

Decrees and Documents of the Russian Revolution



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APPEAL FROM THE COUNCIL OF PEOPLE'S COMMISSARS TO THE TOILING MASSES OF ENGLAND, AMERICA, FRANCE, ITALY, AND JAPAN ON ALLIED INTERVENTION IN RUSSIA

1 August 1918

Kluchnikov & Sabanin, ii, p. 158

Workers! Like a vicious dog let off the leash, the entire capitalist press of your countries is howling for the 'intervention' of your Governments in Russian affairs, shrieking, 'now or never!' But even at this moment, when these hirelings of your exploiters have dropped their masks and are clamouring for an attack on the workers and peasants of Russia, even at this moment they lie unscrupulously, and shamelessly deceive you. For while threatening 'intervention' in Russian affairs, they are already conducting military operations against workers' and peasants' Russia.

On the Murmansk Railway which they have seized the Anglo-French bandits are already shooting Soviet workers. In the region of the Urals they are breaking up the workers' Soviets and shooting their representatives, using for this purpose the Czecho-Slovak troops, which are maintained at the expense of the French people and commanded by French officers.

Complying with the orders of your Governments, they are cutting off the Russian people from their food supplies, in order to force the workers and peasants to put their necks once more into the halter of the Paris and London Stock Exchanges. The present open attack of FrancoEnglish capital on the workers of Russia is only the culmination of eight months' long underground struggle against Soviet Russia. From the first day of the October revolution, from the moment when the workers and peasants of Russia declared that they would no longer shed either their own or other people's blood for the sake of Russian or foreign capital, from the first day that they overthrew their exploiters and appealed to you to follow their example, to put an end to the universal slaughter, to put an end to exploitation-from that moment your exploiters vowed that they would destroy this country, in which the workers had dared for the first time in the history of humanity to throw off the yoke of capitalism, to get their necks out of the noose of war. Your Governments supported the Ukrainian Rada against the workers and peasants of Russia, that same Rada which sold itself to German imperialism and called in the help of German bayonets against the Ukrainian workers and peasants; they supported the Rumanian oligarchy, that same oligarchy which, by attacking on our south-western front, helped to destroy the defensive power of Russia. For hard cash their agents bought over that same General Krasnov who now, acting in concert with the German military authorities, is trying to cut Russia off from the coal of the Donetz and the grain of the Kuban, to render it a defenceless victim of German and Russian capital. They gave moral and financial support to the right wing of the Social-Revolutionary Party, that party of traitors to the revolution, who rose arms in hand against the workers' and peasants' Government.

But when they saw that all their attempts were unsuccessful, when it became clear that hired bandits were an insufficient force, they decided to sacrifice you too, and they are now openly attacking Russia, flinging the workers and peasants of France and England into the firing line.

You who, in the interests of capital, are shedding your blood, at the Marne and on the Aisne, in the Balkans, in Syria, and in Mesopotamia, you are to die also in the snows of north Finland and on the mountains of the Ural.

In the interests of capital you are to play the part of the executioner of the Russian workers' revolution.

To conceal the true nature of this crusade against the Russian workers' revolution your capitalists tell you that it is being undertaken not against the Russian revolution, but against German imperialism, to which they claim we have sold ourselves. The falsehood and hypocrisy of this assertion will become clear to every one of you once you examine the following facts:

1. We had to sign the Brest treaty, which dismembers Russia, precisely because your Governments ' knowing full well that Russia was unable to carry on the war any longer, refused to participate in international peace negotiations where their strength would have saved Russia and given you an acceptable peace. It was not Russia, bled white as it had been for three and a half years, that betrayed your cause; it was your own Governments that flung Russia under the heel of German imperialism.
2. When we were forced to sign the Brest peace treaty because the masses of our people were unable to carry on the war any longer, and when the agents of your Governments, on many occasions, tried to draw us back into the war, assuring us that Germany would not allow us to remain at peace, our press replied: If Germany destroys the peace which we have bought at such great sacrifice, if it raises its hand against the Russian revolution, then we will defend ourselves. If the Allies wish to help us in our sacred cause of defence, then let them help us to repair our railways, to set our economic affairs in order, for an economically weak Russia cannot seriously defend itself. But the Allies did not reply to these appeals of ours. Their only thought was how to pump out of us the interest due on the old loans which French capital had advanced to Tsarism in order to draw the Tsar's Government into the war, and which the Russian people have long since redeemed by a sea of blood and mountains of corpses.
3. Not only did the Allies do nothing to help us to re-establish our capacity for defence; as we have already shown, they tried to destroy it by all the means in their power, increasing the internal disorganization, cutting us off from the last of our food reserves.
4. The Allies warned us that the Germans would seize the Siberian and Murmansk railways, the last two direct lines outside German control which connected us with the rest of the world; but in the end these lines were seized not by Germany, who was too far off to do so, but by our heroic Allies. In the Murmansk district and in Siberia the Allies are fighting not the Germans, who are not there, but Russian workers, whose Soviets they are everywhere destroying.

Everything that the press of your capitalists and their agents say in justification of the savage assault upon Russia is nothing but hypocrisy, intended to conceal the facts of the case. It is for other purposes that they are preparing their campaign against Russia. They have three aims in view: their first aim is the seizure of as much Russian territory as possible so that its wealth and its railways can be used to secure payment to French and English capital of the interest on loans; their second aim is the suppression of the workers' revolution for fear that it may inspire you, and show you how to throw off the yoke of capitalism. Their third aim is to create a new eastern front so as to divert German forces from the western front to Russian territory. The agents of your capitalists declare that this will weaken the pressure of the German legions on you and hasten the moment of victory over German imperialism. They lie: they were unable to defeat Germany when a great Russian army was fighting, which gave the Allies numerical superiority; how much less are they able to secure victory on the field of battle now that the Russian army is only just being created.

German imperialism can only be defeated when the imperialism of all States is defeated by the united onslaught of the world's proletariat. Not by carrying on the war, but by bringing it to an end, shall we achieve this object.

Then both you and the German workers will be freed of the fear of the foreign bourgeoisie and its plans of conquest: the ending of the war of nations and the beginning of the international civil war-the war of the exploited against the exploiters-will finally put an end to all kinds of injustice, social as well as national.

The attempts to draw Russia into war will not save you from bloodshed; they can only endanger the Russian workers, the Russian workers' and peasants' revolution-and nobody wants this more than the leaders of the German military party, who, being close neighbours to the Russian revolution, are more afraid than anybody else of its inflammatory sparks. By acting as the docile tools of your Governments in their criminal conspiracy against Russia, you, the workers of France and England, America and Italy, become the executioners of the workers' revolution.

The descendants of the Communards are to play the part of assistants to Gallifet. This is the role your masters are assigning to you, workers of France. The sons of the English workers who rose in a body when the English textile barons wanted to come to the aid of the American slaveowners are now to play the part of executioners of the Russian revolution-that is the depth of degradation to which your rulers want to bring you. You, workers of America, who always detested the despotism of the Tsars, you are now, at the bidding of the trust kings, to help in erecting a new Tsarism in Russia. This is the real issue, working men of America. And you, workers of Italy, you who followed with enthusiasm every manifestation of the proletarian war for emancipation, they want to make you share in the counter-revolutionary campaign against workers' Russia!

The workers of Russia stretch out their hands to you, proletarians of the Allied countries!

These men whose hands reek with the blood of the workmen of Kem, of Samara, of Tomsk, shot at the command of the leaders of the Murmansk landing, these organizers of the Czecho-Slovak rebellion, these are the people who cry that under German orders we are breaking the bonds which unite us to the peoples of France, England, Italy, America, and Belgium.

Too long have we calmly endured the mockery of the representatives of Allied imperialism; we allow people who once licked the boots of Tsarism to remain in Russia although they do not recognize the workers' Government. We took no reprisals against them, although the hand of their military missions was visible in every counter-revolutionary plot. And even now, after it has been proved that French officers are leading the Czecho-Slovaks, after the outrages in Murmansk, even now we have not protested by a single word against the presence of your diplomats on the territory of the Soviet Russia which they have not recognized. We have only requested their removal from Vologda to Moscow, so that we might protect them from attempts on their lives by people whom their misdeeds have moved to the deepest indignation.

We acted in this way only because we did not want to give them an excuse to tell you that we are breaking with you. And now, after the departure of the Allied Ambassadors, not a single hair will fall from the head of the peaceful citizens of your countries in our midst, who abide by the laws of the workers' and peasants' Republic. But we are convinced that should we retort to every blow of the rapacious 'Allies' by two blows, you would regard our action not only as legitimate defence, but also as the defence of your own interests, for the salvation of the Russian revolution is the common interest of the proletariat of all countries. We are certain that every measure taken against those who on Russian territory hatch plots against the Russian revolution will meet with your sincere sympathy, for these plots are directed against you as well as against us. Driven to fight Allied capitalism, which wishes to add new fetters to those fastened on us by German imperialism, we turn to you with the call:

Long live the solidarity of the workers of the world!

Long live the solidarity of the proletariat of France, England, America, and Italy, with the Russian proletariat!

Down with the bandits of international imperialism, long live the international revolution!

APPEAL OF THE COUNCIL OF PEOPLE'S COMMISSARS TO THE MOSLEMS OF RUSSIA AND THE EAST

3 December 1917

Kluchnikov & Sabanin, ii, p. 94 (dated 7 December)

Comrades! Brothers!

Great events are taking place in Russia! An end is drawing near to the murderous war, started by the bargainings of foreign Powers. The rule of the plunderers who exploit the peoples of the world is tottering. The ancient citadel of slavery and serfdom is crumbling under the blows of the Russian revolution. The world of violence and oppression is approaching its last days. A new world is being born, a world of the toilers and the liberated. At the head of this revolution stands the workers' and peasants' Government of Russia, the Council of People's Commissars.

Revolutionary councils of workers', soldiers', and peasants' deputies are scattered over the whole of Russia. Power in the country is in the hands of the people. The labouring masses of Russia burn with the single desire to achieve an honourable peace and to help the oppressed peoples of the world to win their freedom.

Russia is not alone in this sacred cause. The mighty call to freedom sounded by the Russian revolution has been taken up by all the toilers in the East and West. The peoples of Europe, exhausted by war, are already stretching out their hands to us, in our work for peace. The workers and soldiers of the West are already rallying under the banner of socialism, storming the strongholds of imperialism. Even far-off India, that land which has been oppressed by the 'enlightened' European robbers for so many centuries, has raised the standard of revolt, organizing its councils of deputies, throwing the hated yoke of slavery from its shoulders, and summoning the peoples of the East to the struggle and to freedom.

The empire of capitalist plunder and violence is falling in ruins. The ground is slipping from under the feet of the imperialist robbers.

In the face of these great events, we turn to you, toiling and disinherited Moslems of Russia and the East.

Moslems of Russia, Tatars of the Volga and the Crimea, Kirghiz and Sarts of Siberia and Turkestan, Turks and Tatars of TransCaucasia, Chechens and mountain Cossacks! All you, whose mosques and shrines have been destroyed, whose faith and customs have been violated by the Tsars and oppressors of Russia! Henceforward your beliefs and customs, your national and cultural institutions, are declared free and inviolable! Build your national life freely and without hindrance. It is your right. Know that your rights, like those of all the peoples of Russia, will be protected by the might of the revolution, by the Councils of Workers', Soldiers', and Peasants' Deputies!

Support this revolution and its authorized Government!

Moslems of the East! Persians, Turks, Arabs, and Hindus. All you in whose lives and property, in whose freedom and native land the rapacious European plunderers have for centuries traded! All you whose countries the robbers who began the war now desire to share among themselves! We declare that the secret treaties of the dethroned Tsar regarding the annexation of Constantinople, confirmed by the deposed Kerensky, are now null and void.

The Russian Republic and its Government, the Council of People's Commissars, are opposed to the seizure of foreign territory; Constantinople must remain in the hands of the Moslems.

We declare that the treaty for the partition of Persia is null and void. Immediately after the cessation of military operations the troops will be withdrawn from Persia and the Persians will be guaranteed the right freely to determine their own destiny.

We declare that the treaty for the partition of Turkey, which was to despoil it of Armenia, is null and void. Immediately after the cessation of military operations, the Armenians will be guaranteed the right freely to determine their political destiny.

It is not from Russia and its revolutionary Government that you have to fear enslavement, but from the European imperialist robbers, from those who laid waste your native lands and converted them into their colonies.

Overthrow these robbers and enslavers of your country! Now, when war and desolation are demolishing the pillars of the old order, when the entire world is blazing with indignation against the imperialist brigands, when the least spark of discontent bursts out in a mighty flame of revolution, when even the Indian Moslems, oppressed and tormented by the foreign yoke, are rising in revolt against their slave drivers-now it is impossible to keep silent. Lose no time in throwing off the yoke of the ancient oppressors of your land! Let them no longer violate your hearths! You must yourselves be masters in your own land! You yourselves must arrange your life as you yourselves see fit! You have the right to do this, for your fate is in your own hands!

Comrades! Brothers!

Advance firmly and resolutely towards a just and democratic peace!

We inscribe the liberation of the oppressed peoples of the world on our banners!

Moslems of Russia!

Moslems of the East!

We look to you for sympathy and support in the work of regenerating the world.

RESOLUTION OF THE FOURTH ALL-RUSSIAN (EXTRAORDINARY) SOVIET CONGRESS RATIFYING THE TREATY OF BREST-LITOVSK

15 March 1918
Lenin (i), xv, p. 183

The Congress ratifies the treaty of peace concluded by our representatives at Brest-Litovsk on 3 March 1918.

The Congress approves the action of the All-Russian Central Executive Committee and the Council of People's Commissars in concluding this incredibly oppressive, coercive, and humiliating peace, because we have no army and because of the extreme exhaustion of the people, who received no support from the bourgeoisie and the bourgeois intelligentsia; these latter indeed exploited the situation for rapacious class purposes.

The Congress also unconditionally approves the action of the peace delegation in refusing to discuss the details of the terms of peace proposed by the Germans, since these conditions were imposed on us as an ultimatum and with undisguised violence.

In the most emphatic manner the Congress puts before all workers, soldiers, and peasants, all the labouring and oppressed masses, the most vitally urgent and essential task of the present moment: to improve the activity and self-discipline of the workers, to create everywhere strong and well-ordered organizations to embrace, as far as possible, the entire production and distribution of goods, to conduct a merciless struggle against the chaos, disorganization, and devastation, which were the historically unavoidable consequence of the most cruel war, but which are at the same time the greatest obstacle to the final victory of socialism and the consolidation of the foundations of a socialist society.

Now, after the October revolution, after the downfall of the political power of the bourgeoisie in Russia, after we have torn up and published all the secret imperialist treaties, after the cancellation of foreign loans, after the offer by the workers' and peasants' Government of a just peace to all peoples without exception, Russia, having pulled itself out of the clutches of the imperialist war, has the right to declare that it will not take part in the plunder and subjection of foreign countries.

The Russian Soviet Federal Republic, unanimously condemning henceforth all wars of plunder, recognizes its right and its duty to defend the socialist fatherland against any possible attack on the part of any Imperialist Power.

The Congress therefore recognizes it as the unconditional duty of the working masses to exert all their forces to re-establish and to increase the capacity of our country to defend itself, to re-create its military power on the basis of a socialist militia and the universal training of all youths and adult citizens of both sexes in military knowledge and military affairs.

The Congress expresses its unshakeable conviction that the Soviet Government, which has steadfastly carried out all the obligations of international solidarity with the workers of all countries in their struggle against capitalism for socialism, will in the future too do everything in our power to help the international movement, to guard and to proceed more rapidly along the road leading mankind to deliverance from the yoke of capital and from bond slavery, to the creation of socialist society and an enduring and just peace between peoples.

The Congress is most deeply convinced that the international workers' revolution is close at hand, and that the complete triumph of the socialist proletariat is assured, notwithstanding that the imperialists of all countries will not hesitate to use the most barbarous means to suppress the socialist movement.

DECREE OF THE COUNCIL OF PEOPLE'S COMMISSARS BREAKING RELATIONS WITH RUMANIA

26 January 1918

Sobranie RSFSR, 1917-18, p. 247

The Rumanian oligarchy, covered in crimes, has opened hostilities against the Russian Republic. Accustomed to maintain its rule on the misery, the serfdom, and the blood of the Rumanian peasants and workers, the Rumanian monarchy tried to save itself, its landlords, and its bankers by seizing Bessarabia and turning it into a rampart against the powerful torrent of the Russian revolution. The crimes of the Rumanian military and civilian authorities are innumerable. Commissars and representatives of the revolutionary Russian troops are arrested and shot. Revolutionary troops are dying of hunger and throwing away their arms. In withdrawing to the rear they are exposed to artillery fire. In all these bloody crimes one of the leading roles is taken by the Commander-in-Chief on the Rumanian front, Shcherbachev.

As a protest and a warning the Council of People's Commissars ordered the short-term arrest of the Rumanian Ambassador; this step proved ineffective. The crimes are continuing.

The Council of People's Commissars resolves:

1. All diplomatic relations with Rumania are severed. The Rumanian Embassy and in general all agents of the Rumanian authorities are to leave the country by the shortest route.
2. The Rumanian gold reserve held in Moscow is not to be touched by the Rumanian oligarchy. The Soviet Government assumes responsibility for the safekeeping of this reserve and will hand it over to the Rumanian nation.
3. The former Commander-in-Chief on the Rumanian front, Shcherbachev, who has risen against the revolution, is declared an enemy of the people and an outlaw.

RESOLUTION OF THE THIRD ALL-RUSSIAN CONGRESS OF SOVIETS ON THE TERMS OF PEACE PROPOSED BY THE CENTRAL POWERS

27 January 1918

Stenograficheskii Otchet, p. 92

The All-Russian Congress of Soviets of Workers', Peasants', and Soldiers' Deputies confirms and approves all the statements and actions of the Soviet authorities directed towards the attainment of a universal democratic peace.

The All-Russian Congress declares that the conditions put forward by the Austro-German delegation constitute not only a violation of the principles of democracy but also a total negation of those fundamentals which were recognized by the delegations of the Central Empires in their declaration of 12 [25] December.

The Central Empires rule the Poles, the Lithuanians, half the Latvians, a part of the Ukrainians, White Russians, and Estonians, and have deprived them of their rights of effective self-determination, forcibly consolidating the overlordship of the privileged and propertied upper strata in their midst; thus the military occupation which the Central Empires intend to maintain even after the conclusion of a general peace is directly opposed to the realization of a democratic peace on the bases proclaimed by the Russian revolution.

The All-Russian Congress expresses its profound conviction that this annexationist policy will prove powerless to sever the labouring masses of Russia from the labouring masses of Germany and Austria-Hungary.

The All-Russian Congress sees in the powerful protest of the workers of Vienna, Lower Austria, and Hungary against an annexationist peace, and in the awakening revolutionary movement of the German proletariat, the best guarantee against an imperialist peace, based on enslavement, violence, and a disguised indemnity.

Proclaiming anew before the whole world the desire of the Russian people for an immediate cessation of hostilities, the All-Russian Congress instructs its delegation to support the principles of peace on the basis of the programme of the Russian revolution.

Long live an honest, democratic peace!
Long live the revolutionary brotherhood of the peoples!

V. I. Lenin

Declaration Of Rights Of The Working And Exploited People^[1]

Written: 3 January, 1918

First Published: 4 January, 1929 in *Pravda* No. 2 and *Izvestia* No. 2. **Source:** Lenin's *Collected Works*, Progress Publishers, Moscow, Volume 26, 1972, pp. 423-425

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The Constituent Assembly resolves:

- I. 1. Russia is hereby proclaimed a Republic of Soviets of Workers', Soldiers' and Peasants' Deputies. All power, centrally and locally, is vested in these Soviets.
2. The Russian Soviet Republic is established on the principle of a free union of free nations, as a federation of Soviet national republics.
- II. Its fundamental aim being to abolish all exploitation of man by man, to completely eliminate the division of society into classes, to mercilessly crush the resistance of the exploiters, to establish a socialist organisation of society and to achieve the victory of socialism in all countries, the Constituent Assembly further resolves:
 1. Private ownership of land is hereby abolished. All land together with all buildings, farm implements and other appurtenances of agricultural production, is proclaimed the property of the entire working people.
 2. The Soviet laws on workers' control and on the Supreme Economic Council are hereby confirmed for the purpose of guaranteeing the power of the working people over the exploiters and as a first step towards the complete conversion of the factories, mines, railways, and other means of production and transport into the property of the workers' and peasants' state.
 3. The conversion of all banks into the property of the workers' and peasants' state is hereby confirmed as one of the conditions for the emancipation of the working people from the yoke of capital.
 4. For the purpose of abolishing the parasitic sections of society, universal labour conscription is hereby instituted.

5. To ensure the sovereign power of the working people, and to eliminate all possibility of the restoration of the power of the exploiters, the arming of the working people, the creation of a socialist Red Army of workers and peasants and the complete disarming of the propertied classes are hereby decreed.

III. 1. Expressing its firm determination to wrest mankind from the clutches of finance capital and imperialism, which have in this most criminal of wars drenched the world in blood, the Constituent Assembly whole-heartedly endorses the policy pursued by Soviet power of denouncing the secret treaties, organising most extensive fraternisation with the workers and peasants of the armies in the war, and achieving at all costs, by revolutionary means, a democratic peace between the nations, without annexations and indemnities and on the basis of the free self-determination of nations.

2. With the same end in view, the Constituent Assembly insists on a complete break with the barbarous policy of bourgeois civilisation, which has built the prosperity of the exploiters belonging to a few chosen nations on the enslavement of hundreds of millions of working people in Asia, in the colonies in general, and in the small countries.

The Constituent Assembly welcomes the policy of the Council of People's Commissars in proclaiming the complete independence of Finland, commencing the evacuation of troops from Persia, and proclaiming freedom of self-determination for Armenia.^[2]

3. The Constituent Assembly regards the Soviet law on the cancellation of the loans contracted by the governments of the tsar, the landowners and the bourgeoisie as a first blow struck at international banking, finance capital, and expresses the conviction that Soviet power will firmly pursue this path until the international workers' uprising against the yoke of capital has completely triumphed.

IV. Having been elected on the basis of party lists drawn up prior to the October Revolution, when the people were not yet in a position to rise en masse against the exploiters, had not yet experienced the full strength of resistance of the latter in defence of their class privileges, and had not yet applied themselves in practice to the task of building socialist society, the Constituent Assembly considers that it would be fundamentally wrong, even formally, to put itself in opposition to Soviet power.

In essence the Constituent Assembly considers that now, when the people are waging the last fight against their exploiters, there can be no place for exploiters in any government body. Power must be vested wholly and entirely in the working people and their authorised representatives—the Soviets of Workers', Soldiers' and Peasants' Deputies.

Supporting Soviet power and the decrees of the Council of People's Commissars, the Constituent Assembly considers that its own task is confined to establishing the fundamental principles of the socialist reconstruction of society.

At the same time, endeavouring to create a really free and voluntary, and therefore all the more firm and stable, union of the working classes of all the

nations of Russia, the Constituent Assembly confines its own task to setting up the fundamental principles of a federation of Soviet Republics of Russia, while leaving it to the workers and peasants of each nation to decide independently at their own authoritative Congress of Soviets whether they wish to participate in the federal government and in the other federal Soviet institutions, and on what terms.

Footnotes

[1] The draft of the declaration was placed before the All-Russia Central Executive Committee on January 3 (16), 1918, and adopted as a basis by a majority with two against and one abstention. It was referred to a Co-ordinating Commission for final drafting. The declaration was adopted by the All-Russia Central Executive Committee and published in *Izvestia* on January 4 (17). On behalf of the Committee it was read out by Sverdlov at the first sitting of the Constituent Assembly on January 5 (18) and motioned for approval. The counter-revolutionary majority of the Assembly rejected the motion to discuss it. On January 12 (25), it was approved by the Third All-Russia Congress of Soviets and subsequently formed the basis of the Soviet Constitution.

Paragraph 2 of Lenin's manuscript was altered by Stalin. The paragraph beginning with the words "In essence the Constituent Assembly considers..." was written by Bukharin and edited by Lenin.

[2] On December 6 (19), 1917, the Finnish Diet adopted a declaration of Finland's independence. In accordance with the nationalities policy of the Soviet state, the Council of Peoples Commissars, on December 18 (31), 1917, issued a decree on Finland's independence. At the meeting of the government, Lenin personally handed the text of the decree to Prime Minister Svinhufvud, who led a Finnish Government delegation. On December 22, 1917 (January 4, 1918), the decree on Finland's independence was approved by the All-Russia Central Executive Committee.

On December 19, 1917 (January 1, 1918), in conformity with a treaty concluded between Russia and Germany, Austria-Hungary, Turkey and Bulgaria at Brest-Litovsk on December 2 (15), the Soviet Government proposed to the Persian Government to elaborate a common plan for the withdrawal of Russian troops from Persia.

On December 29, 1917 (January 11, 1918), the government issued the Decree on Turkish Armenia, which was published in *Pravda* No. 227 on December 31, 1917 (January 13, 1918).

Declaration of the Rights of the People of Russia

First Published: November 2 (15), 1917. First English translation was published in *The Nation* on December 28, 1919.

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Transcription/Markup: Biswaroop Bhowmick/Brian Baggins

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The October revolution of the workmen and peasants began under the common banner of emancipation. The peasants are being emancipated from the power of the landowners, for there is no longer the landowner's property right in the land — it has been abolished. The soldiers and sailors are being emancipated from the power of autocratic generals, for generals will henceforth be elective and subject to recall. The workingmen are being emancipated from the whims and arbitrary will of the capitalists, for henceforth there will be established the control of the workers over mills and factories. Everything living and capable of life is being emancipated from the hateful shackles. There remain only the peoples of Russia, who have suffered and are suffering oppression and arbitrariness, and whose emancipation must immediately be begun, whose liberation must be effected resolutely and definitely.

During the period of czarism the peoples of Russia were systematically incited against one another. The results of such a policy are known; massacres and pogroms on the one hand, slavery of peoples on the other.

There can be and there must be no return to this disgraceful policy of instigation. Henceforth the policy of a voluntary and honest union of the peoples of Russia must be substituted.

In the period of imperialism; after the February revolution, when the power was transferred to the hands of the Cadet bourgeoisie, the naked policy of instigation gave way to one of cowardly distrust of the peoples of Russia, to a policy of fault-finding and provocation, of "freedom" and "equality" of peoples. The results of such a policy are known; the growth of national enmity, the impairment of mutual trust.

An end must be put to this unworthy policy of falsehood and distrust, of fault-finding and provocation. Henceforth it must be replaced by an open and honest policy which leads to complete mutual trust of the people of Russia. Only as the result of such a trust can there be formed an honest and lasting union of the peoples

of Russia. Only as the result of such a union can the workmen and peasants of the peoples of Russia be cemented into one revolutionary force able to resist all attempts on the part of the imperialist-annexationist bourgeoisie.

Starting with these assumptions, the first Congress of Soviets, in June of this year, proclaimed the right of the peoples of Russia to free self-determination.

The second Congress of Soviets, in October of this year, reaffirmed this inalienable right of the peoples of Russia more decisively and definitely.

The united will of this Congresses, The Councils of the People's Commissars, resolved to base of their activity upon the question of the nationalities of Russia, as expressed in the following principles:

1. The equality and sovereignty of the peoples of Russia.
2. The right of the peoples of Russia to free self-determination, even to the point of separation and the formation of an independent state.
3. The abolition of any and all national and national-religious privileges and disabilities.
4. The free development of national minorities and ethnographic groups inhabiting the territory of Russia.

The concrete decrees that follow from these principles will be immediately elaborated after the setting up of a Commission of Nationality Affairs.

In the name of the Russian Republic,

Chairman of the Council of People's Commissars, V.
Ulianov (Lenin).
People's Commissar on Nationality Affairs, Josef
Dzhugashvili (Stalin).

Sovnarkom
Decree Decree Declaring Agricultural Tools and Machinery a State
Monopoly

Written: November 30/December 13, 1917

First Published: *Sbornik dekretov i postanovlenii po narodnomu khoziaistvu. 25 oktiabria 1917 g.-25 oktiabria 1918 g.*, Moscow, 1918, p. 244.

Source: James Bunyan and H.H. Fisher, *The Bolshevik revolution, 1917-1918: Documents and materials*, Stanford University Press; London: H. Milford, Oxford University Press, 1934, p. 336.

Translated: Emanuel Aronsberg

Transcription/Markup: Zdravko Saveski

Online Version: marxists.org 2017

1. In order to provide villages with the necessary farming implements, all machinery and tools, whether already made or in the process of manufacture or importation from abroad, are declared to be a state monopoly from this time forth.

2. The distribution of machinery and tools is to be carried out in accordance with the rules to be issued separately through the Soviet organs, land committees, and other democratic organizations.

V. ULIANOV (LENIN)

President of the Sovnarkom A.

SCHLICHTER

People's Commissar of Food

**Second All-Russia Congress of Soviets of Workers' and Soldiers'
Deputies
Decree on Abolishment of Capital Punishment**

Written: October 26/November 8, 1917

First Published: *Vtoroi Vserossiiskii Sezd Sovetov R. i S.D.*, p. 94.

Source: James Bunyan and H.H. Fisher, *The Bolshevik revolution, 1917-1918: Documents and materials*, Stanford University Press; London: H. Milford, Oxford University Press, 1934, p. 124.

Translated: Emanuel Aronsberg

Transcription/Markup: Zdravko Saveski

Online Version: marxists.org 2017

Capital punishment, restored by Kerensky on the front, is hereby abolished.

Fullest freedom of agitation on the front is restored. All soldiers and revolutionary officers who are now under arrest charged with a so-called "political crime" are to be released immediately.

Central Executive Committee

Decree on Abolition of Class Distinctions and Civil Ranks

Written: November 10/23, 1917

First Published: *Sobranie Uzakonenii i Rasporiazhenii Rabochego i Krestianskogo Pravitelstva*, 1917, No. 3, pp. 35-36.

Source: James Bunyan and H.H. Fisher, *The Bolshevik revolution, 1917-1918: Documents and materials*, Stanford University Press; London: H. Milford, Oxford University Press, 1934, p. 279-280.

Translated: Emanuel Aronsberg

Transcription/Markup: Zdravko Saveski

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1. All classes and class distinctions which have hitherto existed in Russia, class privileges and class limitations, class organizations and institutions, as well as all civil ranks are abolished.

2. All estates (noble, merchant, commoner, peasant, etc.), titles (prince, count, etc.), and designations of civil ranks (privy councilor, state councilor, etc.) are abolished, and in their places the inhabitants of Russia are to have one name common to all--citizens of the Russian Republic.

3. Property of the nobility^[1] is to be transferred at once to the corresponding zemstvo institutions.

4. Properties of merchants' and commoners' associations are to be transferred at once to the municipalities.

5. All class institutions, transactions, records, and archives are to be transferred at once to the municipal and zemstvo institutions.

6. All laws [relating to class institutions] are repealed.

7. The present decree is to go into effect on the day of its publication and to be put into effect at once by the local Soviets of Workers', Soldiers', and Peasants' Deputies.

The present decree has been confirmed by the Central Executive Committee of the Soviets of Workers' and Soldiers' Deputies at its meeting of November 23, 1917.

YA. SVERDLOV

ULIANOV (LENIN)

President of the Central Executive Committee V.

President of the Soviet of People's Commissars

Notes

[1] Of the nobility as a class, such as schools, clubs, etc.

Sovnarkom

Decree on Abolition of Existing Legal Institutions

Written: November 24/December 7, 1917

First Published: *Sobranie Uzakonenii i Rasporiazhenii Rabochego i Krestianskogo Pravitelstva*, 1917, No. 4, pp. 49-51.

Source: James Bunyan and H.H. Fisher, *The Bolshevik revolution, 1917-1918: Documents and materials*, Stanford University Press; London: H. Milford, Oxford University Press, 1934, pp. 291-292.

Translated: Emanuel Aronsberg

Transcription/Markup: Zdravko Saveski

Online Version: marxists.org 2017

The Soviet of People's Commissars herewith resolves:

1. To abolish all existing general legal institutions, such as district courts, courts of appeal, and the Senate with all its departments, military and naval courts of all grades, and commercial courts; to replace all these institutions with courts established on the basis of democratic elections

2. To abolish the existing institution of Justices of the Peace and to replace the Justices of the Peace, heretofore elected by indirect vote, by local courts represented by a permanent local judge and two jurors summoned for each session from a special list of jurors. Local judges are henceforth to be elected on the basis of direct democratic elections, and until these elections have been held they shall be provisionally appointed by district and volost Soviets, or, in the absence of such, by uezd, city, or gubernia Soviets of Workers', Soldiers', and Peasants' Deputies

3. To abolish the existing institutions of investigating magistrates, the procurator's office, counselors-at-law, and private attorneys.

Pending the reformation of the entire system of legal procedure, preliminary investigations in criminal cases will be made by local judges singly, but his orders of detention and indictment must be confirmed by the decision of the entire local court.

The functions of prosecutors and counsels for the defense, which may begin even with the preliminary investigation, may be performed by all citizens of moral integrity, regardless of sex, who enjoy civil rights.....

5. Local courts will try cases in the name of the Russian Republic and will be guided in their rulings and verdicts by the laws of the deposed governments only in so far as those laws have not been annulled by the revolution and do not contradict the revolutionary conscience and the revolutionary conceptions of right.

Note: All those laws shall be considered void which contradict either the decrees of the Central Executive Committee of Soviets of Workers', Soldiers', and Peasants' Deputies and the Workers' and Peasants' Government, or the minimum program of the Russian Social-Democratic Labor Party and the party of Socialist-Revolutionists.

6. In all disputed civil and criminal cases the parties may resort to the arbitration court. The procedure of the arbitration court will be determined by a special decree.

7. The right of pardon and the restitution of rights of persons convicted in criminal cases will belong henceforth to judicial authorities.

8. In order to fight counter-revolution as well as to try cases against profiteering, speculation, sabotage, and other abuses of merchants, manufacturers, officials, and other persons, revolutionary tribunals of workmen and peasants are hereby established. [These tribunals will] consist of a chairman and six jurors, which are to serve in turn and are to be elected by the gubernia and uezd Soviets of Workers', Soldiers', and Peasants' Deputies.

For the conduct of the preliminary investigation of such cases, special investigating commissions will be formed under the above Soviets[1] _

V. ULIANOV (LENIN), President of the Sovnarkom

A. SCHLICHTER, L. TROTSKY, A. SHLIAPNIKOV, I. DZHUGASHVILI (STALIN),
N. AVILOV (GLEBOV), P. STUCHKA, Commissars

Notes

[1] A more detailed decree on the subject of the People's Court was published by the Central Executive Committee on March 7, 1918, in S.U.R. [*Sobranie Uzakonenii i Rasporiazhenii Rabochego i Krestianskogo Pravitelstva*], 1918, No. 26, pp. 401-404.

