

Stalin, J.W.

Speech Delivered at the Sixth Congress of the R.S.D.L.P. (Bolsheviks)

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1. Report of the Central Committee

July 27

Comrades, the Central Committee's report embraces its activities during the past two and a half months— May, June and the early half of July.

The Central Committee's activities in the month of May were directed along three lines.

First, it issued the call for new elections to the Soviets of Workers' and Soldiers' Deputies. The Central Committee proceeded from the fact that our revolution was developing along peaceful lines, and that the composition of the Soviets of Workers' and Soldiers' Deputies, and hence of the government, could be altered by new elections to the Soviets. Our opponents accused us of trying to seize power. That was a calumny. We had no such intention. We said that we had the opportunity by means of new elections to the Soviets to change the character of the activity of the Soviets and make it conform with the wishes of the broad masses. It was clear to us that a majority of one vote in the Soviets of Workers' and Soldiers' Deputies would be enough to make the government take a different course. New elections were therefore the keynote of our work in the month of May.

In the end we won about half the seats in the workers' group of the Soviet, and about one quarter in the soldiers' group.

Second, agitation against the war. We took the occasion of the death sentence passed on Friedrich Adler 2 to organize a number of protest meetings against capital punishment and against the war. That campaign was well received by the soldiers.

The third aspect of the Central Committee's activities was the municipal elections in May. Jointly with the Petrograd Committee, the Central Committee exerted every effort to give battle both to the Cadets, the main force of counter-revolution, and to the Mensheviks and Socialist-Revolutionaries, who willingly or unwillingly followed the Cadets. We secured about 20 per cent of the 800,000 votes cast in Petrograd. The Vyborg District Duma we won entirely.

Outstanding service was rendered the Party by our soldier and sailor comrades. Thus the outstanding features in May were: 1) the municipal elections; 2) agitation against the war, and 3) the elections to the Soviets of Workers' and Soldiers' Deputies.

June. Rumours of preparation for an offensive at the front were making the soldiers restless. A series of orders were issued abrogating the rights of the soldiers. All this electrified the masses. Every rumour spread through Petrograd like wildfire, stirring up unrest among the workers and especially the soldiers. Rumours of an offensive; Kerensky's orders and declaration of the rights of the soldier; the evacuation from Petrograd of "unnecessary" elements—as the authorities called them, it being clear, however, that what they wanted was to rid Petrograd of revolutionary elements; the economic disruption, which was becoming ever more tangible—all this was making the workers and soldiers restless. Meetings were organized at the factories, and we were being constantly urged by regiments and factories to organize a demonstration. It was planned to hold a demonstration on June 5. But the Central Committee resolved not to hold a demonstration for the time being, but to convene a meeting of representatives of the districts, factories, mills and regiments on June 7 and to decide there the question of a demonstration. This meeting was called and was attended by about 200 persons. It became evident that the soldiers were particularly restless. By an overwhelming majority of votes it was decided to demonstrate. The question was debated as to what should be done if the Congress of Soviets, which had just opened, should declare against a demonstration. The vast majority of the comrades who took the floor were of the opinion that nothing could prevent the demonstration from being held. After that the Central Committee decided to take it upon itself to organize a peaceful demonstration. The soldiers wanted to know whether they could not come armed, but the Central Committee resolved against the carrying of arms. The soldiers, however, said that it was impossible to come unarmed, that arms were the only effective guarantee against excesses on the part of the bourgeois public, and that they would bring arms only for purposes of self-defence.

On June 9 the Central Committee, the Petrograd Committee and the Army Organization held a joint meeting. The Central Committee raised the following point: in view of the fact that the Congress of Soviets and all the "socialist" parties were opposed to our demonstration, would it not be well to postpone it? All replied in the negative.

At midnight the same day the Congress of Soviets issued a manifesto in which it brought the whole weight of its authority against us. The Central Committee resolved not to hold the demonstration on June 10 and to postpone it to June 18, seeing that on that day the Congress of Soviets was itself calling a demonstration, at which the masses would be able to express their will. The workers and soldiers greeted the Central Committee's decision with repressed dissatisfaction, but obeyed it. It is characteristic, comrades, that on the morning of June 10, when a number of speakers from the Congress of Soviets addressed factory meetings urging the "liquidation of the attempt to organize a

demonstration," the overwhelming majority of the workers agreed to listen only to the speakers of our Party. The Central Committee succeeded in pacifying the soldiers and workers. This was indicative of our high level of organization. When arranging the demonstration for June 18 the Congress of Soviets announced that freedom of slogans would be allowed. It was evident that the Congress had decided to give battle to our Party. We accepted the challenge, and began to muster our forces for the coming demonstration.

The comrades know how the demonstration of June 18 went off. Even the bourgeois papers said that the overwhelming majority of the demonstrators marched under the slogans of the Bolsheviks. The principal slogan was "All power to the Soviets!" No fewer than 400,000 persons marched in the procession. Only three small groups—the Bund, the Cossacks and the Plekhanovites—ventured to display the slogan "Confidence in the Provisional Government!"—and even they repented it, for they were compelled to furl their banners. The Congress of Soviets was given proof positive of how great the strength and influence of our Party was. It was the general conviction that the demonstration of June 18, which was more imposing than the demonstration of April 21, was bound to have its effect. And it should indeed have had its effect. Rech averred that in all probability there would be important changes in the government, because the policy of the Soviets was not approved by the masses. But that very day our armies launched an offensive at the front, a successful offensive, and the "Blacks" began a demonstration on the Nevsky Prospect in honour of it. That obliterated the moral victory gained by the Bolsheviks at the demonstration. It also obliterated the chances of the practical results which had been spoken of by both Rech and official spokesmen of the ruling parties, the Socialist-Revolutionaries and Mensheviks.

The Provisional Government remained in power. The successful offensive, partial successes of the Provisional Government, and a number of projects to withdraw the troops from Petrograd had their effect on the soldiers. These facts convinced them that passive imperialism was changing to active imperialism. They realized that a period of fresh sacrifices had begun.

