord with the fundamental principles of the Soviet rule; secondly, in what relation is this case—this precedent, if you wish—to the special problems of the Soviet rule during the present concrete period? Both questions deserve serious consideration.

Democracy and Dictatorship

That the dictatorship of individuals has very frequently in the history of revolutionary movements served as an expression and means of realization of the dictatorship of the revolutionary classes is confirmed by the undisputed experience of history. The dictatorship of individuals has undoubtedly been compatible with bourgeois democratic principles, but this point is always treated adroitly by the bourgeois critics of the Soviet rule and by their petty bourgeois aides. On the one hand, they declare the Soviet rule simply something absurd and anarchically wild, carefully avoiding all our historical comparisons and theoretical proofs that the Soviets are a higher form of democracy; nay, more, the beginning of a Socialist form of democracy. On the other hand, they demand of us a higher democracy than the bourgeois and argue: individual dictatorship is absolutely incompatible with your Bolshevist (i. e. Socialist, not bourgeois) democratic principles, with the Soviet democratic principles.

Extremely poor arguments, these. If we are not anarchists, we must admit the necessity of a state; that is, of compulsion, for the transition from capitalism to Socialism. The form of compulsion is determined by the degree of development of the particular revolutionary class, then by such special circumstances as, for instance, the heritage of a long and reactionary war, and then by the forms of

resistance of the bourgeoisie and the petty bourgeoisie. There is therefore absolutely no contradiction in principle between the Soviet (Socialist) democracy and the use of dictatorial power of individuals. The distinction between a proletarian and a bourgeois dictatorship consists in this: that the first directs its attacks against the exploiting minority in the interests of the exploited majority; and, further, in this—that the first is accomplished (through individuals) not only by the masses of the exploited toilers, but also by organizations which are so constructed that they arouse these masses to creative work of historic significance. The Soviets belong to this kind of organization.

With respect to the second question on the significance of individual dictatorial power from the standpoint of the specific problems of the present period, we must say that every large machine industry—which is the material productive source and basis of Socialism—requires an absolute and strict unity of the will which directs the joint work of hundreds, thousands and tens of thousands of people. This necessity is obvious from the technical economic and historical standpoint, and has always been recognized as its prerequisite by all those who had given any thought to Socialism. But how can we secure a strict unity of will? By subjecting the will of thousands to the will of one.

This subjection, if the participants in the common work are ideally conscious and disciplined, may resemble the mild leading of an orchestra conductor; it may also take the acute form of a dictatorship—if there is no ideal discipline and consciousness. At any rate, complete submission to a single will for the success of the processes of work organized on the type of large machine industry is absolutely necessary. This is doubly true of the railways. And just this transition from one political problem to another, which in appearance has no resemblance to the first, constitutes the peculiarity of the present period. The revolution has just broken the oldest, the strongest, and the heavi-

est chains to which the masses were compelled to submit. So it was yesterday. And today the same revolution—and indeed in the interest of Socialism—demands the absolute submission of the masses to the single will of those who direct the labor process. It is self-evident that such a transition cannot take place at once. It is self-evident that it can be realized only after great upheavals, crises, returns to the old; only through the greatest strain of the energy of the proletarian vanguard which is leading the people to the new order. This is ignored by those who, like the snug and comfort loving, fall into the hysterics of the “Novaya Zhizn,” “Vperiod,” “Dielo Naroda” and “Nash Viek.”¹¹

The Transition Period

Take the psychology of the average, ordinary type of the toiling and exploited masses and compare this psychology with the objective, material conditions of his social life. Before the November revolution he had never seen the possessing exploiting classes sacrifice in his favor anything that was really of value to them. He did not believe that he would be given the often promised land and liberty; that he would be given peace; that the interests of a “greater Russia” and of the secret treaties aiming at a “greater Russia,” would be sacrificed; that capital and profits would be surrendered. He realized this only after November 7, 1917—when he took it himself by force and when he had to defend this by force against the Kerenskys, Gotz, Gegchkoris, Dutovs, and Kornilovs. It is natural that for a certain time all his attention, all his thoughts, all his energy are turned in one direction—to breathe freely, to straighten out, to expand, to take the immediate benefits of life which can be taken and which were denied to him by the overthrown exploiters. It is natural that it must take some time before the ordinary representative of the masses not only sees and becomes convinced, but comes to feel that he must not just simply seize, grab, snatch;—that this leads

¹¹ Liberal and moderate Socialist journals representing groups opposed to the Bolsheviks.

to greater disorganization, to ruin, to the return of the Kornilovs. A corresponding change in the environment (and, hence, in the psychology) of the rank and file of the toiling masses is barely beginning. And we, the Communist Party (the Bolsheviks), which gives conscious expression to the aspiration of the exploited masses for emancipation, should fully comprehend this change and its necessity, should be in the front ranks of the weary masses which are seeking a way out and should lead them along the right road—the road of labor discipline, harmonizing the problem of holding meetings to discuss the conditions of work, with the problem of absolute submission to the will of the Soviet director, or the dictator, *during* work.