Central Executive Committee Decree on Annulment of State Loans

Written: February 10, 1918

First Published: *Sbornik dekretov i postanovlenii po narodnomu khoziaistvu. 25 oktiabria 1917 g.-25 oktiabria 1918 g.*, Moscow, 1918, p. 875.

Source: James Bunyan and H.H. Fisher, *The Bolshevik revolution, 1917-1918: Documents and materials*, Stanford University Press; London: H. Milford, Oxford University Press, 1934, pp. 602-603.

Translated: Emanuel Aronsberg

Transcription/Markup: Zdravko Saveski

Online Version: marxists.org 2017

1. All state loans made by the governments of the Russian landowners and bourgeoisie are hereby annulled (abolished) as from December 1917. The December coupons of these loans are not subject to payment.
2. Guaranties given by the said governments on loans made by different enterprises and institutions are likewise annulled.
3. All foreign loans without exception are unconditionally annulled.
4. Short term notes and State Treasury bonds retain their value. Interest on them will not be paid, but the bonds themselves are to circulate as legal tender.
5. Citizens of small means who hold certificates of not more than 10,000 rubles (nominal value) of annulled internal state loans are to receive in exchange certificates of the new loan of the Russian Socialist Federated Soviet Republic up to but not exceeding 10,000 rubles. There will be a special announcement of the terms of the loan.
6. Deposits made in the state savings banks and interest on them are not disturbed. All bonds of the annulled loans belonging to savings banks are transferred to the debit books of the Russian Federated Soviet Republic.
7. Co-operatives, municipalities, and other democratic and public service institutions which own bonds of the annulled loans will be indemnified in accordance with the rules to be determined by the Supreme Council of National Economy in co-operation with representatives of the above institutions, provided it can be proved that the bonds were acquired prior to the publication of the present decree.

Note: Local organs of the Supreme Council of National Economy shall determine whether the institutions presenting a claim are of a democratic or public service

character.

8. The general liquidation of the state loans is in the hands of the Supreme Council of National Economy.

9. All detailed matters of liquidation are handled by the State Bank, which is to proceed at once to register all state bonds in the hands of different owners and other interest-bearing securities, irrespective of whether or not they are subject to annulment.

10. The local Soviets of Workers', Soldiers', and Peasants' Deputies, in agreement with the local councils of national economy, are to form commissions to determine what citizens fall within the category of [those having] small means.

The commissions have the right to annul completely unearned savings, even if the sum does not exceed 5,000 rubles.[1]

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YA. SVERDLOV

Chairman of the All-Russian Central Executive Committee

Notes

[1]According to official data the general state indebtedness at the close of 1917 was sixty billion rubles. A considerable portion of that debt was in the form of short term treasury notes. . . . Of the sixty billion rubles about onefourth were foreign loans, distributed as follows (in million rubles):

England	.....	7,500
France	.....	5,500
Germany	.....	1,250
Holland	.....	750
U.S.A.	.....	500
Japan	.....	200
Switzerland	.....	200
Italy	.....	100
Total	.....	16,000

(From an article by Bronsky in *Pravda*, No. 28, February 17, 1918, p. 1.) Pasvolsky and Moulton place the foreign indebtedness at 13,823 millions of rubles and give the following figures as to the distribution of the debt by countries: pre-war government debt, France 80 per cent, Great Britain 14 per cent; industrial securities, France 32 per cent, Great Britain 25 per cent, Germany 16 per cent, Belgium 15 per cent, United States 6 per cent; war debt, Great Britain 70 per cent, France 19 per cent, United States 7 per cent. (Russian Debts and Russian Reconstruction, New York, 1924, pp. 20-22.) 24

Sovnarkom

Decree on Appropriation for the Support of World Revolution

Written: December 13/26, 1917

First Published: *Sobranie Uzakonenii i Rasporiazhenii Rabochego i Krestianskogo Pravitelstva*, 1917, No. 8, p. 119.

Source: James Bunyan and H.H. Fisher, *The Bolshevik revolution, 1917-1918: Documents and materials*, Stanford University Press; London: H. Milford, Oxford University Press, 1934, p. 285.

Translated: Emanuel Aronsberg

Transcription/Markup: Zdravko Saveski

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Taking into consideration the fact that Soviet power bases itself on principles of international solidarity of the proletariat and on the brotherhood of the toilers of all countries; that the struggle against war and imperialism can lead toward complete victory only if waged on an international scale, the Soviet of People's Commissars considers it necessary to offer assistance by all possible means, including money, to the left international wing of the labor movement of all countries, regardless of whether these countries are at war or in alliance with Russia or are neutral.

For this reason the Soviet of People's Commissars decides to grant two million rubles for the needs of the revolutionary international movement and to put it at the disposal of the foreign representatives of the Commissariat of Foreign Affairs.

V. ULIANOV (LENIN)

President of the Soviet of People's Commissars L.

TROTSKY

People's Commissar of Foreign Affairs

Sovnarkom

Decree on Confiscation of Capital Stock of Private Banks

Written: February 8, 1918

First Published: *Sobranie Uzakonenii i Rasporiazhenii Rabochego i Krestianskogo Pravitelstva*, 1918, No. 19, pp. 286-87.

Source: James Bunyan and H.H. Fisher, *The Bolshevik revolution, 1917-1918: Documents and materials*, Stanford University Press; London: H. Milford, Oxford University Press, 1934, p. 601.

Translated: Emanuel Aronsberg

Transcription/Markup: Zdravko Saveski

Online Version: marxists.org 2017

1. Capital stocks which belonged to private banks are hereby transferred without reserve to the State Bank of the Russian Republic.

2. All bank shares are annulled and all payment of dividends is absolutely discontinued.

3. Present holders of bank shares are to deliver these shares to the local branches of the State Bank.

4. Owners of bank shares who do not have their shares on hand are to submit memoranda indicating the exact place where these shares may be found.

5. Owners of bank shares who fail to deliver their shares or to submit memoranda within two weeks from the day of publication of this decree will have all their property confiscated.

6. All transactions and transfers of bank shares are absolutely forbidden. Those guilty of such acts will be punished by three years imprisonment.

V. ULJANOV (LENIN)

President of the Sovnarkom

Sovnarkom

Decree on Consumers' Co-Operatives

Written: April 10, 1918

First Published: *Sobranie Uzakonenii i Raspriazhenii Rabochego i Krestianskogo Pravitelstva*, 1918, No. 32, pp. 393-94.

Source: James Bunyan and H.H. Fisher, *The Bolshevik revolution, 1917-1918: Documents and materials*, Stanford University Press; London: H. Milford, Oxford University Press, 1934, pp. 632-633.

Translated: Emanuel Aronsberg

Transcription/Markup: Zdravko Saveski

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1. The Consumers' Co-operatives are to serve the interests of the entire local population.

All trading houses supplying the population with articles of consumption are to be taxed by the treasury to the extent of 5 per cent of their entire turnover. Members of consumers' societies are to be exempt from that tax and are to receive a refund of 5 per cent on their yearly purchases.

2. Those without funds and wishing to join a consumers' society may do so by paying a minimum membership fee (not more than fifty kopeks). They may acquire membership shares by letting the 5 per cent refund accumulate

3. Every region or locality is to have its separate consumers' society.

4. Only two Consumers' Co-operatives may function within any given place or territorial unit, one for the general public and one for the working class.

5. All regulations coming either from the central or from the local organs of the Soviet Government, especially those of the departments of food supply which deal with the distribution of products, etc., are applicable both to private trading concerns and to co-operative organizations.

6. Representatives of unions of consumers' societies are to take part in the work of all central and local government organs of supply, supervising private trade enterprises, and putting them under state control whenever necessary

7. Owners or managers of private trade or industrial enterprises cannot be on the board of directors of consumers' societies.

8. Co-operatives which succeed in organizing the entire population within a given territory will be granted certain privileges in regard to taxes.

9. The carrying out of the above principles will be undertaken by the co-operatives under supervision of the government organs of food supply.

10. In proportion as the co-operatives are supplied with commodities the attempt will be made to introduce a new wage system by which payment will be made in coupons which will entitle their holders to receive from the co-operative stores certain articles of consumption

12. The consumers' societies are to assist the Soviet Government in effecting the transfer of money belonging to private individuals and institutions to the State Bank. The consumers' societies will initiate that movement by depositing at once all their capital in the State Bank. The People's Commissariat of Finance will guarantee them complete freedom to dispose of this capital as they wish.

13. In proportion as the trade machinery and economic resources of the consumers' societies develop, these societies will be charged by the government with the business of supplying and manufacturing commodities under the supervision of the Supreme Council of National Economy.

V. ULIANOV (LENIN)

President of the Soviet of People's Commissars

Sovnarkom

Decree on Discontinuance of Interest and Dividend Payments

Written: December 29, 1917/January 11, 1918

First Published: *Obzor finansovogo zakonodatelstva, 1917-1921 g.g.*, Petrograd, 1921, p. 15.

Source: James Bunyan and H.H. Fisher, *The Bolshevik revolution, 1917-1918: Documents and materials*, Stanford University Press; London: H. Milford, Oxford University Press, 1934, p. 326.

Translated: Emanuel Aronsberg

Transcription/Markup: Zdravko Saveski

Online Version: marxists.org 2017

1. Until the issuing of special rulings concerning the nationalization of industry all payments of interest on investments and dividends on shares will be discontinued.
2. All transactions in bonds are prohibited.
3. Those violating rule 2 of this decree will be criminally liable and their property will be confiscated.

Sovnarkom

Decree on Elections for the Constituent Assembly

Written: October 27/November 9, 1917

First Published: *Izvestiia*, No. 209, November 10, 1917, p. 2.

Source: James Bunyan and H.H. Fisher, *The Bolshevik revolution, 1917-1918: Documents and materials*, Stanford University Press; London: H. Milford, Oxford University Press, 1934, p. 341.

Translated: Emanuel Aronsberg

Transcription/Markup: Zdravko Saveski

Online Version: marxists.org 2017

In the name of the Government of the Republic, chosen by the All-Russian Congress of Workers' and Soldiers' Deputies with the participation of the Peasants' Deputies, the Soviet of People's Commissars decrees:

1. Elections to the Constituent Assembly shall be held on the day set, November 25.
2. All election committees, institutions of local self-government, Soviets of Workers', Soldiers', and Peasants' Deputies, and soldiers' organizations at the front should make every effort to insure free and legal elections

VLADIMIR ULIANOV (LENIN)

President of the Sovnarkom

Sovnarkom

Decree on Establishment of the Extraordinary Commission to Fight Counter-Revolution

Written: December 7/20, 1917

First Published: *Pravda*, No. 290, December 18, 1927, p. 2.

Source: James Bunyan and H.H. Fisher, *The Bolshevik revolution, 1917-1918: Documents and materials*, Stanford University Press; London: H. Milford, Oxford University Press, 1934, pp. 297-298.

Translated: Emanuel Aronsberg

Transcription/Markup: Zdravko Saveski

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The Commission is to be named the All-Russian Extraordinary Commission and is to be attached to the Soviet of People's Commissars.^[1] [This commission] is to make war on counter-revolution and sabotage

The duties of the Commission will be:

1. To persecute and break up all acts of counter-revolution and sabotage all over Russia, no matter what their origin.
2. To bring before the Revolutionary Tribunal all counter-revolutionists and saboteurs and to work out a plan for fighting them.
3. To make preliminary investigation only-enough to break up [the counter-revolutionary act]. The Commission is to be divided into sections: (a) the information [section], (b) the organization section (in charge of organizing the fight against counter-revolution all over Russia) with branches, and (c) the fighting section.

The Commission will be formed tomorrow The Commission is to watch the press, saboteurs, strikers, and the Socialist-Revolutionists of the Right. Measures [to be taken against these counter-revolutionists are] confiscation, confinement, deprivation of [food] cards, publication of the names of the enemies of the people, etc.

Notes

[1] This commission will be referred to as the Cheka, which is the Russian abbreviation of *Chrezvychainaia Komissiiia*. The commission was also known as *Chrezvychaika*.

Central Executive Committee

Decree on Establishment of the Supreme Council of National Economy

Written: December 1/14, 1917

First Published: *Sobranie Uzakonenii i Rasporiazhenii Rabocheho i Krestianskogo Pravitelstva*, 1917, No. 5, pp. 73-74.

Source: James Bunyan and H.H. Fisher, *The Bolshevik revolution, 1917-1918: Documents and materials*, Stanford University Press; London: H. Milford, Oxford University Press, 1934, pp. 314-315.

Translated: Emanuel Aronsberg

Transcription/Markup: Zdravko Saveski

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1. The Supreme Council of National Economy is established [as an organ] attached to the Soviet of People's Commissars.

2. The work of the Supreme Council of National Economy is to organize the national economy and state finances. With that in view the Supreme Council of National Economy will draw up general standards and plans for the regulation of the economic life of the country, coordinating and unifying the activities of the local and central regulating organs (committees on fuel, metals, transport, food-supply committee, and others) that are attached to the People's Commissariats (trade and industry, food, agriculture, finance, war-navy, etc.), the All-Russian Soviet of Workers' Control, the factory-shop committees, and the trade unions.

3. The Supreme Council of National Economy has the right to confiscate, requisition, sequester, and consolidate various branches of industry, commerce, and other enterprises in the field of production, distribution, and state finance.

4. The Supreme Council of National Economy is to take charge of all existing institutions for the regulation of the economic life and has the right to reorganize them.

5. The Supreme Council of National Economy is to include [representatives of] (a) the All-Russian Soviet of Workers' Control, (b) the Commissariats, and (c) experts invited in an advisory capacity.

6. The Supreme Council of National Economy is divided into sections and departments (fuel, metal, demobilization [of industry], finance, etc.). The number of the sections and departments and their respective functions are determined at a general meeting of the Supreme Council of National Economy.

7. The different departments of the Supreme Council of National Economy occupy

themselves with the regulation of specific branches of the national economy, and prepare measures for the respective commissariats.

8. The Supreme Council of National Economy selects from its own body a bureau of fifteen members to co-ordinate the work of the different sections and departments and to carry out the tasks that need immediate attention.

9. All legislative measures and important undertakings having to do with the regulation of the economic life as a whole are brought before the Sovnarkom through the Supreme Council of National Economy.

10. The Supreme Council of National Economy co-ordinates and directs the activities of the local economic departments of the Soviets of Workers', Soldiers', and Peasants' Deputies, including the local organs of Workers' Control, as well as local agencies of the Commissariats of Labor, Trades and Industry, Food, etc.

In the absence of local agencies referred to above, the Supreme Council of National Economy organizes those of its own.

All the rulings of the Supreme Council of National Economy are binding on the economic departments of the local Soviets as the agents of the Supreme Council of National Economy.

YA. SVERDLOV, Chairman of the Central Executive Committee V.

ULIANOV (LENIN), President of the Sovnarkom

L. TROTSKY, I. STALIN, AVILOV (GLEBOV), People's Commissars

Sovnarkom

Decree on Exchange of Commodities to Increase the Supply of Grain

Written: April 2, 1918

First Published: *Sobranie Uzakonenii i Rasporiazhenii Rabocheho i Krestianskogo Pravitelstva*, 1918, No. 30, p. 375.

Source: James Bunyan and H.H. Fisher, *The Bolshevik revolution, 1917-1918: Documents and materials*, Stanford University Press; London: H. Milford, Oxford University Press, 1934, pp. 665-666.

Translated: Emanuel Aronsberg

Transcription/Markup: Zdravko Saveski

Online Version: marxists.org 2017

1. In order to increase the supply of grain and other food products, the People's Commissariat of Food is charged with the task of organizing an orderly exchange of commodities on a nation-wide scale within the limits indicated below.

2. Some of the following commodities may be used for exchange: dry goods, threads, notions, leather, harnesses, boots, galoshes, matches, soap, candles, kerosene, lubricating oil, agricultural machines, wire, sheet iron, assorted iron, horseshoes, nails, binding twine, rope, glass, utensils, tobacco, tobacco products, salt, molasses, sugar, tea, and their substitutes.

Note: This list can be supplemented and revised upon the agreement of the Commissariat of Food and the Supreme Council of National Economy.

3. The commodities listed in Article 2 are transferred to [the control of] the Commissariat of Food in the quantities necessary to carry out the plan stated above. This transference is to be made on request of the Commissariat of Food in accordance with the plan worked out by the Commissar of Food and the Chairman of the Supreme Council of National Economy. The central and local organs for distributing these commodities are to carry out the instructions of the Commissariat of Food.

Note: Some of the goods mentioned which are not listed among those to be exchanged are to be distributed by the respective organs in accordance with the plans approved by the Commissariat of Food and by the Supreme Council of National Economy.

4. The Commissariat of Food will issue special instructions to determine the procedure and rules concerning exchanging [manufactured] goods for grain and

other food products. These instructions should aim: (a) to attract the village poor

to help in the organizing of interchange of commodities by handing over to the volost or some other unit for further distribution among the needy population the goods to be exchanged for grain; (b) to work out a plan that will guarantee to the Soviet Republic the return of all the money spent on this interchange of commodities and will draw out of the village bourgeoisie as much paper money as possible.

5. Local food organs and other authorized organizations are responsible for carrying out the interchange of goods in accordance with the instructions of the Commissariat of Trade.

6. Without the permission of the Commissariat of Food or its authorized organs no exchange of goods is allowed.

7. Persons guilty of exchanging goods for grain without authority or failing to comply with this decree are subject to arrest and trial.

V. ULIANOV (LENIN)

President of the Sovnarkom

A. TSIURUPA, G. PETROVSKY, V. MILIUTIN

People's Commissars

Central Executive Committee Decree on Food Procurement

Written: May 13, 1918

Source: [Seventeen Moments in Soviet History](#)

Translated: Emanuel Aronsberg **Transcription/**

Markup: Zdravko Saveski **Online Version:**

marxists.org 2017

A ruinous process of disintegration of the food procurement of the country-the heavy legacy of a four-year war- continues to extend and aggravate the existing distress.

While the consuming provinces are starving, great stocks of cereals, including the 1916 harvest and the 1917 harvest which has not yet been threshed, lie, as habitually, in the producing provinces. These stocks are in the hands of rural kulaks and wealthy people, in the hands of the rural bourgeoisie. Replete and satisfied, having accumulated an enormous mass of money earned in the years of war, this rural bourgeoisie remains deaf and unresponsive in the face of the moaning of starving workers and poor peasants; it refuses to dispatch cereals to the state station points with the aim of forcing the state to increase again and again the price of cereals, while at the same time it sells for its own benefit cereals in the provinces of fabulous prices to speculators and bagmen.

The obstinacy of the greedy kulaks and wealthy peasants must be brought to an end. The food procurement experience of the last years has shown that the failure to apply fixed prices on cereals and a grain monopoly facilitates the feeding of a small group of our capitalists by making food inaccessible to several millions of toiling people and exposing them to the inevitability of death by starvation.

The reply to the violence of grain holders upon the rural poor must be violence upon the bourgeoisie.

Not one single pood of grain must remain in the hands of the grain holders, except the quantity needed for sowing and subsistence of the household until the next harvest.

And it is necessary to implement all this immediately, especially after the occupation of the Ukraine by the Germans, as we must content ourselves with the resources of cereals which are barely sufficient for sowing and survival.

Taking into account this situation and considering that only by rigorous accounting and even distribution of all grain stocks of Russia is it possible to get out

of the food provision crisis, the All-Russian Executive Central Committee has decreed:

(1) By keeping firmly the grain monopoly and fixed prices and also carrying out a merciless struggle against grain speculators and bagmen, to compel each grain holder to declare the surrender of all surpluses, except the quantity needed for consumption on established norms until the next harvest, in one week after the notification of this decree in each volost. The rules applying to the orders will be defined by the local food procurement organs of Narkomprod.

(2) To invite all toiling people and unpropertied peasants to unite immediately in a merciless struggle against the kulaks.

(3) To declare enemies of the nation all people having surpluses of grain and not handing them over to the station points and even dissipating the stocks of cereals for their own home brew instead of delivering them to the collecting stations; to bring them before the Revolutionary Courts, put them in jail for not less than ten years, confiscate all their belongings, banish them out of the obshchina and condemn the holders of home brew to forced labor in public works.

(4) In the case of discovery of any surplus of grain which had not been declared for delivery, according to point 1, grain will be requisitioned without payment, and half of the value which was due at fixed prices for the undeclared surplus will be paid to the people who took part in discovering the surpluses, after they have been in fact received in the collecting stations, and the other half to the Agricultural Community. Information about discovery of surpluses has to be reported to the local food procurement organs.

Considering also that the struggle against the food procurement crisis requires the adoption of rapid and decisive measures, that the most fruitful realization of such measures requires in turn the centralization of all decisions on food matters into a single institution, and that such an institution is the People's Commissariat of Food Procurement, the All-Russian Executive Central Committee has decreed-for the purpose of a more successful struggle against the food crisis-to attribute to the People's Commissar of Food Procurement the following powers:

(1) To issue obligatory decisions on food procurement matters, exceeding the normal limits of competence of the People's Commissar of Food Procurement.

(2) To abrogate instructions of local food procurement organs and institutions contradicting plans and activity of the People's Commissar of Food Procurement.

(3) To solicit from institutions and organizations of all departments the indisputable and immediate fulfillment of the commissar's decisions on food procurement matters.

(4) To make use of armed troops in the case of resistance to requisition of grain and other foodstuffs.

(5) To dismiss or reorganize the food procurement organs in the localities if they oppose the People's Commissariat of Food Procurement's decisions.

(6) To discharge, dismiss, take before the Revolutionary Court, and submit to arrest appointees and employees of all departments and social organizations, if they interfere in a disruptive way with the commissariat's decisions.

(7) To transfer the present powers, except the right to arrest of point 6, to other people and institutions in the localities upon authorization of the People's Commissariat of Food Procurement.

(8) All measures of the People's Commissars of Food Procurement related by their nature to the People's Commissariat of Transport and to VSNKh are implemented upon agreement with the corresponding departments.

(9) All instructions and decisions of the People's Commissariat of Food Procurement, issued on account of the present powers, are examined by its collegium which has the right-without interrupting their execution-to appeal against them before the Soviet of People's Commissars.

(10) The present decree comes into life from the day of its signing and will be notified by telegraph.

Sovnarkom

Decree on Formation of the Worker-Peasant Red Army

Written: January 15/28, 1918

First Published: *Sobranie Uzakonenii i Rasporiazhenii Rabochego i Krestianskogo Pravitelstva*, 1918, No. 17, p. 259.

Source: James Bunyan and H.H. Fisher, *The Bolshevik revolution, 1917-1918: Documents and materials*, Stanford University Press; London: H. Milford, Oxford University Press, 1934, p. 568-569.

Translated: Emanuel Aronsberg

Transcription/Markup: Zdravko Saveski

Online Version: marxists.org 2017

I

The Soviet of People's Commissars hereby resolves to organize on the following principles a new army to be known as the *Worker-Peasant Red Army*:

1. The Worker-Peasant Army is to be made up of the more classconscious and organized elements of the toiling masses.
2. Admission to the army is open to all Russian citizens of eighteen years and over. Admission is by recommendation of the army committees or democratic organizations, standing on the platform of the Soviet Government, party and labor organizations, or at least by two members of such organizations

II

1. Soldiers of the Worker-Peasant Army are fully provided for by the state and receive in addition fifty rubles a month.
2. Dependents of Red Army soldiers will be provided for according to the local standards as worked out by the local organs of the Soviet Government.

III

The Supreme Commanding organ of the Worker-Peasant Army is the Soviet of People's Commissars. The direct command and administration of the army is concentrated in the Commissariat of War and its specially created All-Russian Collegium.

V. ULIANOV (LENIN)

President of the Sovnarkom

N. KRYLENKO

Supreme Commander-in-Chief

DYBENKO, PODVOISKY

People's Commissars of War and Navy

Sovnarkom

Decree on Independence of Finland

Written: December 18/31, 1917

Source: [Pauli Kruhse's History of Finland website](#)

Transcription/Markup: Zdravko Saveski

Online Version: marxists.org 2017

The Soviet of People's Commissars

Petrograd

December 18, 1917

No. 101

As the answer to the appeal of the Finnish Government to recognise the independence of the Republic of Finland, the Soviet of People's Commissars, in full accordance with the principle of nations' right to self-determination, HAS DECIDED:

To propose to the Central Executive Committee that:

- a. The independence of the Republic of Finland as a country is recognised, and
- b. A special Commission, in agreement with the Finnish Government, comprising members of both parties, should be instituted to elaborate those practical measures that follow from the partition of Finland from Russia.

Chairman of the Soviet of People's Commissars Vl.
Ulianov (Lenin)

People's Commissars:

L. Trotski

G. Petrovski

J. Stalin

I. Steinberg

V. Karelin

A. Schlichter

The Chief of Bureau

Vlad. Bonch-Bruevich

Secretary of the Soviet

N. Gorbunov

People's Commissar of Justice

Decree on Institutions for Investigation and Arrest

Written: December 29, 1917/January 11, 1918

First Published: *Sobranie Uzakonenii i Rasporiazhenii Rabochego i Krestianskogo Pravitelstva*, 1917, No. 9, pp. 141-42.

Source: James Bunyan and H.H. Fisher, *The Bolshevik revolution, 1917-1918: Documents and materials*, Stanford University Press; London: H. Milford, Oxford University Press, 1934, pp. 292-293.

Translated: Emanuel Aronsberg

Transcription/Markup: Zdravko Saveski

Online Version: marxists.org 2017

From the moment of the publication of this decree all arrests, searches, seizure of documents, and other actions of investigation are to be carried on according to the order of the following institutions:

- (1) The Committee of Inquiry of the Petrograd Soviet of Workers' and Peasants' Deputies.
- (2) The organs of inquiry of the regional Soviets of Workers' and Soldiers' Deputies.
- (3) The Revolutionary Tribunals of all newly organized judicial offices.
- (4) Special Committees of Inquiry: (a) All-Russian Commission to Fight Counter-Revolution and Sabotage, attached to the Soviet of People's Commissars. (b) The Committee to Fight Pogroms attached to the Central Executive Committee of Soviets of Workers, Soldiers' and Peasants' Deputies.

All complaints dealing with wrong actions and mistakes made by the above commissions are to be directed to the institutions which control these commissions and also to the People's Commissariat of Justice.

I. STEINBERG

People's Commissariat of Justice

Central Executive Committee Decree on Nationalization of Banks

Written: December 14/27, 1917

First Published: *Sobranie Uzakonenii i Rasporiazhenii Rabocheho i Krestianskogo Pravitelstva*, 1917, No. 5, pp. 73-74.

Source: James Bunyan and H.H. Fisher, *The Bolsheviki revolution, 1917-1918: Documents and materials*, Stanford University Press; London: H. Milford, Oxford University Press, 1934, p. 323.

Translated: Emanuel Aronsberg

Transcription/Markup: Zdravko Saveski

Online Version: marxists.org 2017

In the interests of a proper organization of the national economy, a thorough eradication of bank speculation and a complete emancipation of the toiling masses from exploitation by the banking capitalists, and in order to found a single unified State Bank for the Russian Republic which shall serve the interests of the people and the poorest classes, the Central Executive Committee decrees that:

1. Banking is hereby declared a state monopoly.
2. All existing private joint-stock banks and other banking houses are to become a part of the State Bank.
3. Assets and liabilities of establishments in the process of liquidation will be assumed by the State Bank.
4. The manner of the amalgamation of private banks with the State Bank will be determined by a special decree.
5. The temporary management of private banks is intrusted to the Council of the State Bank.
6. The interests of small depositors will be fully protected.

Sovnarkom

Decree on Nationalization of Foreign Trade

Written: April 22, 1918

First Published: *Sbornik dekretov i postanovlenii po narodnomu khoziaistvu. 25 oktiabria 1917 g.-25 oktiabria 1918 g.*, Moscow, 1918, pp. 235-36.

Source: James Bunyan and H.H. Fisher, *The Bolshevik revolution, 1917-1918: Documents and materials*, Stanford University Press; London: H. Milford, Oxford University Press, 1934, pp. 617-618.

Translated: Emanuel Aronsberg

Transcription/Markup: Zdravko Saveski

Online Version: marxists.org 2017

I

All foreign trade is to be nationalized. Contracts with foreign countries and foreign commercial houses for buying and selling all kinds of products (raw, industrial, agricultural, etc.) are to be made in the name of the Russian Republic by specially authorized organs. Aside from these organs all export and import agreements are forbidden.

Note: Regulations for the import and export of packages and travelers' baggage will be published separately.

II

The People's Commissariat of Trade and Industry is the organ in charge of nationalized foreign trade.

III

In connection with the People's Commissariat of Trade and Industry a Council of Foreign Trade is to be formed to organize exporting and importing. The Council is to be composed of representatives of the following departments, institutions, and organizations: (a) the departments of war, navy, agriculture, food, transportation, foreign affairs, and finance; (b) the central organs for the regulation and administration of the different branches of industry (central committees of the tea, sugar, textile industries, etc.) and all branches of the Supreme Council of National

Economy; (c) the central organizations of co-operatives; (d) the central organizations of trade, industry, and agriculture; (e) the central organs of trade unions and unions of employees; and (f) the central organs of commercial enterprises for the export and import of important products.

Note: The People's Commissariat of Trade and Industry has the right to include in the Council of Foreign Trade representatives of other organizations not mentioned in this decree.

IV

The Council of Foreign Trade will act upon the plans of foreign trade approved by the People's Commissariat of Trade and Industry. The aims of the Council of Foreign Trade include: (a) keeping account of supply and demand of exports and imports; (b) collecting goods for export, using the respective central bureaus of the different industries (sugar center, oil center, etc.), co-operatives or agencies established for that purpose; (c) organization of buying abroad through state buying commissions and agencies, co-operative organizations and commercial firms; (d) fixing of prices on exports and imports.

V

1. The Council of Foreign Trade is to be divided into sections corresponding to each branch of industry and principal item of export and import. The chairman of each of these sections must be a representative of the People's Commissariat of Trade and Industry.

2. The chairman of the general meeting of the Council of Foreign Trade and of its presidium, which is elected at the general meeting, must be a representative of the People's Commissariat of Trade and Industry.

Note: The internal organization of the Council of Foreign Trade, the number of sections, their duties, rights, and scope of their activities will be determined later.

3. The presidium of the Council will submit the decisions of the sections to the People's Commissariat of Trade and Industry for approval.

VI

The present decree will become effective from the moment of its publication.

V. ULIANOV (LENIN)

President of the Soviet of People's Commissars

GUKOVSKY, BRONSKY, STALIN, CHICHERIN

People's Commissars

Sovnarkom

Decree on Nationalization of the Merchant Marine

Written: February 8, 1918

First Published: *Sobranie Uzakonenii i Rasporiazhenii Rabochego i Krestianskogo Pravitelstva*, 1918, No. 19, pp. 284-85.

Source: James Bunyan and H.H. Fisher, *The Bolshevik revolution, 1917-1918: Documents and materials*, Stanford University Press; London: H. Milford, Oxford University Press, 1934, pp. 611-612.

Translated: Emanuel Aronsberg

Transcription/Markup: Zdravko Saveski

Online Version: marxists.org 2017

1. All navigation companies, with all their movable and immovable property, assets, and liabilities, all river and ocean freight and passenger boats owned by stock companies, partnerships, commercial houses, and large private firms are declared to be the property of the Soviet Republic.

2. The following are not taken over by the Soviet Republic: (a) Boats used as a means of making a living (minimum standard); boats owned by small companies, organized as labor partnerships. (b) Whaling and fishing boats; pilot-association vessels; boats belonging to cities and villages; boats not used for freight and passenger service, except those belonging to stock companies.

3. In co-operation with seamen's unions and branches of the All-Russian Soviet of Sailors and in agreement with the Soviet economic organizations (regional councils of national economy, economic committees, etc.), the local Soviets should take immediate steps to safeguard vessels and other property which now become the property of the Soviet Republic

4. The institutions and organizations mentioned above are authorized to appoint temporary commissars to take charge of the offices of the steamship companies. They must see to it that the offices and agencies continue their business and that the repairing of boats does not stop. The above is to be enforced even to the point of threatening to hand over the employees to the revolutionary court. The commissars who are appointed to take charge of these offices have control of all the company's money, pay the workers their wages promptly and at the old scale, appropriate money for repairs, etc.

5. More detailed instructions regarding the nationalization of shipping enterprises will be issued in a special decree.

6. This decree becomes effective by telegraph.

V. ULIANOV (LENIN)

President of the Sovnarkom

V. BOLENSKY, V. ALGASOV, A. SHLIAPNIKOV

People's Commissars

Central Executive Committee

Decree on Organization of Local Food Commissions

Written: December 24, 1917/January 6, 1918

First Published: *Sobranie Uzakonenii i Rasporiazhenii Rabochego i Krestianskogo Pravitelstva*, 1918, No. 12, p. 190.

Source: James Bunyan and H.H. Fisher, *The Bolshevik revolution, 1917-1918: Documents and materials*, Stanford University Press; London: H. Milford, Oxford University Press, 1934, pp. 331-332.

Translated: Emanuel Aronsberg

Transcription/Markup: Zdravko Saveski

Online Version: marxists.org 2017

In order to harmonize all the measures taken in the work of food supply, and in order to create a single supply organization at Petrograd, an All-Russian Food Committee has been organized, which includes representatives of the All-Russian Army Food Commission, of the First All-Russian Navy Congress, and of the congress of organizations working for the supply of the front.

The All-Russian Food Committee maintains close contact with the Soviet of People's Commissars, standing as it does on the platform of the Second All-Russian Congress of Soviets and being in full accord with the principle that "the reorganization of the supply service can yield positive results only on the condition that the state monopolizes all the products of both urban and rural economy; that it establishes regular exchange of goods between towns and villages, as well as Workers' Control over production; and that the supply service must be democratized and intrusted to the poorest strata of the population, eliminating those bourgeois groups which are interested in raising the price of articles of prime necessity." The All-Russian Food Committee advises all Soviets immediately to begin forming food commissions attached to the Soviets and to secure the co-operation in them of all active forces of the revolutionary democracy. These commissions shall at once assume control over local food organizations. When full unity in the work of [these] commissions and the existing food organizations has been established, all food-supply organs are to be placed under the control of the Soviets, which, in turn, must bring their own work of food supply into harmony with the [activities] of the central food organs. Up to the time of their final liquidation, all supply organizations must submit entirely to the directions of the local Soviets

Immediately after forming a food commission you are requested to submit to the All-Russian Food Committee exact data on the membership of the commission stating the methods by which the business of food supply can best be transferred to the Soviets

In a very short time the All-Russian Food Committee will call a congress of all democratic organizations and prominent food-supply workers who are entirely devoted to the interests of the revolution.

YA. SVERDLOV

Chairman of the Central Executive Committee A.

