

BOLSHEVISM:

Some Questions Answered

By
I. STALIN

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LONDON:
COMMUNIST PARTY OF GREAT BRITAIN
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Paul & Violet O.W.

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Foreword

This pamphlet is a speech made by comrade Stalin at the Communist Sverdlov University, in Moscow, on June 9, 1925. It contains answers to ten questions which were put in written form to comrade Stalin by the students of the Sverdlov University. In his reply, the speaker took the questions in the order they were given him by the students.

The questions are devoted to the tasks of the Comintern and the Russian Communist Party in connection with the temporary stabilisation of capitalism, and the policy of the proletarian State towards the peasantry. Stalin's answers are clear in form and rich in content, and take the reader into a region of strategic and tactical problems of the revolutionary movement, which are decisive for the present period. Therein lies the significance of this booklet for the membership of the Party and for all other advanced workers.

Bolshevism : Some Questions Answered

I.

What measures and what conditions should make it possible to strengthen the alliance of the working class with the peasantry under the proletarian dictatorship, if the Soviet Union should not receive the support of a social revolution of the Western proletariat during the next ten to fifteen years?

I think this question embraces all the other questions that you have presented to me in writing. For this reason my reply will be of a general and, therefore, far from exhaustive nature. Otherwise there will be nothing left to be said in reply to the other questions.

I think that the decisions of the Fourteenth Party Congress give an extensive reply to this question. These decisions assert that the basic guarantee for strengthening the alliance is a correct policy towards the peasantry.

But what is a correct policy towards the peasantry?

This can only mean a number of measures on economic, administrative-political, and cultural-educational lines, guaranteeing the strengthening of this alliance.

Let us begin with the economic field.

First of all, it is necessary to liquidate the relics of Military Communism in the countryside.

Moreover, a correct price policy is essential in regard to manufactured and agricultural products to ensure a rapid growth of industry and agriculture, and the disappearance of the "scissors." Further, we must reduce the proportions of the agricultural tax and gradually transfer it from the general State budget to the local budget. The alliance of the millions of the peasant masses first and foremost through agricultural and credit co-operation is necessary as a means of including peasant economy in the general system of Socialist construction. We must flood the countryside with tractors so as to revolutionise agriculture technically, and as a means of founding cultural centres in the villages. Finally, we must carry out a plan of electrification in order to bring about the rapprochement between the countryside and the town and abolish the existing economic differences between them.

Such is the path that must be taken by the Party if it desires to guarantee the economic alliance between town and village.

I would like to draw your attention to the question of transferring the economic tax from the State budget to the local budgets. This may appear rather strange to you. Nevertheless it is a fact that the agricultural tax is assuming and will certainly assume completely the nature of a local tax. It is well known, for instance, that formerly, about two years ago, the agricultural tax was almost the main item of revenue of our State budget. But what is the position now? Now it is an insignificant part of the State budget. The State budget now represents two and a half milliard roubles, while the agricultural tax can yield this year a maximum of 250-260 million roubles, which is a

hundred million less than last year's total. The more the State budget grows, the smaller the proportion of this amount. Secondly, a hundred millions from this 260 millions agricultural tax is transferred to the local budgets. This constitutes more than one-third of the entire tax. What does this imply? It means that of all the existing taxes the agricultural tax is the one that is nearest to local conditions, the one more adapted than any other for utilisation for local needs. There can hardly be any doubt that the local budget will grow in general, and it is equally certain that it will increase in the first place at the expense of the agricultural tax, which demands the maximum adaptation to local conditions. This is all the more probable since the centre of gravity of the State revenue has begun to shift, and will continue to shift further, into revenue of another nature, such as income from State enterprises, direct taxes, etc.

That is why the transference of the agricultural tax from the State budget to the local budget is not only probable, but may in time also become entirely appropriate from the point of view of strengthening the alliance.

Now let us turn to the measures to be taken for preserving the alliance in the administrative-political field.

If the Party desires to strengthen the alliance in the field of administrative political construction, it must take the following path: It must imbue the town and countryside with Soviet democracy, it must intensify the work of the Soviets by simplifying the State apparatus and making it less costly and morally sounder, it must remove from this apparatus all elements of bureaucracy and bourgeois disintegration, it must secure a complete

rapprochement between the State apparatus and the millions of the masses.

The dictatorship of the proletariat is not an end in itself. This dictatorship is a means to Socialism. And what is Socialism? Socialism is the transition from a society with a proletarian dictatorship to a non-State society. But in order to realise this transition we must prepare this change of the State apparatus in such a direction and in such a way as to enable and guarantee the transformation of the society from dictatorship into the non-State society, the Communist society. And it is just to serve this end that we have the watchword of livening up the Soviets, the watchword of imbuing town and countryside with Soviet democracy, the watchword of adapting the best elements of the working class and the peasantry to the direct government of the country. To reform the State apparatus, to bring it up to date, to throw out all the elements of bureaucracy and disintegration, to make it near and dear to the working masses—all this is impossible without continual and active aid to the State apparatus from the working masses themselves. But the active and uninterrupted aid of the masses is in turn impossible without drawing the best elements of the workers and peasants into the organs of government, establishing direct and indirect connections between the State apparatus and the "lowest" depths of the toiling masses.

What distinguishes the Soviet State apparatus from the apparatus of the bourgeois State?

First and foremost the difference lies in the fact that the bourgeois State apparatus is **over** the masses and in view of this it is removed from the population by an insurmountable barrier, and it is foreign to the masses of the people by its very

spirit—whereas the Soviet State apparatus **merges** with the masses, for, if it wants to preserve its existence as a Soviet State apparatus, it must not and cannot be **over** the masses. Furthermore, if it really wants to embrace the millions of the toiling masses, it cannot be foreign to these masses. Therein lies one of the principal differences between the Soviet State apparatus and the apparatus of the bourgeois State.

Lenin once said in his pamphlet: "Will the Bolsheviks Maintain Power?" that 240,000 members of the Party could undoubtedly govern the country in the interests of the poor against the rich, since they were in no way worse than the 130,000 landowners who governed the country in the interests of the rich against the poor. On the basis of these words some comrades think that the State apparatus can be fully wielded by a few hundred thousand members of the Party and that this is quite enough for the government of this enormous country. In the same manner they are sometimes not loath to identify the Party with the State. This is not correct. This is a distortion of Lenin's thoughts. In speaking of 240,000 members of the Bolshevik Party, Lenin in no way meant to say that the numerical composition and general capacity of the Soviet State apparatus is or could be exhausted by this figure. On the contrary he included in the composition of the State apparatus in addition to the members of the Party also the million votes that were cast for the Bolsheviks on the eve of October, saying that we have means whereby we can multiply by ten our State apparatus at one blow, i. e., whereby we can at any rate bring it up to ten millions by involving the toiling masses in the everyday work of directing the State.

"These 240,000 already have no less than a million votes of the population behind them, for just this proportion of votes to members of the party has been ascertained from the experience in Europe and also in Russia, as, for instance, in the August municipal elections in Petrograd. So here we have already a "governing body" of a million, faithful to the ideal of the Socialist State, and not working merely for the sake of getting on every 20th of the month a considerable bundle of notes.

"Moreover, we have a splendid means of increasing tenfold our apparatus of government—a means which never has been and never could be at the disposal of a capitalist State. It is a very effective expedient: the drawing in of the workers, the poor, to the daily work of managing the State." (Lenin: "Will the Bolsheviks Maintain Power?" Labour Publishing Co., London, 1922. Pages 62-63.)

Well, how are we to bring about this drawing the toilers, the poorest masses, into the everyday work of governing the State?

It will come about through the mass initiative of organisations, all kinds of commissions and committees, conferences and delegate meetings that are created around the Soviets, the economic organs, the factory and workshop committees, the cultural institutions, the Party organisations, the organisations of the Youth Leagues, and all kinds of co-operative unions, and so on. Our comrades sometimes fail to notice that around our lower Party, Soviet, cultural, trade union, educational, Young Communist, Women's Department, and other organisations there are arising entire ant-hills of self-governing organisations, commissions and con-

ferences embracing millions of masses of non-Party workers and peasants—ant-hills which, by their everyday unperceived minute and noiseless work, are creating the source of strength of the Soviet State. Without these millions of organisations encompassing our Soviet and Party organs the existence and development of the Soviet power, the guiding and government of this vast country, would be absolutely unthinkable. The Soviet State apparatus is not only composed of the Soviets. The Soviet State apparatus in the deep sense of the word is composed of the Soviets plus the millions of organisations of all and sundry non-Party and Party groupings, uniting the Soviets with the “lowest” depths, merging the State apparatus with the millions of the masses and step by step abolishing any barrier between the State apparatus and the population.