The habit of holding meetings is ridiculed, and more often wrathfully hissed at by the bourgeoisie, Mensheviks, etc., who see only chaos, senseless bustle and outbursts of petty bourgeois egoism. But without the "holding of meetings" the oppressed masses could never pass from the discipline forced by the exploiters to conscious and voluntary discipline. "Meeting holding" is the real democracy of the toilers, their straightening out, their awakening to a new life, their first steps on the field which they themselves have cleared of reptiles (exploiters, imperialists, landed proprietors, capitalists) and which they want to learn to put in order themselves in their own way; for themselves, in accord with the principles of their, "Soviet," rule, and not the rule of the foreigners, of the nobility and bourgeoisie. The November victory of the toilers against the exploiters, was necessary; it was necessary to have a whole period of elementary discussion by the toilers themselves of the new conditions of life and of the new problems to make possible a secure transition to higher forms of labor discipline, to a conscious assimilation of the idea of the necessity of the dictatorship of the proletariat, to absolute submission to the personal orders of the representatives of the Soviet rule during work.

This transition has now begun.

The Three Stages of the Revolution

We have successfully solved the first problem of the revolution. We saw how the toiling masses formed in themselves the fundamental condition of a successful solution: united efforts against the exploiters to overthrow them. Such stages as October, 1905,¹² and March and November, 1917, are of universal historical significance.

We have successfully solved the second problem of the revolution; to awaken and arouse the downtrodden social classes which were oppressed by the exploiters and which only after November 7, 1917, have obtained the freedom to overthrow them and to begin to take stock and to regulate their lives in their own way. The "meeting holding" of the most oppressed and downtrodden, of the least trained toiling masses, their joining the Bolsheviki, their creating Soviet organizations everywhere—this is the second great stage of the revolution.

We are now in the third stage. Our gains, our decrees, our laws, our plans must be secured by the solid forms of every-day labor discipline. This is the most difficult, but also the most promising problem, for only its solution will give us Socialism. We must learn to combine the stormy, energetic breaking of all restraint on the part of the toiling masses, with iron discipline during work, with absolute submission to the will of one person, the Soviet director, during work.

We have not yet learned this, but we will learn it.

The restoration of bourgeois exploitation threatened us yesterday through the Kornilovs, Gotz, Dutovs, Gegechkoris, Bogajevskys. We defeated them. This restoration,

¹² October, 1905, saw the beginning of the first Russian Revolution. It was during that month that the General strike was declared and the open struggle between the revolutionary forces and the autocracy ensued. The Czar's government was forced to grant a constitution (October 30) and establish a parliamentary form of government (Duma).

the very same restoration threatens us today in a different form, through the environment of petty bourgeois dissoluteness and anarchism, in the form of ordinary, small, but numerous attacks and aggressions of this environment against proletarian discipline. This environment of petty bourgeois anarchy we must and we will conquer.

The Character of Soviet Organization

The Socialist character of the Soviet democracy—that is, of proletarian democracy in its concrete particular application—consists first in this: that the electorate comprises the toiling and exploited masses—that the bourgeoisie is excluded. Secondly in this: that all bureaucratic formalities and limitations of elections are done away with—that the masses themselves determine the order and the time of elections and with complete freedom of recall of elected officials. Thirdly, that the best possible mass organization of the vanguard of the toilers—of the industrial proletariat—is formed, enabling them to direct the exploited masses, to attract them to active participation in political life, to train them politically through their own experience, that in this way a beginning has been made for the first time actually to get the whole population to learn how to manage and to begin managing.

Such are the principal distinctive features of the democracy which is being tried in Russia, and which is a higher type of democracy, which breaks away from bourgeois distortion, and which is a transition to Socialist democracy and to conditions which will mean the beginning of the end of the state.

Of course, the chaotic petty bourgeois disorganization (which will inevitably manifest itself in one or another degree during every proletarian revolution, and which in our revolution, on account of the petty bourgeois character of the country, its backwardness, and the consequences of the reactionary war, manifests itself with special strength) cannot but leave its mark on the Soviets.