The front reacted to the policy of active imperialism in its own way. A whole number of regiments, in spite of orders to the contrary, began to take a vote on the question of whether to attack or not. The higher command failed to realize that in the new conditions prevailing in Russia, and in view of the fact that the aims of the war had not been made clear, it was impossible to hurl the masses blindly into an offensive.

What we had predicted occurred: the offensive was doomed to failure. The latter part of June and the beginning of July were dominated by the policy of the offensive. Rumours were circulating that the death penalty had been

reintroduced, that a whole number of regiments were being disbanded, that soldiers at the front were being subjected to maltreatment. Delegates arrived from the front with reports of the arrest and beating up of soldiers in their own units. There were similar reports from the grenadier regiment and the machine-gun regiment. All this prepared the ground for another demonstration of the workers and soldiers of Petrograd.

I now come to the events of July 3-5. It all began on July 3, at three in the afternoon, at the premises of the Petrograd Committee.

July 3, 3 p.m. The Petrograd City Conference of our Party was in session. The most inoffensive of questions was being discussed—the municipal elections. Two representatives of one of the regiments of the garrison appeared. They raised a matter of urgency. Their regiment had "decided to come out this evening," because they "could not stand it any longer in silence when regiment after regiment was being disbanded at the front," and they had "already sent round their delegates to the factories and regiments" inviting them to join the demonstration. In reply to this, Comrade Volodarsky, speaking for the presidium of the conference, said that "the Party had already decided not to demonstrate, and Party members in the regiment must not dare to disobey the Party's decision."

4 p.m. The Petrograd Committee, Army Organization and Central Committee of the Party, having discussed the question, resolve not to demonstrate. The resolution is approved by the conference, whose members disperse to the factories and regiments to dissuade the comrades from demonstrating.

5 p.m. A meeting of the Bureau of the Central Executive Committee of the Soviets in the Taurida Palace. On the instructions of the Central Committee of the Party, Comrade Stalin makes a statement to the Bureau of the Central Executive Committee on what has occurred, and reports that the Bolsheviki have decided against a demonstration.

7 p.m. In front of the headquarters of the Petrograd Committee. Several regiments march up with banners displaying the slogan "All power to the Soviets!" They stop in front of the Petrograd Committee premises and request that members of our organization "say a few words." Two Bolshevik speakers, Lashevich and Kurayev, explain the current political situation and urge against demonstrating. They are received with cries of "Get down!" Members of our organization then suggest that the soldiers elect a delegation to convey their wishes to the Central Executive Committee of the Soviets and then disperse to their regiments. This proposal is greeted with deafening cheers. The band plays the Marseillaise. . . . By this time the news flies round Petrograd that the Cadets have resigned from the government, and the workers become restless. Following the soldiers, columns of workers appear. Their slogans are the same as the soldiers'. The soldiers and the workers march off to the Taurida Palace.

9 p.m. Headquarters of the Petrograd Committee. A succession of delegates arrives from the factories. They all request our Party organizations to join in and assume direction of the demonstration. Otherwise there "will be bloodshed." Voices are raised suggesting that delegations should be elected from the mills and factories to make the will of the demonstrators known to the Central Executive Committee of the Soviets, and that the masses; after hearing the reports of the delegations, should disperse peacefully.

10 p.m. Meeting of the Workers' Section of the Petrograd Soviet of Workers' and Soldiers' Deputies in the Taurida Palace. In consequence of the reports of the workers that the demonstration has already begun, the majority of the section decide to join in the demonstration in order to avert excesses and to lend it a peaceful and organized character. A minority do not agree with this decision and walk out of the meeting. The majority elect a bureau to carry out the decision just adopted.

11 p.m. The Central Committee and Petrograd Committee of our Party shift their meeting place to the Taurida Palace, to which the demonstrators have been marching all the evening. Agitators from the districts and representatives from the factories arrive. Representatives of the Central Committee of our Party, the Petrograd Committee, the Army Organization, the Mezhrayonny Committee and the Bureau of the Workers' Section of the Petrograd Soviet hold a meeting. The reports from the districts make it clear:

- 1) That the workers and soldiers cannot be restrained from demonstrating the following day;
- 2) That the demonstrators will carry arms exclusively for self-defence, as an effective guarantee against provocative shots that may be fired from the Nevsky Prospect: "It's not so easy to fire on armed men."

The meeting decides that at a time when the revolutionary worker and soldier masses are demonstrating under the slogan "All power to the Soviets!" the party of the proletariat has no right to wash its hands of and stand aloof from the movement; it cannot abandon the masses to the caprice of fate; it must remain with the masses in order to lend the spontaneous movement a conscious and organized character. The meeting decides to recommend the workers and soldiers to elect delegates from the regiments and factories and through them declare their wishes to the Executive Committee of the Soviets. An appeal for a "peaceful and organized demonstration" is drawn up on the lines of this decision. 3

Midnight. Over 30,000 Putilov workers arrive at the Taurida Palace with banners displaying the slogan: "All power to the Soviets!" Delegates are elected. The delegates report the demands of the Putilov workers to the Executive Committee.

The soldiers and workers in front of the Taurida Palace begin to disperse.

July 4. Daytime. The procession of workers and soldiers, carrying banners and Bolshevik slogans, marches to the Taurida Palace. The tail of the procession consists of thousands of sailors from Kronstadt. There are no fewer than 400,000 demonstrators—according to the bourgeois papers (Birzhovka). The streets are scenes of jubilation. Friendly cheers from the public greet the demonstrators. In the afternoon excesses begin. Sinister elements in the bourgeois districts cast a dark shadow over the workers' demonstration by firing provocative shots. Even *Birzheviye Vedomosti* does not venture to deny that the shooting was started by opponents of the demonstration. "Precisely at two o'clock," it writes (July 4, evening edition), "on the corner of the Sadovaya and the Nevsky Prospect, as the armed demonstrators were filing past and large numbers of the public were quietly looking on, a deafening report came from the right side of the Sadovaya, after which shots began to be fired in volleys."

Obviously, it was not the demonstrators that started the shooting; it was "unknown persons" who fired on the demonstrators, not vice versa.

