

are for the most part naturally free from the political and social prejudices of their former superiors. The whole thing means a tremendous change in the social life of Germany. The two pillars of the old caste system were the reserve officer and the official with academic training. There was a line drawn between the

world in which these two reigned and the world below, which nobody overstepped. The one has disappeared, the other's position is going to be shaken. In this way new blood will be infused into the veins of the old bureaucracy. It will react on the universities themselves.

## RUSSIA'S NEW ECONOMY

BY N. BUCHARIN

*[The following is a German report of the speech which the Soviet Commissar Bucharin delivered on the eighth of last June, before the Third World-Congress in Moscow.]*

From *Die Rote Fahne*, June 28, 29  
(BERLIN OFFICIAL BOLSHEVIST DAILY)

IN order to understand the new course we have adopted, it is necessary to know its connection with the economic and social crises that we passed through last spring. The experience of the Russian Revolution shows that our earlier ideas of revolutionary processes were rather naïve. Even the most orthodox followers of Marx supposed that the proletariat needed only to seize political power in order to get full control of the instruments of production — after first ejecting, of course, the higher ranks of the bourgeoisie. Experience teaches quite the contrary. Every revolution involves a complex reorganization of society. A proletarian revolution involves this in a much higher degree than the bourgeois revolutions of the past. A proletarian revolution requires the people not only to seize and reorganize the government, but to seize and reorganize the whole productive mechanism of society. The latter, in fact, is its most important task.

Now, what is the character of this productive mechanism in a capitalist state? In the first place, you have a capitalist hierarchy, one group below another — at the top the wealthy owners; next to them, the business administrators; next below them, the technical personnel; one step further down the scale, skilled artisans and mechanics; and at the bottom, common laborers. When you start out to reorganize this society, you disturb the balance between these groups, you break off connection between them. The workmen start this by open revolt against the government and by strikes. So long as soldiers obey their officers, you cannot have a revolution in the army. So long as employees obey their bosses and employers, you cannot have a revolution in industry. But the moment you break the ties between these different classes and groups, you stop production. If the employees strike or man the barricades, work ceases.

If the skilled engineers and scientific personnel sabotage, output dwindles. The proletariat cannot deal with this situation until it has the whole political power in its own hands.

When conservative Socialists like Kautsky and Bauer talk of continuing production and having revolution at the same time, they are talking nonsense. It would be like telling soldiers to dispense with their officers and still continue to obey them. Either you have a revolution and a temporary disorganization of production, or production runs along as usual and you have no revolution. You have to pay a price for a revolution. You cannot get a transition to a higher form of existence for nothing. We should not fear this temporary wreckage of our material prosperity. You cannot make an omelet without breaking eggs.

It is clear that the price we must pay for a revolution is the higher, the more powerful the resistance offered by other classes and groups of society; and that it will be highest in the first country to set up a proletarian dictatorship. In Russia the class-struggle involved not only civil war, but foreign war. When a domestic conflict develops into a war against powerful governments outside the country, the cost of a revolution becomes enormous. This is the principal reason for our fearful impoverishment. We have had to devote almost three quarters of our scanty resources and of the fruits of our labor to the Red Army. Any rational man can see what that means.

Human beings must have bread, to live. The bread-problem is the hardest problem of revolution. The economic disorganization inevitable in such a crisis also breaks the ties between the city and the country. When the proletariat is fighting in the towns, and production ceases there, then relations between the towns and the country

cease. Large estate-owners and prosperous farmers find themselves without banking facilities. Farmers' unions and societies are broken up. The exchange of country produce for city goods stops. The credit system goes to smash. When the towns cease to serve the country, the country ceases to serve the towns. The whole economic balance between the urban and the rural population is destroyed.

Since city people must live even during a revolution, we must devise special methods for feeding them. First, the supplies accumulated in the towns will be used up. Second, we can use force to collect grain from the farmers. Third, the proletarian sympathies of the peasantry help us, because the latter know that they owe to the proletarian government the protection they enjoy against their former landlords and other exploiters.

So long as we were fighting a civil war at home and a foreign war against reactionaries abroad, the last of these three motives played an important part among the peasantry. When we employed force, we based it on this sentiment. Every disciple of Marx knows that the claim of our opponents, that the peasants are the enemies of the Bolsheviki and that our power is based solely upon our bayonets, is nonsense. Even an old established government like that of the tsars could not have maintained itself were that the case. We used force because our compulsion was backed up by the conviction of the peasants that no other government would protect them from the great landlords from whom they had taken their land. We had given eighty-two per cent of the large estates of Russia to the peasants, and the peasants have too keen an appreciation of the value of property to give that up. They reckon wisely that they will come out best by holding on to the land they have got; for

then they will be sure of an income later. That is why they tolerate our requisitions and why we can give them a certain exceptional status in our economic society. There we have firm ground under our feet.

Capitalist governments have discovered by experience that they can enforce in time of war economic regulations which they never could put into effect in time of peace. Just the same thing happened with us. All classes in Russia, even the petty bourgeoisie, felt that every sacrifice must be made during the war. We could depend on this sentiment to back us up in employing dictatorial methods.