That is how we must endeavour to “multiply by ten” our State apparatus, making it near and dear to the millions of the toiling masses, throwing out the relics of bureaucracy, merging it with the masses and preparing this very same transition from a society with the proletarian dictatorship into a non-State society, into Communist society.

Such is the idea and the significance of the watchword of livening up the work of the Soviets and ingraining Soviet democracy. Such are the chief means of strengthening the contact required in the field of the administrative-political work of the Party.

There is no necessity to dwell very long on the measures necessary for guaranteeing contacts in the field of cultural educational work, for these measures are quite clear, quite well known, and, therefore need no clarification. I would like only

to outline the main line of work in this field for the coming period. This fundamental policy amounts to preparing the conditions necessary for carrying through compulsory elementary education throughout the whole country, throughout the whole union. This is a tremendous reform. By carrying it out we shall be achieving a colossal victory, not only on the cultural but also on the political and economic fronts. This reform should serve as the basis for an enormous awakening in the country, but it will cost hundreds of thousands of roubles. It is sufficient to point out that to carry through this reform a large army of very nearly half a million teachers will be required. But if we really are thinking of raising the country to a higher degree of culture we must guarantee this reform in the coming period in spite of every obstacle. And we will do this without the slightest doubt.

That is the reply to the first question.

Now let us take the second question.

II.

With what dangers of degeneration is our Party faced from the stabilisation of capitalism, if this stabilisation should last a long time?

Do these dangers exist in general?

Such dangers, as possible dangers and also as real dangers, do exist; they exist in our country irrespective of any stabilisation. Stabilisation only makes them all the more palpable. If we take the most important of these dangers, I think there are three:

(a) The danger of losing the Socialist perspectives of the construction of our country, and the "liquidation" tendency connected therewith;

(b) The danger of losing the international revolutionary perspective and the nationalism therein involved;

(c) The danger of the decline in the Party leadership and the possibility of the transformation of the Party into an appendage of the State apparatus.

Let us begin with the first danger.

A characteristic feature of this danger is mistrust in the internal forces of our revolution, lack of faith in the cause of a union of the workers and peasants; lack of faith in the leading role of the working class within this alliance; lack of trust in the work of transforming "NEP Russia" into "Socialist Russia"; lack of faith in the victory of Socialist construction in our country.

This is a part of degeneration, for it leads to the

destruction of the fundamentals and of the aims of the October revolution, and to the decay of the proletarian State in the form of a bourgeois democratic State.

The source of such a "frame of mind" as this, the soil on which it has flourished within the Party is the strengthening of the bourgeois influence on the Party, under conditions of a desperate struggle of the capitalist and Socialist enemies within our national structure. The capitalist elements are not only waging the struggle in the economic field, they are also trying to carry the struggle into the ideological field of the proletariat, trying to poison the less stable elements of the Party with a mistrust in the work of Socialist construction, and with a sceptical attitude towards the Socialist perspectives of our constructional work, and in this respect one cannot say that their endeavours have remained absolutely sterile.

"How can such a backward country as ours construct a real Socialist society?" asks one of these infected "Communists." "The position of the productive forces of our country does not enable us to present ourselves with such Utopian aims; for goodness sake let us just hold on and build up somehow or other, and then we shall see what will happen. . . ."

"We have already fulfilled our revolutionary mission by realising the October revolution"—others say—"and now everything depends upon the international revolution, since we cannot build up Socialism without the victory first of the proletariat of the West, and, strictly speaking, there is nothing more for a revolutionary in Russia to do. . . ." It is a well-known fact that in 1923, on the eve of the German revolution, some of our

young students were ready to throw down their books and go to Germany, saying that there was nothing left for a revolutionary to do in Russia, and that they must throw down their books and go to Germany in order to make the revolution.

As you perceive, both these groups of "Communists," both the first and second, adopt the standpoint of denying the Socialist possibilities of our construction, the standpoint of "liquidationism." The difference between them is that the first cloak their liquidationism with the "learned" "Theory of productive forces" (it was not in vain that a few days ago Miliukoff praised them in his "Poslednie Novosti" as being "serious Marxists") while the second group mask it under their left and "terrible revolutionary" phrases about the world revolution.

Indeed, even if we assume that it were true that there was nothing left for a revolutionary to do in Russia, even if we concur in the fact that it is senseless and impossible to construct Socialism in our country before the victory of Socialism in other countries; even if we admit that the victory of Socialism in the advanced countries will be delayed yet another ten to twenty years—can we suppose under such conditions, that the capitalist element of our economy, operating in the conditions of the capitalist environment of our country, will agree to abandoning the death struggle with the social elements of this economy and will await the victory of world revolution with folded arms? It is worth while presenting this question in order to understand the entire absurdity of this supposition. But if this supposition is excluded, what remains for our "serious Marxists" and "terrible revolutionaries" to do? It is evident that there is but one thing left for them to do: they must aban-

don their lonely path, and become regenerated as ordinary bourgeois democrats.

One thing or the other: **either** we will regard our country as a basis for the world revolution, and have, as Lenin said, all the given factors for the construction of a complete Socialist society, and then we can and must build such a society, counting upon the complete victory of our national economy over the capitalist elements: **or** we do not consider our country as the base of the world revolution, we have not the given factors for the construction of Socialism, we are unable to construct a Socialist society, and then in case of a delay in the victory of Socialism in other countries, we must be reconciled to the fact that the capitalist elements of our national economy will rise to the top, the Soviet regime will decay, the Party will degenerate.

That is why mistrust in the Socialist possibilities of our construction leads to liquidationism and degeneration.

That is why the struggle against the danger of liquidationism is the main task of our Party, particularly at the present time, during the conditions of a temporary stabilisation of capitalism.

Now let us turn to the second danger.

The characteristic picture of this danger is mistrust in the international proletarian revolution: lack of faith in its victory; a sceptical attitude towards the national liberation movement in the colonies and dependencies; a failure to understand the fact that our country will not be able to resist world imperialism without support on the part of the revolutionary movement of other countries; the failure to understand that the victory of Socialism in one country cannot be final, since

it must be guaranteed against intervention until such time as the revolution shall be victorious in at least a number of other countries; a failure to understand that elementary demand of internationalism, by dint of which the victory of Socialism in one country is not an aim in itself, but is the means whereby the revolution in all countries can be developed and supported.

This is the path of nationalism and degeneration, it is the path of complete liquidation of the international policy of the proletariat, for the people who suffer from this disease do not look upon our country as a section of one whole of what we call the world revolutionary movement, but simply as the beginning and the end of this movement, thinking that the interests of all other countries should be sacrificed for the interests of our country.

Support the liberation movement in China? What for? Won't it be dangerous? Won't it bring us into difficulties with other countries? Will it not be better for us to fix up "spheres of interest" in China, jointly with the other "advanced" powers, and get something out of China for our advantage? This would be useful and at the same time not dangerous . . . Support the liberation movement in Germany? Is it worth risking? Would it not be better to come to agreement with the Entente with regard to the Versailles Treaty and make a little for ourselves by way of compensation? . . . Preserve friendship with Persia, Turkey, Afghanistan? Is the game worth the candle? Would it not be better to fix up "spheres of interest" with one or other of the Great Powers? . . . and so on, and so forth.

That is a nationalist "frame of mind" of a new brand, which tries to liquidate the foreign policy

of the October revolution and which harbours the germs of degeneration.

If the source of the first danger, the liquidationist danger, comes from the reinforcement of bourgeois influence on the Party with respect to national policy, and from the struggle of the capitalist and Socialist elements of our national economy, the source of this second danger, the danger of nationalism, we must consider as being the reinforcement of bourgeois influence on the Party in respect to foreign policy, and the struggle of capitalist States with the Proletarian Dictatorship State. One can hardly doubt but that the pressure of capitalist States on our State is tremendous, that our foreign trade workers are not always able to put up a stand against this pressure, and that the danger of complications often creates the temptation to adopt the line of least resistance, the path of nationalism.

On the other hand, it is quite clear that the first victorious country can only preserve the role of standard bearer of the world revolutionary movement on the basis of a consistent internationalism and on the basis of the foreign policy of the October revolution. It is clear that the line of least resistance and the path of nationalism in foreign policy represent the path of isolation and decay of the first victorious country.