Firing went on simultaneously in several places in the bourgeois part of the town. The provocators were not dozing. Nevertheless, the demonstrators did not go beyond necessary self-defence. There was absolutely no sign of a conspiracy or insurrection. Not a single government or public building was seized, nor even was an attempt made to do so, although, with the tremendous armed force at their disposal, the demonstrators could quite easily have captured not only individual buildings, but the whole city. . . .

8 p.m. At a meeting of the Central Committee, the Mezhrayonny Committee and other organizations of our Party in the Taurida Palace it is decided that now that the revolutionary workers and soldiers have demonstrated their will, the action should be stopped. An appeal is drawn up on these lines: "The demonstration is over. . . . Our watchword is: Staunchness, restraint, calm" (see the appeal in *Listok Pravdy* 4). The appeal was sent to *Pravda* but could not appear on July 5, because on the night of the 4th the *Pravda* offices were wrecked by military cadets and secret agents.

10-11 p.m. In the Taurida Palace the Central Executive Committee of the Soviets discusses the question of the government. After the resignation of the Cadets the position of the Socialist-Revolutionaries and Mensheviks has become very critical: they "need" a bloc with the bourgeoisie, but a bloc is impossible because the bourgeoisie want no more agreements with them. A bloc with the Cadets is no longer feasible. Hence the question of the Soviets taking over power themselves arises with full force.

There are rumours that our front has been pierced by the Germans. True, these rumours are still unconfirmed, but they cause uneasiness.

There are rumours that on the following day a statement will appear in the press containing an infamous slander against Comrade Lenin.

The Central Executive Committee of the Soviets calls out soldiers (of the Volhynia regiment) to protect the Taurida Palace. From whom? From the Bolsheviks, it appears, who have allegedly come to the palace to "arrest" the Executive Committee and "seize power." That is said of the Bolsheviks, who had been advocating the strengthening of the Soviets and the transference to them of all authority in the country! . . .

2-3 a.m. The Central Executive Committee of the Soviets does not assume power. It instructs the "socialist" Ministers to form a new government and to get at least a few bourgeois into it. The Ministers are furnished with emergency powers to "combat anarchy." The matter is clear: the Central Executive Committee, faced with the necessity of resolutely breaking with the bourgeoisie—which it particularly fears to do, because it has hitherto derived its strength from "combinations" in one form or another with the bourgeoisie—responds by resolutely breaking with the workers and the Bolsheviks, in order to join with the bourgeoisie and turn its weapons against the revolutionary workers and soldiers. Thus a campaign is launched against the revolution. The Socialist-Revolutionaries and Mensheviks open fire on the revolution, to the glee of the counter-revolutionaries. . . .

July 5. The papers (*Zhivoye Slovo* 5) publish the statement with the infamous slander against Comrade Lenin. *Pravda* does not appear, because its offices were wrecked on the night of July 4. A dictatorship of the "socialist" Ministers, who are seeking a bloc with the Cadets, is established. The Mensheviks and Socialist-Revolutionaries, who had not wanted to take power, now take it (for a short period) in order to crush the Bolsheviks. . . . Army units from the front appear in the streets. Gangs of military cadets and counterrevolutionaries go about wrecking, making searches and committing acts of ruffianism. The witch-hunt against Lenin and the Bolsheviks raised by Alexinsky, Pankratov and Pereverzev is exploited to the full by the counter-revolutionaries. The counter-revolution hourly gains momentum. The hub of the dictatorship is the army staff. The secret service agents, the military cadets, the Cossacks run riot. Arrests and manhandlings. The open attack of the Central Executive Committee of the Soviets against the Bolshevik workers and soldiers unleashes the forces of counter-revolution. . . .

In reply to the slanders of Alexinsky and Co., the Central Committee of our Party issues the leaflet, "Try the Slanderers!" 6 The Central Committee's appeal to call off the strike and demonstration (which could not appear in *Pravda* because of the wrecking of its offices) appears as a separate leaflet. One is struck by the absence of any appeals from the other "socialist" parties. The Bolsheviks are alone. Against them have tacitly combined all the elements to the Right of the Bolsheviks — from Suvorin and Milyukov to Dan and Chernov.

July 6. The bridges have been raised. The pacifier Ma-zurenko and his composite detachment are doing their punitive work.

In the streets, troops are suppressing recalcitrants. There is a virtual state of siege. "Suspects" are arrested and taken to military headquarters. Workers, soldiers and sailors are being disarmed. Petrograd has been placed under the power of the military. Much as the "powers that be" would like to incite a so-called "battle," the workers and soldiers do not succumb to the provocation and do not "accept battle." The Fortress of Peter and Paul opens its gates to the disarmers. The premises of the Petrograd Committee are occupied by a composite detachment. Searches are conducted and weapons confiscated in the working-class districts. Tsereteli's idea of disarming the workers and soldiers, which he first timidly formulated on June 11, is now being carried into effect. "Minister of Disarmament" the workers bitterly call him. ...

The Trud printing plant is wrecked. Listok Pravdy appears. A worker, Voinov, is killed while distributing the Listok. . . . The bourgeois press throws off all restraint; it represents the infamous slander against Comrade Lenin as a fact, and now does not confine its attack on the revolution to the Bolsheviks alone, but extends it to the Soviets, the Mensheviks, the Socialist-Revolutionaries.

It becomes clear that in betraying the Bolsheviks the Socialist-Revolutionaries and Mensheviks have betrayed themselves, have betrayed the revolution, and have unleashed and unbridled the forces of counter-revolution. The campaign of the counter-revolutionary dictatorship against liberty in the rear and at the front is in full swing. From the fact that the Cadet and Allied press, which only yesterday was still carping at revolutionary Russia, now suddenly feels satisfied, it may be concluded that the "work" of pacification was not undertaken without the participation of the Russian and Allied moneybags.

2. Reply to the Discussion

July 27

Comrades, it is evident from the discussion that no one criticizes the political line of the Central Committee of the Party or objects to its slogans. The Central Committee put forward three major slogans: all power to the Soviets, control of production, and confiscation of the landed estates. These slogans won sympathy among the mass of the workers and among the soldiers. They proved to be correct, and by waging the fight on that basis we retained the support of the masses. I consider this a major fact in the Central Committee's favour. If it issues correct slogans at the most difficult moments, this shows that in the main the Central Committee is right.

