INTERVIEWS WITH FOREIGN WORKERS' DELEGATIONS

J. STALIN
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INTERVIEW WITH THE FIRST AMERICAN LABOUR DELEGATION IN RUSSIA*

(SEPTEMBER 9, 1927)

I

QUESTIONS PUT BY THE DELEGATION AND
STALIN'S REPLIES

Question 1. What new principles have Lenin and the Communist Party added to Marxism in practice? Would it be correct to say that Lenin believed in "creative revolutions" whereas Marx was more inclined to wait for the culmination of the development of economic forces?

Answer: I think that Lenin "added" no "new principles" to Marxism nor did Lenin abolish any of the "old" principles of Marxism. Lenin was and remained a loyal and consistent pupil of Marx and Engels, and wholly and entirely based himself on the principles of Marxism. But Lenin did not merely carry out the doctrines of Marx and Engels. He developed these doctrines further. What does that mean? It means that he developed the doctrines of Marx and Engels in accordance with the new conditions of development, with the new phase of capitalism, with imperialism. This means that in developing further the doctrines of Marx in the new conditions of the class struggle, Lenin contributed to the general treasury of Marxism something new as compared with what was created by Marx and Engels and with what they could create in the pre-imperialist period of capitalism. Moreover, Lenin's contribution to Marxism is based

*In view of the fact that the English stenographic report of this interview was not available to the publishers, the report was translated from the Russian, which appeared in Pravda of September 15, 1927. Consequently, while the speeches of the American delegates as given in this report are correct in substance, they are not presented as a verbatim report.—Ed.
whole and entirely on the principles laid down by Marx and Engels. In that sense we speak of Leninism as Marxism of the epoch of imperialism and proletarian revolutions. Here are a number of questions in the sphere of which Lenin contributed something new in developing further the doctrines of Marx:

First the question of monopolistic capitalism—of imperialism as the new phase of capitalism. In *Capital* Marx and Engels analysed the basis of capitalism, but Marx and Engels lived in the pre-monopolistic period of capitalism, in the period of the smooth evolution of capitalism and its "peaceful" expansion throughout the whole world. This old phase of capitalism came to a close towards the end of the nineteenth and the beginning of the twentieth centuries, when Marx and Engels had already passed away. Clearly Marx and Engels could only guess at the new conditions of the development of capitalism which arose out of the new phase of capitalism which succeeded the old phase. In the imperialistic, monopolistic phase of development the smooth evolution of capitalism gave way to spasmodic, cataclysmic development, the unevenness of development and the contradictions of capitalism emerged with particular force; the struggle for markets and spheres for the investment of capital conducted amidst conditions of extreme unevenness of development made periodical imperialist wars for a periodical redistribution of the world and of spheres of influence inevitable. The service Lenin rendered, and, consequently, his new contribution, was that on the basis of the main postulates enunciated in *Capital* he made a fundamental Marxian analysis of imperialism as the final phase of capitalism, he exposed its ulcers and the conditions of its inevitable doom. On the basis of this analysis arose Lenin's well-known postulate that the conditions of imperialism made possible the victory of socialism in separate capitalist countries.

Second: The question of the dictatorship of the proletariat. The fundamental idea of the dictatorship of the proletariat as the political domination of the proletariat and as a method of overthrowing the reign of capital by violence was created by Marx and Engels. Lenin's new contribution in this field was that a) utilising the experience of the Paris Commune and the Russian Revolution, he discovered the Soviet form of government as the state form of the dictatorship of the proletariat; b) he
deciphered the formula of the dictatorship of the proletariat from the point of view of the problem of the allies of the proletariat, and defined the dictatorship of the proletariat as a special form of class alliance between the proletariat, which is the leader, and the exploited masses of the non-proletarian classes (the peasantry, etc.) who are led; c) he particularly emphasised the fact that the dictatorship of the proletariat is a higher type of democracy in class society, *i.e.*, *proletarian* democracy, which expresses the interests of the majority (the exploited) as against capitalist democracy which expresses the interests of the minority (the exploiters).

Third: the question of the forms and methods of the successful building up of socialism in the period of dictatorship of the proletariat, in the period of transition from capitalism to socialism in a country encircled by capitalist states. Marx and Engels regarded the period of the dictatorship of the proletariat as a more or less prolonged period replete with revolutionary conflicts and civil wars in the course of which the proletariat in power would take the economic, political, cultural and organisational measures necessary for the purpose of establishing a new socialist society, a society without classes and without a state, in place of the old capitalist society. Lenin wholly and entirely based himself on these fundamental postulates of Marx and Engels. Lenin's new contribution in this field was: a) he proved that it was possible to construct complete socialist society in a land of the dictatorship of the proletariat encircled by imperialist states, provided the country is not crushed by the military intervention of the surrounding capitalist states; b) he outlined the concrete path of economic policy (the "New Economic Policy") by which the proletariat, being in command of the economic key positions (industry, land, transport, the banks, etc.), links up socialised industry with agriculture ("the bond between industry and peasant agriculture") and thus leads the whole of national economy towards socialism; c) he outlined the concrete channels by which the bulk of the peasantry is gradually brought into the line of socialist construction through the medium of the co-operative societies, which, in the hands of the proletarian dictatorship, represent a powerful instrument for the transformation of petty peasant economy and for the re-education of the main masses of the peasantry in the spirit of socialism.
Fourth: the question of the hegemony of the proletariat in revolution, in all popular revolutions—in the revolution against tsarism as well as in the revolution against capitalism. Marx and Engels presented the main outlines of the idea of the hegemony of the proletariat. Lenin's new contribution in this field was that he further developed and expanded these outlines into a symmetrical system of the hegemony of the proletariat, into a symmetrical system of proletarian leadership of the masses of the toilers in town and country not only in the fight for the overthrow of tsarism and capitalism, but also in the work of building up socialism under the dictatorship of the proletariat. It is well known that, thanks to Lenin and his Party, the idea of the hegemony of the proletariat was skillfully applied in Russia. This, in passing, explains why the revolution in Russia brought the proletariat to power. In previous revolutions it usually happened that the workers did all the fighting at the barricades, shed their blood and overthrew the old order, but power passed into the hands of the bourgeoisie, which oppressed and exploited the workers. That was the case in England and in France. That was the case in Germany. In Russia, however, things took a different turn. In Russia, the workers did not merely represent the shock troops of the revolution. While serving as the shock troops of the revolution, the Russian proletariat at the same time strove for hegemony, for the political leadership of all the exploited masses of town and country, rallying them around itself, detaching them from the bourgeoisie and politically isolating the bourgeoisie. Being the leader of the exploited masses, the Russian proletariat all the time waged a fight to seize power in its own hands and utilise it in its own interests against the bourgeoisie and against capitalism. This explains why every powerful outbreak of the revolution in Russia, as in October 1905, and in February 1917, gave rise to Soviets of Workers' Deputies as the embryo of the new apparatus of power—the function of which would be to crush the bourgeoisie—as against the bourgeois parliament, the old apparatus of power—the function of which was to crush the proletariat. On two occasions the bourgeoisie in Russia tried to restore the bourgeois parliament and put an end to the soviets: in August 1917, at the time of the "Preliminary Parliament" prior to the capture of power by the Bolsheviks, and in January 1918, at the time of the "Constituent
Assembly" after power had been seized by the proletariat. On both occasions these efforts failed. Why? Because the bourgeoisie was already politically isolated. The vast masses of the toilers regarded the proletariat as the sole leader of the revolution and the soviets had already been tried and tested by the masses as their own workers' government. For the proletariat to have substituted these soviets by a bourgeois parliament would have been tantamount to committing suicide. It is not surprising, therefore, that bourgeois parliamentarism did not take root in Russia. That is why the revolution in Russia led to the establishment of the rule of the proletariat. These were the results of the application of the Leninist system of the hegemony of the proletariat in revolution.

Fifth: the national and colonial question. In analysing the events in Ireland, India, China and the Central European countries like Poland and Hungary, in their time, Marx and Engels developed the basic, initial ideas of the national and colonial question. In his works Lenin based himself on these ideas. Lenin's new contribution in this field was: a) that he gathered these ideas into one symmetrical system of views on national and colonial revolutions in the epoch of imperialism; b) that he connected the national and colonial question with the question of overthrowing imperialism, and c) that he declared the national and colonial question to be a component part of the general question of international proletarian revolution.

Finally: the question of the Party of the proletariat. Marx and Engels gave the main outlines of the idea of the Party as being the vanguard of the proletariat, without which (the Party), the proletariat could not achieve its emancipation, could not capture power or reconstruct capitalist society. Lenin's new contribution to this theory was that he developed these outlines further and applied them to the new conditions of the proletarian struggle in the period of imperialism and showed: a) that the Party is a higher form of the class organisation of the proletariat as compared with the other forms of proletarian organisation (labour unions, co-operative societies, state organisation) and, moreover, its function was to generalise and direct the work of these organisations; b) that the dictatorship of the proletariat may be realised only through the Party as its directing force; c) that the dictatorship of the proletariat can be complete only if
it is led by a single party, the Communist Party, which does not and must not share leadership with any other party; and d) that without iron discipline in the Party, the tasks of the dictatorship of the proletariat to crush the exploiters and to transform class society into socialist society cannot be fulfilled.

This, in the main, is the new contribution which Lenin made in his works; he developed and made more concrete the doctrines of Marx in a manner applicable to the new conditions of the proletarian struggle in the period of imperialism.

That is why we say that Leninism is Marxism of the epoch of imperialism and proletarian revolutions.

From this it is clear that Leninism cannot be separated from Marxism, still less can it be contrasted with Marxism.

The question submitted by the delegation goes on to ask:

"Would it be correct to say that Lenin believed in ‘constructive revolution’ whereas Marx was more inclined to await the culmination of the development of economic forces?” I think it would be absolutely incorrect to say that. I think that every popular revolution, if it is really a popular revolution, is a constructive revolution; for it breaks up the old system and creates a new one. Of course, there is nothing constructive in such revolutions (if we can call them that) as take place, let us say, in Albania in the form of toy “rebellions” of one tribe against another. But Marxists never regarded such toy “rebellions” as revolutions. Apparently, it is not such “rebellions” that we are discussing, but mass popular revolutions, the rising of oppressed classes against oppressing classes. Such a revolution cannot but be constructive. Marx and Lenin stood for such a revolution, and only for such a revolution. It must be added, of course, that such a revolution cannot arise under all conditions; it can unfold itself only under certain favourable economic and political conditions.

**Question 2. Is it correct to say that the Communist Party controls the government?**

**Answer:** It all depends upon what is meant by control. In capitalist countries they have a rather curious conception of control. I know that a number of capitalist governments are controlled by big banks, notwithstanding the existence of “democratic” parliaments. The parliaments assert that they alone con-
control the government. As a matter of fact, the composition of the government is predetermined, and their actions are controlled by great financial consortiums. Who does not know that there is not a single capitalist "power" in which the Cabinet can be formed in opposition to the will of the big financial magnates? It is sufficient to exert financial pressure to cause Cabinet Ministers to fall from their posts as if they were stunned. This is real control exercised by banks over governments in spite of the alleged control by parliament. If such control is meant, then I must declare that control of the government by money-bags is inconceivable and absolutely impossible in the U.S.S.R., if only for the reason that the banks have been nationalised long ago and the money-bags have been expelled from the U.S.S.R.

Perhaps the delegation did not mean control, but the guidance exercised by the Party in relation to the government. If that is what the delegation meant by its question, then my reply is: Yes, our Party does guide the government. And the Party is able to guide the government because it enjoys the confidence of the majority of the workers and the toilers generally, and it has the right to guide the organs of the government in the name of this majority.

In what manner is the guidance of the government by the workers' party in the U.S.S.R., by the Communist Party of the U.S.S.R., expressed?

First of all it is expressed in that the Communist Party strives, through the soviets and their congresses, to secure the election to the principal posts in the government of its own candidates, its best workers, who are loyal to the cause of the proletariat and prepared truly and faithfully to serve the proletariat. This it succeeds in doing in the overwhelming majority of cases because the workers and peasants have confidence in the Party. It is not an accident that the chiefs of government departments in our country are Communists and that these chiefs enjoy enormous respect and authority.

Secondly, the Party supervises the work of the administration, the work of the organs of power; it rectifies their errors and defects, which are unavoidable; it helps them to carry out the decisions of the government and strives to secure for them the support of the masses. It should be added that not a single
important decision is taken by them without the direction of the Party.

Thirdly, when the plan of work is being drawn up by the various government departments, in industry or agriculture, in trade or in cultural work, the Party gives general leading instructions defining the character and direction of the work of these departments in the course of carrying out these plans.