That is why the loss of an international revolutionary perspective leads to the danger of nationalism and degeneration.

That is why the struggle with the danger of nationalism in foreign policy is the immediate task of our Party.

Finally, as to the third danger.

The characteristic feature of this danger is the lack of faith in the internal forces of the Party;

lack of faith in the Party leadership; the endeavour of the State apparatus to weaken the Party leadership, and to liberate itself from the latter; the failure to understand that without the guidance of the Party there can be no proletarian dictatorship.

This danger lies in three directions:

First, the classes that are to be led have changed. The workers and peasants are no longer what they were in the period of Military Communism. Formerly the working class was declassed and scattered, while the peasantry was overcome with the fear of the return of the landowners in the event of defeat in the civil war. At the same time the Party, in this period, was the sole concentrated force, guiding military affairs. Now things are different with us. There is no longer any war. It appears that there is no longer a military danger rallying the toiling masses around our Party. The proletariat has recovered and has risen to a higher level both in a cultural and in a material sense; the peasantry also has gone forward and has developed. The political activity of both classes is growing and will continue to grow. Now we can no longer rule in a military fashion. First, the maximum flexibility of direction is necessary. Secondly there must be extraordinary sensitiveness to the demands and needs of the working peasants. Thirdly, we must be able to choose from the Party the best people from among the workers and peasants who have been thrust forward as a result of the development of the political activities of these classes. But as everyone knows, these conditions and qualities are not obtained at once. Therein lies the origin of the discrepancy between the demands presented to the Party and the possibilities the Party disposes of at the present moment. The danger

of weakening the Party leadership, the danger of losing the Party leadership, arise from this same source.

Secondly, during the recent period, during the period of economic development, the apparatus of State and social organisations has grown considerably and become strengthened. Trusts and syndicates, trading and credit institutions, administrative-political and cultural-educational organisations and finally co-operation—all these various forms have grown and extended considerably and have attracted hundreds and thousands of new people, mainly non-Party, into their ranks. But this apparatus not only grows in its composition, it also grows in strength and weight. The more the significance increases, the more will their pressure on the Party be felt, the more insistently will they try to weaken the Party leadership, and the stronger will their resistance to the Party become. A re-grouping of forces is necessary and a reshuffling of the leading people within these apparatus, which will guarantee the leadership of the Party in its new setting. But it is generally known that it is impossible to attain all this at one blow. It is from this that the danger of a rupture between the State apparatus and the Party arises.

Thirdly, the work itself has become more complicated and more varied. I am, of course, talking of our present day constructional work. Both in the countryside and in the town entire branches and sub-branches of work have developed and become complicated, and, in accordance with this, direction has also become more concrete. Formerly it was generally accepted policy to talk about direction "in general." Now direction "in general" is simply an empty phrase, for there is absolutely no

direction in that. Now direction must be concrete and exemplary. The former period produced a type of jack-of-all-trades who had a ready answer for all questions of theory and practice. Now this old type of "know-all" worker must make way for a new type of worker who endeavours to be a specialist in some special branch of work. In order to be able to direct in a proper manner one must know the business, and study it conscientiously, patiently and persistently. One cannot direct affairs in the villages if one does not understand agriculture, if one does not understand co-operation and if one is not acquainted with the price policy and does not know the laws that bear directly on the villages. One cannot direct affairs in the town if one does not understand industry, if one has not studied the life of the workers, if one has not given ear to the demands and needs of the workers, and if one does not understand co-operation, the trade unions and club work. But can all this be attained at once? Unfortunately this is impossible. In order to raise the level of Party directions to the necessary standard, the standard of qualification of the Party workers must be raised first of all. The chief thing that matters is the quality of the worker. But to raise the quality of the Party worker with one swing is no easy matter. The old habits of hasty administration, which unfortunately replace knowledge, are still alive in the Party organisation. Properly speaking this is what explains the fact that the so-called Party leadership sometimes degenerates into a comical accumulation of useless orders, and empty and verbal "direction" which does not move anyone or anything. Therein lies one of the most serious dangers of the weakening and the decline of the Party leadership.

Such are the grounds by which the danger of losing Party leadership leads to disintegration and degeneration of the Party.

Hence a decisive struggle against this danger is the immediate task of our Party.

That is the answer to the second question.

Now let us take the third question.

III.

How to carry on the struggle with the Kulaks without enkindling the class struggle?

I believe this question is confused, and, therefore, incorrectly presented. What class struggle is in question? If it is a question of the class struggle in the countryside in general, then it must be said that the proletariat wages this struggle not only against the kulaks. The contradictions between the proletariat and the peasantry as a whole—what is this if not the class struggle, although it has rather an unusual form? Is it not a fact that the proletariat and peasantry are at the present time two fundamental classes of our society, and that between these two classes differences exist, which, it is true, can be solved and ultimately overcome, but which all the same are contradictions which call forth conflict between these two classes?

If we take into consideration the relations between the town and countryside, between the proletariat and the peasantry, then in my opinion the class struggle in our country is proceeding on three main fronts:

(a) The front in the conflict between the proletariat as a whole (in the person of the State) and the peasantry in connection with the establishment of maximum prices for manufactured goods and agricultural products, in connection with the normalisation of taxation, etc.

(b) The front in the conflict between the proletariat as a whole (in the person of the State) and the kulaks, in connection with the liquidation of

speculative prices for agricultural products, in connection with the transference of the main burden of taxation on to the kulaks, etc.;

(c) The front in the conflict between the poor peasantry, above all the batraks (agricultural labourers), and the kulaks.

You see that these fronts cannot be similar, either by their importance or by the nature of the struggle arising therefrom. Therefore, our attitude towards the forms of the class struggle on these fronts should also be varied.

Let us examine the matter a little closer.

The first front. The proletariat (in the person of the State), taking into consideration the weakness of our industry and the impossibility of receiving loans for this, has established a number of basic measures which can guard it from the competition of foreign industry, and which are able to hasten the development of this industry to the advantage of the whole national economy, including agriculture. These measures are as follows: The monopoly of foreign trade, the agricultural tax, State forms of purchasing agricultural products, the introduction of a planned basis of the development of national economy as a whole. All these measures are based on the nationalisation of the main branches of industry, transport, credits. You all know that these measures resulted as they should have done, that is, they set a limit to the inevitable fall in prices of industrial commodities, and also the inevitable rise in prices of agricultural products. On the other hand, it is clear that the peasantry as a whole, in so far as it purchases industrial products and realises the products of its own agriculture on the market, prefers to receive these commodities at the lowest possible prices, and

to realise its own products at as high prices as possible. In just the same way the peasantry would like to be relieved of the agricultural tax, or at least to have it reduced to an absolute minimum.

Such is the basis of the struggle between the proletariat and the peasantry.

Can the State completely renounce all the main measures mentioned above? No, it cannot. For if these measures were to be renounced at the present moment, it would lead to the collapse of our industry, to the breaking up of the proletariat as a class, and to the transformation of our country into an agrarian colony of the industrially developed capitalist countries; it would lead to the collapse of the entire revolution.

Is the peasantry as a whole interested in the abolition of these fundamental measures of our State? No, that would not be in its interests. For the abolition of these measures at the present time would mean the triumph of the capitalist form of development, a form of development by means of which the impoverishment of the majority of the peasantry is attained in order to enrich a handful of wealthy people, a handful of capitalists. Who wants to insist that the peasantry is interested in its own impoverishment, that it is interested in our country being transformed into a colony, and that it is not deeply interested in the triumph of the Socialist path of development of our national economy?

Such is the basis for the alliance between the proletariat and the peasantry.

Does this mean that our industrial organs, relying on monopoly, force up the prices of industrial commodities to the detriment of the interests of

the basic mass of the peasantry and industry itself? No, it cannot mean that. Such a policy would above all harm industry itself, and prevent the transformation of our industry from a hot-house growth, as it was formerly, into the strong and powerful industry which it ought to be in future. Therein lies the origin of our campaign for lowering prices of manufactured goods and raising the productivity of labour. You know that the success of this campaign has been fairly extensive.

Does this mean, further, that our purchasing organs, relying on monopoly, can gamble with the reduction of prices of agricultural products, making them ruinous for the peasantry, damaging the interests of both the proletariat and the peasantry, to the detriment of the entire national economy? No, we do not mean this. Such a policy would first of all ruin the entire industry, since it would in the first place hinder the supply of agricultural products to the workers, and secondly it would put an end to and disorganise our internal industrial market. Therein lies the origin of our campaign against the so-called "scissors" which as you know has already given favourable results.