But when the war was over, opposition to our measures was sure to grow. It expressed itself first in resistance to our regulatory system, and as an anarchist agitation among the peasants. It is clear in economics, that, if we take away all the surplus which the peasants produce, we leave them no motive to increase production. The only motive that is left is the peasant's conviction that he must help out the town-workers, so that they may defend him from the great landlords. When we crushed armed resistance, this motive became very weak. We discovered at once that the cultivated area was decreasing. This was partly because we enrolled the farmers in the army, and partly because draft-animals and agricultural implements had grown scarcer. So we are in the midst of an agricultural crisis, and are in danger of not having enough to eat.

Naturally, when farm-production declines, city-production falls off. It is not true that our factories and workshops are utterly ruined. In many large textile and metal-working factories we still have excellent machinery. But the great problem is to provide food for the townspeople. Our workmen are hungry, and the circulation of produce

and manufactures between the city and the country stagnates.

These economic conditions produce social effects. When our factories are at a standstill, the workers resort to various devices to earn a living. For instance, they make little articles for everyday use on their own account in the metal-working shops. Thereby they cease to be proletarians. They discover that they have a stake in freedom to trade, and acquire the mental attitude of the petty bourgeoisie. So we have a reversion of the proletariat to the petty bourgeoisie, with all its characteristic features. The proletariat keeps dispersing into the villages and taking up small independent trades. The greater the social chaos, the more rapid this breaking-up and degeneration of the proletariat.

Thus the proletariat as a class is being weakened by our economic condition. This tendency was reinforced by the loss of the élite among them during the wars. Our armies consisted of amorphous masses of peasants, led by Communists and non-partisans. We have lost heavily of the best of our proletarian leaders, the men who enjoyed in the highest degree the respect and confidence of their fellow factory-hands. Added to all that, we had to send many of our best men to the villages and elsewhere, to run the machinery of government. When you organize a proletarian dictatorship in an agricultural country, you must move the members of that class about the country as you would the men on a chessboard, so that they may guide the peasants. You can readily understand, therefore, how the strength of the proletariat has declined in the factories. Only the worst elements remained there. So we are witnessing declassification of the working class. That is the great present crisis.

The peasants also have suffered, but not so much as the proletariat. From

the economic standpoint, but not from the political standpoint, they have won more than any other class of the population. The peasants are better off materially than the proletariat, although the latter run the government. The peasants feel that they are stronger than ever. In addition, we witness certain secondary effects. The peasants learn a great deal about politics in the army. They don't come back from war the same kind of men they were when they went in. They are more intelligent, more class-conscious, more alert. They understand politics pretty well by this time. They say to themselves: 'We're the real power in this country. We'll not tolerate being treated like the younger son in the family. We're willing to feed the workingmen, but we're the elder son and demand our rights.'

When the fetters of the war fell from their limbs, the peasants immediately began to make demands. They are interested in petty trading. They are champions of freedom to buy and sell, and enemies of government regulation and socialized production. They have made their wants known, and in some districts like Siberia, Tambov, and elsewhere, they have revolted against us. The situation was not as bad as the foreign press represented, but it was a disturbing symptom.

They invented a political battle-cry to express their economic programme. They clamored: 'For the Bolsheviki against the Communists!' At first, that sounds like nonsense. But it has a kernel of reason. During the October revolution and before that, we, as a party, kept exhorting the peasants: 'Kill your landlords and seize their lands.' So the Bolsheviki got the reputation of being fine fellows. They gave the peasants everything and asked nothing back. However, of late years, we have been the party which gave the

peasants nothing and wanted everything from them. So they curse the Communists as the people who take away their grain and give them nothing in return.

Their second battle-cry is: 'For non-partisan Soviets against party dictatorship!' Since there are Communists who cannot see that a class can govern only with its head, and that the party is the head of the class, it is quite comprehensible that the peasants should not understand this. These same ideas are cherished by what I have just described as the declassed petty-bourgeois proletariat. In several instances, the metal-workers took up the fight in favor of freedom of trade against the Communists, and in favor of class dictatorship against party dictatorship. So the equilibrium between the proletariat and the peasantry was disturbed, and a state of affairs arose which threatened the whole proletarian dictatorship. That crisis reached a climax in the Kronstadt revolt. Documents, which we subsequently discovered, prove that monarchist conspirators were at work on that occasion; but at the same time, the Kronstadt revolt was essentially a petty-bourgeois insurrection against the socialization of industry.

Our sailors are mostly the sons of peasants, and many of them come from the Ukraine. Now the Ukraine is much more petty bourgeois than Central Russia. Its peasants are more like German farmers than Russian peasants. They hated the Tsar, but they have no use for Communism. Our sailors were on furlough, and they became infected with the ideas of the people at home. That is what caused the revolt.