SCHLICHTER

People's Commissar of Food

Sovnarkom

Decree on Organization of Volost Land Committees

Written: November 3/16, 1917

First Published: *Izvestiia*, No. 215, November 16, 1917, p. 4; *Sobranie Uzakonenii i Rasporiazhenii Rabocheho i Krestianskogo Pravitelstva*, 1917, No. 2, pp. 23-25. **Source:** James Bunyan and H.H. Fisher, *The Bolshevik revolution, 1917-1918: Documents and materials*, Stanford University Press; London: H. Milford, Oxford University Press, 1934, pp. 333-334.

Translated: Emanuel Aronsberg

Transcription/Markup: Zdravko Saveski

Online Version: marxists.org 2017

1. To bring about a speedy transfer of the land to the people these present regulations, regarding the functioning of the volost land committees, as approved by the All-Russian Congress of Soviets of Workers', Soldiers', and Peasants' Deputies of July 6, 1917, shall be enforced until such a time as the Constituent Assembly makes final rulings on all details of the land reform.

2. The present law will become effective by telegraph. It is understood that the term volost refers to every territorial unit equal in size to that of a volost

3. The formation of land committees in every volost is compulsory. In those places where the law of small zemstvo units is not yet in force, the land committees will be organized as self-governing bodies on the principle of direct, equal, and secret universal suffrage. In those places where the zemstvo units are already functioning the land committee will be organized in connection with the zemstvo

4. Where volost zemstvos are not in existence the number of members of the land committee will be determined by the inhabitants themselves. Where zemstvos do exist the local population has the right to include in the land committee representatives from different villages, in addition to members provided by law

5. All expenses in connection with the organization and administration of the land committees will be borne by the state.

6. Arbitration boards will be organized within the volost land committees to settle all disputed questions

7. The volost land committees are charged with the rapid and definitive liquidation of all vestiges of serfdom preserved in the village. They must abolish all forms of bondage, such as menial service, payments in kind, etc.

8. In order that there may be more rational management of the land fund, the land

committee will collect all documentary data concerning the amount of land within the boundaries of the volost showing how much there is of each kind--meadow, forest, pasture, and arable land, etc.

9. The volost land committee will make a survey of the forests within the boundaries of the volost and lay down, with the assistance of the state forester, plans for felling.

The volost land committee will give priority to supplying the national needs in fuel and building material in accordance with the orders received from a special fuel commission

17. The volost land committee will fix the area of land to be cultivated, distributing it between the different villages and hamlets. It will see to it that the land is properly cultivated and equitably distributed among the farmers.

18. The volost land committee will fix the rentals for fields, meadows, and pastures, determining the methods by which such rentals are to be collected.....

20. The volost land committee will take complete charge of carrying through the land reform within its locality. It will determine to what extent the available land fund is capable of satisfying local needs, what branches of agriculture stand in greatest need of additional land, what order is to be observed in distributing the land among those having little or no land, newcomers, etc.

21. The volost land committee will take charge of the scientifically cultivated farms and, in agreement with the uezd and gubernia land committees, will fix the area of land to be allowed to them It will establish those branches of rural economy that are dictated by the necessities of the state and society as a whole (breeding stations, dairies, sugar-beet plantations, vineyards, etc.).

22. The volost land committee will fix the laboring wage for day and contract workers, and will supervise the carrying out of the terms of employment.....

24. The activities of the volost land committees should be co-ordinated with those of the uezd and the gubernia land committees. All disagreements between different volosts as well as volost land committees should be settled by the uezd land committee.[1]

-

In the name of the Russian Republic, V.

MILIUTIN

The People's Commissar of Agriculture

[1] This decree was supplemented on December 26, 1917, by a new decree transforming the land committees into a land parliament elected by universal secret and direct suffrage, and empowering the gubernia congresses of these committees "to discuss and supplement the legislative acts of the central government, adapting them to local conditions." (*Sbornik dekretov i postanovlenii po narodnomu khoziaistvu. 25 oktiabria 1917 g.-25 oktiabria 1918 g.*, Moscow, 1918, pp. 465-70.)

People's Commissar of Justice Decree on Revolutionary Tribunals[1] -

Written: December 19, 1917/January 1, 1918

First Published: *Sobranie Uzakonenii i Rasporiazhenii Rabochego i Krestianskogo Pravitelstva*, 1917, No. 12, pp. 179-81.

Source: James Bunyan and H.H. Fisher, *The Bolshevik revolution, 1917-1918: Documents and materials*, Stanford University Press; London: H. Milford, Oxford University Press, 1934, pp. 293-295.

Translated: Emanuel Aronsberg

Transcription/Markup: Zdravko Saveski

Online Version: marxists.org 2017

1. The Revolutionary Tribunal will have jurisdiction in cases of persons (a) who organize uprisings against the authority of the Workers' and Peasants' Government, who actively oppose the latter or do not obey it, or who call upon other persons to oppose or disobey it; (b) who take advantage of their position as government or public servants to disturb or hamper the regular progress of work in the institutions or enterprises in which they are or have been serving (sabotage, concealing or destroying documents or property, etc.); (c) who stop or curtail the production of articles of general use without actual necessity for doing so ; (e) who violate the decrees, orders, binding ordinances, and other published acts of the organs of the Workers' and Peasants' Government, if the violation of such acts calls for a trial by the Revolutionary Tribunal.

2 In fixing the penalty, the Revolutionary Tribunal shall be guided by the circumstances of the case and the dictates of the revolutionary conscience.

3. (a) The Revolutionary Tribunal is to be elected by the Soviets of Workers', Soldiers', and Peasants' Deputies and is to include one permanent chairman, two permanent substitutes, one permanent secretary and two substitutes, and forty jurors. All persons, except the jurors, are elected for three months and may be recalled by the Soviets before the expiration of the term. (b) The jurors are elected for one month. . . . Lists of jurors numbering six, and one or two in addition, are to be made up for each session. (c) The session of each successive jury of the Revolutionary Tribunal is to last no longer than one week. (f) An investigating commission consisting of six members is to be created under the Revolutionary Tribunal for the conduct of the preliminary investigation. (g) Upon receiving information or complaint, the investigating commission examines it and within forty-eight hours either orders the dismissal of the case, if it does not find that a crime has been committed, or transfers it to the proper jurisdiction, or brings it up for trial at the session of the Revolutionary Tribunal. (h) The orders of the investigating commission about arrests, searches, seizures, and releases of detained

persons are valid if issued jointly by three members. In cases which do not permit of delay such orders may be issued by any member of the investigating commission singly, on the condition that within twelve hours the measure shall be approved by the investigating commission. (i) The order of the investigating commission is carried out by the Red Guard, the militia, the troops, and the executive organs of the Republic. (j) Complaints against the decisions of the investigating commission are submitted to the Revolutionary Tribunal through its president and are considered at executive sessions of the Revolutionary Tribunal.....

4. The sessions of the Revolutionary Tribunal are public.

5. The verdicts of the Revolutionary Tribunal are rendered by a majority of votes of the members of the Tribunal.

6. The legal investigation is made with the participation of the prosecution and defense.

7. (a) Citizens of either sex who enjoy political rights are admitted at the will of the parties as prosecutors and counsel for the defense, with the right to participate in the case; (b) under the Revolutionary Tribunals a collegium of persons is to be created who devote themselves to the service of the law, in the form of public prosecution as well as of public defense; (c) the collegium mentioned above is formed by the free registration of all persons who desire to render aid to revolutionary justice and who present recommendations from the Soviets of Workers', Soldiers', and Peasants' Deputies.

8. The Revolutionary Tribunal may invite for each case a public prosecutor from the membership of the collegium named.

9. If the accused does not for some reason use his right to invite counsel for defense, the Revolutionary Tribunal, at his request, appoints a member of the collegium for his defense.

10. Besides the above-mentioned prosecutors and defense, one prosecutor and one counsel for defense, drawn from the public present at the session, may take part in the court's proceedings.

11. The verdicts of the Revolutionary Tribunal are final. In case of violation of the form of procedure established by these instructions, or the discovery of indications of obvious injustice in the verdict, the People's Commissar of Justice has the right to address to the Central Executive Committee of the Soviets of Workers', Soldiers', and Peasants' Deputies a request to order a second and last trial of the case.

12. The maintenance of the Revolutionary Tribunal is charged to the account of the state. The amount of compensation and the daily fees are fixed by the Soviets of

Workers', Soldiers', and Peasants' Deputies. The jurors receive the difference between the daily fees and their daily earnings, if the latter are less than the daily fees; at the same time the jurors may not be deprived of their positions during the session.

I. Z. STEINBERG

People's Commissar of Justice

Notes

[1] On November 18/December 31 there had been organized a Revolutionary Tribunal of the Press to try cases in which the press was charged with publishing false or perverted information about events in public life (S.U.R. [*Sobranie Uzakonenii i Rasporiazhenii Rabocheho i Krestianskogo Pravitelstva*], 1917, No. 10, p. 155).

Central Executive Committee Decree on Safe Deposit Boxes

Written: December 14/27, 1917

First Published: *Sobranie Uzakonenii i Rasporiazhenii Rabochego i Krestianskogo Pravitelstva*, 1917, No. 10, p. 150.

Source: James Bunyan and H.H. Fisher, *The Bolshevik revolution, 1917-1918: Documents and materials*, Stanford University Press; London: H. Milford, Oxford University Press, 1934, p. 324.

Translated: Emanuel Aronsberg

Transcription/Markup: Zdravko Saveski

Online Version: marxists.org 2017

1. All moneys kept in safe deposit boxes should be transferred to the current account of the holders.

Note: Gold in coin or bullion is to be confiscated and handed over to the State Gold Reserve.

2. All holders of safe deposit boxes are under obligation to appear at the bank upon notice, bringing the keys to their safe deposit boxes, and to be present while their boxes are searched.

3. All holders of safe deposit boxes who fail to appear after three days' notice will be considered as having maliciously declined to comply with the law of search.

4. Safe deposit boxes owned by persons who maliciously decline to comply with the law will be opened by investigating commissions appointed by the Commissar of the State Bank; all property contained in those vaults will be confiscated and declared the property of the people.^[1]

Notes

[1] Up till July 1, 1918, a total of 35,493 safe deposit boxes had been searched in the Moscow banks, yielding the following:

Paper money	.....	64,649,091 rubles
Gold in Russian coin	.....	401,662 rubles
Gold in bullion	.....	13 puds, 8 fonts, 46 zolotniks
Silver in Russian coin	.....	251,709 rubles
Silver in bullion	.....	25 fonts
Platinum in coins	.....	2,241 rubles
Platinum in bullion	.....	2 funts, 57 zolotniks, 70 dolias

State bonds	.....	307,679,902 rubles
Private bonds	.....	256,453,861 rubles

In addition there was a considerable sum of foreign money. *Izvestiia*, No. 158, July 27, 1918, p. 6.

Sovnarkom

Decree on Separation of Church and State

Written: February 5, 1918

First Published: *Sobranie Uzakonenii i Rasporiazhenii Rabochego i Krestianskogo Pravitelstva*, 1918, No. 18, pp. 272-73.

Source: James Bunyan and H.H. Fisher, *The Bolshevik revolution, 1917-1918: Documents and materials*, Stanford University Press; London: H. Milford, Oxford University Press, 1934, pp. 590-591.

Translated: Emanuel Aronsberg

Transcription/Markup: Zdravko Saveski

Online Version: marxists.org 2017

1. The church is separated from the state.

2. Within the territory of the Republic the passing of any local laws or regulations limiting or interfering with freedom of conscience or granting special rights or privileges to citizens because they belong to a certain faith is forbidden.

3. Every citizen has a right to adopt any religion or not to adopt any at all. Every legal restriction connected with the profession of certain faiths or with the non-profession of any faith is now abolished.

Note: Official acts shall make no mention of a citizen's faith.

4. State or semi-official public functions are not to be accompanied by religious ceremonies or rituals.

5. Religious performances may be carried on freely in so far as they do not disturb the public order or encroach upon the rights of citizens of the Russian Republic. Local authorities have the right to take the necessary measures to preserve order and safeguard the rights of citizens.

6. No one can decline to carry out his civic duties on the ground of his religious views. Exception to this ruling may be made by special decisions of the people's court provided one civic duty is substituted for another.

7. Religious oaths are abolished. In case of necessity a solemn promise will suffice.

8. All civil acts are performed exclusively by the civic authorities [in charge of] the department for the registration of marriages and births.

9. The school is separated from the church. The teaching of religion in state and public schools, as well as in private schools where general subjects are taught, is forbidden. Citizens may study or teach religious subjects privately.

10. Church and religious societies are subject to the same laws and regulations as private societies and unions. They do not enjoy any special privileges or subsidies from the state or from local institutions.

11. The levying of obligatory collections or imposition for the benefit of church or religious societies is forbidden. These organizations are forbidden also to coerce or punish their members.

12. Church and religious societies have no right to own property. They do not have the rights of a legal person.

13. All property in Russia now owned by churches and religious organizations is henceforth the property of the people. Buildings and objects that are needed for religious services revert to the free use of religious organizations by special arrangement with the central or local [Soviet] authorities.

ULIANOV (LENIN) President

of the Sovnarkom

PODVOISKY, ALGASOV, TRUTOVSKY, SCHLICHTER, PROSHIAN,
MENZHINSKY, SHLIAPNIKOV, PETROVSKY

People's Commissars

Sovnarkom

Decree on Social Insurance

Written: October 31/November 13, 1917

First Published: *Sobranie Uzakonenii i Rasporiazhenii Rabochego i Krestianskogo Pravitelstva*, 1917, No. 2, p. 20.

Source: James Bunyan and H.H. Fisher, *The Bolshevik revolution, 1917-1918: Documents and materials*, Stanford University Press; London: H. Milford, Oxford University Press, 1934, p. 308.

Translated: Emanuel Aronsberg

Transcription/Markup: Zdravko Saveski

Online Version: marxists.org 2017

The Russian proletariat has placed on its banners "Full Social Insurance for Wage Workers" as well as for the city and village poor. The tsarist government of landowners and capitalists and the coalition-reconciliation governments [Provisional Government] failed to satisfy the demands of the workers in this respect.

The Workers' and Peasants' Government, being supported by the Soviet of Workers', Soldiers', and Peasants' Deputies, announces to the working class of Russia and to the city and village poor that it will immediately prepare decrees on social insurance in accordance with the ideas of the workers.

1. Insurance for all wage workers without exception, as well as for the city and village poor.
2. Insurance to cover all forms of disability, such as illness, injury, invalidism, old age, maternity, widowhood, orphanage, as well as unemployment.
3. The total cost of the insurance to be borne by the employer.
4. Full compensation in case of disability or unemployment.
5. The insured to have full control of the insurance institutions.^[1] _

In the name of the Government of the Russian Republic, A.

SHLIAPNIKOV

People's Commissar of Labor

Notes

[1] During the following weeks the government issued several decrees regulating the various forms of disability and unemployment insurance. French translations of

some of these decrees are given in Labry, *Une législation communiste. Recueil des lois, décrets, arrêtés principaux du gouvernement bolcheviste*, Paris, 1920, pp. 251-57. Private insurance companies were not nationalized until later.

Central Executive Committee Decree on State Publishing House

Written: December 29, 1917/January 11, 1918

First Published: *Sbornik dekretov i postanovlenii po narodnomu khoziaistvu. 25 oktiabria 1917 g.-25 oktiabria 1918 g.*, Moscow, 1918, pp. 243-44.

Source: James Bunyan and H.H. Fisher, *The Bolshevik revolution, 1917-1918: Documents and materials*, Stanford University Press; London: H. Milford, Oxford University Press, 1934, pp. 595-596.

Translated: Emanuel Aronsberg

Transcription/Markup: Zdravko Saveski

Online Version: marxists.org 2017

Taking into consideration the widespread unemployment among printers and the book hunger in the country the library publication section of the People's Commission on education is authorized to proceed with publishing at once and on a large scale. This work is to be done with the co-operation of the following institutions and bureaus: adult education, school departments, arts and sciences, printers' union, and other organizations concerned, as well as experts especially invited by the Commission.

First of all, cheap popular editions of Russian classics should be published. Books on which the copyright has expired should be brought out in new editions. The

writings of all authors which in this way cease to be private property should in each case be declared by the State Commission on Education a state monopoly for a period of not more than five years. The Commission is to use this right especially in relation to great works of literature, which, according to the present decree, are made the property of the people. These works are to be published in two series: As a complete scientific edition which should be handed over for editing to the section of Russian language and literature of the Academy of Sciences (after that institution has been democratized to correspond with the new form of government and social order of Russia) and as an abridged, compact, one-volume edition of selected works. In making the selections the editor should have in mind, among other things, the degree of appeal which a book has to the toiling people for whom the popular editions are issued. Each collection and each single volume should have an introduction by a competent critic or historian of literature, etc. There should be created a special editorial collegium of representatives of educational, literary, and learned societies, as well as of especially invited experts and representatives of labor organizations. The editors chosen by the collegium must submit their plans and editorial notes to this body for approval.

Popular editions of classics should be sold at cost or, if finances permit, below cost or free through the libraries that serve the toiling democracy.

The state publishing house should bring out textbooks in large numbers. The revision and correction of old texts and the compilation of new ones shall rest with a special commission on texts, including representatives of educational, learned, and democratic organizations and especially invited experts. The state publishing house may subsidize publications, such as periodicals and books, undertaken by societies and individuals and recognized as being generally useful, provided that if such publications are profitable the state will be compensated first of all.

In order to proceed at once with this important public work the Soviet of People's Commissars proposes to place a million and a half rubles to the credit of the State Commission on Education.

All printing orders will be distributed in accordance with the decision of the printers' union

A. V. LUNACHARSKY

People's Commissar [of Education]

Decree on Suppression of Hostile Newspapers

First Published: October 27 [Nov. 9], 1917.

Source: *A Documentary History of Communism*, compiled by Robert V Daniels, ©1985; I.B.Tauris & Co Ltd, London.

Translated: U.S. Government: *Bolshevik Propaganda*: Hearings before a Subcommittee of the Committee on the Judiciary, U.S. Senate, 65th Congress, 3rd Session. [Commas have been introduced.]

Transcription/Markup: Brian Baggins

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In the serious decisive hour of the revolution, and the day immediately following it, the Provisional Revolutionary Committee was compelled to adopt a whole series of measures against the counter revolutionary press of all shades.

Immediately on all sides cries arose that the new socialist authority was violating, in this way, the essential principles of its program by an attempt against the freedom of the press.

The Workers' and Soldiers' Government draws the attention of the population to the fact that in our country, behind this liberal shield, there is practically hidden the liberty for the richer class to seize into their hand the lion's share of the whole press and by this means to poison the minds and bring confusion into the consciousness of the masses.

Everyone knows that the bourgeois press is one of the most powerful weapons of the bourgeoisie. Especially in this critical moment when the new authority, that of the workers and peasants, is in process of consolidation. It was impossible to leave this weapon in the hands of the enemy at a time when it is not less dangerous than bombs and machine guns. This is why temporary and extraordinary measures have been adopted for the purpose of cutting off the stream of mire and calumny in which the yellow and green press would be glad to drown the young victory of the people.

As soon as the new order will be consolidated, all administrative measures against the press will be suspended; full liberty will be given it within the limits of responsibility before the law, in accordance with the broadest and most progressive regulations in this respect.

Bearing in mind, however, the fact that any restrictions of the freedom of the press, even in critical moments, are admissible only within the bound of necessity, the Council of People's Commissaries decrees as follows:

General Rules on the Press.

1. The following organs of the press shall be subject to be closed: (a) those inciting to open resistance or disobedience towards the Workers' and Peasants' Government; (b) those sowing confusion by means of an obviously calumnious perversion of facts; (c) those inciting to acts of a criminal character punishable by the penal laws.
2. The temporary or permanent closing of any organ of the press shall be carried out only by a resolution of the Council of People's Commissaries.
3. The present decree is of a temporary nature and will be revoked by special *ukaz* when the normal conditions of public life will be reestablished.

*Chairman of the Council of People's Commissars,
Vladimir Ulianov (Lenin)*

V. I. Lenin

Decree On The Arrest Of The Leaders Of The Civil War Against The Revolution

Written: 28 November, 1917

First Published: 29 November, 1917, in *Pravda* No. 23 (evening edition) and *Izvestia*, No. 239 29 November, 1917. Published according to the manuscript.

Source: Lenin's *Collected Works*, Progress Publishers, Moscow, Volume 28, 1972, pp. 351

Translated: Yuri Sdobnikov and George Hanna, Edited by George Hanna

Transcription & HTML Markup: Charles Farrell and David Walters

Online Version: [Lenin Internet Archive](#) November, 2000

Members of leading bodies of the Cadet Party, as a party of enemies of the people, are liable to arrest and trial by revolutionary tribunal.

Local Soviets are ordered to exercise special surveillance over the Cadet Party in view of its connection with the Kornilov-Kaledin civil war against the revolution.

This decree enters into effect from the time of signing.

*V. Ulyanov (Lenin),
Chairman of the Council of People's Commissar*

Petrograd, November 28, 1917, 10.30 p.m.

Sovnarkom

Decree on the End of Workers' Control over the Railroads

Written: March 26, 1918

First Published: *Sbornik dekretov i postanovlenii po narodnomu khoziaistvu. 25 oktiabria 1917 g.-25 oktiabria 1918 g.*, Moscow, 1918, pp. 820-22.

Source: James Bunyan and H.H. Fisher, *The Bolshevik revolution, 1917-1918: Documents and materials*, Stanford University Press; London: H. Milford, Oxford University Press, 1934, pp. 655-656.

Translated: Emanuel Aronsberg

Transcription/Markup: Zdravko Saveski

Online Version: marxists.org 2017

In view of the obvious need of preventing any further disintegration of the railway system [and of checking the well-meant but disastrous] interference of local, oblast, and central organizations in the management of the railways, the Soviet of People's Commissars decrees:

1. The People's Commissar of Ways and Communications is to be in control of the Commissariat of the same name

2. The Collegium of Ways and Communications is to consist of the Commissar, as chairman, and members elected by the All-Russian Congress of Railroad Workers and approved by the Soviet of People's Commissars and the All-Russian Central Executive Committee. In case of any disagreement between the Collegium and the Commissar, the former may appeal to the Soviet of People's Commissars and to the All-Russian Central Executive Committee.

3. The Collegium is not to interfere with the regulations of the Commissar of Ways and Communications, who is given dictatorial powers in matters relating to railway transport.

4. The complicated network of organizations directing [railway] transport is to be simplified, and unnecessary units are to be abolished. A list of the latter is to be prepared by the People's Commissar of Ways and Communications.....

6. Each local, district, and regional railway center is to select from among its members a worker who has shown himself to be the most energetic and loyal to the Soviet regime and who understands railroad business. This worker is to be made chief executive of the given railway center and is to be responsible to the People's Commissar of Ways and Communications. Within a given traffic division this official is vested with full dictatorial powers

8. On those lines or in those localities where elected committees of railway

workers, refusing to indorse the Soviet government's policy, carry on secret sabotage, the most active and revolutionary-minded railway men must organize railway military revolutionary committees which, upon [receiving] the approval of the People's Commissar of Ways and Communications, are to assume complete control. [Such authority] they are [then] to delegate to a single responsible individual.....

[The rest of the decree deals with arrangements for guarding the railway lines, plans for increasing the railroads' technical and administrative efficiency, and penalties to be imposed in case of failure to carry out the decree.]

VI. ULIANOV (LENIN)

President of the Soviet of People's Commissars A.

ROGOV, V. NEVSKY

People's Commissars

Sovnarkom

Decree on the Extraordinary Commission on Food and Transport

Written: February 15, 1918

First Published: *Pravda*, No. 26, February 15, 1918, p. 2.

Source: James Bunyan and H.H. Fisher, *The Bolshevik revolution, 1917-1918: Documents and materials*, Stanford University Press; London: H. Milford, Oxford University Press, 1934, p. 661.

Translated: Emanuel Aronsberg

Transcription/Markup: Zdravko Saveski

Online Version: marxists.org 2017

1. In order to supply the people with food and other necessities of life an All-Russian Inter-Departmental Extraordinary Commission is being organized. This Commission is to guard the railways. It is to be made up of the Commissar of Railways, the Chairman of the Central Committee on Army Supplies, and the Vice-Chairman of the Council of Supplies.

2. All the existing organizations having to do with the guarding of the railways are merged in the new Commission

5. The Commission is to make merciless war on speculation and the transportation of food without authorization.

V. ULIANOV (LENIN)

President of the Sovnarkom

Sovnarkom

Decree on the Hours of Labor^[1]

Written: October 29/November 11, 1917

First Published: *Sobranie Uzakonenii i Rasporiazhenii Rabocheho i Krestianskogo Pravitelstva*, 1917, No. 1, pp. 7-10.

Source: James Bunyan and H.H. Fisher, *The Bolshevik revolution, 1917-1918: Documents and materials*, Stanford University Press; London: H. Milford, Oxford University Press, 1934, pp. 304-308.

Translated: Emanuel Aronsberg

Transcription/Markup: Zdravko Saveski

Online Version: marxists.org 2017

1. The working time or the number of working hours in a day is the time which, according to the agreement on employment (Articles 48, 60, 96, 98, 103 of the Industrial Labor Law), a workman is obliged to be in the factory for the performance of work and at the disposal of his manager.

Note 1: In underground work the time used to go down into the mine and to come up to the surface is counted as working time.

Note 2: The working time of workmen sent on tasks outside of the boundaries of the factory is determined by special agreement.

2. The working time as determined by the rules of the internal organization of the enterprise (Clause 1, Article 103 of the Industrial Labor Law) should not exceed eight working hours a day and forty-eight hours a week, including the time spent in cleaning the machinery and putting the establishment in a state of orderliness.

On the day before Christmas (December 24) and on Holy Trinity Day work stops at noon.

3. After not more than six hours of work there should be a recess of not less than an hour for food and rest. Recesses are determined by the rules of the internal organization. During the recess the workman is free to dispose of his time and may leave the boundaries of the establishment. During the recess motors, commutators, and machines should be stopped. Exceptions to this rule may be permitted in case of overtime (as provided in Articles 18-22 of this law) in case of those machines and commutators that control ventilation, water supply, lighting, etc., and in such other cases where it is impossible to stop work for technical reasons (as, for example, unfinished casting, etc.).

Note 1: Enterprises that are recognized by law or the Main Labor Office as continuous and on a three-shift day do not conform to the rules on recesses but they

must give the workman the right to take his food during work.

Note 2: If the conditions of work are such that the workman cannot leave his place of work to eat, a special room or place is to be provided for that purpose. This is obligatory in case of men who come in contact with materials (lead, mercury, etc.) which, according to the rulings of the main board of the factory and mining industries (or the organ taking its place), are injurious to health.

4. The total amount of time spent in recesses should not exceed two hours a day.

5. Night work is from 9:00 P.M. to 5:00 A.M.

6. Boys and girls under sixteen years of age are not to be employed for night work.

7. For enterprises which are working on a two-shift basis night work is reckoned from 9:00 P.M. to 5:00 A.M. Recesses (Article 4) may be shortened to half an hour for each shift.

8. In cases where workers (brickmakers for example) wish to have a longer noon recess or climatic conditions make [a longer recess] desirable the main industrial board may make exceptions to Articles 4, 5, 6, and 8 of this law.

9. In addition to the rules mentioned above the following regulations apply to minors (under eighteen years of age): (a) those under fourteen years of age are not allowed to do hired work; (b) those under eighteen years of age cannot be employed for more than six hours a day. Note: After January 1, 1919, all children under fifteen years of age and after January 1, 1920, all under twenty years of age are not permitted to be hired for work.

10. The holidays when no work is allowed (Clause 2, Article 103, Industrial Labor Law) are all Sundays and the following named days: January 1, January 6, February 27, March 25, May 1, August 15, September 14, December 25, 26, Friday and Saturday of Holy Week, Monday and Tuesday of Easter week, Ascension Day, and the second day of the Descent of the Holy Ghost.

Note 1: According to their belief non-Christians may have other days of rest in place of Sundays. They are, however, obliged to observe all the other holidays enumerated in this article except those indicated below.

Note 2: At the request of a majority of the workmen of an industry or a section of it, other free days may be substituted for January 1 and 6, August 15, September 14, December 26, Saturday of Holy Week, and Easter Monday.

11. In the case of a one-shift day the minimum duration of Sunday and holiday rest to which a worker is entitled is forty-two hours. In the case of a two- or three-shift day the minimum hours of rest are determined by agreement with the labor

organizations.

12. By mutual consent of the manager of the industry and the workers, the latter may (as a departure from the schedule of holidays indicated in Article 11) work on a holiday instead of on a week day. This agreement should, however, be reported immediately to the proper authorities who supervise the execution of this law.

13. The main board of factory and mining industries (or the organ taking its place) has the right to issue rules permitting departures, as necessity arises, from the rules enumerated in Articles 3, 4, 5, and 8 in the case of those establishments which must work at night or irregularly at different seasons of the year (such as work connected with the light and water supply for cities).

14. The working hours indicated in Articles 3, 4, 5, and 8 are to be further reduced in the case of industries and occupations particularly harmful to health and in which the workers are exposed to poisons. A list of such occupations and industries with the length of working time in each as well as other conditions of work must be prepared by the main board of the factory and mining industries (or by the organ which takes its place).

15. Women and minors (under eighteen years of age) cannot be employed for underground work.

16. By agreement with the workmen and with the approval of the workmen's organizations departures from the regulations stated in Articles 3-5 and 8-12 are permitted in case of workers engaged in supplementary work such as repair work, care of the boilers, motors, lathes, heating, water supply, lighting the premises, guard and fire duty

17. Overtime is work done outside the regular working hours and is permitted only under the regulations stated in Articles 19-22 and is paid for at a double rate.

18. Women and minors under eighteen years of age cannot work overtime. Men over eighteen years of age may work overtime if the workmen's organizations approve [and then only in exceptional cases when failure to do so may lead to interruption and harm to the plant and workers]

19. [A special permit from the Commissariat of Labor or the Labor Inspector is required for overtime work.]

20. All overtime work is recorded in the workmen's account books and in the office books.

21. Fifty days is the maximum overtime per year allowed for each branch of industry under the conditions enumerated in Articles 19-21. A separate record is to be kept of the overtime even if it applies to only one workman in the branch.

22. The duration of overtime of any one worker shall under no circumstance be more than four hours in two consecutive days.

23. In the near future [that is], until the end of the war, organizations engaged in the work of defense may, by agreement with the management, set aside the regulation of overtime work (Article 19-23) and in industries engaged in the work of defense recesses (Articles 4-6) may not be enforced, provided the workers and workers' organizations agree to it.

24. The present law becomes effective by telegraph.

25. This law applies to all industries and occupations regardless of size or ownership and to all persons hired to work.

26. Violation of the present law is punishable by imprisonment for a period not longer than one year.

Yu. LARIN

Acting Commissar of Labor

Notes

[1] On November 15, 1917, there appeared in *Volia Naroda*, No. 161, p. 2, the following letter signed by A. Bykov and referring to the decree on the eight-hour day: " The text of the [decree] is a verbatim reproduction of my draft of a law relating to hours of labor which was written in the spring of this year on the basis of materials supplied by the Party of People's Freedom [Cadets]. It was intended to submit the draft to the Industrial-War Committee and later to the Ministry of Trade and Industry (Section of Labor). As published the decree retained references to the 'main board of factory and mining industries' which no longer exists"

Central Executive Committee

Decree on the Right to Call for Re-Elections

Written: November 23/December 6, 1917

First Published: *Sobranie Uzakonenii i Rasporiazhenii Rabochego i Krestianskogo Pravitelstva*, 1917, No. 3, pp. 47-48.

Source: James Bunyan and H.H. Fisher, *The Bolshevik revolution, 1917-1918: Documents and materials*, Stanford University Press; London: H. Milford, Oxford University Press, 1934, p. 348-349.

Translated: Emanuel Aronsberg

Transcription/Markup: Zdravko Saveski

Online Version: marxists.org 2017

The All-Russian Central Executive Committee of the Soviets of Workers', Soldiers', and Peasants' Deputies resolves that:

The Congress of Soviets of Workers' and Soldiers' Deputies has the right to call for re-elections in all representative institutions, including the Constituent Assembly

Re-elections take place in the usual manner ... and the newly elected persons replace at once those previously elected.

Sovnarkom

Decree on the Right to Issue Laws

Written: October 30/November 12, 1917

First Published: *Sobranie Uzakonenii i Rasporiazhenii Rabocheho i Krestianskogo Pravitelstva*, 1917, No. 1, pp. 10-11.

Source: James Bunyan and H.H. Fisher, *The Bolshevik revolution, 1917-1918: Documents and materials*, Stanford University Press; London: H. Milford, Oxford University Press, 1934, p. 187.

Translated: Emanuel Aronsberg

Transcription/Markup: Zdravko Saveski

Online Version: marxists.org 2017

1. From now on until the convocation of the Constituent Assembly the preparation and drafting of laws shall be carried out by the Provisional Government of Workers and Peasants elected by the All-Russian Congress of Soviets of Workers', Soldiers', and Peasants' Deputies in the order set forth in the present regulations.
2. Each law project is to be submitted to the government by the respective Commissariat concerned, over the signature of the corresponding People's Commissar; or it may be submitted by the Bureau of Legislative Projects attached to the government over the signature of the chief of the department.
3. After it has passed the government, the decree in its final wording is to be signed in the name of the Russian Republic by the President of the Soviet of People's Commissars or, acting in his stead, by the People's Commissar who submitted the said decree for the consideration of the government; it will then be published for general information.
4. The day of its publication in the official Gazette of the Provisional Workers' and Peasants' Government will be the day on which a decree is recognized as having come into force as a law.
5. Other conditions by which it may come into force may be especially mentioned, or it may become effective by telegraph, in which case it will be considered as having come into force whenever and wherever such telegrams are published.
6. The publication of government decrees by the State Senate is suspended. The Bureau of Legislative Projects attached to the Soviet of People's Commissars is to publish periodically digests of those decrees and ordinances of the government which have become laws.
7. The Central Executive Committee of the Soviet of Workers', Soldiers', and Peasants' Deputies has a right to defer, modify, or annul any decisions of the government.[1]

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V. ULIANOV (LENIN)

President of the Soviet of People's Commissars

Notes

[1] W. R. Batsell, *Soviet Rule in Russia*, New York, 1929, pp. 77-79, gives a translation of a plan of organization of the Central Executive Committee dated November 15, 1917. The plan provided for large and small sessions, for a presidium, and for eleven departments or commissions.

Sovnarkom

Decree on the Rights and Duties of Soviets

Written: December 25, 1917/January 7, 1918

First Published: *Sobranie Uzakonenii i Rasporiazhenii Rabochego i Krestianskogo Pravitelstva*, 1917, No. 12, p. 189.

Source: James Bunyan and H.H. Fisher, *The Bolshevik revolution, 1917-1918: Documents and materials*, Stanford University Press; London: H. Milford, Oxford University Press, 1934, p. 280.

