

I. STALIN

Industrialization and the Grain Problem

**Speech to the July 1928 Plenum of
the Central Committee of the
All-Union Communist Party**

(Stenographic Report)

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Industrialization and the Grain Problem: Speech to the July 1928 Plenum of the Central Committee of the All-Union Communist Party, July 9, 1928 (Stenographic Report)

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Speech of I.V. Stalin at the July Plenum of the Central Committee of the CPSU(b)¹

Evening, July 9, 1928

Chairman [Rykov]. Comrade Stalin has the floor.

Stalin. Comrades, before turning to the specific question of our difficulties on the grain front, allow me to touch upon certain general questions of theoretical interest that have arisen here at the plenum.

First of all, there is the general question *regarding the principal sources of our industrial development* and the ways to sustain the current pace of that development. This question was directly addressed, perhaps without themselves even realizing it, by Comrade Osinsky² and, following him, by Comrade Sokolnikov.³ It is a question of paramount importance.

¹ RGASPI, *f.* 17, *op.* 2, *d.* 375 (part 2), *ll.* 500b–660b. Printed.

² **N. Osinsky** (1887–1938) was the party name of Valerian V. Obolensky, a Moscow University student that joined the RSDLP in 1907. Osinsky, who knew Nikolai Bukharin from his student days, had expertise in agricultural economics and was the author of two books on the topic. Ever the rebel, Osinsky aligned himself with the Left Communists in 1918, and was a key leader of the Democratic Centralist faction in 1920. He was a signatory of the Trotskyist “Declaration of the 46” in 1923. Osinsky was on the presidium of Gosplan from July 1925 and named a candidate member of the Central Committee of the VKP(b) in December 1925 by the 14th Party Congress. Osinsky reunited with Bukharin ideologically during the agricultural crisis of 1927–30, and ultimately shared his fate of arrest and execution during the Terror.

³ **Grigory Sokolnikov** (1888–1939), né Hirsh Brilliant, joined the RSDLP in 1905 and was a participant of the 1905 revolution. He was elected to the Central Committee in 1917 and served as People’s Commissar of Finance from 1922. Sokolnikov was closely aligned with Leningrad party leader Grigory Zinoviev and was therefore shifted from control of Narkomfin to a less powerful vice chairmanship of Gosplan in January 1926. Sokolnikov was arrested in October 1937 and was a prominent defendant in the 1937 Great Show Trial of Karl Radek and Iurii Piatakov. He received a 10-year sentence and died in the GULag in May 1939.

I believe there are two main sources fueling our industry: firstly, the working class, and secondly, the peasantry.

In capitalist countries, industrialization usually proceeded, aside from internal accumulation, through the plunder of other nations, such as colonies or defeated countries, or through substantial and more or less enslaving foreign loans.

You know that for centuries, England drained the resources of its colonies and various parts of the world, thereby channeling additional capital into its own industry. This, incidentally, explains why England once became the “workshop of the world.”

You also know that Germany developed its industry, among other ways, using the five billion franc indemnity exacted from France after the Franco-Prussian War. It is likewise well known that America developed its industry through loans obtained in Europe. In the same way, Germany is now rebuilding its industry through loans—primarily from America.

Our country differs from capitalist countries in that it cannot and must not engage in the robbery of colonies or the plunder of other nations in general. Consequently, that path is closed to us. Yet our country also receives no loans from abroad; thus, that path is closed to us as well.

What, then, remains? Only one course of action: to develop industry and industrialize the country through internal accumulation.

Under the bourgeois order, the development of our industry, transport, and so forth, was usually financed by loans. Whether it was the construction of new factories or the retrofitting of old ones, the laying of new railway lines or the building of large power stations—none of these undertakings could proceed without foreign loans.

The situation is entirely different under the Soviet system. We are building the 1,400 verst [925 mile] Turkestan railway at a cost

of over a hundred million rubles. We are building Dnieprostroi,⁴ which also requires more than a hundred million. Do we have any loans for these projects? No, we do not. All of this is being accomplished through internal accumulation.

But where do the main sources of this accumulation lie? As I have already mentioned, there are two such sources: first, the working class, which creates value and drives industry forward; second—the peasantry.

With regards to the peasantry the situation is as follows: it pays the state not only the usual taxes, direct and indirect, but it also, firstly, *overpays* through the comparatively high prices of industrial goods, and secondly, it *receives less* than it otherwise would for its agricultural products.

