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**On the Draft Constitution of the U.S.S.R
Report Delivered at the Extraordinary Eighth Congress of Soviets of the
U.S.S.R.**

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(Comrade Stalin's appearance on the rostrum is greeted by all present with loud and prolonged cheers. All rise. Shouts from all parts of the hall : "Hurrah for Comrade Stalin!" "Long live Comrade Stalin!" "Long live the great Stalin!" "Hurrah for the great genius, Comrade Stalin!" "Vivat!" "Rot Front!" "Hurrah for Comrade Stalin!")

1. Formation of the Constitution Commission and its tasks

Comrades, the Constitution Commission, whose draft has been submitted for consideration to the present Congress, was formed, as you know, by special decision of the Seventh Congress of Soviets of the U.S.S.R. This decision was adopted on February 6, 1935. It reads :

"1. To amend the Constitution of the Union Soviet Socialist Republics in the direction of :

"a) further democratizing the electoral system by replacing not entirely equal suffrage by equal suffrage, indirect elections, by direct elections and the open ballot by the secret ballot;

"b) giving more precise definition to the social and economic basis of the Constitution by bringing the Constitution into conformity with the present relation of class forces in the U.S.S.R. (the creation of a new, Socialist industry, the demolition of the kulak class, the victory of the collective farm system, the consolidation of Socialist property as the basis of Soviet society, and so on).

"2. To enjoin the Central Executive Committee of the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics to elect a Constitution Commission which shall be instructed to draw up an amended text of the Constitution in accordance with the principles indicated in Clause 1, and to submit it for approval to a Session of the Central Executive Committee of the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics.

"3. To conduct the next ordinary elections of the organs of Soviet government in the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics on the basis of the new electoral system."

This was on February 6, 1935. The day after this decision was adopted, i.e., February 7, 1935, the First Session of the Central Executive Committee of the U.S.S.R. met, and in pursuance of the decision of the Seventh Congress of Soviets of the U.S.S.R., set up a Constitution Commission consisting of 31 persons. It instructed the Constitution Commission to prepare a draft of an amended Constitution of the U.S.S.R.

Such were the formal grounds and instructions of the supreme body of the U.S.S.R. on the basis of which the work of the Constitution Commission was to proceed.

Thus, the Constitution Commission was to introduce changes in the Constitution now in force, which was adopted in 1924, taking into account the changes in the direction of Socialism which have been brought about in the life of the U.S.S.R. in the period from 1924 to the present day.

II. Changes in the life of the U.S.S.R. in the period from 1924 to 1936

What are the changes in the life of the U.S.S.R. that have been brought about in the period from 1924 to 1936 and which the Constitution Commission was to reflect in its Draft Constitution?

What is the essence of these changes?

What was the situation in 1924?

That was the first period of the New Economic Policy, when the Soviet government permitted a certain revival of capitalism while taking all measures to develop Socialism; when it calculated on securing, in the course of competition between the two systems of economy - the capitalist system and the Socialist system - the preponderance of the Socialist system over the capitalist system. The task was to consolidate the position of Socialism in the course of this competition, to achieve the elimination of the capitalist elements, and to consummate the victory of the Socialist system as the fundamental system of the national economy.

Our industry, particularly heavy industry, presented an unenviable picture at that time. True, it was being gradually restored, but it had not yet raised its output to anywhere near the pre-war level. It was based on the old, backward, and insufficient technique. Of course, it was developing in the direction of Socialism. The Socialist sector of our industry at that time accounted for about 80 per cent of the whole. But the capitalist sector still controlled no less than 20 per cent of industry.

Our agriculture presented a still more unsightly picture. True, the landlord class had already been eliminated, but, on the other hand, the agricultural capitalist class, the kulak class, still represented a fairly considerable force. On the whole, agriculture at that time resembled a boundless ocean of small individual peasant farms with backward, mediaeval technical equipment. In this ocean there existed, in the form of isolated small dots and islets, collective farms and state farms which, strictly speaking, were not yet of any considerable significance in our national economy. The collective farms and state farms were weak, while

the kulak was still strong. At that time we spoke not of eliminating the kulaks, but of restricting them.

The same must be said about our country's trade.

The Socialist sector in trade represented some 50 or 60 per cent, not more, while all the rest of the field was occupied by merchants, profiteers, and other private traders. Such was the picture of economic life in our country in 1924.

What is the situation now, in 1936?

At that time we were in the first period of the New Economic Policy, the beginning of NEP, the period of a certain revival of capitalism; now, however, we are in the last period of NEP, the end of NEP, the period of the complete liquidation of capitalism in all spheres of the national economy.

Take the fact, to begin with, that during this period our industry has grown into a gigantic force.

Now it can no longer be described as weak and technically ill-equipped. On the contrary, it is now based on new, rich, modern technical equipment, with a powerfully developed heavy industry, and an even more developed machine-building industry. But the most important thing is that capitalism has been banished entirely from the sphere of our industry, while the Socialist form of production now holds undivided sway in the sphere of our industry. The fact that in volume of output our present Socialist industry exceeds prewar industry more than sevenfold cannot be regarded as a minor detail.

In the sphere of agriculture, instead of the ocean of small individual peasant farms, with their poor technical equipment, and a strong kulak influence, we now have mechanized production, conducted on a scale larger than anywhere else in the world, with up-to-date technical equipment, in the form of an all-embracing system of collective farms and state farms. Everybody knows that the kulak class in agriculture has been eliminated, while the sector of small individual peasant farms, with its backward, mediaeval technical equipment, now occupies an insignificant place; its share in agriculture as regards crop area does not amount to more than two or three per cent. We must not overlook the fact that the collective farms now have at their disposal 316,000 tractors with a total of 5,700,000 horse power, and, together with the state farms, over 400,000 tractors, with a total of 7,580,000 horse power.

As for the country's trade, the merchants and profiteers have been banished entirely from this sphere. All trade is now in the hands of the state, the cooperative societies, and the collective farms.

A new, Soviet trade - trade without profiteers, trade without capitalists - has arisen and developed.

Thus the complete victory of the Socialist system in all spheres of the national economy is now a fact.

And what does this mean?

It means that the exploitation of man by man has been abolished, eliminated, while the Socialist ownership of the implements and means of production has been established as the unshakable foundation of our Soviet society. (Prolonged applause.)

As a result of all these changes in the sphere of the national economy of the U.S.S.R., we now have a new, Socialist economy, which knows neither crises nor unemployment, which knows neither poverty nor ruin, and which provides our citizens with every opportunity to lead a prosperous and cultured life.

Such, in the main, are the changes which have taken place in the sphere of our economy during the period from 1924 to 1936.

In conformity with these changes in the economic life of the U.S.S.R., the class structure of our society has also changed.

