

V.I. LENIN

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SPEECHES AT CONGRESSES OF THE COMMUNIST INTERNATIONAL

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Workers of All Countries, Unite!

V.I.LENIN

SPEECHES
AT CONGRESSES
OF THE
COMMUNIST
INTERNATIONAL



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В. И. ЛЕНИН

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FIRST CONGRESS OF THE COMMUNIST INTERNATIONAL March 2-6, 1919

SPEECH AT THE OPENING SESSION OF THE CONGRESS

March 2

On behalf of the Central Committee of the Russian Communist Party I declare the First Congress of the Communist International open. First I would ask all present to rise in tribute to the finest representatives of the Third International: Karl Liebknecht and Rosa Luxemburg. (*All rise.*)

Comrades, our gathering has great historic significance. It testifies to the collapse of all the illusions cherished by bourgeois democrats. Not only in Russia, but in the most developed capitalist countries of Europe, Germany for example, civil war is a fact.

The bourgeoisie are terror-stricken at the growing workers' revolutionary movement. This is understandable if we take into account that the development of events since the imperialist war inevitably favours the workers' revolutionary movement, and that the world revolution is beginning and growing in intensity everywhere.

The people are aware of the greatness and significance of the struggle now going on. All that is needed is to find the practical form to enable the proletariat to establish its rule. Such a form is the Soviet system with the dictatorship of the proletariat. Dictatorship of the proletariat—until now these words were Latin to the masses. Thanks to the spread of the Soviets throughout the world this Latin has been translated into all modern languages; a practical form of dictatorship has been found by the working people. The mass of workers now

understand it thanks to Soviet power in Russia, thanks to the Spartacus League in Germany¹ and to similar organisations in other countries, such as, for example, the Shop Stewards Committees in Britain.² All this shows that a revolutionary form of the dictatorship of the proletariat has been found, that the proletariat is now able to exercise its rule.

Comrades, I think that after the events in Russia and the January struggle in Germany, it is especially important to note that in other countries, too, the latest form of the workers' movement is asserting itself and getting the upper hand. Today, for example, I read in an anti-socialist newspaper a report to the effect that the British Government had received a deputation from the Birmingham Workers' Council and had expressed its readiness to recognise the Councils as economic bodies.³ The Soviet system has triumphed not only in backward Russia, but also in the most developed country of Europe—in Germany, and in Britain, the oldest capitalist country.

Even though the bourgeoisie are still raging, even though they may kill thousands more workers, victory will be ours, the victory of the world-wide communist revolution is assured.

Comrades, I extend hearty greetings to you on behalf of the Central Committee of the Russian Communist Party. I move that we elect a presidium. Let us have nominations.

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2

THESES AND REPORT ON BOURGEOIS DEMOCRACY AND THE DICTATORSHIP OF THE PROLETARIAT

March 4

1. Faced with the growth of the revolutionary workers' movement in every country, the bourgeoisie and their agents in the workers' organisations are making desperate attempts to find ideological and political arguments in defence of the rule of the exploiters. Condemnation of dictatorship and defence of democracy are particularly prominent among these arguments. The falsity and hypocrisy of this argument, repeated in a thousand strains by the capitalist press and at the Berne yellow International Conference in February 1919,⁴ are obvious to all who refuse to betray the fundamental principles of socialism.

2. Firstly, this argument employs the concepts of "democracy in general" and "dictatorship in general", without posing the question of the class concerned. This non-class or above-class presentation, which supposedly is popular, is an outright travesty of the basic tenet of socialism, namely, its theory of class struggle, which socialists who have sided with the bourgeoisie recognise in words but disregard in practice. For in no civilised capitalist country does "democracy in general" exist; all that exists is bourgeois democracy, and it is not a question of "dictatorship in general", but of the dictatorship of the oppressed class, i.e., the proletariat, over its oppressors and exploiters, i.e., the bourgeoisie, in order to overcome the resistance offered by the exploiters in their fight to maintain their domination.

3. History teaches us that no oppressed class ever did, or could, achieve power without going through a period of dictatorship, i.e., the conquest of political power and forcible suppression of the resistance always offered by the exploiters—a resistance that is most desperate, most furious, and that stops at nothing. The bourgeoisie, whose domination is now defended by the socialists who denounce “dictatorship in general” and extol “democracy in general”, won power in the advanced countries through a series of insurrections, civil wars, and the forcible suppression of kings, feudal lords, slaveowners and their attempts at restoration. In books, pamphlets, congress resolutions and propaganda speeches socialists everywhere have thousands and millions of times explained to the people the class nature of these bourgeois revolutions and this bourgeois dictatorship. That is why the present defence of bourgeois democracy under cover of talk about “democracy in general” and the present howls and shouts against proletarian dictatorship under cover of shouts about “dictatorship in general” are an outright betrayal of socialism. They are, in fact, desertion to the bourgeoisie, denial of the proletariat’s right to its own, proletarian, revolution, and defence of bourgeois reformism at the very historical juncture when bourgeois reformism throughout the world has collapsed and the war has created a revolutionary situation.

4. In explaining the class nature of bourgeois civilisation, bourgeois democracy and the bourgeois parliamentary system, all socialists have expressed the idea formulated with the greatest scientific precision by Marx and Engels, namely, that the most democratic bourgeois republic is no more than a machine for the suppression of the working class by the bourgeoisie, for the suppression of the working people by a handful of capitalists. There is not a single revolutionary, not a single Marxist among those now shouting against dictatorship and for democracy who has not sworn and vowed to the workers that he accepts this basic truth of socialism. But now, when the revolutionary proletariat is in a fighting mood and taking action to destroy this machine of oppression and to establish proletarian dictatorship, these traitors to socialism claim that the bourgeoisie have granted the working people “pure democracy”, have abandoned resistance and are prepared to yield to the majority of the working

people. They assert that in a democratic republic there is not, and never has been, any such thing as a state machine for the oppression of labour by capital.

5. The Paris Commune—to which all who parade as socialists pay lip service, for they know that the workers ardently and sincerely sympathise with the Commune—showed very clearly the historically conventional nature and limited value of the bourgeois parliamentary system and bourgeois democracy—institutions which, though highly progressive compared with medieval times, inevitably require a radical alteration in the era of proletarian revolution. It was Marx who best appraised the historical significance of the Commune. In his analysis, he revealed the exploiting nature of bourgeois democracy and the bourgeois parliamentary system under which the oppressed classes enjoy the right to decide once in several years which representative of the propertied classes shall “represent and suppress” (*ver- und zertreten*) the people in parliament.⁵ And it is now, when the Soviet movement is embracing the entire world and continuing the work of the Commune for all to see, that the traitors to socialism are forgetting the concrete experience and concrete lessons of the Paris Commune and repeating the old bourgeois rubbish about “democracy in general”. The Commune was not a parliamentary institution.

6. The significance of the Commune, furthermore, lies in the fact that it endeavoured to crush, to smash to its very foundations, the bourgeois state apparatus, the bureaucratic, judicial, military and police machine, and to replace it by a self-governing mass workers’ organisation in which there was no division between legislative and executive power. All contemporary bourgeois-democratic republics, including the German republic, which the traitors to socialism, in mockery of the truth, describe as a proletarian republic, retain this state apparatus. We therefore again get quite clear confirmation of the point that shouting in defence of “democracy in general” is actually defence of the bourgeoisie and their privileges as exploiters.

7. “Freedom of assembly” can be taken as a sample of the requisites of “pure democracy”. Every class-conscious worker who has not broken with his class will readily appreciate the absurdity of promising freedom of assembly to the exploiters at a time and in a situation when

the exploiters are resisting the overthrow of their rule and are fighting to retain their privileges. When the bourgeoisie were revolutionary, they did not, either in England in 1649 or in France in 1793,⁶ grant "freedom of assembly" to the monarchists and nobles, who summoned foreign troops and "assembled" to organise attempts at restoration. If the present-day bourgeoisie, who have long since become reactionary, demand from the proletariat advance guarantees of "freedom of assembly" for the exploiters, whatever the resistance offered by the capitalists to being expropriated, the workers will only laugh at their hypocrisy.

The workers know perfectly well, too, that even in the most democratic bourgeois republic "freedom of assembly" is a hollow phrase, for the rich have the best public and private buildings at their disposal, and enough leisure to assemble at meetings, which are protected by the bourgeois machine of power. The urban and rural workers and the small peasants—the overwhelming majority of the population—are denied all these things. As long as that state of affairs prevails, "equality", i.e., "pure democracy", is a fraud. The first thing to do to win genuine equality and enable the working people to enjoy democracy in practice is to deprive the exploiters of all the public and sumptuous private buildings, to give the working people leisure and to see to it that their freedom of assembly is protected by armed workers, not by scions of the nobility or capitalist officers in command of downtrodden soldiers.

Only when that change is effected can we speak of freedom of assembly and of equality without mocking at the workers, at working people in general, at the poor. And this change can be effected only by the vanguard of the working people, the proletariat, which overthrows the exploiters, the bourgeoisie.

• 8. "Freedom of the press" is another of the principal slogans of "pure democracy". And here, too, the workers know—and socialists everywhere have admitted it millions of times—that this freedom is a deception while the best printing-presses and the biggest stocks of paper are appropriated by the capitalists, and while capitalist rule over the press remains, a rule that is manifested throughout the world all the more strikingly, sharply and cynically the more democracy and the republican system

are developed, as in America for example. The first thing to do to win real equality and genuine democracy for the working people, for the workers and peasants, is to deprive capital of the possibility of hiring writers, buying up publishing houses and bribing newspapers. And to do that the capitalists and exploiters have to be overthrown and their resistance suppressed. The capitalists have always used the term "freedom" to mean freedom for the rich to get richer and for the workers to starve to death. In capitalist usage, freedom of the press means freedom of the rich to bribe the press, freedom to use their wealth to shape and fabricate so-called public opinion. In this respect, too, the defenders of "pure democracy" prove to be defenders of an utterly foul and venal system that gives the rich control over the mass media. They prove to be deceivers of the people, who, with the aid of plausible, fine-sounding, but thoroughly false phrases, divert them from the concrete historical task of liberating the press from capitalist enslavement. Genuine freedom and equality will be embodied in the system which the Communists are building, and in which there will be no opportunity for amassing wealth at the expense of others, no objective opportunities for putting the press under the direct or indirect power of money, and no impediments in the way of any workingman (or groups of workingmen, in any numbers) for enjoying and practising equal rights in the use of public printing-presses and public stocks of paper.

9. The history of the nineteenth and twentieth centuries demonstrated, even before the war, what this celebrated "pure democracy" really is under capitalism. Marxists have always maintained that the more developed, the "purer" democracy is, the more naked, acute and merciless the class struggle becomes, and the "purer" the capitalist oppression and bourgeois dictatorship. The Dreyfus case in republican France, the massacre of strikers by hired bands armed by the capitalists in the free and democratic American republic—these and thousands of similar facts illustrate the truth which the bourgeoisie are vainly seeking to conceal, namely, that actually terror and bourgeois dictatorship prevail in the most democratic of republics and are openly displayed every time the exploiters think the power of capital is being shaken.

10. The imperialist war of 1914-18 conclusively revealed even to backward workers the true nature of bourgeois democracy, even in the freest republics, as being a dictatorship of the bourgeoisie. Tens of millions were killed for the sake of enriching the German or the British group of millionaires and multimillionaires, and bourgeois military dictatorships were established in the freest republics. This military dictatorship continues to exist in the Allied countries⁷ even after Germany's defeat. It was mostly the war that opened the eyes of the working people, that stripped bourgeois democracy of its camouflage and showed the people the abyss of speculation and profiteering that existed during and because of the war. It was in the name of "freedom and equality" that the bourgeoisie waged the war, and in the name of "freedom and equality" that the munition manufacturers piled up fabulous fortunes. Nothing that the yellow Berne International does can conceal from the people the now thoroughly exposed exploiting character of bourgeois freedom, bourgeois equality and bourgeois democracy.

11. In Germany, the most developed capitalist country of continental Europe, the very first months of republican freedom, established as a result of imperialist Germany's defeat, have shown the German workers and the whole world the true class substance of the bourgeois-democratic republic. The murder of Karl Liebknecht and Rosa Luxemburg is an event of epoch-making significance not only because of the tragic death of these finest people and leaders of the truly proletarian, Communist International, but also because the class nature of an advanced European state—it can be said without exaggeration, of an advanced state on a world-wide scale—has been conclusively exposed. If those arrested, i.e., those placed under state protection, could be assassinated by officers and capitalists with impunity, and this under a government headed by social-patriots, then the democratic republic where such a thing was possible is a bourgeois dictatorship. Those who voice their indignation at the murder of Karl Liebknecht and Rosa Luxemburg but fail to understand this fact are only demonstrating their stupidity, or hypocrisy. "Freedom" in the German republic, one of the freest and advanced republics of the world, is freedom to murder arrested leaders of the proletariat with impunity. Nor can it be otherwise as



long as capitalism remains, for the development of democracy sharpens rather than dampens the class struggle which, by virtue of all the results and influences of the war and of its consequences, has been brought to boiling point.

Throughout the civilised world we see Bolsheviks being exiled, persecuted and thrown into prison. This is the case, for example, in Switzerland, one of the freest bourgeois republics, and in America, where there have been anti-Bolshevik pogroms, etc. From the standpoint of "democracy in general", or "pure democracy", it is really ridiculous that advanced, civilised, and democratic countries, which are armed to the teeth, should fear the presence of a few score men from backward, famine-stricken and ruined Russia, which the bourgeois papers, in tens of millions of copies, describe as savage, criminal, etc. Clearly, the social situation that could produce this crying contradiction is in fact a dictatorship of the bourgeoisie.

12. In these circumstances, proletarian dictatorship is not only an absolutely legitimate means of overthrowing the exploiters and suppressing their resistance, but also absolutely necessary to the entire mass of working people, being their only defence against the bourgeois dictatorship which led to the war and is preparing new wars.

The main thing that socialists fail to understand and that constitutes their short-sightedness in matters of theory, their subservience to bourgeois prejudices and their political betrayal of the proletariat is that in capitalist society, whenever there is any serious aggravation of the class struggle intrinsic to that society, there can be no alternative but the dictatorship of the bourgeoisie or the dictatorship of the proletariat. Dreams of some third way are reactionary, petty-bourgeois lamentations. That is borne out by more than a century of development of bourgeois democracy and the working-class movement in all the advanced countries, and notably by the experience of the past five years. This is also borne out by the whole science of political economy, by the entire content of Marxism, which reveals the economic inevitability, wherever commodity economy prevails, of the dictatorship of the bourgeoisie that can only be replaced by the class which the very

growth of capitalism develops, multiplies, welds together and strengthens, that is, the proletarian class.

13. Another theoretical and political error of the socialists is their failure to understand that ever since the rudiments of democracy first appeared in antiquity, its forms inevitably changed over the centuries as one ruling class replaced another. Democracy assumed different forms and was applied in different degrees in the ancient republics of Greece, the medieval cities and the advanced capitalist countries. It would be sheer nonsense to think that the most profound revolution in human history, the first case in the world of power being transferred from the exploiting minority to the exploited majority, could take place within the time-worn framework of the old, bourgeois, parliamentary democracy, without drastic changes, without the creation of new forms of democracy, new institutions that embody the new conditions for applying democracy, etc.

14. Proletarian dictatorship is similar to the dictatorship of other classes in that it arises out of the need, as every other dictatorship does, to forcibly suppress the resistance of the class that is losing its political sway. The fundamental distinction between the dictatorship of the proletariat and the dictatorship of other classes—landlord dictatorship in the Middle Ages and bourgeois dictatorship in all the civilised capitalist countries—consists in the fact that the dictatorship of the landowners and bourgeoisie was the forcible suppression of the resistance offered by the vast majority of the population, namely, the working people. In contrast, proletarian dictatorship is the forcible suppression of the resistance of the exploiters, i.e., an insignificant minority of the population, the landowners and capitalists.

It follows that proletarian dictatorship must inevitably entail not only a change in democratic forms and institutions, generally speaking, but precisely such a change as provides an unparalleled extension of the actual enjoyment of democracy by those oppressed by capitalism—the toiling classes.

And indeed, the form of proletarian dictatorship that has already taken shape, i.e., Soviet power in Russia, the Räte-System in Germany, the Shop Stewards Committees in Britain and similar Soviet institutions in other countries, all this implies and presents to the toiling classes, i.e.,

the vast majority of the population, greater practical opportunities for enjoying democratic rights and liberties than ever existed before, even approximately, in the best and the most democratic bourgeois republics.

The substance of Soviet government is that the permanent and only foundation of state power, the entire machinery of state, is the mass-scale organisation of the classes oppressed by capitalism, i.e., the workers and the semi-proletarians (peasants who do not exploit the labour of others and regularly resort to the sale of at least a part of their own labour-power). It is the people, who even in the most democratic bourgeois republics, while possessing equal rights by law, have in fact been debarred by thousands of devices and subterfuges from participation in political life and enjoyment of democratic rights and liberties, that are now drawn into constant and unflinching, moreover, decisive, participation in the democratic administration of the state.

15. The equality of citizens, irrespective of sex, religion, race, or nationality, which bourgeois democracy everywhere has always promised but never effected, and never could effect because of the domination of capital, is given immediate and full effect by the Soviet system, or dictatorship of the proletariat. The fact is that this can only be done by a government of the workers, who are not interested in the means of production being privately owned and in the fight for their division and redivision.

16. The old, i.e., bourgeois, democracy and the parliamentary system were so organised that it was the mass of working people who were kept farthest away from the machinery of government. Soviet power, i.e., the dictatorship of the proletariat, on the other hand, is so organised as to bring the working people close to the machinery of government. That, too, is the purpose of combining the legislative and executive authority under the Soviet organisation of the state and of replacing territorial constituencies by production units—the factory.

17. The army was a machine of oppression not only under the monarchy. It remains as such in all bourgeois republics, even the most democratic ones. Only the Soviets, the permanent organisations of government authority of the classes that were oppressed by capitalism, are in a position to destroy the army's subordination

to bourgeois commanders and really merge the proletariat with the army; only the Soviets can effectively arm the proletariat and disarm the bourgeoisie. Unless this is done, the victory of socialism is impossible.

18. The Soviet organisation of the state is suited to the leading role of the proletariat as a class most concentrated and enlightened by capitalism. The experience of all revolutions and all movements of the oppressed classes, the experience of the world socialist movement teaches us that only the proletariat is in a position to unite and lead the scattered and backward sections of the working and exploited population.

19. Only the Soviet organisation of the state can really effect the immediate break-up and total destruction of the old, i.e., bourgeois, bureaucratic and judicial machinery, which has been, and has inevitably had to be, retained under capitalism even in the most democratic republics, and which is, in actual fact, the greatest obstacle to the practical implementation of democracy for the workers and working people generally. The Paris Commune took the first epoch-making step along this path. The Soviet system has taken the second.

20. Destruction of state power is the aim set by all socialists, including Marx above all. Genuine democracy, i.e., liberty and equality, is unrealisable unless this aim is achieved. But its practical achievement is possible only through Soviet, or proletarian, democracy, for by enlisting the mass organisations of the working people in constant and unfailing participation in the administration of the state, it immediately begins to prepare the complete withering away of any state.

21. The complete bankruptcy of the socialists who assembled in Berne, their complete failure to understand the new, i.e., proletarian, democracy, is especially apparent from the following. On February 10, 1919, Branting delivered the concluding speech at the international Conference of the yellow International in Berne. In Berlin, on February 11, 1919, *Die Freiheit*, the paper of the International's affiliates, published an appeal from the Party of "Independents"⁷⁸ to the proletariat. The appeal acknowledged the bourgeois character of the Scheidemann government, rebuked it for wanting to abolish the Soviets, which it described as *Träger und Schützer der Revolution*—vehicles and guardians of the

revolution—and proposed that the Soviets be legalised, invested with government authority and given the right to suspend the operation of National Assembly decisions pending a popular referendum.

That proposal indicates the complete ideological bankruptcy of the theorists who defended democracy and failed to see its bourgeois character. This ludicrous attempt to combine the Soviet system, i.e., proletarian dictatorship, with the National Assembly, i.e., bourgeois dictatorship, utterly exposes the paucity of thought of the yellow socialists and Social-Democrats, their reactionary petty-bourgeois political outlook, and their cowardly concessions to the irresistibly growing strength of the new, proletarian democracy.

22. From the class standpoint, the Berne yellow International majority, which did not dare to adopt a formal resolution out of fear of the mass of workers, was right in condemning Bolshevism. This majority is in full agreement with the Russian Mensheviks⁹ and Socialist-Revolutionaries,¹⁰ and the Scheidemanns in Germany. In complaining of persecution by the Bolsheviks, the Russian Mensheviks and Socialist-Revolutionaries try to conceal the fact that they are persecuted for participating in the Civil War on the side of the bourgeoisie against the proletariat. Similarly, the Scheidemanns and their party have already demonstrated in Germany that they, too, are participating in the civil war on the side of the bourgeoisie against the workers.

It is therefore quite natural that the Berne yellow International majority should be in favour of condemning the Bolsheviks. This was not an expression of the defence of "pure democracy", but of the self-defence of people who know and feel that in the civil war they stand with the bourgeoisie against the proletariat.

That is why, from the class point of view, the decision of the yellow International majority must be considered correct. The proletariat must not fear the truth, it must face it squarely and draw all the necessary political conclusions.

Comrades, I would like to add a word or two to the last two points. I think that the comrades who are to report to us on the Berne Conference will deal with it in greater detail.

Not a word was said at the Berne Conference about

the significance of Soviet power. We in Russia have been discussing this question for two years now. At our Party Conference in April 1917 we raised the following question, theoretically and politically: "What is Soviet power, what is its substance and what is its historical significance?" We have been discussing it for almost two years. And at our Party Congress we adopted a resolution on it.¹¹

On February 11 Berlin *Die Freiheit* published an appeal to the German proletariat signed not only by the leaders of the Independent Social-Democratic Party of Germany, but also by all the members of the Independent Social-Democratic group in the Reichstag. In August 1918, Kautsky, one of the leading theorists of these Independents, wrote a pamphlet entitled *The Dictatorship of the Proletariat*, in which he declared that he was a supporter of democracy and of Soviet bodies, but that the Soviets must be bodies merely of an economic character and that they must not by any means be recognised as state organisations. Kautsky says the same thing in *Die Freiheit* of November 11 and January 12. On February 9 an article appeared by Rudolf Hilferding, who is also regarded as one of the leading and authoritative theorists of the Second International, in which he proposed that the Soviet system be united with the National Assembly juridically, by state legislation. That was on February 9. On February 11 this proposal was adopted by the whole of the Independent Party and published in the form of an appeal.

There is vacillation again, despite the fact that the National Assembly already exists, even after "pure democracy" has been embodied in reality, after the leading theorists of the Independent Social-Democratic Party have declared that the Soviet organisations must not be state organisations! This proves that these gentlemen really understand nothing about the new movement and about its conditions of struggle. But it goes to prove something else, namely, that there must be conditions, causes, for this vacillation! When, after all these events, after nearly two years of victorious revolution in Russia, we are offered resolutions like those adopted at the Berne Conference, which say nothing about the Soviets and their significance, about which not a single delegate uttered a single word, we have a perfect right

to say that all these gentlemen are dead to us as socialists and theorists.

However, comrades, from the practical side, from the political point of view, the fact that these Independents, who in theory and on principle have been opposed to these state organisations, suddenly make the stupid proposal to "peacefully" unite the National Assembly with the Soviet system, i.e., to unite the dictatorship of the bourgeoisie with the dictatorship of the proletariat, shows that a great change is taking place among the masses. We see that the Independents are all bankrupt in the socialist and theoretical sense and that an enormous change is taking place among the masses. The backward masses among the German workers are coming to us, have come to us! So, the significance of the Independent Social-Democratic Party of Germany, the best section of the Berne Conference, is nil from the theoretical and socialist standpoint. Still, it has some significance, which is that these waverers serve as an index to us of the mood of the backward sections of the proletariat. This, in my opinion, is the great historical significance of this Conference. We experienced something of the kind in our own revolution. Our Mensheviks traversed almost exactly the same path as that of the theorists of the Independents in Germany. At first, when they had a majority in the Soviets, they were in favour of the Soviets. All we heard then was: "Long live the Soviets!", "For the Soviets!", "The Soviets are revolutionary democracy!" When, however, we Bolsheviks secured a majority in the Soviets, they changed their tune; they said: the Soviets must not exist side by side with the Constituent Assembly. And various Menshevik theorists made practically the same proposals, like the one to unite the Soviet system with the Constituent Assembly and to incorporate the Soviets in the state structure. Once again it is here revealed that the general course of the proletarian revolution is the same throughout the world. First the spontaneous formation of Soviets, then their spread and development, and then the appearance of the practical problem: Soviets, or National Assembly, or Constituent Assembly, or the bourgeois parliamentary system; utter confusion among the leaders, and finally—the proletarian revolution. But I think we should not present the problem in this way after nearly two years

of revolution; we should rather adopt concrete decisions because for us, and particularly for the majority of the West-European countries, spreading of the Soviet system is a most important task.

I would like to quote here just one Menshevik resolution. I asked Comrade Obolensky to translate it into German. He promised to do so but, unfortunately, he is not here. I shall try to render it from memory, as I have not the full text of it with me.

It is very difficult for a foreigner who has not heard anything about Bolshevism to arrive at an independent opinion about our controversial questions. Everything the Bolsheviks assert is challenged by the Mensheviks, and vice versa. Of course, it cannot be otherwise in the middle of a struggle, and that is why it is so important that the last Menshevik Party conference, held in December 1918, adopted the long and detailed resolution published in full in the Menshevik *Gazeta Pechatnikov*. In this resolution the Mensheviks themselves briefly outline the history of the class struggle and of the Civil War. The resolution states that they condemn those groups in their party which are allied with the propertied classes in the Urals, in the South, in the Crimea and in Georgia—all these regions are enumerated. Those groups of the Menshevik Party which, in alliance with the propertied classes, fought against the Soviets are now condemned in the resolution; but the last point of the resolution also condemns those who joined the Communists. It follows that the Mensheviks were compelled to admit that there was no unity in their party, and that its members were either on the side of the bourgeoisie or on the side of the proletariat. The majority of the Mensheviks went over to the bourgeoisie and fought against us during the Civil War. We, of course, persecute Mensheviks, we even shoot them, when they wage war against us, fight against our Red Army and shoot our Red commanders. We responded to the bourgeois war with the proletarian war—there can be no other way. Therefore, from the political point of view, all this is sheer Menshevik hypocrisy. Historically, it is incomprehensible how people who have not been officially certified as mad could talk at the Berne Conference, on the instructions of the Mensheviks and Socialist-Revolutionaries, about the Bolsheviks fighting the latter, yet keep silent about their own

struggle, in alliance with the bourgeoisie, against the proletariat.

All of them furiously attack us for persecuting them. This is true. But they do not say a word about the part they themselves have taken in the Civil War! I think that I shall have to provide the full text of the resolution to be recorded in the minutes, and I shall ask the foreign comrades to study it because it is a historical document in which the issue is raised correctly and which provides excellent material for appraising the controversy between the "socialist" trends in Russia. In between the proletariat and the bourgeoisie there is another class of people, who incline first this way and then the other. This has always been the case in all revolutions, and it is absolutely impossible in capitalist society, in which the proletariat and the bourgeoisie form two hostile camps, for intermediary sections not to exist between them. The existence of these waverers is historically inevitable, and, unfortunately, these elements, who do not know themselves on whose side they will fight tomorrow, will exist for quite some time.

I want to make the practical proposal that a resolution be adopted in which three points shall be specifically mentioned.

First: One of the most important tasks confronting the West-European comrades is to explain to the people the meaning, importance and necessity of the Soviet system. There is a sort of misunderstanding on this question. Although Kautsky and Hilferding are bankrupt as theorists, their recent articles in *Die Freiheit* show that they correctly reflect the mood of the backward sections of the German proletariat. The same thing took place in our country: during the first eight months of the Russian revolution the question of the Soviet organisation was very much discussed, and the workers did not understand what the new system was and whether the Soviets could be transformed into a state machine. In our revolution we advanced along the path of practice, and not of theory. For example, formerly we did not raise the question of the Constituent Assembly from the theoretical side, and we did not say we did not recognise the Constituent Assembly. It was only later, when the Soviet organisations had spread throughout the country and had captured political power, that we decided to

dissolve the Constituent Assembly. Now we see that in Hungary and Switzerland the question is much more acute. On the one hand, this is very good: it gives us the firm conviction that in the West-European states the revolution is advancing more quickly and will yield great victories. On the other hand, a certain danger is concealed in it, namely, that the struggle will be so precipitous that the minds of the mass of workers will not keep pace with this development. Even now the significance of the Soviet system is not clear to a large mass of the politically educated German workers, because they have been trained in the spirit of the parliamentary system and amid bourgeois prejudices.

Second: About the spread of the Soviet system. When we hear how quickly the idea of Soviets is spreading in Germany, and even in Britain, it is very important evidence that the proletarian revolution will be victorious. Its progress can be only retarded for a short time. It is quite another thing, however, when Comrades Albert and Platten tell us that in the rural districts in their countries there are hardly any Soviets among the farm labourers and small peasants. In *Die Rote Fahne* I read an article opposing peasant Soviets, but quite properly supporting Soviets of farm labourers and of poor peasants.¹² The bourgeoisie and their lackeys, like Scheidemann and Co., have already issued the slogan of peasant Soviets. All we need, however, is Soviets of farm labourers and poor peasants. Unfortunately, from the reports of Comrades Albert, Platten and others, we see that, with the exception of Hungary, very little is being done to spread the Soviet system in the countryside. In this, perhaps, lies the real and quite serious danger threatening the achievement of certain victory by the German proletariat. Victory can only be considered assured when not only the urban workers, but also the rural proletarians are organised, and organised not as before—in trade unions and co-operative societies—but in Soviets. Our victory was made easier by the fact that in October 1917 we marched with the peasants, with all the peasants. In that sense, our revolution at that time was a bourgeois revolution. The first step taken by our proletarian government was to embody in a law promulgated on October 26 (old style), 1917,¹³ on the next day after the revolution, the old demands

of all the peasants which peasant Soviets and village assemblies had put forward under Kerensky. That is where our strength lay; that is why we were able to win the overwhelming majority so easily. As far as the countryside was concerned, our revolution continued to be a bourgeois revolution, and only later, after a lapse of six months, were we compelled within the framework of the state organisation to start the class struggle in the countryside, to establish Committees of Poor Peasants, of semi-proletarians, in every village, and to carry on a methodical fight against the rural bourgeoisie. This was inevitable in Russia owing to the backwardness of the country. In Western Europe things will proceed differently, and that is why we must emphasise the absolute necessity of spreading the Soviet system also to the rural population in proper, perhaps new, forms.