The bourgeois press usually expresses "astonishment" at the Party's "interference" in the affairs of the government. But this "astonishment" is absolutely hypocritical. It is well known that the bourgeois parties in capitalist countries "interfere" in the affairs of the government and guide the government, and moreover, that in these countries this guidance is concentrated in the hands of a close circle of individuals connected in one way or another with the big banks and because of that they strive to conceal the part they play in this from the people. Who does not know that every bourgeois party in England, or in other capitalist countries, has its secret Cabinet consisting of a close circle of persons who concentrate the guidance in their hands?

Recall, for example, Lloyd George's well-known reference to the "shadow Cabinet" in the Liberal Party. The difference between the Land of the Soviets and the capitalist countries in this respect are: a) in capitalist countries the bourgeois parties guide the government in the interests of the bourgeoisie and against the proletariat, whereas in the U.S.S.R. the Communist Party guides the government in the interests of the proletariat and against the bourgeoisie; b) the bourgeois parties conceal from the people the rôle they play in guiding the state, and resort to suspicious, secret Cabinets, whereas the Communist Party in the U.S.S.R. does not stand in need of such secret Cabinets. It condemns the policy and practice of secret Cabinets and openly declares to the whole country that it takes responsibility for the guidance of the state.

One of the Delegates: On the same principles the Party guides the trade unions?

Stalin: In the main, yes. Formally, the Party cannot give instructions to the trade unions, but the Party gives instructions to the Communists who work in the trade unions. It is known that in the trade unions there are Communist fractions as there are also in the soviets, co-operative societies, etc. It is the duty of
these Communist fractions to secure by argument the adoption of decisions in the trade unions, in the soviets, co-operative societies, etc., which correspond to the Party's instructions. This they are able to achieve in the overwhelming majority of cases because the Party exercises enormous influence among the masses and enjoys their great confidence. By these means unity of action among the most varied proletarian organisations is secured. If this were not done there would be confusion and clashing in the work of these working class organisations.

Question 3. Since there is legality for one political party only in Russia, how do you know that the masses favour communism?

Answer: It is true that in the U.S.S.R. there are no legal bourgeois parties, that only one party, the party of the workers, the Communist Party, enjoys legality. Have we the ways and means, however, of convincing ourselves that the majority of the workers, the majority of the masses of the toilers sympathise with the Communists? We speak of course of the masses of the workers and peasants and not of the new bourgeoisie, or of the remnants of the old exploiting classes which have been already defeated by the proletariat. Yes, it is possible. We have the ways and means of knowing whether the masses of the workers and peasants sympathise with the Communists or not. Take the most important moments in the life of our country and see whether there are any grounds for the assertion that the masses really sympathise with the Communists.

Take, first of all, so important a moment as the period of the October Revolution in 1917, when the Communist Party, precisely as a party, openly called upon the workers and peasants to overthrow the rule of the bourgeoisie, and when this Party obtained the support of the overwhelming majority of the workers, soldiers and peasants. What was the situation at the time? The Socialist-Revolutionaries (S.R.'s) and the Social-Democrats (Mensheviks), allied with the bourgeoisie, were in power then. The governmental apparatus, both in the centre and locally, as well as the command of the twelve million army, was in the hands of these parties, in the hands of the government. The
Communist Party was in a state of semi-legality. The bourgeoisie of all countries prophesied the inevitable collapse of the Bolshevik Party. The Entente wholly and entirely supported the Kerensky government. Nevertheless, the Communist Party, the Bolshevik Party, never ceased to call upon the proletariat to overthrow the government and to establish the dictatorship of the proletariat. What happened? The overwhelming majority of the masses of the toilers, in the rear as well as at the front, most emphatically supported the Bolshevik Party—the Kerensky government was overthrown and the rule of the proletariat was established. How is it that the Bolsheviks were able to emerge victorious at that time in spite of the malicious forecasts by the bourgeoisie of all countries of the doom of the Bolshevik Party? Does it not prove that the broad masses of the toilers sympathised with the Bolshevik Party? I think it does. This is the first test of the authority and influence of the Communist Party among the broad masses of the population.

Take the second period, the period of intervention and civil war, when the British capitalists occupied the north of Russia, the districts of Archangel and Murmansk, when the American, British, Japanese and French capitalists occupied Siberia and pushed Kolchak to the forefront, when the French and British capitalists took steps to occupy “South Russia” and raised on their shields Denikin and Wrangel. This was a war conducted by the Entente and the counter-revolutionary generals in Russia against the Communist government in Moscow, against the achievements of the October Revolution. In this period the strength and stability of the Communist Party among the broad masses of the workers and peasants were put to the greatest test. And what happened? It is generally known that as a result of the Civil War the armies of occupation were driven from Russia and the counter-revolutionary generals were defeated by the Red Army. Here it was proved that the outcome of war is decided in the last analysis, not by technique, with which Kolchak and Denikin were plentifully furnished by the enemies of the U.S.S.R., but by proper policy, the sympathy and support of the vast masses of the population. Was it an accident that the Bolshevik Party proved victorious then? Of course not. Does not this fact prove that the Communist Party in Russia enjoys the sympathy of the wide masses of the toilers? I think it does. This is the
second test of the strength and stability of the Communist Party in the U.S.S.R.

We will now take up the present period, the post-war period, when questions of peaceful construction are the order of the day. The period of economic ruin gave way to the period of the restoration of industry and finally to the period of the reconstruction of the whole of our national economy on a new technical basis. Have we now ways and means of testing the strength and stability of the Communist Party, of determining the degree of sympathy enjoyed by the Party among the broad masses of the toilers? I think we have

Take first of all the trade unions which combine nearly ten million proletarians. Let us examine the composition of the leading bodies of these trade unions. Is it an accident that Communists are at the head of these bodies? Of course not. It would be absurd to think that the workers in the U.S.S.R. are indifferent to the composition of the leading bodies of their trade unions. The workers in the U.S.S.R. grew up and received their training in the storms of three revolutions. They learned, as no other workers learned, to try their leaders and to expel them if they do not satisfy the interests of the proletariat. At one time the most popular man in our Party was Plekhanov. However, the workers did not hesitate to isolate him completely when they became convinced that he had abandoned the proletarian position. And if these workers express their complete confidence in the Communists, elect them to responsible posts in the trade unions, it is direct evidence that the strength and stability of the Communist Party among the workers in the U.S.S.R. is enormous. This is one test of the undoubted sympathy of the broad masses of the workers for the Communist Party.

Take the last Soviet elections. In the U.S.S.R. the whole of the adult population from the age of eighteen, irrespective of sex and nationality—except the bourgeois elements who exploit the labour of others and those who have been deprived of their rights by the courts—enjoy the right to vote. The people enjoying the right to vote number sixty millions. The overwhelming majority of these, of course, are peasants. Of these sixty million voters, about 51 per cent, i.e., over thirty millions, exercised their right. Now examine the composition of the leading organs
of our soviets both in the centre and locally. Is it an accident that
the overwhelming majority of the elected leading elements are
Communists? Clearly, it is not an accident. Does not this fact
prove that the Communist Party enjoys the confidence of
millions of the masses of the peasantry? I think it does. This
is another test of the strength and stability of the Communist
Party.

Take the Komsomol (Young Communist League) which
unites nearly two million young workers and peasants. Is it
an accident that the overwhelming majority of the elected lead-
ing elements in the Young Communist League are Communists?
I think that it cannot be said to be an accident. Thus you have
another test of the strength and authority of the Communist
Party.

Finally, take the innumerable conferences, consultations,
delegate meetings, etc., which embrace millions of toilers, both
workingmen and working women, peasants and peasant women,
among all the nationalities forming the U.S.S.R. In Western
countries, people wax ironical over these conferences and
consultations and assert that the Russians like to talk very much.
For us, however, these conferences and consultations are of
enormous significance in that they serve as a test of the mood
of the masses and also as a means of exposing our mistakes and
indicating the methods by which these mistakes may be rectified;
for we make not a few mistakes and we do not conceal them,
because we think that to expose these errors and honestly to recti-
fy them is one of the best means of improving the management
of the country. Take the speeches delivered at these conferences
and consultations. Note the business-like and straightforward
remarks uttered by these "simple people," these workers and
peasants; note the decisions taken and you will see how enor-
mous is the influence and authority of the Communist Party, an
influence and authority that any party in the world might envy.
Thus you have still another test of the stability of the Commu-
nist Party.

These are the ways and means enabling us to test the strength
and influence of the Communist Party among the masses of the
people.

That is how I know that the broad masses of the workers and
peasants in the U.S.S.R. sympathise with the Communist Party.
Question 4. If a non-Party group should organise a fraction and nominate candidates for office on a platform which supported the Soviet government, but at the same time demanded the abolition of the foreign trade monopoly, could they have their own funds and conduct an active political campaign?

Answer: I think that there is an irreconcilable contradiction in this question. We cannot conceive of a group basing itself on a platform supporting the Soviet government and at the same time demanding the abolition of the monopoly of foreign trade. Why? Because the monopoly of foreign trade is one of the unshakable foundations of the “platform” of the Soviet government; because a group demanding the abolition of the foreign trade monopoly could not support the Soviet government; because such a group would be profoundly hostile to the whole Soviet system.

There are, of course, elements in the U.S.S.R. who demand the abolition of the monopoly of foreign trade. These are the Nepmen,* the kulaks, and the remnants of the already defeated exploiting classes, etc. But these elements represent an insignificant minority of the population. I do not think that the delegation has these elements in mind. If, however, the delegation refers to workers and peasant toilers, then I must say that the demand for the abolition of the monopoly of foreign trade would merely call forth ridicule and hostility among them.

Indeed, what would the abolition of monopoly of foreign trade mean for the workers? For them it would mean abandonment of the industrialisation of the country, cessation of the construction of new works and factories and of the expansion of the old works and factories. To them it would mean that the U.S.S.R. would be flooded with goods from capitalist countries, the destruction of our industry, because of its relative weakness; increase in unemployment, deterioration of the material conditions of the working class, and the weakening of their economic and political conditions. In the last analysis it would mean the strengthening of the Nepmen and the new bourgeoisie generally. Can the proletariat of the U.S.S.R. agree to committing suicide like this? Clearly it cannot.

And what would the abolition of the monopoly of foreign trade mean for the toiling masses of the peasantry? It would

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*I.e., private traders under the New Economic Policy.—Ed.
mean the transformation of our country from an independent country into a semi-colonial country and the impoverishment of the masses of the peasantry. It would mean a return to the system of “free trade” which prevailed under Kolchak and Denikin when the combined forces of the counter-revolutionary generals and the Allies freely plundered the many millions of the peasantry. In the last analysis it would mean the strengthening of the kulaks and other exploiting elements in the rural districts. The peasants have sufficiently experienced the charms of this system in the Ukraine, in the North Caucasus, on the Volga, and in Siberia. What grounds are there for believing that they desire to put their heads into this noose again? Is it not clear that the toiling masses of the peasantry cannot support a demand for the abolition of the monopoly of foreign trade?

*A Delegate:* The delegation suggested the point concerning the monopoly of foreign trade and of its abolition as a point around which a whole group of the population might organise if there was not the monopoly of a single party, the monopoly of legality in the U.S.S.R.

*Stalin:* The delegation consequently is returning to the question of the monopoly of the Communist Party, as the sole legal party in the U.S.S.R. I replied briefly to this question when I spoke about the ways and means of testing the sympathy of the vast masses of the workers and peasants towards the Communist Party. As for the other strata of the population, the kulaks, the Nepmen, the remnants of the old, defeated, exploiting classes, they are deprived of the right to have their political organisations just as they are deprived of the right to vote. The proletariat deprived the bourgeoisie not only of the factories, workshops, banks, railroads, lands, and mines, but they also deprived them of the right to have their political organisations, because the proletariat does not desire the restoration of the rule of the bourgeoisie. The delegation apparently does not object to the proletariat of the U.S.S.R. depriving the bourgeoisie and the landlords of their factories and workshops, of their land and railroads, banks and mines, [laughter] but it seems to me that the delegation is somewhat surprised that the proletariat did not limit itself to this, but went further and deprived the bourgeoisie of political rights. This, to my mind, is not altogether logical, or, to speak more correctly, is quite illogical. Why should the prole-
tariat be called upon to show magnanimity towards the bourgeoisie? Does the bourgeoisie in Western countries, where they are in power, show the slightest magnanimity towards the working class? Do they not drive genuine revolutionary parties of the working class underground? Why should the proletariat of the U.S.S.R. be called upon to show magnanimity towards their class enemy? You must be logical. Those who think that political rights can be restored to the bourgeoisie must, if they are to be logical, go further and raise the question of restoring to the bourgeoisie the factories and workshops, railroads and banks.

A Delegate: It is the task of the delegation to investigate how the opinion of the working class and the peasantry, as distinct from the opinion of the Communist Party, can find legal expression. It would be incorrect to believe that the delegation is interested in the question of granting political rights to the bourgeoisie, or in the manner in which the bourgeoisie may find legal expression of their opinions. The question is, in what manner can the opinions of the working class and of the peasantry, as distinct from the opinion of the Communist Party, find legal expression?

