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BULLETIN

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Chairman: Comrade Neurath.

Contents:

The year of the Russian Revolution and the perspectives of the World Revolution* (Continued).

Speakers: Zetkin, Bella Kaa.

The Chairman, Com. Neurath, declared the Session Open at 11, 55 a. m. and called upon Clara Zetkin to continue her report.

Zetkin (greeted with acclamation): Comrades, I broke off yesterday with a declaration that the Soviet power cannot possibly disperse with the use of force for its defence and maintenance. Utterly erroneous, however, is the contention of our reformist and bourgeois opponents that the Soviet power exists thanks to force alone. The state cannot maintain power for long with the aid of bayonets. The eight months of coalition Government in Russia and especially the months of Kerensky regime of Social Revolutionists, gave ample proof of this. The statement applies especially to an epoch of revolution, in which days count as months and years as decades or centuries. The Soviet Power had to justify its existence by active policy.

The International trend of Soviet policy occupies the foreground in this connection. It secured unambiguous expression in the attitude of the Soviet Power towards the problems of war and peace. Peace was the first demand of the proletarian state. Doubtless the cry for peace was largely rooted in the poverty the war had engendered; it was under the pressure of poverty that the peasant

and proletarian masses clamoured for peace. But another, and certainly quite as strong a factor in the demand for peace, was the consciousness of the international revolutionary solidarity of the workers of the world. In the Class War in France Marx wrote: "The Social Revolution was proclaimed in France, but it could not be achieved there. The Social Revolution speaking generally, cannot be achieved inside national barriers".

From the very outset, this conviction was the left-motive of the Russian Revolution, of bolshevist revolutionary policy. Among the first decrees of the provisional government came an appeal to other Governments and nations on behalf of peace. This appeal made it perfectly plain that those who issued it were not under the spell of bourgeois pacifist illusions, but were demanding peace as a revolutionary act of the proletariat, as the gateway, as the first step to the World Revolution. In especial, the workers of Germany, Great Britain, and France, were reminded that they had already done great and valuable services for humanity, and that it behoved them, therefore, to do their duty now by the deliverance of mankind from the miseries of war.

The appeal of the Soviet Republic for

peace by war of the proletarian revolution was lost in the void, although unquestionable peace and the revolution will never again be obtainable upon such easy terms as were possible had there been in other countries a prompt continuation of the Proletarian Revolution in Russia. A whole year of crimes, of horrors, of the wastage of life and property, would have been spared. Most important of all, the proletarian masses were then in possession of armed power, which they could have turned with deadly effect against the exploiting class.

Peace, however, was not brought about by the World Revolution. The Soviet Republic was forced to make peace with the Zwei-bund—the Peace of Brest-Litovsk. This Peace greatly accentuated the difficulties of the internal situation of the young proletarian State. The Social Revolutionists, the most compactly organised power of the counter-revolution in Soviet Russia, made this peace the pretext for scandalous incitement against the Soviet Power, declaring that the Soviet Power was responsible for the military collapse.

But what was the position of affairs in reality? The young Soviet State had to pay for the crimes and follies of the Kerensky Government's June offensive by accepting the severities and humiliations of the Brest-Litovsk Peace. It had to pay for the imperialism of "pure democracy". A more specific attack on the part of the Social Revolutionists, the counter-revolutionists, was their assertion that by the Peace of Brest-Litovsk, the Soviet Power had strengthened German or Hohenzollern militarism at the expense of the "democracy" and "Kultur" of Entente imperialism.

In reality Brest-Litovsk was for German imperialism the direct route to Versailles and the Peace of Versailles. The victory mania of German imperialism flamed fiercely. All the forces of the Central Powers were staked upon the war. Then ensued the collapse of German militarism and German imperialism. Now, among the forces leading to this collapse we must unquestionably number the Russian revolution and its example as one of the strongest factors in undermining the will to war of the German and Austrian armies. When the German proletarians began to refuse to be bled any lon-

ger upon the battlefields for the benefit of the German bourgeoisie, the first halting word expressive of a renunciation of the war was the demand for soldiers' councils. When the military collapse culminated in political revolution, the first word of the German Revolution was "workers' and peasants' councils". "Who did the working masses of Germany take this watchword of revolution? They had learned it from the Russian Revolution.

Unfortunately these revolutionists were content with the first letters of the revolutionary alphabet. The German proletariat had not as yet learned to read the book of revolution fluently. It had not learned what the Russian workers and peasants, "backward and illiterate", had been taught in eight months by the capitalist policy of the coalition governments. Four years later, the lesson is still unlearned. The German workers, handed back to the bourgeoisie the political power concentrated in the councils. Instead of dictatorship of the proletariat, democracy was established, in other words, the class rule of the bourgeoisie. For the time being, therefore, there was no fulfilment of the hopes of the Russian revolutionary leaders that the world revolution was going to run a rapid course. The counter-revolutionaries twitted the bolsheviks for their conviction that the Russian Revolution was merely to be the prelude of the imminent world revolution.

Comrades! mockery is easy enough, but there is no justification here for the jibe. The leaders of the Russian Revolution recognised very clearly the trend and the aim of the incipient world revolution. As to the tempo, they may have been mistaken. Why? The aim and the trend of any historical development are plainly perceptible. They are displayed by the workers of the objective forces of society. But the tempo depends mainly upon the subjective energies of the historical process; that is to say, in the case we are now considering, upon the revolutionary consciousness and activities of the proletarian masses. In the estimate of this factor so many imponderabilities are concerned that it is impossible to prophesy confidently concerning the tempo of the world revolution. But what the wiseacres of universal history stigmatised as an

error of calculation, has become one of the strongest motive forces maintaining the persistent energy of the Russian Revolution. This error of calculation has multiplied ten times, a hundred times, more in its influence far beyond the boundaries of Soviet Russia than all the "clever" recipes of the self-satisfied calculators. The inviolable conviction that the world revolution must progress, that it would complete what had been begun on Russian soil — this conviction gave the Russian proletarians the confidence, the religious faith in the world revolutions and in the revolutionary solidarity among the workers of all lands which still keeps the masses of Soviet Russia fresh, enthusiastic in the fight, eager for work, bold and resolute, after five years of fierce struggle.