Finally, does this mean that our local or central organs, on the basis of the law on the agricultural tax, and using their right to assess taxes, can interpret this law as something indisputable, can go to the extreme of taking to pieces the granaries or taking the roofs off the houses of taxpayers with small means, as was done in certain districts in the Tambov Gubernia? No, this is not what is meant. Such a policy would undermine any confidence the peasant has in the proletariat and the State. Therein lies the origin of the latest measures undertaken by the Party to reduce the agri-

cultural tax, to give this tax a more or less local character, and to put our taxation system generally into order and abolish irregularities that have occurred here and there in connection with tax collecting. You know that these measures have already given the desired results.

Thus we have first a community of interests between the proletariat and the peasantry on fundamental questions; their interest generally in the triumph of the Socialist course of development of national economy; from this source we have the alliance of the working class with the peasantry. Secondly we have the antagonism of interests between the working class and the peasantry on current questions, from which arise the struggles within this alliance, the struggles which by their gravity cover up the community of interests, and which should disappear in the future, when the workers and peasants will no longer be a class, when they will be transformed into toilers in a non-class society. Thirdly we have the ways and means for solving these contradictions between the working class and the peasantry within the bounds of preserving and strengthening the alliance between the workers and peasants in the interests of both these allies. We not only possess these ways and means, but we have already applied them successfully to the complicated NEP measures and the temporary stabilisation of capitalism.

Does it follow from the above that we should enkindle a class struggle on this front? No, it does not. On the contrary. It only follows that we should moderate the struggle on this front by every means at our disposal, regulating it by agreements and mutual concessions, without resorting either to radical measures or collisions. We

are doing this. We have every possibility for so doing since the community of interests here is stronger and more ingrained than the contradiction of interests.

As you see the slogan of Enkindling the Class Struggle is entirely inappropriate to the conditions of struggle on this front.

The second front. The factors in action here are the proletariat (in the form of the Soviet State) and the kulaks. Here the forms of the class struggle are also of a peculiar nature, just as they were in the conditions of struggle on the first front.

With a view to giving the agricultural tax a sharply defined income-tax character, the State places the main burden of this tax on the shoulders of the kulaks. In response to this, the kulaks are trying to wriggle out of it "by hook or crook" and use all their influence in the villages in order to throw the burden of taxation on to the shoulders of the middle and poor peasants. The State endeavours to take measures of an economic nature, destined to establish limited and just prices of agricultural products, fully corresponding with the interests of peasant economy, in the course of the struggle against the high cost of living and for the preservation of the stability of wages. In response to this, the kulaks buy up the products from the poor and middle peasants, collect large reserves, which they store in their granaries, and do not release them for the markets, so as to force up prices of products artificially and bring them up to the level of speculative prices; they release them for market when the time is ripe to harvest wild speculation profits. You know, I presume, that in certain gubernia of our country the kulaks have

been able to force up the price of a pound of wheat to 8 roubles.

Therein lies the cause of the class struggle on this front with its peculiar and more or less hidden forms.

It might seem that the slogan of enkindling the class struggle is quite applicable to the conditions of struggle on this front. But this is not true, it is absolutely untrue. Here, we are also not interested in enkindling the class struggle; for we can and absolutely must pull through here without enkindling this struggle, and all the complications arising therefrom.

We can and must vitalise the work of the Soviets, win over the peasants and organise the poor peasants within the Soviets, so as to obtain tax alleviations for the general masses of the peasantry and a real transference of the main burden of taxation on to the shoulders of the kulaks. You know that measures are being taken in this direction and they have already shown favourable results. We can and must put at the disposal of the State the food reserves necessary for bringing pressure on the food market, so as to be able to intervene when necessary, maintaining prices at a level acceptable by the toilers, and thus undermining the speculative activities of the kulak. You know that this year we used some tens of millions of wheat for this purpose. You must know that in this field we attained quite favourable results, for not only did we manage to maintain low wheat prices in such districts as Leningrad, Moscow, the Donetz Basin, Ivanovo Voznesensk, but, what is more, we also made the kulak capitulate in a number of districts, compelling him to throw on to the market old wheat reserves.

Of course, all this is not entirely dependent upon us; it is quite possible that in certain cases the kulaks themselves enkindle the class struggle, try to bring it to boiling point, try to give it the form of bandit or insurrectionary movements; but when the slogan for igniting the struggle is no longer our slogan but the slogan of the kulaks, then it is a counter-revolutionary slogan. Besides, there is no doubt that the kulak must then feel on his own skin the disadvantages of this slogan directed against the Soviet government.

As you see the slogan of Enkindling the Class Struggle is inappropriate for this second front.

The third front. Here the following factors are in action: the poor peasantry, chiefly the agricultural labourers, on the one hand, with the kulaks on the other. In this struggle the State formally stands aside. As you see this front is not so extensive as the previous fronts. On the other hand the class struggle on this front is quite clear and open, whereas it is hidden or more or less masked in the previous ones. Here it is a question of the direct exploitation of hired or semi-hired labour by the kulak proprietors. Therefore, we cannot deal here with a policy of softening or moderating the struggle. Our task consists in organising the struggle of the poor peasants, and directing this struggle against the kulaks.

Does this not mean that we at the same time are igniting the class struggle? Nothing of the kind. Igniting the struggle would mean not only organising and directing the struggle; it would at the same time mean an artificial stimulus and an intentional kindling of the class struggle. Is there any necessity for these artificial means now that we have the proletarian dictatorship and when the

Party and trade union organisations are operating quite freely in our country? Certainly not.

Therefore, the slogan of Enkindling the Class Struggle is also inappropriate for this third front. As you see, the question of the class struggle in the countryside is not quite so simple as it might seem at a first glance.

Now let us turn to the fourth question.

IV.

**“The Workers’ and Peasants’ Government”—
A practical or merely an agitational slogan?**

I think the formulation of this question is rather incoherent. What does this formulation mean? It would appear that the Party can also give slogans which do not correspond with actuality, but merely serve the end of some sly manœuvre or other, for some reason termed here “agitation.” It would appear that the Party can also issue such slogans as do not and cannot have a scientific basis. Is this true? Of course, it is not true. Such a Party would only deserve to exist for a short time and then disappear afterwards like a soap bubble. Our Party would not then be a Party of the proletariat carrying out a scientific policy, but would be nothing but empty froth on the surface of political events.

Our government is by its very nature, by its programme and by its tactics, a workers’ proletarian, Communist government. There should be no misinterpretation or doubt as to this. Our government cannot have two programmes at the same time—a proletarian one and another; its programme and practical work are proletarian and Communist and in this sense our government is undoubtedly, proletarian and Communist.

Does this mean that our government is not simultaneously a Workers’ and Peasants’ Government? No it does not. Our government, which is proletarian by its programme and by its work, is at

the same time a Workers' and Peasants' Government.

Why is this?

Because the fundamental interests of the main peasant masses completely coincide with the interests of the proletariat.

Because these interests of the peasantry, for this reason, find their full expression in the programme of the proletariat, in the programme of the Soviet Government.

Because the Soviet Government is based on the alliance of the workers and peasants which is being built up on the community of the fundamental interests of these two classes.

Finally, because they enter into the composition of the organs of the government and into the composition of the Soviets together with the workers, peasants also fight against the common enemy, and build up a new life together with the workers and under the leadership of the workers.

That is why the slogan "Workers' and Peasants' Government," is not an empty "agitational" slogan, but a revolutionary slogan of the Socialist proletariat, which has received its scientific basis in the Communist programme.

That is the state of affairs with regard to the fourth question. Now let us turn to the fifth question.

V.

Some comrades interpret our policy towards the peasantry as an extension of democracy for the peasantry and as a modification of the nature of power in the country. Is this interpretation correct?

Do we actually extend democracy in the countryside?

Yes, we do.

Is this a concession to the peasantry?

Undoubtedly it is.

Is this concession very great, and is it in keeping with the constitution of our country?

I do not think this concession is particularly great, and it does not change our constitution by one iota.

In such cases, what do we change, and in what manner is this concession expressed?

We are modifying the practice of our work in the countryside, which is quite unsatisfactory under the new conditions of development.

We have changed the order that has been established in the villages, which was strangling the work of the alliance, and which disturbed our Party work in rallying the peasantry to the proletariat.