Another Delegate: These distinctive opinions could find expression in the mass organisations of the working class, in the trade unions, etc.

Stalin: All right. Consequently, the question is not one of the restoration of the political rights of the bourgeoisie, but of the conflict of opinion within the working class and among peasantry. Is there any conflict of opinion among the workers and the toiling masses of the peasantry at the present time? Undoubtedly there is. It is impossible for millions of workers and peasants all to think alike. This never happens. First of all, there is a great difference between the workers and peasants relative to their economic position and in their views concerning various questions. Secondly, there is some difference in outlook among various sections of the working class, difference in training, different ages, temperament, a difference between the outstanding industrial workers and those who have migrated from the rural districts, etc. All this leads to a conflict of opinion among the workers and the toiling masses of the peasantry which finds legal expression at meetings, in trade unions, in cooperative societies, during elections to the soviets, etc.
But there is a radical difference between the conflict of opinion now, under the proletarian dictatorship and conflict of opinion in the past, prior to the October Revolution. In the past, the conflict of opinion among the workers and the toiling peasantry was concentrated mainly on questions concerning the overthrow of the landlords, of tsarism, of the bourgeoisie and of the break-up of the whole capitalist system. Now, however, under the dictatorship of the proletariat, conflict of opinion does not revolve around questions concerning the overthrow of the Soviet government, of the break-up of the Soviet system, but around questions concerning the improvement of the organs of the Soviet government and improvement of their work. This makes a radical difference. There is nothing surprising in the fact that the conflict of opinion in the past around questions concerning the revolutionary destruction of a prevailing system gave grounds for the appearance of several rival parties among the working class and toiling masses of the peasantry. These parties were: the Bolshevik Party, the Menshevik Party, the Socialist-Revolutionary Party. On the other hand it is not difficult to understand that conflict of opinion under the dictatorship of the proletariat, which has for its aim, not the break-up of the existing Soviet system, but its improvement and consolidation, provides no nourishment for the existence of several parties among the workers and the toiling masses in the rural districts. That is why the legality of a single party, the Communist Party, the monopoly enjoyed by that party, not only raises no objection among the workers and toiling peasants but on the contrary, is accepted by them as something necessary and desirable.

The position of our Party as the only legal party in the country (the monopoly of the Communist Party), is not something artificial and deliberately invented. Such a position cannot be created artificially by administrative machinations, etc. Our Party’s monopoly grew out of life, it developed historically as a result of the fact that the Socialist-Revolutionary Party and the Menshevik Party became absolutely bankrupt and departed from the stage. What were the Socialist-Revolutionary Party and the Menshevik Party in the past? They served as channels for conducting bourgeois influence into the ranks of the proletariat. By what were these parties cultivated and sustained prior to October 1917? By the existence of the bourgeois class and in the
last analysis by the existence of bourgeois rule. Is it not clear then, that when the bourgeoisie was overthrown the basis for the existence of these parties should disappear? What became of these parties after October 1917? They became parties for the restoration of capitalism and for the overthrow of the rule of the proletariat. Clearly these parties had to lose all support and all influence among the workers and the toiling strata of the peasantry.

The fight between the Communist Party and the Socialist-Revolutionary Party and Menshevik Party for influence among the workers did not commence only yesterday. It commenced when the first symptoms of a mass revolutionary movement manifested themselves in Russia, even before 1905. The period between 1903 and October 1917 is the period of severe conflicts of opinion within the working class of our country, a period of struggle between the Bolsheviks, the Mensheviks and the Socialist-Revolutionaries for influence in the working class. During this period the working class of the U.S.S.R. passed through three revolutions. In the fires of these revolutions it tried and tested the proletarian revolutionary character of these parties and their fitness for the cause of the proletarian revolution. In October 1917, when history had summed up the whole of the past revolutionary struggle and had weighed in the balance the various parties fighting within the working class—the working class of the U.S.S.R. made its final selection and accepted the Communist Party as the only proletarian party. How is the fact that the working class selected the Communist Party to be explained? In April 1917, the Bolsheviks in the Petrograd Soviet, for example, represented an inconsiderable minority. The Socialist-Revolutionaries and Mensheviks at that time had an overwhelming majority. In the October days the whole apparatus of the government and all means of coercion were in the hands of the Socialist-Revolutionary and Menshevik Parties who had allied themselves with the bourgeoisie. It is explained by the fact that the Communist Party stood for the termination of the war, for an immediate democratic peace, while the Socialist-Revolutionary and Menshevik Parties insisted upon “War to Complete Victory,” the continuation of the imperialist war. It is explained by the fact that the Communist Party stood for the overthrow of the Kerensky government, for the overthrow of the rule of the bourgeoisie, for
the nationalisation of the factories and workshops, of the banks and railroads, whereas the Menshevik and Socialist-Revolutionary Parties fought in defence of the Kerensky government and defended the right of the bourgeoisie to the factories and the workshops, the banks and the railroads. It is to be explained by the fact that the Communist Party stood for the immediate confiscation of the estates of the big landlords for the benefit of the peasantry, whereas the Socialist-Revolutionary and Menshevik Parties postponed this question until the Constituent Assembly should be convened, which in its turn was postponed for an indefinite time. What is there surprising, therefore, in the fact that the workers and the poor peasants made their final selection in favour of the Communist Party? What is there surprising in the fact that the Socialist-Revolutionary and Menshevik Parties went to the bottom so quickly? That is why the Communist Party came to power.

The subsequent period, the period following October 1917, the period of civil war, was the period in which the Mensheviks and Socialist-Revolutionaries finally met their doom; it was the period of the final triumph of the Bolshevik Party. In that period the Mensheviks and Socialist-Revolutionaries themselves facilitated the triumph of the Communist Party. Wrecked and sent to the bottom during the October Revolution, remnants of the Menshevik Party and Socialist-Revolutionary Party began to link themselves up with counter-revolutionary kulak rebellions, allied themselves with Kolchak and Denikin, went into the service of the Entente and finally and utterly discredited themselves in the eyes of the workers and peasants. The situation then created was that the Socialist-Revolutionaries and Mensheviks, having changed from bourgeois revolutionaries into bourgeois counter-revolutionaries, helped the Entente in its efforts to strangle the new Soviet Russia, whereas the Bolshevik Party, rallying around itself all that was vital and revolutionary, roused fresh ranks of workers and peasants in increasing numbers for the fight in defence of the socialist fatherland and against the Entente. It was quite natural that the victory of the Communists in that period should, and in fact did, lead to the utter defeat of the Socialist-Revolutionaries and Mensheviks. What is there surprising, therefore, in the fact that after all this the Communist
Party became the sole party of the working class and the poor peasantry?

That is how the monopoly of the Communist Party as the only legal party in the country arose.

You speak of a conflict of opinion among the workers and peasants at the present time, under the proletarian dictatorship. I have said already that conflict of opinion exists and will exist in the future, that no progress is possible without this, but conflict of opinion among the workers under present conditions centres, not around the question of the overthrow of the Soviet system in principle, but around practical questions like the improvement of the soviets, the rectification of errors committed by the Soviet organs and, consequently, of consolidating Soviet rule. Such a conflict of opinion can only serve to strengthen and perfect the Communist Party. Such a conflict of opinion can only serve to strengthen the monopoly of the Communist Party. Such a conflict of opinion cannot provide nourishment for other parties within the working class and among the toiling peasantry.

Question 5. Will you summarise briefly the outstanding differences between yourself and Trotsky?

Answer: I must say first of all that the differences with Trotsky are not personal differences. If these differences bore a personal character, the Party would not concern itself with them for a single hour, for it does not like individual persons to thrust themselves forward. Apparently, you mean the differences in the Party. That is how I understand the question. Yes, such differences do exist in the Party. The character of these differences was described rather in detail by Comrade Rykov in a speech he delivered recently in Moscow and by Comrade Bukharin in Leningrad. These speeches have been published. I have nothing to add to what is stated in them concerning these differences. If you have not obtained these documents I can get them for you. [The delegation states that it is in possession of the documents.]

A Delegate: On our return we shall be questioned concerning these differences, but we have not all the documents. For example, we have not the platform of the "83."
Stalin. I did not sign that platform. I have no right to dispose of other people's documents. [Laughter.]

**Question 6.** In capitalist countries the chief incentive is furnished by the hope of private profit. This incentive is of course relatively absent in the U.S.S.R. What alternative displaces it and, in your opinion, how effective is it? Can it be maintained indefinitely?

**Answer:** It is true that the principal driving force of capitalist economy is profit. It is true also that obtaining profit is neither the aim nor the driving force of our socialist industry. What then is the driving force of our industry?

First of all, the fact that the factories and workshops in the U.S.S.R. belong to the whole people and not to capitalists, that the factories and workshops are managed not by the appointees of capitalists, but by representatives of the working class; the consciousness that the workers work, not for the capitalist, but for their own state, for their own class, represents an enormous driving force in the development and perfection of our industry. It must be observed that the overwhelming majority of the factory and works managers in Russia are workingmen, appointed by the Supreme Economic Council in agreement with the trade unions and that not a single factory manager can remain at his post contrary to the will of the workers, or of the respective trade union. It must be observed also that in every factory and workshop there is a factory council, elected by the workers, which controls the activities of the management of the particular enterprise. Finally, it must be observed that in every industrial enterprise regular production conferences of workers are held in which all the workers employed in the given enterprise take part and at which the work of the manager of the enterprise is discussed and criticised: the plan of work of the factory administration is discussed, errors and defects are noted and rectified through the trade unions, through the Party and through the organs of the Soviet administration. It is not difficult to understand, therefore, that all these circumstances radically alter the position of the workers as well as the state of affairs in the various enterprises. While, under capitalism, the workers regard their factory as a prison, under the Soviet system the workers no
longer regard the factory as a prison, but as something near and
dear to them and in the development and improvement of which
they are vitally interested. It is hardly necessary to prove that
this new attitude of the workers towards the enterprise in which
they are employed, this understanding of the close ties that link
the workers with the enterprise, represents a powerful driving
force for the whole of our industry. This circumstance explains
the fact that the number of worker-inventors in the field of tech-
nique of production, and worker-organisers of industry increases
from day to day.

Secondly, the revenues from industry in Russia are employed
not for the enrichment of individuals, but for the further ex-
pansion of industry, for the improvement of the material and
cultural conditions of the working class, for reducing the price
of industrial commodities necessary both for the workers and for
the peasants, which again is the improvement of the material
conditions of the toiling masses. A capitalist cannot employ his
revenues for improving the welfare of the working class. He
lives for profit; otherwise he would not be a capitalist. He obtains
profit in order to invest it as supplementary capital in less
developed countries suffering from a shortage of capital in order
again to obtain fresh and increased profit. That is how capital
flows from the United States to China, to Indonesia, to South
America and Europe and from France to the French colonies and
from England to the British colonies. In the U.S.S.R. things are
altogether different; for we neither conduct nor recognise colonial
policy. In Russia, the revenues from industry remain in the
country and are employed for the further expansion of industry,
for improving the conditions of the workers, for enlarging the
capacity of the home market, including also the peasant market,
by reducing the price of industrial commodities. Ten per cent of
the profits from industry in our country goes to a fund for im-
proving the social conditions of the workers. A sum equal to 13
per cent of the payroll is contributed to a sick insurance fund for
the insurance of workers. (This represents eight hundred million
rubles per annum.) A certain part of the revenues (I cannot just
now say exactly how much) is employed for cultural require-
ments, vocational training and vacations for the workers. A
fairly considerable part of these revenues (again I cannot now
say exactly how much) is employed for the annual increase in
the money wages of the workers. The rest of the revenues from industry are employed for the further expansion of industry, for the repair of old workshops, for the construction of new workshops and finally for the reduction of prices of industrial commodities. The enormous significance of these circumstances for our industry is: a) that they facilitate the linking up of agriculture with industry and the smoothing out of the antithesis between town and country; b) that they facilitate the increase of the capacity of the home market—urban and rural—and by that create a constantly expanding base for the further development of industry.

Finally, the nationalisation of industry facilitates the conduct of industry as a whole according to plan.

Will these stimuli and driving forces of our industry be permanent factors? Can they be permanently operative factors? Yes, undoubtedly they are permanently operative stimuli and driving forces, and the more our industry develops, the more the strength and significance of these factors will grow.