Criticism has centred not around primary, but secondary matters. It amounted in substance to the claim that the Central Committee had not formed contacts with the provinces and that its activities had been confined chiefly to Petrograd. The

reproach of isolation from the provinces is not without foundation. But it was utterly impossible to cover the entire provinces. The reproach that the Central Committee virtually became a Petrograd Committee is to some extent justified. This is a fact. But it is here, in Petrograd, that the policy of Russia is being hammered out. It is here that the directing forces of the revolution are located. The provinces react to what is done in Petrograd. This, finally, is due to the fact that this is the seat of the Provisional Government, in whose hands all the power is concentrated, and the seat of the Central Executive Committee, which is the voice of the whole organized revolutionary democracy. On the other hand, events are moving fast, an open struggle is in progress, and there is no assurance that the existing government may not disappear any day. Under such circumstances, to wait until our friends in the provinces say their word was quite unthinkable. We know that the Central Executive Committee decides questions concerning the revolution without waiting for the provinces.

The whole government apparatus is in their hands. And what have we got? The apparatus of the Central Committee. And it is, of course, a weak apparatus. To demand, therefore, that the Central Committee take no steps without first consulting the provinces is tantamount to demanding that the Central Committee should not march ahead of events but trail behind them. But then it would not be a Central Committee. Only by following the method which we did follow could the Central Committee be equal to the situation.

Reproaches have been voiced on particular points. Some comrades spoke of the failure of the insurrection of July 3-5. Yes, comrades, failure there was; only it was not an insurrection, but a demonstration. This failure was due to the breach of the front of the revolution resulting from the treacherous conduct of the petty-bourgeois parties, the Socialist-Revolutionaries and Mensheviks, who turned their backs on the revolution.

Comrade Bezrabortny 7 said that the Central Committee made no effort to flood Petrograd and the provinces with leaflets explaining the events of July 3-5. But our printing plant had been wrecked, and it was physically impossible to get anything printed in other printing plants, as this would have exposed them to the danger of being wrecked likewise.

All the same, things here were not so bad: if in some of the districts we were arrested, in others we found a welcome and were greeted with extraordinary enthusiasm. And now, too, the spirit of the Petrograd workers is splendid and the prestige of the Bolsheviks is immense.

I should like to raise a few questions.

Firstly, how should we react to the slanders against our leaders? Recent events make it necessary to draw up a manifesto to the people explaining all the facts, and for this purpose a commission should be elected. And I propose that this commission, if you decide to elect it, should also issue a manifesto to the

revolutionary workers and soldiers of Germany, Britain, France, etc., informing them of the events of July 3-5 and branding the calumniators. We are the most advanced section of the proletariat, we are responsible for the revolution, and we must tell the whole truth about the events and expose the infamous slanderers. Secondly, about the refusal of Lenin and Zinoviev to appear for "trial." Just now it is still unclear who holds the power. There is no guarantee that if they do appear they will not be subjected to brutal violence. If the court were democratically organized and if a guarantee were given that violence would not be committed, it would be a different matter. In reply to our inquiries at the Central Executive Committee we were told, "We cannot say what may happen." Consequently, so long as the situation remains unclarified, so long as the silent struggle between official power and actual power continues, there is no sense in our comrades appearing for "trial." If, however, at the head there will be a power which can guarantee our comrades against violence, they will appear.

3. Report of the Political Situation

July 30

Comrades, to discuss the political situation of Russia is to discuss the development of our revolution, its victories and defeats in the midst of an imperialist war.

As early as February it was apparent that the main forces of our revolution were the proletariat and the peasants whom the war has put into soldier's uniform. It so happened that in the struggle against tsarism there were in the same camp as these forces, and as though in alliance with them, other forces — the bourgeois liberals and Allied capital.

The proletariat was, and remains, the mortal foe of tsarism.

The peasants put their faith in the proletariat and, seeing that they would not receive land unless tsarism was overthrown, followed the proletariat. The bourgeois liberals were disillusioned in tsarism and turned their backs on it, because it had not only failed to win them new markets but was even unable to retain the old ones, having surrendered fifteen gubernias to Germany.

Allied capital, the friend and well-wisher of Nicholas II, was also "compelled" to betray tsarism, because the latter had not only failed to ensure the "united front" it desired, but was clearly preparing to conclude a separate peace with Germany into the bargain.

Tsarism thus found itself isolated.

This indeed explains the "amazing" fact that tsar-ism so "silently and imperceptibly passed away."

But the aims pursued by these forces differed completely.

The bourgeois liberals and British and French capital wanted to make a little revolution in Russia similar to that of the Young Turks, in order to rouse the

ardour of the masses and exploit it for a big war, while the power of the capitalists and landlords at bottom remained unshaken.

A little revolution for the sake of a big war! The workers and peasants, on the other hand, were out for a thorough break-up of the old order, for what we call a great revolution, in order to overthrow the landlords and curb the imperialist bourgeoisie so as to put an end to the war and ensure peace. A great revolution and peace!

It was this fundamental contradiction that underlay the development of our revolution and of each and every "crisis of power."

The "crisis" of April 20 and 21 was the first open manifestation of this contradiction. If in this series of "crises" success so far has on every occasion been with the imperialist bourgeoisie, it is to be attributed not only to the high degree of organization of the counter-revolutionary front, headed by the Cadet Party, but primarily to the fact that the compromising parties, the Socialist-Revolutionaries and Mensheviks, which vacillate in favour of imperialism, and which so far have the following of the broad masses, every time broke the front of revolution, deserted to the camp of the bourgeoisie, and so gave the front of counter-revolution the advantage.

So it was in April.

So it was in July.

The "principle" of coalition with the imperialist bourgeoisie advocated by the Mensheviks and Socialist-Revolutionaries has proved in practice to be a most pernicious weapon, with the help of which the party of the capitalists and landlords, the Cadets, isolating the Bolsheviks, step by step consolidated its position with the helping hand of these same Mensheviks and Socialist-Revolutionaries. . . .