We must work unceasingly to develop the organization

of the Soviets and Soviet rule. There is a petty bourgeois tendency to turn the members of the Soviets into "parliamentarians" or, on the other hand, into bureaucrats. This should be combated by attracting all members of the Soviet to practical participation in management. The departments of the Soviets are turning in many places into organs which gradually merge with the commissariats. Our aim is to attract every member of the poor classes to practical participation in the management, and the different steps leading toward this end (the more diverse the better), should be carefully registered, studied, systematized, verified on broader experiences and legalized. It is our object to obtain the free performance of state obligations by every toiler after he is through with his eight hour session of productive work. The transition toward this end is especially difficult, but only this transition will secure the definite realization of Socialism. The novelty and the difficulty of the change naturally cause an abundance of steps which are made, so to speak, in the dark, an abundance of mistakes and hesitations. Without this, no sudden movement forward is possible. The originality of the present situation consists, from the standpoint of many who consider themselves Socialists, in this—that people have been used theoretically to contrast capitalism and Socialism, and between one and the other they profoundly put the word "leap" (some, recalling Engels, quote more profoundly this: "A leap from the kingdom of necessity to the kingdom of freedom.") That the word "leap" was used by the Socialist teachers to denote the crisis of an historical transformation and that leaps of this kind comprise periods of ten or more years—this cannot be understood by most of the so-called Socialists who study Socialism from books, and who have never given serious thought to this matter. It is natural that the so-called "Intelligentsia" furnish during such times an infinite number of criers after the dead; one bewails the Constituent Assembly; another bourgeois discipline; a third, the capitalist order; a fourth, the cultured aristocrat; a fifth, imperialistic "greater Russia"; and so on and so forth.

The Socialists and the Passing Order

The real interest of an epoch of great leaps consists in this: that the abundance of fragments of the old order which sometimes accumulate more rapidly than the germs of the new order (which are not always immediately discernible), requires ability to distinguish the most essential in the line or chain of development. There are historical periods when it is most important for the success of the revolution to smash as many fragments as possible—that is, to blow up as many old institutions as possible. But there are periods when enough has been blown up, and it becomes necessary to turn to the “prosaic” work of clearing the ground of the fragments, which work the bourgeoisie revolutionists calls “tedious.” And there are periods when it is most important to tend carefully the germs of the new growth under the fragments, on the soil that is yet full of rubbish.

It is not enough to be a revolutionist and an adherent of Socialism or Communism in general. One must be able to find at any moment that particular link in the chain that must be grasped with full strength lest the chain slip away, and to prepare a sound passage to the next link. The order of the links, their form, their connections, their distinction, from one to another in the historical chain of events is not so simple as in an ordinary chain which is made by a blacksmith.

The outcome of struggle with the bureaucratic distortion of the Soviet organizations is assured by the firm bond between the Soviets and the people (in the sense of the exploited toilers), by the flexibility and elasticity of this bond. The bourgeois parliaments even in the most democratic capitalist republic are never looked upon by the poor as “their” institutions. But the Soviets are for the masses of the workers and peasants, “their own,” and not alien institutions. The modern “social-democrats” of the Scheidemann kind or, what is almost synonymous of the Martov kind, are just as averse to the Soviets, are just as much attracted to the well-behaved bourgeois parliament, or to the

Constituent Assembly, as Turgenev was attracted sixty years ago to a moderate monarchist and aristocratic constitution, as he was averse to the peasant democracy of Dobrolybov and Tchernyshevsky.¹³

This proximity of the Soviets to the toiling people creates special forms of recall and other methods of control by the masses which should now be developed with special diligence. For instance, the councils of popular education deserve the fullest sympathy and support as periodical conferences of the Soviet electors and their delegates to discuss and to control the activity of the Soviet authorities of the particular region. Nothing could be more foolish than turning the Soviets into something settled and self-sufficient. The more firmly we now have to advocate a merciless and firm rule and dictatorship of individuals for definite processes of work during certain periods of purely executive functions, the more diverse should be the forms and means of mass control in order to paralyze every possibility of distorting the Soviet rule, in order repeatedly and tirelessly to remove the wild grass of bureaucratism.

Conclusions

An unusually grave, difficult and dangerous international situation exists; a period of "tacking;" a period of waiting for new outbursts of revolution in the West, which is painfully slow in coming. Within the country we are passing through a period of slow constructive work and of merciless rigor, of a long and persistent struggle of the proletarian discipline with the threatening petty bourgeois dissoluteness and anarchy. Such, in short, are the distinctive features of the present stage in the Socialist revolution. Such is the link in the historical chain of events which we must now grasp with all our strength to come out with honor, before we pass to the next link—which draws us by its glory, by the glory of the victories of the international proletarian revolution.

