Lenin on the Soviet state

Aleksey Ivanovich Stetski

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Speech delivered at the memorial meeting commemorating the eleventh anniversary of the death of Lenin, January 21, 1935

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LENIN ON THE SOVIET STATE

By A. I. STETSKY

1. THE ROLE OF THE SOVIETS

Today, when we are commemorating the death of the great leader and teacher of our Party and the world proletariat, all the toilers of the Soviet Union are reporting on how Lenin’s bequests have been fulfilled and are being fulfilled, and on the accomplishment of the world-historic Leninist task of emancipating the workers and toilers and of building communism.

Lenin, the brilliant theoretician and continuer of the work of Marx and Engels, evolved the teaching on the Communist Party, the vanguard of the working class, which leads the toilers to victory over capitalism; he forged our glorious fighting Party and created the Communist International. Lenin further developed the teachings of Marx and Engels on the proletarian dictatorship, the establishment of which is a necessary condition for the emancipation of the toilers, the annihilation of capitalism and the building of communist society.

Under the leadership of Lenin the proletariat and all the toilers of our country overthrew the rule of the bourgeoisie and the landlords and created a new type of state—the dictatorship of the proletariat, the Soviet state. Lenin was the founder and the first builder of this new world-historic structure called the Soviet state. Under the leadership of Lenin the proletariat not only of our country but of the entire world has found in the Soviets the state form in which the rule of the workers must be realized, the organization which the working class, as the ruling class, must form in order completely to smash the oppressors and exploiters and build communist society. Soviets—the word has become near, dear and comprehensible to the oppressed of
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the entire world. Like the unforgettable name of Lenin it rings
the same in the languages of all the peoples as the symbol of
their emancipation.

After the First Congress of the Communist International, in
1919, Lenin wrote:

The Soviets have triumphed throughout the world.
They have triumphed first and foremost in that they have won the
sympathy of the proletarian masses. That is the main thing. No outrages
of the imperialist bourgeoisie, no persecution or murder of Bolsheviks has
the power to deprive the masses of this conquest. The more the “demo-
cratic” bourgeoisie rages, the more firmly will these gains be implanted
in the hearts of the proletarian masses, in their spirits, in their conscious-
ness, in their heroic readiness for the struggle.

And further:

The new movement is marching towards the dictatorship of the prole-
tariat, it is marching irrespective of all vacillation, irrespective of des-
erate defeats . . . it is marching towards Soviet government with the
force of a torrent of millions and tens of millions of proletarians sweeping
everything from its path.*

The facts have fully corroborated this appraisal of the world
role of the Soviets given by Lenin. During the seventeen years
and more that have passed since the victory of the October Revo-
lution wherever the proletariat has risen or is rising for deter-
mined struggle against the bourgeoisie—in Germany and China,
in Hungary and Austria, in Indonesia and Spain—the slogan of
Soviet power has been inscribed on its banners. In the course
of revolution the proletariat and toilers are organizing into
Soviets.

After establishing the power of the Soviets in our country,
the proletariat was enabled to bring all the mighty and sharp
weapons of the state, all its organized force, down on its ene-
mies, on the exploiters, on those who strove to restore the system
of slavery and oppression. Through the flexible, widely ramified
mass organization called the Soviets, the proletariat was enabled

* V. I. Lenin, “Won and Recorded,” The Foundation of the Communist
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directly and daily to lead the other sections of the toilers, to re-educate them, to lead them along the road to socialism. The Soviets gave the greatest possibilities of drawing the masses into universal government of the state and of their closest and most direct participation under the leadership of the party of the proletariat in affairs of the state, in the building of socialism, in the struggle against the class enemy.

No other state knows or has known such wide and direct democracy for the toilers.

When he was preparing to write his brilliant work State and Revolution, Lenin, on the basis of his study of Marx and Engels, summed up his ideas of this new state in his notes as follows:

... the awakening (revolutionary fire, revolutionary activity) of the toiling masses, of the majority of the population, active participation by them, instead of the bureaucrats, in affairs of the state—proletarian leadership, they must be led by the organized, centralized proletarians.

Condition for all this: reduction of the working day to 8-6-4 hours; combination of productive labour of all with participation of all in “state” administration.*

These notes give an exceptionally clear idea of the way in which Lenin, studying the works of Marx and Engels, taking their fundamental postulates, developed their teachings further, opening up, on the basis of the new experience of the revolutionary struggle, new chapters in the teaching of socialism.

Expounding the conclusions drawn by Marx from the experience of the Paris Commune, Lenin in a few lines sketches a new chapter in the Marxist theory of the state.

One may perhaps briefly, drastically, express the whole thing as follows: the replacement of the old (“ready-made”) state machine and parliaments by Soviets of Workers’ Deputies and persons authorized by them. That is the point! And as for the non-working population? He who does not work, neither shall he eat (let alone govern the state)! **

Lenin everywhere and always particularly stressed as one of the principal distinctive features of the new Soviet state its de-

* Lenin, Marxism on the State, p. 58, Russian ed.
** Ibid.
mocracy, the possibility for the most extensive and direct participation by the masses in government, the possibility for the masses to develop their initiative and energy through the medium of the Soviets.