A small group of people connected more with the uyezd and gubernia than with the village population has been hitherto governing the villages in quite a number of districts. This state of affairs meant that those directing the villages relied especially on a lead from above, from the uyezds, and least of all did they look to those below them,

the village population. They did not feel themselves responsible to the villages or to voters, but to the uyezds and gubernia, evidently not understanding that "above" and "below" represent one and the same chain and if this chain is broken below the whole chain will fall to pieces. As a result of this we had lack of control, independent management and arbitrariness on the part of the directors on the one hand, and discontent and grumbling in the villages on the other hand. As you know, quite a number of presidents of Executive Committees of rural districts and members of nuclei have gone to prison on this account. Now an end is being put to such a state of affairs in the villages—decisively once and for all.

Up to the present in a number of districts the elections to the Soviets in the countryside were not real elections, but empty bureaucratic procedures dragging in "deputies" by means of different kinds of artfulness and pressure on the part of a narrow group of rulers, fearful of losing their power. As a result of this the Soviets risked being transformed from organs near and dear to the masses into organs foreign to the masses, and the leadership of the peasants on the part of the workers—this fortress of the proletarian dictatorship—risked hanging in the air. You know that the Party, in view of this state of affairs, was compelled to organise new elections to the Soviets, and these re-elections showed that the old electoral practice in a number of districts is a relic of Military Communism, which must be abolished as a harmful practice, a practice rotten through and through. Now an end has been put to such electoral practices in the villages—decisively, once and for all.

Such is the basis of this concession, the basis of the extension of democracy in the villages.

Not only the peasantry needs this concession ; it is none the less necessary for the proletariat, for it strengthens the proletariat, raises its authority in the villages, and strengthens the faith of the peasantry in the proletariat. It is generally known that concessions and compromises in general are mainly destined to strengthen and reinforce the proletariat in the long run.

What are the confines of these concessions at the present moment ?

The confines of these concessions have been outlined by the Fourteenth Conference of the R.C.P.* and the Third Congress of Soviets of the U.S.S.R. These boundaries are not very broad, but restricted within the framework of what I have just said. But this does not mean that they will remain stable for centuries. On the contrary, they will undoubtedly extend in accordance with the growth of our national economy, in proportion to the strengthening of the economic and political power of the proletariat, in proportion to the development of the revolutionary movement in the West and in the East, in proportion to the strengthening of the international position of the Soviet State. Lenin spoke in 1918 about the necessity for "extending the Soviet Constitution over the whole population in proportion with the diminishing resistance on the part of the exploiters." Hence you see this is a question of extending the benefits of the Constitution over the **whole** population, including the bourgeoisie. These words were spoken in March, 1918. From that date till

* Russian Communist Party.

Lenin's death five years elapsed. However, Lenin did not once during that period utter a word about the desirability of realising this conception. Why? Because the time for such an extension had not yet come. But there cannot be the slightest doubt that this time will come some day or other, when the internal and international position of the Soviet State becomes finally strengthened and stabilised.

Therefore, while foreseeing the further extension of democracy in the future, we consider, nevertheless, that at the present moment it is necessary to limit concessions with regard to democracy to the lines sketched by the Fourteenth Conference of the R.C.P. and the Third Congress of Soviets of the U.S.S.R. Do these concessions change the character of power in the country?

No they do not.

Do they bring changes into the system of proletarian dictatorship in the sense that they have a weakening effect?

Not in the slightest degree.

The dictatorship of the proletariat does not become weakened, but only becomes reinforced by the livening up of the Soviets, and by drawing the best people from among the peasantry into the conduct of affairs. The leadership of the proletariat in respect to the peasantry is not only preserved, thanks to this extension of democracy, but acquires yet further force by creating an atmosphere of confidence in the proletariat. That, after all, is the main thing in proletarian dictatorship, when it is a question of the inter-relations of the proletariat and the peasantry in the system of dictatorship.

Those comrades, who assert that a comprehension of the dictatorship of the proletariat has been

fully arrived at by an understanding of force, err. The dictatorship of the proletariat is not only **force** but also **leadership** of the toiling masses of the proletarian classes, and this is also the **construction** of a Socialist economy of a higher form than capitalist economy, with a higher productivity of labour than capitalist economy. The dictatorship of the proletariat is (1) **force with regard to the capitalists and landowners** unlimited by any law; (2) **leadership of the proletariat in respect of the peasantry**; and (3) **construction of Socialism as regards society as a whole**. Not one of these three sides of the dictatorship can be excluded without damage, and without distorting the comprehension of the proletarian dictatorship. Only all these three aspects taken together will give us a complete and finished comprehension of the proletarian dictatorship.

Does the new Party policy with regard to Soviet democracy undermine in any way the system of proletarian dictatorship?

No, it does not. On the contrary, this new policy only improves the state of affairs and reinforces the system of proletarian dictatorship. If it is a question of the element of **force** in the system of dictatorship, and the expression of this force in the Red Army, then we hardly need prove that by ingraining Soviet democracy in the villages, we can only improve the conditions of the Red Army, by rallying it to the Soviet regime, since our army is in the main composed of peasants. If it is a question of the elements of **leadership** in the system of dictatorship, we can hardly doubt but that the slogans for livening up the work of the Soviets will only facilitate this leadership on the part of the proletariat, by strengthening the faith

of the peasants in the working class. If it is a question of the elements of **construction** in the system of dictatorship, one need hardly prove that this new course of the Party can only facilitate the construction of Socialism, since it has been entered on in order to strengthen the alliance with the peasantry and the construction of Socialism is impossible without this alliance.

There is but one conclusion; concessions to the peasantry in the present situation strengthen the proletariat and stabilise its dictatorship, and do not change the character of power in the country by one iota.

That is how the fifth question stands.

Now let us turn to the sixth question.

VI.

Is our Party conceding ground to the Right deviation in the Comintern in connection with the stabilisation of capitalism, and if that is so, is this really a necessary tactical manoeuvre?

This is evidently a question referring to the Czecho-Slovakian Communist Party, and the agreement arrived at with the Smeral and Zapotocky group against the Right elements of this Party.

I do not believe that our Party made any concessions whatsoever to the Right deviation in the Comintern. On the contrary, the entire Enlarged Plenum of the Executive Committee of the Comintern was devoted to isolating the Right elements of the Comintern. Read the Comintern resolution on the Czecho-Slovakian Party, read the resolution on Bolshevisation, and it will not be difficult for you to understand that the Right elements in Communism were the main target of the Comintern.

Hence one should not talk of our Party making concessions to the Right deviations in the Comintern.

Comrades Smeral and Zapotocky are strictly speaking, not Right-wing. They do not support the platform of the Right, the Bruenn platform. It would be more correct to describe them as hesitating between the Left and Right wings with a leaning towards the Right. The peculiarity of their conduct at the Enlarged Executive of the Comintern is that under the pressure of our criticism on the one hand, and under the threat of prospects of a split created by the Right on the other

hand, they this time wavered toward our side, toward the side of the Leninists, and undertook to enter into an alliance with the Leninists against the Right. This undoubtedly is a great credit to them. But do the comrades think that we should not have stretched a hand to meet these hesitators, when they deviated toward the Leninists, when they inclined to the Leninists against the Rights? It would be strange and sad if there were people amongst us who were not able to understand the elementary truths of Bolshevik tactics. After all, has not practice shown that the Comintern policy with regard to the Czecho-Slovakian Communist Party was the only correct policy? Is it not true that comrades Smeral and Zapotocky have offered to fight against the Right in the ranks of the Leninists? Are not the Bruennites in the Czecho-Slovakian Party already isolated?

Of course, one might ask, will this be for long? I certainly do not know whether this will be for long, I do not want to prophesy. In any case, it is clear that while there is a struggle between the Smeralists and the Right there will also be this agreement with the Smeralists, and as soon as the present position of the Smeralists begins to change this agreement with them will no longer hold good. But at present there is no question of this. Now it is a question of the present agreement against the Right, strengthening of the Leninists, giving them **new possibilities** of carrying the waverers with them. That is the main question, and not what new waverings might occur on the part of comrades Smeral and Zapotocky.

There are some people who think that the Leninists are obliged to support every Left shouter and neurasthenic, and that the Leninists are every-

where and in all cases the jurymen of the Left in the Communist ranks. This is not true. We are Left in comparison with the non-Communist Parties of the working class. But we never undertook to be the "most Left of all" as the late Parvus at one time demanded, and for which Lenin rebuked him. Among Communists we are neither Left nor Right—we are simply Leninists. Lenin knew what he was doing when he was fighting on two fronts, both against the Left digression in Communism and against the Right digression. There was a good reason for the theme of one of Lenin's best pamphlets being "Left Wing Communism."