This constitutes an additional tax on the peasantry in the interest of boosting the industry that serves the entire country, including the peasantry itself. It is a sort of “tribute” [*dan*], a kind of super-tax, which we are compelled to levy temporarily in order to maintain and further accelerate the current pace of development of industry, to provide industry for the whole country, to further raise rural prosperity, and eventually to abolish altogether this additional tax—these “scissors” between town and country.

Needless to say, this is an unpleasant matter. Yet we would not be Bolsheviks if we covered up the facts or turned a blind eye to the reality that, unfortunately, our industry and our country cannot yet do without this additional tax on the peasantry.

Why do I mention this? Because Sokolnikov and Osinsky do not grasp, apparently, this indisputable fact. They based their speeches on the premise that the peasantry pays too much for goods, which is absolutely true, and that the peasantry is underpaid

⁴ **Dnieprostroi**, the Dnieper Hydroelectric Station, was a dam constructed on the Dnieper River in Zaporizhzhia oblast, Ukraine. The dam, completed in 1932, was destroyed during World War II to hinder invading German forces. It was rebuilt after the war, completed in 1950.

for ag products, which is also true. What, then, do Comrades Sokolnikov and Osinsky demand? They demand the introduction of parity prices [*vosstanovitel'nye tseny*]⁵ for grain, so that these “scissors,” this underpayment and overpayment, might be eliminated immediately. But what would the elimination of the “scissors” mean, say, for this year or the coming year? It would mean slowing down the industrialization of the country, including the industrialization of agriculture, undermining our young, still-fragile industry and striking a blow at the entire national economy. Can we afford to do that? Clearly, we cannot.

Do we need to eliminate these “scissors” between town and country—all this underpayment and overpayment? Yes, they certainly need to be eliminated. Can we eliminate them right now without weakening our industry and, consequently, our national economy? No, we cannot.

In that case, what should our policy be? It should consist of gradually closing these “scissors,” bringing the prices closer together year by year by lowering the prices of manufactured goods and improving agricultural techniques, which is bound to lead to a reduction in the cost of production of grain [*khleb*], so that eventually, after a number of years, this additional tax on the peasantry can be eliminated altogether.

Can the peasantry bear this burden? Undoubtedly, it can: firstly, because this burden will ease year by year; and secondly, because the levying of this additional tax does not take place under conditions of capitalist development, where the peasant masses are doomed to impoverishment and exploitation, but rather under the Soviet system, where exploitation of the peasantry by the socialist state is ruled out, and where the payment of this additional tax

⁵ The uncredited translator of the English Stalin *Works* renders this as “replacement prices,” which is technically correct but muddies the concept. The Western economic concept of “parity” is what this was about—a desire to return to stable, historic price ratios between agricultural and manufactured products.

occurs amidst the continuous improvement of the material condition of the peasantry.

Comrade Osinsky asked: how, then, does the Central Committee's line differ from the line of the Opposition? The answer here is clear: between the Central Committee's position and the Opposition's position there lies a chasm—a fact demonstrated by the entire course and outcome of the discussion with the Opposition. As for Comrade Osinsky's position on this matter, however, it differs in no way, absolutely no way, from the line of the opposition. One must not forget that the demand for the immediate introduction of parity prices for grain is an Opposition demand. It would be strange not to acknowledge this fact. It may seem incredible, but it is an indisputable fact.

Might one ask: how can the superindustrialist follies of the Opposition be reconciled with the demand for introducing parity prices for grain? Well, it's true, these cannot be reconciled logically. However, they were combined in the opposition's platform. The fact is that the opposition has two souls: one clamorous and "Left-Revolutionary," attempting to accuse the Central Committee of being unwilling to support industrialization; the other—demagogic and opportunist in practice, aiming to curry favor with the peasants by harping on the need to introduce "parity prices" and simply drifting with the current. [...]⁶

Here is one of the Opposition's documents demonstrating they also have a second, "Extreme-Right" soul. I refer to the statement made by N. Muralov⁷ at a meeting of the faction during the USSR Congress of Soviets on April 23, 1927:

⁶ Ellipses in original.

⁷ **Nikolai I. Muralov** (1877–1937) joined the RSDLP in 1903. He was a member of the Moscow Military Revolutionary Committee during the 1917 events and was a military leader with the 3rd Army on the Eastern front during the Civil War that followed. He was a member of the Presidium of Gosplan from 1925 to 1927. A close associate of Trotsky, Muralov was arrested in the spring of 1936 and an unindicted conspirator in the Kemerovo "sabotage" trial. Executed on February 1, 1937.