The lull which set in at the front in March, April and May was taken advantage of to develop the revolution further. Spurred on by the general disruption in the country, and encouraged by the possession of liberties which not a single one of the belligerent countries enjoys, the revolution drove deeper and deeper and began to put forward social demands. It invaded the economic sphere, demanding workers' control in industry, nationalization of the land and supply of farm implements to the poor peasants, organization of proper exchange between town and country, nationalization of the banks and, lastly, the assumption of power by the proletariat and the poorer strata of the peasantry. The revolution came squarely up against the necessity for socialist changes.

Some comrades say that since capitalism is poorly developed in our country, it would be utopian to raise the question of a socialist revolution. They would be right if there were no war, if there were no economic disruption, if the foundations of the capitalist organization of the national economy were not shaken. The question of intervening in the economic sphere is arising in all

countries as something essential in time of war. This question has also arisen of sheer necessity in Germany, where it is being settled without the direct and active participation of the masses. The case is different here in Russia.

Here the disruption has assumed more ominous proportions. On the other hand, nowhere is there such freedom in time of war as in our country. Then we must bear in mind the high degree of organization of our workers; for instance, 66 per cent of the metalworkers of Petrograd are organized. Lastly, the proletariat in no other country has, or has had, such broad organizations as the Soviets of Workers' and Soldiers' Deputies. Possessing the maximum liberty and organization, the workers naturally could not, without committing political suicide, abstain from actively interfering in the economic life of the country in favour of socialist changes. It would be rank pedantry to demand that Russia should "wait" with socialist changes until Europe "begins." That country "begins" which has the greater opportunities. . . .

Inasmuch as the revolution had advanced so far, it could not but arouse the vigilance of the counter-revolutionaries; it was bound to stimulate counter-revolution. This was the first factor which mobilized the counter-revolution.

A second factor was the adventurous gamble started by the policy of an offensive at the front and the series of breaches of the front, which deprived the Provisional Government of all prestige and fired the hopes of the counter-revolutionaries, who launched an attack on the government. There are rumours that a phase of broadly conceived provocations has begun in our country.

Delegates from the front are of the opinion that both the offensive and the retreat—in a word, all that has happened at the front—were planned in order to discredit the revolution and overthrow the Soviets. I do not know whether these rumours are true or not, but it is noteworthy that on July 2 the Cadets resigned from the government, on the 3rd the July events began, and on the 4th came the news of the breach of the front. An amazing coincidence! It cannot be said that the Cadets resigned because of the decision regarding the Ukraine, because the Cadets did not object to the decision on the Ukrainian question. There is another fact which indicates that a phase of provocation has really begun—I am referring to the shooting affray in the Ukraine. 8 In the light of these facts it should be clear to the comrades that the breach of the front was one of the factors in the plan of the counter-revolutionaries which were to discredit the idea of revolution in the eyes of the broad masses of the petty bourgeoisie.

There is a third factor which has helped to strengthen the counter-revolutionary forces in Russia—Allied capital. If, when it saw that tsarism was working for a separate peace, Allied capital betrayed Nicholas' government, there is nothing to prevent it breaking with the present government should it prove incapable of preserving the "united" front. Milyukov said at one of the sittings that Russia was valued in the international market as a supplier of manpower, and received

money for this, and that if it should turn out that the new governmental authority, in the shape of the Provisional Government, was incapable of supporting the united front of attack on Germany, it would not be worth subsidizing such a government. And without money, without credits, the government was bound to fall. That is the secret why the Cadets became a big force at the time of the crisis, while Kerensky and all the Ministers were mere puppets in the hands of the Cadets. The strength of the Cadets lay in the fact that they were supported by Allied capital.

Russia was faced with two courses:

Either the war was to be ended, all financial ties with imperialism severed, the revolution advanced, the foundations of the bourgeois world shaken, and an era of workers' revolution begun;

Or the other course, that of continuing the war, continuing the offensive at the front, obeying every command of Allied capital and the Cadets—and then complete dependence on Allied capital (there were definite rumours in the Taurida Palace that America would give 8,000 million rubles for the "rehabilitation" of the economy) and the triumph of counterrevolution.

There was no third course.

The attempt of the Socialist-Revolutionaries and Mensheviks to make out that the demonstration of July 3 and 4 was an armed revolt is simply absurd. On July 3 we proposed a united revolutionary front against counter-revolution. Our slogan was "All power to the Soviets!" and, hence, a united revolutionary front. But the Mensheviks and Socialist-Revolutionaries feared to break with the bourgeoisie, turned their backs on us, and thereby broke the revolutionary front in deference to the counter-revolutionaries. If those responsible for the victory of the counter-revolution are to be named, it was the Socialist-Revolutionaries and Mensheviks. It is our misfortune that Russia is a country of petty bourgeois, and that it still follows the Socialist-Revolutionaries and Mensheviks, who are compromising with the Cadets. And until the masses become disillusioned with the idea of compromise with the bourgeoisie, the revolution will go haltingly and limpingly.

The picture we have now is a dictatorship of the imperialist bourgeoisie and the counter-revolutionary generals. The government, while ostensibly combating this dictatorship, is actually carrying out its will, and is only a shield protecting it from the wrath of the people. The policy of endless concessions pursued by the weakened and discredited Soviets only supplements the picture, and if the Soviets are not being dispersed, it is because they are "needed" as a "necessary" and very "convenient" screen.

Hence the situation has changed fundamentally.

Our tactics must likewise change.

Formerly we stood for the peaceful transfer of power to the Soviets, and we assumed that it would be sufficient for the Central Executive Committee of the Soviets to decide to take power, and the bourgeoisie would peacefully clear out of the way. And, indeed, in March, April and May every decision of the Soviets was regarded as law, because it could always be backed by force. With the disarmament of the Soviets and their (virtual) degradation to the level of mere "trade union" organizations, the situation has changed. Now the decisions of the Soviets are disregarded. To take power now, it is first necessary to overthrow the existing dictatorship.

Overthrow of the dictatorship of the imperialist bourgeoisie—that is what the immediate slogan of the Party must be.

The peaceful period of the revolution has ended. A period of clashes and explosions has begun.