I think that the comrades would not have put the sixth question if they had paid due attention to this latter circumstance.

That is how the sixth question stands.

Now let us turn to the seventh.

VII.

Is there not a danger of encouraging anti-Soviet agitation in the villages in connection with the new peasant policy, due to the weakness of Party organisations in the countryside?

Yes, there is such a danger. One can hardly doubt that the conduct of Soviet elections under the slogan of vitalising the Soviets means freedom for electoral agitation in the localities. Needless to say, the anti-Soviet elements will not miss such a convenient opportunity of pushing through the opened crevice to throw some extra mud at the Soviet regime. In this we scent the danger of anti-Soviet agitation growing and taking root in the countryside. Facts from the election experiences in the Kuban, Siberia and the Ukraine speak eloquently of this. There is no doubt that the weakness of our village organisation in a number of districts increases this danger. There is also no doubt that the interventionist habits of the imperialist powers in turn give an impetus to this increasing danger.

How is this danger nourished; what are its sources?

There are at least two such sources.

First, the anti-Soviet elements have sensed the fact that recently there have been certain changes in the countryside in favour of the kulaks, and that in a number of districts the middle peasants have turned back towards the kulaks. One might think the elections it became an indisputable fact. Therein lies the first and the main foundation of the

danger of the encouragement of anti-Soviet agitation in the countryside.

Secondly, in quite a number of districts our concessions to the peasantry have been interpreted as a sign of our weakness. One might have had doubts as to this before the elections; but after the elections no place for doubt remains. Hence the call of the White Guard elements of the villages: "Squeeze harder!" Therein lies the second main danger of increasing anti-Soviet agitation in the countryside—although this is not so substantial.

Communists should understand above all that the present phase in the countryside is the phase of the struggle for the middle peasants, and that the most important task of the Party in the countryside is to win over the middle peasants to the side of the proletariat. They should understand that without the fulfilment of this task the danger of formulating anti-Soviet agitation will be increased, and the new peasant policy will only bring advantages to the White Guard.

Secondly, Communists should understand that it is only possible to win over the middle peasants on the basis of a new Party policy in connection with the Soviets, co-operation, credit, the agricultural tax, local budgets, etc., and that measures of administrative pressure can only spoil and ruin this work, and that the middle peasant must be convinced of the correctness of our policy only by measures of an economic and political nature, and that we can "get" him only by example and demonstrations.

Communists should understand further that the new policy is being operated not in order to vitalise the anti-Soviet elements, but to vitalise the work of the Soviets and to attract the wide

masses of the peasantry. They should understand that the new policy does not merely not exclude, but pre-supposes, a decisive struggle with the anti-Soviet element; that if the anti-Soviet elements say "squeeze harder," interpreting the concessions to the peasantry as a sign of weakness and using them for counter-revolutionary ends—then we must prove to them without fail that the Soviet regime is powerful, and we must remind them of the prisons which have been expecting them for a long time.

I think that the danger of the encouragement and of the strengthening of anti-Soviet agitation in the countryside will be most certainly uprooted, if only these tasks are mastered and put into operation.

That is how the seventh question stands.

Now let us turn to the eighth.

VIII.

Is there not a danger of non-Party fractions being formed within the Soviets in view of the increased influence of non-Party elements?

One can only speak conditionally about the danger in this case. There is no danger, if the influence of more or less organised non-Party elements grows in places where the influence of the Communists has not yet penetrated. For instance that holds good in reference to the trade unions in towns, and the more or less Soviet non-Party organisations in the countryside. The danger only begins when the non-Party organisations contemplate taking the place of the Party.

Where does this danger spring from?

It is characteristic that in the working class we do not observe such a danger, or at least it is hardly explain this by the fact that in the working class we have a great number of active non-Party workers who rally round our Party, who surround the Party with an atmosphere of confidence, and link up the Party with the millions of the working class masses.

It is not less characteristic that this danger is particularly acute among the peasantry. Why? Because among the peasantry the Party is weak; it has not yet got a large number of active non-Party peasants who could link up the Party with the tens of millions of peasants. But, by the way, nowhere is there such a definite palpable necessity for a non-Party corps of active workers as there is among the peasantry.

There is one way out of it. In order to abolish the danger of a rupture and estrangement of the non-Party peasant masses with the Party, we must create a large body of non-Party active peasants around the Party.

But it is impossible to form this corps of active workers at one blow, or within a couple of months. It can be formed from among the backward masses of the peasantry only in course of time, during the process of work and during the process of vitalising the Soviets and the grafting on of a co-operative form of society. The very approach of the Communist toward the non-Party worker or peasant must be in accordance with this. In order to do this it is necessary for a Communist to treat the non-Party comrades as equals, it is necessary for the Communist to trust the non-Party man as a brother. One cannot demand confidence on the part of the non-Party elements if they only receive distrust in return. Lenin said that the relation between the Partyites and the non-Partyites should be relations of "mutual trust." We must not forget these words of Lenin. The supreme necessity for the preparation of conditions for the creation of a numerous corps of active peasants around the Party is the creation of an atmosphere of mutual trust between Party and non-Party elements.

How are we to create this mutual trust? It certainly will not be done at once or to order. As Lenin says, it can only be created by means of a "mutual trust" between the Party and non-Party forces, by means of mutual examination during the process of everyday practical work. At the time of the first Party cleansing, Party comrades were examined by non-Party workers, and this gave very good results for the Party, by forming around

it an unusual atmosphere of trust. Already at that time Lenin said in respect to this that the lessons of the first Party cleansing, as far as the mutual examination of Party and non-Party workers is concerned, should be extended to all branches of work. I think that it is time that we remembered this advice of Lenin and took the necessary steps to put it into operation. So we see that mutual criticism and mutual examination of Party and non-Party workers during the process of daily practical work, as a means for creating an atmosphere of mutual confidence among them, is the course the Party must take, if it desires to abolish the danger of estranging the millions of non-Party masses from the Party, if it desires to form a corps of non-Party active workers from among the peasantry in connection with its organisations in the countryside.

That is how the eighth question stands.

Let us now turn to the ninth.

IX.

Can we really effect equipment and important extension of the capital of our heavy industry without foreign aid?

We might understand this question in two ways.

Here one has either in view the immediate aid to the Soviet State by credits from the existing capitalist states as an inevitable condition for developing Soviet industry—and to this, one could give one answer in accordance with such a presentation of the question.

Or else one has in view aid to the Soviet State from the proletariat of the West, in future, after it has been victorious, as an inevitable condition for constructing Socialist economy—in which case a different answer would have to be given.

In order to cause no offence, I will try to give a reply to both possible interpretations of this question.

Let us start with the first interpretation.

Can Soviet heavy industry be developed under conditions of capitalist encirclement without credits from abroad?

Yes, this is possible. It will, of course, entail great difficulties, difficult experiences will have to be overcome, but nevertheless we can carry out the industrialisation of our country without credits from abroad, despite all these difficulties.

Up to the present day history has known three different courses of foundation and development of powerful industrial States.

The first path is the path of seizure and robbery

of colonies. England, for instance, developed in this manner, grabbing colonies in all corners of the earth, pumping out of them "surplus capital" to increase its industry during two centuries, becoming eventually "the factory of the world." You know that this path of development is unacceptable to us, for colonial seizure and robbery are incompatible with the very nature of the Soviet order.

The second path is that of military violence and the system of tribute imposed by one country over another. Such was the case for instance, with Germany, which, having beaten France during the period of the Franco-Prussian war and having squeezed out of her a five milliard indemnity, afterwards poured this into its industries. You know that this path of development is also incompatible with the very nature of the Soviet order, since in substance it in no way differs from the first path.

The third path is that of vassal concessions and loans received by capitalistically backward countries from the capitalistically advanced countries. Such, for instance, was the case with Tsarist Russia, which, by giving vassal concessions, and accepting vassal loans from the Western States, plunged by so doing into the pit of a semi-colonial existence. This however did not prevent her from eventually scrambling out on to the path of independent industrial development, but, of course, not without the aid of more or less "successful" wars, and by robbing the neighbouring countries. One need hardly prove that this path is also unacceptable for a Soviet country; we have not shed blood during a three-years' war with the imperialists of all countries for this end. We have not waged this three-years' civil war so that the very

day after the victorious finish we should voluntarily enter upon servitude to imperialism.