¹³ Noted radical sociologists and publicists of that period.

Try to compare with the ordinary, popular idea of a "revolutionist," the slogans which are dictated by the peculiarities of the present situation: to be cautious, to retreat, to wait, to build slowly, to be mercilessly rigorous, to discipline sternly, to attack dissoluteness. Is it surprising that some "revolutionists," hearing this, become full of noble indignation and begin to "attack" us for forgetting the traditions of the November revolution, for compromising with bourgeois specialists, for compromises with the bourgeoisie, for petty bourgeois tendencies, for reformism, etc., etc.?

The trouble with these super-revolutionists is this: that even those who are actuated by the best motives in the world, and are absolutely loyal to the cause of Socialism, fail to comprehend the particular and "particularly unpleasant" state that must inevitably be passed by a backward country which has been shattered by a reactionary and ill-fated war and which started the Socialist revolution long before the more advanced countries. They lack firmness in difficult moments of a difficult transition. It is natural that this kind of "official" opposition to our party comes from the Socialist-Revolutionists of the Left. Of course there are, and always will be, individual exceptions to group and class types. But social types remain. In a country where the petty bourgeois population is vastly predominant in comparison with the purely proletarian, the difference between the proletarian and the petty bourgeois revolutionist will inevitably appear, and from time to time very sharply. The petty bourgeois revolutionist hesitates and wavers at every turn of events; passes from a violently revolutionary position in March, 1917, to lauding "coalition" in May; to hatred against the Bolsheviks, to bewailing their "adventurousness" in July; to cautiously drawing away from them in the beginning of November; to supporting them in December; and lastly, in March and April, 1918, such types usually turn up their noses scornfully and say, "I am not of those who sing hymns to organic work, to practiciness and gradualism."

The social course of such types is that of the small proprietor who has been maddened by the horrors of the war, by sudden ruin, by the unheard of torments of starvation and disorganization; who is tossing hysterically, seeking a way out, seeking salvation, hesitating between confidence and support to the proletariat, on the one hand; and fits of despair, on the other hand. We must clearly comprehend and firmly remember that Socialism cannot be built on such a social base. Only a class that marches along its road without hesitation, that does not become dejected and does not despair on the most difficult and dangerous crossings, can lead the toiling and exploited masses. We do not need hysterical outbursts. We need the regular march of the iron battalions of the proletariat.

Moscow, April, 1918.

THE BRIGAND'S PEACE

The International Situation

The history of mankind is today recording one of the greatest and most difficult crises which has an infinite—we can say without the least exaggeration, world-wide liberating significance. It is not surprising that at the most difficult points of such a crisis, when everywhere around us the old order is crumbling and falling apart with tumult and crash, and a new order is being born in indescribable torments—it is not surprising that some are becoming bewildered, some become victims of despair, and others, to escape from the bitter reality, are taking cover behind beautiful and enchanting phrases.

The Story of the Revolution

We were forced, however, to observe most clearly, and to pass through the sharp and painful experience of the most difficult crisis of history which turns the world from imperialism towards communistic revolution. In a few days we destroyed one of the oldest, most powerful, bar-

barous and cruel monarchies. In a few months we passed through a number of stages of compromise with the bourgeoisie and got over the petty bourgeois illusions, in the grip of which other countries have spent decades. In a few weeks we have overthrown the bourgeoisie and crushed her open resistance in civil war. We passed in a victorious and triumphant procession of Bolshevism from one end of an enormous country to the other. We aroused to freedom and independence the most humble sections of the toiling masses oppressed by czarism and the bourgeoisie. We introduced and firmly established the Soviet republic—a new type of state—ininitely higher and more democratic than the best of the bourgeois-parliamentary republics. We established the dictatorship of the proletariat, supported by the poorest peasantry, and have inaugurated a comprehensively planned system of Socialist reform. We awakened self-confidence and kindled the fire of enthusiasm in the hearts of millions upon millions of workers of all countries. We sent broadcast the clarion call of the international working class revolution. We challenged the imperialistic plunderers of all countries.

Brest-Litovsk—A Brigand's Peace

And in a few days an imperialistic brigand knocked us down, attacking those who had no arms. He forced us to sign an incredibly oppressive and humiliating peace—a penalty for our daring to break away, even for as short a time as possible, from the iron grip of the imperialistic war. And the more threateningly the spectre of a working class revolution in his own country rises before the brigand, the more furiously he oppresses and strangles and tears Russia to pieces.