The slogan of overthrowing the present dictatorship can be realized only if there is a powerful new political upsurge on a country-wide scale. Such an upsurge is inevitable; it is dictated by the country's whole trend of development, by the fact that not a single one of the basic issues of the revolution has been decided, for the questions of the land, workers' control, peace and governmental power have remained unsettled.

Repressive measures only aggravate the situation without settling a single issue of the revolution.

The main forces of the new movement will be the urban proletariat and the poorer strata of the peasantry. It is they that will take power in the event of victory.

The characteristic feature of the moment is that the counter-revolutionary measures are being implemented through the agency of "Socialists." It is only because it has created such a screen that the counter-revolution may continue to exist for another month or two. But since the forces of revolution are developing, explosions are bound to occur, and the moment will come when the workers will raise and rally around them the poorer strata of the peasantry, will raise the standard of workers' revolution and usher in an era of socialist revolution in Europe.

4. Replies to Questions in Connection with the Report on the Political Situation

July 31

First question: "What forms of militant organization does the speaker propose in place of the Soviets of Workers' Deputies?" My reply is that the question is not put properly. I did not oppose the Soviets as a form of organization of the working class. The slogan is determined not by the form of organization of the revolutionary institution, but by its content, its flesh and blood. If the Cadets had

entered the Soviets, we should never have raised the slogan of transferring power to them.

We are now advancing the demand for the transfer of power to the proletariat and poor peasantry. Consequently, it is a question not of form, but of the class to which power is to be transferred; it is a question of the composition of the Soviets.

The Soviets are the most appropriate form of organization of the working-class struggle for power; but the Soviets are not the only type of revolutionary organization. It is a purely Russian form. Abroad, we have seen this role played by the municipalities during the Great French Revolution, and by the Central Committee of the National Guard during the Paris Commune. And even here in Russia the idea of a Revolutionary Committee was mooted. Perhaps the Workers' Section will be the form best adapted for the struggle for power. But it must be clearly realized that it is not the form of organization that is decisive.

What really is decisive is whether the working class is mature enough for dictatorship; everything else will come of itself, will be brought about by the creative action of the revolution.

On questions two and three—what, practically, is our attitude towards the existing Soviets?—the reply is quite clear. If the point at issue is the transfer of all power to the Central Executive Committee of the Soviets, this slogan is obsolete. And that is the only point at issue. The idea of overthrowing the Soviets is an invention. Nobody here has suggested it. The fact that we are proposing to withdraw the slogan "All power to the Soviets!" does not, however, mean "Down with the Soviets!" And although we are withdrawing the slogan, we are not even resigning from the Central Executive Committee of the Soviets, in spite of the wretched role it has lately been playing.

The local Soviets have still a role to play, for they will have to defend themselves against the attacks of the Provisional Government, and in this fight we shall support them.

And so, I repeat, the withdrawal of the demand for the transfer of power to the Soviets does not mean "Down with the Soviets!" "Our attitude towards those Soviets in which we have the majority" is one of the greatest sympathy. May they live and flourish. But the might is no longer with the Soviets. Formerly, the Provisional Government would issue a decree and the Executive Committee of the Soviets would issue a counter-decree, and it was only the latter that acquired force of law. Recall the case of Order No. 1. 9 Now, however, the Provisional Government ignores the Central Executive Committee. The decision that the Central Executive Committee of the Soviets would take part in the commission of inquiry into the events of July 3-5 was not cancelled by the Central Executive Committee; it was by order of Kerensky that no effect was given to it. The

question now is not one of winning a majority in the Soviets—which in itself is very important—but of overthrowing the counter-revolutionary dictatorship. To question four—asking for a more concrete definition of the concept the "poor peasantry" and an indication of its form of organization — my reply is that the term "poor peasantry" is not a new one. It was introduced into Marxist literature by Comrade Lenin in 1905, and since then it has been used in nearly every issue of Pravda and found a place in the resolutions of the April Conference.

The poorer strata of the peasantry are those which are at odds with the upper sections of the peasantry. The Soviet of Peasants' Deputies, which allegedly "represents" 80 million peasants (counting women), is an organization of the upper sections of the peasantry. The lower sections of the peasantry are waging a fierce struggle against the policy of this Soviet. Whereas the head of the Socialist-Revolutionary Party, Chernov, as well as Avksentyev and others, are urging the peasants not to seize the land immediately, but to wait for a general settlement of the land question by the Constituent Assembly, the peasants retort by seizing the land and ploughing it, seizing farm implements and so on. We have information to this effect from the Penza, Voronezh, Vitebsk, Kazan and a number of other gubernias. This fact alone clearly indicates that the rural population is divided into lower and upper sections, that the peasantry no longer exists as an integral whole. The upper sections mainly follow the Socialist-Revolutionaries. The lower sections cannot live without land, and they are in opposition to the Provisional Government. These are the peasants who have little land, only one horse or no horse at all, etc. Associated with them are the sections which have practically no land, the semi-proletarians.

It would be unwise in a revolutionary period not to attempt to reach some agreement with these sections of the peasantry. However, the farm-labourer sections of the peasantry should be organized separately and rallied around the proletarians.

What form the organization of these sections will take is difficult to predict. At present the lower sections of the peasantry are either organizing unauthorized Soviets, or are trying to capture the existing Soviets. Thus, in Petrograd, about six weeks ago, a Soviet of poor peasants was formed (composed of representatives from eighty military units and from factories), which is waging a fierce struggle against the policy of the Soviet of Peasants' Deputies.

In general, Soviets are the most appropriate form of organization of the masses. We should not, however, speak in terms of institutions, but should indicate their class content; and we should strive to get the masses too to distinguish between form and content.

Generally speaking, the form of organization is not the basic question. If the revolution advances, the organizational forms will be forthcoming. We must not

let the question of form obscure the basic question: to which class must power pass?

Henceforth a bloc with the defencists is unthinkable. The defencist parties have bound up their fate with the bourgeoisie, and the idea of a bloc extending from the Socialist-Revolutionaries to the Bolsheviks has suffered fiasco. The question now is to fight the top leaders of the Soviets, to fight them in alliance with the poorer strata of the peasantry and to sweep away the counterrevolution.