**Question 7. How far can Soviet Russia co-operate with capitalist industry in other countries? Is there a definite limit to such co-operation or is it simply an experiment to discover in which field such co-operation is possible and in which it is not?**

**Answer:** Apparently this is a reference to temporary agreements with capitalist states in the field of industry, in the field of commerce and perhaps of diplomatic relations. I think that the existence of two opposite systems, the capitalist system and the socialist system, does not exclude the possibility of such agreements. I think that such agreements are possible and expedient in conditions of peaceful development. Exports and imports are the most suitable ground for such agreements. We require equipment, raw material (raw cotton for example), semi-manufactures (metals, etc.) while the capitalists require a market for their goods. This provides a basis for agreement. The capitalists require oil, timber, grain products and we require a market for these goods. Here is another basis for agreement. We require credits, the capitalists require good interest for their credits. Here is still another basis for agreements in the field of credit. It is well known that the Soviet organs are most punctual in their payments.
The same thing may be said in regard to the diplomatic field. We are pursuing a policy of peace and we are prepared to sign a pact of non-aggression with bourgeois states. We are pursuing a policy of peace and we are prepared to come to an agreement concerning disarmament including complete abolition of standing armies, which we declared to the whole world as far back as the time of the Genoa Conference. Here is a basis for agreement on the diplomatic field.

The limits to these agreements? The limits are set by the opposite characters of the two systems between which there is rivalry and conflict. Within the limits permitted by these two systems, but only within these limits, agreement is quite possible. This is proved by the experience of the agreements concluded with Germany, Italy, Japan, etc.

Are these agreements merely experiments? Or can they be of a more or less prolonged character? That does not altogether depend upon us alone. It depends also upon the other parties. It depends upon the general situation. A war may upset any and every agreement. Finally, it depends upon the terms of the agreement. We can never accept conditions of bondage. We have an agreement with Harriman who is exploiting the manganese mines in Georgia. That agreement extends for twenty years. As you see, not a brief period. We have also an agreement with the Lena Goldfields Company, which is extracting gold in Siberia. That agreement has been signed for thirty years—a still longer period. Finally, we have an agreement with Japan concerning the exploitation of the oil and coal fields in Sakhalin. We would like these agreements to have a more or less solid character. But that depends of course not only upon us, but upon the other parties.

**Question 8. What are the chief ways in which Russia differs from capitalist states in her treatment of national minorities?**

**Answer:** Apparently this refers to the nationalities in the U.S.S.R. who were formerly oppressed by tsarism and the Russian exploiting classes and who did not enjoy state sovereignty. The principal distinction is that while in capitalist states national oppression and national enslavement prevails, in the U.S.S.R. both the one and the other have been radically abolished. In capitalist states, side by side with nations of the first rank, privileged na-
tions, "sovereign" nations, there are second rank nations, "non-
sovereign" nations, nations which do not enjoy equality, which
are deprived of various rights, principally of sovereign rights. In
the U.S.S.R., however, all the attributes of national inequality
and national oppression have been abolished. In the U.S.S.R.,
all nations are equal and sovereign, for the national and state
privileges which previously were enjoyed by the Great Rus-
sian people have been abolished. We do not of course speak of
declarations of national equality. All bourgeois and Social-Demo-
cratic parties have made not a few declarations concerning national
equality. What is the value of such declarations if they are not
carried out? The thing to do is to abolish those classes which are
the bearers, the creators and the conduits of national oppression.
In Russia these classes were the landlords and capitalists. We
overthrew these classes and by that abolished the possibility of
national oppression. And precisely for the reason that we abol-
ished these classes, real national equality became possible in the
U.S.S.R. This is what we call the application of the idea of self-
determination of nations including the right of complete seces-
sion. Precisely for the reason that we granted the right of self-
determination of nations, we managed to eliminate mutual sus-
picion between the toiling masses of the various nationalities in
the U.S.S.R. and to unite these nationalities on a voluntary basis
into one federal state. The present Union of Soviet Socialist Re-
publics is the result of our national policy and expression of the
voluntary federation of the nationalities in the U.S.S.R. into one
federal state. It is hardly necessary to prove that such a policy in
the national question is inconceivable in capitalist countries, for
there, the capitalists who are the creators and conduits of national
oppression are still in power. For example, we cannot fail to ob-
serve that the supreme organ of the U.S.S.R., the Central Execu-
tive Committee of the Soviets, is headed not necessarily by one
Russian chairman, but by six chairmen, representing each of the
federal republics forming the U.S.S.R., of whom one is a Russian
(Kalinin), the second a Ukrainian (Petrovsky), the third a White
Russian (Chervyakov), the fourth an Azerbaijani (Musabek-
kov), the fifth a Turkoman (Aitakov), and the sixth an Uzbek
(Faizulla Hodjayev). This fact is a striking expression of our na-
tional policy. Needless to say, there is not a single bourgeois
republic, however democratic it may be, that would do this. And
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yet, with us it is taken as a matter of course, as following directly from our policy of national equality.

Question 9. American labour leaders justify their struggle against the Communists on two grounds: 1) The Communists are disrupting and destroying the labour movement by their factional fights inside the unions and their attacks on all union officials who are not radicals, and 2) American Communists take their orders from Moscow and hence cannot be good trade unionists since their loyalty to an outside foreign body is placed above their loyalty to the union. How can this difficulty be adjusted so that American Communists can work jointly with other sections of the American movement?

Answer: I think that the attempts of the American labour leaders to justify their struggle against the Communists do not stand examination. No one has yet proved, nor can it be proved, that the Communists disrupt the labour movement. But it can be taken as fully proved that the Communists are the most loyal and boldest champions of the labour movement all over the world, including America. Is it not a fact that during strikes and demonstrations the Communist workingmen take their place in the front ranks of the working class and receive the first blows of the capitalists, whereas the reformist labour leaders take shelter in the backyards of the capitalists? How can Communists refrain from criticising the cowardice and the reactionary policies of the reformist labour leaders? Is it not clear that such criticism can serve only to stimulate and strengthen the labour movement? True, such criticism destroys the authority of the reactionary labour leaders, but what about that? Let the reactionary labour leaders answer the criticism, not expel the Communists from the unions. I think that if the labour movement in America desires to live on and develop, it cannot avoid a conflict of opinion and of tendencies within the trade unions. I think that the conflict of opinion and of tendencies within the trade unions, criticism of the reactionary labour leaders, etc., will continue to grow notwithstanding the efforts of the reformist labour leaders to prevent it. The working class of America stands in absolute need of such conflict of opinion and of such criticism in order that it may be able to choose between the various tendencies and finally to take
up its stand as an independent organised force within American society. The complaints made by American reformist leaders against the Communists merely indicate that they are not sure of the correctness of their case and do not feel strong in their position. That is why they fear criticism like the plague. It is a remarkable fact that the American labour leaders are more determined opponents of elementary democracy than many capitalists in America.

The assertion that the American Communists work under "orders from Moscow" is absolutely untrue. There are no such Communists in the world who agree to work "under orders" from outside against their own convictions and will and contrary to the requirements of the situation. Even if there were such Communists they would not be worth a cent. Communists are bold and courageous, they are fighting against a host of enemies. The value of a Communist, among other things, lies in that he is able to defend his convictions. Therefore, it is strange to speak of American Communists as not having their own convictions and being capable only of working according to "orders" from outside. The only part of the labour leaders' assertion that has any truth in it at all is that the American Communists are affiliated to an international Communist organisation and from time to time consult with the central body of this organisation on one question or another. But what is there bad in this? Are the American labour leaders opposed to an international workers' centre? It is true they are not affiliated to Amsterdam, not because they are opposed to an international workers' centre as such, however, but because they regard Amsterdam as being too radical. [Laughter.] Why may the capitalists organise internationally and the working class, or part of it, not have its international organisation? Is it not clear that Green and his friends in the American Federation of Labour slander the American Communists when they slavishly repeat the capitalist legends about "orders from Moscow?" Some people believe that the members of the Communist International in Moscow do nothing else but sit and write instructions to all countries. As there are more than sixty countries affiliated to the Comintern, one can imagine the position of the members of the Comintern who never sleep or eat, in fact do nothing but sit day and night and write instructions to all countries. [Laughter.] And the American labour leaders believe that with this ridiculous
legend they can cover up their fear of the Communists and conceal the fact that Communists are the bravest and most loyal workers in the labour movement in America.

The delegation asks for a way out of this situation. I think there is only one way out: leave room for conflict of opinion and of tendencies within the American trade unions, give up the reactionary policy of expelling the Communists from the trade unions, and give the working class of America an opportunity of making a free choice of these tendencies; for America has not yet had its October Revolution and the workers there have not yet had the opportunity of making their final selection from among the various tendencies in the trade unions.

**Question 10. Is any money now being sent to America to aid either the American Communist Party or the Communist paper, the "Daily Worker"? If not how much do the American Communists remit to the Third International in annual membership dues?**

**Answer:** If this has reference to the relations between the Communist Party of America and the Third International, I must say that the Communist Party of America as part of the Communist International most likely pays affiliation dues to the Comintern. On the other hand, the Comintern, being the central body of the international Communist movement, probably renders what assistance it can to the Communist Party of America whenever it thinks it necessary. I do not think there is anything surprising or exceptional in this. If, however, the question refers to the relations between the Communist Party of America and the Communist Party of the U.S.S.R., I must say that I do not know of a single occasion on which the representatives of the American Communist Party appealed for aid to the Communist Party of the U.S.S.R. You may think this strange—but it is a fact, which indicates that the American Communists are rather too sensitive. What would happen if the Communist Party of America did appeal for aid to the Communist Party of the U.S.S.R.? I think the Communist Party of the U.S.S.R. would render it whatever assistance it could. Indeed, what would be the worth of the Communist Party, a party that is in power, if it refused to do what it could to aid the Communist Party of another country labouring
under the yoke of capitalism? I would say that such a Communist Party would not be worth a cent. Let us assume that the American working class had come into power after overthrowing its bourgeoisie. Let us assume that the working class of another country appealed to the working class of America, which had emerged victorious from the great struggle against capitalism, for material aid; would the American working class refuse it? I think it would disgrace itself if it hesitated to give the assistance asked for.

Question 11. We understand that some good Communists are not in entire sympathy with the Communist Party’s demand that all new members be atheists, now that the reactionary clergy are suppressed. Could the Communist Party in the future take a neutral attitude towards a religious faith which supported all the teachings of science and did not oppose Communism? Could you in the future permit some Party members to hold religious opinions if they did not conflict with Party loyalty?

Answer: In this question there are several inexactitudes. In the first place, I do not know of any such “good Communists” that the delegates talk about. It is hardly likely that such Communists exist at all. Secondly, I must declare that speaking formally, we have no conditions of Party membership which demand that a candidate for Party membership shall be an atheist. The conditions of membership of our Party are: acceptance of the programme and rules of the Party; absolute subordination to the decisions of the Party and its organs; payment of membership dues; and membership in one of the Party locals.

A Delegate: I often read of expulsions from the Party because of belief in God.

Stalin: I can only repeat the conditions of membership in our Party that I have just mentioned. We have no other condition. Does that mean the Party is neutral towards religion? No, it does not. We carry on and will continue to carry on propaganda against religious prejudices. Our legislation guarantees to citizens the right to adhere to any religion. This is a matter for the conscience of each individual. That is precisely why we carried out the separation of the church from the state. But in separating the church from the state and proclaiming religious liberty we at the same time guaranteed the right of every citizen to combat
by argument, by propaganda and agitation any and all religion. The Party cannot be neutral towards religion, and it does conduct anti-religious propaganda against all and every religious prejudice because it stands for science, while religious prejudices run counter to science, because all religion is something opposite to science. Cases such as recently occurred in America in which Darwinists were prosecuted in court, cannot occur here because the Party carries out a policy of the general defence of science. The Party cannot be neutral towards religious prejudices and it will continue to carry on propaganda against these prejudices because this is one of the best means of undermining the influence of the reactionary clergy who support the exploiting classes and who preach submission to these classes. The Party cannot be neutral towards the bearers of religious prejudices, towards the reactionary clergy who poison the minds of the toiling masses. Have we suppressed the reactionary clergy? Yes, we have. The unfortunate thing is that it has not been completely liquidated. Anti-religious propaganda is a means by which the complete liquidation of the reactionary clergy must be brought about. Cases occur when certain members of the Party hamper the complete development of anti-religious propaganda. If such members are expelled it is a good thing because there is no room for such "Communists" in the ranks of the Party.

Question 12. Can you outline briefly the characteristics of the society of the future which Communism is trying to create?

Answer: The general characteristics of communist society are given in the works of Marx, Engels and Lenin. Briefly, the anatomy of communist society may be described as follows: It is a society in which a) there will be no private ownership of the means of production but social, collective ownership; b) there will be no classes or state, but workers in industry and agriculture managing their economic affairs as a free association of toilers; c) national economy, organised according to plan, will be based on the highest technique in both industry and agriculture; d) there will be no antithesis between town and country, between industry and agriculture; e) the products will be distributed according to the principle of the old French Communists: "from each according to his abilities, to each according to his needs"; f) science and
art will enjoy conditions conducive to their *highest development*; g) the individual, freed from bread and butter cares, and of the necessity of cringing to the "powers that be" will become really free, etc., etc. Clearly, we are still remote from such a society.