Third: We must say that winning a Communist majority in the Soviets is the principal task in all countries in which Soviet government is not yet victorious. Our Resolutions Commission discussed this question yesterday. Perhaps other comrades will express their opinion on it; but I would like to propose that these three points be adopted as a special resolution. Of course, we are not in a position to prescribe the path of development. It is quite likely that the revolution will come very soon in many West-European countries, but we, as the organised section of the working class, as a party, strive and must strive to gain a majority in the Soviets. Then our victory will be assured and no power on earth will be able to do anything against the communist revolution. If we do not, victory will not be secured so easily, and it will not be durable. And so, I would like to propose that these three points be adopted as a special resolution.

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July 19-August 7, 1920

REPORT
ON THE INTERNATIONAL SITUATION
AND THE FUNDAMENTAL TASKS
OF THE COMMUNIST INTERNATIONAL
July 19

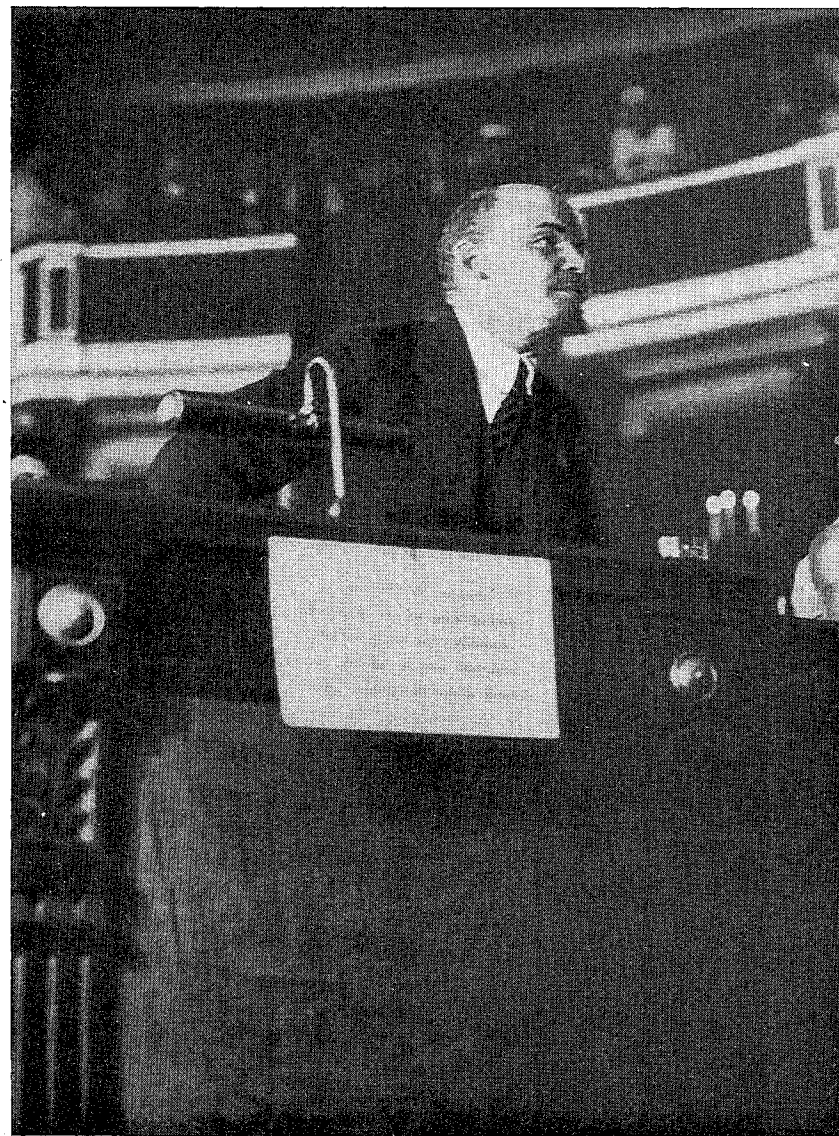
(*A*n ovation breaks out. All present rise to their feet and applaud. The speaker tries to begin, but the applause and cries in all languages continue. The ovation does not abate.) Comrades, the theses on the questions of the fundamental tasks of the Communist International have been published in all languages and contain nothing that is materially new (particularly to the Russian comrades). That is because, in a considerable measure, they extend several of the main features of our revolutionary experience and the lessons of our revolutionary movement to a number of Western countries, to Western Europe. My report will therefore deal at greater length, if in brief outline, with the first part of my subject, namely, the international situation.

Imperialism's economic relations constitute the core of the entire international situation as it now exists. Throughout the twentieth century, this new, highest and final stage of capitalism has fully taken shape. Of course, you all know that the enormous dimensions that capital has reached are the most characteristic and essential feature of imperialism. The place of free competition has been taken by huge monopolies. An insignificant number of capitalists have, in some cases, been able to concentrate in their hands entire branches of industry; these have passed into the hands of combines, cartels, syndicates and trusts, not infrequently of an international nature. Thus, entire branches of industry, not only in single

countries, but all over the world, have been taken over by monopolists in the field of finance, property rights, and partly of production. This has formed the basis for the unprecedented domination exercised by an insignificant number of very big banks, financial tycoons, financial magnates who have, in fact, transformed even the freest republics into financial monarchies. Before the war this was publicly recognised by such far from revolutionary writers as, for example, Lysis in France.

This domination by a handful of capitalists achieved full development when the whole world had been partitioned, not only in the sense that the various sources of raw materials and means of production had been seized by the biggest capitalists, but also in the sense that the preliminary partition of the colonies had been completed. Some forty years ago, the population of the colonies stood at somewhat over 250,000,000, who were subordinated to six capitalist powers. Before the war of 1914, the population of the colonies was estimated at about 600,000,000, and if we add countries like Persia, Turkey and China, which were already semi-colonies, we shall get, in round figures, a population of a thousand million people oppressed through colonial dependence by the richest, most civilised and freest countries. And you know that, apart from direct political and juridical dependence, colonial dependence presumes a number of relations of financial and economic dependence, a number of wars, which were not regarded as wars because very often they amounted to sheer massacres, when European and American imperialist troops, armed with the most up-to-date weapons of destruction, slaughtered the unarmed and defenceless inhabitants of colonial countries.

The first imperialist war of 1914-18 was the inevitable outcome of this partition of the whole world, of this domination by the capitalist monopolies, of this great power wielded by an insignificant number of very big banks—two, three, four or five in each country. This war was waged for the repartitioning of the whole world. It was waged in order to decide which of the small groups of the biggest states—the British or the German—was to obtain the opportunity and the right to rob, strangle and exploit the whole world. You know that the war settled this question in favour of the British group. And, as a result of this war, all capitalist contradictions



Lenin reports on the international situation and the fundamental tasks of the Communist International at the Second Congress of the Comintern

have become immeasurably more acute. At a single stroke the war relegated about 250,000,000 of the world's inhabitants to what is equivalent to colonial status, viz., Russia, whose population can be taken at about 130,000,000, and Austria-Hungary, Germany and Bulgaria, with a total population of not less than 120,000,000. That means 250,000,000 people living in countries, of which some, like Germany, are among the most advanced, most enlightened, most cultured, and on a level with modern technical progress. By means of the Treaty of Versailles,¹⁴ the war imposed such terms upon these countries that advanced peoples have been reduced to a state of colonial dependence, poverty, starvation, ruin, and loss of rights: this treaty binds them for many generations, placing them in conditions that no civilised nation has ever lived in. The following is the post-war picture of the world: at least *1,250 million* people are at once brought under the colonial yoke, exploited by a brutal capitalism, which once boasted of its love for peace, and had some right to do so some fifty years ago, when the world was not yet partitioned, the monopolies did not as yet rule, and capitalism could still develop in a relatively peaceful way, without tremendous military conflicts.

Today, after this "peaceful" period, we see a monstrous intensification of oppression, the reversion to a colonial and military oppression that is far worse than before. The Treaty of Versailles has placed Germany and the other defeated countries in a position that makes their economic existence physically impossible, deprives them of all rights, and humiliates them.

How many nations are the beneficiaries? To answer this question we must recall that the population of the United States—the only full beneficiary from the war, a country which, from a heavy debtor, has become a general creditor—is no more than 100,000,000. The population of Japan—which gained a great deal by keeping out of the European-American conflict and by seizing the enormous Asian continent—is 50,000,000. The population of Britain, which next to the above-mentioned countries gained most, is about 50,000,000. If we add the neutral countries with their very small populations, countries which were enriched by the war, we shall get, in round figures, some 250,000,000 people.

Thus you get the broad outlines of the picture of the world as it appeared after the imperialist war. In the oppressed colonies—countries which are being dismembered, such as Persia, Turkey and China, and in countries that were defeated and have been relegated to the position of colonies—there are 1,250 million inhabitants. Not more than 250,000,000 inhabit countries that have retained their old positions, but have become economically dependent upon America, and all of which, during the war, were militarily dependent, once the war involved the whole world and did not permit a single state to remain really neutral. And, finally, we have not more than 250,000,000 inhabitants in countries whose top stratum, the capitalists alone, benefited from the partition of the world. We thus get a total of about 1,750 million comprising the entire population of the world. I would like to remind you of this picture of the world, for all the basic contradictions of capitalism, of imperialism, which are leading up to revolution, all the basic contradictions in the working-class movement that have led up to the furious struggle against the Second International, facts our chairman has referred to, are all connected with this partitioning of the world's population.

Of course, these figures give the economic picture of the world only approximately, in broad outline. And, comrades, it is natural that, with the population of the world divided in this way, exploitation by finance capital, the capitalist monopolies, has increased many times over.

Not only have the colonial and the defeated countries been reduced to a state of dependence; within each victor state the contradictions have grown more acute; all the capitalist contradictions have become aggravated. I shall illustrate this briefly with a few examples.

Let us take the national debts. We know that the debts of the principal European states increased no less than *sevenfold* in the period between 1914 and 1920. I shall quote another economic source, one of particular significance—Keynes, the British diplomat and author of *The Economic Consequences of the Peace*, who, on instructions from his government, took part in the Versailles peace negotiations, observed them on the spot from the purely bourgeois point of view, studied the subject in detail, step by step, and took part in the con-

ferences as an economist. He has arrived at conclusions which are more weighty, more striking and more instructive than any a Communist revolutionary could draw, because they are the conclusions of a well-known bourgeois and implacable enemy of Bolshevism, which he, like the British philistine he is, imagines as something monstrous, ferocious, and bestial. Keynes has reached the conclusion that after the Peace of Versailles, Europe and the whole world are heading for bankruptcy. He has resigned, and thrown his book in the government's face with the words: "What you are doing is madness." I shall quote his figures, which can be summed up as follows.

What are the debtor-creditor relations that have developed between the principal powers? I shall convert pounds sterling into gold rubles, at a rate of ten gold rubles to one pound. Here is what we get: the United States has assets amounting to 19,000 million, its liabilities are nil. Before the war it was in Britain's debt. In his report on April 14, 1920, to the last congress of the Communist Party of Germany, Comrade Levi very correctly pointed out that there are now only two powers in the world that can act independently, viz., Britain and America. America alone is absolutely independent financially. Before the war she was a debtor; she is now a creditor only. All the other powers in the world are debtors. Britain has been reduced to a position in which her assets total 17,000 million, and her liabilities 8,000 million. She is already half-way to becoming a debtor nation. Moreover, her assets include about 6,000 million owed to her by Russia. Included in the debt are military supplies received by Russia during the war. When Krasin, as representative of the Russian Soviet Government, recently had occasion to discuss with Lloyd George the subject of debt agreements, he made it plain to the scientists and politicians, to the British Government's leaders, that they were labouring under a strange delusion if they were counting on getting these debts repaid. The British diplomat Keynes has already laid this delusion bare.

Of course, it is not only or even not at all a question of the Russian revolutionary government having no wish to pay the debts. No government would pay, because these debts are usurious interest on a sum that has been

paid twenty times over, and the selfsame bourgeois Keynes, who does not in the least sympathise with the Russian revolutionary movement, says: "It is clear that these debts cannot be taken into account."

In regard to France, Keynes quotes the following figures: her assets amount to 3,500 million, and her liabilities to 10,500 million! And this is a country which the French themselves called the world's money-lender, because her "savings" were enormous; the proceeds of colonial and financial pillage—a gigantic capital—enabled her to grant thousands upon thousands of millions in loans, particularly to Russia. These loans brought in an enormous revenue. Notwithstanding this and notwithstanding victory, France has been reduced to debtor status.

A bourgeois American source, quoted by Comrade Braun, a Communist, in his book *Who Must Pay the War Debts?* (Leipzig, 1920), estimates the ratio of debts to national wealth as follows: in the victor countries, Britain and France, the ratio of debts to aggregate national wealth is over 50 per cent; in Italy the percentage is between 60 and 70, and in Russia 90. As you know, however, these debts do not disturb us, because we followed Keynes's excellent advice just a little before his book appeared—we annulled all our debts. (*Stormy applause.*)

In this, however, Keynes reveals the usual crankiness of the philistine: while advising that all debts should be annulled, he goes on to say that, of course, France only stands to gain by it, that, of course, Britain will not lose very much, as nothing can be got out of Russia in any case; America will lose a fair amount, but Keynes counts on American "generosity"! On this point our views differ from those of Keynes and other petty-bourgeois pacifists. We think that to get the debts annulled they will have to wait for something else to happen, and will have to try working in a direction other than counting on the "generosity" of the capitalists.

These few figures go to show that the imperialist war has created an impossible situation for the victor powers as well. This is further shown by the enormous disparity between wages and price rises. On March 8 of this year the Supreme Economic Council, an institution charged with protecting the bourgeois system throughout the

world from the mounting revolution, adopted a resolution which ended with an appeal for order, industry and thrift, provided, of course, the workers remain the slaves of capital. This Supreme Economic Council, organ of the Entente and of the capitalists of the whole world, presented the following summary.

In the United States of America food prices have risen, on the average, by 120 per cent, whereas wages have increased only by 100 per cent. In Britain, food prices have gone up by 170 per cent, and wages 130 per cent; in France, food prices—300 per cent, and wages 200 per cent; in Japan, food prices—130 per cent, and wages 60 per cent (I have analysed Comrade Braun's figures in his pamphlet and those of the Supreme Economic Council as published in *The Times* of March 10, 1920).

In such circumstances, the workers' mounting resentment, the growth of a revolutionary temper and ideas, and the increase in spontaneous mass strikes are obviously inevitable, since the position of the workers is becoming intolerable. The workers' own experience is convincing them that the capitalists have become prodigiously enriched by the war and are placing the burden of war costs and debts upon the workers' shoulders. We recently learnt by cable that America wants to deport another 500 Communists to Russia so as to get rid of "dangerous agitators".

Even if America deports to our country, not 500 but 500,000 Russian, American, Japanese and French "agitators", that will make no difference, because there will still be the disparity between prices and wages, which they can do nothing about. The reason why they can do nothing about it is because private property is most strictly safeguarded, is "sacred" there. That should not be forgotten, because it is only in Russia that the exploiters' private property has been abolished. The capitalists can do nothing about the gap between prices and wages, and the workers cannot live on their previous wages. The old methods are useless against this calamity. Nothing can be achieved by isolated strikes, the parliamentary struggle, or the vote, because "private property is sacred", and the capitalists have accumulated such debts that the whole world is in bondage to a handful of men. Meanwhile the workers' living conditions are

becoming more and more unbearable. There is no other way out but to abolish the exploiters' "private property".

In his pamphlet *Britain and the World Revolution*, valuable extracts from which were published by our *Bulletin of the People's Commissariat of Foreign Affairs* of February 1920, Comrade Lapinsky points out that in Britain coal export prices have doubled as against those anticipated by official industrial circles.

In Lancashire things have gone so far that shares are at a premium of 400 per cent. Bank profits are at least 40-50 per cent. It should, moreover, be noted that, in determining bank profits, all bank officials are able to conceal the lion's share of profits by calling them, not profits but bonuses, commissions, etc. So here, too, indisputable economic facts prove that the wealth of a tiny handful of people has grown prodigiously and that their luxury beggars description, while the poverty of the working class is steadily growing. We must particularly note the further circumstance brought out very clearly by Comrade Levi in the report I have just referred to, namely, the change in the value of money. Money has everywhere depreciated as a result of the debts, the issue of paper currency, etc. The same bourgeois source I have already mentioned, namely, the statement of the Supreme Economic Council of March 8, 1920, has calculated that in Britain the depreciation in the value of currency as against the dollar is approximately one-third, in France and Italy two-thirds, and in Germany as much as 96 per cent.

This fact shows that the "mechanism" of the world capitalist economy is falling apart. The trade relations on which the acquisition of raw materials and the sale of commodities hinge under capitalism cannot go on; they cannot continue to be based on the subordination of a number of countries to a single country—the reason being the change in the value of money. No wealthy country can exist or trade unless it sells its goods and obtains raw materials.

Thus we have a situation in which America, a wealthy country that all countries are subordinate to, cannot buy or sell. And the selfsame Keynes who went through the entire gamut of the Versailles negotiations has been compelled to acknowledge this impossibility despite his

unyielding determination to defend capitalism, and all his hatred of Bolshevism. Incidentally, I do not think any communist manifesto, or one that is revolutionary in general, could compare in forcefulness with those pages in Keynes's book which depict Wilson and "Wilsonism" in action. Wilson was the idol of philistines and pacifists like Keynes and a number of heroes of the Second International (and even of the "Two-and-a-Half" International¹⁵), who exalted the "Fourteen Points"¹⁶ and even wrote "learned" books about the "roots" of Wilson's policy; they hoped that Wilson would save "social peace", reconcile exploiters and exploited, and bring about social reforms. Keynes showed vividly how Wilson was made a fool of, and all these illusions were shattered at the first impact with the practical, mercantile and huckster policy of capital as personified by Clemenceau and Lloyd George. The masses of the workers now see more clearly than ever, from their own experience—and the learned pedants could see it just by reading Keynes's book—that the "roots" of Wilson's policy lay in sanctimonious piffle, petty-bourgeois phrase-mongering, and an utter inability to understand the class struggle.

In consequence of all this, two conditions, two fundamental situations, have inevitably and naturally emerged. On the one hand, the impoverishment of the masses has grown incredibly, primarily among 1,250 million people, i.e., 70 per cent of the world's population. These are the colonial and dependent countries whose inhabitants possess no legal rights, countries "mandated" to the brigands of finance. Besides, the enslavement of the defeated countries has been sanctioned by the Treaty of Versailles and by existing secret treaties regarding Russia, whose validity, it is true, is sometimes about as real as that of the scraps of paper stating that we owe so many thousands of millions. For the first time in world history, we see robbery, slavery, dependence, poverty and starvation imposed upon 1,250 million people by a legal act.

On the other hand, the workers in each of the creditor countries have found themselves in conditions that are intolerable. The war has led to an unprecedented aggravation of all capitalist contradictions, this being the origin of the intense revolutionary ferment that is

ever growing. During the war people were put under military discipline, hurled into the ranks of death, or threatened with immediate wartime punishment. Because of the war conditions people could not see the economic realities. Writers, poets, the clergy, the whole press were engaged in nothing but glorifying the war. Now that the war has ended, the exposures have begun: German imperialism with its Peace of Brest-Litovsk⁴⁷ has been laid bare; the Treaty of Versailles, which was to have been a victory for imperialism but proved its defeat, has been exposed. Incidentally, the example of Keynes shows that in Europe and America tens and hundreds of thousands of petty bourgeois, intellectuals, and simply more or less literate and educated people, have had to follow the road taken by Keynes, who resigned and threw in the face of the government a book exposing it. Keynes has shown what is taking place and will take place in the minds of thousands and hundreds of thousands of people when they realise that all the speeches about a "war for liberty", etc., were sheer deception, and that as a result only a handful of people were enriched, while the others were ruined and reduced to slavery. Is it not a fact that the bourgeois Keynes declares that, to survive and save the British economy, the British must secure the resumption of free commercial intercourse between Germany and Russia? How can this be achieved? By cancelling all debts, as Keynes proposes. This is an idea that has been arrived at not only by Keynes, the learned economist; millions of people are or will be getting the same idea. And millions of people hear bourgeois economists declare that there is no way out except annulling the debts; therefore "damn the Bolsheviks" (who have annulled the debts), and let us appeal to America's "generosity"! I think that, on behalf of the Congress of the Communist International, we should send a message of thanks to these economists, who have been agitating for Bolshevism.

If, on the one hand, the economic position of the masses has become intolerable, and, on the other hand, the disintegration described by Keynes has set in and is growing among the negligible minority of all-powerful victor countries, then we are in the presence of the maturing of the two conditions for the world revolution.

We now have before us a somewhat more complete

picture of the whole world. We know what dependence upon a handful of rich men means to 1,250 million people who have been placed in intolerable conditions of existence. On the other hand, when the peoples were presented with the League of Nations⁴⁸ Covenant, declaring that the League had put an end to war and would henceforth not permit anyone to break the peace, and when this Covenant, the last hope of working people all over the world, came into force, it proved to be a victory of the first order for us. Before it came into force, people used to say that it was impossible not to impose special conditions on a country like Germany, but when the Covenant was drawn up, everything would come out all right. Yet, when the Covenant was published, the bitterest opponents of Bolshevism were obliged to repudiate it! When the Covenant came into operation, it appeared that a small group of the richest countries, the "Big Four"—in the persons of Clemenceau, Lloyd George, Orlando and Wilson—had been put on the job of creating the new relations! When the machinery of the Covenant was put into operation, this led to a complete breakdown.

We saw this in the case of the wars against Russia. Weak, ruined and crushed, Russia, a most backward country, fought against all the nations, against a league of the rich and powerful states that dominate the world, and emerged victorious. We could not put up a force that was anything like the equal of theirs, and yet we proved the victors. Why was that? Because there was not a jot of unity among them, because each power worked against the other. France wanted Russia to pay her debts and become a formidable force against Germany; Britain wanted to partition Russia, and attempted to seize the Baku oilfields and conclude a treaty with the border states of Russia. Among the official British documents there is a Paper which scrupulously enumerates all the states (fourteen in all) which some six months ago, in December 1919, pledged themselves to take Moscow and Petrograd. Britain based her policy on these states, to whom she granted loans running into millions. All these calculations have now misfired, and all the loans are unrecoverable.

Such is the situation created by the League of Nations. Every day of this Covenant's existence provides the

best propaganda for Bolshevism, since the most powerful adherents of the capitalist "order" are revealing that, on every question, they put spokes in one another's wheels. Furious wrangling over the partitioning of Turkey, Persia, Mesopotamia and China is going on between Japan, Britain, America and France. The bourgeois press in these countries is full of the bitterest attacks and the angriest statements against their "colleagues" for trying to snatch the booty from under their noses. We see complete discord at the top, among this handful, this very small number of extremely rich countries. There are 1,250 million people who find it impossible to live in the conditions of servitude which "advanced" and civilised capitalism wishes to impose on them: after all, these represent 70 per cent of the world's population. This handful of the richest states—Britain, America and Japan (though Japan was able to plunder the Eastern, the Asian countries, she cannot constitute an independent financial and military force without support from another country)—these two or three countries are unable to organise economic relations, and are directing their policies toward disrupting policies of their colleagues and partners in the League of Nations. Hence the world crisis; it is these economic roots of the crisis that provide the chief reason of the brilliant successes the Communist International is achieving.

Comrades, we have now come to the question of the revolutionary crisis as the basis of our revolutionary action. And here we must first of all note two widespread errors. On the one hand, bourgeois economists depict this crisis simply as "unrest", to use the elegant expression of the British. On the other hand, revolutionaries sometimes try to prove that the crisis is absolutely insoluble.

This is a mistake. There is no such thing as an absolutely hopeless situation. The bourgeoisie are behaving like barefaced plunderers who have lost their heads; they are committing folly after folly, thus aggravating the situation and hastening their doom. All that is true. But nobody can "prove" that it is absolutely impossible for them to pacify a minority of the exploited with some petty concessions, and suppress some movement or uprising of some section of the oppressed and exploited. To try to "prove" in advance that there is "absolutely" no way out of the situation would be sheer pedantry, or

playing with concepts and catchwords. Practice alone can serve as real "proof" in this and similar questions. All over the world, the bourgeois system is experiencing a tremendous revolutionary crisis. The revolutionary parties must now "prove" in practice that they have sufficient understanding and organisation, contact with the exploited masses, and determination and skill to utilise this crisis for a successful, a victorious revolution.

It is mainly to prepare this "proof" that we have gathered at this Congress of the Communist International.

To illustrate to what extent opportunism still prevails among parties that wish to affiliate to the Third International, and how far the work of some parties is removed from preparing the revolutionary class to utilise the revolutionary crisis, I shall quote the leader of the British Independent Labour Party,¹⁹ Ramsay MacDonald. In his book, *Parliament and Revolution*, which deals with the basic problems that are now engaging our attention, MacDonald describes the state of affairs in what is something like a bourgeois pacifist spirit. He admits that there is a revolutionary crisis and that revolutionary sentiments are growing, that the sympathies of the workers are with the Soviets and the dictatorship of the proletariat (note that this refers to Britain) and that the dictatorship of the proletariat is better than the present dictatorship of the British bourgeoisie.

But MacDonald remains a thorough-paced bourgeois pacifist and compromiser, a petty bourgeois who dreams of a government that stands above classes. Like all bourgeois liars, sophists and pedants, MacDonald recognises the class struggle merely as a "descriptive fact". He ignores the experience of Kerensky, the Mensheviks and the Socialist-Revolutionaries of Russia, the similar experience of Hungary, Germany, etc., in regard to creating a "democratic" government allegedly standing above classes. MacDonald lulls his party and those workers who have the misfortune to regard this bourgeois as a socialist, this philistine as a leader, with the words: "We know that all this [i.e., the revolutionary crisis, the revolutionary ferment] will pass... settle down." The war, he says, inevitably provoked the crisis, but after the war it will all "settle down", even if not at once!

That is what has been written by a man who is leader of a party that wants to affiliate to the Third Interna-

tional. This is a revelation—the more valuable for its rare outspokenness—of what is no less frequently to be seen in the top ranks of the French Socialist Party and the German Independent Social-Democratic Party, namely, not merely an inability, but also an unwillingness to, take advantage, in a revolutionary sense, of the revolutionary crisis, or, in other words, both an inability and an unwillingness to really prepare the party and the class in revolutionary fashion for the dictatorship of the proletariat.

That is the main evil in very many parties which are now leaving the Second International. This is precisely why, in the theses I have submitted to the present Congress, I have dwelt most of all on the tasks connected with *preparations* for the dictatorship of the proletariat, and have given as concrete and exact a definition of them as possible.

Here is another example. A new book against Bolshevism was recently published. An unusually large number of books of this kind are now coming out in Europe and America; the more anti-Bolshevik books are brought out, the more strongly and rapidly mass sympathy for Bolshevism grows. I am referring to Otto Bauer's *Bolshevism or Social-Democracy?* This book clearly demonstrates to the Germans the essence of Menshevism, whose shameful role in the Russian revolution is understood well enough by the workers of all countries. Otto Bauer has produced a thoroughgoing Menshevik pamphlet, although he has concealed his own sympathy with Menshevism. In Europe and America, however, more precise information should now be disseminated about what Menshevism actually is, for it is a generic term for all allegedly socialist, Social-Democratic and other trends that are hostile to Bolshevism. It would be dull writing if we Russians were to explain to Europeans what Menshevism is. Otto Bauer has shown that in his book, and we thank in advance the bourgeois and opportunist publishers who will publish it and translate it into various languages. Bauer's book will be a useful if peculiar supplement to the textbooks on communism. Take any paragraph, any argument in Otto Bauer's book and indicate the Menshevism in it, where the roots lie of views that lead up to the actions of the traitors to socialism, of the friends of Kerensky,

Scheidemann, etc.—this is a question that could be very usefully and successfully set in “examinations” designed to test whether communism has been properly assimilated. If you cannot answer this question, you are not yet a Communist, and should not join the Communist Party. (*Applause.*)

Otto Bauer has excellently expressed in a single sentence the essence of the views of world opportunism; for this, if we could do as we please in Vienna, we would put up a monument to him in his lifetime. The use of force in the class struggle in modern democracies, Otto Bauer says, would be “violence exercised against the social factors of force”.

You may think that this sounds queer and unintelligible. It is an example of what Marxism has been reduced to, of the kind of banality and defence of the exploiters to which the most revolutionary theory *can* be reduced. A German variety of philistinism is required, and you get the “theory” that the “social factors of force” are: number; the degree of organisation; the place held in the process of production and distribution; activity and education. If a rural agricultural labourer or an urban working man practises revolutionary violence against a landowner or a capitalist, that is no dictatorship of the proletariat, no violence against the exploiters and the oppressors of the people. Oh, no! This is “violence against the social factors of force”.

Perhaps my example sounds something like a jest. However, such is the nature of present-day opportunism that its struggle against Bolshevism becomes a jest. The task of involving the working class, all its thinking elements, in the struggle between international Menshevism (the MacDonalds, Otto Bauers and Co.) and Bolshevism is highly useful and very urgent to Europe and America.

Here we must ask: how is the persistence of such trends in Europe to be explained? Why is this opportunism stronger in Western Europe than in our country? It is because the culture of the advanced countries has been, and still is, the result of their being able to live at the expense of a thousand million oppressed people. It is because the capitalists of these countries obtain a great deal more in this way than they could obtain as profits by plundering the workers in their own countries.

Before the war, it was calculated that the three richest countries—Britain, France and Germany—got between eight and ten thousand million francs a year from the export of capital alone, apart from other sources.

It goes without saying that, out of this tidy sum, at least five hundred millions can be spent as a sop to the labour leaders and the labour aristocracy, i.e., on all sorts of bribes. The whole thing boils down to nothing but bribery. It is done in a thousand different ways: by increasing cultural facilities in the largest centres, by creating educational institutions, and by providing co-operative, trade union and parliamentary leaders with thousands of cushy jobs. This is done wherever present-day civilised capitalist relations exist. It is these thousands of millions in superprofits that form the economic basis of opportunism in the working-class movement. In America, Britain and France we see a far greater persistence of the opportunist leaders, of the upper crust of the working class, the labour aristocracy; they offer stronger resistance to the communist movement. That is why we must be prepared to find it harder for the European and American workers' parties to get rid of this disease than was the case in our country. We know that enormous successes have been achieved in the treatment of this disease since the Third International was formed, but we have not yet finished the job; the purging of the workers' parties, the revolutionary parties of the proletariat all over the world, of bourgeois influences, of the opportunists in their ranks, is very far from complete.