Let us pass from the peace policy of the Russian Revolution to its economic policy. The economic policy was to create the steadfast energy of the revolutionary proletariat. It was to revolutionise society. From the first, the revolution turned its proletarian side outwards. Its economic policy had to manifest a tendency towards the communistic goal. If the political Soviet Power aimed at realising Communism, it must abolish private property in the means of production. Nor would this suffice. It must reorganise the whole economic structure of society, purposely in the communist direction. This was a mighty task, and the attempt to solve it was exposed the tragic side of the Russian Revolution. The tragedy lies in this, that there is a contrast between the clear and passionate will to realise communism here and now, in all its perfection, and the weakness and backwardness of the existent economic and social conditions under which this will has to operate.

If we wish to understand the economic policy of the Russian Revolution, we must form a clear mental picture of the economic and social forces that were available for achieving a communist transformation of the proletarian State. What were the forces upon which the Russian Revolution could count for the economic transformation of society into a communist society? It starts from the view that the foundation of the social revolution must be supplied by the highest attainable economic-

technical development, which shall have brought about a titanic growth of productive energies and shall have created the most perfect instruments and methods for the performance of productive work. On the other hand, economic evolution must have brought into being a proletariat comprising the immense majority of the population, a proletariat of hand and brain workers that shall be competent to fulfill the economic and social tasks of effecting the transformation of capitalism to communism.

What was the position of Soviet Russia in these respects? The Soviet State, in its economic and social structure, may be compared to a pyramid which the revolution has inverted and balanced upon its apex. This pyramid is supported by a youthful, backward, poorly developed system of machine industry; and by a proletariat which is likewise youthful, comparatively, numerically speaking, little trained, young in capacity to deal with the apparatus of production, to manage and guide it, to use its productive powers to the full—and comparatively inexperienced, likewise, in the management of affairs of State. This apex of the inverted pyramid has to support the enormous masses of a peasant agriculture, a peasant population continuing to till the soil by methods which (as Rosa Luxemburg once said) "date back to the days of the Pharaohs." And of course, these peasants have a mentality appropriate to the tenour of their lives.

Comrades, when we realise the state of affairs, we cannot but say: "It is a miracle that this inverted pyramid is still standing, although for five years all the powers of the counter-revolution have been endeavouring to overthrow it". For the long run, however, the position is untenable. The most expert juggler could not save such a pyramid from falling unless perhaps the heavy masses of the erstwhile base should crush the slender apex beneath their weight.

There would seem to be only two ways of saving the situation. We might hope that the narrow support of modern proletariat, should undergo a growth so rapid and extensive as to fit to withstand all the pressure from above. Or, again, the narrow support might be buttressed from without by the progress of the

world revolution by the establishment of a Soviet Republic outside the Russian Soviet State. Let us suppose that the proletarians were in a position to find few Soviet States with the highest degree of economic development and (to use bourgeois phraseology) at the highest possible level of culture, suppose that the world proletariat, in fraternal solidarity with Soviet Russia were able speedily to expand and to consolidate the same apex on which the inverted pyramid of Soviet Russia stood, and could thus have accelerated the transformation to communism!

This did not happen; no such Soviet State came into being. The result was that the Russian Revolution and the Russian proletarian State which the revolution had created, had to come to terms with foreign capitalists. This *modus vivendi* is the new economic policy, and when we are appraising it we must never forget the conditions peculiar to Russia under which it came into being. We must not judge it as if the measures that have been adopted formed part of an elaborated plan for the social revolution, carefully thought out in some professor's study. The criticism of our judgment must be, whether these measures are suitably adapted to circumstances which were not freely chosen but were given as such; whether they are steps likely to lead in the communist direction; whether the measures are taken with communism as their goal.

It is above all from their point of view that we must judge the bolshevist agrarian policy, which has been so adversely criticised by the reformists and by bourgeois adversaries, but has also been sharply criticised by some members of our own Party. I must dwell for a moment upon this matter of the agrarian policy. It is of course impossible here to go into details but an understanding on broad lines is essential to an understanding of the Russian Revolution, and is moreover of extreme importance as an aid to the solution of the problems which the world proletariat will have to face everywhere after the conquest of political power—although in somewhat different conditions from Soviet Russia. Logical enough, after their fashion, are those mensheviks who condemn the Russian Revolution on principle because of its agrarian policy.

Whether they are justified in calling themselves Marxists is another story. When we appraise the bolshevik agrarian policy, we have to remember that capitalism, despite the manifold means at its disposal, has hitherto been powerless to make an end of petty peasant agriculture and to replace it by higher forms. Doubtless capitalism has proletarianised the petty peasant farming of extensive regions and even of whole countries. But petty peasant agriculture has persisted none the less. I do not think only of the Balkan lands, whose characteristics are still predominantly those imposed by petty peasant agriculture; nor is the assertion applicable solely in addition to the petty peasant masses in Italy and France. In Germany, a country where industrial development is far advanced, there is still an extensive stratum of small peasants. Even in the U. S., there are numerous petty peasant farms, though of course here when we speak of "small farms" we must apply an American, not a European, standard.