With regard to the international conditions necessary for the complete triumph of communist society, these will develop and grow in proportion as revolutionary crises and revolutionary outbreaks of the working class in capitalist countries grow. It must not be imagined that the working class in one country, or in several countries, will march towards socialism, and still more to communism, and that the capitalists of other countries will sit still with folded arms and look on with indifference. Still less must it be imagined that the working class in capitalist countries will agree to be mere spectators of the victorious development of socialism in one or another country. As a matter of fact, the capitalists will do all in their power to crush such countries. As a matter of fact, every important step taken towards socialism, and still more towards communism, in any country will be inevitably accompanied by the unrestrained efforts of the working class in capitalist countries to achieve the dictatorship and socialism in those countries. Thus, in the further progress of development of the international revolution, two world centres will be formed: the socialist centre, attracting to itself all the countries gravitating towards socialism, and the capitalist centre, attracting to itself all the countries gravitating towards capitalism. The fight between these two centres for the conquest of world economy will decide the fate of capitalism and communism throughout the whole world, for the final defeat of world capitalism means the victory of socialism in the arena of world economy.

II

STALIN'S QUESTIONS TO THE DELEGATION AND ITS REPLIES

*Stalin:* If the delegation is not too tired, I would ask it to permit me to put several questions. [*Delegation agrees.*]

*Question 1.* How do you account for the small percentage of American workers organised in trade unions? I think there are about seventeen million industrial workers in America. [*The delegates explain that there are from eighteen to nineteen million.*}
I think that about three million are organised. [Delegates explain that the American Federation of Labour has a membership approximately of three million and that besides these about half a million workers are organised in other unions, so that taken together three and a half million workers are organised.] Personally I think that the proportion of American workers organised in trade unions is very small. In the U.S.S.R. 90 per cent of all the proletarians in the country are organised in trade unions. I would like to ask the delegation whether it regards this small percentage of organised workers as a good thing. Does not the delegation think that this small percentage is an indication of the weakness of the American proletariat and of the weakness of its weapons in the struggle against the capitalists in the economic field?

Brophy: The small membership of trade unions is to be explained not by the bad tactics applied in the labour organisations but by the general economic conditions prevailing in the country, which do not stimulate the whole mass of workers to organise. These favourable economic conditions restrict the necessity of the working class to fight against the capitalists. Of course, these conditions will change. And simultaneously with the change in these conditions, the trade unions will grow and the whole of the trade union movement will proceed along a different path.

Douglas: I agree with the explanation given by the previous speaker. To that I add, however, that first of all, it is necessary to bear in mind that wages in the United States have been recently increased considerably by the capitalists themselves. This process of rising wages was observed in 1917, 1919 and later. If we compare the real wages prevailing at the present time with the wages prevailing in 1911, we will find that they are considerably higher. In the process of its development, the trade union movement at first based itself and still bases itself on the craft principle, according to trade, and the trade unions were formed mainly for skilled workers. At the head of these unions, there were definite leaders who represented a close organisation and strove to obtain good conditions for their members. They had no stimuli to widen the labour organisation or to organise the unskilled workers. Moreover, the American trade unions come up against well-organised capitalism which has at its disposal all means to prevent the organisation of all the workers in trade unions. If for example, a
trust encounters the too strong resistance of the trade unions in one of its enterprises, it will close down that enterprise and transfer its work to another. In this way the resistance of the trade unions is broken. The American capitalists voluntarily raise the wages of the workers but give them no economic power or the possibility of fighting for the economic improvement of their conditions of life. Another very important fact in America is that the capitalists sow dissension among the workers of various nationalities. In the majority of cases the unskilled workers are immigrants from Europe or, as the case has become recently, Negroes. The capitalists try to sow dissension between workers of different nationalities. This national strife is fostered both among skilled workers and unskilled workers. The capitalists systematically sow antagonism among the workers of various nationalities irrespective of their degree of skill. During the last ten years American capitalists have been conducting a more enlightened policy in that they are forming their own trade unions, the so-called company unions. They strive to develop the workers' interest in the enterprise and in the increase of profits. American capitalism shows a tendency to substitute horizontal division by vertical division, i.e., to split up the working class and to give it an interest in capitalism.

Coyle: I approach the question not from the theoretical point of view but from the practical point of view. It is true that it is easier to organise the workers in good times but the statistics of the membership of the American Federation of Labour show that the A.F. of L. is gradually losing the unskilled workers and is increasing its membership of skilled workers. Thus the American Federation of Labour desires to become and is gradually becoming an organisation principally of the skilled workers. The trade union movement in America barely touches the unskilled workers. The big branches of industry are hardly touched by the trade unions. Of these big branches of industry only the mining and railroad industries are organised to any extent, and even in the coal industry 65 per cent of the workers are unorganised. The workers in such industries as steel, rubber and automobiles are hardly organised at all. It may be said that the trade unions do not touch the unskilled workers. There are a number of trade unions outside the American Federation of Labour which strive to organise the unskilled and semi-skilled workers. As for the position taken up by the leaders of the American Federation
of Labour, for example, the President of the Machinists' Union quite frankly stated that he does not wish to attract the unskilled workers to his union. The position in regard to the trade union leaders is this: that a leader caste has grown up consisting of a few scores of individuals who receive enormous salaries up to $10,000 per annum and even more, and into which it is extremely difficult to penetrate.

Dunn: The question put by Comrade Stalin is not fair because in this country 90 per cent of the workers are organised, it must be borne in mind that here power is in the hands of the working class, whereas in capitalist countries the workers are an oppressed class and the bourgeoisie does everything to prevent the workers from organising. Moreover, there are reactionary trade unions led by reactionary leaders in those countries. In the conditions prevailing in America it is very difficult to get into the heads of the workers the very idea of trade unionism. This explains why trade unionism is not so widespread.

Stalin: Does the speaker agree with the previous speaker that certain leaders of the labour movement in America strive to restrict the trade union movement?

Stalin: I did not wish to offend anybody. I merely wanted to clear up for myself the difference in the situation that exists in America as compared with the U.S.S.R. If I have offended any-

Dunn: I agree.

body I hope you will forgive me. [Laughter.]

Dunn: I am not offended in the least.

Stalin: Is there a system of state insurance of workers in America?

A Delegate: There is no system of state insurance of workers in America.

Coyle: In the majority of states, compensation is paid for accidents during employment and the maximum of 30 per cent of the loss of earning capacity is paid. This is in the majority of states. The compensation is paid by the private firms in whose enterprises the accident occurred. But the law demands that compensation shall be paid.

Stalin: Is there state insurance against unemployment in America?

A Delegate: No. The funds for insurance against unemployment
might satisfy from eighty to one hundred thousand unemployed in all states.

Coyle: There is insurance (not government insurance) against accidents during employment but there is no insurance against sickness or old age. The insurance fund is made up of contributions from the workers. As a matter of fact the fund is provided by the workers themselves, because if the workers did not organise these funds they would receive higher wages and as these funds are established in agreement with the employers the workers receive a smaller wage. As a matter of fact, the employers contribute only a very small proportion of the fund, about 10 per cent. Almost the whole of it is made up by the workers.

Stalin: I think the comrades will be interested to learn that in the U.S.S.R. more than 800,000,000 rubles per annum are appropriated for workers’ insurance. It will not be superfluous to add also that our workers in all branches of industry, in addition to their ordinary money wages, receive a sum equal to about one-third of the wages paid for insurance, social improvements, cultural requirements, and so on.

Question 2. How do you explain the absence of a special mass workers’ party in the United States? The bourgeoisie in America have two parties, the Republican Party and the Democratic Party. But the American workers have no mass party of their own. Do not the comrades think that the absence of such a mass workers’ party, even if it were like the British Labour Party, weakens the working class in its political fight against the capitalists? Then again, why do the leaders of the labour movement in America, Green and the others, so strongly oppose the establishment of a workers’ party in America?

Brophy: Yes, the leaders did decide that there was no necessity for forming such a party. However, there is a minority which considers that such a party is necessary. Conditions in America at the present time are such, as has been pointed out already, that the trade union movement is extremely weak. The weakness of the trade union movement is to be explained in its turn by the fact that the working class at present does not have to fight against the capitalists because the capitalists themselves increase wages and guarantee to them satisfactory material conditions.
Stalin: But it is the skilled workers mainly whose material conditions are guaranteed. There is a contradiction here. On the one hand it would appear that there is no necessity for organisation because the workers are provided for. On the other hand it is said that the more secure workers, the skilled workers, are organised in the trade unions. Thirdly, it would appear that the unorganised workers are those least provided for, namely, the unskilled workers who most of all stand in need of organisation. I cannot understand this at all.

Brophy: Yes, there is a contradiction. But so are American political and economic conditions contradictory.

Brebnor: Although the unskilled workers are not organised, they have the political right to vote, so that if there is any discontent the unskilled workers can express this discontent by exercising their political right to vote. On the other hand the organised workers who belong to trade unions, when particularly bad times come, do not turn to their union but exercise their vote. Thus the political right to vote compensates for the lack of trade union organisation.

Israel: One of the principal difficulties is the very system of election in the United States. It is not the man for whom the majority of the votes of the whole country is cast, or even the majority of the votes of any particular class is cast, that is elected as President. In every state there is an electoral college; every state has a certain number of electors who participate in the election of the President. To be elected, the candidate must obtain 51 per cent of the votes. If there were three or four parties no one candidate would be elected and the election of the President would have to be transferred to the Congress. This is an argument against forming a third party. The opponents of the third party argue in this way: Don't put forward a third candidate because you will split the liberal vote and you will prevent the liberal candidate from being elected.

Stalin: But Senator LaFollette at one time created a third bourgeois party. It follows then that the third party will not split votes if it is a bourgeois party, but it may split votes if it is a workers’ party.

Davie: I do not regard the fact mentioned by the previous speaker as a fundamental one. I think the most important point is the following. I will quote the example of the city in which
I live. During the election campaign the representative of a certain party gives the trade union leader an important job in connection with the campaign and places certain funds at his disposal, which he uses for his own purpose. In this way he obtains a certain prestige connected with his job. It turns out, therefore, that the leaders of the trade union support one or the other of the bourgeois parties. Naturally, when there is any talk of forming a third party, a workers’ party, these labour leaders refuse to do anything in the matter. They argue that if a third party were formed there would be a split in the trade union movement.

_Douglas_: The fact that only skilled workers are organised in trade unions is due principally to the fact that in order to be able to join a union a man must have money and be well off, because the entrance fees and dues are high and the unskilled worker cannot afford to pay. Moreover, the unskilled worker is under the constant danger of being thrown out of work if he attempts to organise. The unskilled workers can be organised only with the active aid of the skilled workers. In the majority of cases this aid is not forthcoming and this is one of the principal obstacles to the organisation of the unskilled workers. The principal means by which the workers can defend their rights are political means. This in my opinion is the principal reason why the unskilled workers are unorganised. I consider the economic condition to be the principal factor in the unorganised state of the unskilled workers in the political and industrial fields. I must point to a special feature of the American electoral system, the direct primary election, in which any man may get to the election booth, declare himself a Democrat or a Republican and cast his vote. I am convinced that Gompers could not keep the workers on a non-partisan political programme if he did not have the argument of the direct primary. He always told the workers that if they wished to act politically, they could join either of the existing two political parties, get the responsible positions in them and command influence. With this argument Gompers managed to keep the workers away from the idea of organising the working class and of forming a workers’ party.

Question 3. _How do you explain that on the question of recognising the U.S.S.R. the leaders of the American Federation of Labour are more reactionary than many bourgeois?_ How do
you explain that a bourgeois like Mr. Borah and others are in favour of recognising the U.S.S.R., while American labour leaders like Gompers and Green have conducted and still conduct reactionary propaganda against the recognition of the first workers' republic, against the recognition of the U.S.S.R.? How do you explain that even a reactionary like the late President Woodrow Wilson was able to "greet" Soviet Russia, while Green and other leaders of the American Federation of Labour wish to be more reactionary than the capitalists? Here is the text of the "greeting" Woodrow Wilson sent to the Soviet Congress in Russia in March 1918, at the time when the troops of the German Kaiser were marching against Soviet Leningrad:

May I not take advantage of the meeting of the Congress of the Soviets to express the sincere sympathy which the people of the United States feel for the Russian people at this moment when the German power has been thrust in to interrupt and turn back the whole struggle for freedom and substitute the wishes of Germany for the purpose of the people of Russia. Although the government of the United States is, unhappily, not now in a position to render the direct and effective aid it would wish to render, I beg to assure the people of Russia through the Congress that it will avail itself of every opportunity to secure for Russia once more complete sovereignty and independence in her own affairs and full restoration to her great rôle in the life of Europe and the modern world. The whole heart of the people of the United States is with the people of Russia in the attempts to free themselves forever from autocratic government and become masters of their own life. (Pravda, No. 50, March 16, 1918.)

*Can we regard it as normal when the leaders of the American Federation of Labour desire to be more reactionary than reactionary Wilson?*

*Brophy:* I cannot precisely explain the reason but I think that the leaders of the American Federation of Labour are opposed to the recognition of Soviet Russia for the very same reason that the American Federation of Labour is not affiliated to the Amsterdam International. I think it is due to the peculiar philosophy of the American workers as compared with the European workers.