I shall not dwell on the concrete manner in which we must do that; that is dealt with in my published theses. My task consists in indicating the deep economic roots of this phenomenon. The disease is a protracted one; the cure takes longer than the optimists hoped it would. Opportunism is our principal enemy. Opportunism in the upper ranks of the working-class movement is bourgeois socialism, not proletarian socialism. It has been shown in practice that working-class activists who follow the opportunist trend are better defenders of the bourgeoisie than the bourgeois themselves. Without their leadership of the workers, the bourgeoisie could not remain in power. This has been proved, not only by the history of the Kerensky regime in Russia; it has also been proved by

the democratic republic in Germany under its Social-Democratic government, as well as by Albert Thomas's attitude towards his bourgeois government. It has been proved by similar experience in Britain and the United States. This is where our principal enemy is, an enemy we must overcome. We must leave this Congress firmly resolved to carry on this struggle to the very end, in all parties. That is our main task.

Compared with this task, the rectification of the errors of the "Left" trend in communism will be an easy one. In a number of countries anti-parliamentarianism is to be seen, which has not been so much introduced by people of petty-bourgeois origin as fostered by certain advanced contingents of the proletariat out of hatred for the old parliamentarianism, out of a legitimate, proper and necessary hatred for the conduct of members of parliament in Britain, France, Italy, in all lands. Directives must be issued by the Communist International and the comrades must be made more familiar with the experience of Russia, with the significance of a genuinely proletarian political party. Our work will consist in accomplishing this task. The fight against these errors in the proletarian movement, against these shortcomings, will be a thousand times easier than fighting against those bourgeois who, in the guise of reformists, belong to the old parties of the Second International and conduct the whole of their work in a bourgeois, not proletarian, spirit.

Comrades, in conclusion I shall deal with one other aspect of the subject. Our comrade, the chairman, has said that our Congress merits the title of a World Congress. I think he is right, particularly because we have here quite a number of representatives of the revolutionary movement in the colonial and backward countries. This is only a small beginning, but the important thing is that a beginning has been made. At this Congress we see taking place a union between revolutionary proletarians of the capitalist, advanced countries, and the revolutionary masses of those countries where there is no or hardly any proletariat, i.e., the oppressed masses of colonial, Eastern countries. It is on ourselves that the consolidation of unity depends, and I am sure we shall achieve it. World imperialism shall fall when the revolutionary onslaught of the exploited and oppressed workers in each country, overcoming resistance from

petty-bourgeois elements and the influence of the small upper crust of labour aristocrats, merges with the revolutionary onslaught of hundreds of millions of people who have hitherto stood beyond the pale of history, and have been regarded merely as the object of history.

The imperialist war has helped the revolution: from the colonies, the backward countries, and the isolation they lived in, the bourgeoisie levied soldiers for this imperialist war. The British bourgeoisie impressed on the soldiers from India that it was the duty of the Indian peasants to defend Great Britain against Germany; the French bourgeoisie impressed on soldiers from the French colonies that it was their duty to defend France. They taught them the use of arms, a very useful thing, for which we might express our deep gratitude to the bourgeoisie—express our gratitude on behalf of all the Russian workers and peasants, and particularly on behalf of all the Russian Red Army. The imperialist war has drawn the dependent peoples into world history. And one of the most important tasks now confronting us is to consider how the foundation-stone of the organisation of the Soviet movement can be laid in the *non-capitalist* countries. Soviets are possible there; they will not be workers' Soviets, but peasants' Soviets, or Soviets of working people.

Much work will have to be done; errors will be inevitable; many difficulties will be encountered along this road. It is the fundamental task of the Second Congress to elaborate or indicate the practical principles that will enable the work, till now carried on in an unorganised fashion among hundreds of millions of people, to be carried on in an organised, coherent and systematic fashion.

Now, a year or a little more after the First Congress of the Communist International, we have emerged victors over the Second International; it is not only among the workers of the civilised countries that the ideas of the Soviets have spread; it is not only to them that they have become known and intelligible. The workers of all lands are ridiculing the wiseacres, not a few of whom call themselves socialists and argue in a learned or almost learned manner about the Soviet "system", as the German systematists are fond of calling it, or the Soviet "idea", as the British Guild Socialists²⁰ call it. Not infrequently,

these arguments about the Soviet "system" or "idea" becloud the workers' eyes and their minds. However, the workers are brushing this pedantic rubbish aside and are taking up the weapon provided by the Soviets. A recognition of the role and significance of the Soviets has now also spread to the lands of the East.

The groundwork has been laid for the Soviet movement all over the East, all over Asia, among all the colonial peoples.

The proposition that the exploited must rise up against the exploiters and establish their Soviets is not a very complex one. After our experience, after two and a half years of the existence of the Soviet Republic in Russia, and after the First Congress of the Third International, this idea is becoming accessible to hundreds of millions of people oppressed by the exploiters all over the world. We in Russia are often obliged to compromise, to bide our time, since we are weaker than the international imperialists, yet we know that we are defending the interests of this mass of a thousand and a quarter million people. For the time being, we are hampered by barriers, prejudices and ignorance which are receding into the past with every passing hour; but we are more and more becoming representatives and genuine defenders of this 70 per cent of the world's population, this mass of working and exploited people. It is with pride that we can say: at the First Congress we were in fact merely propagandists; we were only spreading the fundamental ideas among the world's proletariat; we only issued the call for struggle; we were merely asking where the people were who were capable of taking this path. Today the advanced proletariat is everywhere with us. A proletarian army exists everywhere, although sometimes it is poorly organised and needs reorganising. If our comrades in all lands help us now to organise a united army, no shortcomings will prevent us from accomplishing our task. That task is the world proletarian revolution, the creation of a world Soviet republic. (*Prolonged applause.*)

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SPEECH ON THE ROLE OF THE COMMUNIST PARTY

July 23

Comrades, I would like to make a few remarks concerning the speeches of Comrades Tanner and McLaine. Tanner says that he stands for the dictatorship of the proletariat, but he does not see the dictatorship of the proletariat quite in the way we do. He says that by the dictatorship of the proletariat we actually mean the dictatorship of the organised and class-conscious minority of the proletariat.

True enough, in the era of capitalism, when the masses of the workers are subjected to constant exploitation and cannot develop their human capacities, the most characteristic feature of working-class political parties is that they can involve only a minority of their class. A political party can comprise only a minority of a class, in the same way as the really class-conscious workers in any capitalist society constitute only a minority of all workers. We are therefore obliged to recognise that it is only this class-conscious minority that can direct and lead the broad masses of the workers. And if Comrade Tanner says that he is opposed to parties, but at the same time is in favour of a minority that represents the best-organised and most revolutionary workers showing the way to the entire proletariat, then I say that there is really no difference between us. What is this organised minority? If this minority is really class-conscious, if it is able to lead the masses, if it is able to

reply to every question that appears on the order of the day, then it is a party in reality. But if comrades like Tanner, to whom we pay special heed as representatives of a mass movement—which cannot, without a certain exaggeration, be said of the representatives of the British Socialist Party²¹—if these comrades are in favour of there being a minority that will fight resolutely for the dictatorship of the proletariat and will educate the masses of the workers along these lines, then this minority is in reality nothing but a party. Comrade Tanner says that this minority should organise and lead the entire mass of workers. If Comrade Tanner and the other comrades of the Shop Stewards' group and the Industrial Workers of the World²² accept this—and we see from the daily talks we have had with them that they do accept it—if they approve the idea that the class-conscious Communist minority of the working class leads the proletariat, then they must also agree that this is exactly the meaning of all our resolutions. In that case the only difference between us lies in their avoidance of the word "party" because there exists among the British comrades a certain mistrust of political parties. They can conceive of political parties only in the image of the parties of Gompers and Henderson,²³ parties of parliamentary smart dealers and traitors to the working class. But if, by parliamentarianism, they mean what exists in Britain and America today, then we too are opposed to such parliamentarianism and to such political parties. What we want is new and different parties. We want parties that will be in constant and real contact with the masses and will be able to lead those masses.

I now come to the third question I want to touch upon in connection with Comrade McLaine's speech. He is in favour of the British Communist Party affiliating to the Labour Party. I have already expressed my opinion on this score in my theses on affiliation to the Third International.²⁴ In my pamphlet I left the question open.²⁵ However, after discussing the matter with a number of comrades, I have come to the conclusion that the decision to remain within the Labour Party is the only correct tactic. But here is Comrade Tanner, who declares, "Don't be too dogmatic." I consider his remark quite out of place here. Comrade Ramsay says: "Please let us British Communists decide this question for ourselves." What would

the International be like if every little group were to come along and say: "Some of us are in favour of this thing and some are against; leave it to us to decide the matter for ourselves"? What then would be the use of having an International, a congress, and all this discussion? Comrade McLaine spoke only of the role of a political party. But the same applies to the trade unions and to parliamentarianism. It is quite true that a larger section of the finest revolutionaries are against affiliation to the Labour Party because they are opposed to parliamentarianism as a means of struggle. Perhaps it would be best to refer this question to a commission, where it should be discussed and studied, and then decided at this very Congress of the Communist International. We cannot agree that it concerns only the British Communists. We must say, in general, which are the correct tactics.

I will now deal with some of Comrade McLaine's arguments concerning the question of the British Labour Party. We must say frankly that the Party of Communists can join the Labour Party only on condition that it preserves full freedom of criticism and is able to conduct its own policy. This is of supreme importance. When, in this connection, Comrade Serrati speaks of class collaboration, I affirm that this will not be class collaboration. When the Italian comrades tolerate, in their party, opportunists like Turati and Co., i.e., bourgeois elements, that is indeed class collaboration. In this instance, however, with regard to the British Labour Party, it is simply a matter of collaboration between the advanced minority of the British workers and their vast majority. Members of the Labour Party are all members of trade unions. It has a very unusual structure, to be found in no other country. It is an organisation that embraces four million workers out of the six or seven million organised in trade unions. They are not asked to state what their political opinions are. Let Comrade Serrati prove to me that anyone there will prevent us from exercising our right of criticism. Only by proving that, will you prove Comrade McLaine wrong. The British Socialist Party can quite freely call Henderson a traitor and yet remain in the Labour Party. Here we have collaboration between the vanguard of the working class and the rearguard, the backward workers. This collaboration is so important to the entire

movement that we categorically insist on the British Communists serving as a link between the Party, that is, the minority of the working class, and the rest of the workers. If the minority is unable to lead the masses and establish close links with them, then it is not a party, and is worthless in general, even if it calls itself a party or the National Shop Stewards Committee—as far as I know, the Shop Stewards Committees in Britain have a National Committee, a central body, and that is a step towards a party. Consequently, until it is refuted that the British Labour Party consists of proletarians, this is co-operation between the vanguard of the working class and the backward workers; if this co-operation is not carried on systematically, the Communist Party will be worthless and there can be no question of the dictatorship of the proletariat at all. If our Italian comrades cannot produce more convincing arguments, we shall have to definitely settle the question later here, on the basis of what we know—and we shall come to the conclusion that affiliation is the correct tactic.

Comrades Tanner and Ramsay tell us that the majority of British Communists will not accept affiliation. But must we always agree with the majority? Not at all. If they have not yet understood which are the correct tactics, then perhaps it would be better to wait. Even the parallel existence for a time of two parties would be better than refusing to reply to the question as to which tactics are correct. Of course, acting on the experience of all Congress delegates and on the arguments that have been brought forward here, you will not insist on passing a resolution here and now, calling for the immediate formation of a single Communist Party in each country. That is impossible. But we can frankly express our opinion, and give directives. We must study in a special commission the question raised by the British delegation and then we shall say: affiliation to the Labour Party is the correct tactic. If the majority is against it, we must organise a separate minority. That will be of educational value. If the masses of the British workers still believe in the old tactics, we shall verify our conclusions at the next congress. We cannot, however, say that this question concerns Britain alone—that would mean copying the worst habits of the Second Interna-

tional. We must express our opinion frankly. If the British Communists do not reach agreement, and if a mass party is not formed, a split is inevitable one way or another.*

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pp. 235-39

3

REPORT OF THE COMMISSION
ON THE NATIONAL
AND THE COLONIAL QUESTIONS
July 26

Comrades, I shall confine myself to a brief introduction, after which Comrade Maring, who has been secretary to our commission, will give you a detailed account of the changes we have made in the theses. He will be followed by Comrade Roy, who has formulated the supplementary theses. Our commission have unanimously adopted both the preliminary theses,²⁶ as amended, and the supplementary theses. We have thus reached complete unanimity on all major issues. I shall now make a few brief remarks.

First, what is the cardinal idea underlying our theses? It is the distinction between oppressed and oppressor nations. Unlike the Second International and bourgeois democracy, we emphasise this distinction. In this age of imperialism, it is particularly important for the proletariat and the Communist International to establish the concrete economic facts and to proceed from concrete realities, not from abstract postulates, in all colonial and national problems.

The characteristic feature of imperialism consists in the whole world, as we now see, being divided into a large number of oppressed nations and an insignificant number of oppressor nations, the latter possessing colossal wealth and powerful armed forces. The vast majority of the world's population, over a thousand million, perhaps even 1,250 million people, if we take the total population of the world as 1,750 million, in other words, about 70 per cent of the world's population, belong to the oppressed nations,

* Issue No. 5 of the *Bulletin of the Second Congress of the Communist International* gave the concluding sentences of this speech as follows:

"We must express our opinion frankly, whatever it may be. If the British Communists do not reach agreement on the question of the organisation of the mass movement, and if a split takes place on this issue, then better a split than rejection of the organisation of the mass movement. It is better to rise to definite and sufficiently clear tactics and ideology than to go on remaining in the previous chaos."—Ed.

which are either in a state of direct colonial dependence or are semi-colonies, as, for example, Persia, Turkey and China, or else, conquered by some big imperialist power, have become greatly dependent on that power by virtue of peace treaties. This idea of distinction, of dividing the nations into oppressor and oppressed, runs through the theses, not only the first theses published earlier over my signature, but also those submitted by Comrade Roy. The latter were framed chiefly from the standpoint of the situation in India and other big Asian countries oppressed by Britain. Herein lies their great importance to us.

The second basic idea in our theses is that, in the present world situation following the imperialist war, reciprocal relations between peoples and the world political system as a whole are determined by the struggle waged by a small group of imperialist nations against the Soviet movement and the Soviet states headed by Soviet Russia. Unless we bear that in mind, we shall not be able to pose a single national or colonial problem correctly, even if it concerns a most outlying part of the world. The Communist Parties, in civilised and backward countries alike, can pose and solve political problems correctly only if they make this postulate their starting-point.

Third, I should like especially to emphasise the question of the bourgeois-democratic movement in backward countries. This is a question that has given rise to certain differences. We have discussed whether it would be right or wrong, in principle and in theory, to state that the Communist International and the Communist Parties must support the bourgeois-democratic movement in backward countries. As a result of our discussion, we have arrived at the unanimous decision to speak of the national-revolutionary movement rather than of the "bourgeois-democratic" movement. It is beyond doubt that any national movement can only be a bourgeois-democratic movement, since the overwhelming mass of the population in the backward countries consists of peasants who represent bourgeois-capitalist relationships. It would be utopian to believe that proletarian parties in these backward countries, if indeed they can emerge in them, can pursue communist tactics and a communist policy, without establishing definite relations with the peasant movement and without giving it effective support. However, the objections have been raised that, if we speak of the bourgeois-democratic movement,

we shall be obliterating all distinctions between the reformist and the revolutionary movements. Yet that distinction has been very clearly revealed of late in the backward and colonial countries, since the imperialist bourgeoisie is doing everything in its power to implant a reformist movement among the oppressed nations too. There has been a certain *rapprochement* between the bourgeoisie of the exploiting countries and that of the colonies, so that very often—perhaps even in most cases—the bourgeoisie of the oppressed countries, while it does support the national movement, is in full accord with the imperialist bourgeoisie, i.e., joins forces with it against all revolutionary movements and revolutionary classes. This was irrefutably proved in the commission, and we decided that the only correct attitude was to take this distinction into account and, in nearly all cases, substitute the term "national-revolutionary" for the term "bourgeois-democratic". The significance of this change is that we, as Communists, should and will support bourgeois-liberation movements in the colonies only when they are genuinely revolutionary, and when their exponents do not hinder our work of educating and organising in a revolutionary spirit the peasantry and the masses of the exploited. If these conditions do not exist, the Communists in these countries must combat the reformist bourgeoisie, to whom the heroes of the Second International also belong. Reformist parties already exist in the colonial countries, and in some cases their spokesmen call themselves Social-Democrats and socialists. The distinction I have referred to has been made in all the theses with the result, I think, that our view is now formulated much more precisely.

Next, I would like to make a remark on the subject of peasants' Soviets. The Russian Communists' practical activities in the former tsarist colonies, in such backward countries as Turkestan, etc., have confronted us with the question of how to apply the communist tactics and policy in pre-capitalist conditions. The preponderance of pre-capitalist relationships is still the main determining feature in these countries, so that there can be no question of a purely proletarian movement in them. There is practically no industrial proletariat in these countries. Nevertheless, we have assumed, we must assume, the role of leader even there. Experience has shown us that tremendous difficulties have to be surmounted in these countries.

However, the practical results of our work have also shown that despite these difficulties we are in a position to inspire in the masses an urge for independent political thinking and independent political action, even where a proletariat is practically non-existent. This work has been more difficult for us than it will be for comrades in the West-European countries, because in Russia the proletariat is engrossed in the work of state administration. It will readily be understood that peasants living in conditions of semi-feudal dependence can easily assimilate and give effect to the idea of Soviet organisation. It is also clear that the oppressed masses, those who are exploited, not only by merchant capital but also by the feudalists, and by a state based on feudalism, can apply this weapon, this type of organisation, in their conditions too. The idea of Soviet organisation is a simple one, and is applicable, not only to proletarian, but also to peasant feudal and semi-feudal relations. Our experience in this respect is not as yet very considerable. However, the debate in the commission, in which several representatives from colonial countries participated, demonstrated convincingly that the Communist International's theses should point out that peasants' Soviets, Soviets of the exploited, are a weapon which can be employed, not only in capitalist countries but also in countries with pre-capitalist relations, and that it is the absolute duty of Communist Parties and of elements prepared to form Communist Parties, everywhere to conduct propaganda in favour of peasants' Soviets or of working people's Soviets, this to include backward and colonial countries. Wherever conditions permit, they should at once make attempts to set up Soviets of working people.

This opens up a very interesting and very important field for our practical work. So far our joint experience in this respect has not been extensive, but more and more data will gradually accumulate. It is unquestionable that the proletariat of the advanced countries can and should give help to the working masses of the backward countries, and that the backward countries can emerge from their present stage of development when the victorious proletariat of the Soviet Republics extends a helping hand to these masses and is in a position to give them support.

There was quite a lively debate on this question in the commission, not only in connection with the theses I signed,

but still more in connection with Comrade Roy's theses, which he will defend here, and certain amendments to which were unanimously adopted.

The question was posed as follows: are we to consider as correct the assertion that the capitalist stage of economic development is inevitable for backward nations now on the road to emancipation and among whom a certain advance towards progress is to be seen since the war? We replied in the negative. If the victorious revolutionary proletariat conducts systematic propaganda among them, and the Soviet governments come to their aid with all the means at their disposal—in that event it will be mistaken to assume that the backward peoples must inevitably go through the capitalist stage of development. Not only should we create independent contingents of fighters and party organisations in the colonies and the backward countries, not only at once launch propaganda for the organisation of peasants' Soviets and strive to adapt them to the pre-capitalist conditions, but the Communist International should advance the proposition, with the appropriate theoretical grounding, that with the aid of the proletariat of the advanced countries, backward countries can go over to the Soviet system and, through certain stages of development, to communism, without having to pass through the capitalist stage.

The necessary means for this cannot be indicated in advance. These will be prompted by practical experience. It has, however, been definitely established that the idea of the Soviets is understood by the mass of the working people in even the most remote nations, that the Soviets should be adapted to the conditions of a pre-capitalist social system, and that the Communist Parties should immediately begin work in this direction in all parts of the world.

I would also like to emphasise the importance of revolutionary work by the Communist Parties, not only in their own, but also in the colonial countries, and particularly among the troops employed by the exploiting nations to keep the colonial peoples in subjection.

Comrade Quelch of the British Socialist Party spoke of this in our commission. He said that the rank-and-file British worker would consider it treasonable to help the enslaved nations in their uprisings against British rule. True, the jingoist and chauvinist-minded labour aristo-

crats of Britain and America present a very great danger to socialism, and are a bulwark of the Second International. Here we are confronted with the greatest treachery on the part of leaders and workers belonging to this bourgeois International. The colonial question has been discussed in the Second International as well. The Basle Manifesto²⁷ is quite clear on this point, too. The parties of the Second International have pledged themselves to revolutionary action, but they have given no sign of genuine revolutionary work or of assistance to the exploited and dependent nations in their revolts against the oppressor nations. This, I think, applies also to most of the parties that have withdrawn from the Second International and wish to join the Third International. We must proclaim this publicly for all to hear, and it is irrefutable. We shall see if any attempt is made to deny it.

All these considerations have formed the basis of our resolutions, which undoubtedly are too lengthy but will nevertheless, I am sure, prove of use and will promote the development and organisation of genuine revolutionary work in connection with the national and the colonial questions. And that is our principal task.

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SPEECH ON THE TERMS OF ADMISSION INTO THE COMMUNIST INTERNATIONAL

July 30

Comrades, Serrati has said that we have not yet invented a sincerometer—meaning by this French neologism an instrument for measuring sincerity. No such instrument has been invented yet. We have no need of one. But we do already have an instrument for defining trends. Comrade Serrati's error, which I shall deal with later, consists in his having failed to use this instrument, which has been known for a long time.

I would like to say only a few words about Comrade Crispien. I am very sorry that he is not present. (*Dittmann*: "He is ill.") I am very sorry to hear it. His speech is a most important document, and expresses explicitly the political line of the Right wing of the Independent Social-Democratic Party. I shall speak, not of personal circumstances or individual cases but only of the ideas clearly expressed in Crispien's speech. I think I shall be able to prove that the entire speech was thoroughly in the Kautskian spirit, and that Comrade Crispien shares the Kautskian views on the dictatorship of the proletariat. Replying to a rejoinder, Crispien said: "Dictatorship is nothing new, it was already mentioned in the Erfurt Programme." The Erfurt Programme²⁸ says nothing about the dictatorship of the proletariat, and history has proved that this was not due to chance. When, in 1902-03, we were drawing up our Party's first programme, we always had before us the example of the Erfurt Programme; Plekhanov, that very Plekhanov who rightly said at the time, "Either Bernstein will bury Social-Democracy, or Social-Democra-

cy will bury Bernstein", laid special emphasis on the fact that the Erfurt Programme's failure to mention the dictatorship of the proletariat was erroneous from the standpoint of theory, and in practice was a cowardly concession to the opportunists. The dictatorship of the proletariat has been in our programme since 1903.

When Comrade Crispien now says that the dictatorship of the proletariat is nothing new, and goes on to say: "We have always stood for the conquest of political power", he is evading the gist of the matter. Conquest of political power is recognised, but not dictatorship. All the socialist literature—not only German, but French and British as well—shows that the leaders of the opportunist parties, for instance, MacDonald in Britain, stand for the conquest of political power. They are, in all conscience, sincere socialists, but they are against the dictatorship of the proletariat! Since we have a good revolutionary party worthy of the name of Communist, it should conduct propaganda for the dictatorship of the proletariat, as distinct from the old conception of the Second International. This has been glossed over and obscured by Comrade Crispien, which is the fundamental error common to all of Kautsky's adherents.

"We are leaders elected by the masses," Comrade Crispien continues. This is a formal and erroneous point of view, since a struggle of trends was clearly to be seen at the latest Party congress of the German Independents. There is no need to seek for a sincerometer and to wax humorous on the subject, as Comrade Serrati does, in order to establish the simple fact that a struggle of trends must and does exist: one trend is that of the revolutionary workers who have just joined us and are opposed to the labour aristocracy; the other is that of the labour aristocracy, which in all civilised countries is headed by the old leaders. Does Crispien belong to the trend of the old leaders and the labour aristocracy, or to that of the new revolutionary masses of workers, who are opposed to the labour aristocracy? That is a question Comrade Crispien has failed to clarify.

In what kind of tone does Comrade Crispien speak of the split? He has said that the split was a bitter necessity, and deplored the matter at length. That is quite in the Kautskian spirit. Who did they break away from? Was it not from Scheidemann? Of course, it was. Crispien has

said: "We have split away." In the first place, this was done too late. Since we are on the subject, that has to be said. Second, the Independents should not deplore this, but should say: "The international working class is still under the sway of the labour aristocracy and the opportunists." Such is the position both in France and in Great Britain. Comrade Crispien does not regard the split like a Communist, but quite in the spirit of Kautsky, who is supposed to have no influence. Then Crispien went on to speak of high wages. The position in Germany, he said, is that the workers are quite well off compared with the workers in Russia or, in general, in the East of Europe. A revolution, as he sees it, can be made only if it does not worsen the workers' conditions "too much". Is it permissible, in a Communist Party, to speak in a tone like this, I ask? This is the language of counter-revolution. The standard of living in Russia is undoubtedly lower than in Germany, and when we established the dictatorship, this led to the workers beginning to go more hungry and to their conditions becoming even worse. The workers' victory cannot be achieved without sacrifices, without a temporary deterioration of their conditions. We must tell the workers the very opposite of what Crispien has said. If, in desiring to prepare the workers for the dictatorship, one tells them that their conditions will not be worsened "too much", one is losing sight of the main thing, namely, that it was by helping their "own" bourgeoisie to conquer and strangle the whole world by imperialist methods, with the aim of thereby ensuring better pay for themselves, that the labour aristocracy developed. If the German workers now want to work for the revolution they must make sacrifices, and not be afraid to do so.

In the general and world-historical sense, it is true that in a backward country like China, the coolie cannot bring about a proletarian revolution; however, to tell the workers in the handful of rich countries where life is easier, thanks to imperialist pillage, that they must be afraid of "too great" impoverishment, is counter-revolutionary. It is the reverse that they should be told. The labour aristocracy that is afraid of sacrifices, afraid of "too great" impoverishment during the revolutionary struggle, cannot belong to the Party. Otherwise the dictatorship is impossible, especially in West-European countries.

What does Crispien say about terror and coercion? He has said that these are two different things. Perhaps such a distinction is possible in a manual of sociology, but it cannot be made in political practice, especially in the conditions of Germany. We are forced to resort to coercion and terror against people who behave like the German officers did when they murdered Liebknecht and Rosa Luxemburg, or against people like Stinnes and Krupp, who buy up the press. Of course, there is no need to proclaim in advance that we shall positively resort to terror, but if the German officers and the Kappists remain the same as they now are and if Krupp and Stinnes remain the same as they now are, the employment of terror will be inevitable. Not only Kautsky, but Ledebour and Crispien as well, speak of coercion and terror in a wholly counter-revolutionary spirit. A party that makes shift with such ideas cannot participate in the dictatorship. That is self-evident.

Then there is the agrarian question. Here Crispien has got very worked up and tried to impute a petty-bourgeois spirit to us: to do anything for the small peasant at the expense of the big landowner is alleged to be petty-bourgeois action. He says the landed proprietors should be dispossessed and their land handed over to co-operative associations. This is a pedantic viewpoint. Even in highly developed countries, including Germany, there are a sufficient number of latifundia, landed estates that are cultivated by semi-feudal, not large-scale capitalist, methods. Part of such land may be cut off and turned over to the small peasants, without injury to farming. Large-scale farming can be preserved, and yet the small peasants can be provided with something of considerable importance to them. No thought is given to this, unfortunately, but in practice that has to be done, for otherwise you will fall into error. This has been borne out, for example, in a book by Varga (former People's Commissar for the National Economy in the Hungarian Soviet Republic), who writes that the establishment of the proletarian dictatorship hardly changed anything in the Hungarian countryside, that the day-labourers saw no changes, and the small peasants got nothing. There are large latifundia in Hungary, and a semi-feudal economy is conducted in large areas. Sections of large estates can and must always be found, part of which can be turned over to the small peasants, perhaps not as their property, but on lease, so that even the small-

est peasant may get some part of the confiscated estates. Otherwise, the small peasant will see no difference between the old order and the dictatorship of the Soviets. If the proletarian state authority does not act in this way, it will be unable to retain power.

Although Crispien did say: "You cannot deny that we have our revolutionary convictions", I shall reply that I do deny them. I do not say that you would not like to act in a revolutionary manner, but I do say that you are unable to reason in a revolutionary fashion. I am willing to wager that if we chose any commission of educated people, and gave them a dozen Kautsky's books and then Crispien's speech, the commission would say: "The whole speech is thoroughly Kautskian, is imbued through and through with Kautsky's views." The entire method of Crispien's argumentation is fundamentally Kautskian, yet Crispien comes along and says, "Kautsky no longer has any influence whatever in our party." No influence, perhaps, on the revolutionary workers who have joined recently. However, it must be accepted as absolutely proved that Kautsky has had and still has an enormous influence on Crispien, on his entire line of thought, all his ideas. This is manifest in his speech. That is why, without inventing any sincerometers, any instruments for measuring sincerity, we can say that Crispien's orientation is not that of the Communist International. In saying this, we are defining the orientation of the entire Communist International.

Comrades Wijnkoop and Münzenberg have expressed dissatisfaction with the fact that we have invited the Independent Socialist Party and are holding talks with its representatives. I think they are wrong. When Kautsky attacks us and brings out books against us, we polemise with him as our class enemy. But when the Independent Social-Democratic Party, which has expanded as a result of an influx of revolutionary workers, comes here for negotiations, we must talk to its representatives, since they are a section of the revolutionary workers. We cannot reach an immediate agreement with the German Independents, or with the French and the British, regarding the International. In every speech he delivers, Comrade Wijnkoop reveals that he shares almost all the errors of Comrade Pannekoek. Wijnkoop has stated that he does not share Pannekoek's views, but his speeches prove the reverse. Herein lies the main error of this "Left" group, but

this, in general, is an error of a proletarian movement that is developing. The speeches of Comrades Crispien and Dittmann are imbued with a bourgeois spirit which will not help us prepare for the dictatorship of the proletariat. When Comrades Wijnkoop and Münzenberg go still further on the subject of the Independent Social-Democratic Party, we are not in agreement with them.