Finally, only when they are already actually freed from the yoke of the bourgeoisie and the bourgeois state apparatus, only when they have received the opportunity of really freely (free from exploiters) organizing into their Soviets, can the masses, i.e., the entire body of toilers and exploited, develop for the first time in history the initiative and the energy of tens of millions of people crushed by capitalism. Only when the Soviets have become the only state apparatus is it possible to realize the genuine participation in government of the entire masses of the exploited, who under the most enlightened and freest bourgeois democracy have actually always been debarred from participation in government ninety-nine times out of a hundred. Only in the Soviets do the masses of the exploited actually begin to learn, not from books, but from their own practical experience, the business of socialist construction, the creation of a new social discipline, of a free union of free toilers.*

2. THE SUCCESSES OF SOVIET GOVERNMENT

The seventeen years' existence of the Soviet state has fully borne out Lenin's postulate concerning the world-historic importance of this new state structure erected by the proletariat, has demonstrated the great role of the proletarian state in the struggle against the world of slavery, for the consolidation of the new socialist order.

The Soviet state, created by Lenin, has become a mighty force resting on the solid foundation of the alliance between the working class and the peasantry under the leadership of the advanced and centralized proletariat.

The Soviet state now towers over the world like a shining beacon, an example to the oppressed, rousing them to the struggle for emancipation.

Comrades, we are now on the eve of the Seventh All-Union Congress of Soviets. Elections to the Soviets have taken place

throughout the country. These elections were the clearest demonstration of Lenin's ideas of Soviet democracy. There is not nor can there be any other state where the masses so actively and directly discuss and settle all affairs of the state, both great and small—questions of international politics, complex questions of economics, construction, industry, agriculture, the development of trade, cultural matters, the position and tasks in their own collective farm, factory, settlement and village, including the minutest everyday matters.

Millions of electors—young and old, men and women, workers, collective farmers, engineers, students and scientists—belonging to the hundred and ninety peoples inhabiting the Soviet Union, carefully discussed their instructions to the deputies and elected their best people to the Soviets.

Take the instructions printed by the Moscow Soviet, the instructions issued by the electors at their meetings. Everywhere, at every one of these meetings first in order came the fundamental questions of our construction, of the way to build socialism. Every meeting discussed how we should carry on the fight against the remnants of our class enemies. And at the same time, these fundamental political questions, questions of internal and international policy, were always combined with questions concerning their own enterprise or their own district. In these instructions you will find the most varied points: how to put the school in order, how to build a bathhouse, how to extend transport. We have here a great mass of practical proposals which will have to be carried out by our Soviets and which have been adopted by them as their program of work.

It is sufficient to read any of these sets of instructions for every toiler to realize: Yes, this is the government of the working people, our very own government! A government to which we, the workers and collective farmers, have given our instructions as to how to build the state and develop its economy, as to what to do in the particular quarter, settlement or town.

Comrades, we have not concealed, nor do we now conceal, the
fact that our Soviet power is a proletarian *dictatorship*, that it is stern and relentless to the enemies of the people, to the criminals and traitors, that it is firm and resolute in every matter of defending the toilers, of guarding revolutionary order.

And at the same time it is the widest and most genuine *democracy* for the toilers. The disfranchised persons, the enemies of the people, constitute only 2.5 per cent of the population. According to the preliminary data, 83.3 per cent of the electors in the countryside and 91.2 per cent in the towns took part in the last elections. The increase in the activity of women is especially great: 80.3 per cent of the women electors participated in the elections in the countryside, and in the towns 89.4 per cent, as against 61.7 per cent and 75.8 per cent respectively in the previous elections. Where, in what country, can one find such extensive participation in affairs of the state?

By developing their creative activity, their initiative and energy in the form of Soviet democracy, through the Soviets, the toiling masses led by the Leninist Party have achieved decisive successes on the road to socialism. The Party and the toilers have achieved these victories by fulfilling the bequests of Lenin, by carrying out what he outlined, by fighting for the purity of the Leninist theory. They won these victories on the basis of strengthening the alliance between the working class and the peasantry under the leadership of the working class, according to the directives of Lenin.

We are successfully carrying out and have for the most part accomplished Lenin’s instructions on transforming our country into a country of large-scale machine industry. In the course of the First and Second Five-Year Plan periods the Land of the Soviets has created a fully developed socialist industry and has been transformed from a backward agrarian country into a country of advanced technique, an industrial country. Socialist industry has become a mighty force which is transforming the entire country, which has supplied and is supplying modern technical means to agriculture, transport, communication services;
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which is providing a powerful basis for improving the welfare of the toilers, for the growth of culture, for making our country wealthy and still more mighty.

During the last two years socialist industry has provided agriculture with vast numbers of machines: the capacity of the tractors in agriculture has increased by 2,613,000 h.p.; industry has manufactured 133,000 tractor shares, 75,000 tractor-drawn and horse-drawn seeders, 20,000 combines, 25,000 complex threshers; and so on. Agriculture is being supplied to an extent unprecedented in all the preceding years.

We are doing the same in the other branches of national economy—in light industry, in the branches serving cultural requirements, in those branches which constitute the basis for further improving the welfare of the toiling masses.

We have carried out Lenin's instructions on transforming peasant economy into large-scale socialized economy. Under the leadership of the party of Lenin, the toiling peasantry has become convinced of the advantages of the collective farm system and has firmly taken the socialist road. Three-quarters of the peasant households belong to the collective farms; through the machine and tractor stations the proletarian state has supplied the collective farms with new technical means—tractors, combines, tractor shares, seeders, threshers, etc.

The productivity of labor on the collective farms is growing from year to year, harvests are increasing, the incomes of the collective farms and of their members are growing. The following figures compiled by the Central Statistics Board and characterizing this growth were quoted at the Moscow Congress of Soviets: in 1929 the gross per capita income in the rural districts was 6.1 centners,* while in that very year of 1929 the gross income per member of a kulak household was 9.2 centners; in the collective farms in 1933, however, the per capita income was 10.2 centners.