The landlord class, as you know, had already been eliminated as a result of the victorious conclusion of the civil war. As for the other exploiting classes, they have shared the fate of the landlord class. The capitalist class in the sphere of industry has ceased to exist. The kulak class in the sphere of agriculture has ceased to exist. And the merchants and profiteers in the sphere of trade have ceased to exist. Thus all the exploiting classes have been eliminated.

There remains the working class.

There remains the peasant class.

There remains the intelligentsia.

But it would be a mistake to think that these social groups have undergone no change during this period, that they have remained the same as they were, say, in the period of capitalism.

Take, for example, the working class of the U.S.S.R. By force of habit, it is often called the proletariat. But what is the proletariat? The proletariat is a class bereft of the instruments and means of production, under an economic system in which the means and instruments of production belong to the capitalists and in which the capitalist class exploits the proletariat. The proletariat is a class exploited by the capitalists. But in our country, as you know, the capitalist class has already been eliminated, and the instruments and means of production have been taken from the capitalists and transferred to the state, of which the leading force is the working class. Consequently, our working class, far from being bereft of the instruments and means of production, on the contrary, possess them jointly with the whole people. And since it possesses them, and the capitalist class has been eliminated, all possibility of the working class being exploited is precluded. This being the case, can our working class be called the proletariat? Clearly, it cannot. Marx said that if the proletariat is to emancipate itself, it must crush the capitalist class, take the instruments and means of production from the capitalists, and abolish those conditions of production which give rise to the proletariat. Can it be said that the working class of the U.S.S.R. has already brought about these conditions for its emancipation?

Unquestionably, this can and must be said. And what does this mean? This means that the proletariat of the U.S.S.R. has been transformed into an entirely new class, into the working class of the U.S.S.R., which has abolished the capitalist economic system, which has established the Socialist ownership of the instruments and means of production and is directing Soviet society along the road to Communism.

As you see, the working class of the U.S.S.R. is an entirely new working class, a working class emancipated from exploitation, the like of which the history of mankind has never known before.

Let us pass on to the question of the peasantry.

It is customary to say that the peasantry is a class of small producers, with its members atomized, scattered over the face of the land, delving away in isolation on their small farms with their backward technical equipment; that they are slaves to private property and are exploited with impunity by landlords, kulaks, merchants, profiteers, usurers, and the like.

And, indeed, in capitalist countries the peasantry, if we take it in the mass, is precisely such a class.

Can it be said that our present-day peasantry, the Soviet peasantry, taken in the mass, resembles that kind of peasantry? No, that cannot be said. There is no

longer such a peasantry in our country. Our Soviet peasantry is an entirely new peasantry. In our country there are no longer any landlords and kulaks, merchants and usurers who could exploit the peasants.

Consequently, our peasantry is a peasantry emancipated from exploitation. Further Our Soviet peasantry, its overwhelming majority, is a collective farm peasantry, i.e., it bases its work and wealth not on individual labour and on backward technical equipment, but on collective labour and up-to-date technical equipment. Finally, the economy of our peasants is based, not on private property, but on collective property, which has grown up on the basis of collective labour.

As you see, the Soviet peasantry is an entirely new peasantry, the like of which the history of mankind has never known before.

Lastly, let us pass on to the question of the intelligentsia, to the question of engineers and technicians, of workers on the cultural front, of employees in general, and so on. The intelligentsia too, has undergone great changes during this period. It is no longer the old hidebound intelligentsia which tried to place itself above classes, but which actually, for the most part, served the landlords and the capitalists. Our Soviet intelligentsia is an entirely new intelligentsia, bound up by its very roots with the working class and the peasantry. In the first place, the composition of the intelligentsia has changed. People who come from the aristocracy and the bourgeoisie constitute but a small percentage of our Soviet intelligentsia; 80 to 90 per cent of the Soviet intelligentsia are people who have come from the working class, from the peasantry, or from some other strata of the working population. Finally, the very nature of the activities of the intelligentsia has changed. Formerly it had to serve the wealthy classes, for it had no alternative. Today it must serve the people, for there are no longer any exploiting classes. And that is precisely why it is now an equal member of Soviet society, in which, side by side with the workers and peasants, pulling together with them, it is engaged in building the new, classless, Socialist society.

As you see, this is an entirely new, working intelligentsia, the like of which you will not find in any other country on earth.

Such are the changes which have taken place during this period as regards the class structure of Soviet society.

What do these changes signify?

Firstly, they signify that the dividing lines between the working class and the peasantry, and between these classes and the intelligentsia, are being obliterated,

and that the old class exclusiveness is disappearing. This means that the distance between these social groups is steadily diminishing.

Secondly, they signify that the economic contradictions between these social groups are declining and becoming obliterated.

And lastly, they signify that the political contradictions between them are also declining and becoming obliterated.

Such is the position in regard to the changes in the class structure of the U.S.S.R.

The picture of the changes in the social life of the U.S.S.R. would be incomplete if a few words were not said about the changes in yet another sphere. I have in mind the sphere of national relationships in the U.S.S.R. As you know, within the Soviet Union there are about sixty nations, national groups and nationalities. The Soviet state is a multi-national state. Clearly, the question of the relations among the peoples of the U.S.S.R. cannot but be one of prime importance for us.

The Union of Soviet Socialist Republics, as you know, was formed in 1922, at the First Congress of Soviets of the U.S.S.R. It was formed on the principles of equality and the voluntary affiliation of the peoples of the U.S.S.R. The Constitution now in force, adopted in 1924, was the first Constitution of the U.S.S.R. That was the period when relations among the peoples had not yet been properly adjusted, when survivals of distrust towards the Great-Russians had not yet disappeared, and when centrifugal forces still continued to operate. Under those conditions it was necessary to establish fraternal cooperation among the peoples on the basis of economic, political, and military mutual aid by uniting them in a single federated, multi-national state. The Soviet government could not but see the difficulties of this task.

It had before it the unsuccessful experiments of multi-national states in bourgeois countries. It had before it the experiment of old Austria-Hungary, which ended in failure. Nevertheless, it resolved to make the experiment of creating a multi-national state, for it knew that a multi-national state which has arisen on the basis of Socialism is bound to stand every and any test.

Since then fourteen years have elapsed. A period long enough to test the experiment. And what do we find? This period has shown beyond a doubt that the experiment of forming a multi-national state based on Socialism has been completely successful. This is the undoubted victory of the Leninist national policy. (Prolonged applause.)

How is this victory to be explained?

The absence of exploiting classes, which are the principal organizers of strife between nations; the absence of exploitation, which cultivates mutual distrust and kindles nationalist passions; the fact that power is in the hands of the working class, which is the foe of all enslavement and the true vehicle of the ideas of internationalism; the actual practice of mutual aid among the peoples in all spheres of economic and social life; and, finally, the flourishing national culture of the peoples of the U.S.S.R., culture which is national in form and Socialist in content - all these and similar factors have brought about a radical change in the aspect of the peoples of the U.S.S.R.; their feeling of mutual distrust has disappeared, a feeling of mutual friendship has developed among them, and thus real fraternal cooperation among the peoples has been established within the system of a single federated state.