Of course, we have no instrument for measuring sincerity, as Serrati has put it, for testing a man's conscience; we quite agree that the matter is not one of forming an opinion of people, but of appraising a situation. I am sorry to say that although Serrati did speak he said nothing new. His was the sort of speech we used to hear in the Second International as well.

Serrati was wrong in saying: "In France the situation is not revolutionary; in Germany it is revolutionary; in Italy it is revolutionary."

Even if the situation is non-revolutionary, the Second International is in error and carries a heavy responsibility if it is really unwilling to organise revolutionary propaganda and agitation, since, as has been proved by the entire history of the Bolsheviki Party, revolutionary propaganda can and should be conducted even in a situation that is not revolutionary. The difference between the socialists and the Communists consists in the former refusing to act in the way we act in any situation, i.e., conduct revolutionary work.

Serrati merely repeats what Crispien has said. We do not mean to say that Turati should be expelled on such and such a date. That question has already been touched upon by the Executive Committee, and Serrati has said to us: "Not expulsions, but a Party purge." We must simply tell the Italian comrades that it is the line of *L'Ordine Nuovo*²⁹ members that corresponds to the line of the Communist International, and not that of the present majority of the Socialist Party's leaders and their parliamentary group. They claim that they want to defend the proletariat against the reactionaries. Chernov, the Mensheviks and many others in Russia are also "defending" the proletariat against the reactionaries, but that is not sufficient reason for accepting them into our midst.

That is why we must say to the Italian comrades and all parties that have a Right wing: this reformist tendency has nothing in common with communism.

We ask our Italian comrades to call a congress and have our theses and resolutions submitted to it. I am sure that the Italian workers will want to remain in the Communist International.

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SPEECH ON PARLIAMENTARIANISM

August 2

Comrade Bordiga seems to have wanted to defend the Italian Marxists' point of view here, yet he has failed to reply to any of the arguments advanced by other Marxists in favour of parliamentary action.

Comrade Bordiga has admitted that historical experience is not created artificially. He has just told us that the struggle must be carried into another sphere. Is he not aware that every revolutionary crisis has been attended by a parliamentary crisis? True, he has said that the struggle must be carried into another sphere, into the Soviets. Bordiga, however, has himself admitted that Soviets cannot be created artificially. The example of Russia shows that Soviets can be organised either during a revolution or on the eve of a revolution. Even in the Kerensky period, the Soviets (which were Menshevik Soviets) were organised in such a way that they could not possibly constitute a proletarian government. Parliament is a product of historical development, and we cannot eliminate it until we are strong enough to disperse the bourgeois parliament. It is only as a member of the bourgeois parliament that one can, in the given historical conditions, wage a struggle against bourgeois society and parliamentarianism. The same weapon as the bourgeoisie employs in the struggle must also be used by the proletariat, of course, with entirely different aims. You cannot assert that that is not the case, and if you want to challenge it, you will have thereby to erase the experience of all revolutionary developments in the world.

You have said that the trade unions are also opportunist, that they, too, constitute a danger. On the other hand, however, you have said that an exception must be made in the case of trade unions, because they are workers' organisations. But that is true only up to a certain point. There are very backward elements in the trade unions too: a section of the proletarianised petty bourgeoisie, the backward workers, and the small peasants. All these elements really think that their interests are represented in parliament. This idea must be combated by work within parliament and by citing the facts, so as to show the masses the truth. Theory will have no effect on the backward masses; they need practical experience.

This was to be seen in the case of Russia too. We were obliged to convene the Constituent Assembly even after the victory of the proletariat, so as to prove to the backward workers that they had nothing to gain from that Assembly.³⁰ To bring home the difference between the two, we had to concretely contrapose the Soviets and the Constituent Assembly and to show the Soviets as the only solution.

Comrade Souchy, a revolutionary syndicalist,³¹ advocated the same theory, but he had no logic on his side. He said that he was not a Marxist, so everything can be readily understood. But you, Comrade Bordiga, assert that you are a Marxist, so we must expect more logic from you. You must know how parliament can be smashed. If you can do it by an armed uprising in all countries, well and good. You are aware that we in Russia proved our determination to destroy the bourgeois parliament, not only in theory, but in practice as well. You, however, have lost sight of the fact that this is impossible without fairly long preparations, and that in most countries it is as yet impossible to destroy parliament at one stroke. We are obliged to carry on a struggle within parliament for the destruction of parliament. For the conditions determining the political line of all classes in modern society you substitute your revolutionary determination; that is why you forget that to destroy the bourgeois parliament in Russia we were first obliged to convene the Constituent Assembly, even after our victory. You say: "It is a fact that the Russian revolution is a case that is not in accord with conditions in Western Europe", but you have not produced a single weighty argument to prove that to us. We went through a period of

bourgeois democracy. We went through it rapidly at a time when we had to agitate for elections to the Constituent Assembly. Later, when the working class was able to seize power, the peasants still believed in the necessity of a bourgeois parliament.

Taking account of these backward elements, we had to proclaim the elections and show the masses, by example and by facts, that the Constituent Assembly, which was elected at a time of dire and universal need, did not express the aspirations and demands of the exploited classes. In this way the conflict between Soviet and bourgeois government became quite clear, not only to us, the vanguard of the working class, but also to the vast majority of the peasantry, to the petty office employees, the petty bourgeoisie, etc. In all capitalist countries there are backward elements in the working class who are convinced that parliament is the true representative of the people and do not see the unscrupulous methods employed there. You say that parliament is an instrument with the aid of which the bourgeoisie deceive the masses. But this argument should be turned against you, and it does turn against your theses. How will you reveal the true character of parliament to the really backward masses, who are deceived by the bourgeoisie? How will you expose the various parliamentary manoeuvres, or the positions of the various parties, if you are not in parliament, if you remain outside parliament? If you are Marxists, you must admit that, in capitalist society, there is a close link between the relations of classes and the relations of parties. How, I repeat, will you show all this if you are not members of parliament, and if you renounce parliamentary action? The history of the Russian revolution has clearly shown that the masses of the working class, the peasantry, and petty office employees could not have been convinced by any arguments, unless their own experience had convinced them.

It has been claimed here that it is a waste of time to participate in the parliamentary struggle. Can one conceive of any other institution in which all classes are as interested as they are in parliament? This cannot be created artificially. If all classes are drawn into the parliamentary struggle, it is because the class interests and conflicts are reflected in parliament. If it were possible everywhere and immediately to bring about, let us say, a decisive general strike so as to overthrow capitalism at a

single stroke, the revolution would have already taken place in a number of countries. But we must reckon with the facts, and parliament is a scene of the class struggle. Comrade Bordiga and those who share his views must tell the masses the truth. Germany provides the best example that a Communist group in parliament is possible. That is why you should have frankly said to the masses: "We are too weak to create a party with a strong organisation." That would be the truth that ought to be told. But if you confessed your weakness to the masses, they would become your opponents, not your supporters; they would become supporters of parliamentarianism.

If you say: "Fellow workers, we are so weak that we cannot form a party disciplined enough to compel its members of parliament to submit to it", the workers would abandon you, for they would ask themselves: "How can we set up a dictatorship of the proletariat with such weaklings?"

You are very naïve if you think that the intelligentsia, the middle class, and the petty bourgeoisie will turn communist the day the proletariat is victorious.

If you do not harbour this illusion, you should begin right away to prepare the proletariat to pursue its own line. You will find no exceptions to this rule in any branch of state affairs. On the day following the revolution, you will everywhere find advocates of opportunism who call themselves Communists, i. e., petty bourgeois who refuse to recognise the discipline of the Communist Party or of the proletarian state. Unless you prepare the workers for the creation of a really disciplined party, which will compel its members to submit to its discipline, you will never prepare for the dictatorship of the proletariat. I think that this accounts for your unwillingness to admit that the repudiation of parliamentary action by a great many of the new Communist Parties stems from their weakness. I am convinced that the vast majority of the really revolutionary workers will follow us and speak up against your anti-parliamentary theses.

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SPEECH ON AFFILIATION TO THE BRITISH LABOUR PARTY

August 6³²

Comrades, Comrade Gallacher began his speech by expressing regret at our having been compelled to listen here for the hundredth and the thousandth time to sentences that Comrade McLaine and other British comrades have reiterated a thousand times in speeches, newspapers and magazines. I think there is no need for regret. The old International used the method of referring such questions for decision to the individual parties in the countries concerned. That was a grave error. We may not be fully familiar with the conditions in one party or another, but in this case we are dealing with the principles underlying a Communist Party's tactics. That is very important and, in the name of the Third International, we must herewith clearly state the communist point of view.

First of all, I should like to mention a slight inaccuracy on the part of Comrade McLaine, which cannot be agreed to. He called the Labour Party the political organisation of the trade union movement, and later repeated the statement when he said that the Labour Party is "the political expression of the workers organised in trade unions". I have met the same view several times in the paper of the British Socialist Party. It is erroneous, and is partly the cause of the opposition, fully justified in some measure, coming from the British revolutionary workers. Indeed, the concepts "political department of the trade unions" or "political expression" of the trade union movement, are erroneous. Of course, most of the Labour Party's members are

working men. However, whether or not a party is really a political party of the workers does not depend solely upon a membership of workers but also upon the men that lead it, and the content of its actions and its political tactics. Only this latter determines whether we really have before us a political party of the proletariat. Regarded from this, the only correct, point of view, the Labour Party is a thoroughly bourgeois party, because, although made up of workers, it is led by reactionaries, and the worst kind of reactionaries at that, who act quite in the spirit of the bourgeoisie. It is an organisation of the bourgeoisie, which exists to systematically dupe the workers with the aid of the British Noskes and Scheidemanns.

We have also heard another point of view, defended by Comrade Sylvia Pankhurst and Comrade Gallacher, who have voiced their opinion in the matter. What was the substance of the speeches delivered by Gallacher and many of his friends? They have told us that they are insufficiently linked with the masses. But take the instance of the British Socialist Party, they went on. It is still less linked with the masses and it is a very weak party. Comrade Gallacher has told us here how he and his comrades have organised, and done so really splendidly, the revolutionary movement in Glasgow, in Scotland, how in their wartime tactics they manoeuvred skilfully, how they gave able support to the petty-bourgeois pacifists Ramsay MacDonald and Snowden when they came to Glasgow, and used this support to organise a mass movement against the war.

It is our aim to integrate this new and excellent revolutionary movement—represented here by Comrade Gallacher and his friends—into a Communist Party with genuinely communist, i.e., Marxist tactics. That is our task today. On the one hand, the British Socialist Party is too weak and incapable of properly carrying on agitation among the masses; on the other hand, we have the younger revolutionary elements so well represented here by Comrade Gallacher, who, although in touch with the masses, are not a political party, and in this sense are even weaker than the British Socialist Party and are totally unable to organise their political work. Under these circumstances, we must express our frank opinion on the correct tactics. When, in speaking of the British Socialist Party, Comrade Gallacher said that it is "hopelessly reformist", he was undoubtedly exaggerating. But the general tenor and content of all the

resolutions we have adopted here show with absolute clarity that we demand a change, in this spirit, in the tactics of the British Socialist Party; the only correct tactics of Gallacher's friends will consist in their joining the Communist Party without delay, so as to modify its tactics in the spirit of the resolutions adopted here. If you have so many supporters that you are able to organise mass meetings in Glasgow, it will not be difficult for you to bring more than ten thousand new members into the Party. The latest Conference of the British Socialist Party, held in London three or four days ago, decided to assume the name of the Communist Party and introduced into its programme a clause providing for participation in parliamentary elections and affiliation to the Labour Party. Ten thousand organised members were represented at the Conference. It will therefore not be at all difficult for the Scottish comrades to bring into this "Communist Party of Great Britain" more than ten thousand revolutionary workers who are better versed in the art of working among the masses, and thus to modify the old tactics of the British Socialist Party in the sense of better agitation and more revolutionary action. In the commission, Comrade Sylvia Pankhurst pointed out several times that Britain needed "Lefts". I, of course, replied that this was absolutely true, but that one must not overdo this "Leftism". Furthermore she said that they were better pioneers, but for the moment were rather noisy. I do not take this in a bad sense, but rather in a good one, namely, that they are better able to carry on revolutionary agitation. We do and should value this. We expressed this in all our resolutions, for we always emphasise that we can consider a party to be a workers' party only when it is really linked up with the masses and fights against the old and quite corrupt leaders, against both the Right-wing chauvinists and those who, like the Right Independents in Germany, take up an intermediate position. We have asserted and reiterated this a dozen times and more in all our resolutions, which means that we demand a transformation of the old party, in the sense of bringing it closer to the masses.

Sylvia Pankhurst also asked: "Is it possible for a Communist Party to join another political party which still belongs to the Second International?" She replied that it was not. It should, however, be borne in mind that the British Labour Party is in a very special position: it is a

highly original type of party, or rather, it is not at all a party in the ordinary sense of the word. It is made up of members of all trade unions, and has a membership of about four million, and allows sufficient freedom to all affiliated political parties. It thus includes a vast number of British workers who follow the lead of the worst bourgeois elements, the social-traitors, who are even worse than Scheidemann, Noske and similar people. At the same time, however, the Labour Party has let the British Socialist Party into its ranks, permitting it to have its own press organs, in which members of the selfsame Labour Party can freely and openly declare that the party leaders are social-traitors. Comrade McLaine has cited quotations from such statements by the British Socialist Party. I, too, can certify that I have seen in *The Call*, organ of the British Socialist Party, statements that the Labour Party leaders are social-patriots and social-traitors. This shows that a party affiliated to the Labour Party is able, not only to severely criticise but openly and specifically to mention the old leaders by name, and call them social-traitors. This is a very original situation: a party which unites enormous masses of workers, so that it might seem a political party, is nevertheless obliged to grant its members complete latitude. Comrade McLaine has told us here that, at the Labour Party Conference, the British Scheidemanns were obliged to openly raise the question of affiliation to the Third International, and that all party branches and sections were obliged to discuss the matter. In such circumstances, it would be a mistake not to join this party.

In a private talk, Comrade Pankhurst said to me: "If we are real revolutionaries and join the Labour Party, these gentlemen will expel us." But that would not be bad at all. Our resolution says that we favour affiliation insofar as the Labour Party permits sufficient freedom of criticism. On that point we are absolutely consistent. Comrade McLaine has emphasised that the conditions now prevailing in Britain are such that, should it so desire, a political party may remain a revolutionary workers' party even if it is connected with a special kind of labour organisation of four million members, which is half trade union and half political and is headed by bourgeois leaders. In such circumstances it would be highly erroneous for the best revolutionary elements not to do everything possible to remain in such a party. Let the Thomases and other social-traitors, whom

you have called by that name, expel you. That will have an excellent effect upon the mass of the British workers.

The comrades have emphasised that the labour aristocracy is stronger in Britain than in any other country. That is true. After all, the labour aristocracy has existed in Britain, not for decades but for centuries. The British bourgeoisie, which has had far more experience—democratic experience—than that of any other country, has been able to buy workers over and to create among them a sizable stratum, greater than in any other country, but one that is not so great compared with the masses of the workers. This stratum is thoroughly imbued with bourgeois prejudices and pursues a definitely bourgeois reformist policy. In Ireland, for instance, there are two hundred thousand British soldiers who are applying ferocious terror methods to suppress the Irish. The British socialists are not conducting any revolutionary propaganda among these soldiers, though our resolutions clearly state that we can accept into the Communist International only those British parties that conduct genuinely revolutionary propaganda among the British workers and soldiers. I emphasise that we have heard no objections to this either here or in the commissions.

Comrades Gallacher and Sylvia Pankhurst cannot deny that. They cannot refute the fact that, in the ranks of the Labour Party, the British Socialist Party enjoys sufficient freedom to write that certain leaders of the Labour Party are traitors; that these old leaders represent the interests of the bourgeoisie; that they are agents of the bourgeoisie in the working-class movement. They cannot deny all this because it is the absolute truth. When Communists enjoy such freedom, it is their duty to join the Labour Party if they take due account of the experience of revolutionaries in all countries, not only of the Russian revolution (for here we are not at a Russian congress but at one that is international). Comrade Gallacher has said ironically that in the present instance we are under the influence of the British Socialist Party. That is not true; it is the experience of all revolutions in all countries that has convinced us. We think that we must say that to the masses. The British Communist Party must retain the freedom necessary to expose and criticise the betrayers of the working class, who are much more powerful in Britain than in any other country. That is readily understandable. Comrade Gallacher is

wrong in asserting that by advocating affiliation to the Labour Party we shall repel the best elements among the British workers. We must test this by experience. We are convinced that all the resolutions and decisions that will be adopted by our Congress will be published in all British revolutionary socialist newspapers and that all the branches and sections will be able to discuss them. The entire content of our resolutions shows with crystal clarity that we are representatives of working-class revolutionary tactics in all countries and that our aim is to fight against the old reformism and opportunism. The events reveal that our tactics are indeed defeating the old reformism. In that case the finest revolutionary elements in the working class, who are dissatisfied with the slow progress being made—and progress in Britain will perhaps be slower than in other countries—will all come over to us. Progress is slow because the British bourgeoisie are in a position to create better conditions for the labour aristocracy and thereby to retard the revolutionary movement in Britain. That is why the British comrades should strive, not only to revolutionise the masses—they are doing that splendidly (as Comrade Gallacher has shown), but must at the same time strive to create a real working-class political party. Comrade Gallacher and Comrade Sylvia Pankhurst, who have both spoken here, do not as yet belong to a revolutionary Communist Party. That excellent proletarian organisation, the Shop Stewards' movement, has not yet joined a political party. If you organise politically you will find that our tactics are based on a correct understanding of political developments in the past decades, and that a real revolutionary party can be created only when it absorbs the best elements of the revolutionary class and uses every opportunity to fight the reactionary leaders, wherever they show themselves.

If the British Communist Party starts by acting in a revolutionary manner in the Labour Party, and if the Hendersons are obliged to expel this Party, that will be a great victory for the communist and revolutionary working-class movement in Britain.

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THIRD CONGRESS
OF THE COMMUNIST
INTERNATIONAL

June 22-July 12, 1921

THESES FOR A REPORT ON THE TACTICS OF THE R.C.P.

I. THE INTERNATIONAL POSITION OF THE R.S.F.S.R.

The international position of the R.S.F.S.R. at present is distinguished by a certain equilibrium, which, although extremely unstable, has nevertheless given rise to a peculiar state of affairs in world politics.

This peculiarity is the following. On the one hand, the international bourgeoisie is filled with furious hatred of, and hostility towards, Soviet Russia, and is prepared at any moment to fling itself upon her in order to strangle her. On the other hand, all attempts at military intervention, which have cost the international bourgeoisie hundreds of millions of francs, ended in complete failure, in spite of the fact that the Soviet power was then weaker than it is now and that the Russian landowners and capitalists had whole armies on the territory of the R.S.F.S.R. Opposition to the war against Soviet Russia has grown considerably in all capitalist countries, adding fuel to the revolutionary movement of the proletariat and extending to very wide sections of the petty-bourgeois democrats. The conflict of interests between the various imperialist countries has become acute, and is growing more acute every day. The revolutionary movement among the hundreds of millions of oppressed peoples of the East is growing with remarkable vigour. The result of all these conditions is that international imperialism has proved unable to strangle Soviet Russia, although it is far stronger, and has been obliged for the time being to grant her recognition, or semi-recognition, and to conclude trade agreements with her.

The result is a state of equilibrium which, although highly unstable and precarious, enables the Socialist Republic to exist—not for long, of course—within the capitalist encirclement.

2. THE INTERNATIONAL ALIGNMENT OF CLASS FORCES

This state of affairs has given rise to the following international alignment of class forces.

The international bourgeoisie, deprived of the opportunity of waging open war against Soviet Russia, is waiting and watching for the moment when circumstances will permit it to resume the war.

The proletariat in all the advanced capitalist countries has already formed its vanguard, the Communist Parties, which are growing, making steady progress towards winning the majority of the proletariat in each country, and destroying the influence of the old trade union bureaucrats and of the upper stratum of the working class of America and Europe, which has been corrupted by imperialist privileges.

The petty-bourgeois democrats in the capitalist countries, whose foremost sections are represented by the Second and Two-and-a-Half Internationals, serve today as the mainstay of capitalism, since they retain an influence over the majority, or a considerable section, of the industrial and commercial workers and office employees who are afraid that if revolution breaks out they will lose the relative petty-bourgeois prosperity created by the privileges of imperialism. But the growing economic crisis is worsening the condition of broad sections of the people everywhere, and this, with the looming inevitability of new imperialist wars if capitalism is preserved, is steadily weakening this mainstay.

The masses of the working people in the colonial and semi-colonial countries, who constitute the overwhelming majority of the population of the globe, were roused to political life at the turn of the twentieth century, particularly by the revolutions in Russia, Turkey, Persia and China. The imperialist war of 1914-18 and the Soviet power in Russia are completing the process of converting these masses into an active factor in world politics and in

the revolutionary destruction of imperialism, although the educated philistines of Europe and America, including the leaders of the Second and Two-and-a-Half Internationals, stubbornly refuse to see this. British India is at the head of these countries, and there revolution is maturing in proportion, on the one hand, to the growth of the industrial and railway proletariat, and, on the other, to the increase in the brutal terrorism of the British, who with ever greater frequency resort to massacres (Amritsar),³³ public floggings, etc.

3. THE ALIGNMENT OF CLASS FORCES IN RUSSIA

The internal political situation in Soviet Russia is determined by the fact that here, for the first time in history, there have been, for a number of years, only two classes—the proletariat, trained for decades by a very young, but modern, large-scale machine industry, and the small peasantry, who constitute the overwhelming majority of the population.

In Russia, the big landowners and capitalists have not vanished, but they have been subjected to total expropriation and crushed politically as a class, whose remnants are hiding out among Soviet government employees. They have preserved their class organisation abroad, as émigrés, numbering probably from 1,500,000 to 2,000,000 people, with over 50 daily newspapers of all bourgeois and “socialist” (i.e., petty-bourgeois) parties, the remnants of an army, and numerous connections with the international bourgeoisie. These émigrés are striving, with might and main, to destroy the Soviet power and restore capitalism in Russia.

4. THE PROLETARIAT AND THE PEASANTRY IN RUSSIA

This being the internal situation in Russia, the main task now confronting her proletariat, as the ruling class, is properly to determine and carry out the measures that are necessary to lead the peasantry, establish a firm alliance with them and achieve the transition, in a series of gradual stages, to large-scale, socialised, mechanised agriculture. This is a particularly difficult task in Russia, both

because of her backwardness, and her extreme state of ruin as a result of seven years of imperialist and civil war. But apart from these specific circumstances, this is one of the most difficult tasks of socialist construction that will confront all capitalist countries, with, perhaps, the sole exception of Britain. However, even in regard to Britain it must not be forgotten that, while the small tenant farmers there constitute only a very small class, the percentage of workers and office employees who enjoy a petty-bourgeois standard of living is exceptionally high, due to the actual enslavement of hundreds of millions of people in Britain's colonial possessions.

Hence, from the standpoint of development of the world proletarian revolution as a single process, the epoch Russia is passing through is significant as a practical test and a verification of the policy of a proletariat in power towards the mass of the petty bourgeoisie.

5. THE MILITARY ALLIANCE BETWEEN THE PROLETARIAT AND THE PEASANTRY IN THE R.S.F.S.R.

The basis for proper relations between the proletariat and the peasantry in Soviet Russia was created in the period of 1917-21 when the invasion of the capitalists and landowners, supported by the whole world bourgeoisie and all the petty-bourgeois democratic parties (Socialist-Revolutionaries and Mensheviks), caused the proletariat and the peasantry to form, sign and seal a military alliance to defend the Soviet power. Civil war is the most intense form of class struggle, but the more intense it is, the more rapidly its flames consume all petty-bourgeois illusions and prejudices, and the more clearly experience proves even to the most backward strata of the peasantry that only the dictatorship of the proletariat can save it, and that the Socialist-Revolutionaries and Mensheviks are in fact merely the servants of the landowners and capitalists.

But while the military alliance between the proletariat and the peasantry was—and had perforce to be—the primary form of their firm alliance, it could not have been maintained even for a few weeks without an economic alliance between the two classes. The peasants received from the workers' state all the land and were given protec-

tion against the landowners and the kulaks; the workers have been receiving from the peasants loans of food supplies until large-scale industry is restored.

6. THE TRANSITION TO PROPER ECONOMIC RELATIONS BETWEEN THE PROLETARIAT AND THE PEASANTRY

The alliance between the small peasants and the proletariat can become a correct and stable one from the socialist standpoint only when the complete restoration of transport and large-scale industry enables the proletariat to give the peasants, in exchange for food, all the goods they need for their own use and for the improvement of their farms. With the country in ruins, this could not possibly be achieved at once. The surplus-appropriation system was the best measure available to the insufficiently organised state to maintain itself in the incredibly arduous war against the landowners. The crop failure and the fodder shortage in 1920 particularly increased the hardships of the peasantry, already severe enough, and made the immediate transition to the tax in kind imperative.

The moderate tax in kind will bring about a big improvement in the condition of the peasantry at once, and will at the same time stimulate them to enlarge crop areas and improve farming methods.

The tax in kind signifies a transition from the requisition of all the peasants' surplus grain to regular socialist exchange of products between industry and agriculture.

7. THE CONDITIONS UNDER WHICH THE SOVIET GOVERNMENT CAN PERMIT CAPITALISM AND CONCESSIONS, AND THE SIGNIFICANCE THEREOF

Naturally, the tax in kind means freedom for the peasant to dispose of his after-tax surplus at his own discretion. Since the state cannot provide the peasant with goods from socialist factories in exchange for all his surplus, freedom to trade with this surplus necessarily means freedom for the development of capitalism.

Within the limits indicated, however, this is not at all dangerous for socialism as long as transport and large-scale industry remain in the hands of the proletariat. On the contrary, the development of capitalism, controlled and regulated by the proletarian state (i.e., "state" capitalism in *this* sense of the term), is advantageous and necessary in an extremely devastated and backward small-peasant country (within certain limits, of course), inasmuch as it is capable of hastening the *immediate* revival of peasant farming. This applies still more to concessions: without denationalising anything, the workers' state leases certain mines, forest tracts, oilfields, and so forth, to foreign capitalists in order to obtain from them extra equipment and machinery that will enable us to accelerate the restoration of Soviet large-scale industry.

The payment made to the concessionaires in the form of a share of the highly valuable products obtained is undoubtedly tribute, which the workers' state pays to the world bourgeoisie; without in any way glossing this over, we must clearly realise that we stand to gain by paying this tribute, so long as it accelerates the restoration of our large-scale industry and substantially improves the condition of the workers and peasants.

8. THE SUCCESS OF OUR FOOD POLICY

The food policy pursued by Soviet Russia in 1917-21 was undoubtedly very crude and imperfect, and gave rise to many abuses. A number of mistakes were made in its implementation. But as a whole, it was the only possible policy under the conditions prevailing at the time. And it did fulfil its historic mission: it saved the proletarian dictatorship in a ruined and backward country. There can be no doubt that it has gradually improved. In the first year that we had full power (August 1, 1918 to August 1, 1919) the state collected 110 million poods of grain; in the second year it collected 220 million poods, and in the third year—over 285 million poods. Now, having acquired practical experience, we have set out, and expect, to collect 400 million poods (the tax in kind is expected to bring in 240 million poods). Only when it is actually in possession of an adequate stock of food will the workers' state be able to

stand firmly on its own feet economically, secure the steady, if slow, restoration of large-scale industry, and create a proper financial system.

9. THE MATERIAL BASIS OF SOCIALISM AND THE PLAN FOR THE ELECTRIFICATION OF RUSSIA

A large-scale machine industry capable of reorganising agriculture is the only material basis that is possible for socialism. But we cannot confine ourselves to this general thesis. It must be made more concrete. Large-scale industry based on the latest achievements of technology and capable of reorganising agriculture implies the electrification of the whole country. We had to undertake the scientific work of drawing up such a plan for the electrification of the R.S.F.S.R. and we have accomplished it. With the co-operation of over two hundred of the best scientists, engineers and agronomists in Russia, this work has now been completed; it was published in a large volume and, as a whole, endorsed by the Eighth All-Russia Congress of Soviets in December 1920. Arrangements have now been made to convene an all-Russia congress of electrical engineers in August 1921 to examine this plan in detail, before it is given final government endorsement.³⁴ The execution of the first part of the electrification scheme is estimated to take ten years, and will require about 370 million man-days.

In 1918, we had eight newly erected power stations (with a total capacity of 4,757 kw); in 1919, the figure rose to 36 (total capacity of 1,648 kw), and in 1920, it rose to 100 (total capacity of 8,699 kw).

Modest as this beginning is for our vast country, a start has been made, work has begun and is making steady progress. After the imperialist war, after a million prisoners of war in Germany have become familiar with modern up-to-date technique, after the stern but hardening experience of three years of civil war, the Russian peasant is a different man. With every passing month he sees more clearly and more vividly that only the guidance given by the proletariat is capable of leading the mass of small farmers out of capitalist slavery to socialism.

10. THE ROLE OF "PURE DEMOCRACY",
THE SECOND AND TWO-AND-A-HALF INTERNATIONALS,
THE SOCIALIST-REVOLUTIONARIES
AND THE MENSHEVIKS
AS THE ALLIES OF CAPITAL

The dictatorship of the proletariat does not signify a cessation of the class struggle, but its continuation in a new form and with new weapons. This dictatorship is essential as long as classes exist, as long as the bourgeoisie, overthrown in one country, intensifies tenfold its attacks on socialism on an international scale. In the transition period, the small farmer class is bound to experience certain vacillations. The difficulties of transition, and the influence of the bourgeoisie, inevitably cause the mood of this mass to change from time to time. Upon the proletariat, enfeebled and to a certain extent declassed by the destruction of the large-scale machine industry, which is its vital foundation, devolves the very difficult but paramount historic task of holding out in spite of these vacillations, and of carrying to victory its cause of emancipating labour from the yoke of capital.

The policy pursued by the petty-bourgeois democratic parties, i.e., the parties affiliated to the Second and Two-and-a-Half Internationals, represented in Russia by the S.R. (Socialist-Revolutionary) and Menshevik parties, is the political expression of the vacillations of the petty bourgeoisie. These parties now have their headquarters and newspapers abroad, and are actually in a bloc with the whole of the bourgeois counter-revolution and are serving it loyally.