In 1934 the new socialist enterprises, the state and collective

* One centner is equal to 110.23 pounds.
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farms, supplied the state with three times as much grain as the small individual households in 1928. It became possible to abolish the card system with regard to bread and certain other products—a tremendous stride forward in developing Soviet trade and increasing the welfare of the toilers.

We have carried out Lenin’s instructions concerning the necessity of finally smashing the class enemy within the country, smashing the last capitalist class in our country—the kulaks. Five years ago Comrade Stalin, the continuer of the work of Lenin, the glorious leader of the glorious Leninist Party, following Lenin’s instructions, put forward the militant task of liquidating the kulaks as a class on the basis of all-round collectivization. During the few years that have passed since that time, our Party has successfully carried this slogan into life under the leadership of its brilliant leader, Comrade Stalin. The toiling masses, following in the wake of the Party of Lenin, have smashed the kulaks as a class, have won the last decisive victory over the class enemy and have paved the way for further socialist construction. The remnants of the class enemy still attempt to strike at us surreptitiously. But these blows are incapable of shaking the great edifice which our Party has built according to the directives of Lenin and under the leadership of Stalin.

Speaking in 1921 of the conquests of the socialist revolution, Lenin at the same time stressed the fact that:

Our last—but most important, most difficult, and still most uncompleted—task is economic construction, the laying of an economic foundation for the new, the socialist, edifice, the replacement of the feudal edifice which has been destroyed and the capitalist edifice which has been half-destroyed. In this most important and most difficult of tasks we have suffered most failures and committed most errors. And how could one expect a task so new to the world to be begun without failures and without mistakes? *

The development and extension of socialist enterprises in industry and transport, of state farms in agriculture, the triumph

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of the collective farm system in the rural districts, the ousting of capitalist elements from industry, and the liquidation of the kulaks as a class have radically changed the situation. At the Seventeenth Congress of the Party, summing up the results of socialist construction, Comrade Stalin said:

The facts show that we have already built the foundations of socialist society in the U.S.S.R. and all we have to do now is to erect the edifice—a task which undoubtedly is much easier than building the foundations of socialist society.*

Eleven years ago, when Comrade Lenin's body lay in the Hall of Columns of the House of Trade Unions, the Second Congress of Soviets of the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics was in session in this hall. At that time, at a memorial meeting for Lenin, Comrade Stalin, on behalf of our entire Party, on behalf of all the toilers of our country, solemnly vowed to carry on the work of Lenin to the end, to success, to carry out his bequests. Eleven years have passed. We can report to Lenin: the Leninist cause, the construction of socialism, has triumphed absolutely and irrevocably in our country. We can say that Comrade Stalin and our Party have borne the militant banner of Lenin with credit under the most difficult conditions of struggle and construction.

3. THE SOVIET STATE—A NEW TYPE OF STATE

The laying of the economic foundation of socialist society means a tremendous consolidation of the Soviet system, the Soviet state.

Not for purposes of comparison, but in order doubly to stress the importance of this, I should like to recall to your minds what Lenin wrote in 1919 in his article "Economics and Politics in the Era of the Dictatorship of the Proletariat." In this article Lenin characterizes the economic system of the country at that time:

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The economic system of Russia in the era of the dictatorship of the proletariat represents the struggle between the first step of labor communistically united—within the boundaries of a single vast state—and petty commodity production and also capitalism, which has been preserved and is even reviving on the basis of petty commodity production.*

In speaking of this struggle, characterizing the successes achieved and the difficulties encountered by the Soviet government, Lenin deals with the state grain collections as one of the most characteristic facts. He points out the increase in these collections from month to month. He points out the fact that at this time one-half of the supplies of the towns was already furnished by the state and not by speculators. On the basis of these facts he states that there is a slow but steady improvement as regards the victory of communism over capitalism. And from these facts Lenin draws the following exceptionally forceful, profound and important conclusion: “From the point of view of basic economic problems the victory of communism over capitalism is assured for our dictatorship of the proletariat.” **

At that time the grain supply was one of the spheres of economics and politics in which the conflict and struggle of the new communist system in our economy with the predatory, speculating, capitalist system was most acute. And the fact that with regard to the grain collections the majority of the toiling peasantry were in agreement with the proletarian state, that the state grain collections began to exceed the supplies of the traders, speculators and petty food profiteers—the most widespread and most pernicious variety of capitalist parasites; the fact that the proletarian state received grain and was enabled to distribute it in a socialist manner, in accordance with the requirements of defence, to supply the proletariat in accordance with the requirements of socialist construction—all this corroborated in Lenin’s mind the decisive conclusion that from the economic point of view the victory of socialism in our country was assured.

** Ibid., p. 510.
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The more striking is the significance of our present decisive victories. They have brilliantly confirmed Lenin's bold forecasts. "The socialist system," said Comrade Stalin at the Seventeenth Party Congress, "now has unchallenged predominance and is the sole commanding force in the whole of national economy." *

Thereby the Soviet state, the state of the proletariat, created its own economic foundation, the foundation for socialist production relations.