5. Reply to the Discussion

July 31

Comrades, first of all I must make a few corrections of fact.

Comrade Yaroslavsky objects to my assertion that the Russian proletariat is the most organized, and points to the Austrian proletariat. But, comrades, I was speaking of "red," revolutionary organization, and in no other country is the proletariat organized in this way to the same extent as the Russian proletariat. Angarsky is quite wrong when he says that I advocate the idea of uniting all forces. But we cannot help seeing that, for different motives, not only the peasantry and the proletariat but also the Russian bourgeoisie and foreign capital turned their backs on tsardom. That is a fact. And it would be a bad thing if Marxists refused to face facts. But later the first two forces took the path of developing the revolution further, and the other two the path of counter-revolution.

I shall now pass to the substance of the matter. Bukharin put it most trenchantly but he, too, failed to carry it to its logical conclusion. Bukharin asserts that the imperialist bourgeois have formed a bloc with the muzhiks. But with which muzhiks? We have different kinds of muzhiks. The bloc has been formed with the Right-wing muzhiks; but we have lower, Left-wing muzhiks, who represent the poorer strata of the peasantry. Now with these the bloc could not have been formed. These have not formed a bloc with the big bourgeoisie; they follow it because they are politically undeveloped, they are simply being deceived, led by the nose.

Against whom is the bloc directed?

Bukharin did not say. It is a bloc of Allied and Russian capital, the army officers and the upper sections of the peasantry, represented by Socialist-Revolutionaries of the Chernov type. This bloc has been formed against the lower peasantry and against the workers.

What is the prospect Bukharin held out? His analysis is fundamentally wrong. In his opinion, in the first stage we are moving towards a peasant revolution. But it is bound to concur, to coincide with a workers' revolution. It cannot be that the working class, which constitutes the vanguard of the revolution, will not at the

same time fight for its own demands. I therefore consider that Bukharin's scheme has not been properly thought out.

The second stage, according to Bukharin, will be a proletarian revolution supported by Western Europe, without the peasants, who will have received land and will be satisfied. But against whom would this revolution be directed? Bukharin's gimcrack scheme furnishes no reply to this question. No other approach to an analysis of events has been proposed.

About the political situation. There is no longer any talk of dual power.

Formerly the Soviets represented a real force; now they are merely organs for uniting the masses, and possess no power. That is precisely why it is impossible "simply" to transfer power to them. Comrade Lenin, in his pamphlet,¹⁰ goes further and definitely says that there is no dual power, because the whole power has passed into the hands of the capitalists, and to advance the slogan "All power to the Soviets!" now would be quixotic.

Whereas formerly no laws were of any validity without the sanction of the Executive Committee of the Soviets, now there is not even talk of dual power. Capture all the Soviets, and even so you will have no power!

We jeered at the Cadets during the district Duma elections because they represented a miserable group which obtained only 20 per cent of the votes. Now they are jeering at us. Why? Because, with the connivance of the Central Executive Committee of the Soviets, power has passed into the hands of the bourgeoisie.

Comrades are in a hurry to settle the question of how to organize the governmental power. But power is not yet in your hands!

The chief task is to preach the necessity of overthrowing the existing power. We are still inadequately prepared for this. But we must prepare for it.

The workers, peasants and soldiers must be made to realize that unless the present power is overthrown they will secure neither freedom nor land!

And so, the question is not how to organize the governmental power, but to overthrow it. Once we have seized power we shall know how to organize it.

Now a few words in reply to Angarsky's and Nogin's objections on the subject of socialist changes in Russia. Already at the April Conference we said that the moment had come to begin to take steps towards socialism. (Reads the end of the resolution of the April Conference "On the Current Situation")

"The proletariat of Russia, operating in one of the most backward countries of Europe, in the midst of a small-peasant population, cannot set itself the aim of introducing socialist changes immediately. But it would be a great mistake, and in practice even complete desertion to the bourgeoisie, to deduce from this that the working class must support the bourgeoisie, or that we must confine our activities within limits acceptable to the petty bourgeoisie, or that we must reject

the leading role of the proletariat in the work of explaining to the people the urgency of a series of steps towards socialism which are now practically ripe." The comrades are three months behind the times. And what has happened in these three months? The petty bourgeoisie has split into sections, the lower sections are parting ways with the upper sections, the proletariat is organizing, and economic disruption is spreading, rendering still more urgent the introduction of workers' control (for instance, in Petrograd, the Donets region, etc.). All this goes to corroborate the theses already adopted in April. But the comrades would drag us back.

About the Soviets. The fact that we are withdrawing the old slogan about power to the Soviets does not mean that we are opposing the Soviets. On the contrary, we can and must work in the Soviets, even in the Central Executive Committee of the Soviets, that organ of counter-revolutionary camouflage. The Soviets, it is true, are now merely organs for uniting the masses, but we are always with the masses, and we shall not leave the Soviets unless we are driven out. Do we not remain in the factory committees and the municipalities even though they have no power? But while we remain in the Soviets we continue to expose the tactics of the Socialist-Revolutionaries and Mensheviks.

Now that the counter-revolution has patently revealed the connection between our bourgeoisie and Allied capital, it has become more obvious than ever that in our revolutionary struggle we must rely upon three factors: the Russian proletariat, our peasantry, and the international proletariat—for the fate of our revolution is closely bound up with the West-European movement.

6. Reply to Preobrazhensky on Clause 9 of the Resolution "On The Political Situation"

August 3

Stalin reads clause 9 of the resolution :

9. "The task of these revolutionary classes will then be to bend every effort to take the state power into their hands and, in alliance with the revolutionary proletariat of the advanced countries, direct it towards peace and towards the socialist reconstruction of society."

Preobrazhensky : I propose a different formulation of the end of the resolution: "to direct it towards peace and, in the event of a proletarian revolution in the West, towards socialism." If we adopt the formulation proposed by the commission it will contradict Bukharin's resolution which we have already adopted.