The shrewd leaders of the Russian big bourgeoisie headed by Milyukov, the leader of the Cadet (Constitutional-Democratic) Party,³⁵ have quite clearly, definitely and openly appraised this role of the petty-bourgeois democrats, i.e., the Socialist-Revolutionaries and Mensheviks. In connection with the Kronstadt mutiny,³⁶ in which the Mensheviks, Socialist-Revolutionaries and whiteguards joined forces, Milyukov declared in favour of the "Soviets without the Bolsheviks" slogan. Elaborating on the idea, he wrote that the Socialist-Revolutionaries and Mensheviks "are welcome to try" (*Pravda* No. 64, 1921, quoted from the *Paris Posledniye Novosti*³⁷), because upon them devolves the task of *first taking* power away from the Bolshe-

viks. Milyukov, the leader of the big bourgeoisie, has correctly appraised the lesson taught by all revolutions, namely, that the petty-bourgeois democrats are incapable of holding power, and always serve merely as a screen for the dictatorship of the bourgeoisie, and a stepping stone to its undivided power.

The proletarian revolution in Russia again and again confirms this lesson of 1789-94 and 1848-49, and also what Frederick Engels said in his letter to Bebel of December 11, 1884.

... "Pure democracy ... when the moment of revolution comes, acquires a temporary importance ... as the final sheet-anchor of the whole bourgeois and even feudal economy.... Thus between March and September 1848 the whole feudal-bureaucratic mass strengthened the liberals in order to hold down the revolutionary masses.... In any case our sole adversary on the day of the crisis and on the day after the crisis will be the whole of the reaction which will group around pure democracy, and this, I think, should not be lost sight of." (Published in Russian in *Kommunistichesky Trud* No. 360, June 9, 1921, in an article by Comrade V. Adoratsky: "Marx and Engels on Democracy". In German, published in the book, Friedrich Engels, *Politisches Vermächtnis*, Internationale Jugend-Bibliothek, Nr. 12, Berlin, 1920, S. 19.)

N. Lenin

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SPEECH ON THE ITALIAN QUESTION³⁸

June 28

Comrades, I should like to reply mainly to Comrade Lazzari. He said: "Quote concrete facts, not words". Excellent. But if we trace the development of the reformist-opportunist trend in Italy, what will that be, words or facts? In your speeches and in the whole of your policy you lose sight of the fact, which is so important for the socialist movement in Italy, that not only this trend, but an opportunist-reformist group has existed for quite a long time. I still very well remember the time when Bernstein started his opportunist propaganda, which ended in social-patriotism, in the treason and bankruptcy of the Second International. We have known Turati ever since, not only by name, but for his propaganda in the Italian party and in the Italian working-class movement, of which he has been a disrupter for the past twenty years. Lack of time prevents me from closely studying the material concerning the Italian party; but I think that one of the most important documents on this subject is a report, published in a bourgeois Italian newspaper—I don't remember which, *La Stampa* or *Corriere della Sera*—of the conference held by Turati and his friends in Reggio Emilia.³⁹ I compared that report with the one published in *Avanti!*⁴⁰ Is this not proof enough? After the Second Congress of the Communist International, we, in our controversy with Serrati and his friends, openly and definitely told them what, in our opinion, the situation was. We told them that the Italian party could not become

a Communist Party as long as it tolerated people like Turati in its ranks.

What is this, political facts, or again just words? After the Second Congress of the Communist International we openly said to the Italian proletariat: "Don't unite with the reformists, with Turati." Serrati launched a series of articles in the Italian press in opposition to the Communist International and convened a special conference of reformists.⁴¹ Was all this mere words? It was something more than a split: it was the creation of a new party. One must have been blind not to have seen this. This document is of decisive importance for this question. All those who attended the Reggio Emilia conference must be expelled from the party; they are Mensheviks—not Russian, but Italian Mensheviks. Lazzari said: "We know the Italian people's mentality." For my part I would not dare to make such an assertion about the Russian people, but that is not important. "Italian Socialists understand the spirit of the Italian people very well," said Lazzari. Perhaps they do, I will not argue about that. But they do not know Italian Menshevism, if the concrete facts and the persistent refusal to eradicate Menshevism is anything to go by. We are obliged to say that—deplorable though it may be—the resolution of our Executive Committee must be confirmed. A party which tolerates opportunists and reformists like Turati in its ranks cannot be affiliated to the Communist International.

"Why should we change the name of the party?" asks Comrade Lazzari. "The present one is quite satisfactory." But we cannot share this view. We know the history of the Second International, its fall and bankruptcy. Do we not know the history of the German party? And do we not know that the great misfortune of the working-class movement in Germany is that the break was not brought about before the war? This cost the lives of twenty thousand workers, whom the Scheidemannists and the Centrists betrayed to the German Government by their polemics with and complaints against the German Communists.⁴²

And do we not now see the same thing in Italy? The Italian party was never a truly revolutionary party. Its great misfortune is that it did not break with the Mensheviks and reformists before the war, and that the latter continued to remain in the party. Comrade Lazzari says:

"We fully recognise the necessity of a break with the reformists; our only disagreement is that we did not think it necessary to bring it about at the Leghorn Congress."⁴³ But the facts tell a different story. This is not the first time that we are discussing Italian reformism. In arguing about this with Serrati last year, we said: "You won't mind us asking why the split in the Italian party cannot be brought about immediately, why it must be postponed?" What did Serrati say in reply to that? Nothing. And Comrade Lazzari, quoting an article by Frossard in which the latter said, "We must be adroit and clever", evidently thinks that this is an argument in his favour and against us. I think he is mistaken. On the contrary, it is an excellent argument in our favour and against Comrade Lazzari. What will the Italian workers say when you are obliged to explain your conduct and your resignation? What will you tell them if they declare our tactics to be clever and adroit compared with the zigzags of the pseudo-Communist Left—the Left which at times is not even simply Communist and more often looks like anarchism?

What is the meaning of the tales told by Serrati and his party about the Russians only wanting everyone to imitate them? We want the very opposite. It takes more than memorising communist resolutions and using revolutionary phrases on every possible occasion. That is not enough, and we are opposed beforehand to Communists who know this or that resolution by heart. The mark of true communism is a break with opportunism. We shall be quite frank and open with those Communists who subscribe to this and, boldly, in the conviction that we are right, will tell them: "Don't do anything stupid; be clever and skilful."

But we shall speak in this way only with Communists who have broken with the opportunists, something that cannot yet be said about you. I repeat therefore: I hope the Congress will confirm the resolution of the Executive Committee. Comrade Lazzari said: "We are in the preparatory period." This is absolutely true. You are in the preparatory period. The first stage of this period is a break with the Mensheviks, similar to the one we brought about with our Mensheviks in 1903. The sufferings the whole of the German working class has had to endure during this long and weary post-war period in the history of the German revolution are due to the fact that the German party did not break with the Mensheviks.

Comrade Lazzari said that the Italian party is passing through the preparatory period. This I fully accept. And the first stage is a definite, final, unambiguous and determined break with reformism. When that is brought about the masses will side solidly with communism. The second stage is by no means a repetition of revolutionary slogans. It will be the adoption of our wise and skilful decisions, which will always be such, and which will always say: fundamental revolutionary principles must be adapted to the specific conditions in the various countries.

The revolution in Italy will run a different course from that in Russia. It will start in a different way. How? Neither you nor we know. The Italian Communists are not always Communists to a sufficient degree. Did a single Communist show his mettle when the workers seized the factories in Italy?⁴⁴ No. At that time, there was as yet no communism in Italy; there was a certain amount of anarchism, but no Marxian communism. The latter has still to be created and the masses of the workers must be imbued with it by means of the experience of the revolutionary struggle. And the first step along this road is a final break with the Mensheviks, who for more than twenty years have been collaborating and working with the bourgeois government. It is quite probable that Modigliani, whom I was able to watch to some extent at the Zimmerwald and Kienthal conferences,⁴⁵ is a sufficiently astute politician to keep out of the bourgeois government and to keep in the centre of the Socialist Party, where he can be far more useful to the bourgeoisie. But all the theories of Turati and his friends, all their propaganda and agitation, signify collaboration with the bourgeoisie. Is this not proved by the numerous quotations in Gennari's speech? Indeed, it is the united front which Turati has already prepared. That is why I must say to Comrade Lazzari: "Speeches like yours and like the one which Comrade Serrati made here do not help to prepare for the revolution, they disorganise it." (*Shouts: "Bravo!" Applause.*)

You had a considerable majority at Leghorn. You had 98,000 votes against 14,000 reformist and 58,000 communist votes. As the beginning of a purely communist movement in a country like Italy, with its well-known traditions, where the ground has not been sufficiently prepared for a split, this vote is a considerable achievement for the Communists.

This is a great victory and tangible proof of the fact that the working-class movement in Italy will develop faster than our movement developed in Russia, because, if you are familiar with the figures concerning our movement, you must know that in February 1917, after the fall of tsarism and during the bourgeois republic, we were still a minority compared with the Mensheviks. Such was the position after fifteen years of fierce fighting and splits. Our Right wing did not grow—and it was not so easy to prevent it from growing, as you seem to think when you speak of Russia in such a disparaging tone. Undoubtedly, development in Italy will proceed quite differently. After fifteen years of struggle against the Mensheviks, and after the fall of tsarism, we started work with a much smaller number of adherents. You have 58,000 communistically minded workers against 98,000 united Centrists who occupy an indefinite position. This is proof, this is a fact, which should certainly convince all those who refuse to close their eyes to the mass movement of the Italian workers. Nothing comes all at once. But it certainly proves that the mass of workers—not the old leaders, the bureaucrats, the professors, the journalists, but the class that is actually exploited, the vanguard of the exploited—supports us. And it proves what a great mistake you made at Leghorn. This is a fact. You controlled 98,000 votes, but you preferred to go with 14,000 reformists against 58,000 Communists. You should have gone with them even if they were not genuine Communists, even if they were only adherents of Bordiga—which is not true, for after the Second Congress Bordiga quite honestly declared that he had abandoned all anarchism and anti-parliamentarism. But what did you do? You chose to unite with 14,000 reformists and to break with 58,000 Communists. And this is the best proof that Serrati's policy has been disastrous for Italy. We never wanted Serrati in Italy to copy the Russian revolution. That would have been stupid. We are intelligent and flexible enough to avoid such stupidity. But Serrati has proved that his policy in Italy was wrong. Perhaps he should have manoeuvred. This is the expression that he repeated most often when he was here last year. He said: "We know how to manoeuvre, we do not want slavish imitation. That would be idiocy. We must manoeuvre, so as to bring about a separation from opportunism. You Russians do not know how to do that. We Italians are more skilful at that sort of thing.

That remains to be seen." And what is it we saw? Serrati executed a brilliant manoeuvre. He broke away from 58,000 Communists. And now these comrades come here and say: "If you reject us the masses will be confused." No, comrades, you are mistaken. The masses of the workers in Italy are confused now, and it will do them good if we tell them: "Comrades, you must choose; Italian workers, you must choose between the Communist International, which will never call upon you slavishly to imitate the Russians, and the Mensheviks, whom we have known for twenty years, and whom we shall never tolerate as neighbours in a genuinely revolutionary Communist International." That is what we shall say to the Italian workers. There can be no doubt about the result. The masses of workers will follow us. (*Loud approval.*)

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SPEECH IN DEFENCE OF THE TACTICS OF THE COMMUNIST INTERNATIONAL

July 1

Comrades! I deeply regret that I must confine myself to self-defence. (*Laughter.*) I say deeply regret, because after acquainting myself with Comrade Terracini's speech and the amendments introduced by three delegations, I should very much like to take the offensive, for, properly speaking, offensive operations are essential against the views defended by Terracini and these three delegations.⁴⁶ If the Congress is not going to wage a vigorous offensive against such errors, against such "Leftist" stupidities, the whole movement is doomed. That is my deep conviction. But we are organised and disciplined Marxists. We cannot be satisfied with speeches against individual comrades. We Russians are already sick and tired of these Leftist phrases. We are men of organisation. In drawing up our plans, we must proceed in an organised way and try to find the correct line. It is, of course, no secret that our theses are a compromise. And why not? Among Communists, who have already convened their Third Congress and have worked out definite fundamental principles, compromises under certain conditions are necessary. Our theses,⁴⁷ put forward by the Russian delegation, were studied and prepared in the most careful way and were the result of long arguments and meetings with various delegations. They aim at establishing the basic line of the Communist International and are especially necessary now after we have not only formally condemned the real Centrists but have expelled them from the Party. Such are the facts. I have to stand up for these theses. Now,



Lenin speaks at the Third Congress of the Comintern

when Terracini comes forward and says that we must continue the fight against the Centrists, and goes on to tell how it is intended to wage the fight, I say that if these amendments denote a definite trend, a relentless fight against this trend is essential, for otherwise there is no communism and no Communist International. I am surprised that the German Communist Workers' Party⁴⁸ has not put its signature to these amendments. (*Laughter.*) Indeed, just listen to what Terracini is defending and what his amendments say. They begin in this way: "On page 1, column 1, line 19, the word 'majority' should be deleted." Majority! That is extremely dangerous! (*Laughter.*) Then further: instead of the words "basic propositions", insert 'aims' ". Basic propositions and aims are two different things; even the anarchists will agree with us about aims, because they too stand for the abolition of exploitation and class distinctions.

I have met and talked with few anarchists in my life, but all the same I have seen enough of them. I sometimes succeeded in reaching agreement with them about aims, but never as regards principles. Principles are not an aim, a programme, a tactic or a theory. Tactics and theory are not principles. How do we differ from the anarchists on principles? The principles of communism consist in the establishment of the dictatorship of the proletariat and in the use of state coercion in the transition period. Such are the principles of communism, but they are not its aim. And the comrades who have tabled this proposal have made a mistake.

Secondly, it is stated there: "the word 'majority' should be deleted". Read the whole passage:

"The Third Congress of the Communist International is setting out to review questions of tactics under conditions when in a whole number of countries the objective situation has become aggravated in a revolutionary sense, and when a whole number of Communist mass parties have been organised, which, incidentally, in their actual revolutionary struggle have nowhere taken into their hands the virtual leadership of the majority of the working class."

And so, they want the word "majority" deleted. If we cannot agree on such simple things, then I do not understand how we can work together and lead the proletariat to victory. Then it is not at all surprising that we cannot reach agreement on the question of principles either. Show

me a party which has already won the majority of the working class. Terracini did not even think of adducing any example. Indeed, there is no such example.

And so, the word "aims" is to be put instead of "principles", and the word "majority" is to be deleted. No, thank you! We shall not do it. Even the German party—one of the best—does not have the majority of the working class behind it. That is a fact. We, who face a most severe struggle, are not afraid to utter this truth, but here you have three delegations who wish to begin with an untruth, for if the Congress deletes the word "majority" it will show that it wants an untruth. That is quite clear.

Then comes the following amendment: "On page 4, column 1, line 10, the words 'Open Letter', etc., should be deleted."⁴⁹ I have already heard one speech today in which I found the same idea. But there it was quite natural. It was the speech of Comrade Hempel, a member of the German Communist Workers' Party. He said: "The 'Open Letter' was an act of opportunism." To my deep regret and shame, I have already heard such views privately. But when, at the Congress, after such prolonged debate, the "Open Letter" is declared opportunist—that is a shame and a disgrace! And now Comrade Terracini comes forward on behalf of the three delegations and wants to delete the words "Open Letter". What is the good then of the fight against the German Communist Workers' Party? The "Open Letter" is a model political step. This is stated in our theses and we must certainly stand by it. It is a model because it is the first act of a practical method of winning over the majority of the working class. In Europe, where almost all the proletarians are organised, we must win the majority of the working class and anyone who fails to understand this is lost to the communist movement; he will never learn anything if he has failed to learn that much during the three years of the great revolution.

Terracini says that we were victorious in Russia although the Party was very small. He is dissatisfied with what is said in the theses about Czechoslovakia. Here there are 27 amendments, and if I had a mind to criticise them I should, like some orators, have to speak for not less than three hours. . . . We have heard here that in Czechoslovakia the Communist Party has 300,000-400,000 members, and that it is essential to win over the majority, to

create an invincible force and continue enlisting fresh masses of workers. Terracini is already prepared to attack. He says: if there are already 400,000 workers in the party, why should we want more? Delete! (*Laughter.*) He is afraid of the word "masses" and wants to eradicate it. Comrade Terracini has understood very little of the Russian revolution.

In Russia, we were a small party, but we had with us in addition the majority of the Soviets of Workers' and Peasants' Deputies throughout the country. (*Cries: "Quite true!"*) Do you have anything of the sort? We had with us almost half the army, which then numbered at least ten million men. Do you really have the majority of the army behind you? Show me such a country! If these views of Comrade Terracini are shared by three other delegations, then something is wrong in the International! Then we must say: "Stop! There must be a decisive fight! Otherwise the Communist International is lost." (*Animation.*)

On the basis of my experience I must say, although I am taking up a defensive position (*laughter*), that the aim and the principle of my speech consist in defence of the resolution and theses proposed by our delegation. It would, of course, be pedantic to say that not a letter in them must be altered. I have had to read many resolutions and I am well aware that very good amendments could be introduced in every line of them. But that would be pedantry. If, nevertheless, I declare now that in a political sense not a single letter can be altered, it is because the amendments, as I see them, are of a quite definite political nature and because they lead us along a path that is harmful and dangerous to the Communist International. Therefore, I and all of us and the Russian delegation must insist that not a single letter in the theses is altered. We have not only condemned our Right-wing elements—we have expelled them. But if, like Terracini, people turn the fight against the Rightists into a sport, then we must say: "Stop! Otherwise the danger will become too grave!"

Terracini has defended the theory of an offensive struggle.⁵⁰ In this connection the notorious amendments propose a formula two or three pages long. There is no need for us to read them. We know what they say. Terracini has stated the issue quite clearly. He has defended the theory of an offensive, pointing out "dynamic tendencies" and the "transition from passivity to activity". We in Russia have

already had adequate political experience in the struggle against the Centrists. As long as fifteen years ago, we were waging a struggle against our opportunists and Centrists, and also against the Mensheviks, and we were victorious not only over the Mensheviks, but also over the semi-anarchists.

If we had not done this, we would not have been able to retain power in our hands for three and a half years, or even for three and a half weeks, and we would not have been able to convene communist congresses here. "Dynamic tendencies", "transition from passivity to activity"—these are all phrases the Left Socialist-Revolutionaries⁵¹ had used against us. Now they are in prison, defending there the "aims of communism" and thinking of the "transition from passivity to activity". (*Laughter.*) The line of reasoning followed in the proposed amendments is an impossible one, because they contain no Marxism, no political experience, and no reasoning. Have we in our theses elaborated a general theory of the revolutionary offensive? Has Radek or anyone of us committed such a stupidity? We have spoken of the theory of an offensive in relation to a quite definite country and a quite definite period.

From our struggle against the Mensheviks we can quote instances showing that even before the first revolution there were some who doubted whether the revolutionary party ought to conduct an offensive. If such doubts assailed any Social-Democrat—as we all called ourselves at that time—we took up the struggle against him and said that he was an opportunist, that he did not understand anything of Marxism and the dialectics of the revolutionary party. Is it really possible for a party to dispute whether a revolutionary offensive is permissible in general? To find such examples in this country one would have to go back some fifteen years. If there are Centrists or disguised Centrists who dispute the theory of the offensive, they should be immediately expelled. That question cannot give rise to disputes. But the fact that even now, after three years of the Communist International, we are arguing about "dynamic tendencies", about the "transition from passivity to activity"—that is a shame and a disgrace.

We do not have any dispute about this with Comrade Radek, who drafted these theses jointly with us. Perhaps it was not quite correct to begin talking in Germany *about the theory* of the revolutionary offensive when an actual

offensive had not been prepared. Nevertheless the March action was a great step forward in spite of the mistakes of its leaders.⁵² But this does not matter. Hundreds of thousands of workers fought heroically. However courageously the German Communist Workers' Party fought against the bourgeoisie, we must repeat what Comrade Radek said in a Russian article about Hölz. If anyone, even an anarchist, fights heroically against the bourgeoisie, that is, of course, a great thing; but it is a real step forward if hundreds of thousands fight against the vile provocation of the social-traitors and against the bourgeoisie.

It is very important to be critical of one's mistakes. We began with that. If anyone, after a struggle in which hundreds of thousands have taken part, comes out against this struggle and behaves like Levi, then he should be expelled. And that is what was done. But we must draw a lesson from this. Had we really prepared for an offensive? (*Radek: "We had not even prepared for defence."*) Indeed only newspaper articles talked of an offensive. This theory as applied to the March action in Germany in 1921 was incorrect—we have to admit that—but, in general, the theory of the revolutionary offensive is not at all false.

We were victorious in Russia, and with such ease, because we prepared for our revolution during the imperialist war. That was the first condition. Ten million workers and peasants in Russia were armed, and our slogan was: an immediate peace at all costs. We were victorious because the vast mass of the peasants were revolutionarily disposed against the big landowners. The Socialist-Revolutionaries, the adherents of the Second and the Two-and-a-Half Internationals, were a big peasant party in November 1917. They demanded revolutionary methods but, like true heroes of the Second and the Two-and-a-Half Internationals, lacked the courage to act in a revolutionary way. In August and September 1917 we said: "Theoretically we are fighting the Socialist-Revolutionaries as we did before, but practically we are ready to accept their programme because only we are able to put it into effect." We did just what we said.⁵³ The peasantry, ill-disposed towards us in November 1917, after our victory, who sent a majority of Socialist-Revolutionaries into the Constituent Assembly, were won over by us, if not in the course of a few days—as I mistakenly expected and predicted—at any

rate in the course of a few weeks. The difference was not great. Can you point out any country in Europe where you could win over the majority of the peasantry in the course of a few weeks? Italy perhaps? (*Laughter.*) If it is said that we were victorious in Russia in spite of not having a big party, that only proves that those who say it have not understood the Russian revolution and that they have absolutely no understanding of how to prepare for a revolution.

Our first step was to create a real Communist Party so as to know whom we were talking to and whom we could fully trust. The slogan of the First and Second congresses was "Down with the Centrists!" We cannot hope to master even the ABC of communism, unless all along the line and throughout the world we make short shrift of the Centrists and semi-Centrists, whom in Russia we call Mensheviks. Our first task is to create a genuinely revolutionary party and to break with the Mensheviks. But that is only a preparatory school. We are already convening the Third Congress, and Comrade Terracini keeps saying that the task of the preparatory school consists in hunting out, pursuing and exposing Centrists and semi-Centrists. No, thank you! We have already done this long enough. At the Second Congress we said that the Centrists are our enemies. But, we must go forward really. The second stage, after organising into a party, consists in learning to prepare for revolution. In many countries we have not even learned how to assume the leadership. We were victorious in Russia not only because the undisputed majority of the working class was on our side (during the elections in 1917 the overwhelming majority of the workers were with us against the Mensheviks), but also because half the army, immediately after our seizure of power, and nine-tenths of the peasants, in the course of some weeks, came over to our side; we were victorious because we adopted the agrarian programme of the Socialist-Revolutionaries instead of our own, and put it into effect. Our victory lay in the fact that we carried out the Socialist-Revolutionary programme; that is why this victory was so easy. Is it possible that you in the West can have such illusions? It is ridiculous! Just compare the concrete economic conditions, Comrade Terracini and all of you who have signed the proposed amendments! In spite of the fact that the majority so rapidly came to be on our side, the difficulties confronting us after

our victory were very great. Nevertheless we won through because we kept in mind not only our aims but also our principles, and did not tolerate in our Party those who kept silent about principles but talked of aims, "dynamic tendencies" and the "transition from passivity to activity". Perhaps we shall be blamed for preferring to keep such gentlemen in prison. But dictatorship is impossible in any other way. We must prepare for dictatorship, and this consists in combating such phrases and such amendments. (*Laughter.*) Throughout, our theses speak of the masses. But, comrades, we need to understand what is meant by masses. The German Communist Workers' Party, the Left-wing comrades, misuse this word. But Comrade Terracini, too, and all those who have signed these amendments, do not know how the word "masses" should be read.

I have been speaking too long as it is; hence I wish to say only a few words about the concept of "masses". It is one that changes in accordance with the changes in the nature of the struggle. At the beginning of the struggle it took only a few thousand genuinely revolutionary workers to warrant talk of the masses. If the party succeeds in drawing into the struggle not only its own members, if it also succeeds in arousing non-party people, it is well on the way to winning the masses. During our revolutions there were instances when several thousand workers represented the masses. In the history of our movement, and of our struggle against the Mensheviks, you will find many examples where several thousand workers in a town were enough to give a clearly mass character to the movement. You have a mass when several thousand non-party workers, who usually live a philistine life and drag out a miserable existence, and who have never heard anything about politics, begin to act in a revolutionary way. If the movement spreads and intensifies, it gradually develops into a real revolution. We saw this in 1905 and 1917 during three revolutions,⁵⁴ and you too will have to go through all this. When the revolution has been sufficiently prepared, the concept "masses" becomes different: several thousand workers no longer constitute the masses. This word begins to denote something else. The concept of "masses" undergoes a change so that it implies the majority, and not simply a majority of the workers alone, but the majority of all the exploited. Any other kind of interpretation is

impermissible for a revolutionary, and any other sense of the word becomes incomprehensible. It is possible that even a small party, the British or American party, for example, after it has thoroughly studied the course of political development and become acquainted with the life and customs of the non-party masses, will at a favourable moment evoke a revolutionary movement (Comrade Radek has pointed to the miners' strike as a good example⁵⁵). You will have a mass movement if such a party comes forward with its slogans at such a moment and succeeds in getting millions of workers to follow it. I would not altogether deny that a revolution can be started by a very small party and brought to a victorious conclusion. But one must have a knowledge of the methods by which the masses can be won over. For this, thoroughgoing preparation of revolution is essential. But here you have comrades coming forward with the assertion that we should immediately give up the demand for "big" masses. They must be challenged. Without thoroughgoing preparation you will not achieve victory in any country. Quite a small party is sufficient to lead the masses. At certain times there is no necessity for big organisations.

But to win, we must have the sympathy of the masses. An absolute majority is not always essential; but what is essential to win and retain power is not only the majority of the working class—I use the term "working class" in its West-European sense, i.e., in the sense of the industrial proletariat—but also the majority of the working and exploited rural population. Have you thought about this? Do we find in Terracini's speech even a hint at this thought? He speaks only of "dynamic tendency" and the "transition from passivity to activity". Does he devote even a single word to the food question? And yet the workers demand their victuals, although they can put up with a great deal and go hungry, as we have seen to a certain extent in Russia. We must, therefore, win over to our side not only the majority of the working class, but also the majority of the working and exploited rural population. Have you prepared for this? Almost nowhere.

And so, I repeat: I must unreservedly defend our theses and I feel I am bound to do it. We not only condemned the Centrists but expelled them from the Party. Now we must deal with another aspect, which we also consider danger-

ous. We must tell the comrades the truth in the most polite form (and in our theses it is told in a kind and considerate way) so that no one feels insulted: we are confronted now by other, more important questions than that of attacks on the Centrists. We have had enough of this question. It has already become somewhat boring. Instead, the comrades ought to learn to wage a real revolutionary struggle. The German workers have already begun this. Hundreds of thousands of proletarians in that country have been fighting heroically. Anyone who opposes this struggle should be immediately expelled. But after that we must not engage in empty word-spinning but must immediately begin to learn, on the basis of the mistakes made, how to organise the struggle better. We must not conceal our mistakes from the enemy. Anyone who is afraid of this is no revolutionary. On the contrary, if we openly declare to the workers: "Yes, we have made mistakes", it will mean that they will not be repeated and we shall be able better to choose the moment. And if during the struggle itself the majority of the working people prove to be on our side—not only the majority of the workers, but the majority of all the exploited and oppressed—then we shall really be victorious. (*Prolonged, stormy applause.*)

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REPORT ON THE TACTICS OF THE R.C.P.

July 5

Comrades! Strictly speaking I was unable to prepare properly for this report. All that I was able to prepare for you in the way of systematic material was a translation of my pamphlet on the tax in kind and the theses on the tactics of the Russian Communist Party.* To this I merely want to add a few explanations and remarks.

I think that to explain our Party's tactics we must first of all examine the *international situation*. We have already had a detailed discussion of the economic position of capitalism internationally, and the Congress has adopted definite resolutions on this subject. I deal with this subject in my theses very briefly, and only from the political standpoint. I leave aside the economic basis, but I think that in discussing the international position of our Republic we must, politically, take into account the fact that a certain equilibrium has now undoubtedly set in between the forces that have been waging an open, armed struggle against each other for the supremacy of this or that leading class. It is an equilibrium between bourgeois society, the international bourgeoisie as a whole, and Soviet Russia. It is, of course, an equilibrium only in a limited sense. It is only in respect to this military struggle, I say, that a certain equilibrium has been brought about in the international situation. It must be emphasised, of course, that this is only a relative equilibrium, and a very unstable one. Much

* See pp. 81-89 of this book.—Ed.

inflammable material has accumulated in capitalist countries, as well as in those countries which up to now have been regarded merely as the objects and not as the subjects of history, i.e., the colonies and semi-colonies. It is quite possible, therefore, that insurrections, great battles and revolutions may break out there sooner or later, and very suddenly too. During the past few years we have witnessed the direct struggle waged by the international bourgeoisie against the first proletarian republic. This struggle has been at the centre of the world political situation, and it is there that a change has taken place. Inasmuch as the attempt of the international bourgeoisie to strangle our Republic has failed, an equilibrium has set in, and a very unstable one it is, of course.

We know perfectly well, of course, that the international bourgeoisie is at present much stronger than our Republic, and that it is only the peculiar combination of circumstances that is preventing it from continuing the war against us. For several weeks now, we have witnessed fresh attempts in the Far East to renew the invasion,⁵⁶ and there is not the slightest doubt that similar attempts will continue. Our Party has no doubts whatever on that score. The important thing for us is to establish that an unstable equilibrium does exist, and that we must take advantage of this respite, taking into consideration the characteristic features of the present situation, adapting our tactics to the specific features of this situation, and never forgetting that the necessity for armed struggle may arise again quite suddenly. Our task is still to organise and build up the Red Army. In connection with the food problem, too, we must continue to think first of all of our Red Army. We can adopt no other line in the present international situation, when we must still be prepared for fresh attacks and fresh attempts at invasion on the part of the international bourgeoisie. In regard to our practical policy, however, the fact that a certain equilibrium has been reached in the international situation has some significance, but only in the sense that we must admit that, although the revolutionary movement has made progress, the development of the international revolution this year has not proceeded along as straight a line as we had expected.