As a result, we now have a fully formed multinational Socialist state, which has stood all tests, and whose stability might well be envied by any national state in any part of the world. (Loud applause.)

Such are the changes which have taken place during this period in the sphere of national relations in the U.S.S.R.

Such is the sum total of changes which have taken place in the sphere of the economic and social-political life of the U.S.S.R. in the period from 1924 to 1936.

III. The Principal Specific Features of the Draft Constitution

How are all these changes in the life of the U.S.S.R. reflected in the draft of the new Constitution?

In other words : What are the principal specific features of the Draft Constitution submitted for consideration to the present Congress?

The Constitution Commission was instructed to amend the text of the Constitution of 1924. The work of the Constitution Commission has resulted in a new text of the Constitution, a draft of a new Constitution of the U.S.S.R. In drafting the new Constitution, the Constitution Commission proceeded from the proposition that a constitution must not be confused with a program. This means that there is an essential difference between a program and a constitution. Whereas a program speaks of that which does not yet exist, of that which has yet to be achieved and won in the future, a constitution, on the contrary, must speak of that which already exists, of that which has already been achieved and won now, at the present time. A program deals mainly with the future, a constitution with the present.

Two examples by way of illustration.

Our Soviet society has already, in the main, succeeded in achieving Socialism; it has created a Socialist system, i.e., it has brought about what Marxists in other words call the first, or lower, phase of Communism. Hence, in the main, we have already achieved the first phase of Communism. Socialism. (Prolonged applause.) The fundamental principle of this phase of Communism is, as you know, the formula : "From each according to his abilities, to each according to his work." Should our Constitution reflect this fact, the fact that Socialism has been achieved? Should it be based on this achievement? Unquestionably, it should. It should, because for the U.S.S.R. Socialism is something already achieved and won.

But Soviet society has not yet reached the higher phase of Communism, in which the ruling principle will be the formula : "From each according to his abilities, to each according to his needs," although it sets itself the aim of achieving the higher phase of Communism in the future. Can our Constitution be based on the higher phase of Communism, which does not yet exist and which has still to be achieved?

No, it cannot, because for the U.S.S.R. the higher phase of Communism is something that has not yet been realized, and which has to be realized in the future. It cannot, if it is not to be converted into a program or a declaration of future achievements.

Such are the limits of our Constitution at the present historical moment.

Thus, the draft of the new Constitution is a summary of the path that has been traversed, a summary of the gains already achieved. In other words, it is the registration and legislative embodiment of what has already been achieved and won in actual fact. (Loud applause.)

That is the first specific feature of the draft of the new Constitution of the U.S.S.R.

Further. The constitutions of bourgeois countries usually proceed from the conviction that the capitalist system is immutable. The main foundation of these constitutions consists of the principles of capitalism, of its main pillars : the private ownership of the land, forests, factories, works, and other implements and means of production; the exploitation of man by man and the existence of exploiters and exploited; insecurity for the toiling majority at one pole of society, and luxury for the non-toiling but secure minority at the other pole, etc.,

etc. They rest on these, and similar pillars of capitalism. They reflect them, they embody them in law.

Unlike these, the draft of the new Constitution of the U.S.S.R. proceeds from the fact that the capitalist system has been liquidated, and that the Socialist system has triumphed in the U.S.S.R. The main foundation of the draft of the new Constitution of the U.S.S.R. is the principles of Socialism, whose main pillars are things that have already been achieved and realized : the Socialist ownership of the land, forests, factories, works and other instruments and means of production; the abolition of exploitation and of exploiting classes; the abolition of poverty for the majority and of luxury for the minority; the abolition of unemployment; work as an obligation and an honourable duty for every able-bodied citizen, in accordance with the formula : "He who does not work, neither shall he eat"; the right to work, i.e., the right of every citizen to receive guaranteed employment; the right to rest and leisure; the right to education, etc., etc. The draft of the new Constitution rests on these, and similar pillars of Socialism. It reflects them, it embodies them in law.

Such is the second specific feature of the draft of the new Constitution.

Further. Bourgeois constitutions tacitly proceed from the premise that society consists of antagonistic classes, of classes which own wealth and classes which do not own wealth; that no matter what party comes into power, the guidance of society by the state (the dictatorship) must be in the hands of the bourgeoisie; that a constitution is needed for the purpose of consolidating a social order desired by, and beneficial to, the propertied classes.

Unlike bourgeois constitutions, the draft of the new Constitution of the U.S.S.R. proceeds from the fact that there are no longer any antagonistic classes in society; that society consists of two friendly classes, of workers and peasants; that it is these classes, the labouring classes, that are in power; that the guidance of society by the state (the dictatorship) is in the hands of the working class, the most advanced class in society, that a constitution is needed for the purpose of consolidating a social order desired by, and beneficial to, the working people.

Such is the third specific feature of the draft of the new Constitution.

Further. Bourgeois constitutions tacitly proceed from the premise that nations and races cannot have equal rights, that there are nations with full rights and nations without full rights, and that, in addition, there is a third category of nations or races, for example the colonies, which have even fewer rights than the nations without full rights. This means that, at bottom, all these constitutions are nationalistic, i.e., constitutions of ruling nations.

Unlike these constitutions, the draft of the new Constitution of the U.S.S.R. is, on the contrary, profoundly internationalistic. It proceeds from the proposition that all nations and races have equal rights. It proceeds from the fact that neither difference in colour or language, cultural level, or level of political development, nor any other difference between nations and races, can serve as grounds for justifying national inequality of rights. It proceeds from the proposition that all nations and races, irrespective of their past and present position, irrespective of their strength or weakness, should enjoy equal rights in all spheres of the economic, social, political and cultural life of society.

Such is the fourth specific feature of the draft of the new Constitution.

The fifth specific feature of the draft of the new Constitution is its consistent and thoroughgoing democratism. From the standpoint of democratism, bourgeois constitutions may be divided into two groups : One group of constitutions openly denies, or actually nullifies, the equality of rights of citizens and democratic liberties. The other group of constitutions readily accepts, and even advertises democratic principles, but at the same time it makes reservations and provides for restrictions which utterly mutilate these democratic rights and liberties.

They speak of equal suffrage for all citizens, but at the same time limit it by residential, educational, and even property qualifications. They speak of equal rights for citizens, but at the same time they make the reservation that this does not apply to women, or applies to them only in part. And so on and so forth.

What distinguishes the draft of the new Constitution of the U.S.S.R. is the fact that it is free from such reservations and restrictions. For it, there exists no division of citizens into active and passive ones; for it, all citizens are active. It does not recognize any difference in rights as between men and women, "residents" and "non-residents," propertied and propertyless, educated and uneducated.

For it, all citizens have equal rights. It is not property status, not national origin, not sex, nor office, but personal ability and personal labour, that determines the position of every citizen in society.