Translated: Emanuel Aronsberg

Transcription/Markup: Zdravko Saveski

Online Version: marxists.org 2017

1. Soviets of workers', soldiers', and peasants' deputies, being local organs, are quite independent in regard to questions of a local character, but must always act in accord with the decrees and decisions of the Central Soviet Government as well as of the larger bodies (uezd, gubernia, and regional Soviets) of which they form a part.

2. Upon the Soviets, as organs of government, devolve the tasks of administration and service in every sphere of local life, viz., administrative, economic, financial, and educational.

3. In the field of administration the Soviets must carry out all decrees and decisions of the central government, undertake to give to the people the widest information about those decisions, issue obligatory ordinances, make requisitions and confiscations, impose fines, suppress counter-revolutionary organs of the press, make arrests, and dissolve public organizations which incite active opposition or the overthrow of the Soviet Government.

Note: The Soviets must report to the Central Soviet Government regarding all measures undertaken by them and concerning most important local events.

4. The Soviets elect from their number an executive organ (executive committee, presidium) which is charged with the duty of carrying out their decisions and the performance of all current business of administration.

Note 1: The Military Revolutionary Committees as fighting organs, which came into existence during the coup d'etat, are abolished.

Note 2: As a temporary measure commissars may be appointed in those provinces where the power of the Soviet is not sufficiently well established or where the Soviet

Government is not exclusively recognized.....

Sovnarkom

Decree on Transfer of Food Control to Municipalities

Written: October 28/November 10, 1917

First Published: *Sobranie Uzakonenii i Rasporiazhenii Rabochego i Krestianskogo Pravitelstva*, 1917, No. 1, pp. 6-7.

Source: James Bunyan and H.H. Fisher, *The Bolshevik revolution, 1917-1918: Documents and materials*, Stanford University Press; London: H. Milford, Oxford University Press, 1934, pp. 327-328.

Translated: Emanuel Aronsberg

Transcription/Markup: Zdravko Saveski

Online Version: marxists.org 2017

1. All food supplies arriving at the city, including the supplies addressed to the Army Food Supply Service, the Red Cross, and other individuals and institutions which hitherto had the right to receive and distribute supplies independently of the city--are now placed in the charge of the city government for distribution by the food-supply organization attached to the city government.

2. All individuals and institutions which hitherto had a right to receive and distribute supplies independently of the city government are under obligation to place their distribution machinery at the disposal of the city government and take orders from the city government.....

Note 1: In Petrograd and Moscow, all transit trade and all shipments of supplies to the front are to be controlled by the city government.

Note 2: In Petrograd the Central Executive Committee has a right to receive at its address at Smolny Institute the amount of supplies which the government considers necessary to satisfy the needs of specially arriving army units and other extraordinary requirements.

3. All forms of double rations or increased rations are prohibited, with the exception of those granted by the city government.....

4. The city government has a right to establish its supervision and control over all or some of the commercial and industrial enterprises, such as stores, restaurants, flour mills, etc It has a right to sequester within the city limits every commercial and industrial enterprise connected with food supply

5. The city government has a right to confiscate, requisition, and sequester all private premises which it finds necessary in order to open supply stores or for any other need connected with the business of food supply. This right applies also to privately owned products, objects, instruments, means of transport, storehouses, etc.....

6. The city has a right to conscript university students and high-school seniors to work in the food-supply organization.....
7. The city government has a right to force all inhabitants of a certain house or of a group of houses to form a commune and get their supplies jointly
8. The city government has a right to establish a general or partial centralization of cooking so that hot meals will either be procured in public dining-halls or will be sent to apartments.
9. The resolutions of this decree relative to food products apply also to goods of prime necessity.
- 10
11. Violators of this decree are liable to imprisonment for one year and to the confiscation of their property
12. This decree applies to cities with a population of not less than ten thousand.
13. The decree goes into force by telegraph.

VLADIMIR ULIANOV (LENIN)

President of the Sovnarkom

Sovnarkom

Decree on Transfer of Power and the Means of Production to the Toilers

Written: November 5/18, 1917

First Published: *Sobranie Uzakonenii i Rasporiazhenii Rabocheho i Krestianskogo Pravitelstva*, 1917, No. 2, pp. 27-28.

Source: James Bunyan and H.H. Fisher, *The Bolshevik revolution, 1917-1918: Documents and materials*, Stanford University Press; London: H. Milford, Oxford University Press, 1934, p. 277-279.

Translated: Emanuel Aronsberg

Transcription/Markup: Zdravko Saveski

Online Version: marxists.org 2017

Comrades--Workers, Soldiers, Peasants, All Toilers!

The workers' and peasants' revolution has won a decisive victory in Petrograd, having scattered and arrested the last remnants of a small number of Cossacks deceived by Kerensky. The revolution has triumphed in Moscow the cadets and other Kornilov supporters have signed peace. They are now disarmed, and the Committee [of Public Safety] has been dismissed. An overwhelming majority of soldiers in the trenches and peasants in the villages are supporting the new government in its peace decree and its decree to hand over immediately the land to the peasants. The victory of the workers' and peasants' revolution is assured; the majority of the people are for it.

It is easy to understand why the landowners, the capitalists, and the higher state officials who are closely bound up with the bourgeoisie--in one word, all the rich and those who held out their hands to the rich--should assume a hostile attitude toward the new revolution, should stand in its way, and should threaten to close the banks and to stop or to sabotage, directly or indirectly, the work of various institutions.

Every class-conscious worker knows full well that this opposition is inevitable, that the higher officials were selected to oppress the people, and that they are not going to give up their place without a struggle. The laboring classes will not allow themselves to be frightened, even for a minute, by the threats and strikes of these partisans of the bourgeoisie. The majority of the people are with us. With us are the majority of the toilers, and the oppressed of the world. Right is on our side. Our victory is certain. The opposition of the capitalists and higher officials will be broken. We will not deprive a single person of his property otherwise than by a special government law concerning the nationalization of banks and trusts. This law is now in preparation. Not a single laborer and toiler will lose one kopek; on the contrary, he will be helped. The government will impose no new taxes now and will aim at an open and strict accounting and control over the taxes heretofore levied.

In the name of these just demands the great majority of the people has rallied around the Provisional Workers' and Peasants' Government.

Comrade Toilers! Remember that you yourself are now running the government. Unless you get together and take all affairs of the government into your own hands, no one will do it for you. Your Soviets are from now on all-powerful and all-decisive organs of government. Rally around your Soviets. Strengthen them. Take matters into your hands and don't wait for anyone [to tell you what to do]. Insist on the strictest revolutionary order. Crush mercilessly all anarchistic disturbances by drunkards, rowdies, counter-revolutionary cadets, Kornilovists, and their like.

Organize strict control over production and accountability for the products. Bring before the revolutionary tribunal everyone who dares to harm the cause of the people by sabotaging (spoiling, hindering, destroying) in industry, concealing grain and produce, interfering with transportation of grain, tearing up rail, post, and telegraph lines, or in other ways opposing the great cause of peace, of transferring the land to the peasants, and of assuming workers' control over production and distribution.

Comrade workers, soldiers, peasants, and all toilers! Take all local power into your own hands. Take and guard as the apple of your eye the grain, factories, implements, products, and transport--all these are from now on wholly yours; they are public property.

Gradually, with the approval and agreement of the majority of the peasants, guided by their practical experience and that of the workers, we shall move on firmly and resolutely to the victory of socialism, a victory which the advance guard of the workers of the more civilized countries will make secure and which is bound to give the people a lasting peace and freedom from all oppression and exploitation.

V. ULIANOV (LENIN)

President of the Soviet of People's Commissars

**Second All-Russia Congress of Soviets of Workers' and Soldiers'
Deputies
Decree on Transfer of Power to the Soviets**

Written: October 26/November 8, 1917

First Published: *Vtoroi Vserossiiskii Sezd Sovetov R. i S.D.*, p. 95.

Source: James Bunyan and H.H. Fisher, *The Bolshevik revolution, 1917-1918: Documents and materials*, Stanford University Press; London: H. Milford, Oxford University Press, 1934, p. 124.

Translated: Emanuel Aronsberg

Transcription/Markup: Zdravko Saveski

Online Version: marxists.org 2017

By decree of the All-Russian Congress of Soviets all members of land committees under arrest are hereby set free. The commissars who arrested them are subject to arrest.

Henceforth all authority belongs to the Soviets. The commissars of the [Provisional] Government are removed. All chairmen of the Soviets are to communicate directly with the revolutionary government.

Sovnarkom

Decree on Turkish Armenia

Written: December 29, 1917/January 11, 1918

Source: Republic of Western Armenia, "[A Common Set of Legal and Political Documents of Armenians of Western Armenia and Protection of rights of Western Armenia \(Collection of documents\)](#)", 3rd revised edition, 2017, p. 12 **Translated:** Republic of Western Armenia

Transcription/Markup: Zdravko Saveski

Online Version: marxists.org 2017

The Council of People's Commissars declares to Armenian people, that Russian Government of Workers and Peasants supports the rights of Armenians of the occupied territories of "Turkish Armenia" and proclaims the freedom of self-determination up to full independence. The Council of People's Commissars recognizes that this right can only be exercised in a number of pre-approval of the safeguards that are absolutely necessary for the people of Armenia to hold a referendum.

The Council of People's Commissars recognises as a partial guarantee the following conditions:

Article A. Withdrawal of Russian troops from Turkish Armenia and immediate creation of Armenian national police (militia) to protect personal and material safety of Turkish Armenians.

Article B. Unimpeded return of Armenian refugees, scattered across the different countries to Turkish Armenia.

Article C. Unimpeded return of Armenians to Turkish Armenia, who during the war were forcibly exiled inside Turkey by the Turkish authorities. ... The Council of People's Commissars Council will insist on this condition during the negotiations with the Turkish delegation.

Article D. The establishment of Interim Government in Turkish Armenia. Deputies will be elected on the principle of democracy.

Stepan Shaumyan, appointed as Commissar Extraordinary for the Caucasus, will provide assistance to Armenians of Turkish Armenia in the implementation of Articles B and C, as well as for the formation of Mixed Commission to identify the date and ways of Russian troops' withdrawal, according to Article A.

The geographic boundaries of Turkish Armenia will be determined by the people's democratically elected representatives together with Muslims and other residents of neighboring disputed areas and the Commissar ~~an~~ Shahumyan".

Sovnarkom

Decree on Workers' Control

Written: November 14/27, 1917

First Published: *Sobranie Uzakonenii i Rasporiazhenii Rabochego i Krestianskogo Pravitelstva*, 1917, No. 3, pp. 39-40. The decree was first published on November 16/29, 1917.

Source: James Bunyan and H.H. Fisher, *The Bolshevik revolution, 1917-1918: Documents and materials*, Stanford University Press; London: H. Milford, Oxford University Press, 1934, p. 308-310.

Translated: Emanuel Aronsberg

Transcription/Markup: Zdravko Saveski

Online Version: marxists.org 2017

1. In the interests of a systematic regulation of national economy, Workers' Control is introduced in all industrial, commercial, agricultural [and similar] enterprises which are hiring people to work for them in their shops or which are giving them work to take home. This control is to extend over the production, storing, buying and selling of raw materials and finished products as well as over the finances of the enterprise.
2. The workers will exercise this control through their elected organizations, such as factory and shop committees, Soviets of elders, etc. The office employees and the technical personnel are also to have representation in these committees.
3. Every large city, gubernia, and industrial area is to have its own Soviet of Workers' Control, which, being an organ of the S[oviet] of W[orkers'], S[oldiers'], and P[easants'] D[eputies], must be composed of representatives of trade-union, factory, shop and other workers' committees and workers' co-operatives.
4. Until the meeting of the Congress of the Soviets of Workers' Control an All-Russian Soviet of Workers' Control will be organized in Petrograd, made up of representatives from the following organizations: All-Russian Central Executive Committee of the Soviet of Workers' and Soldiers' Deputies (5 [representatives]); All-Russian Central Executive Committee of the Soviet of Peasant Deputies (5); All-Russian Council of Trade Unions (5); All-Russian Union of Workers' Co-operatives (2); All-Russian Bureau of Factory and Shop Committees (5); All-Russian Union of Engineers and Technicians (5); All-Russian Union of Agronomists (2); from every All-Russian union of workers having less than 100,000 members (1); from those that have more than 100,000 members (2); the Petrograd Council of Trade Unions (2).
5. Commissions of trained inspectors (technicians, accountants, etc.) will be established in connection with the higher organs of Workers' Control and will be sent

out either on the initiative of these higher organs or at the request of the lower organs of Workers' Control to investigate the financial and technical side of enterprises.

6. The organs of Workers' Control have the right to supervise production, fix the minimum of output, and determine the cost of production.

7. The organs of Workers' Control have the right to control all the business correspondence of an enterprise. Owners of enterprises are legally responsible for all correspondence kept secret. Commercial secrets are abolished. The owners have to show to the organs of Workers' Control all their books and statements for the current year and for past years.

8. The rulings of the organs of Workers' Control are binding on the owners of enterprises and can be annulled only by decisions of the higher organs of Workers' Control.

9. Appeals from the lower to the higher organs must be made within three days.

10. In all enterprises the owners and the representatives of the workers and employees elected to the Committee on Workers' Control are responsible to the state for the order, discipline, and safety of the property. Persons guilty of hiding raw materials or products, of falsifying accounts, and of other similar abuses are criminally liable.

11. All regional Soviets of Workers' Control (Article 3) have the power to settle disputed points and conflicts that may arise between the lower organs of Workers' Control and to give their decision regarding the complaints of the owners. They also issue instructions (within the limits fixed by the All-Russian Soviet of Workers' Control) to meet the local conditions of production and supervise the activities of the lower organs of control.

12. The All-Russian Soviet of Workers' Control makes out a general plan for Workers' Control, issues instructions, makes binding decisions, regulates mutual relations between the different Soviets of Workers' Control, and serves as the highest authority for all business connected with Workers' Control.

13. The All-Russian Soviet of Workers' Control co-ordinates the activities of the organs of Workers' Control in their dealings with other institutions of national economy.

Special instructions will be issued later defining the relations between the All-Russian Soviet of Workers' Control and other institutions of national economy.^[1]

14. All the laws and circulars restricting the work of factory, shop, and other committees or Soviets of workers and employees are hereby annulled.

V. ULIANOV (LENIN)

President of the Soviet of People's Commissars A.

SHLIAPNIKOV

People's Commissar of Land

Notes

[1] A French translation of general instruction on workers' control, published in *Izvestiia*, No. 250, December 20, 1917, is in Labry, *Une législation communiste. Recueil des lois, décrets, arrêtés principaux du gouvernement bolcheviste*, Paris, 1920, pp. 131-36.

Sovnarkom

Decree Proclaiming Advertising a State Monopoly

Written: November 7/20, 1917

First Published: *Izvestiia*, No. 219, November 21, 1917, p. 3.

Source: James Bunyan and H.H. Fisher, *The Bolshevik revolution, 1917-1918: Documents and materials*, Stanford University Press; London: H. Milford, Oxford University Press, 1934, pp. 222-223.

Translated: Emanuel Aronsberg

Transcription/Markup: Zdravko Saveski

Online Version: marxists.org 2017

1. Paid advertisements in periodical publications, booklets, posters, advertisements in news-stands, bureaus, etc., are declared to be a state monopoly.

2. Such advertisements may be printed only in the publications of the Provisional Workers' and Peasants' Government at Petrograd and in the publications of the local Soviets of Workers', Soldiers', and Peasants' Deputies. Publications inserting advertisements without authority are to be closed.

3. Until it [advertising] is taken over by the state newspaper owners, managers of advertising offices and all employees in such or similar offices are required to remain at their work, will be held responsible for its order and continuation of business, for the turning over to Soviet publications of all private advertisements, and of all money collected for advertising, and for a full documentary account.

4. In order to organize more efficiently and properly the business of private advertising in Soviet publications as well as to draw up better regulations for the benefit of the public in advertising, all those in charge of offices that accept advertisements for money, as well as their employees and workers, should meet in their cities and join first the city unions and later the All-Russian Unions.

5. Persons guilty of concealing documents or money and of disregarding sections 3 and 4 above are punishable by confiscation of property and three years in prison.

6. Paid advertisements in private publications in the form of accounts, articles, or other disguises are punishable in the manner [indicated in section 5].

7. The government is confiscating advertising offices and is ready in case of need to compensate the owners by temporary help. Small owners, depositors, and stockholders of confiscated offices are to be compensated in full for what they have invested.

8. All publishing houses, offices, and, in general, all business undertakings dealing

with advertisements must furnish at once to the Soviets of Workers' and Soldiers' Deputies accurate information as to their location, and must proceed to hand over their affairs. Those failing to do so will be punished as indicated in section 5.

V. ULIANOV (LENIN)

President of the Soviet of People's Commissars A.

LUNACHARSKY

People's Commissar of Education

Sovnarkom

Decrees on Democratization of the Army

Written: December 16-17/29-30, 1917

First Published: *Sobranie Uzakonenii i Rasporiazhenii Rabochego i Krestianskogo Pravitelstva*, 1917, No. 9, pp. 136-38.

Source: James Bunyan and H.H. Fisher, *The Bolshevik revolution, 1917-1918: Documents and materials*, Stanford University Press; London: H. Milford, Oxford University Press, 1934, pp. 298-299.

Translated: Emanuel Aronsberg

Transcription/Markup: Zdravko Saveski

Online Version: marxists.org 2017

1. The army, as the servant of the will of the toiling people, is to be subordinate to the sovereign of that people, the Soviet of People's Commissars.
2. The full power within any army unit or combination of units is to be in the hands of its soldiers' committees and Soviets.
3. The [soldiers'] committees are to exercise control over those spheres of [the army's] activity which the committees do not handle directly.
4. The elective principle for army officers is hereby introduced. All commanders up to the regimental commander are to be elected by a general vote of the [different units] Commanders higher than regimental commanders and including the supreme commander-in-chief are to be elected by a congress of committees of the army units [for which the commander is being elected]
7. Positions of a technical nature which require special training such as physicians, engineers, aviators are to be appointed by the committees from among persons having the required special knowledge.
8. Chiefs of staff are elected from among persons with special training.
9. All other staff officers are to be appointed by the chief of staff. These appointments are to be ratified by the [soldiers'] congresses
10. Commanders above the drafting age, if they are not elected to any post, and are thereby demoted to the position of privates, have a right to leave service

V. ULIANOV (LENIN)

President of the Sovnarkom N.

KRYLENKO

People's Commissar of War and Navy

PODVOISKY

People's Commissar of War

In fulfillment of the will of the revolutionary people which is concerned with the immediate and decisive eradication of every inequality in the army, the Sovnarkom hereby decrees:

1. To do away with all ranks and titles from the rank of corporal to that of general, inclusive. The army of the Russian Republic is henceforth to be composed of free and equal citizens bearing the honorable title of "soldier of the revolutionary army";
2. To do away with all privileges and the external marks formerly connected with the different ranks and titles;
3. To do away with saluting;
4. To do away with all decorations and other signs of distinction;
5. To do away with all officers' organizations
6. To abolish the institution of orderlies in the army

V. ULIANOV (LENIN)

President of the Sovnarkom

N. KRYLENKO

People's Commissar of War and Navy

PODVOISKY

People's Commissar of War

**The Military Writings of
Leon Trotsky**

Volume 1, 1918

How the Revolution Armed

THE MILITARY SPECIALISTS AND THE RED ARMY

**DECREE OF THE COUNCIL OF
PEOPLE'S COMMISSARS**

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* * *

**On the call-up for compulsory military service of persons who
have served in the forces as non-commissioned officers**

Moscow, August 2, 1918

The creation of an army able and ready to defend the interests of the working population against external and internal aggressors is encountering great difficulty owing to the almost complete lack of a commanding apparatus which is inseparably linked with the working class and the poor peasantry.

In the old army, posts of command were held almost exclusively by members of the propertied classes, so that the majority of the old officer corps were hostile to the power of the workers and peasants. The new army needs a new officer corps. This can be created in a short time by bringing into posts of command honest and valiant sons of the people from among the former NCOs.

Proceeding from these considerations, the Council of People's Commissars has decided, in addition to issuing the decree calling up, in the *uyezds* of the Moscow, Petrograd, Vladimir, Nizhny-Novgorod, Perm and Vyatka provinces, all workers born in 1896 and 1897, to call up at the same time and on the same bases as are set out in the decree mentioned, in all the *uyezds* of the six provinces mentioned, also those workers born in 1893, 1894 and 1895 who have served in the forces as non commissioned officers, so as to form from them as quickly as possible a commanding apparatus for the workers' and peasants' Red Army. [67]

NOTES

67. The decree issued for the calling up of NCOs was supplementary to a number of orders and decisions regarding the transition from volunteering for the Red Army to compulsory enlistment.

The first decision of the All-Russia CEC for conscription to the Workers' and Peasants' Red Army was taken on May 29. In view of the complex problems involved in applying this decree over the whole territory of Russia, the All-Russia CEC decided to begin applying it in the most directly threatened regions and in the principal centers of the labor movement – that is, in the Don and Kuban regions and in Moscow and Petrograd. The People's Commissar for Military Affairs was required to draw up within one week a plan for implementing the decree within such limits and forms as would cause the least disruption to the economic and social life of the regions and cities mentioned.

What must be seen as the first decree on mobilization was the decree of the Council of People's Commissars dated June 12, when workers and peasants born in 1893-1897 were ordered to report for military service in certain *uyezds* of the Volga, Ural and West-Siberia military districts. On June 14, instructions for procedure in reception of workers' and peasants' for military service were issued. On June 17 a decree of the Council of People's Commissars called up workers in the city of Moscow and its suburbs who were born in 1896 and 1897. On June 29 workers born in 1896 and 1897 were called up in Petrograd and its suburbs. The growth in the size of the army and the shortage of commanding personnel compelled the Council of People's Commissars and the People's Commissariat for Military Affairs to call up for service a section of the former NCOs as well.

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**The Military Writings of
Leon Trotsky**

Volume 1, 1918

How the Revolution Armed

ORGANIZING THE RED ARMY

**DECREE ON COMPULSORY
MILITARY TRAINING**

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* * *

**Adopted at the session of the All-Russia Central Executive
Committee of the Soviets of Workers', Soldiers
and Peasants' Deputies, April 22, 1918.**

One of the basic tasks of socialism is to free mankind from militarism and from the barbarity of bloody clashes between peoples. The goal of socialism is universal disarmament, permanent peace and fraternal co-operation between all the peoples inhabiting the earth.

This goal will be achieved when power in all the strongest capitalist countries has passed into the hands of the working class, which will wrest the means of production from the exploiters and turn them over to all working people for common use, and will establish a Communist system as the unshakable foundation of the solidarity of all mankind.

At present it is in Russia alone that state power is held by the workers. In all the other countries the imperialist bourgeoisie is in power. Its policy is aimed at suppressing the communist revolution and enslaving all weak peoples. The Russian Soviet Republic, surrounded on all sides by enemies, has to create its own powerful army, under the protection of which the communist transformation of the country's social order will be accomplished.

The Workers' and Peasants' Government of the Republic deems it its immediate task to enroll all citizens for compulsory labor and military service. This work is meeting with stubborn resistance on the part of the bourgeoisie, which refuses to renounce its economic privileges and is trying, through conspiracies, uprisings and traitorous deals with foreign imperialists, to recover state power.

To arm the bourgeoisie would be tantamount to generating constant strife within the army, thereby paralyzing its strength in the fight against external foes. The parasitic and exploiter

elements who do not want to assume the same rights and duties as others cannot be given access to arms. The Workers' and Peasants' Government will find ways of making the bourgeoisie share, in some form or other, the burden of defending the Republic, upon which the crimes of the propertied classes have brought such heavy trials and calamities. But in the immediate transition period military training and the bearing of arms must be restricted to workers and peasants who do not exploit the labor of others.

Citizens between 18 and 40 years of age who have undergone a course of compulsory military training will be registered as liable for military service. At the first call of the Workers' and Peasants' Government they will have to take up arms and reinforce the cadres of the Red Army, which consists of the most devoted and selfless fighters for the freedom and independence of the Russian Soviet Republic and for the international socialist revolution.

1. Military training is compulsory for male citizens of the Russian Soviet Federative Republic of the following age-groups: (i) the school age, the lower limit of which will be decided by the People's Commissariat of Education; ii) the preparatory age, from 16 to 18; and (iii) the call-up age, from 18 to 40.

Female citizens will be given training, with their consent, on the same footing as the males.

Note: Persons whose religious convictions forbid the use of arms will be liable for training only for duties which do not involve the use of arms.

2. Training of persons of the preparatory and call-up ages is entrusted to the People's Commissariat for Military Affairs, and that of the school-age category to the People's Commissariat for Education, with the closest co-operation of the People's Commissariat for Military Affairs.
3. Military training is compulsory for workers employed in factories and workshops, on farms and in villages, and for peasants who do not exploit the labor of others.
4. In the localities, compulsory military training is organized by the respective district, province, *uyezd* and *volost* military commissariats.
5. Trainees receive no form of compensation for the time spent in compulsory training: training is to be organized, so far as possible, in such a way as not to divert the trainees from their normal regular occupations.
6. Training is to be carried on continuously for a period of eight weeks, with a minimum of 12 hours a week. The periods for training for special arms and the procedure for refresher call-ups will be determined in a special regulation.
7. Persons who have already undergone training in the regular army may be exempted from compulsory training on passing an appropriate test. They will then be issued with the appropriate certificates, as persons who have undergone a course of compulsory training.
8. Instruction shall be given by trained instructors in accordance with a programme approved by the People's Commissariat for Military Affairs.
9. Persons who evade compulsory military training, or who show negligence in performing their duties in connection with universal training will be prosecuted.

**The Military Writings of
Leon Trotsky**

Volume 1, 1918

How the Revolution Armed

THE CIVIL WAR IN THE RSFSR IN 1918

**THE RED ARMY AND
THE CIVIL WAR**

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[THE CREATION OF THE WORKERS' AND PEASANTS' RED ARMY](#) – July 10, 1918

[RESOLUTION ON THE REPORT ON CREATING THE WORKERS' AND PEASANTS' RED ARMY](#)

[BEFORE THE CAPTURE OF KAZAN](#) – September 2, 1918

[THE RED OFFICERS](#) – September 1918

[THE DON COSSACK HOST](#) – September 3, 1918

[THE MILITARY SITUATION](#) – November 9, 1918

[RESOLUTION OF THE ALL-RUSSIA EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE OF THE SOVIETS OF WORKERS', PEASANTS', COSSACKS' AND RED ARMY MEN'S DEPUTIES](#)

[NOTES](#)

**THE CREATION OF THE WORKERS' AND
PEASANTS' RED ARMY**

Report to the Fifth Congress of Soviets at its session of July 10, 1918

Our opponents and, to an even greater extent, our enemies – though it must be said that in the course of the revolution our opponents are being transformed into enemies – reproach us

for having realized only gradually, only belatedly, the need to create an army, and an army built according to solid, planned, scientific principles.

The program of our party, like that of any workers' socialist party, does not say anything about the destruction and suppression of the army in the present period of struggle, but only about reconstructing it on new, democratic principles, the principles of militia service and armament of the entire people.

I shall speak later about the modification that the principle of universal armament undergoes in the revolutionary conditions of an epoch of civil war. But now, before dealing with that question, I have to ask you this: what caused the disappearance of the old army, which was a regular army constructed, so far as the material and ideological means and resources of the old regime permitted, on the basis of scientific principles?

The main cause of the collapse of the Tsarist army was not the anti-militarism of the revolution, not the fact that the revolution rejected military defense as such, but solely the class structure of the old army itself, the fact that, while consisting mostly, of course, of peasants and workers, it had a ruling apparatus which was constructed, organized and educated so as to ensure that this army automatically served the ruling class of those days, with the monarchy as its summit.

This is something which, naturally, we never forget. And that is why the claim made by some of the military specialists that the army was ruined by politics, and that an army can survive, as a sound organism capable of fighting, only if it be placed outside politics, seems to us to be baseless and childish.

Not long ago, for instance, one of the most outstanding of the old generals, Brusilov [General A.A. Brusilov was commander-in-chief of Russia's South-Western Front in 1916 and made a famous 'breakthrough' which crippled the Austro-Hungarian army and had important effects on the course of World War I. It brought Romania in on the Allied side, saved the Italian army from annihilation, and obliged the Germans to lighten their pressure on the French. Owing to the corruption and incompetence of the Tsarist regime, Brusilov's success was not followed up. Brusilov remained inactive after the October Revolution until 1920, when he rallied to the Soviet Government in connection with the war against Poland, and became Inspector of Cavalry in the Red Army.], informed the bourgeois press, in connection with Kerensky's reminiscences, which had been published in pamphlet form, that the disintegration of the old army was a process brought about by the revolution, as such, and that the armed forces could be re-created only provided that the army was isolated from politics. By 'politics' is meant in this statement, of course, the interests of the worker and peasant masses, for there has never in history been, and there is not anywhere now, an army that stands 'outside politics'.

'War,' said the famous German theoretician of war, Clausewitz, 'is the continuation of politics, only by other means' – that is, the army of a particular country is subordinate to the politics of that country.

From this it is clear that the army of Tsardom was nothing but an armed force adapted to the service of the interests of Tsardom and carrying out precisely the politics of Tsardom. As crowning proof of this I will not recall its external status and the oath of allegiance to the Tsar, the so-called national anthem, which was the anthem of Tsardom, or the commemoration days and parades – all that which created around the army an atmosphere thick with Tsarist politics. I will refer only to the commanding personnel, who were made to serve as an apparatus for subjecting the peasant and worker masses to the requirements of the ruling upper circles of the country.

And if the old army disintegrated, that happened not because of any pernicious slogans but because of what the revolution itself gave rise to, namely, anger on the part of the worker and peasant masses against the propertied classes that had previously held command. The old

army merely shared the fate of the old Russia in general. If the revolt of the peasants against the landlords, of the workers against the capitalists, of the whole people against the old reign of the bureaucracy and against the Tsar himself signified the break-up of the old Russia, then the break-up of the army was predetermined precisely by this. It was inherent in the internal mechanics of the revolution, in the dynamics of its class forces.

And when they now hurl at us the charge that the October revolution inflicted an incurable injury upon the army and disintegrated it, I remember very well, comrades, since I was living in Petrograd at the time, I remember, as many of you will, too, how, during September and October, down to the moment of the October revolution, delegates came to see us at the Petrograd Soviet, from regiments, divisions, corps and whole armies, saying: ‘Something terrible is coming to a head in the trenches. The army will not stay in the trenches any longer unless decisive steps are taken towards peace.’

In that period proclamations were being circulated in the trenches which the soldiers themselves had composed, proclamations in which they wrote that we, that is, the soldiers, will stay here until the coming of the first snow, but after that we shall quit the trenches and get away from here.

And if this worn-out and internally defeated army – defeated above all, under Tsardom already, by the terrible blows suffered from without, struck at it by the German army, and then by the baseness and dishonesty of the Tsarist regime, and, finally, by the deception committed by the Compromisers and the bourgeoisie after the February period, when they hurled the army into the offensive of June 18 – if this thrice-defeated army nevertheless, all through November, December and January, despite the terrible ebb-tide from the trenches, continued to hold its positions, it was supported solely by the ideological pressure of the October revolution.

But there was no power capable of keeping this army, as such, in existence, for it had been destroyed internally: it had to be atomised, dispersed – every soldier, be he worker or peasant, had to be demobilized, to go back to his own work-hive, his own economic cell, so that he might then, reborn, proceed thence into a new army, built according to the interests and tasks of the new classes that had come to power, the workers and the peasants who do not exploit the labor of others.

‘But you tried to build the army on the voluntary principle’; so runs the next objection.

I do not know of anyone among us who has ever affirmed that the voluntary principle is a sound principle for organizing a truly popular, democratic army. The principle of voluntary service was adopted by Britain, a predatory power whose chief concern in the matter of armed forces was the organizing of a navy – and a navy does not require a large number of men. The principle of voluntary service was also adopted by the United States, which, until recently, did not wage an imperialist policy of conquest outside America, because American territory itself offered wide scope for the bourgeoisie of the New World.

Apart from America and Britain, in absolutely every bourgeois-democratic country the principle of universal military service was invariably applied, being dictated, there too, by the general conditions prevailing, the regime of political life, and so on.

Neither the Party of the workers and peasants nor the Soviet power, based on these classes, could, in any case, make the question of the country’s defence depend upon the influx of volunteers. They resorted to a temporary application of the voluntary principle only because they were passing through an acute, crucial moment of the revolution, when the old army had broken up and dispersed, and, along with it, the old apparatus of military administration, both at the center and in the localities.

In order to build the new army according to the laws dictated by the interests of the working classes it was necessary, first, that the old army should have finally dispersed, with the soldiers returning to their cells of work and class and becoming transformed into the raw material from which it would later be possible to build a new, socialist army; and, secondly, that an apparatus of military administration should have been previously formed, at the center and in the localities, an apparatus that would be competent to register all the human material available and draw it, in a planned way, into fulfillment of the most important of all civic duties the duty of defending the workers' and peasants' Soviet regime and fatherland.

That, comrades, was why, at a time when we had not yet managed to create organs for registering, calling up and training the new cadres, but, at the same time, when it was not possible to suppose that our enemies, internal and external, had gone to sleep, we could only appeal to the people, saying: 'You, workers, and you, peasants, who see the difficult situation that the Soviet power, our power, is in, will respond, and those of you, from the ranks of the old army, from the factories and from the villages, who want to save the socialist fatherland, will at once take your places under the banner of the Red Army, as volunteers.'

This was not a principle that we fought for and promoted. It was a necessary compromise measure for a particular moment, because there was no other solution available. But if you take all our statements of principle since the October revolution, all our programmatic speeches, you will then be able to establish that we considered the voluntary principle precisely as a temporary measure, a palliative, as a measure which was contrary in principle to the task of building a real workers' and peasants' army.

That was why we set ourselves the task, first and foremost, of creating an organ of military administration in the localities, an organ for registration, call-up, formation and training. The local military commissariats are no longer departments of the local Soviets, but are subordinated hierarchically one to another, right up to the People's Commissariat for Military Affairs.

This, comrades, is a most important military-administrative reform: without conscientious and precise implementation of this measure in the localities we cannot carry through any serious mobilization, even when the conditions for this improve – and they will improve when the time comes for gathering in the new harvest.

The creation of the new army is affected by the general situation in the country, its economic position, the presence of food stocks, transport, and so on. All these difficulties, about which particular People's Commissars and individual delegates from the localities have spoken here, the disorganized state of affairs and other phenomena, all this finds reflection in the activity of the War Department and hinders the work of creating the army. I do not say this in order to strengthen anyone's scepticism: on the contrary, I am filled with the same faith which undoubtedly lives in each one of you, faith that we shall cope with all difficulties and dangers, shall overcome them, every one, and create favourable circumstances for consolidating the Soviet Republic.