*Stalin:* But as far as I know the American Federation of Labour does not object to the recognition of Italy or Poland where fascism reigns.
**Brophy:** By quoting the example of Poland and Italy where there are fascist governments you explain the reason for the non-recognition of the U.S.S.R. by America. The hostile attitude towards the U.S.S.R. is explained by the unpleasantness which the Communists at home cause the American labour leaders.

**Dunn:** The argument used by the last speaker—that the labour leaders cannot recognise the U.S.S.R. because they cannot get on with the Communists at home is not convincing, because they preached the non-recognition of the U.S.S.R. before the American Communist Party was organised. The principal reason is that the leaders of the American Federation of Labour are opposed to everything in the nature of socialism. They are put up to this by the capitalists who have an organisation called the National Civic Federation, which does its utmost to rouse American society against socialism in any form. This organisation opposed the position taken by Ivy Lee who advocated the development of commercial relations between America and the U.S.S.R. The leaders of this organisation say: "How can we maintain order among our own working class when liberals begin to talk like this?" The National Civic Federation is an organisation of a group of capitalists who have invested a large sum of money in it and who control it. It should be mentioned that the vice-president of this reactionary organisation is Matthew Woll, the vice-president of the American Federation of Labour.

**Brophy:** The explanations regarding the reactionary character of the labour leaders that have been made here are inadequate. We must look deeper. The presence of the American delegation in the U.S.S.R. is the best reply, and is evidence of the sympathy of a section of the American workers to the workers of the Soviet Union. I think that the opinion of the leaders of the American Federation of Labour in regard to the U.S.S.R. does not differ from the opinion of the majority of the working class in America. The position of the majority of the working class in regard to the U.S.S.R. is to be explained by the remoteness from the U.S.S.R. The working class of America is not interested in international affairs and the influence of the bourgeoisie on the working class of America makes itself felt very strongly in regard to its attitude towards the U.S.S.R.
INTERVIEW WITH THE FOREIGN WORKERS’ DELEGATION.
(NOVEMBER 5, 1927)

There were eighty delegates present from Germany, France, Austria, Czecho-Slovakia, South America, Mexico, China, Belgium, Finland, Denmark and Estonia. The interview lasted six hours.

Stalin: Comrades, a list of questions was handed to me yesterday in the German language without any signature. This morning I received two other lists, one from the French delegation and another from the Danish delegation. Let us begin with the first list of questions, although I do not know from which delegation it emanates, and then we will be able to take up the other two lists. If you do not mind, we shall begin. [The delegates consent.]

Question 1. Why does the U.S.S.R. not belong to the League of Nations?

Answer: Our press has repeatedly given the reasons why the Soviet Union does not belong to the League of Nations. I can point out some of these reasons.

The Soviet Union is not a member of the League of Nations and does not take part in it because first of all it does not want to take the responsibility for the imperialist policy of the League of Nations, for the “mandates” which are handed out by the League of Nations for the exploitation and oppression of colonial countries. The Soviet Union does not belong to the League of Nations because it is completely opposed to imperialism and to the oppression of colonial and subjugated countries.

The Soviet Union does not belong to the League of Nations, secondly, because it does not want to take responsibility for military preparations, for growing armaments, for new military alliances, etc., which are covered and sanctioned by the League of Nations and which cannot but lead to new imperialist
wars. The Soviet Union does not belong to the League of Nations because it is utterly opposed to imperialist wars.

Finally, the Soviet Union does not belong to the League of Nations because it does not want to be a part of the screen of imperialist machinations which the League of Nations represents and which are concealed by the honeyed phrases of its members. The League of Nations is a "rendezvous" for imperialist chiefs, who do their business behind the scenes. What the League of Nations says officially is empty twaddle, intended to deceive the workers. But what the imperialist chiefs do unofficially behind the scenes is real imperialist business, which is pharisaically concealed by the eloquent orators of the League of Nations. What can there be surprising in the fact that the Soviet Union does not want to become a member and participant of this anti-nation comedy?

Question 2. Why does not the Soviet Union tolerate the existence of a Social-Democratic party?

Answer: A Social-Democratic party (i.e., a Menshevik party) is not tolerated in the Soviet Union for the same reason that counter-revolutionaries are not tolerated here. This, perhaps, may surprise you, but there is nothing extraordinary about it. The conditions of development of our country, the history of its development, are such that the Social-Democrats, who under tsarism were a more or less revolutionary party, after the overthrow of tsarism, under Kerensky, became a government party, a bourgeois party, a party of imperialist war, and after the October Revolution, became an avowedly counter-revolutionary party against the proletarian dictatorship. You surely know that the Social-Democrats in our country took part in the Civil War on the side of Kolchak and Denikin, against the Soviet government. At the present time this party is a party of capitalist restoration, a party which stands for the liquidation of the proletarian dictatorship. I think that this development of Social-Democracy is typical not only of the U.S.S.R. but also of the other countries. In our country Social-Democracy was more or less revolutionary so long as tsarism existed. This, as a matter of fact, explain why we Bolsheviks were then in the same party with the Mensheviks, with the Social-Democrats. Social-Democracy becomes an opposi-
tion, or a government and bourgeois party, when the so-called democratic bourgeoisie comes into power. It becomes a party of avowed counter-revolution when the revolutionary proletariat seizes power.

_Interjection by a delegate:_ Does this mean that Social-Democracy is a counter-revolutionary force only here in the Soviet Union, or can it be classified as a counter-revolutionary force also in other countries?

_Stalin:_ I have already stated that, in this respect, there is a certain difference. In the land of the proletarian dictatorship, Social-Democracy is a counter-revolutionary force fighting for the restoration of capitalism and the liquidation of the proletarian dictatorship in the name of "bourgeois" democracy. In the capitalist countries, where the proletariat is not yet in power, the Social-Democrats constitute either an opposition party to the capitalist state, or a semi-governmental party in coalition with the liberal bourgeoisie against the most reactionary forces of capitalism, and against the revolutionary movement of the proletariat, or a thoroughly governmental party openly and avowedly defending capitalism and "bourgeois" democracy against the revolutionary movement of the proletariat. Social-Democracy becomes utterly counter-revolutionary, and its counter-revolutionary action is directed against proletarian state power, only when proletarian state power is established.

**Question 3. Why is there no freedom of the press in the U.S.S.R.**?

_Answer:_ What freedom of the press have you in mind? Freedom of the press, for which class—the bourgeoisie or the proletariat? If it is a question of freedom of the press for the bourgeoisie, then it does not and will not exist here as long as the proletarian dictatorship is in power. But if it is a question of freedom of the press for the proletariat, then I must say that you will not find another country in the world where such broad and complete freedom of the press exists as in the U.S.S.R. Freedom of the press for the proletariat is not an empty phrase. And without the best printing works, the best press clubs, free organisations of the working class, from the most exclusive to the broadest organisations embracing millions of workers, without the widest free-
dom of assembly, there can be no freedom of the press. Examine the conditions in the U.S.S.R., go into the workers' districts, and you will find that the best printing works, the best press clubs, entire paper mills, entire ink factories, producing the necessary material for the press, huge assembly halls—these and many other things which are so necessary for the working class freedom of the press, are entirely and fully at the disposal of the working class and the toiling masses. This is what we call freedom of the press for the working class. We have no freedom of the press for the bourgeoisie. We have no freedom of the press for the Mensheviks and Socialist-Revolutionaries, who represent the interests of the beaten and overthrown bourgeoisie. But what is there surprising in that? We have never pledged ourselves to grant freedom of the press to all classes, and to make all classes happy. In taking power in October 1917, the Bolsheviks openly declared that this government is a government of one class, a government of the proletariat, which will subdue the bourgeoisie in the interests of the toiling masses of town and country who represent the overwhelming majority of the population of the U.S.S.R. How can one, after this, demand from the proletarian dictatorship that it grant freedom of the press for the bourgeoisie?

**Question 4. Why are not the imprisoned Mensheviks released?**

**Answer:** Evidently this refers to the active Mensheviks. Yes, it is true, the active Mensheviks in our country are not released from prison until their sentence expires. But why wonder at this? Why, for example, were not the Bolsheviks released from prison in July, August, September, and October 1917, when the Mensheviks and Socialist-Revolutionaries were in power? Why was Lenin compelled to remain in hiding underground from July to October 1917, when the Mensheviks and Socialist-Revolutionaries were in power? How can you explain the fact that the great Lenin, whose name is a symbol for the proletarians of all countries, was compelled to remain in hiding from July to October 1917, in Finland, far away from the "democratic republic" of Kerensky and Tsere-teli, Chernov and Dan, and that Prawda, the organ of Lenin's Party, was wrecked by the bourgeois Junkers in spite of the fact that prominent and active leaders of the Second International were then at the head of the government. Obviously this is to be
explained by the fact that the struggle between bourgeois counter-revolution and proletarian revolution cannot but lead to a certain amount of repression. I have already stated that the Social-Democrats in our country are a counter-revolutionary party. But from this it follows that the proletarian revolution cannot help arresting the active members of this counter-revolutionary party.

But this is not all. From this it further follows that the imprisonment of Mensheviks in our country is a continuation of the policy begun with the October Revolution. After all, what is the October Revolution? The October Revolution means first of all the overthrow of the power of the bourgeoisie. All more or less class conscious workers of all countries now admit that the Bolsheviks were right in overthrowing bourgeois power in 1917. I have no doubt that you are of the same opinion. But the question arises, whom did the proletariat actually overthrow in 1917? History tells us, and facts go to prove that in October 1917, the proletariat overthrew the Mensheviks and Socialist-Revolutionaries, as it was precisely the Mensheviks and Socialist-Revolutionaries, Kerensky and Chernov, Gotz and Lieber, Dan and Tsereteli, Abramovitch and Avksentiev, who were then in power. And what are the Menshevik and Socialist-Revolutionary Parties? They are parties of the Second International.

It therefore follows that in accomplishing the October Revolution, the proletariat of the U.S.S.R. overthrew the parties of the Second International. This, perhaps, is not very pleasing to some Social-Democrats, but it is an undeniable fact, comrades, over which it would be absurd to argue.

Consequently, it follows that at the moment of proletarian revolution, it is possible and necessary to overthrow the power of the Mensheviks and Socialist-Revolutionaries so that the power of the proletariat may triumph. But if they may be overthrown, why cannot they be arrested if they go over openly and determinedly to the camp of bourgeois counter-revolution? Do you think that the overthrow of the Mensheviks and Socialist-Revolutionaries is a milder act than their imprisonment? One cannot consider the policy of the October Revolution as being correct unless one also considers the inevitable results of that policy to be correct. One of two things: either the October Revolution was wrong, in which case the imprisonment of Mensheviks and Socialist-Revolutionaries is also wrong, or the October Revolution was right, in
which case, one cannot regard the imprisonment of Mensheviks and Socialist-Revolutionaries as being wrong. Logic must take its course.

Question 5. Why was not the correspondent of the Social-Democratic Press Bureau permitted to enter the U.S.S.R.?

Answer: Because the Social-Democratic press abroad, particularly the Vorwärts, excels even a number of bourgeois papers in its monstrous slander of the U.S.S.R. and its representatives. Because many bourgeois newspapers, such as the Vossische Zeitung, for instance, behave far more “impartially” and “decently” in their struggle against the U.S.S.R. than the Vorwärts. This may seem “strange,” but it is a fact which cannot be ignored. If the Vorwärts behaved no worse than some of the bourgeois papers, then its representatives would surely find their place in the U.S.S.R. together with the representatives of the bourgeois papers. A few days ago a Vorwärts representative asked one of the employees of our Embassy in Berlin what conditions had to be complied with for a Vorwärts representative to be permitted to enter the U.S.S.R. In reply, he was told: “If the Vorwärts will prove, in deed, that it is prepared to behave towards the U.S.S.R. and its representatives at least as well as the ‘respectable’ liberal press, like the Vossische Zeitung, the Soviet government will have no objection to permitting a Vorwärts representative in the U.S.S.R.”

I think that the answer was quite reasonable.

Question 6. Is it possible to unite the Second and Third Internationals?

Answer: I think it is impossible. It is impossible because the Second and Third Internationals have two entirely different viewpoints and have two different objects in view. The Third International looks forward to the overthrow of capitalism and the establishment of the proletarian dictatorship. The Second International, on the contrary, looks forward to the safeguarding of capitalism and the destruction of everything which is essential for the dictatorship of the proletariat. The struggle between these two Internationals is the ideological expression of the struggle between the adherents of capitalism and the adherents of social-
ism. In this struggle, either the Second or the Third International must be victorious. There are no reasons for doubting that the Third International will be victorious in the labour movement. I do not think that they can be united.