Lastly, there is still one more specific feature of the draft of the new Constitution. Bourgeois constitutions usually confine themselves to stating the formal rights of citizens, without bothering about the conditions for the exercise of these rights, about the opportunity of exercising them, about the means by which they can be exercised. They speak of the equality of citizens, but forget

that there cannot be real equality between employer and workman, between landlord and peasant, if the former possess wealth and political weight in society while the latter are deprived of both - if the former are exploiters while the latter are exploited. Or again : they speak of freedom of speech, assembly, and the press, but forget that all these liberties may be merely a hollow sound for the working class, if the latter cannot have access to suitable premises for meetings, good printing shops, a sufficient quantity of printing paper, etc.

What distinguishes the draft of the new Constitution is the fact that it does not confine itself to stating the formal rights of citizens, but stresses the guarantee of these rights, the means by which these rights can be exercised. It does not merely proclaim equality of rights for citizens, but ensures it by giving legislative embodiment to the fact that the regime of exploitation has been abolished, to the fact that the citizens have been emancipated from all exploitation. It does not merely proclaim the right to work, but ensures it by giving legislative embodiment to the fact that there are no crises in Soviet society, and that unemployment has been abolished. It does not merely proclaim democratic liberties, but legislatively ensures them by providing definite material resources. It is clear, therefore, that the democratism of the draft of the new Constitution is not the "ordinary" and "universally recognized" democratism in the abstract, but Socialist democratism.

These are the principle specific features of the draft of the new Constitution of the U.S.S.R.

This is the way the draft of the new Constitution reflects the progress and changes that have been brought about in the economic and social-political life of the U.S.S.R. in the period from 1924 to 1936.

IV. Bourgeois Criticism of the Draft Constitution

A few words about bourgeois criticism of the Draft Constitution.

The question of the attitude of the foreign bourgeois press towards the Draft Constitution is undoubtedly of some interest. Inasmuch as the foreign press reflects the public opinion of the various sections of the population of bourgeois countries, we cannot ignore its criticism of the Draft Constitution.

The first reaction of the foreign press to the Draft Constitution was expressed in a definite tendency - to hush up the Draft Constitution, I am referring here to the most reactionary press, the fascist press. This group of critics thought it best to simply hush up the Draft Constitution and to pretend that there is no such Draft, and never has been. It may be said that silence is not criticism.

But that is not true. The method of keeping silence, as a special method of ignoring things, is also a form of criticism - a stupid and ridiculous form, it is true, but a form of criticism, for all that. (Laughter and applause.) But their silence was of no avail. In the end they were obliged to open the valve and to inform the world that, sad though it may be, a Draft Constitution of the U.S.S.R. does exist, and not only does it exist but it is beginning to exercise a pernicious influence on people's minds. Nor could it be otherwise; for, after all, there is such a thing as public opinion in the world, there is the reading public, living people, who want to know the facts, and to hold them in the vise of deception for long is quite impossible. Deception does not carry one far...

The second group of critics admits that there really is such a thing as a Draft Constitution, but considers that the draft is not of much interest, because it is really not a Draft Constitution but a scrap of paper, an empty promise, with the idea of performing a certain manoeuvre to deceive people.

And they add that the U.S.S.R. could not produce a better draft, because the U.S.S.R. itself is not a state, but only a geographical concept (general laughter), and since it is not a state, its Constitution cannot be a real constitution. A typical representative of this group of critics is, strange as it may appear, the German semi - official organ, : "Deutsche Diplomatisch-Politische Korrespondenz." This journal bluntly declares that the Draft Constitution of the U.S.S.R. is an empty promise, a fraud, a "Potemkin village." It unhesitatingly declares that the U.S.S.R. is not a state, that the U.S.S.R. "is nothing more nor less than a strictly defined geographical concept (general laughter), and that in view of this, the Constitution of the U.S.S.R. cannot be regarded as a real constitution.

What can one say about such critics, so-called?

In one of his tales the great Russian writer Shchedrin portrays a pig-headed official, very narrowminded and obtuse, but self-confident and zealous to the extreme. After this bureaucrat had established "order and tranquillity" in the region "under his charge," having exterminated thousands of its inhabitants and burned down scores of towns in the process, he looked around him, and on the horizon espied America - a country little known, of course, where, it appears, there are liberties of some sort or other which serve to agitate the people, and where the state is administered in a different way. The bureaucrat espied America and became indignant :

What country is that, how did it get there, by what right does it exist? (Laughter and applause.) Of course, it was discovered accidentally several centuries ago, but couldn't it be shut up again so that not a ghost of it remains? (General

laughter.) Thereupon he wrote an order : "Shut America up again!" (General laughter.)

It seems to me that the gentlemen of the "Deutsche Diplomatisch - Politische Korrespondenz" and Shchedrin's bureaucrat are as like as two peas. (Laughter and applause.) The U.S.S.R. has long been an eyesore to these gentlemen. For nineteen years the U.S.S.R. has stood like a beacon, spreading the the spirit of emancipation among the working class all over the world and rousing the fury of the enemies of the working class. And it turns out that this U.S.S.R. not only exists, but is even growing; is not only growing, but is even flourishing; and is not only flourishing, but is even composing a draft of a new Constitution, a draft which is stirring the minds and inspiring the oppressed classes with new hope. (Applause.)

How can the gentlemen of the German semi-official organ be anything but indignant after this? What sort of country is this? - they howl; by what right does it exist? (General laughter.) And if it was discovered in October 1917, why can't it be shut up again so that not a ghost of it remains?

Thereupon they resolved : Shut the U.S.S.R. up again; proclaim publicly that the U.S.S.R., as a state, does not exist, that the U.S.S.R. is nothing but a mere geographical concept. (General laughter.)

In writing his order to shut America up again, Shchedrin's bureaucrat, despite all his obtuseness, evinced some reality by adding to himself : "However, it seems that same is not within my power." (Roars of laughter and applause.) I do not know whether the gentlemen of the German semi-official organ are endowed with sufficient intelligence to suspect that - while, of course, they can "shut up" this or that country on paper - speaking seriously, however, "same is not within their power..." (Roars of laughter and applause.)

As for the Constitution of the U.S.S.R. being an empty promise, a "Potemkin village," etc., I would like to refer to a number of established facts which speak for themselves.

In 1917 the peoples of the U.S.S.R. overthrew the bourgeoisie and established the dictatorship of the proletariat, established a Soviet government. This is a fact, not a promise.

Further, the Soviet government eliminated the landlord class and transferred to the peasants over 150,000,000 hectares of former landlord, government, and monasterial lands, over and above the lands which were already in the possession of the peasants. This is a fact, not a promise.

Further, the Soviet government expropriated the capitalist class, took away their banks, factories, railways, and other implements and means of production, declared these to be Socialist property, and placed at the head of these enterprises the best members of the working class. This is a fact, not a promise. (Prolonged applause.)