Now then, can it be expected that the Russian Revolution, that Bolshevist agrarian policy, should in a moment succeed in making an end of petty peasant agriculture? In view of the numerical strength of the peasant population of Russia, it is impossible for the revolution to make good without an agrarian policy that should commend itself to the peasant masses in Russia, 80% of the population are small peasants, 9/10 of whom are estimated to be working peasants. The revolution, the seizure of political power by the proletariat, would have been absolutely impossible in defiance of the will of those masses. I will go further, a revolution would have been impossible without the active support of those masses. Whoever desired the proletarian revolution in Russia must perforce swallow the Bolshevist agrarian policy. You could not have the one without the other.

One of the decrees of the provisional government was the abolition of private property in land. The right to till the land was conceded to all persons without distinction of sex, who themselves worked as cultivators. There was a period during which the great estates were being broken up by the peasants in a wild chaotic fashion; as this time the

implements and the farm stock of large landed estates were distributed in like fashion. There came a period when an attempt was made to carry out distribution in accordance with the principles, to avoid the parcelling of the estates and to effect the deliberate transformation of petty farming into a system of national farming. This was one of the phases of war communism, "its requisitions" etc. land hunger, made the peasant masses revolutionary, and the appeasement of that hunger had made their strong supporters of the Soviet Power. The consequences of this agrarian revolution were not those which Rosa Luxemburg had feared, namely, that the Russian mujik would succumb to political indifference. He did not sit down by his fireside as soon as he had secured his little plot of land. His land hunger satisfied, he became the heroic defender of the Soviet Republic. He defended his plot of land within the Soviet State against any possible return to the landowner. At the same time the expectations of the leaders of the Russian revolution were not realised. The distribution of land did not contribute toward intensifying class contrast in the rural districts, and did not bring over the poor peasant masses to the side of the industrial proletariat, for common action in the class conflict between the capitalists and the workers. A large class of middle peasantry arose whose interests soon came into conflict with the policy of "military communism." These middle peasants held in their hands the food and the arms, and thus they forced the introduction of the New Policy, the chief characteristic of which is the poor tax in lieu of the compulsory delivery of all agricultural products, minus the necessary existence ration. They forced the introduction of free trade and in connection with it the other well known innovations.

Comrades, it has been said that the Bolshevist agrarian policy is not communist, that it is leading away from communism and that it is in direct opposition to the task of the Soviet State which should consist in preparing and carrying out the communist revolution; worse still: that it is barring the way to this revolution. What is the real state of

affairs? First of all, was it possible to carry out an agrarian revolution resulting in the preservation on large land estates tending toward large scale farming and the introduction of the modern methods of agriculture? Those who assert this, do not know what they are talking about. Agriculture in Soviet Russia is characterised by the small peasant farms. At the beginning of the revolution, big agricultural concerns worth mentioning were to be found only in Poland, in the Baltic provinces and in some parts of the Ukraine. What does this mean for the solution of the agrarian question as recommended by the old socialist prescriptions? There was no apparatus for agricultural production capable of carrying on agriculture on a large scale. Moreover, there was no real modern rural proletariat capable of manipulating and managing such an apparatus of production. It is very characteristic that in Russia we hear continually of a "poor peasantry" (*bednota*) but never of an agricultural proletariat. Such a proletariat, in the true sense of the word, does not exist. Big agricultural estates that did exist were managed by the land owners according to the old feudal system, and not according to the methods of modern capitalism, with the exception of a few estates owned by "liberal" members of the nobility. Thus it was out of the question that the agrarian policy of the Russian Revolution should be initiated by the establishment of large scale agricultural production. As things stood (taking also into consideration that the Central Power was not very strong at the beginning)—the agrarian reform had to be, strictly speaking, the work of the peasant masses themselves, and could not help being chaotic.

Is it true that the Bolshevist agrarian policy is putting unsurmountable obstacles in the way of the development of agriculture in the direction of communism? I cannot admit this. It is true that the "ingrained ownership psychology", which is so much made of criticising the revolutionary agrarian measures, is still prevalent among the small peasantry in Soviet Russia. In many cases this psychology has been strengthened and consolidated; for how long, that is another question. This alleged ingrained petty bourgeois pea-

sant mentality was not the only factor in the rebellion of the peasants against the measures of military communism. The land hunger turned the peasant into adherents and defenders of the Soviet State. The unsatisfied hunger for manufactured goods drove them away from communism and made them counter-revolutionary. In what form did communism present itself to them? Not as solidarity between town and village, between the industrial proletariat and the small peasantry, but as "military Communism", which took away everything from the peasantry without giving it the necessaries of existence and agricultural production. Therefore, we are justified in assuming that the Soviet economic policy will not be confronted with an unsurmountable anti-communist opposition on the part of the peasants, if industrial production is raised. In judging of the small-peasant psychology, we must not leave out of consideration that the old traditions of primitive village communism have not yet died out among the Russian small peasantry. These traditions have been preserved and strengthened by a primitive, religious attitude regarding property as belonging to God as God's property. This belief has been encouraged by the propaganda of the Tolstoyans, the Social-Revolutionaries, the Narodniki and of many religious sects. These relics of a communist orientation are systematically nurtured and furthered by the measures taken by the proletarian State. Notwithstanding the new policy, the land has not become the private property of the peasant. It has remained the property of the proletarian State. The peasants receive it for use, but can neither sell it nor leave it to their heirs. The exploitation of hired labour is prohibited. Moreover, the small peasant farms have been linked up with the general national economy, not only by the food tax, but also by a number of decisions, regulations and instructions concerning the agricultural exploitation of the land. The Soviet Government is deliberately and systematically directing the development of agriculture along co-operative lines. This is also partly done by the initiative of the peasants themselves who, under the pressure of last year's famine showed inclination to establish artels and cooperative socie-

ties. Neighbours' Leagues, have been formed for the joint purchase and use of machinery, horses etc. The Soviet Government is also endeavouring to establish a number of Soviet estates and to encourage the establishment of cooperative estates and agricultural concerns. It is true that the Soviet estates and cooperative concerns with up to date agricultural organisations are like small islands in a huge ocean of small peasant farms, which are estimated to number twelve millions. However, they can play an important role as industrial, technical and social model institutions, and there are proofs that they have already to a great extent fulfilled this role.