It was of this future that Lenin then dreamed, it was this future which he visualized and to which he showed the road. Now it has become an actual fact. Fully developed socialist industry, collective and state farms provided with new technical equipment—all these enterprises which the proletariat and all the toilers are building and developing in a socialist manner—constitute the new, firm, unshakable foundation of the Soviet state. The Soviet state is the most stable and most powerful state not only because it is a state built by the millions, the state of millions of toilers, but also because it has concentrated in its hands the leadership of the entire economy of the country, all industry and transport, because, by means of socialist planning, it guides agriculture as well. There has never been nor is there any other state endowed with such economic might.

And now the attributes of this state, the specific nature of the Soviet state, stand out more clearly than ever.

Lenin, in full agreement with Marx, always stressed the fact that the bourgeois state is a "parasitic tumour" on the body of society, a machine for the oppression and suppression of the toiling masses, an apparatus of coercion. The bourgeois army, police, government officials, courts and prisons—this entire apparatus of bourgeois state power, no matter with what "democratic" signboards (in the form of parliaments, so-called universal franchise) it may be camouflaged, is an apparatus standing above the people, coercing the people, an apparatus which by

* Stalin, in the Symposium, Socialism Victorious, p. 27.
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all the means of deception and violence guards the bourgeois order of robbery and exploitation.

It is one of the principal theses of Marxism-Leninism that in the epoch of imperialism and socialist revolutions there can be no middle course, no third solution. The Social-Democratic theoreticians have always betrayed the toilers in alleging that it is possible to grow peacefully into socialism on the basis of bourgeois democracy. Time and again the facts have disproved this lie and corroborated the words of Lenin: either the bourgeois dictatorship, whether camouflaged by “democratic” signboards or in the form of open fascist dictatorship and brutal terror against the toilers (Germany, Austria, Spain), or the dictatorship of the proletariat, the rule of the majority of the exploited rising in struggle against the exploiters.

Another fundamental thesis of Marxism-Leninism states that after it comes to power the proletariat cannot use the bourgeois state machine, but must smash it and create its own new state apparatus. This new state apparatus was discovered by our socialist revolution, it was discovered by Lenin. This apparatus, this new state, is the Soviet state. It differs fundamentally from the bourgeois state, it differs in its content, in the aims which it sets and in its form.

The task of the bourgeois state is to perpetuate the exploitation of the vast masses of the toiling people by a small handful of capitalists and landlords, to guard and defend the interests of this insignificant minority. The task of the Soviet state is to eradicate completely the exploitation of man by man, to build a classless, communist society in which the very need for the state disappears, in which the state withers away.

The Soviet state, as the state of the transition period, differs so completely from the bourgeois state that Lenin even said that it can hardly be called a state in the proper sense of the word. To this state Lenin even applied the term “semi-state.”

Does this mean that the proletarian state is weaker as regards its organization, that it has fewer means and instruments of
state power at its disposal than the bourgeois state? Does this mean that the proletarian state pursues or can pursue a vacillating policy of half measures as its state policy, that it must not apply the means of state coercion to its enemies? Does it mean that it can tolerate any lenience or indecision in safeguarding its state order? No, and again no. Such an interpretation of Lenin, an interpretation that has been made and is being made by the Right and "Left" opportunist, is a direct betrayal of Marxism-Leninism, a rupture with Lenin's doctrine of the proletarian dictatorship, desertion to the camp of counter-revolution.

The Soviet state is a form of proletarian dictatorship, which "is iron power, revolutionarily bold and swift, ruthless in suppressing both exploiters and swindlers." *

Wherever and whenever he spoke of the dictatorship of the proletariat, Lenin always emphasized the significance of iron order and discipline, the strong and thorough organization of the masses, the necessity for the sternest, swiftest and most ruthless punishment of the enemies of the people, the counter-revolutionaries, the swindlers, hooligans and parasites. He stigmatized laxity, slovenliness and neglect of order and discipline. He called for stern measures against the violators of discipline.

Our Soviet state must be a model of this iron-clad revolutionary order, a model of proletarian discipline.

When Lenin said of this state that it could no longer be called a state in the proper sense of the word, he was first and foremost emphasizing the fact that in the form of this state we have a state organization of the million-strong proletarian masses, and of the enormous, overwhelming majority of the population, exercising its dictatorship over the insignificant minority of the former exploiters, the enemies of the people, who are making desperate efforts to regain their old position.

Lenin wrote:

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During the transition from capitalism to communism, suppression is still necessary; but it is the suppression of the exploiting minority by the exploited majority. A special apparatus, a special machine for suppression, the "state," is still necessary, but this is now a transitory state; it is no longer a state in the proper sense; for the suppression of the minority of exploiters by the majority of the wage slaves of yesterday is comparatively so easy, simple and natural a task that it will entail far less bloodshed than the suppression of the risings of slaves, serfs or wage-laborers, and it will cost mankind far less. This is compatible with the diffusion of democracy among such an overwhelming majority of the population that the need for a special machine of suppression will begin to disappear.*

The Soviet state is further distinguished precisely by the widest democracy for the toilers, unprecedented in any other state.

The Soviet state apparatus—says Comrade Stalin—does not consist only of Soviets. In the fullest sense of the word, the Soviet state apparatus consists of the Soviets plus these vast non-Party and Party organizations which link up the Soviets with the very "rank-and-file," which merge the state apparatus with the vast masses, and which, step by step, are breaking down every semblance of a barrier between the state apparatus and the population.**

Literally on every inch of our Soviet land, of our great country, it is possible to find thousands upon thousands of examples of this Soviet socialist democracy. It is not implanted from above, by decree, or by written order. The Party of Lenin lays down the principal lines for directing the creative energy of the toilers, it mobilizes and organizes them. And this energy, this initiative create the models and wonders of the new socialist democracy on the spot. That was and still is the case with socialist competition, with the patronage of workers over institutions and with socialist dual service; *** thus arose production conferences,

* Lenin, State and Revolution.
*** A system practiced in the Soviet Union, under which workers who have distinguished themselves in production are sometimes appointed to fill, concurrently with their own work, responsible posts in the government services, such as assistant chiefs of departments, and so forth.
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the youth "Light Cavalry," * mass control and check-up in the enterprises, the work of the sections of the Soviets and of the collective farm conferences. Wherever one looks one can see the barriers between the state apparatus and the population disappearing and this Soviet state apparatus merging with the population.