What we need to do now, above all and before anything else, is to create an apparatus of military administration in the *uyezds*, *volosts*, provinces and districts. I have nothing to say about the *volost* commissariats. They have been set up in only an insignificant minority of *volosts*. But *uyezd* commissariats do not exist everywhere, either, and those that do are not fully organized, they do not have all their departments, and do not always have the establishment that we laid down for them, that is, they are without specialists. Even the province commissariats are lame in one leg, and sometimes in both, and lack an adequate number of competent workers, authoritative and strong commissars. And without all that, comrades, we cannot, of course, create any army at all.

Furthermore, it is necessary that each commissariat keep well in mind its hierarchical

dependence on the commissariat that ranks above it: the dependence of the *volost* commissariat on that of the *uyezd*, of the *uyezd* commissariat on the province commissariat, of the province commissariat on that of the district, of the latter on the center – on Moscow. This is a simple mechanism, but it has to be mastered, and this is not always done. Soviet centralism is, in general, still in a rudimentary state, but without it we shall achieve nothing, either in the sphere of food-supply or in any other sphere, and especially not in the military sphere.

By its very essence, an army is a strictly centralized apparatus, closely linked by threads with its center. No centralism, no army.

In this connection you have heard a statement made here that we have no need at all for an army built on scientific principles, but that we do need guerrilla squads. But this is as though they were to tell us: ‘The workers’ and peasants’ government do not need railways – we’ll use animal-drawn transport. Let’s chuck out the steam ploughs, where they exist, and go back to the wooden Andreyevna plough. [The allusion here is to a riddle from Russian folklore. ‘Old Andreyevna bending down, with her nose to the ground and her arms stretched out behind her. What is it? Answer: The plough.’ The choice of the name ‘Andreyevna’ was probably intended to suggest the plough-like appearance of a capital ‘A’ upside down.] In general, let’s return to the regime of the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries.’ For going back to guerrilla units means a leap backward of whole centuries.

Yes, indeed, when we were working in the underground we formed guerrilla units, but we tried to bring into them the maximum degree of centralization and unity of action. However, we did not take power in order to continue hobbling along towards our goal with amateurish methods. Having taken over the whole centralized state apparatus, we want to reconstruct it on new principles, to transform it into an apparatus of the masses who yesterday were oppressed and humiliated. What is involved is a very great historical experiment which you have to carry out, an experiment in building a workers’ and peasants’ state and economy and creating a centralised workers’ and peasants’ army.

For this purpose we need, first and foremost, to introduce the strictest Soviet centralism. Unfortunately, we encounter opposition here and there in the localities, and, I’m afraid, we encounter this even from some of the comrades who are present here. Psychologically, this opposition can be understood: it was engendered by the domination of the old bureaucratic centralism, which stifled all free initiative, all individuality. And now, when we have overthrown this old bureaucratic apparatus, it seems to us that each one of us can act quite independently, that he can and will do everything himself. We have got used to looking on the center as a hindrance and a threat. We apply to the center, comrades, when we need money or armoured cars, and all the *volosts* now have a great liking for armoured cars, and there is no *volost* that would not ask for atkasi a dozen of them.

But the centre can give you only what is needed, and when it is needed, and, moreover, only if you are capable of handling it. We must put an end to the procedure whereby they send delegates from the *uyezd* to Moscow almost for every foot cloth [Russian soldiers wore, instead of socks, strips of cloth wound round their feet.] they want, supposing that this will be the quickest way to get it. But this procedure gives rise to the greatest dislocation and difficulty. We need, for example, to ensure that, in the sphere of military administration, the Soviets at province level teach their commissars to keep an eye on the *uyezd* Soviets, to see that all estimates and lists are sent up through the district office. Only in this way shall we form a military apparatus that will help us to create an army.

This military apparatus is, of course, merely an administrative skeleton. To create an army we need, by means of this apparatus, to draw in the living, creative, human element, the conscious element, for it is this that distinguishes our army from the old one. And we know that the Tsarist army was, in the main, a peasant army, but the peasants were unconscious and

ignorant: without reasoning why, they went where they were sent. Discipline did not pass through the individual consciousness of each separate soldier.

People often complain now, in our country, and we too complain, that there is no discipline. We do not want the old discipline, that discipline by which every ignorant peasant and worker was slotted into his regiment, his company and his platoon, and marched off without asking why they were leading him away, why they were making him shed blood. The revolution awakened the human personality in the ignorant peasants and the oppressed worker, and this is the principal and greatest achievement of the revolution.

The revolution gave land to the peasants, the revolution gave power to the workers and the peasants: these were great achievements, but no achievement of the revolution is more important than the awakening of the human personality in every oppressed and humiliated individual.

This process of awakening of the individual personality assumes chaotic form, in the early stages. Whereas yesterday still the peasant did not think of himself as a person, and was ready, at the first order from the Government, to go forth blindly to shed his blood, now he is unwilling to subordinate himself blindly. He asks: where are they telling me to go, and why? And he declares: I'm not going, I don't want to submit! He says that because awareness of his human dignity, his personality, has been awakened in him for the first time, and this awareness, which is as yet too crude, which is not sufficiently digested, takes anarchical forms when expressed in deeds.

We have to reach the situation when every peasant and every worker is aware of himself as a human personality with a right to respect, but also feels that he is part of the working class of republican Russia and will be prepared unquestioningly to lay down his life for this Soviet Republican Russia.

Whereas formerly the working man did not value himself, now, contrariwise, he does not value the whole. It is necessary to remember the whole, to remember the interests of the whole class of working people, of our workers' socialist fatherland of labor.

This is the psychological cement by means of which we can create a new army, a real, conscious Soviet army, bound together by a discipline that has passed through the soldiers' brains, and not just the discipline of the rod. This is the discipline we advocate, and we do not want to know any other.

But for this purpose, I repeat, we need to have a centralized apparatus.

I mentioned when I began that the principle of democracy is the principle of general mobilization, and because we have not introduced it we are in receipt of many attacks from bourgeois newspapers and bourgeois politicians. They demand that we introduce universal military service.

Universal military service is the regime needed for a period of peaceful democratic construction. But we are living in conditions of open civil war of class against class. That is the basic fact from which we start. We are not going to say whether this fact is good or bad. The civil war is not a principle but a fact, prepared by centuries of historical development, centuries of oppression of the working people, who have revolted against this oppression. We cannot but reckon with this fact. Civil war ruthlessly tears apart the fabric, the envelope of the nation. At any moment the propertied classes are ready to stretch out their hands to any foreign aggressor, in order to crush the workers and peasants of their own country. This is also a fact, which has found confirmation in the events in the Ukraine, on the Don, on the Murman coast, and on the banks of the Volga. Every where, the bourgeois classes look with much greater hatred upon the power of the workers and peasants than upon the power of the

German or the Anglo-French imperialists, or upon the Czechoslovak hirelings of the French stock-exchange.

Since civil war exists amongst us, we are naturally not interested in arming our class enemies, who are at the same time the allies of all our external enemies. We do not want to arm a bourgeoisie which is ready to place any weapon that may be given it at the service of foreign imperialism.

We rejected the Constituent Assembly because this democratic envelope is merely an empty form when class is confronting class, and the question of power calls for a weapon. And universal military service is at that moment, in those conditions, just such an empty envelope.

The obligation of universal military service would actually find expression for the bourgeoisie in the obligation to run away to Krasnov, to the Urals, to the Czechoslovaks, to join with all our enemies and attack us, while the obligation falling upon us is expressed in smashing the bourgeoisie and our enemies external and internal.

It is that that determines the principle on which we build our army. We include workers and peasants in our army: it is a reflection of the system of Soviets as a whole, a reflection of the All-Russia Congress of Soviets. We can understand why the bourgeois agents – the SRs and Mensheviks – fiercely attack our method of creating an army. Of course our army is hateful to them, since it is a weapon of the Soviet system. Repeating the phrase of the German theoretician I have already quoted, about war and the army being a reflection of general politics, we can say that with Soviet, workers' and peasants' politics it is necessary to have a Soviet Workers' and Peasants' Red Army.

But an agitation is being carried on among the peasants and workers, saying that the Soviet power is putting the burden of military service on their shoulders, while relieving the bourgeoisie and landlords of this burden. To this argument you, comrades, should reply: 'In the epoch in which we live, a rifle is not a burden but a privilege, a monopoly of the ruling class.'

For lack of time and also for lack of a fully-formed military apparatus, we have not as yet managed to draw the bourgeoisie to the work of bearing those burdens which the bourgeois in classes ought not, of course, to be spared. A series of decrees are being got ready in the Council of People's Commissars, and will, I hope, be issued in the next few days, which will draw the bourgeoisie into the work of bearing these burdens. Levies for work in the rear, teams for laboring and auxiliary tasks, will be formed from among the bourgeoisie. [99]

We are told that this is cruel. To this we reply: if the bourgeois youth show in practice that they are devoted to the peasant and worker class and are ready to live with us, to eat from one fraternal cauldron, ready to fight against our external and internal foes, then, of course, we shall open the gates of the Red Army wide and clear for such youngsters. But those from whom the revolution has not yet shaken out the idea of restoring the power of the landlords and bourgeoisie are in need of thoroughgoing correction. We shall say: 'Our ancestors, our grandfathers and fathers, served yours, cleaning up dirt and *filth*, and we will make you do the same.' Until you recognize that Soviet Russia is a country of equality in labor, of duty to labor, for civil and military purposes – until then we shall subject you to a severe schooling.

But, once again, for the practical solving of this question we need to create military commissariats in the localities – universal registration and control both of the working class for enlistment in the army and of the bourgeoisie for enlistment in teams for work in the rear. The question of universal military training is being solved by us, as I have already said, on the basis of the general principle of the Soviet regime. We are undertaking (and have already undertaken) the military training of all workers and all peasants who do not exploit the labor

of others. But these enormous numbers of cadres who have to pass through the training school are still not an army, but only substantial reserves, which can be called up at a moment of crisis. However, we need to have, here and now, the fundamental nucleus of an army that would be capable of giving battle at any moment. This cadre, fit to fight, we have so far formed through volunteering, but we have now had to reject this principle and, in practice, to go over to the method of compulsory military mobilization.

For the time being we have carried out one complete practical experiment only. Here in Moscow we have mobilized two age-groups – those of 1896 and 1897. As always, there was whispering in all the bourgeois holes and corners that our experiment would come to nothing, that not a single worker would turn up. You know, comrades, that we have not had recourse to any measure of coercion, for there was no need for it: the workers all reported themselves, as one man, and we selected from the numbers reporting the thousands whom we needed, and from them we shall form very fine fighting regiments.

The Council of People's Commissars has instructed the Petrograd Commune to carry out a similar mobilization of those two age-groups, 1896 and 1897. In addition, we are going to mobilize three age-groups of workers belonging to the artillery and engineer branches.

Those who know the proletariat of Petrograd will have no doubt that the mobilization will be carried out there impeccably. By a general decree, which lays down no times for its implementation, mobilization has been proclaimed in fifty *uyezds* of the Volga region, the Urals, Siberia, the Don and the Kuban, but in those parts of the country the military-administrative prerequisites for the practical carrying-out of mobilization do not yet exist.

All these partial experiments of ours are merely preparatory steps towards the promulgation of a law that every citizen of the Soviet Republic between 18 and 40 years of age must report to the colors at any moment when called upon by the Soviet power to defend it.

We shall ask the Congress to give us, in the interests of the Soviet Republic, the right to mobilize two, three or more age groups, depending on the conditions that confront us. When you have granted us this right, you, comrade delegates to the Congress, after dispersing to the localities, will explain at every meeting of workers and peasants that, in order to defend our selves against our enemies, in order not to fall under the oppression of the imperialists, we need to have an armed force.

And here we take the occasion to say to those comrades from the Left SRS who have not left us and who, I hope, will not leave us, but will stay loyal to the Soviet power, those who, as they say, feel with particular acuteness the oppression by German imperialism in the Ukraine (true, they do not feel the pressure of the other imperialism in the same way), those who say: 'We do not want to be slaves' – we say to them: 'We, too, do not want to be slaves, we all want to be free citizens of Soviet Russia: therefore, comrades, don't get excited, don't succumb to hysterics, but, in the localities, build companies, battalions and regiments of the workers' and peasants' army.'

Comrades, while war and the army are a continuation of politics, politics is, on its part, a reflection of the strength of the army.

The most difficult problem in creating the Red Army is the problem of commanding personnel. The crisis of the old army caused a split between the working masses and the ruling class, and this led to a breach between the mass of the soldiers and the officers. That was inevitable.

Neither the working class nor the peasant masses possess as yet the habit of governing, they lack sufficient of the knowledge that is needed in all spheres of economic, state and

military administration. This is an indubitable fact, to which we cannot close our eyes. We have extraordinarily few engineers, doctors, generals and officers who are flesh and blood of the workers and peasants. All the bourgeois specialists were brought up in such educational institutions and in such an atmosphere that there was formed in them the conviction that the working masses are incapable of taking over the apparatus of state power, that only the educated, bourgeois classes can rule. When power passed to us they were mostly in the camp of our enemies, with only a few remaining cautiously neutral, waiting in the wings to see who would win, so as to offer their services to the victor.

But from this, comrades, one cannot draw the conclusion which is drawn by naive and superficial people, namely, that we should reject the services of the old commanding personnel and try to manage with our own resources. If we did we should have to resort to guerrilla methods, to military amateurism.

The power of the working class and the peasants does not begin with our driving out the bourgeoisie and the landlords, with cudgel-blows, from the apparatus of state power: it begins with our taking that apparatus into our own hands and making it fulfill the tasks of our own class.

The Tsarist cannon, the Tsarist machine-guns, armoured cars, engineers, generals, specialists of all ranks and branches – we register them all and say: ‘Now, gentlemen, hitherto all this has belonged to the propertied classes and served them, but now be so kind as to serve the working class!’

At that moment we are asked: ‘But what if they betray us?’ There will, of course, be cases of betrayal. Haven’t the railway bigwigs, all sorts of directors, engaged in sabotage and called for strikes? Haven’t there been very shameful cases when they held up the movement of our Red Army men? There have been any number of such cases! What conclusion follows from that? Certainly not that we must do without railways, but rather that we must catch the saboteurs and crush them ruthlessly, while supporting the honest engineers and railway executives. It is just the same where the commanding personnel are concerned.

Among us one hears, it said, in the localities: ‘They are inviting the old generals to come back.’ And many add: ‘They are restoring the old regime.’ But when the situation gets serious they send us a telegram: ‘Send us experienced specialists, military leaders!’ And among the military leaders, the military specialists, there are, I affirm, a whole category of men who are now giving conscientious service to the Soviet regime, because they see that this regime is firm and strong and able to make itself obeyed. Not to take them into our service would be pitiful childishness. On the contrary, all the military specialists who conscientiously carry out our instruction must receive the most vigorous support in the localities. The local soviets and Soviet people must eliminate the prejudice and distrust felt towards these men by the masses, and put it to them like this: ‘You, worker and peasant, now hold in your hands the power of government, you form part of it: that means that the officers and generals are now serving you.’

‘But then,’ they say, ‘what if we don’t manage to keep a close eye on them?’

‘Comrades! If we don’t keep a close eye on them, when we have all power in our grasp, then we are not worth a brass farthing!’

It is possible that, along with honest military specialists, a dozen or two may get in among us who will want to use their position for counter-revolutionary plots. There has been such a case: it happened in the Baltic fleet, and you know what the end of it was. [\[100\]](#)

We do not want an amateur army, constructed on some do-it-yourself principle or other, but a real, centralized army, constructed in accordance with the principles of military science

and technique. For that to be the case, the army needs to have adequate cadres of military specialists.

As yet there are no new military specialists drawn from the working class, and so we are enlisting the old ones.

Among the regular officers whose consciousness and experience were formed only during the war and the revolution there are many for whom their experience of events has not gone for nothing. They have understood what a profound organic process the revolution has stimulated, they have understood that the people and the army will emerge from the revolution different from what they were, that the army must be built by other ways and means than before. Among these young officers there are not a few who understand us and march with us.

At the same time we have done everything possible to create a new officer corps of our own, from among workers and peasants who have passed through the school of war and who have the military vocation. We are putting them through instructors' courses. We shall increase the number of such courses month by month and cover the whole country with them. As I have already reported, there took part in the suppression of the revolt in Moscow our Soviet officers of tomorrow, the students attending the instructors' courses. They are the most devoted, the finest soldiers of the Soviet power. Appointed to command small military units, platoons and companies, they will be a bulwark of the Soviet regime, a bulwark against which any intrigues in the ranks of the Red Army will break in pieces.

At the same time we have opened the doors of the General Staff Academy, now called the Military Academy, to persons without qualifications. Previously, access to the academy was restricted to military specialists possessing certain educational qualifications. We have said: any soldier who has had a certain experience of command, who has a quick brain and a certain amount of imagination, the ability to combine the tasks of a military commander, may be admitted to the Military Academy. Within two or three months we shall determine whether he is up to the work. If not, he will be transferred to the preparatory courses, and later will again be sent to the Military Academy. We have sent about 150 new pupils there, soldiers devoted to the Soviet power, and our Academy will turn out the first graduation of these General Staff officers during the next ten or twelve months.

While creating a new commanding apparatus drawn from the classes which are now in power, we shall in the meantime make use of all the sound elements of the old commanding apparatus, giving their members extensive opportunities for work.

Speaking of the difficulties we encounter in creating the new army, I must mention that the biggest of these is constituted by this dreadful localism, local patriotism. Interception, seizure and concealment of military property and institutions of any and every kind is being carried on by the local organs of Soviet power.

Every *uyezd*, almost every *volost*, believes that Soviet power can best be defended by concentrating on the territory of the given *volost* as much as possible of aircraft *materiel*, radio equipment, rifles and armoured cars, and they all try to conceal this *materiel* – and not only in the provinces, but even in the centers, even in the district organizations of Petrograd we can still observe this childish conduct.

It is self-evident that, from the point of view of the state as a whole we need to keep account of all our military property. It was dumped during the process of demobilizing the old army, without any plan, in all sorts of places, and wherever it was dumped it was absorbed, unpacked, pillaged and sold off. It must be recovered, listed, handed over to the army authorities and concentrated in depots, so as to be at the disposal of the country as a whole.

Is it really not appreciated that any Tsarevo-Kokshaisk *uyezd* [Trotsky uses Tsarevo-Kokshaisk as an example of an out-of-the-way, backwoods place. Known today as Yoshkar-Ola, and capital of the Mari USSR, it lies between Kazan and Vyatka.], or any *volost*, will be better protected from external enemies and counter-revolution if the central Soviet power has on record and under its control all the arms and ammunition in the country, instead of letting these military stores remain in the *volosts*, where they can neither be used nor disposed of? We send telegrams to the Soviets of the provinces complaining about these abuses, but in nine cases out of ten, comrades, we do not meet with sufficiently active support from you in the localities.

We must put an end to this situation. We must wage a most severe struggle against the intercepting, appropriating and concealing of Army property by local Soviets.

There are a whole number of difficulties of a more general kind. Testifying to these are a large number of dispatches which we have received only this day. I am not going to quote them all here: I will select just a few, to serve as examples.

Here is a telegram from Usmansk *uyezd*, in Tambov province: 'Organization of the Red Army is proceeding with great difficulty. Very few men have registered for service. The kulaks are carrying on a persistent agitation against the Soviet power: in some *volosts* they have driven out the Soviets. In general, counter-revolutionary agitation is proceeding intensely.'

The same kulaks who disrupt our procurement organization and conceal grain are also waging a struggle against the Red Army. This means that the Red Army is nothing but a reflection of the Soviet regime as a whole, and it is coming up against the same difficulties and the same foes.

The poorest peasantry have a good attitude to the creation of a new Red Army. A resolution greeting the workers' and peasants' Red Army was adopted at a general meeting. The morale of the Red Army men is excellent, but this cannot be said of the railway workers. Counter-revolutionary agitation is being carried on among them. The military commissariat has only just been established.'

Where the railway workers are old cadres of the Black Hundreds, where they are under the thumb of the managers, they revolt against the Soviet power and against the workers' and peasants' Soviet army.

From Kaleyev *volost*, in Volokolamsk *uyezd*, Moscow province, I have received a report that the peasants of one village announced that everyone serving in the Red Army must immediately leave it and return to his village by June 30. Whoever failed to obey this decision would be deprived of his peasant status (that is how it is put in the resolution) and would not be allowed back into the village. One of the commissars sends us this report, and says that it has affected the Red Army very badly. Comrades, I make use of this lofty tribune of the All-Russia Congress of Soviets to give a first warning to the kulaks and Black Hundreds of Kaleyev *volost*, Volokolamsk *uyezd*. They have no right to deprive a Red Army man of his peasant status. They themselves will be deprived of any status at all if they dare revolt against the creation of the workers' and peasants' army.

In the localities the idea of compulsory military service is meeting in most cases, so say the reports we get from our commissars, with a completely favourable response on the part of the workers and the poor peasants. Thus, I have had a telegram from our district commissar regarding the Yaroslavl province congress. He writes that this congress hails the last decree on universal military service and considers that one of the principal tasks, perhaps *the* principal task, of the current moment is the formation, technical equipment, and armament in accordance with the last word of military science, of a workers' and peasants' Red Army. The congress is firmly convinced that Soviet Russia will succeed in realising its cherished

aims and will in future be in a position to resist the entire imperialist world not only ideologically but also with military armed force. This is signed by Nakhimson, representing the Congress.

Nakhimson was our district commissar. He was killed at Yaroslavl during the White-Guard revolt. He was one of the most dedicated workers for the Soviet regime, one of the best of our commissars. We shall accomplish the idea which he set forth in that statement, we shall create a workers' and peasants' army excellently trained and technically equipped according to the most up-to-date military science.

In conclusion I must say that all those who previously were doubtful about this are coming round to it. In the Party Committee of the North-Western region there were comrades who reacted with some distrust and criticism to our endeavour to build an army on the basis of rational military science, with enlistment of the necessary number of specialists. I have received from that quarter, from those very comrades, a telegram which calls for establishment of the strictest discipline, recruitment of the necessary number of old military specialists, compulsory enlistment for military service on special conditions, of all those officers who are scattered among various other commissariats and engaged in various other kinds of work, and formation of new cadres of military leaders from the ranks of our own Soviet people.

I may mention here the name of one of the finest workers for the Soviet power, Comrade Myasnikov [A.F. Myasnikov (Myasnikian), a Bolshevik since 1906, served on the Volga front in 1918, and became Commissar for Military Affairs in Soviet Lithuania and Byelorussia in 1919], whose previous attitude towards our methods of creating a workers' and peasants' army was one, if not of mistrust then of hesitation. I don't know if he is present: he wanted to speak on this question. As a result of experience he has now come to the same conclusions as we have, and he wanted to make a public statement to this effect at the Congress.

We hear more and more often that those Soviet executives who, sometimes openly and sometimes on the sly, grumbled at us for creating a real army and not a toy or amateur one, not some sort of militia detachments, are now in favour of our view on this matter. Those who protest against this have not yet understood that the worker and peasant class is in power, and for that very reason everything we do is not home-made and amateurish but built on solid, scientific principles.

We must stop this grumbling! Some people try to frighten us by saying: 'We are inviting back the old generals, and the Red Army men hear this and think that we are inviting them back so as to restore the old regime.' But we say: 'Haven't you taken power, worker and peasant? Don't you want to consolidate this power? That we can do, but we need to create conditions in which we can work successfully. For this purpose we need to bring in specialists. In order to create an army of the workers and peasants we need generals, and if mistakes and failures occur in this sphere of work, if we see that some general engages in counter-revolutionary activity, we shall arrest him.'

We must examine each case individually, and not throw out all the specialists without adequate reason. Fortunately, the workers and peasants understand that we cannot succeed in creating something on new principles without employing specialists. If a bourgeois engineer, invited to serve in a factory, were to think of being guided in his work by the idea that industry is going to revert to capitalism, then the workers' administration would, of course, show him that this is not so. And we have shown and shall show this likewise to every military specialist. Our task is to create the mechanism of a new order. This task is not so simple.

If the Tsarist regime succeeded in creating an army, and succeeded in creating discipline in that army which served not the people but the enemies of the people, we, in creating an army

to defend the people's interests, do not doubt that we shall succeed in creating discipline that is ten times as firm. We have only to overcome the infantile disease, the malady of growth, the slackness and weakness which are a heritage from the accursed war and the Tsarist regime.

But the question of whether or not we shall manage to do this is the question of the survival of our power. If we do not, it means that the working class must put its neck under the old yoke. But we reject that notion. We know that the working class will overcome all difficulties and will be able to hold out through these most difficult few weeks when our enemies are straining every effort, resorting to rebellion and mutiny, holding up the movement of food supplies, delaying trains, striving to bring about disorder everywhere: when, essentially speaking, all parties have disappeared, merging into one, which sets itself the task of overthrowing the workers' and peasants' power: when every means is being brought into play – calumny, sabotage, and the summoning of foreign bayonets.

We are sure that you here, having acquired fresh energy, fresh will to power, will take with you from this Congress back to the localities confidence that no force can crush us, because we are closely bound together. A new, still closer bond will be our workers' and peasants' army, which will grow and become stronger and firmer. Within six weeks we shall be over the pass, we shall be getting in the new harvest, and that will enable us to create the basis for organizing our army. We shall become able to give our Red Army men not three-quarters of a pound but one-and-a-half, perhaps two pounds of bread, which a healthy young fellow needs if he is going to undergo military training for six hours a day and then spend three hours on his political development.

We shall form more and more cadres from the workers and peasants, and you will support us in the localities, stamping out all localism, understanding that Soviet Russia is one entire organism, that the army is one of the parts of this organism, that we need firm discipline and a firm, consistent policy for strengthening the workers' and peasants' socialist order.

RESOLUTION ON THE REPORT ON CREATING THE WORKERS' AND PEASANTS' RED ARMY

1. The Russian Soviet Republic is like a fortress which is besieged on every side by imperialist forces. Inside the Soviet fortress counter-revolution is raising its head, having found temporary support from the Czechoslovak hirelings of the Anglo-French bourgeoisie.

The Soviet Republic needs a strong revolutionary army, capable of crushing the bourgeois-landlord counter-revolution and giving a rebuff to the onslaught of the imperialist predators.

2. The old Tsarist army, which was created by coercion and in order to maintain the rule of the propertied upper circles over the working lower orders, suffered a terrible debacle in the imperialist slaughtering of the peoples. It was dealt the final blow by the lying policy of the Cadets and the compromisers, the criminal offensive of June 18, the Kerensky episode and the Korniloviad.

The old apparatus of military administration, at the center and in the localities, crashed and was dispersed along with the old order and the old army.

3. Under these conditions there was, at the beginning, no way open to the workers' and

peasants' power, for creating an army, other than the enlistment of volunteers prepared to take their places under the flag of the Red Army.

4. At the same time the Soviet power always recognised (and the Fifth All-Russia Congress of Soviets again solemnly confirms this) that every honest and healthy citizen aged between 18 and 40 has the duty to answer the first call of the Soviet Republic to come forward to defend it against internal and external enemies.

5. With a view to introducing compulsory military training and compulsory military service, the Council of People's Commissars has set up Soviet organs of local military administration, in the form of district, province, *uyezd* and *volost* military commissariats. Approving this reform, the All-Russia Congress of Soviets imposes on all local soviets the duty of implementing it with all strictness in the localities. It is a condition for the success of all measures for creating an army that there shall be consistent centralism in the sphere of military administration – that is, strict and unconditional subordination of *volost* commissariats to *uyezd* commissariats, of *uyezd* commissariats to province commissariats, of province commissariats to district commissariats, and of district commissariats to the People's Commissariat for Military Affairs.

6. The Fifth Congress of Soviets requires of all local institutions a strict accounting of military property, and its conscientious distribution and expenditure in conformity with the establishments and regulations laid down by the central organs of Soviet power. Arbitrary seizure of military property, its concealment, unlawful appropriation or careless expenditure must henceforth be treated as equivalent to the worst of crimes against the state.

7. The period of casual formations, arbitrary detachments and amateurish structures must be put behind us. All formations must be effected in strict conformity with the institutional establishments and according to the assessments of the All-Russia General Staff. The Workers' and Peasants' Red Army must be built in such a way that the minimum expenditure of forces and resources gives the maximum result, and this will be possible only provided there is planned application of all the conclusions of military science emerging from the experience of the present war.

8. In order to create a centralized, well-trained and well-equipped army we need to make extensive use of the experience and knowledge of many military specialists from among the officers of the former army. These must all be registered and obliged to take up the posts assigned to them by the Soviet power. Every military specialist who works honestly and conscientiously to develop and strengthen the military might of the Soviet Republic has the right to respect from the workers' and peasants' army and to support from the Soviet power. The military specialist who tries perfidiously to utilise his responsible post for counter-revolutionary conspiracy or treason on behalf of foreign imperialists must be punished with death.

9. The military commissars are the guardians of the close and inviolable internal bond between the Red Army and the workers' and peasants' regime as a whole. Only irreproachable revolutionaries, staunch champions of the cause of the proletariat and the village poor, must be appointed to the posts of military commissars, to whom is entrusted the fate of the army.

10. A most important task in connection with the creation of the army is the education of new commanding personnel thoroughly filled with the ideas of the workers' and peasants' revolution. The Congress imposes upon the People's Commissar for Military Affairs the duty to redouble his efforts in this direction, by creating an extensive network of schools for instructors and bringing into them able, energetic and courageous soldiers of the Red Army.

11. The Workers' and Peasants' Red Army must be built on a basis of iron revolutionary

discipline. A citizen who has been given by the Soviet power a weapon with which to defend the interests of the working masses is obliged to submit unquestioningly to the demands and orders of the commanders appointed by the Soviet power. Hooligan elements who plunder and coerce the local population or raise revolts, together with self-seekers, cowards and deserters who quit their battle-positions, must be punished without mercy. The All-Russia Congress imposes on the Commissariat for Military Affairs the duty of calling to account, first and foremost, those commissars and commanders who connive at excesses or shut their eyes to violations of military duty.

12. Until the bourgeoisie has been finally expropriated and subjected to universal labor service, so long as the bourgeoisie is still striving to restore its former domination, arming the bourgeoisie would mean arming an enemy who is ready at any moment to betray the Soviet republic to foreign imperialism. The Congress confirms the decree of the Council of People's Commissars on forming, from the age-groups of the bourgeoisie which have been called up, rear levies to make up the strength of non-combatant units serving as fatigue squads. Only such bourgeois elements can be allowed to transfer to combatant units who have shown in practice their loyalty to the working classes.

13. The Congress imposes on all Soviet institutions and on all trade-union and factory-committee organizations the duty of assisting the War Department in every way in the matter of implementing compulsory military training of workers and peasants who do not exploit the labor of others. Shooting clubs and rifle ranges must be established everywhere, manoeuvres and revolutionary-military festivals organized and agitation extensively carried on with the aim of heightening interest in military matters among the working class and the peasantry.

14. Hailing the call-up of two age-groups of workers in Moscow and Petrograd, and also the approach to mobilization on the Volga and in the Urals, and taking account of the endeavour by the world-predators to involve Russia once more in the imperialist slaughter, the Congress considers it necessary to proceed as soon as possible with the mobilizing of several age-groups of workers and working peasants throughout the country. The Central Executive Committee and the Council of People's Commissars are made responsible for issuing a decree defining the number of age-groups subject to immediate call-up, together with the times and conditions for reception of these age-groups.

15. Surrounded on all sides by enemies, face to face with counter-revolution, which relies on support from foreign mercenaries, Soviet Russia is creating a strong army to defend the workers' and peasants' power until such time as the working class of Europe and the world, rising in revolt, shall strike a mortal blow at militarism and create the conditions for peaceful and fraternal collaboration between all peoples.

BEFORE THE CAPTURE OF KAZAN

Speech at the meeting of the All-Russia Central Executive Committee on September 2, 1918

Comrades, I did not expect that I should have the opportunity to address you at this time, to address the highest organ of the Soviet Republic, and I came here not on the business of the department in which I work but recalled by the news of the attempt on the life of Comrade Lenin. [101] In conversation with comrades about this I could describe the situation that has been created only as one in which, besides the fronts we had already, yet another front has been created – in the chest of Vladimir Ilyich, where life is now struggling with death, and where, as we hope, that struggle will end with the victory of life. On our war fronts victory alternates with defeats: there are many dangers, but all comrades undoubtedly realise that *this*

front, the front in the Kremlin, is now the most worrying of all. At the front, the front where the armies are, the news of the attempt on the life of the leader of the working class produced not depression and dismay, so far as I could judge from first impressions, but, on the contrary, an upsurge of bitterness and of will to revolutionary struggle. There is no need to say how the conscious fighters at the front felt about Comrade Lenin when they learnt that he was lying with two bullets in his body. We knew that no-one could say of Comrade Lenin that his character lacked metal: now there is metal in his body as well as in his soul, and for this he will be still dearer to the working class of Russia.

Turning to the front from which I have come, I must say that I cannot, alas, report decisive victories, but, on the other hand, I am able with complete confidence, to affirm that these victories are on the way: that our position is firm and sound: that a decisive turn has taken place: that we are now guaranteed, so far as this is possible, against any big surprises, and that each week that passes will strengthen us at the expense of our enemies. As regards the masses in the army, they have undergone a certain schooling, both military and political, and an enormous contribution was made to this by those advanced workers from Petrograd, Moscow and other cities who were sent to the front. It is hard to evaluate the importance at the front of every conscious, advanced worker. At the most critical moment, when Kazan had fallen and the battle was renewed, the Communist comrades took all the difficulties of the situation on their own shoulders. They organized vanguard units. These set out numbering fifty and came back twelve. They are agitators but, when necessary, they take up rifles, like the commissars, get in among unreliable units and provide them with a strong armature. They establish everywhere a hard, sometimes severe, regime, because war is, in general, a severe business. At the same time, thanks to these forces and to the close contact between our units and the population, a tremendous change has been brought about in the mood of the Volga peasantry.