One more thing must be taken into consideration. We must not be led to look upon the Russian agrarian revolution in the light of the French peasant emancipation, in spite of the many outward analogies between these two mighty events. We must not forget that the French peasant emancipation was closely connected with the bourgeois revolution, a characteristic of which was the watchword: ownership and individualism. The Russian agrarian revolution, on the other hand, is linked up with the proletarian revolution, the leit-motive of which is work and solidarity. This creates a quite different social atmosphere for the development of the small-peasant ideology from that which prevailed during the French revolution.

Above all, the Russian small peasantry will learn by experience that its welfare is bound up with the development of industry and with the raising of the proletariat to higher forms of economic and social existence. The peasantry cannot put its production on a more rational basis if it is not supported by a flourishing industry and by the achievements of the proletariat. In connection with this, I venture to say that the electrification of the Russian agricultural industry is the best agrarian program and the most effective agrarian reform which the Soviet Power has adopted and is endeavouring to carry out. It establishes solidarity between town and village and a community of economic and agricultural interests between the industrial proletarians and small peasants, which could not be attained in any other way.

This brings me to the following conclusion. Even though the Bolsheviki agrarian reform has not been able to solve the agrarian question in a way leading to immediate realisation of communism, it is in no way turned the agrarian development away from the goal of a communist society. On the contrary, it has introduced innovations which, economically, socially and culturally head the small peasantry towards communism, and will continue to lead it along the path. For it is self evident that the psychology of the petty property holders will undergo a change as the conditions of labour and production become different.

The petty bourgeois reform Socialists treat the agrarian policy of the Russian Communist Party as if it were the Fall in the Eden of revolution. According to their opinion, through the agrarian policy, the hereditary sin of capitalism was introduced into the Bolsheviki world, a sin which implies the revival of capitalism. I believe this point of view to be fundamentally false. Soviet Russia, apart from the Bolsheviki agrarian policy, would have to evolve a *modus vivendi* with capitalism, in order subsequently to attain to communism. The leading Party of the Russian Revolution has not forgotten the final aim of communism in economic policy. It still maintains the road which leads to communism. With political realism weighed and tested the concrete circumstances affecting the march towards communism. Therefore, the Bolsheviki, in their economic policy, always aimed for immediate ends which were in the direction of Communism. Lenin summed it up in 1917. What, he asked, were the immediate economic tasks after the conquest of State power? They were the socialisation of the great industries, the means of transportation, the banks, the State monopoly of foreign trade, and the control of production by the workers. And the first decrees of the new government did not go against these demands. The thing progressed slowly. Step by step, broader measures were taken for the elimination of private property in the means of production, in land, etc.

The proletarian revolution went forward apace after the April slogan: Workers' Control of Industry! Why? A large number of the capitalists responded to the

measures taken by the Soviet State either by sabotage or by the closing down of their enterprises. There was therefore nothing else for the workers to do except to take over these enterprises and to use them, if they did not wish the national industry to cease altogether or to be shattered.

There was also another reason for this. Soviet Russia had to equip and maintain the Red Army, while surrounded by hostile armies which were equipped by the highly developed industries of the whole world. That could not have been accomplished, if they had limited themselves to the primary economic measures demanded by the circumstances of the young revolution. It necessitated the confiscation and use of all means of production and wealth, the utilisation of all productive power. Besides, the bourgeoisie, although deprived of their political power, were still in the possession of strong social influences which they did not hesitate to use against the workers. The bourgeoisie had to be attacked at the root of their power, private property. This was accomplished through the nationalisation of all the existing means of production and the land.

Finally, there was another consideration. The defence of Soviet Russia against the attacks of the counter-revolutionaries, caused unheard of sufferings among the broad masses. But the masses bore this with rejoicing, because a certain—how shall I express myself?—kind of rough, primitive communism had been introduced. Thus the Russian Revolution was carried far beyond the limits of its immediate aims.

When people now whine that the revolution is beaten, that it is in flight, it is untrue. The Russian revolution has retired to its initial position in good order, retaining all the advantages which it originally wished to possess. Certainly, Capitalism returns; that capitalism whose might was broken, which was exiled from the Eden of Soviet Russia forever. It returns not merely in the form of the petty proprietor, but also of the lessee and concessionaire. It is obvious that these gentlemen have no disinterested desire to take part in the progressive Russian economic life, to build it up and to serve it through cultural methods. They follow

"realistic" aim, that of making profit, the greatest possible profit. But, comrades, the capitalist returns to Soviet Russia no longer the absolute master of his own enterprise. And why not? Because he is no longer master of the State. The profit-lust of the concessionaires and the lessees will be curbed through the laws of the working class State, through the administration of these laws by means of the Soviet Power. Of course: In the arena of the new economic policy, the opposition between capital and labour will be revealed in all its sharpness and violence. The Soviet State reckons itself as the trustee, appointed by the proletariat, of all the means of production, all natural resources, and all human labour power. The interests of the proletariat are supreme law to the State. By legal conditions, the State renders it impossible for foreign or home capitalists to plunder natural resources. The capitalist is also prevented from increasing his profits, however large they may be, through extreme and inhuman exploitation. The proletarian State is fully conscious that the greatest wealth of Soviet Russia is its toilers, who produce all values. It is fully conscious that the Russian proletariat is not going to stay at its present level of living and working. No, it will raise to a far higher level its physical, spiritual, and professional capacities, and its ethical and cultural activity, in order to become the creators and the defenders of the complete communist society.