It would be incorrect to think that each one of these paths of development is realised in real life in an absolutely pure form, and quite isolated from other paths. In actual fact, these paths, in the history of different States, have often crossed or supplemented one another. An example of this interlacing of paths, for instance, is the history of the United States of America. This fact is explained by the various paths of development, despite all their dissimilarities, having certain common traits associating them more closely and enabling them to be interlaced: first, they all lead to the foundation of **capitalist** industrial States; secondly, they all presuppose an influx of "surplus capital" from outside, received by one means or another as an **inevitable condition** for forming such States. But it would be still more incorrect if, on these grounds, we were to confuse them, and pile them into one heap, without understanding that three paths of development nevertheless imply three different methods of founding industrial capitalist States, and that the special imprint of each of these three paths is laid on the physiognomy of these States.

What is there left for the Soviet State to do, if the old methods of industrialising a country are incompatible with it, and if the influx of fresh capital on conditions other than those of vassalage still remains excluded?

There remains a new path of development, a path not yet fully examined by other countries, a path of developing heavy industry without foreign credits, the path of industrialising the country without the obligatory influx of foreign capital, the path

marked out by Lenin in his article "Better Little and Good."

"We must endeavour," said Lenin, "to construct a State in which the workers would maintain their leadership over the peasantry, and the confidence of the peasants in them, and in which they will eliminate from their social relations, with the greatest possible economy, all traces whatsoever of any kind of superfluity. We must construct our State apparatus with the maximum of economy. . . ." "If we maintain working class leadership over the peasantry, we shall be able, with the greatest possible economy in the management of our State, to secure that the slightest saving may be utilised in developing our large-scale machine industry, in developing electrification. . . ." "Only then," said Lenin further on, "shall we be able to jump across, figuratively speaking, from one horse on to the other, from the peasant, moujik, impoverished horse of an economy calculated on a ruined peasant country—on to a horse which seeks and cannot fail to seek for itself the proletariat, on to the horse of large-scale machine industry, electrification, Volkhovstroy, etc."

That is the path which our country is already beginning to pursue and which it must pass over in order to develop its heavy industry, and develop into the most powerful industrial proletarian State.

As I have already said, this course has not been tried by bourgeois States. But this by no means signifies that it is impossible for a proletarian State. What is impossible or nearly impossible for bourgeois States, is quite possible for a proletarian State. A proletarian State has in

this respect certain advantages which bourgeois States have not or rather could not have. Nationalised industry, nationalised transport and credit, monopolised foreign trade, internal trade regulated by the State, all these are such new sources of "surplus capital" as can be utilised for the development of the industry of our country and such as not one bourgeois State has yet possessed. You know that these new sources and others similar to them are already being utilised by the proletarian regime for the development of our industry. You know that on this path we may already record certain successes of no small importance.

That is why a course of development impossible for bourgeois States is quite possible for a proletarian State despite all its difficulties and trials.

We must note, moreover, that the absence of an influx of capital from without at the present moment, under conditions not conducive to servitude, cannot continue uninterruptedly for ever. Already there has been a certain influx of capital from without into our country. There is scarcely reason to doubt that this influx will increase in proportion with the growth and strengthening of our national economy.

That is how the matter stands in relation to the first interpretation of the question.

Now let us approach the second interpretation of the question.

Is it possible to construct a Socialist economic system in our country without the preliminary victory of Socialism in the most important countries of Europe, and without assistance in technique and equipment on the part of the victorious proletariat of Europe?

Before dealing with this question, which, strictly speaking, I have already replied to at the beginning of this article, I would like to dispel one very widespread misconception in connection with this question. This misconception arises through certain comrades being apt to identify the question of "re-equipping and extending the capital of heavy industry" with the question of constructing a Socialist economic system in our country. Can one agree to such identification? No, it is impossible. Why is this? Because the first question already covers the second in its scope. Because the question of extending capital of industry embraces only a **part** of national economy—industry, whereas the the question of constructing a Socialist economic system includes **the whole** of national economy, i.e., both industry **and** agriculture. Because the problem of constructing Socialism means the problem of the **organisation** of national economy as a whole, the problem of **correct combination** of industry and agriculture, whereas the question of extending industrial capital, strictly speaking, does not even touch this problem. One can quite conceive that industrial capital becomes both re-equipped and extended, but this by no means signifies that thereby the problem of the construction of a Socialist economic system is already solved. Socialist society is a producing-consuming association of workers in industry and agriculture. If, in this association, industry is not bound up with agriculture, which gives raw materials and food products, and which swallows up industrial products, if industry and agriculture do not represent in this manner one national economic whole, no Socialism whatsoever will result therefrom.

Hence the question of the mutual relations between industry and agriculture, the question of the mutual relations between the proletariat and the peasantry is the main question in the problem of constructing a Socialist economic system. For this reason the question of re-equipment and extension of the capital of heavy industry must not be identified with the question of constructing a Socialist economic system.

Is it possible, then, to construct a Socialist economic system in our country without the previous victory of Socialism in other countries, without aid in technique and equipment on the part of the victorious proletariat of the West?

Yes, this is possible. It is not only possible, but is both necessary and inevitable. For we are already building up Socialism, developing nationalised industry and linking it up with agriculture, implanting co-operation in the countryside and including peasant farming in the general system of Soviet development, vitalising the Soviets, and merging the State apparatus with the millions of masses of the population, constructing a new culture and installing a new social order. There is no doubt but that there are colossal difficulties on this path and that we must live through a number of trials. There is no doubt that this work would be radically facilitated if the victory of Socialism in the West hurried to our aid. But, first, the victory of Socialism in the West is not "made" so quickly as we would like, and, secondly, these difficulties can be overcome, and, as everyone knows, we are already overcoming them.

I mentioned all this already at the beginning. I spoke about this before in my speech to the Moscow active workers, and even still earlier in my

“foreword” to the book “On the Road to October.” I said that a denial of the Socialist possibilities of construction in our country amounts to liquidationism, leading to the degeneration of the Party. Surely there is no need to repeat now what has already been said several times before. I, therefore, refer you to Lenin’s works, where you will find adequate material and theses on this subject.

I would only like to say a few more words about the history of the question, and about its significance for the Party at the present juncture.

If we do not count the discussion of 1905-06, the question of the construction of Socialism in one country was first brought up for discussion in the Party during the imperialist war in 1915. It is well-known that Lenin was the first to formulate at that time the theses on “The Possibilities of the Victory of Socialism,” first “In one capitalist country taken separately.” This was the period in which there was a turn from bourgeois-democratic revolution to a Socialist revolution. It is well known that comrade Trotsky then disputed this thesis of Lenin’s, declaring: “It is hopeless to think . . . that a revolutionary Russia, for instance, could hold its own with a conservative Europe.”

In 1921, after the October revolution and the civil war, when questions of construction became the order of the day, the question of the construction of Socialism once more came to the surface within the Party. This was a period when some comrades regarded the swing round to “The New Economic Policy” as a departure from Socialist tasks, and as a departure from Socialist construction. It is well-known that Lenin, in his pamphlet “On the Food Tax,” defined this swing round to “The New Economic Policy” as a necessary con-

dition of alliance between industry and peasant economy, as a condition for laying the foundation of Socialist economy, as a path towards the successful construction of Socialism. This was in April, 1921. Comrade Trotsky in 1922, as if in reply to this, presents in the foreword to his book "1905" quite a contrary thesis on the question of Socialist construction in our country, declaring that "the contradictions in the situation of the Workers' Government in a backward country, having an overwhelming majority of peasant population, can only find their solution on an international scale, on the arena of the world revolution of the proletariat."

A year later (1922) Lenin's declaration at the Plenum of the Moscow Soviet, that "Socialist Russia will develop from NEP Russia" and Trotsky's declaration in his epilogue to "Programme of Peace" that "a real growth in the Socialist economy of Russia will only become possible after the victory of the proletariat in the most important countries of Europe"—again confronted one another. Finally, a year later, not long before his death, Lenin once more returns to this question in his article "On Co-operation" (May, 1923), declaring that in the Soviet Union we have "everything necessary for the construction of a complete Socialist society."

There you have a short history of the question.

You may already perceive from this historic note that the problem of construction of Socialism in our country is one of the most important problems of our Party tactics. There is hardly need to prove that Lenin would not keep on returning to this question if he did not consider it the most important question in our practical work.

In the subsequent development of our economy, the intensifying of the struggle between the elements of Socialism and capitalism within it, and especially the temporary stabilisation of capitalism, would only help to heighten the significance of the question as to the possibilities of Socialist construction in our country.