**Question 7. How do you regard the European situation? Is there reason for expecting revolutionary events in the next few years?**

**Answer:** I think that elements of a profound capitalist crisis are growing and will continue to grow in Europe. Capitalism can be partly stabilised, it can rationalise its production, it can temporarily stifle the working class. Capitalism is still able to do these things, but it will never return to that “stability” and that “equilibrium” which existed prior to the war and before the October Revolution. It will never again return to that “stability” and “equilibrium.” And that this is so can be seen from the fact that in the European countries, as well as in the colonial countries, which are the source of life of European capitalism, we see one revolutionary outburst after another. Today we see a revolutionary outburst in Austria, tomorrow in England, and the day after somewhere in France or Germany, and then in China, Indonesia, India, etc. And what is Europe and its colonies? It is the centre of capitalism and its periphery. There is “unrest” in the centres of European capitalism. There is still greater “unrest” in its periphery. Conditions are ripening for new revolutionary events. I think that the clearest sign of the growing capitalist crisis, the clearest example of accumulated discontent and dissatisfaction among the working class, are the events connected with the execution of Sacco and Vanzetti. What did the murder of two workers mean to the capitalist butchers? Have they not been murdering workers up to now in tens and hundreds, day in and day out? However, it sufficed to kill two workers, Sacco and Vanzetti, to set the working class all over the world in motion. What does that show? It indicates that the ground is getting too hot for capitalism. It indicates that conditions for new revolutionary events are ripening. The fact that the capitalists could succeed in sweeping back the first revolutionary wave cannot by any means serve as a consolation for capitalism. The revolution against capitalism cannot rise in one continuous wave. It always
develops in the form of ebbs and flows. Such was the case in Russia. Such will also be the case in Europe. We are on the eve of new revolutionary events.

**Question 8. Is the opposition in the Russian Party strong and on what circles does it rest?**

**Answer:** I think that it is very weak. Moreover, its strength is rather insignificant in our Party. I have before me today's newspaper. It contains a survey of the last few days' discussions. The figures show that over 135,000 members of the Party voted for the Central Committee and its theses, and only 1,200 voted for the opposition. This is even less than 1 per cent. I think that the future votes will be even more disastrous for the opposition. Our discussion will last up to the Congress. We will try to canvass the whole Party during that period if possible. I do not know how discussions are conducted in the Social-Democratic parties in your countries, I do not know whether discussions are carried on at all in the Social-Democratic parties. But we regard a discussion as a serious matter. We will canvass the whole Party and you will see that the relative strength of the opposition in our Party will even be more insignificant than the figures I have just given. It is quite possible that at our Fifteenth Party Congress the opposition will not have a single representative, a single delegate. Let us take, for instance, such huge works as the “Treugolnik” or “Putilov” in Leningrad. The number of workers employed in “Treugolnik” is about 15,000. The number of Party members is 2,122. The opposition received thirty-nine votes. The number of workers in the “Putilov” Works is about 11,000. The number of Party members is 1,719. The opposition received twenty-nine votes.

On what circles does the opposition rest? I think that the opposition is supported primarily by non-proletarian circles. If you ask the non-proletarian sections of the population, those which are discontented with the proletarian dictatorship, with whom they side, they will unhesitatingly reply that they sympathise with the opposition. Why? Because the struggle which the opposition is carrying on is essentially a struggle against the Party, a struggle against the regime of the proletarian dictatorship, with which certain non-proletarian sections cannot but be dissatisfied. The
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hunter in the world, and yet cophone Daudet knew perfectly
touraine. His childhood friends called him the greatest hon-
Killed an innumerable number of hours and hers on the Alpes
ble, Tarns in Boyresdy asserted everybody that he had
nows of Tarn's [Laughter. You have prop-
should read this well-known novel. Tarn's, the hero of the book,
is similar to the attitude of the famous French novelist. Cophone

Answer: My attitude to the opposition and its German agency

Question 10. Why is your attitude to the opposition and to

[Sound applause.]

repeated only by ridicule. [Sound applause.]

I think that such questions can be
cannot be treated seriously. I think that such questions can be
serious on the question, Of course, contradicts a question like this
not all laughing. Perhaps some of you will think that I am not
have asked such a question. [General laughter. Seated deprecatingly:
violating our own sisters. [General laughter. Seated deprecatingly:
women have decided to nationalise all women and to make it a practice
have decided to nationalise all women and to make it a practice
and that is not all. The Communists and
their factors to them, and that is not all. The Communists and
of the world. Moreover, I can inform you that the Communists and
the working classes of the L.S.D. To the counter-revolutionaries
reason to think that the Communists and the C.P.S.U. are
Answer: We must assume that it is correct. There is also

Question 9. Is Ruth Piscator's and Maxsal's 'Theodolito' the dissection of the non-proletarian see-

Resolution, corrected.

and the Russian Party are beginning the workers to the counter-
called in Germany, that the present leaders of the Communists
pressure they exert upon it

Question 9. Is Ruth Piscator's and Maxsal's 'Theodolito' the dissection of the non-proletarian see-

Resolution, corrected.
well, just as Tartarin knew perfectly well, that he had never in his life seen either lions or tigers. Tartarin boasted of having climbed to the peak of Mont Blanc. His credulous friends therefore called him the greatest mountain-climber in the world. But, Alphonse Daudet surely knew that Tartarin never even saw the peak of Mont Blanc, because he was only at the foot of it. Tartarin boasted that he had founded a great colony in a country a long distance from France. His credulous friends, therefore, called him the greatest coloniser in the world. But, Alphonse Daudet surely knew as Tartarin himself had to admit, that nothing but disgrace could result from Tartarin’s fantastic imagination.

You know what scandal and disgrace Tartarin’s fantastic boastings caused the Tartarinites.

I think that the noisy boastfulness of the leaders of the opposition and the clamour they raised in Moscow and Berlin will end in similar scandal and disgrace for the opposition. [Laughter.]

We have now exhausted the first list of questions; let us now deal with the questions of the French delegation.

**Question 1. How does the Soviet government propose to combat the foreign oil concerns?**

**Answer:** I do not think that this is the right way to put this question. One might think that the Soviet oil industry intends to make an attack on the oil concerns of other countries and aims at their overthrow and liquidation. But is this really the case? Certainly not. The fact is that certain oil concerns in capitalist countries are striving to throttle the oil industry of Soviet Russia, whereas the latter has to defend itself in order to be able to exist and develop. The Soviet oil industry is weaker than the oil industry of the capitalist countries in regard to production—we produce less than they—and also in regard to markets—they are better connected with the world market than we. How does the Soviet oil industry defend itself? It defends itself by improving the quality of its products, and above all, by lowering oil prices, by throwing cheap oil on the market, cheaper than the oil of the capitalist concerns. You will probably ask me: Are the Soviets really so well off that they can afford to sell cheaper than the wealthiest capitalist firms? It goes without saying that the Soviet industry is not wealthier than the capitalist firms. On the contrary,
the latter are considerably wealthier than the Soviet industry. But it is not a question of wealth here. The point is that the Soviet oil industry is not a capitalist industry, and, therefore, does not require enormous super-profits, whereas capitalist oil concerns cannot do without such profits. And because the Soviet oil industry does not require super-profits it can sell its products cheaper than the capitalist firms. The same can be said about Soviet grain, timber, etc. It should be pointed out that Soviet goods, particularly Soviet oil, are a factor on the international market, that reduces prices and improves thereby the position of the masses of consumers. This constitutes the strength and at the same time the means of defence of the Soviet oil industry against the attacks of the capitalist oil concerns. This also explains the noisy campaign the oil concerns of all countries, and particularly the Deterding concern, are waging against the Soviets and the Soviet oil industry; they disguise their policy of high prices and robbing the consumers by the now fashionable phraseology about "Communist propaganda."

**Question 2. How do you think you will achieve collectivism in the peasant question?**

**Answer:** We think of achieving collectivism in the peasant question gradually, by economic, financial and cultural-political measures. I think that the most interesting question is that of economic measures. In regard to this we adopt measures which follow three lines. We organise individual peasant holdings on a co-operative basis, we organise peasant holdings, mainly of the poorest type, into producers' societies, and finally peasant farming is being brought within the sphere of operation of our state planning organisations in regard to marketing farm produce and to supplying the peasants with the necessary articles produced by our industry.

A few years ago there were numerous middlemen between our industry and the peasant farms, private traders who supplied the peasantry with the necessary manufactured goods and sold the peasants' produce to the workers. It goes without saying that these middlemen did not "work" for nothing, but got tens of millions out of the peasantry, and also out of the urban population. This was the period when there was no proper union between
town and country, between socialist industry and the individual peasant holdings. At that time co-operative societies and state distributive organisations played a comparatively insignificant rôle. A radical change has taken place since then. At present the co-operative societies and state trading organisations not only pre-dominate in, but dominate, if they do not monopolise, trade between town and country, the exchange of goods between industry and the peasant economy. Co-operative societies and state organisations supply over 70 per cent of the textile goods absorbed by the countryside. In regard to agricultural machinery, co-operative societies and state organisations are responsible for almost 100 per cent of the total supply. The share of the co-operative societies and state organisations in the buying of peasant grain is over 80 per cent, and in regard to the buying of raw material for industry, such as cotton, sugar-beet, etc., the share of co-operative societies and state organisations is almost 100 per cent.

What does this mean?

It means, firstly, that the capitalists are being squeezed out of the sphere of trade; industry is linked up with peasant economy; the high profits the speculating middlemen used to make remain in industry and agriculture; the peasants can buy manufactured goods cheaper, and urban workers, in their turn, are able to buy agricultural produce cheaper.

- It means, secondly, that by eliminating the capitalist middlemen from the sphere of trade, industry is enabled to give a lead to the peasant economy, to influence it, to raise its productivity, to rationalise and industrialise it.

It means, thirdly, that by linking up agriculture with industry the state is in a position to develop agriculture according to plan, to supply it with improved seed and fertilisers, to determine the volume of its production, to influence it in regard to price policy, etc.

It means, finally, that favourable conditions are created in the countryside for the liquidation of the capitalist elements, for the further restriction and overcoming of the kulaks, for the organisation of the working peasant farms into producers' societies, for financing these societies out of state funds.

Let us take, for instance, the production of sugar-beet for the sugar industry and the production of cotton for the textile industry.
The volume of production of this kind of raw material, their prices, as well as their quality, are determined, not by the elemental play of forces on an unorganised market, through profiteering middlemen, marts and other capitalist trade organisations, etc., but according to a definite plan, by definite preliminary agreements between the sugar and textile syndicates, on the one hand, and tens of thousands of peasant farms represented by beet and cotton growing co-operative societies on the other hand. Here we have no more marts, exchanges, commercial offices, and price speculation, etc. All these adjuncts of capitalist economy no longer exist with us in this sphere. Here, two parties meet without any marts and middlemen—state syndicates on the one hand, co-operative peasants on the other hand. The state syndicates sign contracts with corresponding co-operative organisations for the production of a certain quantity of sugar-beet or cotton, for supplying the peasantry with seed, loans, etc. At the end of the financial year the total output is placed at the disposal of the syndicates, and the peasants receive for it the amounts agreed upon in the contracts. This is what we call the contract system. The advantage of this system is that it is profitable to both sides, and links up peasant economy with industry directly without middlemen. This system is the surest way to the collectivisation of peasant economy.

We cannot say that other branches of agriculture have already reached this stage of development. But we can safely say that all branches of agriculture, including grain production, will gradually take this form of development. And this is the direct road to the collectivisation of agriculture.

All-embracing collectivisation will come when peasant farms are reorganised on a new technical basis—mechanisation and electrification—when most of the working peasants will be organised in co-operative organisations, when most of the villages will have a network of agricultural associations of a collectivist type. We are developing towards this, but we have not yet reached this goal and are not likely to reach it soon. Why? Because, among other things, large sums of money are needed for this which our state has not yet at its disposal, but which will no doubt be accumulated in the course of time. Marx said that not a single new social order in the history of mankind established itself firmly without being generously financed, without absorbing hundreds and hundreds of millions. I think that we are already entering
upon the stage in the development of agriculture when the state is beginning to be able to give increased financial support to the new social order. The fact that socialised industry has already acquired the leading rôle in our national economy and that it is carrying agriculture with it, is the surest guarantee that peasant economy will pursue the road of further collectivisation.

**Question 3. What were the main difficulties under War Communism, when efforts were made to abolish money?**

**Answer:** There were many difficulties, internal and external. In internal economic relationships there were three main difficulties, as follows:

First, our industry was ruined and paralysed, except for the war industry, which supplied our civil war fronts with ammunition and arms during the intervention. Two-thirds of our works and factories were at a standstill, transport was disorganised, there were no, or hardly any, manufactured goods.

Secondly, agriculture was in a very bad state, working peasants were at the fronts, there was lack of raw material, a lack of bread for the urban population and particularly for the workers. In those days the bread ration for workers was half a pound and sometimes only an eighth of a pound a day.