Therefore, in the inevitable conflicts between capital and labour in the leased and concessional industrial concerns, the trade unions and co-operative organisations will play again a very important role as the fighting organs of the proletariat, and will carry on a very fruitful activity. What will, on the other hand, happen in the non-Soviet countries in which the capitalists are also the political masters? In such countries, the State power is only an obstacle to the activities of the trade unions and co-operatives. It interferes in the conflicts between the bourgeoisie and the proletariat, and this interference always benefits the capitalists, unless the working class be strong enough to hold the State power in check. In Soviet Russia, on the other hand, the State power will be always at the back of the

trade unions and of the co-operatives in all the conflicts of the workers with the industrial, trade and usurers' capital.

There is yet another side of "state capitalism" which we must take into consideration. The Soviet Republic does not only carry on "State capitalism" as a leasing and concession giving power; it must also be a "State capitalist" in its own industrial concerns. Only a part—and hitherto only a very small part—of the Russian industry and economic organisations are so to speak hired out to the capitalists for exploitation. The other part, and not the least important at that, the heavy industry, the transport, etc., has remained in the hands of the Soviet Power. The Soviet Power, the workers' State itself is the greatest employer in Soviet Russia. But what does this mean under present circumstances when the Russian economic system finds no allies in other States which are on the way to communism, but forms a link in the chain of the capitalist economic system who exercise a certain influence upon the shaping of conditions? The Soviet State, in its capacity of employer will have to take into consideration the interests of the class which it represents the "rentability" of the various industrial plants. I will go a step further. Even when the transition period will have to come to an end and when pure communism will have been established, society will have to produce and accumulate surplus value in the interests of its higher economic and cultural development. What is the conclusion to be drawn from this? That the workers' State, as employer, may at times get into conflict with the demands and interests of certain workers and groups of workers against which it will have to defend the present and future class interest of the proletariat. It goes without saying that such conflicts cannot and must not be settled in the momentary interests of individuals or separate proletarian groups, or even of separate branches of the economic system. On the contrary, they will always have to be settled in the interests of the proletariat as a class.

It is self evident that such conflicts are likely to occur in Soviet Russia. The reasons are as follows; at present the Russian proletariat is not yet able to

fill the posts of managers and organisers in the industrial concerns. These posts are occupied to-day by people with a high economic and professional education and experience but lacking communist ideology. Comrades, on this side the trade unions and co-operative organisations have a great task to fulfill, not only as constructive but also as educational organs which must carry on their work in the lower as well as in the upper strata, if you will allow me to say so. In the lower, in order to raise the proletarian masses, in their capacity of producers, to the higher form of efficiency. At times the proletarians might present this as a hardship. But with respect to this hardship as well as the backwardness of which Comrade Lenin spoke in mind: outside Russia, in the highly developed Capitalist States the proletariat has for centuries past gone through the hard school of productive efficiency. The British workers have gone through this hard school, and even to-day the whip of hunger and the scorpions of class exploitation and class domination are brought into play against them. The workers' State of Soviet Russia, with the assistance of the trade unions and the co-operative societies, will educate its working masses for communism by milder and more humane methods. But in any case, the workers' State must educate the proletariat, and must get it accustomed to labour discipline and qualified work. This being so, conflicts between the State and the workers might occur.

The workers' State with the assistance of the trade unions and the co-operative organisations, will educate a staff of clerks, officials, managers and administrators who, imbued with the spirit of communism, will change the whole present economic system as rapidly and thoroughly as possible. The officials and administrators must be made to realise that it is to be the representatives and the trusted servants of the workers' State.

There is one more fact. I venture to say that Soviet Russia is to-day, notwithstanding its poverty and the disorga-

isation of its economic system, the State with the most advanced labour protection and social welfare legislation and not only on paper. Trade unions and co-operative organisations, in conjunction with the soviet organs are entrusted with the supervision of the proper application of the labour law and of social insurance, and also with their improvement and development. They are the real executors of the social reforms. The activity of the trade unions and cooperative organisations with relation to social reform, was formerly considered by the reformist gentry as a means to bolster up capitalism and to prevent revolution. Present events show that we, the radical element, were right in asserting that effective social reforms with the assistance of the trade unions and cooperative organisations, are out of the question before the conquest of political power by the proletariat. It is only after the conquest of the political power by the proletariat that the activity of these organisations can be used as an effective means for leading the entire economic system towards communism. Social reform receives a different aspect and another significance with the advent of proletarian political power. From being a bulwark for the protection and defence of the proletariat against capitalism, social reform becomes a means for building up communism. The conquest of political power by the proletariat, and the establishment of its dictatorship in a Soviet state are a milestone on the way towards a higher development of the new social order.