Further, having organized industry and agriculture on new, Socialist lines, with a new technical base, the Soviet government has today attained a position where agriculture in the U.S.S.R. is producing one and a half times as much as was produced in prewar times, where industry is producing seven times more than was produced in pre-war times, and where the national income has increased fourfold compared with pre-war times. All these are facts, not promises. (Prolonged applause.)

Further, the Soviet government has abolished unemployment, has introduced the right to work, the right to rest and leisure, the right to education, has provided better material and cultural conditions for the workers, peasants and intelligentsia, and has ensured the introduction of universal, direct and equal suffrage with secret ballot for its citizens.

All these are facts, not promises. (prolonged applause.)

Finally, the U.S.S.R. has produced the draft of a new Constitution which is not a promise but the registration and legislative embodiment of these generally known facts, the registration and legislative embodiment of what has already been achieved and won.

One may ask : In view of all this, what can all the talk of the gentlemen of the German semi-official organ about "Potemkin villages" amount to but an attempt on their part to conceal from the people the truth about the U.S.S.R., to mislead the people, to deceive them.

Such are the facts. And facts, it is said, are stubborn things. The gentlemen of the German semiofficial organ may say : So much the worse for the facts. (Laughter.) But then, we can answer them in the words of the well-known Russian proverb : "Laws are not made for fools." (Laughter and prolonged applause.)

The third group of critics are not averse to recognizing certain merits in the Draft Constitution; they regard it as a good thing; but, you see, they doubt very much whether a number of its principles can be applied in practice, because they are convinced that these principles are generally impracticable and must remain

a dead letter. These, to put it mildly, are sceptics. These sceptics are to be found in all countries.

It must be said that this is not the first time we have met them. When the Bolsheviks took power in 1917 the sceptics said : The Bolsheviks are not bad fellows, perhaps, but nothing will come of their government; they will fail. Actually it turned out, however, that it was not the Bolsheviks who failed, but the sceptics.

During the civil war and foreign intervention this group of sceptics said : The Soviet government is not a bad thing, of course, but Denikin and Kolchak, plus the foreigners, will, we venture to say, come out on top. Actually, it turned out, however, that the sceptics were wrong again in their calculations.

When the Soviet government published the First Five-Year Plan the sceptics again appeared on the scene saying : The Five-Year Plan is a good thing, of course, but it is hardly feasible; the Bolsheviks' Five-Year Plan is not likely to succeed. The facts proved, however, that once again the sceptics had bad luck : the Five-Year Plan was carried out in four years.

The same must be said about the draft of the new Constitution and the criticism levelled against it by the sceptics. No sooner was the Draft published than this group of critics again appeared on the scene with their gloomy scepticism and their doubts as to the practicability of certain principles of the Constitution.

There is not the slightest ground for doubt that in this case, too, the sceptics will fail, that they will fail today as they have failed more than once in the past. The fourth group of critics, in attacking the draft of the new Constitution, characterize it as a "swing to the Right," as the "abandonment of the dictatorship of the proletariat," as the "liquidation of the Bolshevik regime." "The Bolsheviks have swung to the Right, that is a fact," they declare in a chorus of different voices. Particularly zealous in this respect are certain Polish newspapers, and also some American newspapers.

What can one say about these critics, so-called?

If the broadening of the basis of the dictatorship of the working class and the transformation of the dictatorship into a more flexible, and, consequently, a more powerful system of guidance of society by the state is interpreted by them not as strengthening the dictatorship of the working class but as weakening it, or even abandoning it, then it is legitimate to ask : Do these gentlemen really know what the dictatorship of the working class means.

If the legislative embodiment given to the victories of Socialism, the legislative embodiment given to the successes of industrialization, collectivization, and

democratization is represented by them as a "swing to the Right," then it is legitimate to ask : Do these gentlemen really know the difference between left and right? (General laughter and applause.)

There can be no doubt that these gentlemen have entirely lost their way in their criticism of the Draft Constitution, and, having lost their way, they confuse right with left.

One cannot help recalling, in this connection, the "wench" Pelageya in Gogol's "Dead Souls." Gogol relates that Pelageya offered to act as guide to Chichikov's coachman, Seliphan; but not knowing the right side of the road from the left, she lost her way and got into an embarrassing situation. It must be admitted that, notwithstanding all their pretensions, the intelligence of our critics on the Polish newspapers is not much above that of the "wench" Pelageya in "Dead Souls." (Applause.) If you remember, the coachman Seliphan thought fit to chide Pelageya for confusing right with left and said to her : "Oh, you dirty-legs...you don't know which is right and which is left." It seems to me that our luckless critics should be chided in the same way :

"Oh, you sorry critics...you don't know which is right and which is left."
(Prolonged applause.)

Finally, there is yet another group of critics.

While the last-mentioned group accuses the Draft Constitution of abandoning the dictatorship of the working class, this group, on the contrary, accuses it of not changing anything in the existing position in the U.S.S.R., of leaving the dictatorship of the working class intact, of not granting freedom to political parties, and of preserving the present leading position of the Communist Party in the U.S.S.R. And this group of critics maintains that the absence of freedom for parties in the U.S.S.R. is a symptom of the violation of the principles of democratism. I must admit that the draft of the new Constitution does preserve the regime of the dictatorship of the working class, just as it also preserves unchanged the present leading position of the Communist Party of the U.S.S.R. (Loud applause.) If the esteemed critics regard this as a flaw in the Draft Constitution, that is only to be regretted. We Bolsheviks regard it as a merit of the Draft Constitution. (Loud applause.)

As to freedom for various political parties, we adhere to somewhat different views. A party is a part of a class, its most advanced part. Several parties, and, consequently, freedom for parties, can exist only in a society in which there are antagonistic classes whose interests are mutually hostile and irreconcilable - in which there are, say, capitalists and workers, landlords and peasants, kulaks and

poor peasants, etc. But in the U.S.S.R. there are no longer such classes as the capitalists, the landlords, the kulaks, etc. In the U.S.S.R. there are only two classes, workers and peasants, whose interests - far from being mutually hostile - are, on the contrary, friendly. Hence, there is no ground in the U.S.S.R. for the existence of several parties, and, consequently, for freedom for these parties.

In the U.S.S.R. there is ground only for one party, the Communist Party. In the U.S.S.R. only one party can exist, the Communist Party, which courageously defends the interests of the workers and peasants to the very end. And that it defends the interests of these classes not at all badly, of that there can hardly be any doubt. (Loud applause.) They talk of democracy. But what is democracy?

Democracy in capitalist countries, where there are antagonistic classes, is, in the last analysis, democracy for the strong, democracy for the propertied minority. In the U.S.S.R., on the contrary, democracy is democracy for the working people, i.e., democracy for all. But from this it follows that the principles of democratism are violated, not by the draft of the new Constitution of the U.S.S.R., but by the bourgeois constitutions. That is why I think that the Constitution of the U.S.S.R. is the only thoroughly democratic Constitution in the world.