Both our enemies and our friends wonder at the precision with which the state plan is now fulfilled in our industry. But is the fulfillment of this plan conceivable unless the workers of every enterprise discuss both the entire economic plan and that section of it which relates to their branch of industry and their particular enterprise especially; unless they decide on the basis of their own experience and knowledge how and by what means it is to be fulfilled; unless they often "put this plan right" by increasing it; unless they mobilize to fulfil it?

The same is the case on the collective farms. We cannot imagine the achievement of an improvement in stock-raising unless the collective farmers themselves realize its importance, unless they actually discuss what to do in their particular district and collective farm—and how to do it—in order to fulfil the state stock-raising plan.

The improvement of stock-raising is still a sore spot with us, a difficult matter. But not long ago the Central Statistics Board informed us that in the branch of stock-raising that is the easiest for us so far—pig-raising—there has been an increase of 44 per cent in the number of pigs. Can we imagine our old, backward, individual farms achieving such rapid results? No. This success was achieved because we have the new, socialist farms in the countryside—the collective farms—because they have already begun to work in a socialist manner, because they already understand the general socialist plan issued by our state. At the present time we cannot picture the fulfillment of the state stock-raising plan unless under Soviet democracy, our socialist de-

* Groups of Young Communist League members who pay surprise visits to administrative bodies with a view to bringing to light defects or abuses.
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mocracy, the toiling population itself, the collective farmers themselves, in all the districts and collective farms, discuss this plan in the most detailed manner and provide for its fulfillment by well-picked and properly placed honest toilers.

This is the procedure with regard to all state affairs, both great and small, in the Soviet state created by Lenin. In this way the masses are developing towards universal participation in the affairs of the state, thus they are learning from their own experience to build a new historic order under the leadership of the Party of Lenin led by the great Leninist—Stalin.

The Soviet state has another important distinguishing feature which has never been seen in any other state. The Soviet state guides the unified centralized economy of a great country. History knows nothing like it.

The entire system of industrial enterprises—both those seized from the capitalists and the large numbers built by the proletarian state—of railways, water transport, electric power stations, state farms, trading organizations, machine and tractor stations, and, lastly, the hundreds of thousands of collective farms now constitute a single system of socialist economy. Socialist labor, social labor in social enterprises, holds unchallenged sway in our country. All this enormous and complex mechanism of economic life is guided by our Soviet state through the medium of a widely ramified and flexible system of economic organs and on the basis of socialist planning. Whereas spontaneous economic laws prevail in the economy of capitalist society, and the bourgeois, in spite of their great store of experience and knowledge, cannot, try as they may, cope with these elemental laws and scramble out of the mire of economic crisis, in our country the Soviet state is directing economic development, it is guiding it by means of socialist planning and is leading the toiling masses from victory to victory. Our country is the only country in the world which knows neither crisis nor unemployment, which every year registers economic successes undreamt of by the capitalists.

The questions of industry, transport, agriculture and trade
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are occupying an ever more prominent position in the affairs of the state. Every year our state apparatus is becoming more widely ramified and establishing new organs for the administration of individual branches of economy. Thus the People’s Commissariat of State Farms was recently separated from what was formerly a single People’s Commissariat of Agriculture, for the Soviet farms have become an important independent branch of economy; thus the People’s Commissariat of Supply was divided into the Commissariat of the Food Industry and the Commissariat of Domestic Trade because of the increased importance of these branches of economy; thus the People’s Commissariat of Local Industry was recently set up.

The mission of the Soviets—the state organs of the centralized proletariat—is not only to crush the exploiters and raise and educate the toilers in the epoch of proletarian dictatorship, but also to guide the enterprises socialized by the proletariat. And the further socialist construction proceeds, the greater is the importance of these new functions in the work of the Soviet state, functions which have never before existed for any state.

That is why Lenin called our state a state of a special type.

As for discipline, order and organization, this state, in accordance with the teaching of Lenin, must be an iron one. Our state combats its class enemies with its entire force and might, with all its iron organization; the proletariat must use all the means and instruments of state power at its disposal in order to crush the resistance of the enemy, in order to annihilate it completely. Whoever thinks otherwise departs from Leninism.

4. THE FUTURE OF THE SOVIET STATE

The toilers of the Soviet Union, led by the Communist Party, on the basis of the conquests they have achieved on the Leninist road, have set themselves vast and majestic tasks for the period of the Second Five-Year Plan. Their fundamental political task now is:
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The final liquidation of the capitalist elements and of classes in general; fully to destroy the causes which give rise to class distinction and exploitation; to overcome the survivals of capitalism in economy and in the consciousness of people; to transform the whole working population of the country into conscious, active builders of a classless, socialist society.*

During the period of the Second Five-Year Plan, on the third year of which we have entered, the technical reconstruction of the national economy of the U.S.S.R. and the collectivization of agriculture must be wholly completed.