When we started the international revolution, we did so not because we were convinced that we could forestall its development, but because a number of circumstances

compelled us to start it. We thought: either the international revolution comes to our assistance, and in that case our victory will be fully assured, or we shall do our modest revolutionary work in the conviction that even in the event of defeat we shall have served the cause of the revolution and that our experience will benefit other revolutions. It was clear to us that without the support of the international world revolution the victory of the proletarian revolution was impossible. Before the revolution, and even after it, we thought: either revolution breaks out in the other countries, in the capitalistically more developed countries, immediately, or at least very quickly, or we must perish. In spite of this conviction, we did all we possibly could to preserve the Soviet system under all circumstances, come what may, because we knew that we were not only working for ourselves, but also for the international revolution. We knew this, we repeatedly expressed this conviction before the October Revolution, immediately after it, and at the time we signed the Brest-Litovsk Peace Treaty. And, generally speaking, this was correct.

Actually, however, events did not proceed along as straight a line as we had expected. In the other big, capitalistically more developed countries the revolution has not broken out to this day. True, we can say with satisfaction that the revolution is developing all over the world, and it is only thanks to this that the international bourgeoisie is unable to strangle us, in spite of the fact that, militarily and economically, it is a hundred times stronger than we are. (*Applause.*)

In Paragraph 2 of the theses I examine the manner in which this situation arose, and the conclusions that must be drawn from it. Let me add that my final conclusion is the following: the development of the international revolution, which we predicted, is proceeding, but not along as straight a line as we had expected. It becomes clear at the first glance that after the conclusion of peace, bad as it was, it proved impossible to call forth revolution in other capitalist countries, although we know that the signs of revolution were very considerable and numerous, in fact, much more considerable and numerous than we thought at the time. Pamphlets are now beginning to appear which tell us that during the past few years and months these revolutionary symptoms in Europe have been much more serious than we had suspected. What, in that case, must

we do now? We must now thoroughly prepare for revolution and make a deep study of its concrete development in the advanced capitalist countries. This is the first lesson we must draw from the international situation. As for our Russian Republic, we must take advantage of this brief respite in order to adapt our tactics to this zigzag line of history. This equilibrium is very important politically, because we clearly see that in many West-European countries, where the broad mass of the working class, and possibly the overwhelming majority of the population, are organised, the main bulwark of the bourgeoisie consists of the hostile working-class organisations affiliated to the Second and the Two-and-a-Half Internationals. I speak of this in Paragraph 2 of the theses, and I think that in this connection I need deal with only two points, which were discussed during the debate on the question of tactics. First, winning over the majority of the proletariat. The more organised the proletariat is in a capitalistically developed country, the greater thoroughness does history demand of us in preparing for revolution, and the more thoroughly must we win over the majority of the working class. Second, the main bulwark of capitalism in the industrially developed capitalist countries is the part of the working class that is organised in the Second and the Two-and-a-Half Internationals. But for the support of this section of the workers, these counter-revolutionary elements within the working class, the international bourgeoisie would be altogether unable to retain its position. (*Applause.*)

Here I would also like to emphasise the significance of *the movement in the colonies*. In this respect we see in all the old parties, in all the bourgeois and petty-bourgeois labour parties affiliated to the Second and the Two-and-a-Half Internationals, survivals of the old sentimental views: they insist on their profound sympathy for oppressed colonial and semi-colonial peoples. The movement in the colonial countries is still regarded as an insignificant national and totally peaceful movement. But this is not so. It has undergone great change since the beginning of the twentieth century: millions and hundreds of millions, in fact the overwhelming majority of the population of the globe, are now coming forward as independent, active and revolutionary factors. It is perfectly clear that in the impending decisive battles in the world revolution, the

movement of the majority of the population of the globe, initially directed towards national liberation, will turn against capitalism and imperialism and will, perhaps, play a much more revolutionary part than we expect. It is important to emphasise the fact that, for the first time in our International, we have taken up the question of preparing for this struggle. Of course, there are many more difficulties in this enormous sphere than in any other, but at all events the movement is advancing. And in spite of the fact that the masses of toilers—the peasants in the colonial countries—are still backward, they will play a very important revolutionary part in the coming phases of the world revolution. (*Animated approval.*)

As regards *the internal political position of our Republic* I must start with a close examination of class relationships. During the past few months changes have taken place in this sphere, and we have witnessed the formation of new organisations of the exploiting class directed against us. The aim of socialism is to abolish classes. In the front ranks of the exploiting class we find the big landowners and the industrial capitalists. In regard to them, the work of destruction is fairly easy; it can be completed within a few months, and sometimes even a few weeks or days. We in Russia have expropriated our exploiters, the big landowners as well as the capitalists. They had no organisations of their own during the war and operated merely as the appendages of the military forces of the international bourgeoisie. Now, after we have repulsed the attacks of the international counter-revolution, organisations of the Russian bourgeoisie and of all the Russian counter-revolutionary parties have been formed abroad. The number of Russian émigrés scattered in all foreign countries may be estimated at one and a half to two millions. In nearly every country they publish daily newspapers, and all the parties, landowner and petty-bourgeois, not excluding the Socialist-Revolutionaries and Mensheviks, have numerous ties with foreign bourgeois elements, that is to say, they obtain enough money to run their own press. We find the collaboration abroad of absolutely all the political parties that formerly existed in Russia, and we see how the “free” Russian press abroad, from the Socialist-Revolutionary and Menshevik press to the most reactionary monarchist press, is championing the great landed interests. This, to a cer-

tain extent, facilitates our task, because we can more easily observe the forces of the enemy, his state of organisation, and the political trends in his camp. On the other hand, of course, it hinders our work, because these Russian counter-revolutionary émigrés use every means at their disposal to prepare for a fight against us. This fight again shows that, taken as a whole, the class instinct and class-consciousness of the ruling classes are still superior to those of the oppressed classes, notwithstanding the fact that the Russian revolution has done more than any previous revolution in this respect. In Russia, there is hardly a village in which the people, the oppressed, have not been roused. Nevertheless, if we take a cool look at the state of organisation and political clarity of views of the Russian counter-revolutionary émigrés, we shall find that the class-consciousness of the bourgeoisie is still superior to that of the exploited and the oppressed. These people make every possible attempt and skilfully take advantage of every opportunity to attack Soviet Russia in one way or another, and to dismember it. It would be very instructive—and I think the foreign comrades will do that—systematically to watch the most important aspirations, the most important tactical moves, and the most important trends of this Russian counter-revolution. It operates chiefly abroad, and it will not be very difficult for the foreign comrades to watch it. In some respects, we ought to learn from this enemy. These counter-revolutionary émigrés are very well informed, they are excellently organised and are good strategists. And I think that a systematic comparison and study of the manner in which they are organised and take advantage of every opportunity may have a powerful propaganda effect upon the working class. This is not general theory, it is practical politics; here we can see what the enemy has learned. During the past few years, the Russian bourgeoisie has suffered a terrible defeat. There is an old saying that a beaten army learns a great deal. The beaten reactionary army has learned a great deal, and has learned it thoroughly. It is learning with great avidity, and has really made much headway. When we took power at one swoop, the Russian bourgeoisie was unorganised and politically undeveloped. Now, I think, its development is on a par with modern, West-European development. We must take this into account, we must improve our own organisation and methods, and we shall

do our utmost to achieve this. It was relatively easy for us, and I think that it will be equally easy for other revolutions, to cope with these two exploiting classes.

But, in addition to this class of exploiters, there is in nearly all capitalist countries, with the exception, perhaps, of Britain, a class of small producers and small farmers. The main problem of the revolution now is how to fight these two classes. In order to be rid of them, we must adopt methods other than those employed against the big landowners and capitalists. We could simply expropriate and expel both of these classes, and that is what we did. But we cannot do the same thing with the remaining capitalist classes, the small producers and the petty bourgeoisie, which are found in all countries. In most capitalist countries, these classes constitute a very considerable minority, approximately from thirty to forty-five per cent of the population. Add to them the petty-bourgeois elements of the working class, and you get even more than fifty per cent. These cannot be expropriated or expelled; other methods of struggle must be adopted in their case. From the international standpoint, if we regard the international revolution as one process, the significance of the period into which we are now entering in Russia is, in essence, that we must now find a practical solution for the problem of the relations the proletariat should establish with this last capitalist class in Russia. All Marxists have a correct and ready solution for this problem in theory. But theory and practice are two different things, and the practical solution of this problem is by no means the same as the theoretical solution. We know definitely that we have made serious mistakes. From the international standpoint, it is a sign of great progress that we are now trying to determine the attitude the proletariat in power should adopt towards the last capitalist class—the rock-bottom of capitalism—small private property, the small producer. This problem now confronts us in a practical way. I think we shall solve it. At all events, the experiment we are making will be useful for future proletarian revolutions, and they will be able to make better technical preparations for solving it.

In my theses I tried to analyse *the problem of the relations between the proletariat and the peasantry*. For the first time in history there is a state with only two classes,

the proletariat and the peasantry. The latter constitutes the overwhelming majority of the population. It is, of course, very backward. How do the relations between the peasantry and the proletariat, which holds political power, find practical expression in the development of the revolution? The first form is alliance, close alliance. This is a very difficult task, but at any rate it is economically and politically feasible.

How did we approach this problem practically? We concluded an alliance with the peasantry. We interpret this alliance in the following way: the proletariat emancipates the peasantry from the exploitation of the bourgeoisie, from its leadership and influence, and wins it over to its own side in order jointly to defeat the exploiters.

The Menshevik argument runs like this: the peasantry constitutes a majority; we are pure democrats, therefore, the majority should decide. But as the peasantry cannot operate on its own, this, in practice, means nothing more nor less than the restoration of capitalism. The slogan is the same: Alliance with the peasantry. When we say that, we mean strengthening and consolidating the proletariat. We have tried to give effect to this alliance between the proletariat and the peasantry, and the first stage was a military alliance. The three years of the Civil War created enormous difficulties, but in certain respects they facilitated our task. This may sound odd, but it is true. The war was not something new for the peasants; a war against the exploiters, against the big landowners, was something they quite understood. The overwhelming majority of the peasants were on our side. In spite of the enormous distances, and the fact that the overwhelming majority of our peasants are unable to read or write, they assimilated our propaganda very easily. This proves that the broad masses—and this applies also to the most advanced countries—learn faster from their own practical experience than from books. In Russia, moreover, learning from practical experience was facilitated for the peasantry by the fact that the country is so exceptionally large that in the same period different parts of it were passing through different stages of development.

In Siberia and in the Ukraine the counter-revolution was able to gain a temporary victory because there the

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How did we approach this problem practically? We concluded an alliance with the peasantry. We interpret this alliance in the following way: the proletariat emancipates the peasantry from the exploitation of the bourgeoisie, from its leadership and influence, and wins it over to its own side in order jointly to defeat the exploiters.

The Menshevik argument runs like this: the peasantry constitutes a majority; we are pure democrats, therefore, the majority should decide. But as the peasantry cannot operate on its own, this, in practice, means nothing more nor less than the restoration of capitalism. The slogan is the same: Alliance with the peasantry. When we say that, we mean strengthening and consolidating the proletariat. We have tried to give effect to this alliance between the proletariat and the peasantry, and the first stage was a military alliance. The three years of the Civil War created enormous difficulties, but in certain respects they facilitated our task. This may sound odd, but it is true. The war was not something new for the peasants; a war against the exploiters, against the big landowners, was something they quite understood. The overwhelming majority of the peasants were on our side. In spite of the enormous distances, and the fact that the overwhelming majority of our peasants are unable to read or write, they assimilated our propaganda very easily. This proves that the broad masses—and this applies also to the most advanced countries—learn faster from their own practical experience than from books. In Russia, moreover, learning from practical experience was facilitated for the peasantry by the fact that the country is so exceptionally large that in the same period different parts of it were passing through different stages of development.

In Siberia and in the Ukraine the counter-revolution was able to gain a temporary victory because there the

bourgeoisie had the peasantry on its side, because the peasants were against us. The peasants frequently said, "We are Bolsheviks, but not Communists. We are for the Bolsheviks because they drove out the landowners; but we are not for the Communists because they are opposed to individual farming." And for a time, the counter-revolution managed to win out in Siberia and in the Ukraine because the bourgeoisie made headway in the struggle for influence over the peasantry. But it took only a very short time to open the peasants' eyes. They quickly acquired practical experience and soon said, "Yes, the Bolsheviks are rather unpleasant people, we don't like them, but still they are better than the whiteguards and the Constituent Assembly." "Constituent Assembly" is a term of abuse not only among the educated Communists, but also among the peasants. They know from practical experience that the Constituent Assembly and the whiteguards stand for the same thing, that the former is inevitably followed by the latter. The Mensheviks also resort to a military alliance with the peasantry, but they fail to understand that a military alliance alone is inadequate. There can be no military alliance without an economic alliance. It takes more than air to keep a man alive; our alliance with the peasantry could not possibly have lasted any length of time without the economic foundation, which was the basis of our victory in the war against our bourgeoisie. After all our bourgeoisie has united with the whole of the international bourgeoisie.

The basis of our economic alliance with the peasantry was, of course, very simple, and even crude. The peasant obtained from us all the land and support against the big landowners. In return for this, we were to obtain food. This alliance was something entirely new and did not rest on the ordinary relations between commodity producers and consumers. Our peasants had a much better understanding of this than the heroes of the Second and the Two-and-a-Half Internationals. They said to themselves, "These Bolsheviks are stern leaders, but after all they are our own people." Be that as it may, we created in this way the foundations of a new economic alliance. The peasants gave their produce to the Red Army and received from the latter assistance in protecting their possessions. This is always forgotten by the

heroes of the Second International, who, like Otto Bauer, totally fail to understand the actual situation. We confess that the initial form of this alliance was very primitive and that we made very many mistakes. But we were obliged to act as quickly as possible, we had to organise supplies for the army at all costs. During the Civil War we were cut off from all the grain districts of Russia. We were in a terrible position, and it looks like a miracle that the Russian people and the working class were able to endure such suffering, want, and privation, sustained by nothing more than a deep urge for victory. (*Animated approval and applause.*)

When the Civil War came to an end, however, we faced a different problem. If the country had not been so laid waste after seven years of incessant war, it would, perhaps, have been possible to find an easier transition to the new form of alliance between the proletariat and the peasantry. But bad as conditions in the country were, they were still further aggravated by the crop failure, the fodder shortage, etc. In consequence, the sufferings of the peasants became unbearable. We had to show the broad masses of the peasants immediately that we were prepared to change our policy, without in any way deviating from our revolutionary path, so that they could say, "The Bolsheviks want to improve our intolerable condition immediately, and at all costs."

And so, *our economic policy was changed*; the tax in kind superseded the requisitions. This was not invented at one stroke. You will find a number of proposals in the Bolshevik press over a period of months, but no plan that really promised success. But this is not important. The important thing is that we changed our economic policy, yielding to exclusively practical considerations, and impelled by necessity. A bad harvest, fodder shortage and lack of fuel—all, of course, have a decisive influence on the economy as a whole, including the peasant economy. If the peasantry goes on strike, we get no firewood; and if we get no firewood, the factories will have to idle. Thus, in the spring of 1921, the economic crisis resulting from the terrible crop failure and the fodder shortage assumed gigantic proportions. All that was the aftermath of the three years of civil war. We had to show the peasantry that we could and would quickly change our policy in order immediately to alleviate their distress. We have al-

ways said—and it was also said at the Second Congress—that revolution demands sacrifices. Some comrades in their propaganda argue in the following way: we are prepared to stage a revolution, but it must not be too severe. Unless I am mistaken, this thesis was put forward by Comrade Šmeral in his speech at the Congress of the Communist Party of Czechoslovakia. I read about it in the report published in the Reichenberg *Vorwärts*.⁵⁷ There is evidently a Leftist wing there; hence this source cannot be regarded as being quite impartial. At all events, I must say that if Šmeral did say that, he was wrong. Some comrades who spoke after Šmeral at this Congress said, “Yes, we shall go along with Šmeral because in this way we shall avoid civil war.” (*Laughter.*) If these reports are true, I must say that such agitation is neither communistic nor revolutionary. Naturally, every revolution entails enormous sacrifice on the part of the class making it. Revolution differs from ordinary struggle in that ten and even a hundred times more people take part in it. Hence every revolution entails sacrifices not only for individuals, but for a whole class. The dictatorship of the proletariat in Russia has entailed for the ruling class—the proletariat—sacrifices, want and privation unprecedented in history, and the case will, in all probability, be the same in every other country.

The question arises: *How are we to distribute this burden of privation?* We are the state power. We are able to distribute the burden of privation to a certain extent, and to impose it upon several classes, thereby relatively alleviating the condition of certain strata of the population. But what is to be our principle? Is it to be that of fairness, or of majority? No. We must act in a practical manner. We must distribute the burdens in such a way as to preserve the power of the proletariat. This is our only principle. In the beginning of the revolution the working class was compelled to suffer incredible want. Let me state that from year to year our food policy has been achieving increasing success. And the situation as a whole has undoubtedly improved. But the peasantry in Russia has certainly gained more from the revolution than the working class. There is no doubt about that at all. From the standpoint of theory, this shows, of course, that our revolution was to some degree a bourgeois revolution. When Kautsky used this as an argument against us, we laughed. Naturally, a revolution which does not expropriate the big

landed estates, expel the big landowners or divide the land is only a bourgeois revolution and not a socialist one. But we were the only party to carry the bourgeois revolution to its conclusion and to facilitate the struggle for the socialist revolution. The Soviet power and the Soviet system are institutions of the socialist state. We have already established these institutions, but we have not yet solved the problem of economic relations between the peasantry and the proletariat. Much remains to be done, and the outcome of this struggle depends upon whether we solve this problem or not. Thus, the distribution of the burden of privation is one of the most difficult practical problems. On the whole, the condition of the peasants has improved, but dire suffering has fallen to the lot of the working class, precisely because it is exercising its dictatorship.

I have already said that in the spring of 1921 the most appalling want caused by the fodder shortage and the crop failure prevailed among the peasantry, which constitutes the majority of our population. We cannot possibly exist unless we have good relations with the peasant masses. Hence, our task was to render them immediate assistance. The condition of the working class is extremely hard. It is suffering horribly. Those who have more political understanding, however, realise that in the interest of the dictatorship of the working class we must make tremendous efforts to help the peasants at any price. The vanguard of the working class has realised this, but in that vanguard there are still people who cannot understand it, and who are too weary to understand it. They regarded it as a mistake and began to use the word “opportunism”. They said, “The Bolsheviks are helping the peasants. The peasants, who are exploiting us, are getting everything they please, while the workers are starving.” But is that opportunism? We are helping the peasants because without an alliance with them the political power of the proletariat is impossible, its preservation is inconceivable. It was this consideration of expediency and not that of fair distribution that was decisive for us. We are assisting the peasants because it is absolutely necessary to do so in order that we may retain political power. The supreme principle of the dictatorship is the maintenance of the alliance between the proletariat and the peasantry in order that the proletariat may retain its leading role and its political power.

The only means we found for this was *the adoption of the tax in kind*, which was the inevitable consequence of the struggle. This year, we shall introduce this tax for the first time. This principle has not yet been tried in practice. From the military alliance we must pass to an economic alliance, and, theoretically, the only basis for the latter is the introduction of the tax in kind. It provides the only theoretical possibility for laying a really solid economic foundation for socialist society. The socialised factory gives the peasant its manufactures and in return the peasant gives his grain. This is the only possible form of existence of socialist society, the only form of socialist development in a country in which the small peasants constitute the majority, or at all events a very considerable minority. The peasants will give one part of their produce in the form of tax and another either in exchange for the manufactures of socialist factories, or through the exchange of commodities.

This brings us to the most difficult problem. It goes without saying that the tax in kind means *freedom to trade*. After having paid the tax in kind, the peasant will have the right freely to exchange the remainder of his grain. This freedom of exchange implies freedom for capitalism. We say this openly and emphasise it. We do not conceal it in the least. Things would go very hard with us if we attempted to conceal it. Freedom to trade means freedom for capitalism, but it also means a new form of capitalism. It means that, to a certain extent, we are re-creating capitalism. We are doing this quite openly. It is state capitalism. But state capitalism in a society where power belongs to capital, and state capitalism in a proletarian state, are two different concepts. In a capitalist state, state capitalism means that it is recognised by the state and controlled by it for the benefit of the bourgeoisie, and to the detriment of the proletariat. In the proletarian state, the same thing is done for the benefit of the working class, for the purpose of withstanding the as yet strong bourgeoisie, and of fighting it. It goes without saying that we must grant concessions to the foreign bourgeoisie, to foreign capital. Without the slightest denationalisation, we shall lease mines, forests and oilfields to foreign capitalists, and receive in exchange manufactured goods, machinery, etc., and thus restore our own industry.

Of course, we did not all agree on the question of *state capitalism* at once. But we are very pleased to note in this connection that our peasantry has been developing, that it has fully realised the historical significance of the struggle we are waging at the present time. Ordinary peasants from the most remote districts have come to us and said: "What! We have expelled our capitalists, the capitalists who speak Russian, and now foreign capitalists are coming!" Does not this show that our peasants have developed? There is no need to explain to a worker who is versed in economics why this is necessary. We have been so ruined by seven years of war that it will take many years to restore our industry. We must pay for our backwardness and weakness, and for the lessons we are now learning and must learn. Those who want to learn must pay for the tuition. We must explain this to one and all, and if we prove it in practice, the vast masses of the peasants and workers will agree with us, because in this way their condition will be immediately improved, and because it will ensure the possibility of restoring our industry. What compels us to do this? We are not alone in the world. We exist in a system of capitalist states.... On one side, there are the colonial countries, but they cannot help us yet. On the other side, there are the capitalist countries, but they are our enemies. The result is a certain equilibrium, a very poor one, it is true. Nevertheless, we must reckon with the fact. We must not shut our eyes to it if we want to exist. Either we score an immediate victory over the whole bourgeoisie, or we pay the tribute.

We admit quite openly, and do not conceal the fact, that concessions in the system of state capitalism mean paying tribute to capitalism. But we gain time, and gaining time means gaining everything, particularly in the period of equilibrium, when our foreign comrades are preparing thoroughly for their revolution. The more thorough their preparations, the more certain will the victory be. Meanwhile, however, we shall have to pay the tribute.

A few words about our food policy. Undoubtedly, it was a bad and primitive policy. But we can also point to some achievements. In this connection I must once again emphasise that the only possible economic foundation of socialism is large-scale machine industry. Whoever for-

gets this is no Communist. We must analyse this problem concretely. We cannot present problems in the way the theoreticians of the old school of socialism do. We must present them in a practical manner. What is modern large-scale industry? It is *the electrification of the whole of Russia*. Sweden, Germany and America have almost achieved this, although they are still bourgeois. A Swedish comrade told me that in Sweden a large part of industry and thirty per cent of agriculture are electrified. In Germany and America, which are even more developed capitalistically, we see the same thing on a larger scale. Large-scale machine industry is nothing more nor less than the electrification of the whole country. We have already appointed a special commission consisting of the country's best economists and engineers. It is true that nearly all of them are hostile to the Soviet power. All these specialists will come over to communism, but not our way, not by way of twenty years of underground work, during which we unceasingly studied and repeated over and over again the ABC of communism.

Nearly all the Soviet government bodies were in favour of inviting the specialists. The expert engineers will come to us when we give them practical proof that this will increase the country's productive forces. It is not enough to prove it to them in theory; we must prove it to them in practice, and we shall win these people over to our side if we present the problem differently, not from the standpoint of the theoretical propaganda of communism. We say: large-scale industry is the only means of saving the peasantry from want and starvation. Everyone agrees with this. But how can it be done? The restoration of industry on the old basis will entail too much labour and time. We must give industry a more modern form, i. e., we must adopt electrification. This will take much less time. We have already drawn up the plans for electrification. More than two hundred specialists—almost to a man opposed to the Soviet power—worked on it with keen interest, although they are not Communists. From the standpoint of technical science, however, they had to admit that this was the only correct way. Of course, we have a long way to go before the plan is achieved. The cautious specialists say that the first series of works will take at least ten years. Professor Ballod has estimated that it would take three to four years to electrify Germany. But for us even ten years

is not enough. In my theses I quote actual figures to show you how little we have been able to do in this sphere up to now. The figures I quote are so modest that it immediately becomes clear that they are more of propaganda than scientific value. But we must begin with propaganda. The Russian peasants who fought in the world war and lived in Germany for several years learned how modern farming should be carried on in order to conquer famine. We must carry on extensive propaganda in this direction. Taken by themselves, these plans are not yet of great practical value, but their propaganda value is very great.

The peasants realise that something new must be created. They realise that this cannot be done by everybody working separately, but by the state working as a whole. The peasants who were prisoners of war in Germany found out what real cultural life is based on. Twelve thousand kilowatts is a very modest beginning. This may sound funny to the foreigner who is familiar with electrification in America, Germany or Sweden. But he laughs best who laughs last. It is, indeed, a modest beginning. But the peasants are beginning to understand that new work must be carried out on a grand scale, and that this work has already begun. Enormous difficulties will have to be overcome. We shall try to establish relations with the capitalist countries. We must not regret having to give the capitalists several hundred million kilogrammes of oil on condition that they help us to electrify our country.

And now, in conclusion, a few words about "*pure democracy*". I will read you a passage from Engels's letter to Bebel of December 11, 1884. He wrote:

"Pure democracy ... when the moment of revolution comes, acquires a temporary importance as the extreme bourgeois party, as which it already played itself off in Frankfurt,⁵⁸ and as the final sheet-anchor of the whole bourgeois and even feudal economy.... Thus between March and September 1848 the whole feudal-bureaucratic mass strengthened the liberals in order to hold down the revolutionary masses.... In any case our sole adversary on the day of the crisis and on the day after the crisis will be the *whole of the reaction which will group around pure democracy*, and this, I think, should not be lost sight of."

Our approach must differ from that of the theoreticians. The whole reactionary mass, not only bourgeois, but also feudal, groups itself around "pure democracy". The German comrades know better than anyone else what "pure democracy" means, for Kautsky and the other leaders of the Second and the Two-and-a-Half Internationals are defending this "pure democracy" from the wicked Bolsheviks. If we judge the Russian Socialist-Revolutionaries and Mensheviks, not by what they say, but by what they do, we shall find that they are nothing but representatives of petty-bourgeois "pure democracy". In the course of our revolution they have given us a classic example of what "pure democracy" means, and again during the recent crisis, in the days of the Kronstadt mutiny. There was serious unrest among the peasantry, and discontent was also rife among the workers. They were weary and exhausted. After all, there is a limit to human endurance. They had starved for three years, but you cannot go on starving for four or five years. Naturally, hunger has a tremendous influence on political activity. How did the Socialist-Revolutionaries and Mensheviks behave? They wavered all the time, thereby strengthening the bourgeoisie. The organisation of all the Russian parties abroad has revealed the present state of affairs. The shrewdest of the leaders of the Russian big bourgeoisie said to themselves: "We cannot achieve victory in Russia immediately. Hence our slogan must be: 'Soviets without the Bolsheviks.'" Milyukov, the leader of the Constitutional-Democrats, defended the Soviet power from the attacks of the Socialist-Revolutionaries. This sounds very strange; but such are the practical dialectics which we, in our revolution, have been studying in a peculiar way, from the practical experience of our struggle and of the struggle of our enemies. The Constitutional-Democrats defend "Soviets without the Bolsheviks" because they understand the position very well and hope that a section of the people will rise to the bait. That is what the clever Constitutional-Democrats say. Not all the Constitutional-Democrats are clever, of course, but some of them are, and these have learned something from the French Revolution. The present slogan is to fight the Bolsheviks, whatever the price, come what may. The whole of the bourgeoisie is now helping the Mensheviks and Socialist-Revolutionaries,

who are now the vanguard of all reaction. In the spring we had a taste of the fruits of this counter-revolutionary co-operation.⁵⁹

That is why we must continue our relentless struggle against these elements. Dictatorship is a state of intense war. That is just the state we are in. There is no military invasion at present; but we are isolated. On the other hand, however, we are not entirely isolated, since the whole international bourgeoisie is incapable of waging open war against us just now, because the whole working class, even though the majority is not yet communist, is sufficiently class-conscious to prevent intervention. The bourgeoisie is compelled to reckon with the temper of the masses even though they have not yet entirely sided with communism. That is why the bourgeoisie cannot now start an offensive against us, although one is never ruled out. Until the final issue is decided, this awful state of war will continue. And we say: "*A la guerre comme à la guerre*; we do not promise any freedom, or any democracy." We tell the peasants quite openly that they must choose between the rule of the bourgeoisie and the rule of the Bolsheviks—in which case we shall make every possible concession within the limits of retaining power, and later we shall lead them to socialism. Everything else is deception and pure demagoguery. Ruthless war must be declared against this deception and demagoguery. Our point of view is: for the time being—big concessions and the greatest caution, precisely because a certain equilibrium has set in, precisely because we are weaker than our combined enemies, and because our economic basis is too weak and we need a stronger one.

That, comrades, is what I wanted to tell you about our tactics, the tactics of the Russian Communist Party. (*Prolonged applause.*)

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SPEECHES AT A MEETING
OF MEMBERS OF THE GERMAN,
POLISH, CZECHOSLOVAK,
HUNGARIAN AND ITALIAN
DELEGATIONS

July 11

1

I read certain reports yesterday in *Pravda* which have persuaded me that the moment for an offensive is perhaps nearer than we thought at the Congress, and for which the young comrades attacked us. I shall deal with these reports later, however. Just now I want to say that the nearer the general offensive is, the more "opportunistic" must we act. You will now all return home and tell the workers that we have become more reasonable than we were before the Third Congress. You should not be put out by this; you will say that we made mistakes and now wish to act more carefully; by doing so we shall win the masses over from the Social-Democratic and Independent Social-Democratic parties, masses, who, objectively, by the whole course of events, are being pushed towards us, but who are afraid of us. I want to cite our own example to show you that we must act more carefully.