Our country is huge and requires immense forces and political efforts. In the Volga and Ural regions we have not worked on the mass of the peasantry in the way that virgin soil is ploughed up, consciousness has not yet been aroused among the poor but they have already come into contact with Red Army units which do not plunder or steal, and although some excesses have occurred here and there, we have, on the whole, firmly disciplined units. Here again an immense role is played by those same workers from Petrograd and Moscow. Political circumstances are turning out entirely to our advantage: our units are getting stronger and are growing, spiritually and numerically, whereas among the enemy, according to the reports obtained by our intelligence, utter disorder and breakdown prevails in his units, and those workers and peasants whose attitude to him was one of indifference or only slight hostility are now his enemies and our friends. This is evident from the fact that when our artillery falls silent, the bourgeoisie of Kazan at once rallies to the White Guards, but when our artillery roars, when our aircraft fly over and shower dynamite on the bourgeois quarters, meetings start to be held in the working-class quarters, the bourgeois hide themselves in corners, and the White Guards find themselves isolated. In so far as our units undertake attacks, our command adheres to tactics of caution. We have no right to suggest any change, if our command considers that these tactics correspond to the character of the units involved in this war, and, at the same time, these tactics guarantee us against dangers and major surprises, while we can also expect that they will bring us sure and solid success. On the other fronts there is also wavering this way and that, but on every front the chances of success are now very much greater than they were. The situation is best of all in the Povorino-Tsaritsyn [Povorino is about 330km north-west of Tsaritsyn, and is the junction of the Moscow-Tsaritsyn railway line with the Kazan-Kharkov line.] direction, where we are on the offensive against Krasnov's bands. The latest dispatches, which are probably known to you, speak of the capture of Kachalinskaya *stanitsa*. Here a certain 6th Cossack Regiment was disarmed, and another, similar regiment joined us and, together with our units, pursued the fleeing enemy. This, comrades, was no accidental occurrence, there are profound inner reasons for it. The working class and the working masses have understood that it is a matter of life and death,

that they are engaged in a mortal conflict, and that every day helps to bring a change in the situation in our favour. And so what is required of us is work, tireless work, resolute and intense work.

In the sphere of command, things are better than they were, though still far from satisfactory. Our new front was formed when the old apparatus of command was, in general, withering away, and the apparatus of military organisation was designed for the old front. Hence the duality in organization. We formed divisions on the basis of volunteering, and, in accordance with this, we formed extensive staffs for these divisions. We have already done away with the voluntary principle. We have gone over to the conscription of workers and peasants who do not exploit the labor of others, and the staffs of the old divisions must be transformed to where the process of formation is going ahead with great success. Close to the new front, in those places where the peasant finds himself under direct threat from the blows of the Czechoslovaks and White-Guards, the peasantry are increasingly eager to co-operate in creating new formations.

At the top of our military apparatus we lack at present the necessary unity. We have the former Supreme Military Council, which was set up in relation to the old front, and the Revolutionary War Council at Arzamas [Arzamas is about 100km south of Nizhny-Novgorod, on the railway line between Moscow and Kazan.], which was organized for the needs of the Eastern front, though we have now brought the North-Eastern front under its authority as well.

What are the urgent tasks before us?

It has been said here that Britain intends to wage war against us for three years. It is hard, comrades, to make any forecast where time is concerned. When the world war began, they thought it would last three months, yet it is now entering its fifth year. At present, important British diplomats are saying that war with Soviet Russia will last three years, and those successes which we have had do not in the least mean that we shall finish the war in the next three weeks or three months. These successes merely prove that the working class is learning to fight and to create a military organization, and that the Soviet Republic is able, if it so desires, to defend itself. How long the imperialist onslaught will go on, what forms it will take, and what further measures we shall have to adopt for our defence, it is impossible to say. One can state only that the danger is still extremely great, and that it will be especially great during the next two months – until the coming of winter, which will paralyse, at least for the duration of that season, any increase in British aid to the Czechoslovaks. These two months that lie ahead will be a time of most intense, energetic and, I will say, heroic work on our part for the military consolidation of all the borders of the Soviet Republic. We are exhausted, we are poor in all respects including the military respect, and we need to place all the country's resources at the service of the defence of the Soviet Republic.

You must proclaim that in these conditions, in which we are now faced with the concentrated fury of world imperialism, which has turned its Anglo-French and Japano-American face towards us, we are obliged to transform the Soviet Republic into one single armed camp, and all our resources, all our forces, everything the country possesses, and the personal possessions of each individual citizen and citizeness, must be devoted directly to the defence of the Soviet Republic. We have to mobilize people, soldiers, to mobilize the spirit and the ideological forces of the country, and this mobilization must assume an intense, heroic character, so that everywhere, and, in particular, on the British stock-exchange, where they quote the blood of the Russian people, they may know that, while we live, we will surrender to no-one, that we shall fight to the last drop of blood.

The measures of which I speak follow from the objective situation, from the dangers which surround us and which are not to be measured by the Czechoslovak forces and the pitiful Anglo-French expedition, dangers which may grow and assume a different physiognomy and

different dimensions.

We need to become strong and powerful. To this end we must, first and foremost, ensure supplies for our army. And in our economic circumstances this will be possible only if we mobilize the entire resources of the country. Work in the supply sphere must be centralized. In charge of this work we have already placed such an energetic and expert worker as Comrade Krasin. He must be given the widest powers and all the material resources needed if our military supply service is to be raised to the proper level. Everything must be put at the disposal of the organizers of supply!

We also need, as I have already mentioned, to centralize the military apparatus. The lack of co-ordination which resulted from the duality of the fronts – one ceasing to exist and the other coming into existence – must be ended. At the head of the armed forces and resources of the Soviet Republic must be placed a single leading organ, in the shape of the Revolutionary War Council, and a single Commander-in-Chief. All the other institutions of the All-Russia General Staff, as an organ of supply, must be subordinated to this Revolutionary War Council, and they must receive from it the fundamental directives that will ensure that we have unity in the disposition of all the country's armed forces and resources, in their transfer from one part of the country to another, from one front to another, in the provision of supplies and equipment that have to be got ready and assembled in the shortest possible time. Along with this, we need to continue the work of agitation and organization which has been and is being carried on here in the rear. Every train that brought to us at the front ten, fifteen or twenty Communists, together with a stock of literature, was as precious to us as a train that brought a good regiment or a plentiful quantity of guns. Every detachment, every group of Communists regenerated one or other sector of the front, ensured its staunchness, established communications, and, what is not the least important factor in this matter, ensured for us a certain behaviour on the part of the officers who are now at the front. In that connection I must mention that many, especially among the young officers who were brought up under the former regime, have become closely linked with the new army, with our party, with the Soviet power, and are filled with profound respect for the Soviet activists. Among the General Staff officers with this outlook there are many who are acting not from fear but from conscience. This was shown by the following example. When Kazan fell it was easy for the officers to sell themselves to the enemy. Yet many fell in battle, while others hid themselves for weeks and then secretly made their way over to us. But there are also elements prepared to betray us at the first opportunity, and there are wavering elements that need an iron corset – and such an iron corset is provided by one or two good Communists. Without Communists our army will be incapable of fighting, and if many here complain that we have depopulated a whole number of important institutions, I do not quite understand this attitude of theirs.

These complaints, coming from certain organs, are not altogether comprehensible or normal. If we fail to smash the forces opposing us, then, of course, all the Soviet institutions will go smash, and basic Soviet politics is now being put into effect before Kazan, Simbirsk and Samara and the other sectors of our front. So, give us all the elements that you can give. You will proclaim that the task of the front is now the central task, and that the entire country is a reservoir for supplying that front. You will transform the country into an armed camp: you will centralize the work of supply and make available for that work all the necessary resources that the country can provide: you will centralise the military administration, placing all military authority in the hands of the Revolutionary War Council. Thereby, you will show your will to win and to live, and let us hope that, within the few weeks in which the leader of the working class will recover, we shall conquer on the other fronts too, and that news of the downfall of our foe at Samara, Simbirsk, Ufa, Orenburg and in Siberia will be brought to a session of our CEC at which Comrade Lenin will be our dear guest.

THE RED OFFICERS

Speech at the Military Administration Courses, September 1918

Comrades, I should like first to convey to you a fraternal greeting, and then my impressions, from those armies of ours with whom I have spent the last six weeks, watching from day to day how they grew in strength, solidarity and heroism. Two months ago, comrades, we were a great deal weaker than we are today: our Workers and Peasants' Red Army has taken an immense step forward. To say nothing of our enemies, there were not a few among our friends who, two months ago, were doubting if we would succeed – in a country exhausted by four years of slaughter, a country around whose neck the noose of the Brest peace had been drawn tight, a country that had not yet eliminated the dreadful heritage of Tsardom and bourgeois rule – in creating a powerful revolutionary army. Well, it turned out that the new trials with which history confronted us engendered new forces. Under the lash of historical necessity and of a new war, a civil war, the Russian working class and peasantry strained every nerve, and we now see how, as a result of this effort, a workers' and peasants' Red Army is being built.

The army that fought before Kazan had been created in no more than a few weeks. Before Kazan it showed elements of instability, weakness, criminal deviations. There was the case when the Revolutionary Tribunal, with the approval of the whole army, sentenced to death a regimental commander who, though considering himself a Communist, shamefully deserted his regiment and set off on a steamboat, aiming to get away to Nizhny-Novgorod. In connection with this case the Revolutionary Tribunal said: 'Cowards and self-seekers in general deserve stern punishment, but those who, while holding posts of command and bearing the lofty title of Communist, behave as runaways and traitors must be punished doubly and trebly.' And despite its youth, the whole army understood, grasped with its sense of morality the complete justice of this stern, ruthless punishment. The regiment concerned became one of our best, and fought splendidly after that, with genuine courage.

Thus, comrades, in our Red Army, despite the very brief period it has existed, there is already at work in full force that revolutionary consciousness which rallies everything honorable and valiant and throws out everything impure and corrupt. Yet, not long ago, we were being told, on all sides, that we would not succeed in building a disciplined, solid army. Truly, those who talked like that failed in two ways to understand our army. In the first place, with the working class now in power, there is a profound moral basis for the army, and in the second place, there is realisation of this profound moral basis, the fact that we are fighting for the highest aim of mankind: this justifies the sternest, most ruthless measures in relation to those who undermine the foundations of the workers' and peasants' Red Army. If the Tsarist generals could establish discipline in the name of interests alien to the working class, we can and must – and this is already taking effect – establish a discipline ten times harder and firmer than theirs, for this is discipline in the name of the interests of the working class.

In military literature – in particular, I read something about this only today in our rather poor and weak journal **Voyennoye Dyelo (Military Affairs)**, which is published by specialists who have evidently not quite understood the spirit and sense of this epoch of war – in military literature the question: 'drill or education?' has often been raised. By 'drill' was meant the physical education of the soldier, and by 'education' the exercising of spiritual influence upon him. Have we rejected drill? Never. We have merely brought more purposefulness into it, driving out, through living necessity, the survivals of barrack tyranny, square-bashing and so on. Drill, as we understand it, means inculcating in the soldier the capacity for operating in a purposeful way his arms, his legs, his sabre and his rifle, and doing all that automatically. A musician cannot become a good musician if he cannot rove his

fingers automatically over the keyboard, if he has to seek with his eyes for every separate note. Just as the musician must lay his finger automatically on each key as he needs it, so must the soldier automatically operate his body and his weapon with the maximum productivity, in the interests of the military task assigned to him, just as this is achieved in industrial production, through the mechanisation of movements. The greater the automatism of his technique, the more freely will his mind work, the easier will it be for him to find his bearings, the better will he be able to estimate danger and find cover – the greater will be his freedom for military creativity. Drill, that is, the inculcation of automatism in the soldier, does not stand in contradiction to education.

But education is a different sphere, and here the military specialists do not understand – I am not talking, of course, about all the specialists: there are some among them whose eyes the revolution has opened – that the education we have in mind is profoundly different from, and diametrically opposite to, the education of the past epoch. What was meant by the education of the soldier in the epoch of Tsardom, and what is meant by this in Germany and France today? Educating the soldier on behalf of the propertied class: inculcating in him spiritual slavery and subordination, causing him not to understand his own interests, the interests of his class and of humanity in general. Achieving this under the conditions of capitalist society is a little difficult, and that is why, in all those countries, the education of the soldiers is such a complicated, serious, delicate task. Where religion lends its aid the task is easier, but in proportion as criticism takes hold of the soldier's consciousness, and he no longer submits blindly to whatever his priest tells him, it becomes ever harder for the propertied class to instil in the soldier masses the idea of the necessity of submission, that is, to educate them to serve purposes that are against their own interests. Only our army, the one in which you, comrades, are serving, is, for the first time in the history of the world, nothing but the armed hand of the working class and the poor peasants. Consequently, for us, educating the soldier means showing him that he is serving himself, in the shape of his class and his posterity. Our education is therefore incomparably easier, more honest, simpler, and, in that sense, Comrade Red officers, your task includes, besides a military mission, a great moral and cultural mission as well. You will be able to fulfil your task provided that every soldier feels, recognises, sees and senses that you are flesh of his flesh and blood of his blood. The fact that you belong to the working classes, your spiritual bond with the worker and peasant masses, does not, of course, solve everything, and much room is left free for individual evaluations. Ivanov may be brave, whereas Petrov is not brave enough. Woe to that officer regarding whose courage a spark of doubt is struck in the soldier's mind: woe to him, he is ruined in the consciousness of the masses, ruined for military work. Your first military quality is the same as your first revolutionary quality – selfless courage in face of any and every danger. Hold your head proudly high: that is the behest for every warrior. Nor is that all, comrades. You must be, and you will be – for this is your calling which you have entered freely – not courageous only: you must struggle steadily to enlarge your knowledge, experience and skill as leaders of the Red Army. I have seen in battle, in action, excellent units which did not feel that they were being directed by a steady, technically competent hand. When, at a critical moment, they notice that their leader hesitates, woe to that officer, and woe to that unit! A unit must know at every moment, and especially at the moment of battle, that it is being guided by steadfast thought, a clear eye and a firm hand, and if that hand is sometimes severe, the conscious mass of the soldiers will not complain. They will understand the need for this, in the common interest: they will know that they are fighting for the cause of their class and that for this the fighting capacity of a military unit is an essential condition.

The second behest for every Red Officer is to ensure the unity and growth of the army. You are called proletarian officers. In bourgeois society the word 'proletarian' had a certain nuance which cannot and will not apply to you. You know that when people say: 'he lives like a proletarian', it means: 'he lives badly'; that when they say: 'he lives in a proletarian flat', it means, 'in a poor sort of *flat*'; that when they say: 'he eats a proletarian meal', it

means a scanty meal. But the words ‘proletarian officer’ must not be translated as signifying ‘bad officer’. A ‘proletarian officer’ must signify a first-class Officer, who is a model of courage, firmness, knowledge, and selfless devotion to the cause of the Soviet land. That is what being a proletarian officer means. Thanks to Tsardom and the old army, the word ‘officer’ became discredited with us and was relegated to the archives, but I think that you will renew and revive it, fining it with a new content. I do not doubt that the soldier masses themselves will renew and revive this word, and when you come among them – you, new men filled with a new spirit – they will hail you as ‘our Red worker-and-peasant officers’.

Against the background of the military tasks of the revolution, your task, comrades, like that of the Red Army, is truly immense and rewarding in the highest degree. When the Germans crushed us at Brest-Litovsk it seemed as though there was no way out. They cut us into pieces, separated our sister the Ukraine from her sister Great Russia, and trampled on Poland, Lithuania and the Baltic lands, while in Finland they drowned the proletariat in blood – and then, after that, when we, bled white, were healing our wounds, the Anglo-French and Japano-American predators struck their claws into the North and East. It seemed as though there was no way out. But there is! The Nemesis of history, that is, the goddess of justice, who in the present historical period is embodied in the revolutionary consciousness of the worker masses of the whole world, was and is with us. It seemed that we had been destroyed, crushed by the violence of Germany, but after only a few months Bulgaria broke away from Germany, now Turkey is following Bulgaria, and there is a ferment in Austria-Hungary: within a few weeks or days the Austrian monarch will be brought to his knees Germany itself is isolated, there is discontent and ferment in that country, and the German Kaiser, who always used to speak of ‘*Unser alter Gott*’, that is, ‘our old (German) God’, and maintained the closest friendship with him, has now begun to speak of the need to bring the German people into closer participation in affairs of government. Wilhelm talks as Nicholas talked in the first days of the February revolution, but he will have to talk a different language yet, or else will find himself being talked to differently. History is accomplishing, before our eyes, a rapid turn. Revolution is raising its flag in Bulgaria, where, we learn from the newspapers, a Soviet of workers’ and soldiers’ deputies has been formed. The German press writes that the blame for the surrender of Bulgaria lies not with the military situation but with the idea of Bolshevism, which has taken hold not only of the masses but also of the Bulgarian army. ‘The idea of Bolshevism’ – that means that everywhere the hatred and indignation of the working people is rising against the dishonorable bourgeois slaughter into which they were dragged by their propertied classes. We foretold this and based our policy upon it, and at that time we were accused of having made a mistake, since we were obliged to sign the thrice burdensome and shameful peace of Brest. We said: ‘We shall have to suffer only for a time: give us time, and we will kindle the flame of our revolution in the hearts of the peoples of Germany and Austria-Hungary – and the Ukraine, Poland, Finland and the Baltic lands will be free.’ Naturally, the fools and flay-flints of the French and British Governments rub their hands with glee, thinking that because the masses have been weakened, it will be possible to finish Russia off. They are mistaken. To each one his turn: after Russia, Bulgaria, after Bulgaria, Turkey and then Austria-Hungary, after Austria-Hungary, Germany – and after Germany, and simultaneously with Germany, will come France, Britain and other countries. To each his turn, and from this we forecast with complete confidence that the weakening of German militarism will mean not only revolution in Germany but also revolution in France, Britain, the United States and Japan. We now have more allies than enemies in the world, and, just because of that, we need in this transitional period to prevent our enemies from dealing us a mortal blow. Here lies the fundamental task of the Soviet Republic, of the Red Army, and of you, its commanders. You know that a dying insect can sometimes sting fatally, and so, in order that dying imperialism, to East or West, shall not deal us a cruel blow, we need to be on the alert, we need to be strong and firm – and this applies especially to you, for you, comrades, form part of the skeleton of the workers and peasants’ Red Army, part of its backbone, and the whole organism is held up by the backbone. If the backbone is weak, the organism will not function: you must be that firm backbone on which the musculature of the

workers' and peasants' Red Army depends, you must strengthen the cause of the international revolution by strengthening your spirit with military exercises, with your bond with the Red Army, with its affairs, with awareness that there is not and has never been a cause higher than the one that you serve. That is your first duty!

Today, when you look towards the Volga and the Urals, you can say with complete satisfaction: we have an army, it is taking shape and growing stronger, and before Kazan it smashed the officers' battalions, which consisted entirely of officers of the old army. On the enemy's side, disintegration and collapse, but on our side, in the Red Army – enhanced morale, self-knowledge and self-confidence.

But we are sometimes short of commanding personnel, and it is you who are called upon to fill that gap, to lead our Red Army units. I bring you a fraternal greeting and to each one I mentally stretch out my hand and say: 'Welcome, Red proletarian officers, to the Workers' and Peasants' Red Army! To you, Red officers, and to our Workers' and Peasants' Red Army, and to our Soviet Russia, which we love and for which we are all ready to lay down our lives and to shed our blood to the last drop, to our Soviet Workers' and Peasants' Russia – Hurrah!'

THE DON COSSACK HOST

Decree of the Council of People's Commissars, September 3, 1918

The protracted civil war between the workers and the working peasantry, on the one hand, and, on the other, the landlords and the bourgeoisie, joined with the British, French, Czechoslovak and other mercenaries, has demanded from the Soviet power a great tension of the people's forces. Inflexibly determined to nip in the bud the malicious schemes of the imperialist brigands, both foreign and Russian, the Soviet Government has been obliged to direct great armed forces against them and to give all its attention to crushing quickly and ruthlessly, with the iron fist of the revolution, the last remnants of these plundering bands.

For this reason the Southern borderlands of the Russian Republic – the Don, Kuban, Terek and Caucasian regions have lacked timely support from the central Soviet power. A multitude of generals, landlords and officials, all the black carrion-crows of Tsardom, have congregated in the Cossack lands, gathered round them the landlord and kulak elements of Cossackdom, by force and cunning seized the Don territory, confused the minds of the Cossacks, and made the free Cossacks strangle their Cossack freedom with their own hands.

The renowned working Cossacks proved unable to defend their sovereign rights. The villages and *stanitsas* are depopulated, the corn remains unharvested, the working Cossack community is impoverished and dying.

To end the deception and machinations of the rebel Krasnov and his supporters and to put into effect the decrees of the Central Government concerning the new organization, free and based on labor, of the Don territory, the Council of People's Commissars has decided: To convene a Field Assembly of the Soviet Cossack Host of the Don – a government of the Host, endowed with full power on the Don and composed of representatives of the working population of the Don who are, arms in hand, defending the legal authority of the Soviets against the rebel bands.

The Field Assembly of the Soviet Don Cossack Host will consist of representatives of the Soviet Don regiments and also of those villages and *stanitsas* which have been liberated from

the rule of the officers and landlords.

Until the legally-elected Soviet power has been re-established throughout the territory of the Don Cossack Host, the Field Assembly of the Soviet Don Cossack Host is assigned all the rights and prerogatives of the Soviets of the Don Cossack Host, as laid down in the decree of the People's Commissars of June 1, 1918.

The most urgent task of the Field Assembly is to re-establish the Soviet socialist order in the Don territory and free the territory of the Don Cossack Host from all counter-revolutionary forces.

In order to achieve this aim, the Field Assembly is accorded the right:

- a. to conscript into the Soviet forces all the working population of the Don territory;
- b. to take charge of the organization of the armed forces of the Soviet Don territory;
- c. to co-ordinate the operations of these forces along the whole Don front.

The task of establishing of procedure for elections and norms of representation, and also the actual convocation of the Field Assembly, is entrusted to a special commission to be formed in accordance with instructions from the Presidium of the All Russia Central Executive Committee.

THE MILITARY SITUATION

Report to the Sixth Congress of Soviets [\[102\]](#), November 9, 1918

During the four months and more which have passed since the time of the July Congress, tremendous changes have taken place in the world situation and in the internal lives of all countries, and these changes have found direct reflection in the life and development of our Red Army.

When, in the memorable days of July, we experienced one of the most acute crises in the existence of the nine-months-old Soviet Republic, our Red Army was still weak, and, what was yet more serious, even in our own Soviet ranks its future development was often questioned. At that time many comrades doubted whether we would succeed, under those conditions of the extreme weariness of the entire adult male population of the country and of the anaemic and exhausted state of the Republic, in creating within a short period a trained, close-knit, combat-ready Red Army.

Then, in July, as you will remember, comrades, a party which occupied a certain sector of this hall made it a matter of principle to counterpose guerrilla detachments to the workers' and peasants' Red Army. We were told, from the camp of the Left SR party which then existed, that a revolutionary regime cannot create regular armies, that it must confine itself to forming guerrilla detachments. That was dangerous nonsense. Guerrilla detachments correspond to the period of struggle for power and the first, infant phase of the development of Soviet power. As the ruling class begins to make use of its power for military purposes, it goes over from guerrilla amateurism to planned state-building and has to create a regular army. I think, comrades, that the number of deputies we should find here and now who would support the Left SR cry of those days: 'Long live guerrilla detachments' – counterposed to the cry that rang out in this place: 'Long live the workers' and peasants' army' – would not

reach even single figures.

At that time, in July, our army was in a poor way. The situation was this. On the one hand, the painful breaking-up of the old army, which, in its decomposition, corrupted our newly-formed units: on the other hand, these units, suffering from the natural maladies of youth, were as yet only precariously put together and lacked even the minimum of military traditions. Under these conditions we retreated wherever any fairly well-organized enemy units were in action against us. That happened, for example, when the Czechoslovaks attacked us on the Eastern front. However, we gradually began to form strong units, and as these grew, so the situation began to change.

Previously, the Red Army units had shown a low level of military preparation, and we surrendered town after town. We fell back from the Volga and gave up part of Siberia.

When the Anglo-French expedition landed at Murmansk, and then, almost without having to fight, insolently seized Archangel, there arose before us the concrete danger that the Anglo-French Northern front would link up with the White Guards in the East, on the Volga and in the Urals. This tremendous threat from the North-East shook the Soviet Republic.

Nevertheless, after the Fifth Congress of Soviets which concluded in early July, we still went on retreating for a whole month. In the first days of August we surrendered Kazan, the center of military operations where the War Council of the Eastern Front was situated. Our inability to hold Kazan symbolised the extremely low level of development of the Red Army.

After that there began, at last, a turn for the better, which was accomplished in a short time. The turn took place not so much within the War Department as in Soviet Russia as a whole. For the first time everyone realised that the country was facing mortal danger, and that the War Department and the Workers' and Peasants' Red Army had to get rid of this threat, with their own forces and with the help of the entire working class of Russia.

We appealed to the Petrograd Soviet, to the Moscow Soviet, to the trade unions, to the factory committees and to the more advanced of the provincial soviets, which were still far from completely on the same levels as the revolutionary capitals. The organizations mentioned sent the flower of their workers, the best, most self-sacrificing proletarians, to the Eastern Front.

These comrades, members of trade unions and workers in various commissariats, reinforced the still diffuse, disorganized Workers' and Peasants' Army and formed, as I reported to the Central Executive Committee, its strong, firm and supple backbone. Without those thousands of Soviet executives and advanced proletarians the War Department would not have coped with its task. It was only thanks to their extraordinary self-sacrifice that we not only did not lose Nizhny-Novgorod, Vyatka and Perm, not only prevented any link-up between the Czechoslovaks and the Anglo-French force but, on the contrary, went over to the offensive on these fronts, an offensive which developed with ever greater success and led to our clearing the White Guard forces out of the whole Volga region within a few weeks. And I must say, before the most authoritative assembly of the Republic, that we owe these victories, first and foremost, to the Soviets of Petrograd and Moscow, in the shape of the proletarians they hurled into battle on the Eastern Front. In the Ural region our successes did not develop as speedily as we had wished. The chief difficulty here was that a White Guard revolt broke out in the factories of Izhevsk and Votkinsk [Izhevsk and Votkinsk are about half-way between Kazan and Perm.], and these factories were transformed into strongpoints for the White-Guard and Czechoslovak forces. The factories in question supplied them with cartridges and with machine guns. The counter-revolution succeeded in involving in the factory revolt not only kulaks but also, undoubtedly, a section of the workers, who joined them under compulsion. A struggle *began* for possession of these highly important armament centers, and this struggle diverted forces from our offensive towards Yekaterinburg and other points in the Urals. Only

yesterday we received the news that the Izhevsk factories have been taken by regiments of the Red Army and, on the first anniversary of the Republic, the flag of Soviet power is flying over them. All the other points will soon *be* liberated. Henceforth these factories will supply our Red Army with cartridges, machine-guns and everything else that it needs. This gives us grounds to expect that, in the nearest future and on the nearest front, we shall be advancing. And success will develop at a faster rate. We may suppose that in the immediate future the British and French will scrap even the idea of forming a unified North-Eastern Front. We have information that on the Northern Front the British and French and the Czechoslovaks have given up hope of success, and at the same time there are indubitable signs of disintegration of the expeditionary force. It is reported from the Kotlas front [Kotlas is on the River Northern Dvina, about 500 km south-east of Archangel.] that, for the first time, a detachment of 58 British soldiers has come over to us. It's the first step that counts. Fifty-eight is not many, of course: but we need to remember that there are extremely few British in the North, and that their position will get worse with the winter weather. There can therefore be no doubt that the British must very soon remove their expeditionary force, if they do not want to expose it to the risk of complete disintegration and dispersion.

During the winter the country will not be threatened with any danger on the Northern front. And, I repeat, there can be no question but that the enemy will, for the time being, close down that front.

In the East, operations will develop further in the direction indicated, that is, in the sense of a systematic and planned offensive by our forces. One may legitimately express impatience, comrades, because the capital of the Urals, Yekaterinburg, is not yet in our hands: but at the same time you must note and take full account of the fact that on the Eastern Front our offensive is in the highest degree regular, planned and systematic, and not at all of the guerrilla variety. Here we are safeguarding ourselves against any sort of surprises. This does not prevent the operation on the flanks of our advancing front, and fairly deep in the enemy's rear, of our guerrilla detachments, acting in conformity with directives from the Center, transmitted by the commanders of the regular armies, and they are operating with conscious success.

On the Southern Front, comrades, matters are, up to now, certainly worse than on the Northern and, especially, than on the Eastern Front. On the Southern Front our army has been put together in a different way, as compared with the other two fronts. The enemy here is different, and the course of operations has developed differently. Until recently the Southern Front was, so to speak, our stepchild: our attitude towards it was almost one of letting things slide, the reason being, of course, that we had to concentrate our attention, forces and means upon the Northern Front. The British, French and Czechoslovaks were there, and the Americans and Japanese had already appeared on the Eastern horizon. But the menace proved to be too serious, and unexpectedly so, in the near South as well, where Krasnov's band was. During the first year of the revolution we had too easily got used to disposing of the internal counter-revolution and our own bourgeoisie, of the Krasnovite and Kaledinite bands, by means of improvised workers' detachments which were poorly organized, each numbering a thousand or two of untrained Petrograd workers, who picked up rifles and dealt very well with the matter in hand. Because of this we developed a contemptuous attitude towards the Southern Front, a conviction that we should get rid of our enemies eventually, sooner or later. That was one aspect of the matter. The other aspect was the actual process of formation of the units which are now holding our Southern Front. To a considerable extent they are composed of men from the Ukraine, the Don region, the Kuban and North Caucasia. They are excellently seasoned troops who have been through a hard school of experience during the guerrilla war. Their commanders have shared with them all the adversities and hardship and all the fortunes of war through many months, in the Ukraine, on the Don, and in North Caucasia; but at the same time, these units brought with them the negative features of the guerrilla period of the war, to a greater degree than all our other units on other fronts, and

have still not got rid of them. Each guerrilla commander looked on his unit, which he later named a division, as a closed world: he required of the soldiers belonging to his division unconditional submission to severe discipline, and was often capable of creating and maintaining such discipline. At the same time, he was often lacking in that discipline where his own attitude to the higher centers of command was concerned. It was hard to turn these units into regular formations, proper military units, divisions of a normally functioning centralized army. This task called for a large number of Soviet Communist activists, combat-hardened revolutionaries, and to get them, comrades, we again appealed to the Soviets of Petrograd and Moscow, pointing out how extremely important and necessary it was to discipline and unify the Southern Front, along the same lines as the Eastern Front. And again the Petrograd and Moscow Soviets gave us many hundreds of workers for service on the Southern Front. But this happened very recently, and it was only a few days ago that these several hundreds of the state's best workers appeared at the front: they are today, perhaps, scattered over various sectors of the front. Until now there have been no commissars on the Southern Front, either in the regiments or in the divisions. Those of your comrades who are at all close to the Army know what a tremendous role is played by commissars who are *old* Party workers. As commanders we have only *young* men and former soldiers whose attention and strength are wholly absorbed by the military side of things, and the tasks of political control and revolutionary tempering of the troops are, naturally, assigned to a different leader, to the commissar, whose post is of the highest importance. Yet in our Southern armies, which include great numbers of men, there are hardly any units that have commissars, apart from those regiments and divisions which have recently been and are now being transferred thither. Only now has an apparatus of commissars been formed on that front. Our enemies have given our regime the name 'commissar-rule', and, where our workers' and worker-peasant army is concerned, we are ready to accept that name which our enemies wanted to fasten on us as a term of abuse. Yes, our army is ruled by commissars, and in so far as it depends on them we can call the revolutionary regime 'commissar-rule'. If you will give us experienced, battle-tempered commissars who know how to die, our cause will prosper.

Comrades, I am repeating what I have told the CEC many times before. I do not know of one single unit that has retreated in panic, shown faint-heartedness or produced many cases of desertion, if that unit has a firm commander and a firm commissar. In any case there is always, even if it be small, a perfectly conscious and hardened nucleus of soldier revolutionaries, Communists, knights devoted to the struggle for socialism, and if the commissar always stands at his post as an unbending soldier of the revolution, if, at the moment of most terrible danger, he is there in the front line, in front of his unit, and says '*Don't move*', he will be backed up by the best of the soldiers, and then the conduct of all the soldiers is guaranteed, for in every unit, even one that is not very conscious, there is the voice of conscience in the soul, which whispers: 'You must not betray, you must not desert.' And if even the commanding personnel are silent, and it is known that the instinct of self-preservation may triumph over consciousness, it is enough for the voice of duty to ring out: 'Comrades, don't move,' and the Red Army unit will not fall back. I have not yet known an example of panic under those conditions. That is why we have introduced a rule which some find severe, but which remains fully in force: for every panicky withdrawal, for every case of desertion, the commander and the commissar are to be answerable, first and foremost. If they have not taken all the necessary measures, have remained unharmed, or have deserted along with their unit, then, of course, they will be the first to fall beneath the sharp blade of our revolutionary punishment. Apparently, some comrades have considered, and have voiced their opinion, that we are acting too harshly, too mercilessly. Our time is, in general, a harsh and merciless time for the working class, which is compelled to defend its power and its existence against a swarm of external foes. And if we want to celebrate more than just one anniversary of the Soviet Republic, to uphold Soviet power and win the future for the working class and the working peasantry, then, in this merciless time, we are obliged to be merciless towards anyone in our own ranks who does not display the utmost energy, courage and firmness when he has been put in a responsible position: and there is no post more

responsible than that of Commissar. There can be no doubt, comrades, that if such a firm proletarian course is followed on the Southern Front in the immediate future, beneficial work will be accomplished in the disciplinary, unifying and centralizing of our armies stationed there.

I have visited the armies stationed on the Voronezh, Balashov, Tsaritsyn and Astrakhan fronts, and acquainted myself, closely and in detail, with their situation, and I can say with a clear conscience that we possess in the South a good and very numerous army, very much bigger than many of you suppose. It is now being given the proper organization of command and a real corps of commissars. I repeat – the results of this will make themselves felt very soon.

In the Cossacks and White Guards we now have an adversary who is a great deal more serious than seemed to be the case until recently. United against us are the substantial forces which until recently were backed by the Germans, in the shape of Krasnov's bands, and by the British and French, in the shape of Denikin and Alekseyev. There is now taking place a unification of the Alekseyev-Denikin front and the Krasnov front, which previously relied on the two hostile imperialist coalitions, the German and the Anglo-French, but which both now hope to receive supplies, on both sectors of their united front, from victorious Anglo-French militarism. Our problems on the Southern Front are now extremely acute. German militarism has collapsed. We have just heard a report which shows that the process of its downfall is going ahead at feverish speed. The Germans were needed to defend the Ukraine. Anglo-French militarism is hurrying to take their place in the Ukraine, on the Don and in North Caucasia. And we must slip in between departing German militarism and approaching Anglo-French militarism. We must occupy the Don, North Caucasia and the Caspian, support the workers and peasants of the Ukraine, crush their enemies, and enter into our Soviet house (in which we mentally include North Caucasia, the Don and the Ukraine), go into our own Soviet dwelling and say that there is no entry here either for British or for German scoundrels. This concludes the repercussion on the Red Army of those changes in the world situation that I mentioned earlier. I will now proceed to questions of organization.

It is no secret that we are experiencing difficulties in the organization of supplies and in the training of commanding personnel.