Thirdly, there was no, or hardly any, Soviet distributive apparatus between town and country capable of supplying the latter with manufactured articles and the former with agricultural produce. Co-operative societies and state trade organisations were in an embryonic state.

However, at the end of the civil war, and when the New Economic Policy was introduced, the economic position of the country underwent a radical change.

Industry developed and consolidated itself. It took up a commanding position in the whole national economy. The most characteristic fact in respect to this is that during the last two years we have been able to invest in industry over two billion rubles from our own savings, without help from outside, without any foreign loans whatever. Now it can no longer be said that there are no goods for the peasantry.

Agriculture has developed, its production has reached the pre-war level. Now, it can no longer be said that there is no grain and other agricultural produce for the workers.
Co-operative societies and state trade organisations have developed to such an extent that they occupy a commanding place in the trade of the country. Now, it can no longer be said that we have no distributive apparatus between town and country, between industry and peasant economy.

Of course, all this is not enough to build up socialist economy here and now. But it is quite enough to be able to proceed along the road of successful socialist construction.

We must now re-equip our industry and build new works and factories on a new technical basis. We must develop agriculture, supply the peasantry with a maximum of agricultural machinery, we must organise the majority of the working peasantry in co-operative societies and reorganise the individual peasant farms into a big network of agricultural associations. We must organise a distributive apparatus between town and country capable of ascertaining and satisfying the requirements of the urban and rural districts of the whole country in the same way as every individual draws up his budget, his revenue and expenditure. When we will have achieved all this, then, I should say, the time will have come when money will no longer be required. But this time is still remote.

**Question 4. What about the “scissors”?**

**Answer:** If by “scissors” we mean the discrepancy between the prices of agricultural produce and the prices of manufactured goods from the viewpoint of cost of production, the question of the “scissors” presents itself somewhat as follows: there is no doubt whatever that our manufactured goods are still sold at a somewhat higher price than they could be sold under different circumstances. This is because our industry is very young, because it is necessary to protect it from competition from outside, because it is essential to create for it conditions which will accelerate its development. Its rapid development is needed for our urban as well as our rural districts. Otherwise we would be unable to supply the peasant homesteads with the necessary textile goods and agricultural machinery. This creates a discrepancy between prices for manufactured articles and prices for agricultural produce which is, to some extent, detrimental to the peasantry.

In order to relieve peasant economy of this drawback, the government and the Party have decided to follow the policy of grad-
ually but steadily reducing the prices of manufactured goods. Can this be called a practical policy? I think so. It is a well-known fact, for instance, that during the last year we have been able to reduce the retail prices of manufactured articles by 8 to 10 per cent. It is also a well-known fact that our industrial organisations are systematically reducing the cost of production and the wholesale prices of manufactured articles. There is every reason to believe that this policy will be continued. Even more than that, I must say that the policy of steadily reducing the prices of manufactured articles is the cornerstone of our economic policy without which the improvement and rationalisation of our industry and the consolidation of the union between the working class and the peasantry are impossible.

A different policy is adhered to in this respect in bourgeois countries. Enterprises are usually organised there into trusts and syndicates to raise the prices of manufactured articles within the country, to make them monopoly prices, to make on this basis as big profits as possible, and to create a fund for the export of goods abroad where capitalists sell these goods at low prices in order to secure new markets. The same policy was pursued here in Russia under the bourgeois regime, when, for instance, sugar was sold in the country at exorbitant prices; for instance, in England this sugar was sold at such low prices that it was used as food for pigs. The Soviet government works on diametrically opposite lines. It holds that industry must be at the service of the population, and not vice versa. It holds that a steady reduction of the prices of manufactured articles is the fundamental means, without which the normal growth of industry is impossible, apart from the fact that the policy of reducing the prices of manufactured articles contributes to increased consumption by the population, increases the demand of the urban and rural home markets and creates in this manner an ever-growing source of funds for the further development of industry.

Question 5. What are the proposals of the Soviet government to the French small holders of the Russian bonds? How are they to be brought to the notice of the French rentiers?

Answer: Our proposals on the pre-war debts are published in Comrade Rakovsky’s well-known interview. I think you must be familiar with them. The condition is: simultaneous credits for
the U.S.S.R. We follow in this respect the well-known principle of give and take. If you give us credit you will receive something from us on account of the pre-war debts, if you do not give anything you will not receive anything. Does this mean that we have thereby recognised in principle the pre-war debts? Certainly not. It means only that while leaving in force the well-known decree about the annulment of old tsarist debts, we are prepared at the same time, in the form of a practical agreement, to pay a part of the pre-war debts if we get in return the credits which we need, and which will be at the same time useful to French industry. We look upon payments on account of the pre-war debts as additional interest on the credits which we will receive for the development of our industry.

People talk about the war debts of tsarist Russia, of all sorts of claims on the U.S.S.R. arising out of the October Revolution. But people forget that our Revolution is the negation, in principle, of imperialist wars and tsarist debts connected with them. People forget that the U.S.S.R. cannot and will not pay war debts. People also forget that the U.S.S.R. cannot leave out of account the plunder and violence to which the country was subjected for a number of years, during the intervention of foreign states with which certain counter-claims on the part of the U.S.S.R. are connected. Who is responsible for this plunder and violence? Who must be called to account for it? Who must pay compensation for it? The imperialist rulers of affairs are inclined to allow these unpleasant things to be forgotten, but they must know that such things are not forgotten.

Question 6. How do you reconcile the vodka monopoly with the struggle against alcoholism?

Answer: Generally speaking, I think that it is difficult to reconcile them; one certainly runs counter to the other. The Party is aware of this, and it adopted this policy deliberately knowing full well that at present such a seeming contradiction is the lesser evil. When we introduced the vodka monopoly we were confronted with the alternative: either to accept the capitalist yoke by ceding to capitalists a whole number of our most important works and factories, receiving from them in return the necessary funds to enable us to carry on, or to introduce the vodka monopoly in
order to get the necessary revenue for the development of our industry with our own resources. The members of the Central Committee, including myself, had a talk with Lenin who admitted that in the event of our not getting the necessary credits from outside the vodka monopoly was inevitable as a provisional means of an extraordinary kind. This is how matters stood when we introduced the vodka monopoly.

Of course, generally speaking, it would be better to abolish vodka, for vodka is an evil. But that would mean temporarily accepting the yoke of capitalism, which is a still greater evil. Therefore we preferred the lesser evil. At present the revenue from vodka is over 500,000,000 rubles. To give up the vodka monopoly now would mean to give up this revenue. Moreover, there are no grounds for asserting that this would lessen alcoholism, for the peasants will begin to distil their own vodka and to poison themselves with this inferior home-distilled stuff. In this respect the great cultural backwardness of our countryside obviously plays a certain rôle, apart from the fact that the immediate abandonment of the vodka monopoly is tantamount to depriving our industry of over half a billion rubles which cannot be derived from any other source.

Does this mean that the vodka monopoly will always exist? Certainly not, we introduced it as a provisional measure. Therefore it must be abolished as soon as we discover in our national economy new sources of revenue for the further development of our industry. That such sources will be discovered is certain.

Were we right to transfer the production and distribution of vodka to the hands of the state? I think so. If vodka were handed over into private hands this would, firstly, lead to strengthening private capital, secondly, the government would not have been able adequately to regulate the production and consumption of vodka, and thirdly, this would have made it more difficult for the government to repeal the production and consumption of vodka in the near future. At present our policy is gradually to reduce the production of vodka. I think that in the near future we will be able to abolish the vodka monopoly, to reduce the production of spirits to the minimum required for technical purposes, and subsequently to abolish the sale of vodka.

I think that we could do away with vodka and many other unpleasant things if the Western European proletarians took
power into their hands and gave us the necessary help. But what are we to do? Our Western European brothers do not yet want to seize power, and we are obliged to do the best we can with our own means. But it is not our fault, it is destiny. As you will admit, our Western European friends are also partly responsible for the vodka monopoly. [Laughter and applause.]

Question 7. Judicial powers of the G.P.U., trial without witnesses, without counsel, secret arrests. Considering that these measures are not approved of by French public opinion, it would be interesting to hear their justification. Is it intended to modify or abolish them?

Answer: The G.P.U. or the Cheka is a punitive organ of the Soviet government. It is more or less similar to the Committee of Public Safety which existed during the great French Revolution. It punishes primarily spies, plotters, terrorists, bandits, speculators and forgers. It is something in the nature of a military political tribunal set up for the purpose of protecting the interests of the revolution from attacks on the part of the counter-revolutionary bourgeoisie and their agents.

This organ was created on the day after the October Revolution, after all kinds of plots, terrorist and spying organisations financed by Russian and foreign capitalists were discovered. This organ developed and became consolidated after a series of terrorist acts had been perpetrated against the leaders of the Soviet government, after the murder of Comrade Uritsky, member of the Revolutionary Committee of Leningrad (he was killed by a Socialist-Revolutionary), after the murder of Comrade Volodarsky, member of the Revolutionary Committee of Leningrad (he was also killed by a Socialist-Revolutionary), after the attempt on the life of Lenin (he was wounded by a member of the Socialist-Revolutionary Party). It must be admitted that the G.P.U. aimed at the enemies of the revolution without missing. By the way, this quality of the G.P.U. still holds good. It has been, ever since, the terror of the bourgeoisie, the indefatigable guard of the revolution, the unsheathed sword of the proletariat.

It is not surprising, therefore, that the bourgeoisie of all countries hate the G.P.U. All sorts of legends have been invented about the G.P.U.
The slander which has been circulated about the G.P.U. knows no bounds. And what does that mean? It means that the G.P.U. is properly defending the interests of the revolution. The sworn enemies of the revolution curse the G.P.U. Hence, it follows that the G.P.U. is doing the right thing.

But this is not how the workers regard the G.P.U. You go to the workers' districts and ask the workers what they think of it. You will find that they regard it with respect. Why? Because they see in it a loyal defender of the revolution.

I understand the hatred and distrust of the bourgeoisie for the G.P.U. I understand the various bourgeois tourists who, on coming to the U.S.S.R., inquire before anything else as to whether the G.P.U. still exists and whether the time has not yet come for its liquidation. This is comprehensible and not out of the ordinary. But I cannot understand some workers' delegates who, on coming to the U.S.S.R., ask with alarm as to whether many counter-revolutionaries have been punished by the G.P.U. and whether terrorists and plotters against the proletarian government will still be punished by it and is it not time yet for its dissolution. Why do some workers' delegates show such concern for the enemies of the proletarian revolution? How can it be explained? How can it be justified?

They advocate a maximum of leniency, they advise the dissolution of the G.P.U. . . . But can anyone guarantee that the capitalists of all countries will abandon the idea of organising and financing counter-revolutionary plotters, terrorists, incendiaries, and bomb-throwers after the liquidation of the G.P.U.? To disarm the revolution without having any guarantees that the enemies of the revolution will be disarmed—would not that be folly, would not that be a crime against the working class? No, comrades, we do not want to repeat the errors of the Paris Communards. The Communards of Paris were too lenient in dealing with Versailles, for which Marx rightly reproved them at the time. They had to pay for their leniency, and when Thiers came to Paris, tens of thousands of workers were shot by the Versailles forces. Do the comrades think that the Russian bourgeoisie and nobility are less bloodthirsty than those of Versailles in France? We know, at any rate, how they behaved towards the workers when they occupied Siberia, the Ukraine and North Caucasus in alliance
with the French and British, Japanese and American inter-
ventionists.
I do not mean to say by this that the internal situation of
the country is such as makes it necessary to have punitive organs
of the revolution. From the point of view of the internal situation,
the revolution is so firm and unshakable that we could do without
the G.P.U. But the trouble is that the enemies at home are not
isolated individuals. They are connected in a thousand ways with
the capitalists of all countries who support them by every means
and in every way. We are a country surrounded by capitalist
states. The internal enemies of our revolution are the agents of
the capitalists of all countries. The capitalist states are the back-
ground and basis for the internal enemies of our revolution. In
fighting against the enemies at home we fight the counter-revolut
ionary elements of all countries. Judge for yourselves whether
under such conditions we can do without such punitive organs as
the G.P.U.
No, comrades, we do not want to repeat the mistakes of the
Paris Communards. The G.P.U. is necessary for the revolution
and it will continue to live and strike terror into the hearts of
the enemies of the proletariat. [Loud applause.]
One of the Delegates: Allow me, Comrade Stalin, to thank you
on behalf of the delegates present for your explanations and
refutations of the falsehoods circulated about the U.S.S.R. abroad.
You can rest assured that we will be able to tell our workers at
home the truth about the U.S.S.R.
Stalin: You are welcome, comrades. In consider it a duty to
answer your questions and to report to you. We Soviet leaders
hold ourselves duty-bound to report to our class brothers on all
questions of interest to them. Our state is the child of the world
proletariat. The leaders of our state merely do their duty to the
international proletariat in reporting to its representatives.
[Applause.]
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