Such is the position with regard to the bourgeois criticism of the draft of the new Constitution of the U.S.S.R.

V. Amendments and Addenda to the Draft Constitution

Let us pass on to the amendments and addenda to the Draft Constitution proposed by citizens during the nation-wide discussion of the draft.

The nation-wide discussion of the Draft Constitution, as you know, produced a fairly large number of amendments and addenda. These have all been published in the Soviet press. In view of the great variety of amendments and the fact that they are not all of equal value, they should, in my opinion, be divided into three categories.

The distinguishing feature of the amendments in the first category is that they deal not with constitutional questions but with questions which come within the scope of the current legislative work of the future legislative bodies. Certain questions concerning insurance, some questions concerning collective farm development, some questions concerning industrial development, financial questions - such are the subjects with which these amendments deal.

Evidently the authors of these amendments were not clear as to the difference between constitutional questions and questions of current legislation. That is

why they strive to squeeze as many laws as possible into the Constitution, thus tending to convert the Constitution into something in the nature of a code of laws. But a constitution is not a code of laws. A constitution is the fundamental law, and only the fundamental law. A constitution does not preclude but presupposes current legislative work on the part of the future legislative bodies. A constitution provides the juridical basis for the future legislative activities of these bodies. Therefore, amendments and addenda of this kind, which have no direct bearing on the Constitution, should, in my opinion, be referred to the future legislative bodies of the country.

To the second category should be assigned those amendments and addenda which strive to introduce into the Constitution elements of historical references, or elements of declarations concerning what the Soviet government has not yet achieved and what it should achieve in the future. To describe in the Constitution the difficulties the Party, the working class, and all the working people have overcome during the long years of struggle for the victory of Socialism; to indicate in the Constitution the ultimate goal of the Soviet movement, i.e., the building of a complete Communist society - such are the subjects with which these amendments deal, in different variations. I think that such amendments and addenda should also be set aside as having no direct bearing on the Constitution. The Constitution is the registration and legislative embodiment of the gains that have already been achieved and secured. Unless we want to distort this fundamental character of the Constitution, we must refrain from filling it with historical references to the past, or with declarations concerning the future achievements of the working people of the U.S.S.R. For this we have other means and other documents.

Finally, to the third category should be assigned amendments and addenda which have a direct bearing on the Draft Constitution.

A large number of amendments in this category are simply a matter of wording. They could therefore be referred to the Drafting Commission of the present Congress which I think the Congress will set up, with instructions to decide on the final text of the new Constitution.

As for the rest of the amendments in the third category, they are of greater material significance, and in my opinion a few words should be said about them.

1. First of all about the amendments to Article 1 of the Draft Constitution. There are four amendments.

Some propose that we substitute for the words "state of workers and peasants" the words "state of working people." Others propose that we add the words "and

working intelligentsia" to the words "state of workers and peasants." A third group proposes that we substitute for the words "state of workers and peasants" the words "state of all the races and nationalities inhabiting the territory of the U.S.S.R."

A fourth group proposes that we substitute for the word "peasants" the words "collective farmers" or "toilers of Socialist agriculture."

Should these amendments be adopted? I think they should not.

What does Article 1 of the Draft Constitution speak of? It speaks of the class composition of Soviet society. Can we Marxists ignore the question of the class composition of our society in the Constitution?

No, we cannot. As we know, Soviet society consists of two classes, workers and peasants. And it is of this that Article 1 of the Draft Constitution speaks. Consequently, Article 1 of the Draft Constitution properly reflects the class composition of our society. It may be asked : What about the working intelligentsia? The intelligentsia has never been a class, and can never be a class - it was and remains a stratum, which recruits its members from all classes of society. In the old days the intelligentsia recruited its members from the ranks of the nobility, of the bourgeoisie, partly from the ranks of the peasantry, and only to a very inconsiderable extent from the ranks of the workers. In our day, under the Soviets, the intelligentsia recruits its members mainly from the ranks of the workers and peasants. But no matter where it may recruit its members, and what character it may bear, the intelligentsia is nevertheless a stratum and not a class.

Does this circumstance infringe upon the rights of the working intelligentsia? Not in the least! Article 1 of the Draft Constitution deals not with the rights of the various strata of Soviet society, but with the class composition of that society. The rights of the various strata of Soviet society, including the rights of the working intelligentsia, are dealt with mainly in Chapters X and XI of the Draft Constitution.

It is evident from these chapters that the workers, the peasants, and the working intelligentsia enjoy entirely equal rights in all spheres of the economic, political, social, and cultural life of the country.

Consequently, there can be no question of an infringement upon the rights of the working intelligentsia.

The same must be said of the nations and races comprising the U.S.S.R. In Chapter II of the Draft Constitution it is stated that the U.S.S.R. is a free union

of nations possessing equal rights. Is it worthwhile repeating this formula in Article 1 of the Draft Constitution, which deals not with the national composition of Soviet society, but with its class composition? Clearly, it is not worth-while. As to the rights of the nations and races comprising the U.S.S.R., these are dealt with in Chapters II, X, and XI of the Draft Constitution. From these chapters it is evident that the nations and races of the U.S.S.R. enjoy equal rights in all spheres of the economic, political, social and cultural life of the country.

Consequently, there can be no question of an infringement upon national rights.

It would also be wrong to substitute for the word "peasant" the words "collective farmer" or "toiler of Socialist agriculture." In the first place, besides the collective farmers, there are still over a million households of non-collective farmers among the peasantry. What is to be done about them? Do the authors of this amendment propose to strike them off the books? That would be unwise. Secondly, the fact that the majority of the peasants have started collective farming does not mean that they have already ceased to be peasants, that they no longer have their personal economy, their own households, etc. Thirdly, for the word "worker" we would then have to substitute the words "toiler of Socialist industry," which, however, the authors of the amendment for some reason or other do not propose.

Finally, have the working class and the peasant class already disappeared in our country? And if they have not disappeared, is it worth while deleting from our vocabulary the established names for them? Evidently, what the authors of the amendment have in mind is not present society, but future society, when classes will no longer exist and when the workers and peasants will have been transformed into toilers of a homogeneous Communist society. Consequently, they are obviously running ahead. But in drawing up a constitution one must not proceed from the future, but from the present, from what already exists. A constitution should not and must not run ahead.

2. Then follows an amendment to Article 17 of the Draft Constitution. The amendment proposes that we completely delete from the Constitution Article 17, which reserves to the Union Republics the right of free secession from the U.S.S.R. I think that this proposal is a wrong one and therefore should not be adopted by the Congress. The U.S.S.R. is a voluntary union of Union Republics with equal rights.

To delete from the Constitution the article providing for the right of free secession from the U.S.S.R. would be to violate the voluntary character of this union. Can we agree to this step? I think that we cannot and should not agree to

it. It is said that there is not a single republic in the U.S.S.R. that would want to secede from the U.S.S.R., and that therefore Article 17 is of no practical importance.