We have overcome the deepest crisis: the army exists and is being administered and supplied. There can be no room now for the doubt that was felt not long ago as to whether we could create an army. The army exists, is fighting, and is becoming a factor in international affairs with which our enemies are already having to reckon. Quoted in our own Soviet newspapers recently were extracts from the foreign press, namely, the leading British paper **The Times** and the German bourgeois paper **Der Lokal-Anzeiger**. They write of our Red Army that it is growing at a menacing rate. As regards numbers, the papers mentioned a figure of 400 to 500,000 soldiers, already now. [Figures published later show that the Red Army actually comprised only 350,000 men at this time.] For reasons you will understand, I am not going to quote precise data, but I will say that at present the figures given by country's forces, and to do this, in the first place, so as to serve the Southern Front. If certain institutions feel pressure from the War Department as the cruel pressure of a new Red Soviet militarism, well, I resolutely say again that we live in a harsh time, when our country has to be transformed into an armed camp. If our soldiers fall back under the influence of panic, severe punishment awaits them. This fate will befall likewise those Soviet institutions which may remove themselves, as many have done, previously, from the territory of the front. True, such cases are happening now a great deal less frequently; on the contrary, indeed, when the front bends and comes close to *uyezd* or town soviets, the latter no longer move away, but take up arms and join the ranks of our army. For all that, though, we are still far from having formed a stable, disciplined vigorous rear. When we have such a rear, we will take the offensive on our Southern front. It is clear to everyone how important the conquest of the Don region will be.

It will have repercussions in the Ukraine and all over the world, for we shall develop forces there which will help us wage a struggle for mastery of the Caspian Sea. Just three days ago I was in Astrakhan, and I returned from there with seven large steam ships which had been captured from Bicherakhov. We needed these ships, for three of them were the biggest on the Caspian Sea, such ships as we did not possess. On them we shall mount our hundred-millimetre guns, which neither Bicherakhov [General L.F. Bicherakhov held positions in Daghestan, on the Western coast of the Caspian Sea, from which he was waging a two-front war: by sea against the Bolsheviks based at Astrakhan, and by land against the Turks who had come in through Armenia and Azerbaidzhan.] nor the Turks will have. And I think that our honest Soviet river Volga will soon flow into an equally honest Soviet sea, the Caspian. It is not permissible, of course, to slip into extreme optimism, but we cannot but acknowledge that our general military position is satisfactory.

On the Eastern Front there is complete demoralisation in the units fighting against us. We are now intensifying this by supplying information about the events in Austria-Hungary, about Bohemia having gained independence, and every Czechoslovak understands and knows that the road to liberated Bohemia lies not through Britain and France but through Soviet Russia or through Soviet Ukraine. As regards the Southern Front, the whole question there comes down to the tempo of our work. We must not allow our enemies to relieve each other. Krasnov, who until yesterday was in conflict and competition with Alekseyev, is now united with him: Bicherakhov is now at war with Turkey, but tomorrow he will be united with her. The Germans will undoubtedly clear the way for the British and French and will even help them in the common struggle against us. Tempo is of very great importance, and we must achieve tremendous speed: this together with the forces of the Red Army, will enable us to act so as to safeguard Russia from counter-revolutionary onslaughts.

I returned from the front with the conviction that there is much work to be done, and that there are also subjective obstacles: that, for instance, not all Soviet executives have realised that a centralized administration exists, and all orders that come from above have to be obeyed, that deviation from them is impermissible, and that we shall be pitiless towards those Soviet executives who have not yet understood this. We shall dismiss them, cast them out of our ranks, subject them to repression. There are still many difficulties, especially on the Southern Front, but our forces have grown larger, and we have more experience and confidence. If all of you comrades go from the Congress of Soviets refreshed from having met together, if you go back to the localities and report what you have heard here, and if you say that we have a Red Army that is strong and united, if you go to the localities with that conviction and explain that the principal task before us is to send all available and half-available forces to the Front, that all barrels have to be scraped and all superfluous bayonets and cartridges mobilized and sent back through the appropriate channels, to the front, that if there are motor-cars in the localities, it is necessary to do without them, and to send all of them to the front, as well – if you do all this, if you carry through the work of militarising all Soviet organizations, our country will be put on such a footing that it will fear neither the German nor the Anglo-French imperialists. Our Red Army and our rear will develop daily and hourly. And the slogan which Comrade Lenin issued in his letter to the CEC, that we need an army of three million men, will become reality. [The reference is to Lenin's letter to the All-Russia CEC, October 3, 1918, in *Collected Works*, Vol.28, pp.101-104.]

While in the other countries a process of internal breakdown is taking place, with only a difference of degree between one country and another, while the war is giving rise there to a process of disruption between the mass of the soldiers and the commanders, and between the ruling classes and the masses generally, when they are going through the period we knew in February, March and April of this year – meanwhile, the opposite process is going on here. We are taking shape, getting into formation, becoming hardened. Here we have soldiers, taken partly from the old army, who are now fulfilling historical tasks, soldiers who cannot break down and disperse, which is something that happens now only in the countries of the bankrupt bourgeoisie. There the armies have either dispersed or are dispersing, or will

disperse tomorrow, as a result of revolutionary agitation alone. Our soldiers fear no agitators, and, in confirmation of that, I bring to your notice the fact that on the Southern Front, where we are now in a difficult situation, confronted with the imperialists of Germany, France and Britain, not only the Right SRs but the Left SRs as well are fruitlessly engaged in baseless conspiracies. The details of one of these conspiracies in our Red Army (*cries of 'Shame!'*) fighting against united Anglo-French imperialism will be published in the next few days.

Someone here uttered the word 'shame'. Yes, shame, thrice shame! Our Red Army is now afraid of no agitators. It knows that the country has no task other than to supply and care for the Red Army. The Army has its commanding apparatus. All the forces that are available in the country are being devoted to the Red Army. We do not conceal our tasks and aims.

Our Red Army feels that it is the Soviet workers' and peasants' regime in arms. Our Red Army will uphold this regime. Comrades! Make serving the Red Army, with moral and material means alike, your first priority. The whole country must be mobilized, materially and spiritually. All the country's strength and resources belong to the Red Army, which has to fight better than it has fought hitherto. The experience of the Red Army is being transformed into irreplaceable capital. It will accumulate this experience, it will not waste its strength. The whole country now faces a fresh process of forming units of workers and peasants, and everyone must see to it, in the localities, that these units which are being formed lack nothing they need, either materially or morally. They must feel that they are supported by the Soviet power. It is your duty to leave here conscious that there is no higher task than strengthening the Red Army and supporting the front.

And when this task has been performed, our front will be unshakable, and then we shall celebrate the anniversary of the revolution not only at home but also in Rostov, Kharkov, Kiev, Vienna and Berlin, and, perhaps, the international congress which Friedrich Adler was preparing to convene in July 1914, on the eve of the war, will be fully convened by us, in one of our Soviet capitals. Then we shall tell the Third International that it has assembled here, in Moscow or Petrograd, [A conference of the Second International was being prepared when the First World War broke out. The first Congress of the Third (Communist) International met in Moscow in March 1919.] because its congress is defended by the workers' and peasants' Red Army, the first army of communism in the whole history of the world.

RESOLUTION OF THE ALL-RUSSIA EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE OF THE SOVIETS OF WORKERS', PEASANTS', COSSACKS' AND RED ARMY MEN'S DEPUTIES

[Signed by Ya. Sverdlov, V. Ulyanov (Lenin) and V. Avanesov. – *L.T.*]

The Soviet Republic faces increasing danger of invasion by the united hordes of world imperialism. Having entered the arena of world-wide slaughter under the false slogans of democracy and brotherhood of the peoples, the victorious Allied predators are now trampling more and more upon the weak peoples and states. The German working class, which was itself a victim of the policy of the bourgeois-noble monarchy of the Hohenzollerns, is now being ruthlessly stifled by Wilson, Lloyd-George and their accomplices. Belgium, freed from

the Germans, becomes the booty of Britain: Hungary, Bohemia, all the countries of the Balkan Peninsula, are occupied by foreign armies. All the neutral countries meekly bend their necks beneath the yoke of the victors. France herself, a member of the group of victorious states, is actually occupied by Anglo-American and colonial armies, whose task is to stifle the revolution of the French proletariat.

Under these conditions of world-wide brigandage, plundering and violence, our country alone is now the true home of the independence of the working class, the bulwark of the weak and oppressed peoples, the fortress of the social revolution, namely, Soviet Russia.

Against it is directed all the malice, all the hatred of the world's bourgeoisie. In the North and in the South, in the East and in the West, the Anglo-American and Franco-Japanese predators have advanced and are advancing hostile fronts against Soviet Russia: they are arming the White Guards, the Cossack Generals, the sons of the landlords and bourgeois, of the kulaks of town and country, landing expeditionary forces and threatening us with more and more hordes.

The All-Russia Congresses of Soviets have shown before the face of all mankind their desire to live in peace and fraternity with all peoples, and at the same time their readiness to defend, arms in hand, the socialist republic against the attacks of imperialist forces. Nothing with great satisfaction the successes of the Red Army and the Red Navy, the All-Russia Central Executive Committee reiterates the need to increase tenfold the efforts of the workers and peasants, soldiers and sailors, in the defence of the workers' and peasants' country.

By decree of the All-Russia CEC dated September 2, the Soviet Republic was proclaimed an armed camp.

This decree must now be put into effect in all branches of economic activity and state administration.

It is necessary to ensure that the army gets its supplies, and for this purpose to increase the productivity of labor.

It is necessary to ensure that the army and navy get their food, together with Moscow, Petrograd and all other centers of organized labor.

To this end, all grain-procurement and railway organs, at the center and in the localities, must be made to work at maximum tension and with the greatest conscientiousness.

Not only in the army and the navy, but also in the grain-procurement and transport spheres, and in war industry, a military regime must be established, that is, a regime of strict labor discipline, corresponding to the situation of a country which the bandits of imperialism have forced to transform itself into an armed camp.

In order to put these measures into effect, the closest unity must be created between the War Department, the Extraordinary Commission for Producing Supplies, and the departments of communications and grain-procurement, in joint work for the fulfilment of practical tasks.

To this end, the All-Russia CEC resolves to set up a Workers' and Peasants' Defence Council under the chairmanship of Comrade Lenin, as Chairman of the Council of People's Commissars, to consist of the Chairman of the Revolutionary War Council of the Republic, Comrade Trotsky; the People's Commissar of Communications, Comrade Nevsky; the Deputy-People's Commissar of Food, Comrade Bryukhanov; the Chairman of the Extraordinary Commission for Producing Supplies, Comrade Krasin (or their deputies); and, representing the Central Executive Committee, Comrade Stalin. [The name-index gives: **Stalin, I.V.** Old Bolshevik. Worked very closely with Comrade Lenin during the October Revolution. Member of the

Central Committee of the Russian Communist Party (Bolshevik) continuously since 1912. During the Civil War was a member of the Revolutionary War Councils of various fronts. At present General Secretary of the RCP(B).]

The Defence Council is endowed with full powers for mobilizing the country's forces and resources in the interests of defence. The decrees of the Defence Council are unconditionally binding on all departments and institutions, both central and local, and on all citizens.

Direct leadership of the army and navy, and also of all institutions of the military and naval department, remains as before in the hands of the Revolutionary War Council of the Republic.

In order to secure greater concentration of the activity of the latter institution, a Bureau is to be formed from it, consisting of Comrade Trotsky, as Chairman; the Commander-in-Chief, Comrade Vatsetis; and Comrade Aralov.

November 30, 1918

Published in **Collected Decrees and Decisions of the Workers' and Peasants' Government**, December 22, 1918, No.91-92, p.924

Endnotes

[99.](#) The regulations on the rear levies were published in the decree of the Council of People's Commissars dated July 20, 1918. By this decree, all citizens not liable to be called up to the Red Army along with others of their age groups were conscripted for one year to serve in the rear levies. Special labor units in the form of independent labor battalions, were constituted from those called up in this way. They were assigned to trench digging, building jobs, labor on the roads, work stores and workshops in connection with the stockpiling of fuel and foodstuffs, loading and unloading, and so on. Strict measures were introduced for registering all citizens liable to call up between the ages of 18 and 45, in the following categories: (1) those living on unearned income; (2) those employing hired labor with a view to making profit; (3) members of the managements of joint-stock companies and industrial commercial and agricultural enterprises; (4) former barristers their assistants private attorneys, notaries, stockbrokers, middlemen, writers for the bourgeois press; (5) monks and clergy of all denominations; (6) persons belonging to the so-called liberal professions, if not performing functions of public utility; (7) former officers, civil servants, pupils at the cadet (Junker) training schools and in the Cadet Corps [The old established and prestigious Cadet Corps catered for sons of the nobility. The 'Junker' schools had been created to provide officer training for young men from the other classes of society.], and persons without a definite occupation.

[100.](#) On the counter-revolutionary conspiracy in the Baltic Fleet, headed by Shchastny, see [notes 50-58](#).

[101.](#) The attempt on the life of Comrade Lenin was made on August 30 by a member of the SR party named Kaplan, during a meeting in the Mikhelson factory in the Zamoskvoretsk district of Moscow.

[102.](#) The Sixth All-Russia Extraordinary Congress of Soviets was held in Moscow on November 6-9, 1918, coinciding with the celebration of the first anniversary of the October Revolution. This congress considered the following questions: (1) the anniversary of the Revolution; (2) the international situation; (3) the military situation; (4) the building of Soviet power at the center, the Committees of the Poor, and the Soviets.

V. I. Lenin

Manifesto To The Ukrainian People

With An Ultimatum To The Ukrainian Rada^[1]

Written: 3 December, 1917

First Published: 18 December, 1917 in *Pravda* No. 206; on 6 December, 1917 in *Izvestia* No. 244.

Source: Lenin's *Collected Works*, Progress Publishers, Moscow, Volume 26, 1972, pp. 361-363

Translated: Yuri Sdobnikov and George Hanna, Edited by George Hanna

Transcription & HTML Markup: Charles Farrell and David Walters

Online Version: [Lenin Internet Archive](#) November, 2000

Proceeding from the interests of the unity and fraternal alliance of factory workers and the working and exploited masses in the struggle for socialism, and also from the recognition of these principles by numerous decisions of the organs of revolutionary democracy, the Soviets, and especially the Second All-Russia Congress of Soviets, the Council of People's Commissars—the Socialist government of Russia—reaffirms that the right to self-determination belongs to all nations oppressed by tsarism and the Great Russian bourgeoisie, up to and including the right of these nations to secede from Russia.

Accordingly we, the Council of People's Commissars, recognise the People's Ukrainian Republic, and its right to secede from Russia or enter into a treaty with the Russian Republic on federal or similar relations between them.

We, the Council of People's Commissars, recognise at once, unconditionally and without reservations everything that pertains to the Ukrainian people's national rights and national independence.

We have not taken a single step, in the sense of restricting the Finnish people's national rights or national independence, against the bourgeois Finnish Republic, which still remains bourgeois, nor shall we take any steps restricting the national independence of any nation which had been—or desires to be—a part of the Russian Republic.

We accuse the Rada of conducting, behind a screen of national phrases, a double-dealing bourgeois policy, which has long been expressed in the Rada's non-recognition of the Soviets and of Soviet power in the Ukraine (incidentally, the Rada has refused to convoke a territorial congress of the Ukrainian Soviets immediately, as the Soviets of the Ukraine had demanded). This ambiguous policy, which has made it impossible for us to recognise the Rada as a plenipotentiary representative of the working and exploited masses of the Ukrainian Republic, has lately led the Rada to steps which preclude all possibility of agreement.

These, firstly, were steps to disorganise the front.

The Rada has issued *unilateral* orders moving Ukrainian units and withdrawing them from the front, thereby breaking up the common united front *before* any demarcation, which can be carried out only through a formal agreement between the governments of the two republics.

Secondly, the Rada has started to disarm the Soviet troops stationed in the Ukraine.

Thirdly, the Rada has been extending support to the Cadet-Kaledin plot and revolt against Soviet power. On the patently false plea of "the Don and the Kuban" having autonomous rights, a plea that serves to cover up Kaledin's counter-revolutionary moves, which clash with the interests and demands of the vast majority of the working Cossacks, the Rada has allowed its territory to be crossed by troops on their way to Kaledin, but *has refused transit to any anti-Kaledin troops*.

Even if the Rada had received full formal recognition as the uncontested organ of supreme state power of an independent bourgeois Ukrainian republic, we would have been forced to declare war on it without any hesitation, because of its attitude of unexampled betrayal of the revolution and support of the Cadets and the Kaledinites—the bitterest enemies of the national independence of the peoples of Russia, the enemies of Soviet power and of the working and exploited masses.

At the present time, in view of the circumstances set forth above, the Council of People's Commissars, with the full cognisance of the peoples of the Ukrainian and Russian Republics, asks the Rada'^[2] to answer the following questions:

1. Will the Rada undertake to give up its attempts to disorganise the common front?
2. Will the Rada undertake to refuse transit to any army units on their way to the Don, the Urals or elsewhere, unless it has the sanction of the Commander-in-Chief?

3. Will the Rada undertake to assist the revolutionary troops in their struggle against the counter-revolutionary Cadet-Kaledin revolt?

4. Will the Rada undertake to stop attempts to disarm the Soviet regiments and the workers' Red Guard in the Ukraine and immediately return arms to those who had been deprived of them?

In the event no satisfactory answer is received to these questions within 48 hours, the Council of People's Commissars will deem the Rada to be in a state of open war with Soviet power in Russia and the Ukraine.

Footnotes

[1] The Ukrainian Central Rada was a counter-revolutionary bourgeois-nationalist organisation set up at the All-Ukraine National Congress in Kiev in April 1917 by a bloc of Ukrainian bourgeois and petty-bourgeois nationalist parties and groups. The ideologist of the Ukrainian bourgeoisie, M. S. Grushovskiy, was its chairman, and V. K. Vinnichenko, his deputy. The Rada had a social base of urban and rural bourgeoisie, and petty-bourgeois nationalist-minded intellectuals. It tried to build up the power of the Ukrainian business class and landowners and set up a Ukrainian capitalist state with the aid of the national liberation movement in the Ukraine. It waved the banner of national independence in an effort to lead the Ukrainian masses away from the all-Russia revolutionary movement, subordinate them to the Ukrainian bourgeoisie and prevent the socialist revolution from winning out in the Ukraine. It supported the Provisional Government in spite of contradictions over the issue of Ukrainian autonomy.

After the Great October Socialist Revolution, the Rada proclaimed itself the supreme organ of the Ukrainian People's Republic and launched an open struggle against Soviet power. It was one of the centres of the counter-revolution.

The First All-Ukraine Congress of Soviets, held in Kharkov in December 1917, proclaimed the Ukraine a Soviet republic. The Congress declared the Central Rada overthrown. The Council of People's Commissars of the R.S.F.S.R. recognised the Ukrainian Soviet Government as the sole legitimate government of the Ukraine and decided to give it immediate help in fighting the counter-revolutionary Rada. Armed uprisings against the Central Rada for the re-establishment of Soviet power took place all over the country in December 1917 and January 1918. In January 1918, Soviet troops in the Ukraine launched an offensive and on January 26 (February 8) occupied Kiev. The Rada was overthrown.

Defeated and ousted from the territory of the Soviet Ukraine, deprived of any

support among the working people, the Central Rada joined the German imperialists in an alliance to overthrow Soviet power and restore the rule of the bourgeoisie in the Ukraine. It sent a delegation to Brest-Litovsk and secretly concluded a separate peace giving Germany the Ukraine's corn, coal, raw materials in return for military aid in the fight against Soviet power. In March 1918, the Rada returned to Kiev as the puppet of the Austro-German armies who dispersed it in late April when they realised that it was absolutely incapable of suppressing the revolutionary movement in the Ukraine and delivering the goods.

^[2] The rest of the text was written by L. D. Trotsky and edited by Lenin and Stalin.

Sovnarkom

Proclamation Declaring the Cadet Party an Enemy of the People

Written: November 28/December 11, 1917

First Published: *Izvestiia*, No. 239, December 12, 1917, p. 1.

Source: James Bunyan and H.H. Fisher, *The Bolshevik revolution, 1917-1918: Documents and materials*, Stanford University Press; London: H. Milford, Oxford University Press, 1934, pp. 357-359.

Translated: Emanuel Aronsberg

Transcription/Markup: Zdravko Saveski

Online Version: marxists.org 2017

To All Toilers and Exploited!

The bourgeoisie led by the Cadet Party prepared all its forces to bring about a counter-revolutionary coup d'etat at the time of the Constituent Assembly. Kornilov, Kaledin, and Dutov have unfurled the flag of civil war against the Soviets of Peasants' and Workers' and Soldiers' Deputies. Bogaevsky, Kaledin's aide, has openly declared that the revolt was started at the insistence of the Cadet Party which has long since formed an alliance with the counter-revolutionary faction of the Cossacks.

On the Urals the Cadets support the counter-revolution with money and supplies. . . . It is clear that the civil war was initiated and is led by the Cadets. The Central Committee of this party is at the present moment the headquarters of all counter-revolutionary forces in the country.

This plot, threatening as it does the cause of peace and the conquests of the revolution, is carried on under the cloak of the Constituent Assembly. The Cadet Central Electoral Commission hid from the Soviets, kept to itself the data about the elections so as not to expose the defeat of the Cadets [at the polls] before the plot of Miliukov, Kornilov, Kaledin, and Dutov had time to succeed.[1] The Soviet of People's Commissars has decided to open the Constituent Assembly just as soon as half of its members, namely 400 out of 800, are present. This decision gives the lie to those who say that the Sovnarkom is opposed to the Constituent Assembly. And that is why the bourgeoisie would not wait until the people's assembly is opened in a legal way. On the evening of December 11 a group of people calling themselves deputies, broke into the Taurida Palace without showing their certificates. They were accompanied by armed White Guards, cadets, and thousands of bourgeoisie and officials on strike.

The aim of the Cadet Party was to stage a "legal" cover for the Cadet-Kaledin counter-revolutionary uprising.. They hoped to make the voices of a few bourgeois deputies sound like the voice of the Constituent Assembly.

The Sovnarkom calls this plot to the attention of the people. All the conquests of the revolution including an early peace are at stake. On the south we have Kaledin, in the east Dutov, in the center and in Petrograd the plot of the Central Committee of the Cadet Party, which directs a constant flow of Kornilov officers to Kaledin. The least hesitancy or weakness . . . may put an end to the Soviets, peace and land reform, and bring back the mighty landlords and capitalists.

Recognizing the full responsibility that now rests on the Soviet Government for the fate of the nation and the revolution, the *Soviet of People's Commissars Declares the Cadet Party* (as an organization of counter-revolutionary conspirators) *an Enemy of the People*.

The Sovnarkom is determined not to lay down its arms in its fight against the Cadet Party and its Kaledin forces.

The political leaders of the counter-revolutionary war will be arrested; the conspiracy of the bourgeoisie will be crushed, come what may!

In this fight the Sovnarkom counts on the support and loyalty of all workers, soldiers, peasants, sailors, Cossacks, and all other honest citizens.

Down with the bourgeoisie! There is no place in the Constituent Assembly for enemies of the people, capitalists, and landowners! The country can be saved only by the Constituent Assembly made up of representatives of the toiling and exploited classes. Long live the Revolution! Long live the Soviets! Long live peace!

SOVIET OF PEOPLE'S COMMISSARS

Notes

[1] The Commission had many Cadets among its members. Dmitriev (Socialist), representing the Northern front at the Electoral Commission, comments on the above statement in an open letter to the soldiers and workers as follows: "Is not the accusation really ridiculous? Uritsky was getting all information directly [from the provinces], while the Commission, because of the delay of the elections in many provinces, knew very little of their progress." (*Nash Vek*, No. 10, December 23, 1917, p. 2.

V. I. Lenin

**Resolution Of The All-Russia Central
Executive Committee**

January 3 (16), 1918

Written: 3 January, 1918

First Published: 4 January in *Pravda* No. 3 and *Izvestia* No. 2. Published according to the Pravda text.

Source: Lenin's *Collected Works*, Progress Publishers, Moscow, Volume 26, 1972, pp. 427

Translated: Yuri Sdobnikov and George Hanna, Edited by George Hanna

Transcription & HTML Markup: Charles Farrell and David Walters **Online**

Version: [Lenin Internet Archive](#) November, 2000

On the basis of all the achievements of the October Revolution, and in accordance with the Declaration of the Working and Exploited People adopted at the meeting of the Central Executive Committee of January 3, 1918, all power in the Russian Republic belongs to the Soviets and the Soviet institutions. Accordingly, any attempt by any person or institution whatsoever to usurp any of the functions of state power will be regarded as a counter-revolutionary act. All such attempts will be suppressed by every means at the disposal of the Soviet power, including the use of armed force.

Supreme Council of National Economy

Resolution on Administration of Nationalized Industry

Written: March 3, 1918

First Published: *Sbornik dekretov i postanovlenii po narodnomu khoziaistvu. 25 oktiabria 1917 g.-25 oktiabria 1918 g.*, Moscow, 1918, pp. 311-15.

Source: James Bunyan and H.H. Fisher, *The Bolshevik revolution, 1917-1918: Documents and materials*, Stanford University Press; London: H. Milford, Oxford University Press, 1934, pp. 615-616.

Translated: Emanuel Aronsberg

Transcription/Markup: Zdravko Saveski

Online Version: marxists.org 2017

Part I

1. The central administration of nationalized enterprises of a given branch of industry is to appoint for every large nationalized enterprise [in that branch of industry] a technical and an administrative director to take complete charge and direction of the enterprise. Such directors will be responsible to the central administration and its appointed commissar.

2. The technical director is to appoint the technical personnel and issue all orders relating to the technical management of the enterprise. The shop committee will have the right to lodge complaints with the commissar of the central administration relative to the appointments and orders of the technical director, but the appointments and orders may be canceled only by the commissar or the central administration.

3. The administrative director will work in connection with an economic-administrative Soviet consisting of representatives of workers, employees, and engineers of the enterprise. The Soviet will examine the estimates, plans of work, internal regulations, complaints, material, and moral conditions of the work and life of the workers and employees and other questions relating to the life of the enterprise.

4. In questions of technical administration the Soviet will have consultative powers only, but in other questions it will have power to make decisions.....

5. The decisions of the economic-administrative Soviet will be enacted by the administrative director.

6. The Soviet of the enterprise may petition the central administration to remove

the director and recommend its own candidate.....

10. Workers' control over nationalized enterprises will be effected through the factory-shop committees which will send in their findings to the economic-administrative Soviet.....

12. In those branches of industry where no central administrative department exists all [administrative] rights will belong to the regional councils of national economy

13. Estimates and plans of work in the nationalized enterprises must be prepared every three months.....

Part II

17. The central administration (*Glavnyi Komitet*) of each branch of industry which had been nationalized will be attached to the Supreme Council of National Economy and will consist of representatives of workers and employees of the given industry (one-third), representatives of the general proletariat, state, political, and economic organizations, and institutions such as the Supreme Council of National Economy, the People's Commissariats, the All-Russian Council of Trade Unions, the All-Russian Council of Workers' Co-operatives, the Central Executive Committee of Soviets (one-third), and the representatives of scientific, technical, and All-Russian democratic organizations (one-third).

18. The central administration is to elect a bureau to do current business

19. The central administration is to organize regional and local administrations of the given branch of industry

20. The rights and duties of every central administration (*Glavnyi Komitet*) will be defined in each case by the ordinance which brings it into existence, but in every case the central administration will take charge of: (a) the administration of the enterprises of the given branch of industry, (b) the financing [of these enterprises], (c) their technical consolidation and reform, (d) the conditions of labor in the given industry.

21. Every central administrative body must abide by the decisions of the Supreme Council of National Economy

23. The central administration will have a monopoly of export and import of goods ... and will co-operate with the all-national organization for foreign trade

Yu. LARIN

Third Congress of Soviets of Workers', Soldiers', Peasants', and Cossacks' Deputies Resolution on Nationalities

Written: January 15/28, 1918

First Published: *Tretii Vserossiiskii Sezd Sovetov Rabochikh, Soldatskikh i Krestianskikh Deputatov*, Petrograd, 1918, p. 94.

Source: James Bunyan and H.H. Fisher, *The Bolshevik revolution, 1917-1918: Documents and materials*, Stanford University Press; London: H. Milford, Oxford University Press, 1934, p. 397.

Translated: Emanuel Aronsberg

Transcription/Markup: Zdravko Saveski

Online Version: marxists.org 2017

The All-Russian Congress of Soviets of Workers', Soldiers', and Peasants' Deputies wholeheartedly approves the policy of the People's Commissars in regard to nationalities based on the principle of self-determination of nations in the sense of self-determination of the toiling masses of all nationalities living in Russia. The Congress of Soviets of Workers', Soldiers', and Peasants' Deputies confirms, in particular, the decrees passed by the Sovnarkom and the C.E.C. in regard to Finland and Armenia.

The Congress expresses its firm conviction that all subsequent steps taken by the Soviet Government in this field will help to transform the former Russian Empire, which kept the different nationalities within its borders by means of oppression and force, into a brotherly union of Russian Soviet Republics freely united on federative principles.

Central Executive Committee

Resolution on Relation of the Central Executive Committee to the Sovnarkom

Written: November 17/30, 1917

Source: James Bunyan and H.H. Fisher, *The Bolshevik revolution, 1917-1918: Documents and materials*, Stanford University Press; London: H. Milford, Oxford University Press, 1934, p. 189.

Translated: Emanuel Aronsberg

Transcription/Markup: Zdravko Saveski

Online Version: marxists.org 2017

1. In accordance with the decision of the Second All-Russian Congress, the Soviet of People's Commissars is wholly responsible to the Central Executive Committee.
2. All legislative acts and important ordinances of a general political character are to be submitted to the Central Executive Committee for examination and ratification.
3. Measures relating to the fight against counter-revolution may be taken directly by the Soviet of People's Commissars with the reservation of its responsibility to the Central Executive Committee.
4. Once a week each of the People's Commissars will give an account of his acts to the Central Executive Committee.
5. An immediate reply will be given to interpellations made by the Central Executive Committee. An interpellation, in order to be valid, must be presented by at least fifteen members of the Central Executive Committee.

Third Congress of Soviets of Workers', Soldiers', Peasants', and Cossacks' Deputies

Resolution on the Federation of Soviet Republics

Written: January 15/28, 1918

First Published: *Tretii Vserossiiskii Sezd Sovetov Rabochikh, Soldatskikh i Krestianskikh Deputatov*, Petrograd, 1918, pp. 93-94.

Source: James Bunyan and H.H. Fisher, *The Bolshevik revolution, 1917-1918: Documents and materials*, Stanford University Press; London: H. Milford, Oxford University Press, 1934, pp. 396-397.

Translated: Emanuel Aronsberg

Transcription/Markup: Zdravko Saveski

Online Version: marxists.org 2017

1. The Russian Socialist Soviet Republic is a federation of Soviet republics founded on the principle of a free union of the peoples of Russia.

2. The highest organ of government in the federation is the All-Russian Congress of Soviets of Workers', Soldiers', Peasants', and Cossacks' Deputies, meeting at least once every three months.

3. The All-Russian Congress of Soviets of Workers', Soldiers', Peasants', and Cossacks' Deputies selects the All-Russian Central Executive Committee. In the interim between the Congresses the All-Russian Central Executive Committee is the highest organ of government.

4. The government of the federation, the Soviet of People's Commissars, is elected or dismissed in whole or in part by the All-Russian Congress of Soviets or the All-Russian Central Executive Committee.

5. The manner in which separate Soviet Republics and particular territories having peculiar customs and national organizations may participate in the federal government, as well as the delimitation of the respective spheres of federal and regional administration within the Russian Republic, shall be determined immediately upon the formation of regional Soviet republics by the All-Russian Central Executive Committee and the Central Executive Committees of these republics.

6. All local matters are settled exclusively by the local Soviets. Higher Soviets have the right to regulate affairs between the lower Soviets and to settle differences that may arise between them. The Central Soviet Government sees to it that the fundamental principles of the federation are not violated and represents the Russian Soviet Federation as a whole. The central government looks after matters that

concern the states as a whole, but it must not encroach on the rights of the separate regions that make up the federation.

7. The Central Executive Committee of the Soviets is charged with the drafting of a constitution for the Russian Federated Soviet Republic [to be] submitted at the next Congress of Soviets.^[1]

Notes

[1] Sections 6 and 7 were introduced at the insistence of the Socialist-Revolutionists of the Left. The Bolsheviks objected but the Congress accepted them in spite of the opposition. (*Novaia Zhizn*, No. 13, February 1, 1918, p. 3, and *Tretii Vserossiiskii Sezd Sovetov Rabochikh, Soldatskikh i Krestianskikh Deputatov*, p. 81.)

Central Executive Committee

Resolution on the Right of Sovnarkom to Issue Decrees

Written: November 4/17, 1917

Source: James Bunyan and H.H. Fisher, *The Bolshevik revolution, 1917-1918: Documents and materials*, Stanford University Press; London: H. Milford, Oxford University Press, 1934, p. 189.

Translated: Emanuel Aronsberg

Transcription/Markup: Zdravko Saveski

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In reply to the questions raised the Central Executive Committee resolves that:

1. The Soviet parliament of the toiling masses has nothing in common with the procedure of bourgeois parliaments where different classes and divergent interests meet and where the representatives of the ruling class use rules of procedure for the purpose of parliamentary obstruction.
2. The Soviet parliament cannot deny the Soviet of People's Commissars the right to issue decrees of immediate necessity in the spirit of the general program of the All-Russian Congress of Soviets without first submitting them to the C.E.C.
3. The C.E.C. has general control over all the acts of the Soviet of People's Commissars with the power to recall the government or any member of it.
4. The C.E.C. expresses its regret that the representatives of the Socialist-Revolutionists of the Left whose members raised the question did not find it possible to associate themselves with the government in the drafting of all the decrees of immediate necessity.

Report on Peace

October 26 (November 8)

The question of peace is a burning question, the painful question of the day. Much has been said and written on the subject, and all of you, no doubt, have discussed it quite a lot. Permit me, therefore, to proceed to read a declaration which the government you elect should publish.

Decree on Peace

The workers' and peasants' government, created by the Revolution of October 24-25 and basing itself on the Soviet of Workers', Soldiers' and Peasants' Deputies, calls upon all the belligerent peoples and their government to start immediate negotiations for a just, democratic peace.

By a just or democratic peace, for which the overwhelming majority of the working class and other working people of all the belligerent countries, exhausted, tormented and racked by the war, are craving — a peace that has been most definitely and insistently demanded by the Russian workers and peasants ever since the overthrow of the tsarist monarchy — by such a peace the government means an immediate peace without annexations (i.e., without the seizure of foreign lands, without the forcible incorporation of foreign nations) and without indemnities.

The government of Russia proposes that this kind of peace be immediately concluded by all the belligerent nations, and expresses its readiness to take all the resolute measures now, without the least delay, pending the final ratification of all the terms of such a peace by authoritative assemblies of the people's representatives of all countries and all nations.