In the period of the First Five-Year Plan—said Comrade Stalin—we succeeded in organizing enthusiasm, fervor, for new construction, and achieved decisive successes. This is very good. But now this is not enough. Now we must supplement this with enthusiasm and fervor for mastering the new factories and the new technique, for seriously increasing the productivity of labor, for seriously reducing cost of production. That is the main thing now.**

The cultural level of the toilers must be raised and their well-being improved considerably.

In connection with these tasks absolute clarity is essential in regard to questions of the state.

At the Seventeenth Party Congress Comrade Stalin pointed out that there may be people who reason as follows: Since classless society is near, everything is fine and we can go to sleep, we can wait composedly with folded arms for the arrival of this classless society.

There may be people who from the fact that we are near to a classless society will draw the conclusion that we may begin to "wind up" the Soviet state, relax its strength, and relegate the Soviets to the background.

Such arguments are radically contrary to Marxism-Leninism and contradict the line of our Party.

The tasks of the Second Five-Year Plan call for a great mobilization.

* Resolution of the Seventeenth Party Conference.
** Stalin, "The Results of the First Five-Year Plan," in the Symposium From the First to the Second Five-Year Plan, p. 29.
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zation of the forces and energy of the toilers in all sections of socialist construction. They call for a further rise in their cultural and political level and the ability to administer the affairs of the state. They call for great organization on the part of the millions, for discipline and class consciousness in accomplishing the set tasks.

All this the Party and the revolutionary vanguard of the toilers can bring about first and foremost through the organs of proletarian dictatorship and democracy which embrace the masses to the greatest extent—through the Soviets.

The Soviets are far from being an external superstructure or added wing in our country which may at some moment be eliminated. Such arguments can proceed only from people blinded by opportunism and completely corrupted by bourgeois science. The Soviets have struck deep roots into the very midst of the people. The Soviets are the form of organization of the proletariat as the ruling class together with its ally, the peasantry. It is through the Soviets that the proletariat accomplishes all socialist construction.

And the more imposing the historic task which the proletariat has now set itself, the more intense effort, creative energy and heroism it requires, the higher the rule and importance of the Soviets and the Soviet state.

And that is why today, on the eve of the Seventh All-Union Congress of Soviets, we must loudly proclaim that the Soviet state, the creation of Lenin, has a glorious past, a glorious present, and a still more glorious future.

Through the Soviets and in them, in the form of the Soviet democracy, mass initiative and creative energy have been developing, new heroes and talent have been rising from among the people, and the heroism of the millions, which has wrought the wonders of the First Five-Year Plan that have aroused the admiration of the entire world, has found and is finding expression.

Only by strengthening the Soviets and further developing
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Soviet democracy shall we achieve the great historic aims of the Second Five-Year Plan.

Our state is a special kind of state. It is building a society in which the necessity for the state will vanish and where the state will wither away. To consider that our state is already withering away would be a gross and extremely harmful political error. There are some would-be theoreticians, corrupted by bourgeois literature, by the former opportunist theories of Bukharin or of the counter-revolutionary Trotsky-Zinoviev group, who attempt to present the question in this light. There can be only one conclusion with regard to them—they must be thrown out of the Party. In this most fundamental, most vital question of Leninism, the question of the revolution, there is no place for discussion.

For all of us, for the entire Party, the first and fundamental principle with regard to this question is expressed in the following thesis of Comrade Stalin, which accords fully with the teaching of Lenin:

We are in favor of the state dying out and at the same time we stand for the strengthening of the dictatorship of the proletariat, which represents the most powerful and mighty authority of all forms of state which have existed up to the present day. The highest possible development of the power of the state, with the object of preparing the conditions for the dying out of the state: that is the Marxist formula. Is it “contradictory”? Yes, it is “contradictory.” But this contradiction is a living thing, and completely reflects Marxist dialectics.*

The road to complete democracy, of which Lenin spoke, leads through the consolidation of the proletarian state, for—and this we are doing successfully—it is necessary for us to draw ever larger strata of the proletariat and the toilers into the work of state administration and organization, into our Soviet construction, into our socialist construction, and this means the strengthening of the proletarian dictatorship and the simultaneous creation of the conditions for its withering away in the future.

Further, it is necessary to fight against our class enemies, to do away with these enemies, which means the simultaneous strengthening of the proletarian dictatorship and its organs. And this we are doing likewise on the basis of mobilizing the toiling masses.

It is necessary to create new social, socialist discipline, which means the simultaneous strengthening of the proletarian dictatorship, with which it is connected. It is necessary to combat petty-bourgeois prejudices, petty-bourgeois tendencies, and this cannot be isolated from the struggle for strengthening the proletarian dictatorship. Thus the road to the withering away of the proletarian dictatorship leads through its strengthening. *It cannot be otherwise.*

Similarly, we cannot for a single moment forget our capitalist surroundings. So long as capitalism exists beyond the borders of our country, even when classless society exists in our country, this country as the shock brigade of the world proletariat, our socialist state uniting the toilers, with regard to these capitalist surroundings will always be the greatest, most fundamental and most powerful organ of the proletariat. With regard to these capitalist surroundings which it is fighting and will fight for the victory of the world socialist revolution it will act as the dictatorship of the proletariat.

In short, in the great matter of building communist society we must not for a single moment forget either the difficulties and dangers arising from our capitalist surroundings or the principle that this task can be accomplished only by class struggle, by the elimination of bourgeois classes and elements within the country. And all this demands the greatest vigilance and attention in the everyday practical work of strengthening the dictatorship of the proletariat.