I need not speak to-day of the influence of the new policy in other directions. Comrade Lenin did this yesterday in a most illuminating manner. However, I thought it necessary to emphasize this side or the new policy, as it forms an illustration of two facts. Firstly, that by the conquest and consolidation of the political power, the proletariat has not yet crossed the stream, but that it has only reached its banks. The proletariat will only get into the promised land of communism by means of the general policy, and especially of the economic policy of the proletarian State power. Out of this arise a number of problems: the problem of the relations between town and village, the problem of the political power of the

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do more than "hammer the old, semi-capitalist State into the new Soviet government" it must revolutionise the whole basis of social economies, and with it the whole of society. This is a gigantic task, it cannot be accomplished overnight, nor by the work of a few great personalities. It must be the work of the whole proletarian class, and it will take many decades before the work is accomplished. Karl Marx wrote in his controversy with Max Stirner that we should not grow discouraged if the proletarian revolution should last for many decades. Its task is not only to create new social conditions, but also to educate man, the new man for the new society. This is what we must remember when we look at the first proletarian State in the world. The Russian revolution has accomplished more than any revolution before it. It has not remained stationary, it has developed far beyond its original purpose. With fire and sword, Russia has been cleansed of its old feudal institutions, with a thoroughness which no bourgeois revolution has known. Look at England. In spite of the bourgeois revolution, in spite of long years of bourgeois class rule, there still remain strong traces of the old feudal order. Look at Germany, the country of the latest bourgeois revolution. The first victory of the revolution, the Republic trembles before a Kapp-Putsch or an Orgesch-insurrection. In Soviet Russia, Czarism could never return; nor such a modern capitalist State, as the dream the reformists and petty bourgeois dream of. The proletarian revolution has brought into the consciousness of millions so many germs of a new productive life, that this life can never be destroyed. Soviet Russia will remain as a proletarian State. It is the first type of a proletarian State in this period of transformation from capitalism to communism. As such, all it does and does not do, all its accomplishments as well as its mistakes and its weakness, are fruitful of lessons for the world proletariat and for the world revolution. The proletariat of Russia and the Russian Communist Party have paid dearly to learn how political power is conquered and maintained. They must suffer now to learn how a proletarian State, abandoned by the world proletariat, can transform itself slowly

into a Communist society. The policy of the Bolsheviks has great significance in this connection. Some believe it is as nothing but a vague fishing in the dark, a series of mistakes and un consequential actions. Just the opposite is true. The policy of the Russian Communists appears as a whole to follow a straight unified, and consistent line. This policy is the first to attempt in the history of the masses to apply the theory of Marxism to practical facts: it is the first attempt of the proletariat to become a subjective factor in the history of the world; it is the first willed attempt to make history. It is the conscious attempt to direct historical forces, to make history and not suffer it as a play of blind objective forces, as in bourgeois society.

Comrade Lenin said yesterday, that we still have much to learn, both here in Soviet Russia and outside of it. He said that we did not understand Russian sufficiently abroad, to comprehend the resolutions of our Third Congress, conceived and expressed in Russian.

In a way, Comrade Lenin was right. The foreign proletariat has not yet sufficiently learnt to read Russian, i. e. to act as Russians. Just as the Communist International is the centre of the world revolution, so should it be our university for reciprocal experience. Learn, and save time! This is Lenin's call to us. And he who wins time, wins all! How well it corresponds with Goethe's profound words on the development of humanity:

"How beautiful is my inheritance, how far, how broad.

Time is my field, my domain is time."

Time comrades, not in the sense of wasteful, idle and listless waiting, in which every minute is exploited in passionate activity. Let us use it here in Soviet Russia, to learn the use of the art of creation of the Proletarian State. Let us use it, outside of Russia, to learn to handle the sword with which to conquer political power.

So is forged the sword of the World Revolution, which will free mankind. From the ruins of the world war, let new life flourish. In this period, the highest, most powerful, most fruitful and most creative form of historical development is the Revolution, the expression of

the proletarian masses (prolonged applause).
Chairman Neurath:—Before we go with the business, I want to say that the Presidium requests the translators to be more brief. It would be a good thing for the translators to follow the Russian example.

We now go on with the order of the day. The reporter on the second point on today's agenda will be Comrade Bela Kun.

Bela Kun:—Comrades, the time is not yet come to write the history of the five years of the Russian Revolution, and even if it did, it would not be the task of the fourth World Congress to write that history. World Congress to write that history, although it has been a first rank participant in the making of that history. All the more reason for us, therefore, to carefully and discriminately collect all the experiences of the Russian Revolution and to take judicious views of those experiences in our revolutionary struggle. All of us who have fought in the Russian Revolution and have led in revolutionary fights to the West of Russia have built up some more or less faulty generalised theories. Almost none of us have avoided these errors. We ought to avoid utopianism of every kind, applying our experiences with the utmost discrimination in regard to West European conditions. We ought to endeavour to inaugurate on the basis of the experiences of the Russian revolution, a similarly realist revolutionary policy in the West, as the policy of the Russian Communist Party has always been and continues to be.

After the reports of Comrade Lenin and Comrade Clara Zetkin, it is now my task to point out the subjective factor of the Proletarian Revolution, to describe the role of the Russian Communist Party in the Proletarian Revolution, even if only in fragmentary outline. Comrades, you will permit me in this connection to draw a parallel between the great Russian Revolution and the abortive Hungarian Revolution. On looking back at the history of these five years we have to confess that a miracle has happened.

The power of the Soviets is alive and strong to day in spite of the offensive of the new defunct German imperialism, the united offensive of the capitalists of all countries, and the vicious activities of

Russian and the international Mensheviks. The invincibility of the Russian revolution, of the Russian Soviets, is due to factors the absence of which in Hungary was the cause of the collapse of the Hungarian Proletarian Dictatorship.