It is, of course, true that there is not a single republic that would want to secede from the U.S.S.R.

But this does not in the least mean that we should not fix in the Constitution the right of Union Republics freely to secede from the U.S.S.R. In the U.S.S.R. there is not a single Union Republic that would want to subjugate another Union Republic. But this does not in the least mean that we ought to delete from the Constitution of the U.S.S.R. the article dealing with the equality of rights of the Union Republics.

3. Then there is a proposal that we add a new article to Chapter II of the Draft Constitution, to the following effect : that on reaching the proper level of economic and cultural development Autonomous Soviet Socialist Republics may be raised to the status of Union Soviet Socialist Republics. Can this proposal be adopted? I think that it should not be adopted. It is a wrong proposal, not only because of its content, but also because of the condition it lays down, Economic and cultural maturity can no more be urged as grounds for transferring Autonomous Republics to the category of Union Republics than economic or cultural backwardness can be urged as grounds for leaving any particular republic in the list of Autonomous Republics. This would not be a Marxist, not a Leninist approach. The Tatar Republic, for example, remains an Autonomous Republic, while the Kazakh Republic is to become a Union Republic; but this does not mean that from the standpoint of cultural and economic development the Kazakh Republic is on a higher level than the Tatar Republic. The very opposite is the case. The same can be said, for example, of the Volga German Autonomous Republic and the Kirghiz Union Republic, of which the former is on a higher cultural and economic level than the latter, although it remains an Autonomous Republic.

What are the grounds for transferring Autonomous Republics to the category of Union Republics?

There are three such grounds.

First, the republic concerned must be a border republic, not surrounded on all sides by U.S.S.R. territory. Why? Because since the Union Republics have the right to secede from the U.S.S.R., a republic, on becoming a Union Republic, must be in a position logically and actually to raise the question of secession from the U.S.S.R. And this question can be raised only by a republic which, say,

borders on some foreign state, and, consequently, is not surrounded on all sides by U.S.S.R. territory. Of course, none of our republics would actually raise the question of seceding from the U.S.S.R. But since the right to secede from the U.S.S.R. is reserved to the Union Republics, it must be so arranged that this right does not become a meaningless scrap of paper. Take, for example, the Bashkir Republic or the Tatar Republic. Let us assume that these Autonomous Republics are transferred to the category of Union Republics. Could they logically and actually raise the question of seceding from the U.S.S.R.? No, they could not. Why? Because they are surrounded on all sides by Soviet republics and regions, and, strictly speaking, they have nowhere to go if they secede from the U.S.S.R. (Laughter and applause.) Therefore, it would be wrong to transfer such republics to the category of Union Republics.

Secondly, the nationality which gives its name to a given Soviet republic must constitute a more or less compact majority within that republic. Take the Crimean Autonomous Republic, for example. It is a border republic, but the Crimean Tatars do not constitute the majority in that republic; on the contrary, they are a minority. Consequently, it would be wrong to transfer the Crimean Republic to the category of Union Republics.

Thirdly, the republic must not have too small a population; it should have a population of, say, not less but more than a million, at least. Why? Because it would be wrong to assume that a small Soviet republic with a very small population and a small army could hope to maintain its existence as an independent state. There can hardly be any doubt that the imperialist beasts of prey would soon lay hands on it. I think that unless these three objective grounds exist, it would be wrong at the present historical moment to raise the question of transferring any particular Autonomous Republic to the category of Union Republics.

4. Next it is proposed to delete from Articles 22, 23, 24, 25, 26, 27, 28 and 29 the detailed enumeration of the administrative territorial division of the Union Republics into territories and regions. I think that this proposal is also unacceptable. There are people in the U.S.S.R. who are always ready and eager to go on tirelessly recarving the territories and regions and thus cause confusion and uncertainty in our work. The Draft Constitution puts a check on these people. And that is very good, because here, as in many other things, we need an atmosphere of certainty, we need stability and clarity.

5. The fifth amendment concerns Article 33. The creation of two chambers is regarded as inexpedient, and it is proposed that the Soviet of Nationalities be abolished. I think that this amendment is also wrong. A single-chamber system would be better than a dual-chamber system if the U.S.S.R. were a singlenation

state. But the U.S.S.R. is not a single-nation state. The U.S.S.R., as we know, is a multi-national state. We have a supreme body in which are represented the common interests of all the working people of the U.S.S.R. irrespective of nationality. This is the Soviet of the Union. But in addition to common interests, the nationalities of the U.S.S.R. have their particular, specific interests, connected with their specific national characteristics. Can these specific interests be ignored? No, they cannot. Do we need a special supreme body to reflect precisely these specific interests? Unquestionably, we do. There can be no doubt that without such a body it would be impossible to administer a multi-national state like the U.S.S.R. Such a body is the second chamber, the Soviet of Nationalities of the U.S.S.R.

Reference is made to the parliamentary history of European and American states; it is pointed out that the dual-chamber system in these countries has produced only negative results - that the second chamber usually degenerates into a centre of reaction and a brake on progress. All that is true. But this is due to the fact that in those countries there is no equality between the two chambers. As we know, the second chamber is not infrequently granted more rights than the first chamber, and, moreover, as a rule the second chamber is constituted undemocratically, its members not infrequently being appointed from above. Undoubtedly, these defects will be obviated if equality is established between the chambers and if the second chamber is constituted as democratically as the first.

6. Further, an addendum to the Draft Constitution is proposed calling for an equal number of members in both chambers. I think that this proposal might be adopted. In my opinion, it has obvious political advantages, for it emphasizes the equality of the chambers.

7. Next comes an addendum to the Draft Constitution which proposes that the members of the Soviet of Nationalities be elected by direct vote, as in the case of the members of the Soviet of the Union. I think that this proposal might also be adopted.

True, it may create certain technical inconveniences during elections; but, on the other hand, it would be of great political advantage, for it would enhance the prestige of the Soviet of Nationalities.

8. Then follows an addendum to Article 40, proposing that the Presidium of the Supreme Soviet be granted the right to pass provisional acts of legislation.

I think that this addendum is wrong and should not be adopted by the Congress. It is time we put an end to a situation in which not one but a number of bodies

legislate. Such a situation runs counter to the principle that laws should be stable. And we need stability of laws now more than ever. Legislative power in the U.S.S.R. must be exercised only by one body, the Supreme Soviet of the U.S.S.R.

9. Further, an addendum is proposed to Article 48 of the Draft Constitution, demanding that the President of the Supreme Soviet of the U.S.S.R. be elected not by the Supreme Soviet of the U.S.S.R. but by the whole population of the country. I think this addendum is wrong, because it runs counter to the spirit of our Constitution. According to the system of our Constitution there must not be an individual president in the U.S.S.R., elected by the whole population on a par with the Supreme Soviet, and able to put himself in opposition to the Supreme Soviet. The president in the U.S.S.R. is a collegium, it is the Presidium of the Supreme Soviet, including the President of the Presidium of the Supreme Soviet, elected, not by the whole population, but by the Supreme Soviet, and accountable to the Supreme Soviet. Historical experience shows that such a structure of the supreme bodies is the most democratic, and safeguards the country against undesirable contingencies.