Lastly, we must not for a single moment forget that we are faced with the task of re-educating the petty producers. The peasants have entered the collective farms. That is a great thing. But it would be a mistake to consider that their mere entry
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into the collective farms has made them perfect communards. No, this is far from being the case. That would be self-deception, that would mean glossing over the situation. We know that among the peasants there are still many survivals of the petty-proprietor psychology, and that in order to re-educate them our Party, the proletariat and our proletarian state must continue to act as their leaders. Without this condition, without this re-education, all talk of the possibility of any sort of relaxation or withering away of our state is pernicious nonsense and twaddle.

Lastly, it is necessary that in our practical work we should bear in mind the struggle for the new social discipline, which is becoming ever more voluntary and conscious, but in order to strengthen it we still have to apply not only methods of persuasion, which are constantly gaining in importance, but also methods of compulsion, which eventually must become entirely unnecessary.

Lenin has written of this complete democracy, democracy under communism, when the necessity for the state disappears:

When all have learned the art of administration, and will indeed independently administer social production, will independently keep accounts, control the idlers, the gentlefolk, the swindlers and similar "guardians of capitalist traditions," the escape from this national accounting and control will inevitably become so increasingly difficult, such a rare exception, and will probably be accompanied by such swift and severe punishment (for the armed workers are practical men and not sentimental intellectuals, and they will scarcely allow anyone to trifle with them), that very soon the necessity of observing the simple, fundamental rules of everyday social, common life will become a habit.

The door will then be wide open for the transition from the first phase of communist society to its higher phase, and with it to the complete withering away of the state.*

But this road leads only through the Soviets, their consolidation and development.

For it is first and foremost in the Soviets that the toilers learn administration, accounting and control, it is in the Soviets and

* Lenin, State and Revolution.
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through the Soviets that the new socialist discipline is bred, the swindlers and parasites are combated and the principal rules of everyday social, common life are bred and firmly implanted as a habit among the toilers. The road to complete communism lies not outside the Soviets, not through their gradual “demolition” as some external added wing, but only through the Soviets, through the utmost possible consolidation and development of Soviet democracy and the utilization of the Soviet form to the full; that is the path to full communism, when the Soviets will be completely filled with new socialist content, with communist democracy, under which a special apparatus for governing man will no longer be necessary.

However, comrades, there is one other circumstance of no little importance that we must not forget in reflecting on the destiny of our state: in order to fulfil this mission, Soviet power must triumph throughout the world.

It is for this that it was born!

5. REVOLUTIONARY VIGILANCE

The Soviet state continues to exist in capitalist surroundings. Within the country the class enemy—bourgeois-landlord counter-revolution and the kulaks—has been routed, but not yet finally smashed.

The enemy still attempts to strike at us, to undermine the cause of socialist construction. The treacherous murder of Comrade S. M. Kirov, that splendid fighter for communism, stirred the whole country. It showed more plainly than ever that, though beaten into the dust the counter-revolutionary reptile still strikes with its poisonous fangs wherever it can. This crime has brought home once more that so long as we are surrounded by capitalism, its fascist agents, filled with hatred for the new socialist order, urge on the counter-revolutionary scum in our country, including some who screen themselves with Party cards, to attempts at murders, provocation and wrecking. The circles
of the world bourgeoisie which have adopted the most irreconcilable attitude towards us, and their fascist agents, are using the scoundrels existing in our country, they are providing revolvers and bombs for white guards whom they send into our country, and give them instructions in murder by insidious striking in the dark, arson in factories and collective farm barns, wrecking and espionage.

Under these conditions it would be criminal to lay aside the sharpest and most powerful weapons of struggle of the proletarian state power.

The proletarian dictatorship has been and will be relentless; it has been and will be resolutely and revolutionarily bold in punishing the enemies of the people.

Under the present conditions, when the class enemies, in the face of our decisive victories, are resorting to the basest, vilest, and sharpest methods of struggle, when the agents of these enemies will scorn no means of achieving their end, when they will use all means of deception or cunning in order to worm their way into our apparatus, to install themselves in factories or collective farms, and even to penetrate into the Party or utilize provocateurs with Party cards in their possession, opportunists who have become traitors and counter-revolutionaries to their marrow—like all the Zinovievs and Kamenevs, Zalutskys and the rest—we need vigilance, more vigilance, and once again vigilance.

In this connection we must recall the prophetic words uttered by Comrade Stalin at the Joint Plenum of the Central Committee and Central Control Commission in January 1933. Unfortunately, by far not all members or sections of our apparatus have properly grasped and assimilated these directives. Self-criticism obliges us to admit this, though belatedly, after a great loss, after the murder of Comrade Kirov.

We must bear in mind—Comrade Stalin warned—that the growth of the power of the Soviet state will increase the resistance of the last remnants of the dying classes. It is precisely because they are dying and living their last days that they will pass from one form of attack to
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another, to sharper forms of attack, appeal to the backward strata of the population and mobilize them against the Soviet Union. There is no mischief and slander that these "have been" will not commit against the Soviet government and around which they will not try to mobilize the backward elements. This may give ground for the revival of the activities of the defeated groups of the old counter-revolutionary parties: the Socialist-Revolutionaries, the Mensheviks and the bourgeois nationalists in the centre and in the outlying regions; it may give grounds also for the revival of the activities of the fragments of counter-revolutionary opposition elements, the Trotskyists and Right deviationists. Of course, there is nothing terrible in this. But we must bear all this in mind if we want to put an end to these elements quickly, and without great loss.