At the beginning of the war we Bolsheviks adhered to a single slogan—that of civil war, and a ruthless one at that. We branded as a traitor everyone who did not support the idea of civil war. But when we came back to Russia in March 1917⁶⁰ we changed our position entirely. When we returned to Russia and spoke to the peasants and workers, we saw that they all stood for defence of the homeland, of course in quite a different sense from the Mensheviks, and we could not call these ordinary

workers and peasants scoundrels and traitors. We described this as "honest defensism". I intend to write a big article about this and publish all the material. On April 7 I published my theses, in which I called for caution and patience.* Our original stand at the beginning of the war was correct: it was important then to form a definite and resolute core. Our subsequent stand was correct too. It proceeded from the assumption that the masses had to be won over. At that time we already rejected the idea of the immediate overthrow of the Provisional Government. I wrote: "It should be overthrown, for it is an oligarchic, and not a people's government, and is unable to provide peace or bread. But it cannot be overthrown just now, for it is being kept in power by the workers' Soviets and so far enjoys the confidence of the workers. We are not Blanquists,⁶¹ we do not want to rule with a minority of the working class against the majority."⁶² The Cadets, who are shrewd politicians, immediately noticed the contradiction between our former position and the new one, and called us hypocrites. But as, in the same breath, they had called us spies, traitors, scoundrels and German agents, the former appellation made no impression. The first crisis occurred on April 20. Milyukov's Note on the Dardanelles⁶² showed the government up for what it was—an imperialist government. After this the armed masses of the soldiery moved against the building of the government and overthrew Milyukov. They were led by a non-Party man named Linde. This movement had not been organised by the Party. We characterised that movement at the time as follows: something more than an armed demonstration, and something less than an armed uprising. At our conference on April 22 the Left trend demanded the immediate overthrow of the government. The Central Committee, on the contrary, declared against the slogan of civil war, and we instructed all agitators in the provinces to deny the outrageous lie about the Bolsheviks wanting civil war. On April 22 I wrote that the slogan "Down with the Provisional Government" was incorrect, since if we did not have

* Lenin refers to his article "The Tasks of the Proletariat in the Present Revolution" (*Collected Works*, Vol. 24, pp. 19-26).—Ed.

** See Lenin's article "The Dual Power" (*Collected Works*, Vol. 24, pp. 38-41).—Ed.

the majority of the people behind us this slogan would be either an empty phrase or adventurism.*

We did not hesitate in face of our enemies to call our Leftists "adventurists". The Mensheviks crowed over this and talked about our bankruptcy. But we said that any attempt to be slightly, if only a wee bit, left of the C. C. was folly, and those who stood left of the C. C. had lost ordinary common sense. We refuse to be intimidated by the fact that our enemies rejoice at our slips.

Our sole strategy now is to become stronger, hence cleverer, more sensible, more "opportunistic", and that is what we must tell the masses. But after we shall have won over the masses by our reasonableness, we shall use the tactic of offensive in the strictest sense of that word. Now about the three reports:

1) The strike of Berlin's municipal workers. Municipal workers are mostly conservative people, who belong to the Social-Democrats of the majority and to the Independent Social-Democratic Party; they are well off, but are compelled to strike.

2) The strike of the textile workers in Lille.

3) The third fact is the most important. A meeting was held in Rome to organise the struggle against the fascists, in which 50,000 workers took part—representing all parties—Communists, socialists and also republicans. Five thousand ex-servicemen came to the meeting in their uniforms and not a single fascist dared to appear on the street. This shows that there is more inflammable material in Europe than we thought. Lazzari praised our resolution on tactics. It is an important achievement of our Congress. If Lazzari admits it, then the thousands of workers who back him are bound to come to us, and their leaders will not be able to scare them away from us. "*Il faut reculer, pour mieux sauter*" (you have to step back to make a better jump). This jump is inevitable, since the situation, objectively, is becoming insufferable.

So we are beginning to apply our new tactic. We mustn't get nervy, we cannot be late, rather we may start too early, and when you ask whether Russia will be able to hold out so long, we answer that we are now fighting a war with the petty bourgeoisie, with the peasantry, an eco-

nomie war, which is much more dangerous for us than the last war. But as Clausewitz said, the element of war is a danger and we have never been out of that danger for a moment. I am sure that if we act more cautiously, if we make concessions in time, we shall win this war too, even if it lasts over three years.

Summing up:

1) All of us, unanimously throughout Europe, shall say that we are applying the new tactic, and in this way we shall win the masses.

2) Co-ordination of the offensive in the most important countries: Germany, Czechoslovakia, Italy. We need here preparation, constant co-ordination. Europe is pregnant with revolution, but it is impossible to make up a calendar of revolution beforehand. We in Russia will hold out, not only five years, but more. The only correct strategy is the one we have adopted. I am confident that we shall win positions for the revolution which the Entente will have nothing to put up against, and that will be the beginning of victory on a world scale.

2

Šmeral seemed to be pleased with my speech, but he interprets it one-sidedly. I said in the committee that in order to find the correct line Šmeral had to make three steps to the left, and Kreibich one step to the right. Šmeral, unfortunately, said nothing about taking these steps. Nor did he say anything about his views on the situation. Concerning the difficulties, Šmeral merely repeated the old arguments and said nothing new. Šmeral said that I had dispelled his fears. In the spring he was afraid that the communist leadership would demand of him untimely action, but events dispelled these fears. But what worries us now is this: will things really come to the stage of preparation for the offensive in Czechoslovakia, or will they be confined merely to talk about difficulties. The Left mistake is simply a mistake, it isn't big and is easily rectified. But if the mistake pertains to the resolution to act, then this is by no means a small mistake, it is a betrayal. These mistakes do not bear comparison. The theory that we shall make a revolution, but only after others have acted first, is utterly fallacious.

* See V. I. Lenin, "Resolution of the Central Committee of the R.S.D.L.P. (Bolsheviks) Adopted in the Morning of April 22 (May 5), 1917" (*Collected Works*, Vol. 24, pp. 210-12).—Ed.

The retreat made at this Congress can, I think, be compared with our actions in 1917 in Russia, and therefore prove that this retreat must serve as preparation for the offensive. Our opponents will say that we are not saying today what we said before. It will do them little good, but the working-class masses will understand us if we tell them in what sense the March action is to be considered a success and why we criticise its mistakes and say that we should make better preparations in future. I agree with Terracini when he says that the interpretations of Šmeral and Burian are wrong. If co-ordination is to be understood as our having to wait until another country has started, a country that is richer and has a bigger population, then this is not a communist interpretation, but downright deception. Co-ordination should consist in comrades from other countries knowing exactly what moments are significant. The really important interpretation of co-ordination is this: the best and quickest imitation of a good example. That of the workers of *Rome* is a good example.

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FOURTH CONGRESS OF THE COMMUNIST INTERNATIONAL

November 5-December 5,
1922

FIVE YEARS OF THE RUSSIAN REVOLUTION AND THE PROSPECTS OF THE WORLD REVOLUTION

REPORT TO THE FOURTH CONGRESS
OF THE COMMUNIST INTERNATIONAL,
NOVEMBER 13

(*Comrade Lenin is met with stormy, prolonged applause and a general ovation. All rise and join in singing "The Internationale".*) Comrades, I am down in the list as the main speaker, but you will understand that after my lengthy illness I am not able to make a long report. I can only make a few introductory remarks on the key questions. My subject will be a very limited one. The subject, "Five Years of the Russian Revolution and the Prospects of the World Revolution", is in general too broad and too large for one speaker to exhaust in a single speech. That is why I shall take only a small part of this subject, namely, the question of the New Economic Policy. I have deliberately taken only this small part in order to make you familiar with what is now the most important question—at all events, it is the most important to me, because I am now working on it.

And so, I shall tell you how we launched the New Economic Policy, and what results we have achieved with the aid of this policy. If I confine myself to this question, I shall, perhaps, succeed in giving you a general survey and a general idea of it.

To begin with how we arrived at the New Economic Policy, I must quote from an article I wrote in 1918.⁶³ At the beginning of 1918, in a brief polemic, I touched on the question of the attitude we should adopt towards state capitalism. I then wrote:

"State capitalism would be a *step forward* as compared with the present state of affairs (i.e., the state of affairs at that time) in our Soviet Republic. If in approximately six months' time state capitalism became established in our Republic, this would be a great success and a sure guarantee that within a year socialism will have gained a permanently firm hold and will have become invincible in our country."*

Of course, this was said at a time when we were more foolish than we are now, but not so foolish as to be unable to deal with such matters.

Thus, in 1918, I was of the opinion that with regard to the economic situation then obtaining in the Soviet Republic, state capitalism would be a step forward. This sounds very strange, and perhaps even absurd, for already at that time our Republic was a socialist republic and we were every day hastily—perhaps too hastily—adopting various new economic measures which could not be described as anything but socialist measures. Nevertheless, I then held the view that in relation to the economic situation then obtaining in the Soviet Republic state capitalism would be a step forward, and I explained my idea simply by enumerating the elements of the economic system of Russia. In my opinion these elements were the following: "(1) patriarchal, i.e., the most primitive form of agriculture; (2) small commodity production (this includes the majority of the peasants who trade in grain); (3) private capitalism; (4) state capitalism, and (5) socialism."** All these economic elements were present in Russia at that time. I set myself the task of explaining the relationship of these elements to each other, and whether one of the non-socialist elements, namely, state capitalism, should not be rated higher than socialism. I repeat: it seems very strange to everyone that a non-socialist element should be rated higher than, regarded as superior to, socialism in a republic which declares itself a socialist republic. But the fact will become intelligible if you recall that we definitely did not regard the economic system of Russia as something homogeneous and highly developed; we were fully aware that in Russia we had patriarchal

* V. I. Lenin, *Collected Works*, Vol. 27, pp. 334-35.—Ed.

** Ibid., pp. 335-36.—Ed.

agriculture, i.e., the most primitive form of agriculture, alongside the socialist form. What role could state capitalism play in these circumstances?

I then asked myself which of these elements predominated. Clearly, in a petty-bourgeois environment the petty-bourgeois element predominates. I recognised then that the petty-bourgeois element predominated; it was impossible to take a different view. The question I then put to myself—this was in a specific controversy which had nothing to do with the present question—was: what is our attitude towards state capitalism? And I replied: although it is not a socialist form, state capitalism would be for us, and for Russia, a more favourable form than the existing one. What does that show? It shows that we did not overrate either the rudiments or the principles of socialist economy, although we had already accomplished the social revolution. On the contrary, at that time we already realised to a certain extent that it would be better if we first arrived at state capitalism and only after that at socialism.

I must lay special emphasis on this, because I assume that it is the only point of departure we can take, firstly, to explain what the present economic policy is; and secondly, to draw very important practical conclusions for the Communist International. I do not want to suggest that we had then a ready-made plan of retreat. This was not the case. Those brief lines set forth in a polemic were not by any means a plan of retreat. For example, they made no mention whatever of that very important point, freedom to trade, which is of fundamental significance to state capitalism. Yet they did contain a general, even if indefinite, idea of retreat. I think that we should take note of that not only from the viewpoint of a country whose economic system was, and is to this day, very backward, but also from the viewpoint of the Communist International and the advanced West-European countries. For example, just now we are engaged in drawing up a programme. I personally think that it would be best to hold simply a general discussion on all the programmes, to make the first reading, so to speak, and to get them printed, but not to take a final decision now, this year. Why? First of all, of course, because I do not think we have considered all of them in sufficient detail, and also because we have given scarcely any thought to possible

retreat, and to preparations for it. Yet that is a question which, in view of such fundamental changes in the world as the overthrow of capitalism and the building of socialism with all its enormous difficulties, absolutely requires our attention. We must not only know how to act when we pass directly to the offensive and are victorious. In revolutionary times this is not so difficult, nor so very important; at least, it is not the most decisive thing. There are always times in a revolution when the opponent loses his head; and if we attack him at such a time we may win an easy victory. But that is nothing, because our enemy, if he has enough endurance, can rally his forces beforehand, and so forth. He can easily provoke us to attack him and then throw us back for many years. For this reason, I think, the idea that we must prepare for ourselves the possibility of retreat is very important, and not only from the theoretical point of view. From the practical point of view, too, all the parties which are preparing to take the direct offensive against capitalism in the near future must now give thought to the problem of preparing for a possible retreat. I think it will do us no harm to learn this lesson together with all the other lessons which the experience of our revolution offers. On the contrary, it may prove beneficial in many cases.

Now that I have emphasised the fact that as early as 1918 we regarded state capitalism as a possible line of retreat, I shall deal with the results of our New Economic Policy. I repeat: at that time it was still a very vague idea, but in 1921, after we had passed through the most important stage of the Civil War—and passed through it victoriously—we felt the impact of a grave—I think it was the gravest—internal political crisis in Soviet Russia. This internal crisis brought to light discontent not only among a considerable section of the peasantry but also among the workers. This was the first and, I hope, the last time in the history of Soviet Russia that feeling ran against us among large masses of peasants, not consciously but instinctively. What gave rise to this peculiar, and for us, of course, very unpleasant, situation? The reason for it was that in our economic offensive we had run too far ahead, that we had not provided ourselves with adequate resources, that the masses sensed what we ourselves were not then able to formulate consciously but

what we admitted soon after, a few weeks later, namely, that the direct transition to purely socialist forms, to purely socialist distribution, was beyond our available strength, and that if we were unable to effect a retreat so as to confine ourselves to easier tasks, we would face disaster. The crisis began, I think, in February 1921. In the spring of that year we decided unanimously—I did not observe any considerable disagreement among us on this question—to adopt the New Economic Policy. Now, after eighteen months have elapsed, at the close of 1922, we are able to make certain comparisons. What has happened? How have we fared during this period of over eighteen months? What is the result? Has this retreat been of any benefit to us? Has it really saved us, or is the result still indefinite? This is the main question that I put to myself, and I think that this main question is also of first-rate importance to all the Communist Parties; for if the reply is in the negative, we are all doomed. I think that all of us can, with a clear conscience, reply to this question in the affirmative, namely, that the past eighteen months provide positive and absolute proof that we have passed the test.

I shall now try to prove this. To do that I must briefly enumerate all the constituent parts of our economy.

First of all I shall deal with our financial system and our famous Russian ruble. I think we can say that Russian rubles are famous, if only for the reason that their number now in circulation exceeds a quadrillion. (*Laughter.*) That is something! It is an astronomical figure. I am sure that not everyone here knows what this figure signifies. (*General laughter.*) But we do not think that the figure is so very important even from the point of view of economic science, for the noughts can always be crossed out. (*Laughter.*) We have achieved a thing or two in this art, which is likewise of no importance from the economic point of view, and I am sure that in the further course of events we shall achieve much more. But what is really important is the problem of stabilising the ruble. We are now grappling with this problem, our best forces are working on it, and we attach decisive importance to it. If we succeed in stabilising the ruble for a long period, and then for all time, it will prove that we have won. In that case all these astronomical figures, these trillions and quadrillions, will not have mattered in the least. We shall then be able to

place our economy on a firm basis, and develop it further on a firm basis. On this question I think I can cite some fairly important and decisive data. In 1921 the rate of exchange of the paper ruble remained stable for a period of less than three months. This year, 1922, which has not yet drawn to a close, the rate remained stable for a period of over five months. I think that this proof is sufficient. Of course, if you demand scientific proof that we shall definitely solve this problem, then it is not sufficient; but in general, I do not think it is possible to prove this entirely and conclusively. The data I have cited show that between last year, when we started on the New Economic Policy, and the present day, we have already learned to make progress. Since we have learned to do this, I am sure we shall learn to achieve further successes along this road, provided we avoid doing anything very foolish. The most important thing, however, is trade, namely, the circulation of commodities, which is essential for us. And since we have successfully coped with this problem for two years, in spite of having been in a state of war (for, as you know, Vladivostok was recaptured only a few weeks ago), and in spite of the fact that only now we are able to proceed with our economic activities in a really systematic way—since we have succeeded in keeping the rate of the paper ruble stable for five months instead of only three months, I think I can say that we have grounds to be pleased. After all, we stand alone. We have not received any loans, and are not receiving any now. We have been given no assistance by any of the powerful capitalist countries, which organise their capitalist economy so “brilliantly” that they do not know to this day which way they are going. By the Treaty of Versailles they have created a financial system that they themselves cannot make head or tail of. If these great capitalist countries are managing things in this way, I think that we, backward and uneducated as we are, may be pleased with the fact that we have grasped the most important thing—the conditions for the stabilisation of the ruble. This is proved not by theoretical analysis but by practical experience, which in my opinion is more important than all the theoretical discussions in the world. Practice shows that we have achieved decisive results in that field, namely, we are beginning to push our economy towards the stabilisation of the ruble, which is of supreme importance for trade, for the free circulation



Lenin in his study in the Kremlin

of commodities, for the peasants, and for the vast masses of small producers.

Now I come to our social objectives. The most important factor, of course, is the peasantry. In 1921 discontent undoubtedly prevailed among a vast section of the peasantry. Then there was the famine. This was the severest trial for the peasants. Naturally, all our enemies abroad shouted: "There, that's the result of socialist economy!" Quite naturally, of course, they said nothing about the famine actually being the terrible result of the Civil War. All the landowners and capitalists who had begun their offensive against us in 1918 tried to make out that the famine was the result of socialist economy. The famine was indeed a great and grave disaster which threatened to nullify the results of all our organisational and revolutionary efforts.

And so, I ask now, after this unprecedented and unexpected disaster, what is the position today, after we have introduced the New Economic Policy, after we have granted the peasants freedom to trade? The answer is clear and obvious to everyone; in one year the peasants have not only got over the famine, but have paid so much tax in kind that we have already received hundreds of millions of poods of grain, and that almost without employing any measures of coercion. Peasant uprisings, which previously, before 1921, were, so to speak, a common occurrence in Russia, have almost completely ceased. The peasants are satisfied with their present position. We can confidently assert that. We think that this evidence is more important than any amount of statistical proof. Nobody questions the fact that the peasants are a decisive factor in our country. And the position of the peasantry is now such that we have no reason to fear any movement against us from that quarter. We say that quite consciously, without exaggeration. This we have already achieved. The peasantry may be dissatisfied with one aspect or another of the work of our authorities. They may complain about this. That is possible, of course, and inevitable, because our machinery of state and our state-operated economy are still too inefficient to avert it; but any serious dissatisfaction with us on the part of the peasantry as a whole is quite out of the question. This has been achieved in the course of one year. I think that is already quite a lot.

Now I come to our light industry. In industry we have to make a distinction between heavy and light industry because the situation in them is different. As regards light industry, I can safely say that there is a general revival. I shall not go into details. I did not set out to quote a lot of statistics. But this general impression is based on facts, and I can assure you that it is not based on anything untrue or inaccurate. There is a general revival in light industry, and, as a result, a definite improvement in the conditions of the workers in Petrograd and Moscow. In other districts this is observed to a lesser degree, because heavy industry predominates in them. So this does not apply generally. Nevertheless, I repeat, light industry is undoubtedly on the upgrade, and the conditions of the workers in Petrograd and Moscow have unquestionably improved. In the spring of 1921 there was discontent among the workers in both these cities. That is definitely not the case now. We, who watch the conditions and mood of the workers from day to day, make no mistake on that score.

The third question is that of heavy industry. I must say that the situation here is still grave. Some turn for the better occurred in 1921-22, so that we may hope that the situation will improve in the near future. We have already gathered some of the resources necessary for this. In a capitalist country a loan of hundreds of millions would be required to improve the situation in heavy industry. No improvement would be possible without it. The economic history of the capitalist countries shows that heavy industry in backward countries can only be developed with the aid of long-term loans of hundreds of millions of dollars or gold rubles. We did not get such loans, and so far have received nothing. All that is now being written about concessions and so forth is not worth much more than the paper it is written on. We have written a great deal about this lately and in particular about the Urquhart concession. Yet I think our concessions policy is a very good one. However, we have not concluded a single profitable concession agreement so far. I ask you to bear that in mind. Thus, the situation in heavy industry is really a very grave problem for our backward country, because we cannot count on loans from the wealthy countries. In spite of that, we see a tangible improvement, and we also see that our trading has brought

us some capital. True, it is only a very modest sum as yet—a little over twenty million gold rubles. At any rate, a beginning has been made; our trade is providing us with funds which we can employ for improving the situation in heavy industry. At the present moment, however, our heavy industry is still in great difficulties. But I think that the decisive circumstance is that we are already in a position to save a little. And we shall go on saving. We must economise now though it is often at the expense of the population. We are trying to reduce the state budget, to reduce staffs in our government offices. Later on, I shall have a few words to say about our state apparatus. At all events, we must reduce it. We must economise as much as possible. We are economising in all things, even in schools. We must do this, because we know that unless we save heavy industry, unless we restore it, we shall not be able to build up an industry at all; and without an industry we shall go under as an independent country. We realise this very well.

The salvation of Russia lies not only in a good harvest on the peasant farms—that is not enough; and not only in the good condition of light industry, which provides the peasantry with consumer goods—this, too, is not enough; we also need *heavy* industry. And to put it in a good condition will require several years of work.

Heavy industry needs state subsidies. If we are not able to provide them, we shall be doomed as a civilised state, let alone as a socialist state. In this respect, we have taken a determined step. We have begun to accumulate the funds that we need to put heavy industry on its feet. True, the sum we have obtained so far barely exceeds twenty million gold rubles; but at any rate this sum is available, and it is earmarked exclusively for the purpose of reviving our heavy industry.

I think that, on the whole, I have, as I have promised, briefly outlined the principal elements of our economy, and feel that we may draw the conclusion from all this that the New Economic Policy has already yielded dividends. We already have proof that, as a state, we are able to trade, to maintain our strong positions in agriculture and industry, and to make progress. Practical activity has proved it. I think this is sufficient for us for the time being. We shall have to learn much, and we have realised that we still have much to learn. We have been in power for

five years, and during these five years we have been in a state of war. Hence, we have been successful.

This is understandable, because the peasantry were on our side. Probably no one could have supported us more than they did. They were aware that the whiteguards had the landowners behind them, and they hate the landowners more than anything in the world. That is why the peasantry supported us with all their enthusiasm and loyalty. It was not difficult to get the peasantry to defend us against the whiteguards. The peasants, who had always hated war, did all they possibly could in the war against the whiteguards, in the Civil War against the landowners. But this was not all, because in substance it was only a matter of whether power would remain in the hands of the landowners or of the peasants. This was not enough for us. The peasants know that we have seized power for the workers and that our aim is to use this power to establish the socialist system. Therefore, the most important thing for us was to lay the economic foundation for socialist economy. We could not do it directly. We had to do it in a roundabout way. The state capitalism that we have introduced in our country is of a special kind. It does not agree with the usual conception of state capitalism. We hold all the key positions. We hold the land; it belongs to the state. This is very important, although our opponents try to make out that it is of no importance at all. That is untrue. The fact that the land belongs to the state is extremely important, and economically it is also of great practical purport. This we have achieved, and I must say that all our future activities should develop only within that framework. We have already succeeded in making the peasantry content and in reviving both industry and trade. I have already said that our state capitalism differs from state capitalism in the literal sense of the term in that our proletarian state not only owns the land, but also all the vital branches of industry. To begin with, we have leased only a certain number of the small and medium plants, but all the rest remain in our hands. As regards trade, I want to re-emphasise that we are trying to found mixed companies, that we are already forming them, i.e., companies in which part of the capital belongs to private capitalists—and foreign capitalists at that—and the other part belongs to the state. Firstly, in this way we are learning how to trade, and that is what we need.

Secondly, we are always in a position to dissolve these companies if we deem it necessary, and do not, therefore, run any risks, so to speak. We are learning from the private capitalist and looking round to see how we can progress, and what mistakes we make. It seems to me that I need say no more.

I should still like to deal with several minor points. Undoubtedly, we have done, and will still do, a host of foolish things. No one can judge and see this better than I. (*Laughter.*) Why do we do these foolish things? The reason is clear: firstly, because we are a backward country; secondly, because education in our country is at a low level; and thirdly, because we are getting no outside assistance. Not a single civilised country is helping us. On the contrary, they are all working against us. Fourthly, our machinery of state is to blame. We took over the old machinery of state, and that was our misfortune. Very often this machinery operates against us. In 1917, after we seized power, the government officials sabotaged us. This frightened us very much and we pleaded: "Please come back." They all came back, but that was our misfortune. We now have a vast army of government employees, but lack sufficiently educated forces to exercise real control over them. In practice it often happens that here at the top, where we exercise political power, the machine functions somehow; but down below government employees have arbitrary control and they often exercise it in such a way as to counteract our measures. At the top, we have, I don't know how many, but at all events, I think, no more than a few thousand, at the outside several tens of thousands of our own people. Down below, however, there are hundreds of thousands of old officials whom we got from the tsar and from bourgeois society and who, partly deliberately and partly unwittingly, work against us. It is clear that nothing can be done in that respect overnight. It will take many years of hard work to improve the machinery, to remodel it, and to enlist new forces. We are doing this fairly quickly, perhaps too quickly. Soviet schools and Workers' Faculties have been formed; a few hundred thousand young people are studying; they are studying too fast perhaps, but at all events, a start has been made, and I think this work will bear fruit. If we do not work too hurriedly we shall, in a few years' time,

have a large body of young people capable of thoroughly overhauling our state apparatus.

I have said that we have done a host of foolish things, but I must also say a word or two in this respect about our enemies. If our enemies blame us and say that Lenin himself admits that the Bolsheviks have done a host of foolish things, I want to reply to this: yes, but you know, the foolish things we have done are nonetheless very different from yours. We have only just begun to learn, but are learning so methodically that we are certain to achieve good results. But since our enemies, i.e., the capitalists and the heroes of the Second International, lay stress on the foolish things we have done, I take the liberty, for the sake of comparison, to cite the words of a celebrated Russian author, which I shall amend to read as follows: if the Bolsheviks do foolish things the Bolshevik says, "Twice two are five", but when their enemies, i.e., the capitalists and the heroes of the Second International, do foolish things, they get, "Twice two make a tallow candle".⁶⁴ That is easily proved. Take, for example, the agreement concluded by the U.S.A., Great Britain, France and Japan with Kolchak. I ask you, are there any more enlightened and more powerful countries in the world? But what has happened? They promised to help Kolchak without calculation, without reflection, and without circumspection. It ended in a fiasco, which, it seems to me, is difficult for the human intellect to grasp.

Or take another example, a closer and more important one: the Treaty of Versailles. I ask you, what have the "great" powers which have "covered themselves with glory" done? How will they find a way out of this chaos and confusion? I don't think it will be an exaggeration to repeat that the foolish things we have done are nothing compared with those done in concert by the capitalist countries, the capitalist world and the Second International. That is why I think that the outlook for the world revolution—a subject which I must touch on briefly—is favourable. And given a certain definite condition, I think it will be even better. I should like to say a few words about this.

At the Third Congress, in 1921, we adopted a resolution on the organisational structure of the Communist Parties and on the methods and content of their activities. The resolution is an excellent one, but it is almost entirely Russian, that is to say, everything in it is based on Russian

conditions. This is its good point, but it is also its failing. It is its failing because I am sure that no foreigner can read it. I have read it again before saying this. In the first place, it is too long, containing fifty or more points. Foreigners are not usually able to read such things. Secondly, even if they read it, they will not understand it because it is too Russian. Not because it is written in Russian—it has been excellently translated into all languages—but because it is thoroughly imbued with the Russian spirit. And thirdly, if by way of exception some foreigner does understand it, he cannot carry it out. This is its third defect. I have talked with a few of the foreign delegates and hope to discuss matters in detail with a large number of delegates from different countries during the Congress, although I shall not take part in its proceedings, for unfortunately it is impossible for me to do that. I have the impression that we made a big mistake with this resolution, namely, that we blocked our own road to further success. As I have said already, the resolution is excellently drafted; I am prepared to subscribe to every one of its fifty or more points. But we have not learnt how to present our Russian experience to foreigners. All that was said in the resolution has remained a dead letter. If we do not realise this, we shall be unable to move ahead. I think that after five years of the Russian revolution the most important thing for all of us, Russian and foreign comrades alike, is to sit down and study. We have only now obtained the opportunity to do so. I do not know how long this opportunity will last. I do not know for how long the capitalist powers will give us the opportunity to study in peace. But we must take advantage of every moment of respite from fighting, from war, to study, and to study from scratch.

The whole Party and all strata of the population of Russia prove this by their thirst for knowledge. This striving to learn shows that our most important task today is to study and to study hard. Our foreign comrades, too, must study. I do not mean that they have to learn to read and write and to understand what they read, as we still have to do. There is a dispute as to whether this concerns proletarian or bourgeois culture. I shall leave that question open. But one thing is certain: we have to begin by learning to read and write and to understand what we read. Foreigners do not need that.

They need something more advanced: first of all, among other things they must learn to understand what we have written about the organisational structure of the Communist Parties, and what the foreign comrades have signed without reading and understanding. This must be their first task. That resolution must be carried out. It cannot be carried out overnight; that is absolutely impossible. The resolution is too Russian, it reflects Russian experience. That is why it is quite unintelligible to foreigners, and they cannot be content with hanging it in a corner like an icon and praying to it. Nothing will be achieved that way. They must assimilate part of the Russian experience. Just how that will be done, I do not know. The fascists in Italy may, for example, render us a great service by showing the Italians that they are not yet sufficiently enlightened and that their country is not yet ensured against the Black Hundreds. Perhaps this will be very useful. We Russians must also find ways and means of explaining the principles of this resolution to the foreigners. Unless we do that, it will be absolutely impossible for them to carry it out. I am sure that in this connection we must tell not only the Russians, but the foreign comrades as well, that the most important thing in the period we are now entering is to study. We are studying in the general sense. They, however, must study in the special sense, in order that they may really understand the organisation, structure, method and content of revolutionary work. If they do that, I am sure the prospects of the world revolution will be not only good, but excellent. (*Stormy, prolonged applause. Shouts of "Long live our Comrade Lenin!" evoke a fresh stormy ovation.*)

Pravda No. 258,
November 15, 1922

Collected Works, Vol. 33,
pp. 418-32

NOTES

¹ The *Spartacus League*—a revolutionary organisation of the German Left-wing Social-Democrats founded after the outbreak of World War I by Karl Liebknecht, Rosa Luxemburg, Franz Mehring and others. The Spartacists carried on revolutionary propaganda among the masses, organised anti-war actions, gave leadership to strikes and exposed the imperialist nature of the war and the treachery of opportunist Social-Democratic leaders.