Must Face the Truth

We were compelled to sign a "Tilsit" peace. We must not deceive ourselves. We must have courage to face the unadorned, bitter truth. We must size up in full, to the very bottom, the abyss of defeat, partition, enslavement

and humiliation into which we have been thrown. The clearer we understand this, the firmer, the more hardened and inflexible will become our will for liberation, our desire to arise anew from enslavement to independence, our firm determination to see at all costs, that Russia shall cease to be poor and weak, that she may become truly powerful and prosperous.

She can become such, for we still have left sufficient expanse and natural resources to supply all and everyone, if not with abundance, at least with sufficient means of subsistence. We have the material in the natural resources, in the supply of human energy, and in the splendid impetus which the creative spirit of the people received through the great revolution, to create a really mighty and abundant Russia.

Russia will become such, provided she frees herself of all dejection and phrase-mongering; provided she strains her every nerve and every muscle; provided she comes to understand that salvation is possible only on the road of the international Socialist revolution, which we have chosen. To move forward along this road, not becoming dejected in case of defeats; to lay, stone after stone, the firm foundation of a Socialist society; to work tirelessly to create discipline and self-discipline; to strengthen everywhere organization, order, efficiency, the harmonious cooperation of all the people's forces, state accounting and control over production and distribution of products—such is the road towards the creation of military power and Socialist power.

The Proper Understanding

It is unworthy of a true Socialist, if badly defeated, either to deny that fact or to become despondent. It is not true that we have no way out and that we can only choose between a "disgraceful" death (from the standpoint of a feudal knight), which an oppressive peace is, and a "glorious" death in a hopeless battle. It is not true that we have betrayed our ideals or our friends when we signed

the "Tilsit" peace. We have betrayed nothing and nobody, we have not sanctioned or covered any lie, we have not refused to aid any friend and comrade in misfortune in any way we could, or by any means at our disposal.

A commander who leads into the interior the remnants of an army which is defeated or disorganized by a disorderly flight and who, if necessary, protects this retreat by a most humiliating and oppressive peace, is not betraying those parts of the army which he cannot help and which are cut off by the enemy. Such a commander is only doing his duty, he is choosing the only way to save what can still be saved, he is scorning adventures, telling the people the bitter truth, "yielding territory in order to win time," utilizing any, even the shortest respite in order to gather again his forces, and to give the army, which is affected by disintegration and demoralization, a chance to rest and recover.

An Historical Parallel

We have signed a "Tilsit" peace. When Napoleon I forced Prussia in 1807 to accept the Tilsit peace, the conqueror had defeated all the German armies, occupied the capital and all the large cities, established his police, compelled the conquered to give him auxiliary corps in order to wage new wars of plunder by the conquerors, dismembered Germany, forming an alliance with some of the German states against other German states. And nevertheless, even after such a peace the German people were not subdued; they managed to recover, to rise and to win the right to freedom and independence.

To any person able and willing to think, the example of the Tilsit peace (which was only one of the many oppressive and humiliating treaties forced upon the Germans in that epoch) shows clearly how childishly naive is the thought that an oppressive peace is, under all circumstances, ruinous, and war the road of valor and salvation. The war epochs teach us that peace has in many cases in history

served as a respite to gather strength for new battles. The Peace of Tilsit was the greatest humiliation of Germany and at the same time a turning point to the greatest national awakening. At that time the historical environment offered only one outlet for this awakening—a bourgeois state. At that time, over a hundred years ago, history was made by a handful of noblemen and small groups of bourgeois intellectuals, while the mass of workers and peasants were inactive and inert. Owing to this, history at that time could crawl only with awful slowness.

With an Eye Toward Socialism

Now capitalism has considerably raised the level of culture in general and of the culture of the masses in particular. The war aroused the masses, awakened them by unheard of horrors and sufferings. The war has given impetus to history and now the world is speeding along with the speed of a locomotive. History is now being independently made by millions and tens of millions of people. Capitalism has now become ripe for Socialism.

Thus, if Russia now moves—and it cannot be denied that she does move from a “Tilsit” peace to national awakening and to a great war for the fatherland, the outlet of such an awakening leads not to the bourgeois state but to an international Socialist revolution. We are “resistants” since November 7, 1917. We are for the “defense of our fatherland,” but the war for the fatherland towards which we are moving is a war for a Socialist fatherland, for Socialism, as a part of the universal army of Socialism.

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