10. Then follows another amendment to Article 48.

It reads as follows : that the number of Vice- Presidents of the Presidium of the Supreme Soviet of the U.S.S.R. be increased to eleven, one from each Union Republic. I think that this amendment might be adopted, for it would be an improvement and would only enhance the prestige of the Presidium of the Supreme Soviet of the U.S.S.R.

11. Then follows an amendment to Article 77. It calls for the organization of a new All-Union People's Commissariat - the People's Commissariat of the Defence Industry. I think that this amendment should likewise be accepted (applause), for the time has arrived to separate our defence industry and have a People's Commissariat for it. It seems to me that this would only improve the defence of our country.

12. Next follows an amendment to Article of the Draft Constitution, demanding that the article be changed to provide for the prohibition of religious rites. I think that this amendment should be rejected as running counter to the spirit of our Constitution.

13. Finally, there is one other amendment of a more or less material character. I am referring to an amendment to Article 135 of the Draft Constitution.

It proposes that ministers of religion, former Whiteguards, all the former rich, and persons not engaged in socially useful occupations be disfranchised, or, at all events, that the franchise of people in this category be restricted to the right to elect, but not to be elected. I think that this amendment should likewise be rejected. The Soviet government disfranchised the non-working and exploiting elements not for all time, but temporarily, up to a certain period. There was a time when these elements waged open war against the people and actively resisted the Soviet laws. The Soviet law depriving them of the franchise was the Soviet government's reply to this resistance. Quite some time has elapsed since then. During this period we have succeeded in abolishing the exploiting classes, and the Soviet government has become an invincible force. Has not the time arrived for us to revise this law? I think the time has arrived. It is said that this is dangerous, as elements hostile to the Soviet government, some of the former Whiteguards, kulaks, priests, etc., may worm their way into the supreme governing bodies of the country. But what is there to be afraid of? If you are afraid of wolves, keep out of the woods. (Laughter and loud applause.)

In the first place, not all the former kulaks, Whiteguards and priests are hostile to the Soviet government.

Secondly, if the people in some place or other do elect hostile persons, that will show that our propaganda work was very badly organized, and we shall fully deserve such a disgrace; if, however, our propaganda work is conducted in a Bolshevik way, the people will not let hostile persons slip into the supreme governing bodies. This means that we must work and not whine (loud applause), we must work and not wait to have everything put before us ready-made by official order. As far back as 1919, Lenin said that the time was not far distant when the Soviet government would deem it expedient to introduce universal suffrage without any restrictions. Please note : without any restrictions. He said this at a time when foreign military intervention had not yet been overcome, and when our industry and agriculture were in a desperate condition. Since then, seventeen years have elapsed. Comrades, is it not time we carried out Lenin's behest? I think it is.

Here is what Lenin said in 1919 in his "Draft Program of the Communist Party of Russia." Permit me to read it.

"The Russian Communist Party must explain to the masses of the working people, in order to avoid a wrong generalization of transient historical needs, that the disfranchisement of a section of citizens does not in the Soviet Republic affect, as has been the case in the majority of bourgeois-democratic republics, a definite category of citizens disfranchised for life, but applies only to the exploiters, only to those who in violation of the fundamental laws of the

Socialist Soviet Republic, persist in defending their position as exploiters, in preserving capitalist relationships. Consequently, in the Soviet Republic, on the one hand, every day of added strength for Socialism and diminution in the number of those who have objective possibilities of remaining exploiters or of preserving capitalist relationships, automatically reduces the percentage of disfranchised persons. In Russia at the present time this percentage is hardly more than two or three per cent. On the other hand in the not distant future the cessation of foreign invasion and the completion of the expropriation of the expropriators may, under certain conditions, create a situation in which the proletarian state power will choose other methods of suppressing the resistance of the exploiters and will introduce universal suffrage without any restrictions." (Lenin : Collected Works, Russian edition, Vol. XXIV, p. 94.)

That is clear, I think.

Such is the position with regard to the amendments and addenda to the Draft Constitution of the U.S.S.R.

VI. The significance of the New Constitution of the U.S.S.R.

Judging by the results of the nation-wide discussion, which lasted nearly five months, it may be presumed that the Draft Constitution will be approved by the present Congress. (Loud applause and cheers. All rise.)

In a few days' time the Soviet Union will have a new, Socialist Constitution, built on the principles of fully developed Socialist democracy.

It will be an historical document dealing in simple and concise terms, almost in the style of minutes, with the facts of the victory of Socialism in the U.S.S.R., with the facts of the emancipation of the working people of the U.S.S.R. from capitalist slavery, with the facts of the victory in the U.S.S.R. of full and thoroughly consistent democracy.

It will be a document testifying to the fact that what millions of honest people in capitalist countries have dreamed of and still dream of has already been realized in the U.S.S.R. (Loud applause.)

It will be a document testifying to the fact that what has been realized in the U.S.S.R. is fully possible of realization in other countries also. (Loud applause.)

But from this it follows that the international significance of the new Constitution of the U.S.S.R. can hardly be exaggerated.

Today, when the turbid wave of fascism is bespattering the Socialist movement of the working class and besmirching the democratic strivings of the best people

in the civilized world, the new Constitution of the U.S.S.R. will be an indictment against fascism, declaring that Socialism and democracy are invincible. (Applause.) The new Constitution of the U.S.S.R. will give moral assistance and real support to all those who are today fighting fascist barbarism. (Loud applause.)

Still greater is the significance of the new Constitution of the U.S.S.R. for the peoples of the U.S.S.R. While for the peoples of capitalist countries the Constitution of the U.S.S.R. will have the significance of a program of action, it is significant for the peoples of the U.S.S.R. as the summary of their struggles, a summary of their victories in the struggle for the emancipation of mankind. After the path of struggle and privation that has been traversed, it is pleasant and joyful to have our Constitution, which treats of the fruits of our victories. It is pleasant and joyful to know what our people fought for and how they achieved this victory of worldwide historical importance. It is pleasant and joyful to know that the blood our people shed so plentifully was not shed in vain, that it has produced results.

(Prolonged applause.) This arms our working class, our peasantry, our working intelligentsia spiritually.

It impels them forward and rouses a sense of legitimate pride. It increases confidence in our strength and mobilizes us for fresh struggles for the achievement of new victories of Communism.

(Thunderous ovation. All rise. Shouts from all parts of the hall: "Long live Comrade Stalin." All stand and sing the "Internationale," after which the ovation is resumed. Shouts of "Long live our leader, Comrade Stalin, hurrah.")

Pravda

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