In April 1917 the Spartacists joined the Centrist Independent Social-Democratic Party of Germany, retaining their organisational independence. In the course of the November 1918 revolution in Germany they broke with the "Independents", and in January 1919 founded the Communist Party of Germany.

p. 10

² *Shop Stewards Committees*—elective working-class organisations that operated in a number of British industries during the First World War. Unlike the compromiser trade unions, which pursued a policy of "class peace", the committees vigorously campaigned against the war, came out in defence of the workers' interests, and resolutely supported Soviet Russia. Many Shop Stewards Committee leaders were later active in the communist movement.

p. 10

³ It is likely that the newspaper which Lenin read contained inaccurate information. Most probably, it is not the Birmingham Workers' Council that is meant here, but the Shop Stewards Committee.

p. 10

⁴ The *Berne Conference*—the first post-war conference of the social-chauvinist and Centrist parties. It was called for the purpose of restoring the Second International and met in Berne from February 3 to February 10, 1919. The main item on its agenda was the question of democracy and dictatorship. In its resolution the conference, after hypocritically greeting the revolutions in Russia, Austria-Hungary and Germany, virtually denounced the dictatorship of the proletariat and extolled bourgeois democracy.

p. 11

⁵ See Karl Marx, *The Civil War in France* (Marx and Engels, *Selected Works* in three volumes, Vol. 2, Moscow, 1969, p. 221).

p. 13

⁶ Lenin refers to the English bourgeois revolution of the middle of the 17th century and the French bourgeois revolution of the late 18th century. p. 14

⁷ The reference is to the countries of the Triple Entente (Britain, France and Russia), the bloc of imperialist powers formed at the beginning of the 20th century in opposition to the Triple Alliance (Germany, Austria-Hungary and Italy). The name Entente derives from the *Entente cordiale* treaty concluded by Britain and France in 1904. p. 16

⁸ The *Independent Social-Democratic Party of Germany*, founded in April 1917. Using Centrist phraseology as a screen the "Independents" preached unity with the social-chauvinists, sinking to a renunciation of the class struggle. Following a split at the party's congress in Halle in October 1920, a considerable group of "Independents" merged with the Communist Party of Germany, while the Rightists formed a party of their own, which took on the old name and existed until 1922. p. 20

⁹ The *Mensheviks* (from the Russian word "*men'shinstvo*"—"minority")—opportunists in Russian Social-Democracy known under this name since the Second Congress of the Russian Social-Democratic Labour Party (1903), where they found themselves in the minority in the election of the Party's central bodies, the majority going to the revolutionary Social-Democrats, headed by Lenin, who came to be known as the *Bolsheviks* (from the Russian word "*bol'shinstvo*"—"majority"). Until the Prague Conference of the R.S.D.L.P. in 1912 the Bolsheviks and the Mensheviks nominally remained in one party. p. 21

¹⁰ The *Socialist-Revolutionaries*—a petty-bourgeois party in Russia formed in late 1901-early 1902. During the First World War (1914-18) most Socialist-Revolutionaries adopted a social-chauvinist stand.

After the February 1917 bourgeois-democratic revolution the Socialist-Revolutionaries supported the bourgeois Provisional Government and were represented in it. After the October Socialist Revolution they actively fought against Soviet power.

p. 21

¹¹ Lenin refers to the resolution on changing the name of the Party and the Party programme adopted by the Seventh Congress of the Russian Communist Party (Bolsheviks), held on March 6-8, 1918.

p. 22

¹² Lenin refers to Rosa Luxemburg's article "Der Anfang" (The Beginning) published in the newspaper *Die Rote Fahne* No. 3, November 18, 1918.

Die Rote Fahne (The Red Banner)—central organ of the Spartacists, later central organ of the Communist Party of Germany; published in Berlin from November 9, 1918. p. 26

¹³ This refers to the Decree on Land of October 26 (November 8), 1917, a component of which was the peasants' mandate on the land, formulated on the basis of 242 local mandates. p. 26

¹⁴ The *Treaty of Versailles* was the final act of World War I. It was signed on July 28, 1919, by the U.S.A., Great Britain, France,

Italy and Japan, and the states that had sided with them, on the one hand, and by Germany, which had lost the war, on the other. The treaty sealed the redivision of the capitalist world in favour of the victor powers and imposed enormous reparations on Germany. p. 33

¹⁵ The "*Two-and-a-Half*" International was an international organisation formed in Vienna in February 1921 by a conference of Centrist parties and groups that had left the Second International under pressure from the revolutionary masses. In 1923 the "Two-and-a-Half" International merged with the Second International. p. 39

¹⁶ The reference is to the fourteen-point programme advanced by U.S. President Woodrow Wilson in January 1918 as a basis for a peace settlement between the powers of the Entente and the Austro-German coalition. The programme was designed to weaken the influence exerted on the masses of the warring countries by Lenin's Decree on Peace, which proposed that all nations should conclude an immediate peace without annexations or indemnities.

Wilson's Fourteen Points spoke of restricting armaments, freedom of the seas, establishment of a League of Nations, etc. Most of the points were not realised. p. 39

¹⁷ The *Peace of Brest*—the peace treaty between Soviet Russia and the Austro-German coalition (Germany, Austria-Hungary, Bulgaria and Turkey) signed in Brest-Litovsk on March 3, 1918. Its terms were extremely harsh for Soviet Russia. After the November revolution in Germany, which overthrew the monarchy, the Brest Treaty was annulled. p. 40

¹⁸ The *League of Nations*—an international organisation which existed in the years between the First and the Second World Wars. It was set up in 1919 by the Paris Peace Conference of the victor powers of World War I. p. 41

¹⁹ The *Independent Labour Party of Britain* was a reformist organisation founded in 1893 in the conditions of a revival of the strike struggle and a spreading movement to make the working class independent of the bourgeois parties. From its inception, the I.L.P. took a bourgeois-reformist stand, laying particular stress on parliamentary forms of struggle and parliamentary deals with the Liberal Party. p. 43

²⁰ *Guild Socialists*—a reformist trend in the British trade unions, which arose before the First World War. The Guild Socialists advocated the establishment, on the basis of the existing trade unions, of special associations of producers, "guilds", which were to take over the management of industry. In this way they hoped gradually to build socialist society. After the October Socialist Revolution they stepped up their propaganda, counterposing the "theory" of guild socialism to the ideas of the class struggle and the dictatorship of the proletariat. In the 1920s guild socialism lost all its influence among the British working masses. p. 48

²¹ The *British Socialist Party* was founded in 1911. Owing to its limited membership and feeble ties with the masses, it was sectar-

- ian in character. In April 1916 the B.S.P. annual conference condemned the social-chauvinist elements in the party and they withdrew from it.
- In 1919 the B.S.P. joined the Comintern. It played the key role in the formation of the Communist Party of Great Britain. p. 51
- ²² *Industrial Workers of the World*—a trade union organisation of U.S. workers founded in 1905. It united mainly unskilled and low-paid workers of various trades. I.W.W. organisations were also set up in Canada, Australia, Britain, Latin America and South Africa. The I.W.W. came out against the reformist policy of the leaders of the American Federation of Labour and conducted a number of successful strikes. At the same time it displayed anarcho-syndicalist tendencies, refusing to recognise the political struggle of the proletariat, rejecting the leading role of the party and declining to carry on explanatory work among members of the A.F.L. The I.W.W. leaders turned down the invitation to join the Comintern. Later on the I.W.W. developed into a sectarian organisation and lost its influence among the working class. p. 51
- ²³ The reference is to the reformist *American Federation of Labour* and the *British Labour Party*. p. 51
- ²⁴ In his "Theses on the Fundamental Tasks of the Second Congress of the Communist International" Lenin suggested that the Communist groups of Britain should join the Labour Party while it preserved its character of a federation of all trade union organisations of the working class (see V. I. Lenin, *Collected Works*, Vol. 31, p. 199). p. 51
- ²⁵ Lenin refers to his work "*Left-Wing*" *Communism—an Infantile Disorder*. p. 51
- ²⁶ "The Preliminary Draft Theses on the National and Colonial Questions (For the Second Congress of the Communist International)" were written by Lenin and published on July 14, 1920, in the journal *The Communist International* No. 41. p. 55
- ²⁷ The *Basle Manifesto*—the manifesto adopted by the Extraordinary International Socialist Congress which was held in Basle on November 24-25, 1912. It warned the peoples against the imminent world war and called on the workers of all countries to wage a determined struggle for peace. The Manifesto emphatically condemned the expansionist policy of the imperialist states and urged the socialists of all countries to fight against the oppression of small nations and every manifestation of chauvinism. p. 60
- ²⁸ The *Erfurt Programme*—the programme of the German Social-Democratic Party adopted by its congress in Erfurt in October 1891. It was based on the Marxist thesis that the capitalist mode of production was doomed and would inevitably be replaced by the socialist mode of production. p. 61
- ²⁹ *L'Ordine Nuovo* (New Order)—a weekly newspaper that appeared in Turin from 1919; originally the organ of the Left wing of the Italian Socialist Party, from 1921 the organ of the Communist Party. Directed by Antonio Gramsci and Palmiro Togliatti, it disseminated the ideas of Marxism-Leninism and exposed the con-

ciliatory policy of the I.S.P. leaders. The group of revolutionaries which rallied round *L'Ordine Nuovo* became the leading core of the Italian Communist Party. p. 66

- ³⁰ The bourgeois Provisional Government, which took over in Russia after the February 1917 revolution, announced on March 2 (15) that it would convene a Constituent Assembly. However, the elections to the Assembly were repeatedly postponed, and the government procrastinated with its convocation. It was only convened after the October Socialist Revolution, on January 5, 1918. The vast majority of the people demanded that the Assembly should recognise Soviet power and its decrees on peace and on land. Since the Assembly, composed largely of representatives of parties that had lost the trust of the people, refused to do so, it was disbanded. p. 69
- ³¹ "*Revolutionary syndicalism*"—a petty-bourgeois semi-anarchist trend that emerged in the working-class movement of some West European countries at the end of the 19th century. The syndicalists denied the need for political struggle by the working class and for the dictatorship of the proletariat. They held that the trade unions (the syndicates) could destroy capitalism and take over control of production without a revolution, merely by organising a general strike of the workers. p. 69
- ³² After Lenin's speech, the majority of the Congress (58 votes to 24, with 2 abstentions) voted for the affiliation of the British Communist Party to the Labour Party. However, the Labour leaders refused to grant membership to the Communist Party. p. 72
- ³³ On April 13, 1919, British troops fired on a mass workers' rally in Amritsar, an important industrial centre of the Punjab, killing nearly 1,000 and wounding about 2,000. p. 83
- ³⁴ Lenin refers to the GOELRO plan (State Plan for the Electrification of Russia). p. 87
- ³⁵ *Cadet (Constitutional-Democratic) Party*—the leading party of the Russian liberal-monarchist bourgeoisie formed in October 1905. The Cadets favoured a constitutional monarchy. After the October Socialist Revolution, they took part in all the armed counter-revolutionary actions and interventionist campaigns against Soviet power; after the defeat of the interventionists and the whiteguards, the Constitutional-Democrats continued their anti-Soviet activity abroad. p. 88
- ³⁶ The reference is to the counter-revolutionary mutiny raised by the Socialist-Revolutionaries, Mensheviks and whiteguards in Kronstadt on February 28, 1921. Not daring to challenge the Soviet system openly, the counter-revolutionaries put up the slogan "Soviets without Communists", hoping thus to oust the Communists from the leadership of the Soviets, destroy the Soviet system and restore capitalism. The revolt was suppressed on March 18. p. 88
- ³⁷ *Posledniye Novosti* (The Latest News)—a white-émigré daily, organ of the Constitutional-Democrats, published in Paris from April 1920 to July 1940. p. 88

- ³⁸ The Italian question was submitted to the Third Congress of the Comintern in connection with a protest by the Italian Socialist Party against the decision of the Comintern Executive Committee to expel it from the Comintern and to recognise the Communist Party as the only section of the Comintern in Italy. Having challenged this decision, the I.S.P. sent a delegation, consisting of Constantino Lazzari, Fabrizio Maffi and E. Riboldi, to the Third Congress. On June 29, 1921, the Congress adopted the following decision: "Until the Italian Socialist Party expels from its ranks the participants in the reformist conference in Reggio Emilia and their supporters, it cannot belong to the Communist International..." This decision was not complied with. p. 90
- ³⁹ This refers to the conference of the reformist wing of the Italian Socialist Party held in Reggio Emilia on October 10-11, 1920. The conference refused to unconditionally endorse the 21 terms of admission to the Comintern and adopted a resolution rejecting the revolutionary conquest of power and the establishment of the dictatorship of the proletariat and Soviet government. p. 90
- ⁴⁰ *Avanti!* (Forward!)—a daily, central organ of the I.S.P.; has appeared since 1896. p. 90
- ⁴¹ Lenin apparently refers to the conference of the "unitary" faction of the I.S.P. (Giacinto Serrati, Adelchi Baratonio and others) held in Florence on November 20-21, 1920. The conference declared against a break with the reformists and for the endorsement, with this reservation, of the 21 terms of admission to the Communist International. p. 91
- ⁴² In January 1919 a spontaneous demonstration of Berlin workers grew into a general strike, and then into an armed uprising for the overthrow of the bourgeois government of Philipp Scheidemann. The Berlin workers were supported by the workers of the Rhine, Ruhr and other areas.
Frightened by the vast scope of the movement, the Central Committee of the Independent Social-Democratic Party of Germany entered into negotiations with the government, thus giving it the time needed to prepare a counter-revolutionary offensive. The workers' uprising was brutally suppressed. p. 91
- ⁴³ The Seventeenth Congress of the Italian Socialist Party was held in Leghorn in January 1921. The Centrists, who had the majority, refused to break with the reformists and fully recognise the terms of admission to the Comintern. The Left-wing delegates walked out of the Congress and founded the Italian Communist Party. p. 92
- ⁴⁴ In September 1920, during a conflict between the steel-workers' union and the industrialists' association of Italy, the workers occupied a number of enterprises. The movement spilt over to other industries and spread throughout the country. Yet the reformist union leaders took steps to keep it within trade union limits and not to allow it to develop into a revolution. They decided to enter into negotiations with the industrialists, as a result of which the revolutionary struggle of the Italian workers subsided. p. 93
- ⁴⁵ This refers to the socialist conferences held in Switzerland during the First World War, in 1915 and 1916. They were marked by a struggle between the Centrists, opposed to a definitive rupture with the social-chauvinists, who openly supported their governments, and the Left, revolutionary wing of the socialist parties. p. 93
- ⁴⁶ This refers to amendments by the German, Austrian and Italian delegations to the draft theses on tactics submitted to the Third Congress of the Comintern by the Russian delegation. p. 96
- ⁴⁷ The theses on the tactics of the Comintern were drawn up by Karl Radek. p. 96
- ⁴⁸ The *German Communist Workers' Party (G.C.W.P.)* was formed in April 1920 by "Left-wing" Communists expelled from the Communist Party of Germany. It was a sectarian organisation pursuing a splitting policy in the German communist movement. Subsequently it lost all its influence among the German working class. p. 97
- ⁴⁹ This refers to the "Open Letter" addressed by the Central Committee of the United Communist Party of Germany to the Socialist Party, the Independent Social-Democratic Party, the Communist Workers' Party and all the trade union organisations of Germany. It called on all workers', trade union and socialist organisations jointly to resist the rise of reaction and the onslaught of capital on the vital rights of the working people. However, the leaders of the organisations concerned rejected joint action with the Communists. p. 98
- ⁵⁰ The proponents of the "theory of an offensive struggle", or the "theory of the offensive", which emerged in Germany in 1920, held that the Party must always pursue a tactic of the offensive, irrespective of whether the objective conditions necessary for revolutionary action existed or not, of whether the working masses supported the Party or not. The "theory of the offensive" had supporters also among the "Leftists" of Hungary, Czechoslovakia, Italy and Austria. The Third Congress of the Comintern condemned this adventurist policy, counterposing to it the Leninist tactic of patient preparation for the revolution. p. 99
- ⁵¹ *Left Socialist-Revolutionaries*—the Left wing of the Socialist-Revolutionary Party (see Note 10), which in November 1917 formed a party of their own. After the October Revolution, they entered into an alliance with the Bolsheviks and were included in the government; however, already in July 1918 they broke off the alliance, raising an armed revolt against Soviet power and waging an open struggle against the Soviet state. p. 100
- ⁵² The reference is to the armed struggle of the German proletariat in March 1921. It was provoked by the government, which wanted a premature, unprepared uprising in order to smash the revolutionary organisations of the working class. Despite the workers' heroic struggle, the uprising was put down. p. 101
- ⁵³ The Decree on Land, of October 26 (November 8), 1917, and the Basic Law on the Socialisation of the Land, of January 18 (31),

1918, provided for an equitable distribution of land ("in conformity with a labour standard and a subsistence standard"), as demanded by the peasants and called for by the programme of the Socialist-Revolutionaries.
p. 101

⁵⁴ This refers to the Russian bourgeois-democratic revolutions of 1905-07 and of February 1917 and the October Socialist Revolution of 1917.
p. 103

⁵⁵ Lenin refers to the strike of the British miners in April 1921.
p. 104

⁵⁶ On May 26, 1921, the whiteguards, supported by the Japanese interventionists, established a regime of bourgeois dictatorship and terror in the Maritime Territory. It lasted until the end of 1922.
p. 107

⁵⁷ *Vorwärts* (Forward)—a newspaper published in Reichenberg from May 1911 as the organ of the Austrian Left-wing Social-Democrats; from 1921 the organ of the German branch of the Communist Party of Czechoslovakia.
p. 116

⁵⁸ Lenin refers to the All-German National Assembly which met in Frankfurt in 1848-49.
p. 121

⁵⁹ The reference is to the counter-revolutionary Kronstadt mutiny of March 1921 (see Note 36).
p. 122

⁶⁰ Lenin refers to his return from emigration in March 1917.
p. 124

⁶¹ *Blanquists*—the followers of the French revolutionary Louis Auguste Blanqui (1805-1881), heroic fighter against successive reactionary French governments and founder of several secret societies. The Blanquists' weakness lay in their conviction that the revolution could be accomplished by a small group of conspirators, and in their failure to appreciate the need for making the revolutionary movement a movement of the masses.
p. 125

⁶² Lenin is referring to the Note sent by P. N. Milyukov, Foreign Minister of the bourgeois Provisional Government, to the Entente powers assuring them that the people of Russia were eager to carry the war to a victorious conclusion and that the Provisional Government was determined to fulfil its obligations towards the Allies. The Note caused indignation among the working masses, who reacted with a demonstration of protest on April 20-21 (May 3-4), 1917.
p. 125

⁶³ Lenin refers to his article "Left-Wing' Childishness and the Petty-Bourgeois Mentality".
p. 131

⁶⁴ An expression used by Pigasov, a personage from Turgenev's novel *Rudin*. Refusing to credit women with the ability to think logically he maintained: "A man may, for example, say twice two make not four but five or three and a half; but a woman will say that twice two make a tallow candle."
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Adoratsky, U. U. (1878-1945)—noted propagandist of Marxism, scholar, member of the Bolshevik Party from 1904, author of works on the history of Marxism.—89

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Bernstein, Eduard (1850-1932)—leader of the extreme opportunist wing of German Social-Democracy and of the Second International, theorist of revisionism and reformism.—61, 62, 90

Bordiga, Amadeo (b. 1889)—member of the Italian Socialist Party, in which he led a trend approximating to anarchism. From 1919 advocated boycott of the bourgeois parliament, led a faction known as the "boycottist Communists". Was a delegate to the Second Congress of the Comintern, in 1921 took part in the formation of the Italian Communist Party. Pursued a Left-sectarian policy, later adopted Trotskyite positions; was expelled from the Party in 1930.—68, 71, 94

Branting, Karl Hjalmar (1860-1925)—leader of the Social-Democratic Party of Sweden, an opportunist.—20

Braun (Bronski, M. G.) (1882-1941)—Polish Social-Democrat, member of the Bolshevik Party. After the October Revolution, Deputy People's Commissar for Trade and Industry. From 1920 Plenipotentiary and Trade Representative in Austria; later, he took up educational and Party work.—36, 37

Burian, Edmund (1878-1935)—Czech Social-Democrat; in 1911-18, one of the leaders of the "Centralist" trend in Czech Social-Democracy. In 1920

- joined the Communist Party of Czechoslovakia, was a member of its Executive Committee. Was expelled from the Party in 1929 for Right-wing deviation and liquidationism; rejoined the Social-Democratic Party.—128
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- Clausewitz, Karl* (1780-1831)—Prussian general, outstanding military theorist and writer.—127
- Clemenceau, Georges Benjamin* (1841-1929)—French political leader and statesman; in 1917-20, Premier; one of the organizers and inspirers of the armed intervention against Soviet Russia.—39, 41
- Crispien, Arthur* (1875-1946)—leader of the Right wing of the Independent Social-Democratic Party of Germany; opposed adherence to the Comintern.—61-66
- Dittmann, Wilhelm* (1874-1954)—leader of the Right wing of the Independent Social-Democratic Party of Germany; was a non-voting member of the "Independents" delegation to the Second Congress of the International.—61, 66
- Dreyfus, Alfred* (1859-1935)—a Jewish officer of the French General Staff condemned in 1894 to life imprisonment on patently trumped-up charges of high treason. The Dreyfus case was used for whipping up anti-Semitism and mounting an offensive on the republican regime and the democratic liberties. A campaign in his defence conducted by the working class and progressive intellectuals resulted in his being pardoned in 1899, and rehabilitated in 1906.—14
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- Frossard, Louis Oscar* (b. 1889)—French socialist, a founding member of the French Communist Party. In 1923 broke with the communist movement and went over to positions of reformism.—92
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- Gennari, Eggidio* (1876-1942)—noted leader of the Italian working-class movement, one of the founders of the Italian Communist Party.—93
- Gompers, Samuel* (1850-1924)—U.S. trade union leader; founder of the American Federation of Labour and its president until his death. Pursued a policy of class collaboration with the capitalists.—51
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- Hilferding, Rudolf* (1877-1941)—an opportunist leader of German Social-Democracy and the Second International. Opposed Soviet power and the dictatorship of the proletariat.—22, 25
- Hölz, Max* (1889-1933)—German Left Communist. During the March 1921 uprising, he directed the armed struggle of the workers in Central Germany, for which he was sentenced to life imprisonment.—101
- Kapp, Wolfgang* (1858-1922)—representative of the reactionary German landed aristocracy; in March 1920 headed the abortive counter-revolutionary military-monarchist coup.—64
- Kautsky, Karl* (1854-1938)—one of the leaders of German Social-Democracy and of the Second International, originally a Marxist, later a renegade, ideologist of Centristism—a most dangerous and pernicious brand of opportunism.—22, 25, 61, 62, 63, 64, 65, 116, 122
- Kerensky, A. F.* (1881-1970)—a Socialist-Revolutionary; after the February 1917 bourgeois-democratic revolution he headed the bourgeois Provisional Government. After the October Socialist Revolution, fought against Soviet power.—27, 43, 44, 46, 47, 68
- Keynes, John Maynard* (1883-1946)—British bourgeois economist; author of works sharply criticising the economic insolvency of the system established under the imperialist Versailles peace.—34-36, 38-40
- Kolchak, A. V.* (1873-1920)—monarchist, one of the principal leaders of the Russian counter-revolution, headed the military bourgeois-landowner dictatorship in Siberia and the Far East.—142
- Krasin, L. B.* (1870-1926)—Soviet statesman and diplomat; in 1922-24, People's Commissar of Foreign Trade.—35
- Kreibich, Karel* (b. 1883)—noted leader of the Czechoslovak and international communist movement. Founding member of the Communist Party of Czechoslovakia.—127
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- Lapinsky, P. L.* (Levinson J.) (1879-1937)—Polish Communist; economist and publicist, author of works on world economics and politics; actively contributed to the Soviet, Polish and German Communist press.—38
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- Levi, Paul* (1883-1930)—German Social-Democrat, later a Communist. Was expelled from the C.P.G. in 1921 for a gross breach of Party discipline. Rejoined the Social-Democratic Party.—35, 38, 101
- Liebknecht, Karl* (1871-1919)—outstanding leader of the German and international working-class movement, active fighter against opportunism and militarism. One of the founders of the Communist Party of Germany and leader of the January 1919 uprising of Berlin workers. After the suppression of the uprising he was arrested and brutally murdered by counter-revolutionaries.—9, 16, 64
- Linde, F. F.* (1881-1917)—a member of the Executive Committee of the Petrograd Soviet of Workers' and Soldiers' Deputies; participated in soldiers' demonstrations in April 1917. Later on, commissar of the bourgeois Provisional Government on the South-

- western Front, where he was killed while attempting to persuade soldiers to go into battle.—125
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- Luxemburg, Rosa* (1871-1919)—outstanding leader of the international working-class movement and of the Communist Party of Germany. Was arrested and brutally murdered by counter-revolutionaries in January 1919.—9, 16, 64
- Lysis (Letailleur), Eugène*—French economist, author of works on finance and politics.—32
- MacDonald, James Ramsey* (1866-1937)—British politician, leader of the Independent Labour Party and of the Labour Party. Pursued an extremely opportunist policy, preached class collaboration and the gradual evolution of capitalism into socialism.—43, 45, 62, 72, 73
- McLaine, William* (1891-1960)—British socialist and trade union leader. In the 1920s, a member of the Communist Party, from which he resigned in 1929. Advocating Communists' affiliation to the Labour Party, played down the reactionariness of the Labour leaders.—50-52, 75
- Maring, Henrik* (1883-1942)—Dutch Social-Democrat; in 1913-19, lived in Java, where he joined the Communist parties of Java and the Netherlands. In 1921-23, representative of the Executive Committee of the Communist International for the countries of the Far East. Later a Trotskyite.—55
- Marx, Karl* (1818-1883)—founder of scientific communism, great thinker, leader and teacher of the world proletariat.—12, 15, 20, 89
- Milyukov, P. N.* (1859-1943)—ideologist of the Russian imperialist bourgeoisie, leader of Constitutional - Democratic Party, historian and publicist. White émigré leader.—88, 89, 122, 125
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- Münzenberg, Wilhelm* (1889-1940)—a leader of the Swiss and German labour movement; in 1919-21, secretary of the Communist Youth International; member of the Communist Party of Germany.—65, 66
- Noske, Gustav* (1868-1946)—opportunist leader of the German Social - Democratic Party. In 1919-20, War Minister, organiser of the bloody suppression of the Berlin workers and the assassination of Karl Liebknecht and Rosa Luxemburg.—73, 75
- Obolensky, V. V. (Osinsky, N.)* (1887-1938)—member of the Bolshevik Party from 1907, publicist; held high administrative and economic posts. Delegate to the First Congress of the Comintern.—24
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- Pankhurst, Sylvia Estella* (1882-1960)—ultra-Left British socialist.—73-77
- Pannekoek, Anton* (1873-1960)—Dutch Social-Democrat. In 1918-21, a member of the Netherlands Communist Party; maintained an ultra-Left, sectarian position. In 1924 resigned from the Party and retired from politics.—65
- Platten, Frederick* (1883-1942)—Swiss Left-wing Social-Democrat, later a Communist. Took part in the establishment of the Third, Communist International (in 1919), was a member of its Bureau. From 1923 lived in the U.S.S.R.—26
- Plekhanov, G. V.* (1856-1918)—outstanding leader of the Russian and international working-class movement, the first propagandist of Marxism in Russia. From 1903 took a conciliatory attitude towards opportunism; opposed the October Socialist Revolution, considering Russia unripe for a transition to socialism.—61
- Quelch, Thomas* (1886-1954)—British socialist, later a Communist; trade union leader and political writer.—59
- Radek, K. B.* (1885-1939)—Social-Democrat, member of the Bolshevik Party from 1917. After the October Revolution, worked with the People's Commissariat for Foreign Affairs; was a secretary of the Executive Committee of the Comintern. Opposed the Leninist policy of the Party on many occasions; was expelled from the Party (in 1936) for factional activities.—100, 101, 104
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- Roy, Manabendra Nath* (1892-1948)—Indian political leader, delegate to the Second, Third, Fourth and Fifth Congresses of the Comintern. In later years withdrew from the Communist Party.—55, 59
- Scheidemann, Philipp* (1865-1939)—a leader of the extreme Right, opportunist wing of German Social-Democracy. One of the organisers of the brutal suppression of the German workers' movement in 1918-21.—20, 21, 26, 45, 62, 73, 75, 91
- Serrati, Giacinto Menotti* (1872-1926)—noted leader of the Italian working-class movement and of the Socialist Party, editor of its central organ, *Avanti!*; favoured affiliation of the Socialist Party to the Comintern, but opposed an unqualified break with the reformists. In 1924, joined the Communist Party of Italy.—52, 61, 62, 66, 90-94
- Šmeral, Bohumil* (1880-1941)—noted leader of the Czechoslovak and international working-class movement. From 1918 headed the struggle of the Left-wing Social-Democrats for the establishment of a Marxist-Leninist Party of the working class. After the formation of the Communist Party of Czechoslovakia (1921), was a member of its Central Committee. In 1921-29 and from 1935, a member of the Comintern Executive.—116, 127, 128
- Snowden, Philip* (1864-1937)—British political leader; in 1917-20, chairman of the Independent Labour Party; representative of its Right wing.—73
- Suchy, Augustin*—one of the leaders of the German anarcho-syndicalists, a publicist.—69
- Stinnes, Hugo* (1870-1924)—German monopoly magnate, took an active part in the restoration of Germany's military-industrial potential after the First World War.—64
- Tanner, Jack* (b. 1889)—British trade union leader. In 1920-21, a member of the Communist Party; was a delegate to the Second Congress of the Comintern, preached Left-sectarian ideas. Subsequently, an active Labourite.—50, 51, 53
- Terracini, Umberto* (b. 1895)—noted leader of the Italian working class, a founding member of the Italian Communist Party. Took an irrecon-

cilable attitude towards the reformists, committed Left-sectarian errors, which were condemned by Lenin at the Third Congress of the Comintern. At present, a member of the Central Committee of the Italian Communist Party; since 1950, a member of the World Peace Council.—96-99, 102-104, 128

Thomas, Albert (1878-1932)—French political leader, Right-wing Socialist. Was a member of the French government as Minister for Armaments.—47

Thomas, James Henry (1874-1949)—British political and trade union leader, a prominent member of the Labour Party, advocate of class collaboration with the bourgeoisie.—75

Turati, Filippo (1857-1932)—Italian working-class leader, headed the Right, reformist wing of the Socialist Party.—52, 66, 90, 91, 93

Varga, Eugen (1879-1964)—Soviet economist. Up to 1919 lived in Hungary, was a member of the Hungarian Social-Democratic Party, belonged to its Left wing. Held the posts of People's Commissar of Finances and, later, Chairman of the Supreme National Economic Council of the Hungarian Soviet Republic. After the fall of Soviet government in Hungary, emigrated to Soviet Russia.—64

Wijnkoop, David (1877-1941)—Dutch Left-wing Social-Democrat, later a Communist, maintained an ultra-Left sectarian position.—65, 66

Wilson, Thomas Woodrow (1856-1924)—American statesman, U.S. President in 1913-21. Pursued a policy of ruthless suppression of the working-class movement at home, and a rapacious, expansionist policy, camouflaged by talk of peaceableness, abroad.—39, 41

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