I do not intend to enlarge upon the international and internal political causes which were favourable to the Russian Revolution, and which on the other hand were detrimental to the Hungarian revolution. I will only point to the fact that in Hungary we failed to provide, not only what comrade Lenin described as a plan of retreat, but even a line of retreat. In regard to the Russian Revolution I think that the circumstance which has belied all the Thermidor prophecies about Soviet Russia was the following.—In Russia there was a centralised, disciplined and self-sacrificing Workers Party in the shape of the Russian Communist Party. The absence of such a Party or of anything approaching it in Hungary was the cause of the inevitable collapse of the Proletarian Revolution, notwithstanding all the sacrifices and enthusiasm of the Hungarian Proletariat and poorer peasantry. Apart from military defeat at the front, the downfall of the Revolution was accelerated by the vacillating influence of the social democracy upon the Hungarian Working Class. The Russian Proletariat and its glorious Red Army at that time and afterwards, sustained a number of defeats on the various counter-revolutionary fronts. There were moments in Russia, when in the midst of great dangers, the Russian Working Class began to waver. There were times when the state of mind of a section of the working class was, if not positively, at least passively counter-revolutionary. There were times when the wavering, starving and tired working class gave to the superficial observer sufficient reason for prophesying a Thermidor to Soviet Russia. It is enough to recall the period of the Kronstadt mutiny. Yet all the effects of these waverings a of part of the working class were neutralised. We in Hungary did not have the benefit of a mature Communist Party, and I am safe in saying that at the time we could not have such a Party. We had no mature Communist Party that could cling to the helm of State at the most critical moments, in spite of the wavering

of the working class, in spite of the passive and at times even hostile attitude of parts of the working class. In Hungary advances were brought to bear upon the masses of the proletariat, by the fusion between the class-conscious active and determined minority and the social democracy, which together led the masses to the conquest of power. On the other hand in Russia there has been and there is now a Communist Party with years of fighting experience, whose influence in the critical moments of the Russian Revolution was enormous. Comrades, this party whose class character stands out in prominent relief during these last five years of revolution has become the party of the Russian people. The German Social Democratic Party at the Goerlitz conference finally discarded its class mask, declaring itself the "Volkspartei" (People's Party) instead of the greatest class party in the world, which it was as the German Social-Democratic Party. It is now really the party of the petty bourgeoisie and as such it has become the servant of the big bourgeoisie of Germany. As against this, the Russian Communist Party, having strictly maintained its class character during the entire period of the Dictatorship has truly become the party of all the toiling elements of the Russian people. This will not be believed in Social Democratic circles, and there are even communists who doubt it. But I will quote just one instance which will suffice to show that the Russian Communist Party is really the Party of the Russian people and that every communist is, so to speak, the spokesman of the toiling elements of the Russian people. Last year we had a party cleaning of the Russian Party of elements that were undesirable. This cleaning was conducted at public meetings of non-party workers, in the presence of the entire mass of the unattached factory workers. Every non-party worker and every non-party peasant had the opportunity to object to any member remaining in the Communist Party, and the non-party workers and peasants made full use of this right. To be a Communist in Russia—let me repeat it once more, is to be the spokesman of the people. This makes the Communist Party in Russia a real party of the toiling people, although it has

strictly maintained its proletarian character throughout the five years of the Revolution.

This is the real reason of the wonderful development of the Party. It rests naturally in its revolutionary policy and in its wonderful flexible tactics. Nevertheless, we must ask whence did the Party obtain such a policy and such an influence over the working class. What is it that enabled the Russian Party not only to gain a majority at the time of the October Revolution, but to retain it throughout the vicissitudes of the Revolution. The secret lies first of all in the close organisation of the Party. No other Party, bourgeois or proletarian, had such a carefully picked and strongly welded nucleus, or to use a favourite military metaphor of Comrade Bukharin, a uniform ideological general staff, as has the Russian Party.

This Party, this General Staff, this nucleus, this fundamental group was built up during the long years of struggle. During these struggles the opportunist elements were swept out of the Party, not only mechanically, but also by deliberate elimination. All elements that were unsuitable to the close circle of fighters were weeded out of the ranks. On the other hand, the Russian Communist Party in the course of its struggles not only developed its nucleus, but also brought new elements into the movement which became welded to the nucleus. It has become a party really capable of organising and leading the masses, not hangers on, not intellectuals who refuse to submit to party discipline, but real workers, the majority of the working class. The characteristic feature of the five years of the Russian Revolution was that all the menshevik and social-revolutionist elements who were really faithful to the workers and to the working class were gradually absorbed by the Russian Communist Party. There was nothing left in the Menshevik and Social Revolutionary Parties than a few intellectual scribes who had nothing whatever to do with the labour movement, who were, so to speak guests, and not leaders of the working class. The influence of the Communist Party over the large working class masses, with the State under Com-

control, is naturally exercised by means of propaganda, but by the authority of the State and administration.

anyway, comrades, wherever workers wherever workers are occupied, you meet a Bolshevik, a Communist. The institutions, the Soviet administrative offices may be as faulty as Comrade yesterday said they were, nevertheless, thanks to the Communist Party, have become a kind of proletarian bureaucracies. The Soviet organs through the Communist Party, have become the organs of proletarian democracy, and not vice versa. A comparison with the history of the Hungarian Soviets will show this clearly. In Hungary we have had Soviets with Soviets as Gorter or the German Independents would have them—but without communist leadership. The organs elected by the suffrage of the large masses of the proletariat did not really become the organs of the working class. They were not the expression of the will of the proletariat. Here in Russia where the Mensheviks demanded free elections to the Soviets, where all reformist elements from Martov to Miliukov united for free Soviet elections against the Bolshevik Dictatorship, the Soviet organs became much more the organs of the proletarian democracy than the freely elected Soviets of Hungary which were not led by communists. In Hungary there was no united Communist leadership of the Soviets and the Trade Unions. The Trade Unions claimed the leadership of the State because they were much more proletarian than the Soviets which contained non-proletarian elements. It was a struggle between the Soviets and the Trade Unions, and the Trade Unions could claim with right that they represented to a greater extent than the Soviets the opinions of the large masses and the class character of the proletariat. There resulted a conflict between the reformist, social-democratic Trade Union leaders and the Soviets. The workers went more willingly into the Trade Unions which were led by Labour leaders even though reformists, than in the Soviets, where no communist leadership existed. In Russia, with the help of the Communist Party, the Soviets became a real popular institution, an organ of proletarian democra-

cy. In Hungary we could not achieve this because there was no Communist leadership. But how is it possible to achieve united action in such a large country with so many State organs, with so many Labour organisations? How is it possible, in a country where there are single portions much larger than France, Germany and England together, a unified Party leadership which could be felt even in the smallest village?