You know that we acted quickly. We sent one third of our party convention against the rebels. We lost many people, but crushed the revolt. However, our victory did not solve the prob-

lem. We had to modify our programme. Had the German revolution already taken place, we should have imported proletarians from that country and performed a surgical operation. But we had to act at our own expense. One thing was unconditional. We must defend our dictatorship at any cost. It was clear that, if we made no concession to the peasants, we should have a repetition of Hungary's experience. Eventually, perhaps several years later, we would get control of the government again; but the bourgeoisie would try their hand at reorganization before we got that chance. Economic demoralization would reach a point where it would be impossible to foresee how we were ever to emerge from the prevailing chaos.

So long as we are at the helm of the government, we can steer to the right or to the left. When we are not at the helm, we have nothing to say about the course we take. So our motto was: Stick to the helm; make no political concessions, but as many economic concessions as are needed. Our opponents imagine that we shall first make economic concessions and, later, political concessions. But in reality we make economic concessions in order to avoid making political concessions. We cannot tolerate anything resembling a coalition government, even to the extent of giving the peasants the same political rights which the workingmen enjoy. Our concessions have not changed the class-character of our dictatorship in the slightest. When a government makes concessions to another class, it does not change its own class-character. A factory-owner does not become a workingman because he makes concessions to his workers.

Our social and political object in these concessions is to pacify and neutralize the petty-bourgeois masses. We know, from what I have already

told you, that our main economic difficulty is that there is no motive urging men to produce. We have created one by abolishing our requisitions and collecting a fixed tax in kind. The peasant now knows that he must give more if he produces more, but also that he can keep more. We know from experience that this is the way that he calculates. As soon as we decided upon this new measure, the area under cultivation increased. It reached the figures of 1916, and even, perhaps, of 1915.

Political peace also followed. Peasant revolts almost ceased, even in the Ukraine. Machno's bands were broken up.

Naturally, these concessions to the petty bourgeoisie must not be misunderstood. People may object that capital will begin to accumulate again gradually, and transform itself from profiteering capital into industrial capital. That is a danger which existed also after the Treaty of Brest-Litovsk, in the spring of 1918, when we had reason to be on our guard lest German capital swallow us hide and hair. But that is wholly a question of time. Our idea is: Just now we need more food and a pacified peasantry; otherwise, we shall be turned out. The very workingmen themselves will revolt against their own government, if they get nothing to eat. It will take a considerable time to revive capitalism, and longer than usual with our people in power. We have all the big manufacturing establishments and coal-mines and railways in our possession. It would take a whole epoch of history to convert our peasants into capitalists. We fancy that such capitalism will gradually develop down below the surface, but we have the principal economic resources in our hands. We want food to revive our factories. When we have done that, we shall be able to proceed with the rest of our programme. The proletariat will

cease to declassify itself into small independent producers. We can bring labor from abroad. We can introduce technical improvements, and start the electrification of Russia. When we have got that far, we shall be able to deal with the petty bourgeoisie. When the peasant receives his electric light and power from us, he will become prac-

tically a government agent, and his sentiment of economic independence will not be wounded.

If capital grows faster than our industries improve, then all will be over so far as we are concerned. But we hope the reverse will occur, and that we may thus sweep away the economic obstacles in our path.

## THE PEASANTS ARE WAITING

*[The following two letters, one from Southern Russia and the other from a province in the central part of the country, were published in the Prague Volya Rossii, the official organ of the Socialist-Revolutionary Party, for July 5, 1921. Their particular interest lies in the fact that the Socialist-Revolutionary Party seeks support particularly among the peasantry in its anti-Soviet struggle, and maintains an excellent information service in Russia. These letters are really reports. The extent of this information service is recognized even by the Soviet Government, which, in recent instructions to its secret police, recommended especially careful watch over these agents. The letters refer to events in May, 1921.]*

### I

IT is now two years since people in our part of the country, after passing early through the terrors of Bolshevism, then falling into the hands of Hetman Skoropadsky and the Germans, and finally returning once more to the Bolsheviks, began to keep their ears to the ground in constant expectation. What are they waiting for? They are waiting for better times, for the day when the lash and the dictatorship shall pass away, when the period of starvation shall be over, and when each of us shall be able to speak, live, and breathe freely. And in this protracted waiting, hope gradually becomes extinguished, will and determination become weaker and weaker. But the moment the people's wrath flares up anywhere, the moment a movement starts in any place, you can read in the eyes of each the eternal question: 'Can it be?' And every time the

hopes are vain. Nothing comes of its own accord.

The village population is crushed and terrorized. The requisitions are ruinous, for our authorities are efficient. To curry favor with the central government, they squeeze the village population unmercifully. There is one district in which 250 per cent of the requisitioned amount was actually gathered. There are cases where seed-grain has been taken; as has almost all our hay and much live-stock and poultry.

And so, when the Government ordered the organization of 'planting committees,' the peasants would not listen to them. In spite of all the efforts of our 'best' Communists, who personally went to the villages to persuade the peasants, the latter refused to have anything to do with the committees. The only thing that the authorities could do was to appoint committees, and report to Moscow that everything was pro-