Stalin : I am against such an amendment. The possibility is not excluded that Russia will be the country that will lay the road to socialism. No country hitherto has enjoyed such freedom in time of war as Russia does, or has attempted to introduce workers' control of production. Moreover, the base of our

revolution is broader than in Western Europe, where the proletariat stands utterly alone face to face with the bourgeoisie. In our country the workers are supported by the poorer strata of the peasantry. Lastly, in Germany the state apparatus is incomparably more efficient than the imperfect apparatus of our bourgeoisie, which is itself a tributary to European capital. We must discard the antiquated idea that only Europe can show us the way. There is dogmatic Marxism and creative Marxism. I stand by the latter.

Chairman : I shall put Preobrazhensky's amendment to the vote. Rejected. *

First published in Minutes of the Sixth Congress of the R.S.D.L.P. (Bolsheviks), Communist Publishing House, 1919

* In view of the brevity and obvious inadequacy of the Minutes of the Sixth Congress of the R.S.D.L.P.(B.), which, moreover, were published two years after the congress, the editors considered it necessary in re-establishing the text of Comrade Stalin's speeches at the Sixth Congress to consult, in addition to the Minutes, the official records of the speeches printed in July and August 1917 in the newspapers : Rabochy i Soldat, Nos. 7 and 14, and Proletary, No. 3.

1. The Sixth Congress of the R.S.D.L.P. (Bolsheviks) was held in Petrograd from July 26 to August 3, 1917. It heard and discussed the Central Committee's reports on policy and organization, reports from the districts, on the war and the international situation, on the political and economic situation, on the trade union movement, and on the Constituent Assembly election campaign. The congress adopted new Party Rules and resolved to form a Youth League. The report of the Central Committee and the report on the political situation were made by J. V. Stalin. The congress rejected the Trotskyite resolutions of Bukharin and Preobrazhensky, which were designed to divert the Party from the course of socialist revolution, and approved the resolution on the political situation submitted by J. V. Stalin. The congress headed the Party for armed uprising, for the socialist revolution.

2. Friedrich Adler—a leader of the Austrian Social-Democratic Party. In 1916, in token of protest against the war, he assassinated the Austrian Prime Minister, Sturgkh, for which he was sentenced to death in May 1917, but was released in 1918. On emerging from prison he took up a hostile attitude towards the October Revolution in Russia.

3. On July 4, 1917, the following leaflet was distributed in the working class quarters of Petrograd :

"Comrade Workers and Soldiers of Petrograd, now that the counter-revolutionary bourgeoisie has clearly come out in opposition to the revolution,

let the All-Russian Soviet of Workers', Soldiers' and Peasants' Deputies take the entire power into its own hands.

"This is the will of the revolutionary population of Petrograd, and it has the right to make its will known through a peaceful and organized demonstration to the Executive Committees of the All-Russian Soviets of Workers', Soldiers' and Peasants' Deputies now in session.

"Long live the will of the revolutionary workers and revolutionary soldiers!

"Long live the power of the Soviets!

"The coalition government is bankrupt: it has fallen to pieces without having been able to perform the tasks for which it was formed. Gigantic and most difficult problems confront the revolution. A new power is needed which will, in conjunction with the revolutionary proletariat, the revolutionary army and the revolutionary peasantry, resolutely set about consolidating and extending the peoples' conquests. This power can only be that of the Soviets of Workers', Soldiers' and Peasants' Deputies.

"Yesterday, the revolutionary garrison of Petrograd and the workers came out to proclaim: 'All power to the Soviet!' We urge that this movement that has broken out in the regiments and the factories should be turned into a peaceful and organized expression of the will of all the workers, soldiers and peasants of Petrograd.

Central Committee, R.S.D.L.P.

Petrograd Committee, R.S.D.L.P.

Mezhrayonny Committee, R.S.D.L.P.

Army Organization of the C.C., R.S.D.L.P.

Commission of the Workers' Section, Soviet of Workers' and Soldiers' Deputies

4. Listok Pravdy (Pravda Bulletin) appeared on July 6, 1917, in place of Pravda, whose editorial offices had been wrecked by military cadets. It carried an appeal of the Central and Petrograd Committees and the Army Organization of the R.S.D.L.P.(B.), under the title: "Calm and Restraint."

5. Zhivoye Slovo (Living Word)—a yellow ultra-reactionary newspaper published in Petrograd. In 1917 it called for violent action against the Bolsheviks. It ceased publication with the October Revolution.

6. The leaflet "Try the Slanderers!" was issued by the Central Committee, R.S.D.L.P.(B.) after July 5, 1917, and was printed on July 9 in Volna (Wave), a newspaper published by the Helsingfors Committee of the R.S.D.L.P.(B.). The leaflet said: "The counter-revolutionaries want to decapitate the revolution by a very simple means, by confusing the minds of the masses and inciting them against their most popular leaders, the tried and tested champions of the revolution. . . . We demand that the Provisional Government and the Central Executive Committee of the Soviets of Workers' and Soldiers' Deputies institute an immediate public inquiry into all the circumstances of the vile plot of the

reactionaries and hired slanderers against the honour and lives of the leaders of the working class. . . . The slanderers and slandermongers must be brought to trial. The pogromists and liars must be pilloried!"

7. Bezrobotny—pseudonym of D. Z. Manuilsky.

8. On July 27, 1917, troop trains of the Ukrainian Bogdan Khmel'nitsky Regiment which were proceeding to the front were fired upon by Cossacks and cuirassiers at stations near Kiev and in Kiev itself.

9. Order No. 1 had been issued on March 1, 1917, by the Petrograd Soviet on the demand of representatives of the revolutionary military units, who reported that the soldiers were growing increasingly distrustful of the Provisional Committee of the State Duma and its Military Commission.

The Order directed the military units (companies, battalions, etc.) to elect Soldiers' Committees and to appoint representatives to the Soviets of Workers' and Soldiers' Deputies, commanded that the weapons of the military units be placed at the disposal of the Soldiers' Committees, sanctioned the carrying out of the orders of the Military Commission only when they did not run counter to the orders and decisions of the Soviets of Workers' and Soldiers' Deputies, etc.

10. J. V. Stalin is referring to Lenin's pamphlet, *On Slogans*, written in July 1917 (see V. I. Lenin, *Works*, 4th Russ. ed., Vol. 25, p. 164).