How is centralisation at all possible in such a country as Russia? I would like to answer this question by a comparison. In Germany, the social-democracy, having attained power, was practically dissolved as a Party organisation. The governmental organs influenced the social-democracy much more than the latter influenced the government. The deciding factor in the social-democracy is the governmental social-democratic bureaucracy which originated from the old Party bureaucracy. It is just the opposite in Russia. The Russian Party always saw to it that the leading elements of the Party should influence the Soviet organs, and not vice versa. To bring this about something was required from the Communist Party which is still not understood by many persons otherwise well acquainted with the Russian movement. This is what I said yesterday to one of the comrades of our Party: Russia is not a Prussian sergeant, and we are not recruits. Moscow represents the best leadership of the world revolution. Those who do not understand the significance of centralised discipline as the experience of the Russian Revolution created it, are not good recruits of Communism or of the Communist Party. The leadership of the whole State apparatus by the Communist Party in a country as vast as Russia is a most difficult task. The history of the last five years shows that the forces of the Party are to be totally regrouped to meet the new task which the Revolution put before the Party. Such a weapon as the new economic policy could not possibly be applied without a strict discipline in the Communist Party. It was only by a radical regrouping of the forces of our Party that we were able to carry out this policy without any great crisis in our Party.

...can explain this discipline? Of course, there is the story that old conspirators under the leadership of Comrade Lenin. I am sorry to say that I was not a party to such conspiracy, and do not know what sort of conspirators they were. I know however, that these conspirators have become the best leaders of the masses. Why? Because during this conspiring period of the Russian Revolution, a strict discipline was created and the members of the Party were trained in this discipline. Naturally this discipline comes not only from the masses but mainly from the leaders, and it requires therefore a great confidence in the leaders. This leadership is really the heart of the Russian Communist Party, the authoritative body of the whole Communist movement. It may be that the members of the Communist Party have not always understood what was going on, especially in the matter of the new economic policy. But the masses have such confidence in their leaders that even when they do not understand at once the purpose of some political measure, they are confident that the leaders will not fail to make it clear to them. Allow me to quote these few words from the Austrian poet Anzengruber: "Thou shalt honour thy father and thy mother, but they must be worthy of it". The leaders of the Russian Revolution have gained the confidence of the masses and of the Communist Party because they have been worthy of it.

The iron discipline of the Russian Communist Party was what made it possible to carry on their elastic policy. I do not intend to say why this policy is elastic. The cause and source of the elasticity is well known to all. There is no body in the world where Marxism has been so completely incorporated as in the Communist Party of Russia; but the best Marxian analysis remains only an historical document when there is no organisation sufficiently elastic to act in accordance with this analysis. Without a strict discipline, without well organised cadres the accomplishment of such a policy would be impossible. At the present time, in the sixth year of the revolution, the Communist Party of Russia is being faced with its greatest problem since the be-

ginning of the Revolution. It is, how to apply the economic policy under the leadership of a working class political party so that the realisation of this policy might not bring into the party certain petty bourgeois elements. The Communist Party of Russia has stood the test thanks to its discipline, and its elastic organisation. Centralisation and centralised discipline are the greatest lessons which we have been able to learn in the Russian Communist Party. Some of the best theses of the Comintern, it seems to me, are those of the Second Congress on the role of the Communist Party in the proletarian revolution. These theses have had the same effect, on a less intense scale, than the Communist Party of Russia has had in the Russian Revolution. The activity of the Communist Party of Russia should be a subject of study for every leader and organiser of the Western parties so that they may make critical use of the Russian experience in the Western situation and prepare their parties for the conquest and maintenance of power. The application of this experience is not the least problem of the International Revolution.

Comrades, I am far from being an adherent of the free will doctrine, but I believe that for a realisation of the prospects of a world revolution, the subjective factor of a Communist Party is one of the most important. We cannot determine the objective factors, at most we can influence them through the Communist Party. Nevertheless, I believe that if we had had Communist Parties like the Russian in 1919, at the time of the demobilisation crisis, we would have been able not only to conquer the power, but also to hold it. The importance of the Communist Party as a subjective factor remains the same even in this period of comparative apathy. The question before us is; considering the prospects for a world revolution, how can we build up such Communist Parties which in Western circumstances, perhaps through difference means can win over gradually the majority of the proletariat, before the revolution and after the revolution? Is it possible to create such Communist Parties? I believe so. I have been working during the past time within the Communist Party of Russia, and I can say that the masses

membership do not stand on a higher intellectual level than the German proletariat. I might even say that the level of the German proletariat stands higher in culture than those of the Russian Communist Party. Of course, behind the Russian proletariat are five long years of experience in revolution; it is this experience which has made possible the elastic policy of the Russian Party. But such elasticity is possible in all parties. I believe that the main problem is building up such subjective factors of

the world revolution is the creation of basic revolutionary cadres. I believe that if we are able to form these cadres, these vanguard troops, we will be able to lead the Western proletariat to the conquest of power, and retain this power after we have gained it. That is why this is one of our chief tasks, and the lessons which the Russian Communist Party has given us from five years of experience in the Russian Revolution are most important. (Applause).

The session adjourned at 3. p. m.