In what respect is this question important from the point of view of Party practice ?

It is important in so far as it touches on the question as to the perspectives of our construction, and the tasks and aims of this construction. One cannot construct properly if one does not know for what aim one is constructing, nor move a single step forward without knowing the direction of movement. The question of perspectives is the most important question for our Party, which is accustomed to having before it a clear and definite aim. Are we constructing in the name of Socialism, counting on the victory of Socialist construction, or are we constructing at random and blindly, in order that "while awaiting the Socialist revolutions throughout the whole world," we may fertilise the soil for bourgeois democracy ? That is now one of the most important questions. We cannot work and construct in a proper manner if there is no clear answer to this no less clear question. Hundreds and thousands of Party workers in the trade unions, and in the co-operatives, economic workers and cultural workers, military workers and Young Communists, all appeal to us, ask us, ask our Party—what are we aiming at, in what name are we constructing ? And woe betide any leaders who are not able, or who do not wish, to give a clear and definite answer to this question, or who begin shifting and shuffling,

drowning in intellectual scepticism the perspective of our construction.

The great significance of Lenin, also, by the way, consists in the fact that he adopted no haphazard attitude towards construction, that he does not contemplate construction without perspectives, and that he gives a clear and definite answer to the question of the perspectives of our work, that we have all the pre-requisites for constructing a Socialist economy in our country, and that we can and must construct a completely Socialist society.

That is how the matter stands with regard to the question of the possibilities of the construction of a Socialist economic system.

The other question is, will we really be able to construct a Socialist economic system? This does not only depend upon us. It also depends on the force and weakness of our enemies and of our friends within our own country. We will construct it if we are only given the chance, if we can only extend the period of "breathing space," if there is no serious intervention, if intervention is not victorious, if the strength and power of the international revolutionary movement on the one hand, and the strength and power of our own country on the other hand, are sufficiently formidable to make any serious attempt at intervention impossible. On the other hand, we shall not be able to construct Socialist economy if we are defeated as a result of victorious intervention.

That is how the matter stands with the ninth question.

Let us now turn to the last question.

X.

Indicate the most immediate difficulties of our Party and Soviet construction in connection with the stabilisation and protraction of the world revolution, especially in the field of inter-relations between the Party and the working class, the working class and the peasantry.

Selecting the most important of these difficulties, I would say there are five in all. The role of the stabilisation of capitalism is such that it tends to increase these difficulties.

The first difficulty. This consists in the difficulties bound up with the danger of intervention. This does not mean that we are confronted with the immediate danger of intervention, or that the imperialists are already prepared and quite in a position to intervene in our country at once. For this, imperialism would have to be at least as powerful as it was on the eve of the war, and this in reality, as we all know, is not the case. The present war in Morocco and the intervention in China, these rehearsals of future war and intervention, at once show that the backbone of imperialism has become weak. Therefore, it is not a question of immediate intervention, but simply that while there is capitalist encirclement the danger of intervention will also remain in general, and while there is a danger of intervention we are compelled to maintain an Army and Fleet in the interests of defence, which absorbs hundreds of millions of roubles every year. What does a yearly expenditure of hundreds of millions of roubles on the Army and Fleet im-

ply? It implies a corresponding curtailment of expenditure on economic and cultural construction. Needless to say, were it not for the danger of intervention we might be able to apply these sums, or at least the greater part of them, to the strengthening of industry, the improvement of agriculture, and the introduction of such reforms, as, for instance, compulsory elementary education. Hence in the field of constructional work difficulties arise from the dangers of intervention.

The characteristic peculiarity of this difficulty, as distinguished from all other difficulties, lies in the fact that its solution does not depend only on us, but that it can only be achieved by the joint forces of our country and of the revolutionary movement of all other countries.

The second difficulty. This consists in the complications connected with the contradictions between the proletariat and the peasantry. I have already mentioned these contradictions in expounding the question of the class struggle in the countryside. These contradictions make their appearance in connection with the price of agricultural products and industrial commodities, the agricultural tax, government of the countryside, etc. Here the danger lies in disorganising the work of the alliance between peasantry and proletariat and of the proletariat undermining the idea of leadership of the peasantry. Hence the difficulty connected with this danger.

The characteristic peculiarity of this difficulty, as distinguished from the preceding difficulty, lies in the fact that it can be overcome by our internal forces.

A new policy in the countryside is needed to overcome this difficulty.

The third difficulty. This consists in difficulties connected with the national contradictions within our Union, with the contradictions between "centre" and "borderlands." These contradictions develop on the basis of the dissimilarity of economic and cultural stages of development, of the "centre" and the "borderlands," and on the basis of the backwardness of the latter as compared with the former. If we may already consider the political contradictions on this field as having been overcome, the cultural, and especially the economic, contradictions are still only being formulated and for this reason have still to be overcome. Here the danger is twofold: there is on the one hand, the danger of a powerful high-handedness and official arbitrariness on the part of the central institutions of the Union, not desiring and not capable of exercising the necessary delicacy with regard to questions of the national republics, and the danger of national mistrust and a national self-isolation of the republics and regions as regards the "centre" on the other hand. The struggle with these dangers, and especially the first one, is the means whereby the difficulties in the field of national questions will be overcome.

The characteristic peculiarity of this difficulty lies in the fact that just as with the second difficulty it may be overcome by the interior forces of the Union.

The fourth difficulty. This consists in the complications connected with the danger of a breaking away of the State apparatus from the Party, the danger of the Party leadership over the State apparatus becoming weakened. I already mentioned this danger when dealing with the question of the dangers of Party degeneration. This dan-

ger arises through the presence of bourgeois-bureaucratic elements within the State apparatus. It becomes increased and intensified with the growth of the State apparatus, and with the increase of weight of the latter. Our task is to curtail the State apparatus as much as possible, and systematically to kick out elements of bureaucracy and bourgeois disintegration, distributing the leading forces of the Party in accordance with the main connecting points of the State apparatus, thereby conserving Party leadership over them.

The characteristic peculiarity of this difficulty lies in the fact that it, just as the third difficulty, can be overcome by our own forces.

The fifth difficulty. This consists in the danger of a partial breaking away of Party organisations and the trade unions from the wide masses of the working class and from the needs and demands of these masses. This danger arises and develops thanks to the abuses of the bureaucratic elements in quite a number of organs of the Party and trade union organisations, not excluding the nuclei and factory and workshop committees. Of late, this danger has increased in connection with the slogan: "Face to the Village," which has transferred the attention of our organisation from the town to the countryside, from the proletariat to the peasantry; many of our comrades have not understood that while turning our faces to the village, we cannot stand with our backs to the proletariat. They have not understood that the slogan: "Face to the Village" can only be realised through the proletariat and with the forces of the proletariat, and that a careless attitude towards the demands of the working class can only intensify the danger of our

Party and trade union organisations breaking away from the working masses.

What are the symptoms of this danger ?

First the loss of sensitiveness and inadequate attention on the part of our Party-trade union organisations to the demands and needs of the wide masses of the working class ; secondly the failure to understand that the consciousness of their achievements on the part of the workers, the consciousness of a ruling class, has increased, and that they understand and will not allow any bureaucratic-official attitude on the part of the Party and trade union organisations ; thirdly, a failure to understand that one cannot crawl up to the workers with orders that have not been thought out, and that the main weight now is not to be found in these " measures " but in winning over the confidence of the working class on to the side of the Party ; fourthly, the failure to understand that no extensive measures can be undertaken (for instance such as the transition from three spindles in the textile district) affecting the masses of the workers without a preliminary campaign among the workers, without conducting extensive conferences on production.

All this can only result in the breaking away of a number of Party and trade union organisations from the wide mass of the working class, and conflicts in the factories. It is well-known that the recent conflicts that broke out in the textile districts disclosed the existence of all these sore spots in a number of our Party and trade union organisations.

Such are the characteristic features of the fifth difficulty as regards our construction.

In order to overcome these difficulties it is primarily necessary to see that our Party and trade

union organisations are freed from decidedly bureaucratic elements, and to begin renewing the composition of the factory and workshop committees. It is also necessary to liven up the industrial conferences, and transfer the centre of gravity of Party work to the nuclei in large-scale production and to furnish them with the best Party workers.

We must pay more attention and deeper thought to the demands and needs of the working class, there must be less bureaucratic formality in the practical work of our Party and trade union organisations, there must be more sensitiveness and responsiveness to the feelings of class achievement on the part of the working class—such are our tasks at the present moment.

That is the position as regards the tenth question.

THE END

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