That is why revolutionary vigilance is the quality that Bolsheviks particularly require at the present time.*

A bitter and painful lesson has corroborated this warning uttered by Comrade Stalin. This directive must become a law for the Bolsheviks. However, in speaking of vigilance there is nothing worse or more criminal than to limit oneself to verbal declarations and incantations. This is the worst form of self-deception and self-consolation, the worst form of deception of the masses.

Revolutionary vigilance means first of all that people must be tested, that the people promoted to leading posts must not be Communist "ninnies," who have no grasp on anything, who do not see what is happening under their very eyes, who are incapable of sensing the presence of the enemy—who is crafty, cautious and adroit—but must be people unreservedly devoted to the cause of the Party, to the cause of Lenin, capable of entering into the matter in hand and reading the thoughts of those around them, people possessing class instinct and capable of recognizing and frustrating the intrigues of the enemy.

Revolutionary vigilance consists in organizing our work in such a manner, in securing such an order of things, such control and testing of people as to impede to the greatest possible degree and render impossible the penetration of scoundrels, provocateurs and spies into our apparatus and their activities within it.

* Stalin, in the Symposium From the First to the Second Five-Year Plan, pp. 55-56.
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Laxity, slovenliness, unconcern and blind confidence greatly assist the activities of the enemy. It was precisely insufficient vigilance that made it possible for a scoundrel and adventurer in one of our large regional committees to penetrate through the Communist Party apparatus to a responsible Soviet post.

We must kick out those who in this vital matter want to swindle the Party and the masses by verbal declarations. Revolutionary vigilance, daily and hourly, must be part of all our practical work.

In connection with the tasks of the Second Five-Year Plan, the tasks of building a classless, socialist society, special importance attaches to the educational side of the proletarian dictatorship.

It is necessary for us to eradicate the survivals of capitalism not only in economy but also in the minds of men.

For this reason special attention must be devoted to strengthening the new, enlightened, socialist attitude towards labor.

Especial attention must be devoted by the Soviets and the Party to breeding new enlightened, voluntary, socialist discipline among the toilers, which is one of the most important features of communism.

It is essential to give especial attention and care to cultivating among the population of our country respect for Soviet law, for revolutionary order and care of sacred public, socialist property.

Special attention must be devoted to promoting new talent from among the people; in this matter Comrade Stalin, as Lenin before him, never tires of urging us, teaching us to care for these new people to cherish them as lovingly as a gardener tends a favorite fruit tree.

We must also increase the attention devoted to questions of culture. The Soviet government has created the conditions under which we have begun to catch up rapidly with the advanced peoples as regards our cultural development.

Socialist industry has created the technical, material condi-
tions for the further rapid growth of culture. Comrade Stalin systematically raises questions of construction for cultural purposes—and this year the questions of school construction, the development of the paper industry, the printing industry and the motion picture industry are being placed on a larger scale and more thoroughly than ever before.

But much depends on local initiative. Our Soviet power is based on the initiative and creative energy of the masses themselves. Our cultural development will proceed ten times faster if the Party committees and regional Soviets, and the district and village Soviets, begin to concern themselves in real earnest with the question of schools and hospitals, the construction of bathhouses, the work of traveling cinemas, and all kinds of courses for the education of adults.

The cultural demands of the masses are increasing. This is a pleasing fact. And it is necessary for all our Soviet and Party organizations to do everything to satisfy these demands, mobilizing and directing the initiative and creative energy of the masses to complete the cultural revolution planned by Lenin. The Soviet state is becoming and will be the most cultured and enlightened in the world.

All our successes and achievements, the entire development of all the victories of the Soviet state, were secured by the correct leadership of the fighting Communist Party created by Lenin.

Under the leadership of the best continuer of the work of Lenin, under the leadership of Comrade Stalin, the Party has successfully defended the purity of Lenin’s teachings in struggle against all the enemies of Leninism; it has led and is leading the toiling masses from victory to victory.

Every year brings us new irrefutable proof of the triumph of Lenin’s ideas.

The cause of socialism has won decisive victories within the country.

But we must clearly realize that this happened because the Party followed with precision the directives of Lenin and because
Comrade Stalin, carrying out the bequests of Lenin, on the basis of the teachings of Lenin, developed Lenin's theory through the new experience gained in struggle and construction and never tired of arming the Party with it.

What he has accomplished in this respect now forms the iron theoretical weapon of our Party, the weapon of Marxism-Leninism.

Whoever fails to understand this, whoever does not recognize these achievements in theory recognized by our Party, these achievements which have constantly lit and are lighting our way, is not a Marxist, not a Leninist, not a Communist, and is heading straight for the mire of counter-revolution.

The shameful and damnable path of Zinoviev and Kamenev serves but to confirm this once again.

Under the leadership of Comrade Stalin the Soviet state created by Lenin has become a mighty and prosperous country, the Union of Soviet Republics, where the toilers of all nations, speaking their native languages, living under differing conditions, and each having its own history, have joined in fraternal union to complete the cause of communism bequeathed by Lenin and near and dear to all of them.

They have always known and know that their cause is secure, that they may rest assured in their great creative labor, for their frontiers are being guarded by the mighty Red Army—the child of Lenin and Stalin.

They have always known and know that they are triumphing armed with the directives, the theory of Lenin and Stalin. They know that the better armed they are with Leninism, the greater success will attend their efforts.

Long live the great banner of Marx and Engels, Lenin and Stalin, for it, and it alone, spells our victory!
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