In accordance with the sense of justice of democrats in general, and of the working class in particular, the government conceives the annexation or seizure of foreign lands to mean every incorporation of a small or weak nation into large or powerful state without the precisely, clearly, and voluntarily expressed consent and wish of that nation, irrespective of the time when such forcible incorporation took

place, irrespective also of the degree of development or backwardness of the nation forcibly annexed to the given state, or forcibly retained within its borders, and irrespective, finally, of whether this nation is in Europe or in distant, overseas countries.

If any nation whatsoever is forcibly retained within the borders of a given state, if, in spite of its expressed desire — no matter whether expressed in the press, at public meetings, in the decisions of parties, or in protests and uprisings against national oppression — is not accorded the right to decide the forms of its state existence by a free vote, taken after the complete evacuation of the [aggressive] troops of the incorporating or, generally, of the stronger nation and without the least pressure being brought to bear, such incorporation is annexation, i.e., seizure and violence.

The government considers it the greatest of crimes against humanity to continue this war over the issue of how to divide among the strong and rich nations the weak nationalities they have conquered, and solemnly announces its determination immediately to sign terms of peace to stop this war on the terms indicated, which are equally just for all nationalities without exception.

At the same time the government declares that it does not regard the above-mentioned peace terms as an ultimatum; in other words, it is prepared to consider any other peace terms, and insists only that they be advanced by any of the belligerent countries as speedily as possible, and that in the peace proposals there should be absolute clarity and the complete absence of all ambiguity and secrecy.

The government abolishes secret diplomacy, and, for its part, announces its firm intention to conduct all negotiations quite openly in full view of the whole people. It will proceed immediately with the full publication of the secret treaties endorsed or concluded by the government of land-owners and capitalists from February to October 25, 1917. ^[A] The government proclaims the unconditional and immediate annulment of everything contained in these secret treaties insofar as it is aimed, as is mostly the case, at securing advantages and privileges for the Russian landowners and capitalists and at the retention, or extension, of the annexations made by the Great Russians. ^[B]

Proposing to the governments and peoples of all countries immediately to begin open negotiations for peace, the government, for its part, expresses its readiness to conduct these negotiations in writing, by telegraph, and by negotiations between representatives of the various countries, or at a conference of such representatives. In order to facilitate such negotiations, the government is appointing its plenipotentiary representative to neutral countries.

The government proposes an immediate armistice to the governments and

people of all the belligerent countries, and, for its part, considers it desirable that this armistice should be concluded for a period of not less than three months, i.e., a period long enough to permit the competition of negotiations for peace with the participation of the representatives of all peoples or nations, without exception, involved in or compelled to take part in the war, and the summoning of authoritative assemblies of the representatives of the peoples of all countries for the final ratification of the peace terms.

While addressing this proposal for peace to the governments and peoples of all the belligerent countries, the Provisional Workers' and Peasants' Government of Russia appeals in particular also to the class-conscious workers of the three most advanced nations of mankind and the largest states participating in the present war, namely, Great Britain, France, and Germany. The workers of these countries have made the greatest contributions to the cause of progress and socialism; they have furnished the great examples of the [Chartist](#) movement in England, a number of revolutions of historic importance effected by the French proletariat, and, finally, the heroic struggle against the Anti-Socialist Law in Germany, and the prolonged, persistent and disciplined work of creating mass proletarian organisations in Germany, a work which serves as a model to the workers of the whole world. All these examples of proletarian heroism and historical creative work are a pledge that the workers of the countries mentioned will understand the duty that now faces them of saving mankind from the horrors of war and its consequences, that these workers, by comprehensive, determined, and supremely vigorous action, will help us to conclude peace successfully, and at the same time emancipate the labouring and exploited masses of our population from all forms of slavery and all forms of exploitation.

The workers' and peasants' government, created by the Revolution of October 24-25 and basing itself on the support of the Soviets of Workers', Soldiers', and Peasants' Deputies, must start immediate negotiations for peace. Our appeal must be addressed both to the governments and to the peoples. We cannot ignore the governments, for that would delay the possibility of concluding peace, and the people's government dare not do that; but we have no right not to appeal to the peoples at the same time. Everywhere there are differences between the governments and the peoples, and we must therefore help the peoples to intervene in questions of war and peace. We will, of course, insist upon the whole of our programme for a peace without annexations and indemnities. We shall not retreat from it; but we must not give our enemies an opportunity to say that their conditions are different from ours and that therefore it is useless to start negotiations with us. No, we must deprive them of that advantageous position and not present our terms in the form of an ultimatum. Therefore the point is included that we are willing to consider any peace terms and all proposals. We shall

consider them, but that does not necessarily mean that we shall accept them. We shall submit them for consideration to the Constituent Assembly which will have the power to decide what concessions can and what cannot be made. We are combating the deception practised by governments which pay lip-service to peace and justice, but in fact wage annexationist and predatory wars. No government will say all it thinks. We, however, are opposed to secret diplomacy and will act openly in full view of the whole people. We do not close our eyes to difficulties and never have done so. War cannot be ended by refusal, it cannot be ended by one side. We are proposing an armistice for three months, but shall not reject a shorter period, so that the exhausted army may breathe freely, even if only for a little while; moreover, in all the civilised countries national assemblies must be summoned for the discussion of the terms.

In proposing an immediate armistice, we appeal to the class-conscious workers of the countries that have done so much for the development of the proletarian movement. We appeal to the workers of Britain, where there was the Chartist movement, to the workers of France, who have in repeated uprisings displayed the strength of their class-consciousness, and to the workers of Germany, who waged the fight against the Anti-Socialist Law and have created powerful organisations.

In the Manifesto [issued by the Petrograd Soviet] of March 14, we called for the overthrow of the bankers, but, far from overthrowing our own bankers, we had entered into an alliance with them The Coalition Provisional Government. Now we have overthrown the government of the bankers.

The governments and the bourgeoisie will make every effort to unite their forces and drown the workers' and peasants' revolution in blood. But the three years of war have been a good lesson to the masses — the Soviet movement in other countries and the mutiny in the German navy, which was crushed by the officer cadets of Wilhelm the hangman. Finally, we must remember that we are not living in the depths of Africa, but in Europe, where news can spread quickly.

The workers' movement will triumph and will pave the way to peace and socialism. (*Prolonged Applause*)

Footnotes

[A] All secret treaties made by the Provisional and Tsarist governments were published beginning on November 10 (23), 1917 in issues of Pravda and Izvestia. In December the treaties were published in a (long) series of books entitled Collection of Secret Documents from the Archives of the Former Ministry of Foreign Affairs. Seven volumes were printed from December 1917 to February 1918.

[B]"Great Russians" was Lenin's mocking name of nationalist-chauvinist Russians who sought to expand the Russian empire at the expense of crushing racial minorities and smaller nations. Lenin continued his campaign against "Great Russians" up until his **final writings** in 1923.

Report on Land

October 26 (November 8)

We maintain that the revolution has proved and demonstrated how important it is that the land question should be put clearly. The outbreak of the armed uprising, the second, October, Revolution, clearly proves that the land must be turned over to the peasants. The government that has been overthrown and the compromising parties of the Mensheviks and Socialist-Revolutionaries committed a crime when they kept postponing the settlement of the land question on various pretexts and thereby brought the country to economic chaos and a peasant revolt. Their talk about riots and anarchy in the countryside sounds false, cowardly, and deceitful. Where and when have riots and anarchy been provoked by wise measures? If the government had acted wisely, and if their measures had met the needs of the poor peasants, would there have been unrest among the peasant masses? But all the measures of the government, approved by the [Avkesentyev](#) and [Dan](#) Soviets, went counter to the interests of the peasants and compelled them to revolt. —

Having provoked the revolt, the government raised a hue and cry about riots and anarchy, for which they themselves were responsible. They were going to crush it by blood and iron, but were themselves swept away by the armed uprising of the revolutionary soldiers, sailors and workers. The first duty of the government of the workers' and peasants' revolution must be to settle the land question, which can pacify and satisfy the vast masses of poor peasants. I shall read to you the clauses of a decree your Soviet Government must issue. In one of the clauses of this decree is embodied the Mandate to the Land Committees, compiled on the basis of 242 mandates from local Soviets of Peasants' Deputies.

Decree on Land

- (1) Landed proprietorship is abolished forthwith without any compensation.
- (2) The landed estates, as also all crown, monastery, and church lands,

with all their livestock, implements, buildings and everything pertaining thereto, shall be placed at the disposal of the volost land committees and the uyezd Soviets of Peasants' Deputies pending the convocation of the Constituent Assembly.

- (3) All damage to confiscated property, which henceforth belongs to the whole people, is proclaimed a grave crime to be punished by the revolutionary courts. The uyezd Soviets of Peasants' Deputies shall take all necessary measures to assure the observance of the strictest order during the confiscation of the landed estates, to determine the size of estates, and the particular estates subject to confiscation, to draw up exact inventories of all property confiscated and to protect in the strictest revolutionary way all agricultural enterprises transferred to the people, with all buildings, implements, livestock, stocks of produce, etc.
- (4) The following peasant Mandate, compiled by the newspaper Izvestia Vserossiiskogo Soveta Krestyanskikh Deputatov from 242 local peasant mandates and published in No. 88 of that paper (Petrograd, No. 88, August 19, 1917), shall serve everywhere to guide the implementation of the great land reforms until a final decision on the latter is taken by the Constituent Assembly.

Peasant Mandate on the Land

"The land question in its full scope can be settled only by the popular Constituent Assembly.

The most equitable settlement of the land question is to be as follows:

- (1) *Private ownership of land shall be abolished forever; land shall not be sold, purchased, leased, mortgaged, or otherwise alienated.*

All land, whether state, crown, monastery, church, factory, entailed, private, public, peasant, etc., shall be confiscated without compensation and become the property of the whole people, and pass into the use of all those who cultivate it.

Persons who suffer by this property revolution shall be deemed to be entitled to public support only for the period necessary for adaptation to the new conditions of life.

- (2) All mineral wealth — ore, oil, coal, salt, etc., and also all forests and waters of state importance, shall pass into the exclusive use of the state. All the small streams, lakes, woods, etc., shall pass into the use of the communes, to be administered by the local self-government bodies.

- (3) Lands on which *high-level scientific* farming is practised — orchards, tree-farms, seed plots, nurseries, hothouses, etc. — *shall not be divided up, but shall be converted into model farms*, to be turned over for exclusive use to the state or to the communes, depending on the size and importance of such lands.

Household land in towns and villages, with orchards and vegetable gardens, shall be reserved for the use of their present owners, the size of the holdings, and the size of tax levied for the use thereof, to be determined by law.

- (4) Stud farms, government and private pedigree stock and poultry farms, etc., shall be confiscated and become the property of the whole people, and pass into the exclusive use of the state or a commune, depending on the size and importance of such farms.

The question of compensation shall be examined by the Constituent Assembly.

- (5) All livestock and farm implements of the confiscated estates shall pass into the exclusive use of the state or a commune, depending on their size and importance, and no compensation shall be paid for this.

The farm implements of peasants with little land shall not be subject to confiscation.

- (6) The right to use the land shall be accorded to all citizens of the Russian state (without distinction of sex) desiring to cultivate it by their own labour, with the help of their families, or in partnership, but only as long as they are able to cultivate it. The employment of hired labour is not permitted.

In the event of the temporary physical disability of any member of a village commune for a period of up to two years, the village commune shall be obliged to assist him for this period by collectively cultivating his land until he is again able to work.

Peasants who, owing to old age or ill-health, are permanently disabled and unable to cultivate the land personally, shall lose their right to the use of it but, in return, shall receive a pension from the state.

- (7) Land tenure shall be on an equality basis, i.e., the land shall be distributed among the working people in conformity with a labour standard or a subsistence standard, depending on local conditions.

There shall be absolutely no restriction on the forms of land tenure — household, farm, communal, or co-operative, as shall be decided in each individual village and settlement.

- (8) All land, when alienated, shall become part of the national land fund. Its distribution among the peasants shall be in charge of the local and central self-government bodies, from democratically organised village and city communes, in which there are no distinctions of social rank, to central regional government bodies.

The land fund shall be subject to periodical redistribution, depending on the growth of population and the increase in the productivity and the scientific level of farming.

When the boundaries of allotments are altered, the original nucleus of the allotment shall be left intact.

The land of the members who leave the commune shall revert to the land fund; preferential right to such land shall be given to the near relatives of the members who have left, or to persons designated by the latter.

The cost of fertilisers and improvements put into the land, to the extent that they have not been fully used up at the time the allotment is returned to the land fund, shall be compensated.

Should the available land fund in a particular district prove inadequate for the needs of the local population, the surplus population shall be settled elsewhere.

The state shall take upon itself the organisation of resettlement and shall bear the cost thereof, as well as the cost of supplying implements, etc.

Resettlement shall be effected in the following order: landless peasants desiring to resettle, then members of the commune who are of vicious habits, deserters, and so on, and, finally, by lot or by agreement."

The entire contents of this Mandate, as expressing the absolute will of the vast majority of the class-conscious peasants of all Russia, is proclaimed a provisional law, which, pending the convocation of the Constituent Assembly, shall be carried into effect as far as possible immediately, and as to certain of its provisions with due gradualness, as shall be determined by the uyezd Soviets of Peasants' Deputies.

(5) The land of ordinary peasants and ordinary Cossacks shall not be confiscated.

Voices are being raised here that the decree itself and the Mandate were drawn up by the Socialist-Revolutionaries. What of it? Does it matter who drew them up? As a democratic government, we cannot ignore the decision of the masses of the people, even though we may disagree with it. In the fire of experience, applying the decree in practice, and carrying it out local, the peasants will themselves realise where the truth lies. And even in the peasants continue to follow the Socialist-Revolutionaries, even if they give this party a majority in the Constituent Assembly, we shall still say — what of it?

Experience is the best teacher and it will show who is right. Let the peasants solve this problem from one end and we shall solve it from the other. Experience

will oblige us to draw together in the general stream of revolutionary creative work, in the elaboration of new state forms. We must be guided by experience; we must allow complete freedom to the creative faculties of the masses. The old government, which was overthrown by armed uprising, wanted to settle the land problem with the help of the old, unchanged tsarist bureaucracy. But instead of solving the problem, the bureaucracy only fought the peasants.

The peasants have learned something during the eight months of our revolution; they want to settle all land problems themselves. We are therefore opposed to all amendments to this draft law. We want no details in it, for we are writing a decree, not a programme of action. Russia is vast, and local conditions vary. We trust that the peasants themselves will be able to solve the problem correctly, properly, better than we could do it. Whether they do it in our spirit or in the spirit of the Socialist-Revolutionary programme is not the point. The point is that the peasants should be firmly assured that there are no more landowners in the countryside, that they themselves must decide all questions, and that they themselves must arrange their own lives. (Loud applause)

Decision to Form the Workers' and Peasants' Government

The All-Russia Congress of Soviets of Workers', Soldiers', and Peasants' Deputies resolves:

To establish a provisional workers' and peasants' government, to be known as the Council of People's Commissars, to govern the country until the Constituent Assembly is convened. The management of individual branches of state activity is entrusted to commissions whose members shall ensure the fulfillment of the programme announced by the Congress, and shall work in close contact with mass organisations of men and women workers, sailors, soldiers, peasants and office employees. Governmental authority is vested in a collegium of the chairmen of those commissions, i.e., the Council of People's Commissars.

Control over the activities of the People's Commissars with the right to replace them is vested in the All-Russia Congress of Soviets of Workers', Peasants' and Soldiers' Deputies and its Central Executive Committee.

At the present time the Council of People's Commissars is constituted as follows:

Chairman of the Council — *Vladimir Ulyanov (Lenin)*;

People's Commissar of the Interior — *A. I. Rykov*;

Agriculture — *V. P. Milyutin*;

Labour — *A. G. Shlyapnikov*;

Army and Navy Affairs — a committee consisting of:

V. A. Ovseyenko (Antonov), N. V. Krylenko and P. Y. Dybenko;

Commerce and Industry — *V. P. Nogin*;

Education — *A. V. Lunacharsky*;

Finance — *I. I. Skvortsov (Stepanov)*;

Foreign Affairs — *L. D. Bronstein (Trotsky)*;

Justice — *G. I. Oppokov (Lomov)*;

Food — *I. A. Tedorovich*;

Posts and Telegraph — *N. P. Avilov (Glebov)*;

Chairman for Nationalities Affairs — *J. V. Jugashvili (Stalin)*. The office of People's Commissar of Railways is temporarily vacant.

To Workers, Soldiers, and Peasants!

[October 25]



The Second All-Russia Congress of Soviets of Workers and Soldiers' Deputies has opened. The vast majority of the Soviets are represented at the Congress. A number of delegates from the Peasants' Soviets are also present. The mandate of the compromising Central Executive Committee has terminated.^[A] Backed by the will of the vast majority of the workers, soldiers, and peasants, backed by the victorious uprising of the workers and the garrison which has taken place in Petrograd, the Congress takes power into its own hands.

The Provisional Government has been overthrown. The majority of the members of the Provisional Government have already been arrested.

The Soviet government will propose an immediate democratic peace to all the nations and an immediate armistice on all fronts. It will secure the transfer of the land of the landed proprietors, the crown and the monasteries to the peasant committees without compensation; it will protect the rights of the soldiers by introducing complete democracy in the army; it will establish workers' control over production; it will ensure the convocation of the Constituent Assembly at the time appointed; it will see to it that bread is supplied to the cities and prime necessities to the villages; it will guarantee all the nations inhabiting Russia the genuine right to self-determination.

The Congress decrees: all power in the localities shall pass to the Soviets of Workers', Soldiers' and Peasants' Deputies, which must guarantee genuine revolutionary order.

The Congress calls upon the soldiers in the trenches to be vigilant and firm. The Congress of Soviets is convinced that the revolutionary army will be able to defend the revolution against all attack of imperialism until such time as the new government succeeds in concluding a democratic peace, which it will propose directly to all peoples. The new government will do everything to fully supply the revolutionary army by means of a determined policy of requisitions and taxation of

the propertied classes, and also will improve the condition of the soldiers' families.

The Kornilov men — Kerensky, Kaledin and others — are attempting to bring troops against Petrograd. Several detachments, whom Kerensky had moved by deceiving them, have come over to the side of the insurgent people.

Soldiers, actively resist Kerensky the Kornilovite! Be on your guard!

Railwaymen, hold up all troop trains dispatched by Kerensky against Petrograd!

Soldiers, workers in factory and office, the fate of the revolution and the fate of the democratic peace is in your hands!

Long live the revolution!

***The All-Russia Congress of Soviets
Of Workers' and Soldiers' Deputies The
Delegates from the Peasants' Soviets***

Footnotes

[A] Lenin is referring to the first Central Executive Committee, whose term had expired prematurely. Elected by the First All-Russian Congress of Soviets (June, 1917), Lenin referred to the first CEC as compromisers because it compromised with the Provisional Government, instead of pushing forward the interests of the Soviet.

May Day

Decree of the Soviet of People's Commissars 'On Monuments of the Republic'

12 April 1918

Source: Street Art of the Revolution: Festivals and Celebrations in Russia 1918-33, ed, Vladimir Tolstoy, Irina Bibikova, Catherine Cooke, Iskusstvo, 1984;

HTML: for marxists.org in April, 2002.

To mark the great revolution that has transformed Russia, the Soviet of People's Commissars decrees:

1 Monuments erected in honour of the tsars and their servants and of no historical or artistic interest, should be removed from the streets and squares, some stored away and others put to some utilitarian use.

2 In accordance with an agreement with the Arts Boards of Moscow and Petrograd, a special commission of People's Commissars for Education and the Property of the Republic and the head of the Fine Arts Department of the Commissariat for Education are entrusted with the task of determining which monuments to remove.

3 The same commission is to mobilize artists and organize a broad competition for the design of monuments to celebrate the great days of the Russian Socialist Revolution.

4 The Soviet of People's Commissars expresses the wish that by 1 May some of the more monstrous statues will have already been removed and the first models of new monuments set out for the masses to see.

5 The same commission is also urgently required to organize the city's decoration for 1 May and to replace inscriptions, emblems, street names, coats of arms etc., with new ones reflecting the ideas and mood of revolutionary working Russia.

6 Regional and Provincial Soviets of Workers', Peasants and Soldiers' Deputies should also begin this work only in accordance with the instructions of the above-mentioned commission.

7 The necessary resources will be allocated on presentation of estimates and explanations of those estimates.

Chairman of the Soviet of People 's Commissars: A. Lunacharsky, Stalin

V. Ulyanov [Lenin] *People's Commissars:* ¹⁵⁴

Secretary of the Soviet: Gorbunov

Central Executive Committee

The Fundamental Law of Land Socialization

Written: February 19, 1918

First Published: *Sobranie Uzakonenii i Rasporiazhenii Rabochego i Krestianskogo Pravitelstva*, 1918, No. 25, pp. 327-35.

Source: James Bunyan and H.H. Fisher, *The Bolshevik revolution, 1917-1918: Documents and materials*, Stanford University Press; London: H. Milford, Oxford University Press, 1934, pp. 673-678.

Translated: Emanuel Aronsberg

Transcription/Markup: Zdravko Saveski

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Part I. General Provisions

Article 1. All private ownership of land, minerals, waters, forests, and natural resources within the boundaries of the Russian Federated Soviet Republic is abolished forever.

Article 2. Henceforth all the land is handed over without compensation (open or secret) to the toiling masses for their use.

Article 3. With the exceptions indicated in this decree the right to the use of the land belongs to him who cultivates it with his own labor.

Article 4. The right to the use of the land cannot be limited on account of sex, religion, nationality, or citizenship.

Article 5. All minerals, forests, water, and other natural resources^[1] (depending on their importance) are placed at the disposition of the uezd, gubernia, regional, or federal Soviets to be controlled by them. The methods of utilizing and managing the above resources will be determined by special decree.

Article 6. All privately owned live stock, agricultural implements, and buildings of estates that are worked by hired labor shall be taken over by the land departments of the uezd, gubernia, regional, and federal Soviets without compensation.

Article 7. All buildings referred to in Article 6 and others that are of economic value, together with the agricultural enterprises attached [to these buildings], pass without compensation to the uezd, gubernia, regional, and federal Soviets.

Article 8. All persons unable to work and who are deprived of the means of livelihood in consequence of this decree may, on presenting a certificate from the

local courts and land departments of the Soviet Government, receive a pension (as long as they live or until they are of age) equivalent to that of a soldier. This will obtain until a general decree is promulgated concerning the insurance of citizens unable to work.

Article 9. The distribution of agricultural land among the toilers is in the hands of the land departments of the village, volost, uezd, gubernia, regional, and federal Soviets.

Article 10. The administration of the land reserve in each republic is in the hands of the main land departments [of the republics] and the federal Soviet.

Article 11. In addition to effecting an equitable distribution of the agricultural land among the toiling agricultural population and a more efficient utilization of the national resources, the local and federal land departments have also the following duties: (a) to create conditions favorable to the development of the productive forces of the country by increasing the productivity of the soil, to develop scientific farming, and to raise the general level of agricultural knowledge among the land toilers; (b) to create a reserve of agricultural land; (c) to develop agricultural enterprises such as horticulture, apiculture, market-gardening, stock raising, dairying, etc.; (d) to hasten in certain areas the transition from a less productive to a more productive system of land cultivation by effecting a better distribution of the agricultural population; (e) to encourage the collective system of agriculture at the expense of individual farming, the former being more economical and leading to socialistic economy.

Article 12. The distribution of land among the toilers should be made on an equal basis and in accordance with the ability to work it; local standards and traditions should also be taken into consideration. Care should be exercised that no one should have more than he can work or less than he needs for a comfortable existence.

Article 13. The basic right to the use of agricultural land is individual labor. The organs of the Soviet Government may, in addition, make use of a portion of the land reserve (formerly belonging to monasteries, the state, udel,^[2] the cabinet,^[3] and pomeshchiks)

for model farms and experiment stations. In such cases hired labor may be employed under the general regulations of labor control.

Article 14. All citizens engaged in agriculture are to be insured at the expense of the state against loss of life, old age, sickness, accident, and disability.

Article 15. All incapacitated agriculturalists and members of their families who are unable to work are to be taken care of by the Soviet Government.

Article 16. Every farm is to be insured against fire, live-stock epidemics, poor crops, drought, hail, and other such misfortunes through Soviet mutual insurance arrangements.

Article 17. Surplus income derived from the natural fertility of the soil or from nearness to market is to be turned over to the organs of the Soviet Government, which will use it for the good of society.

Article 18. The Soviet Government has a monopoly of the trade in agricultural machinery and seeds.

Article 19. The grain trade, both foreign and domestic, is to be a state monopoly.

Part II. Who Has the Right to Use the Land?

Article 20. Within the limits of the Russian Federated Soviet Republic, separate plots of the land's surface may be used for public and private needs on the following bases:

A. For educational and cultural purposes: (1) The state in the person of the Soviet organs of government (federal, regional, gubernia, uezd, volost, and village). (2) Public organizations (with the authorization and under the control of the Soviet Government).

B. For agricultural purposes: (3) Agricultural communes. (4) Agricultural partnerships. (5) Village associations. (6) Separate families and individuals.

C. For building purposes: (7) Organs of the Soviet Government. (8) Public organizations, families, and individuals (if the construction is not undertaken with the object of making profit). (9) Commercial, industrial, and transportation enterprises (with the special authorization and under the control of the Soviet Government).

D. For transportation purposes (building roads): (10) Organs of the Soviet Government (federal, regional, gubernia, uezd, volost, and village, depending on the importance of the road in question).

Part III. Order in Which the Land is Apportioned

Article 21. Land is given in the first place to those who wish to cultivate it not for personal profit but for the benefit of the community.

Article 22. For those who engage in agriculture for their own benefit the following order of apportioning the land will be observed:

In the first place, the land will be given to local agriculturists who have little or no land, and to hired farm laborers. The land is to be distributed in equal shares.

In the second place, it will be given to newcomers, i.e., agriculturists who arrive at a given locality after the publication of this law. In the third place, it will be given to non-agricultural elements in the order in which they are registered by the land department of the local Soviets.

Note: In making the allotments of land, preference will be given to agricultural associations over individual farmers.

[Article 23 deals with the allotment of garden land; 24 with land going under buildings.]

Part IV. The Consumption-Labor Standard^[4]

Article 25. The area of land allotted to individual farms to furnish the means of subsistence must not exceed the limits of the consumption-labor standard, which is to be calculated on the basis of the following instructions:

Instructions for Determining the Consumption-Labor Standard

1. Agricultural Russia is to be divided into as many zones as there are different systems of land cultivation (farm-fallow system, three-field system, eight-field system, many-field system, rotation of crops, etc.) in practice at the present time.

2. Each zone is to have its own standard, which, however, may vary in accordance with conditions of climate, natural fertility of the soil, and marketing facilities.

3. In order to determine the standard for each zone, an All-Russian agricultural census will be taken in the near future.

Note: Immediately after putting this law into force the land will be surveyed and topographic maps made.

4. [The distribution of land will take place gradually.]

5. In determining the consumption-labor standard for a given zone the average farm of the least thickly populated uezd will be taken as a basis. . . . The uezd in question must be characterized by such a relation between the different branches of agriculture as is judged by the local population to be most normal, i.e., most favorable for carrying on the type of agriculture dominant in the given zone.

6. In determining the average peasant farm as it exists today, only those lands will be taken into consideration which the peasants actually cultivated prior to 1917, that is to say, the lands bought and rented by peasant societies and individuals.

7. Forests, minerals, and waters are not to be included in this calculation.

8. Neither will there be taken into account those privately owned lands which were under capitalistic cultivation or those which up to now belonged to the state, private banks, monasteries, udel, or pomeschchiks (cabinet and church); these lands will constitute a land reserve out of which allotments will be made to peasants who have no land or whose shares fall below the existing consumption-labor standard.

[Points nine to thirteen set forth rules for the calculation of the total amount of land available for distribution.]

14. In taking the population census the number of workers and the number of consumers [literally "bread-eaters"] will be calculated separately. The whole population is to be classified in respect to age as follows:

Having No Capacity to Work
Girls to 12 years of age
Boys to 12 years of age
Men from 60 years of age
Women from 50 years of age

Capable of Work

	Age	Worker Units
Men	18-60	1.0
Women	18-50	0.8
Boys	12-16	0.5
Girls	12-16	0.5
Boys	16-18	0.75
Girls	16-18	0.6

Note: These figures may be changed in accordance with climatic conditions and local customs by decision of the appropriate organs of the Soviet Government.

15. The amount of land per worker unit may be determined by dividing the number of desiatins by the number of worker units.

16. The number of dependents to be provided for by one worker unit may be obtained by dividing the number of non-workers by the number of "worker units."

17. It is further necessary to make an estimate of the number of cattle which can be fed on a desiatin and by one working unit.

18. In order to determine the average size of a farm in a uezd, which may be taken as typical for a given zone, the average fertility and quality of a desiatin must be ascertained. This average will be found by dividing the total crop by the number of types of soil.

19. The average thus found will be taken as the point of departure in determining the consumption-labor standard in accordance with which the equalization of all farms is to take place.

Note: In case the above average proves insufficient for a satisfactory standard of living it may be increased out of the land reserve.

20. The amount of land required for additional allotments by those whose shares fall below the normal average may be determined by multiplying the amount of land which goes to one "worker unit" in a particular uezd by the total number of worker units of that zone and subtracting from the result the number of desiatins in actual possession of the peasants.

21. Then the land reserve fund should be compared with the amount of land required for additional allotments in order to ascertain whether migration can take place within the zone in question. . . . In case this is impossible [it is necessary to find out] how many families will have to move to another zone.

[The rest of the land law, which contains altogether some fifty-two articles, makes provision for cases of possible shortage of land resulting from overpopulation and unequal distribution of the available land fund. Regulations as to the emigration of farmers indicate such points as the selection of those who are to migrate and state provision for all expenses connected with the emigration, and aid to the new settlers.]

YA. SVERDLOV

President of the Central Executive Committee

VOLODARSKY, ZINOVIEV, KAMKOV, LANDER MURANOV, NATANSON-BOBROV, OKULOV PETERSON, SPIRIDONOVA, USTINOV

Members of the Presidium

V. ULIANOV (LENIN)

President of the Sovnarkom

A. KOLEGAEV

People's Commissar of Agriculture

Notes

[1] Literally, the "live forces of nature."

[2] Lands used for the support of members of the Imperial family except the immediate family of the Emperor.

[3] Lands belonging to the Tsar.

[4] The corresponding Russian expression, which played an important part in the discussions of the period, is rather difficult to render into appropriate English. Russian economists were in search of what they called *potrebitelno-trudovaia norma*, literally, consuming-labor standard, and signifying an amount of land for a single farm such as would provide an adequate standard of living for the cultivator operating it without hired labor. See *Glavnyi Zemelnyi Komitet* [Proceedings of the Central Land Committee], Vol. 2, *Normy zemelnago obezpecheniia*, Petrograd, 1919.

V.I. Lenin

The Socialist Fatherland is in Danger!^[1]

Written: February 21, 1918

First Published: Pravda No. 32. Published according to the Pravda text

Source: Lenin's *Collected Works*, Progress Publishers, Moscow, Volume 27, 1972, pp. 30-33

Translated: Clemens Dutt; Edited by Robert Daglish

Transcription/HTML Markup: David Walters

Online Version: [Lenin Internet Archive](#) March, 2002

In order to save this exhausted and ravaged country from new ordeals of war we decided to make a very great sacrifice and informed the Germans of our readiness to sign their terms of peace. Our truce envoys left Rezhitsa for Dvinsk in the evening on February 20 (7), and still there is no reply. The German Government is evidently in no hurry to reply. It obviously does not want peace. Fulfilling the task with which it has been charged by the capitalists of all countries, German militarism wants to strangle the Russian and Ukrainian workers and peasants, to return the land to the landowners, the mills and factories to the bankers, and power to the monarchy. The German generals want to establish their "order" in Petrograd and Kiev. *The Socialist Republic of Soviets is in gravest danger.* Until the proletariat of Germany rises and triumphs, it is the sacred duty of the workers and peasants of Russia devotedly to defend the Republic of Soviets against the hordes of bourgeois-imperialist Germany. The Council of People's Commissars resolves: (1) *The country's entire manpower and resources are placed entirely at the service of revolutionary defence.* (2) *All Soviets and revolutionary organisations are ordered to defend every position to the last drop of blood.* (3) *Railway organisations and the Soviets associated with them must do their utmost to prevent the enemy from availing himself of the transport system; in the event of a retreat, they are to destroy the tracks and blow up or burn down the railway buildings; all rolling stock-carriages and locomotives-must be immediately dispatched eastward, into the interior of the country.* (4) *All grain and food stocks generally, as well as all valuable property in danger of falling into the enemy's hands, must be unconditionally destroyed; the duty of seeing that this is done is laid upon the local Soviets and their chairmen are made personally responsible.* (5) *The workers and peasants of Petrograd, Kiev, and of all towns, townships, villages and hamlets along the line of the new front are to mobilise battalions to dig trenches, under the direction of military experts.* (6) *These battalions are to include all*

able-bodied members of the bourgeois class, men and women, under the supervision of Red Guards; those who resist are to be shot. (7) All publications which oppose the cause of revolutionary defence and side with the German bourgeoisie, or which endeavour to take advantage of the invasion of the imperialist hordes in order to overthrow Soviet rule, are to be suppressed; able-bodied editors and members of the staffs of such publications are to be mobilised for the digging, of trenches or for other defence work. (8) Enemy agents, profiteers, marauders, hooligans, counter-revolutionary agitators and German spies are to be shot on the spot.



The socialist fatherland is in danger! Long live the socialist fatherland! Long live the international socialist revolution!

*Council of People's Commissars
February 21, 1918
Petrograd*

Endnotes

[1] This decree was passed by the Council of People's Commissars on February 21, 1918 and Published February 22 in *Pravda* and *Izvestia TsIK*. It was also issued as a separate pamphlet.

Vladimir Lenin

To the Citizens of Russia!

Written: 25 October, 1917

First Published: 25 October, 1917 in the magazine *Robochy I Soldat* No. 8 No. 1-2. Published according to the magazine text.

Source: Lenin's *Collected Works*, Progress Publishers, Moscow, Volume 26, 1972, pp. 236

Translated: Yuri Sdobnikov and George Hanna, Edited by George Hanna

Transcription & HTML Markup: Charles Farrell and David Walters **Online**

Version: [Lenin Internet Archive](#) November, 2000

The Provisional Government has been deposed. State power has passed into the hands of the organ of the Petrograd Soviet of Workers' and Soldiers' Deputies--the Revolutionary Military Committee, which heads the Petrograd proletariat and the garrison.

The cause for which the people have fought, namely, the immediate offer of a democratic peace, the abolition of landed proprietorship, workers' control over production, and the establishment of Soviet power—this cause has been secured.

Long live the revolution of workers, soldiers and peasants!

Revolutionary Military Committee of the Petrograd Soviet of Workers' and Soldiers' Deputies

10 a.m., October 25, 1917.