The grain procurement campaign must be evaluated not only by the quantity of grain procured and the average annual price level, but also by the extent to which the campaign aligns with the interests of the *smychka*⁸ between the proletariat and the peasantry. The grain pricing policy must satisfy the following fundamental requirements: first, *the producer must receive a “parity price” for his grain*; second, we must strive to ensure that the less well-off peasant groups receive the same price for their grain as the wealthy groups.

If one considers that Muralov’s statement was submitted on behalf of the entire United Opposition,⁹ and that it was unanimously rejected by the Bolshevik faction of the Congress of Soviets as *fundamentally at odds* with our Party’s line, one can see what a mess Comrade Osinsky has gotten himself into here—with Comrade Sokolnikov following him right after.

That is the situation regarding the question of the primary sources for our country’s industrial development at the present moment.

The second question *concerns the smychka with the middle peasant*, the question of the aims and means of this alliance.

I here again must address the remarks made by Comrade Osinsky. According to his view, the *smychka* between town and country, between the working class and the fundamental mass of the peasantry, runs *exclusively* along the lines of textiles, along the

⁸ *Smychka* refers to a core bond of the toiling peasantry with the working class—a set of common material interests beyond class itself that enabled the alliance which made proletarian revolution in an overwhelmingly peasant country both possible and sustainable. Communists of this era believed the tactics of this worker–peasant alliance effected by Lenin were arguably *the central tenet* of so-called “Leninism.”

⁹ The **United Opposition** of 1926–27 was, to borrow the words of Robert V. Daniels, “a marriage of political convenience” combining “the groups successively worsted by the party apparatus in 1923 and 1925.” Top leaders were former Red Army organizer Leon Trotsky and Leningrad chief and Comintern chairman Grigory Zinoviev, both of whom were top lieutenants of Lenin at various times. Bitter rivals throughout their entire political careers, Trotsky was a coercive super-industrialist by nature, while Zinoviev waxed eloquent on Lenin’s mastery building the worker–peasant alliance—although acknowledging that NEP was a temporary, tactical retreat by the proletarian state. Ergo, the Unified Opposition’s programmatic incoherence, one would presume.

lines of satisfying the *personal* consumption needs of the peasantry.

Is this correct? It is entirely incorrect, comrades. Of course, satisfying the personal needs of the peasantry with textiles is of immense importance. That is indeed where we began building the bond with the peasantry under the new conditions. But to claim on this basis that the link established through textiles covers the entire matter, that the link based on the peasantry's personal needs constitutes the exhaustive basis of the economic union between the working class and the peasantry, would be a grave error. In reality, the link between town and country extends beyond the mere satisfaction of the peasantry's personal needs or the supply of textiles; it also encompasses meeting the economic needs of the peasantry as producers of agricultural goods. In reality, the link between town and country is forged not only through meeting the peasantry's personal needs, not merely through textiles but also through meeting the economic needs of the peasantry as producers of agricultural goods.

We provide the peasantry with more than just calico. We also supply machinery of all kinds, seeds, plows, fertilizers, and so forth—items of critical importance for the advancement and socialist transformation of the peasant economy.

Therefore the *smychka* rests not only on textiles but also on metal. Without this, the *smychka* with the peasantry would be unstable. Comrade Osinsky forgets this.

How does the *smychka* based on textiles differ from the *smychka* based on metal? Primarily in that the textile-based *smychka* concerns itself mainly with the personal needs of the peasantry, without affecting, or affecting only to a negligible degree, the productive side of the peasant economy, whereas the metal-based *smychka* concerns itself chiefly with the productive side of the peasant economy, improving that economy, mechanizing it, raising its profitability, and preparing the ground

for the consolidation of scattered peasant holdings into large-scale socially-conducted [*obshchestvennyi*] farms.

It would be a mistake to think that the goal of the *smychka* is to preserve classes, in particular, to preserve the peasant class. That is incorrect, comrades. That is not the goal of the *smychka* at all. The goal of the *smychka* is to bring the peasantry closer to the working class, as the leader of our entire development, to strengthen the union [*soiuz*] of the peasantry and the working class, with the latter acting as the leading force in that union, to gradually transform the peasantry—its psychology and its production methods—in the spirit of collectivism, and thus to prepare the conditions for the abolition of classes.

The goal of the *smychka* is not the preservation of classes, but their destruction. While the *smychka* based on textiles has little impact on the productive side of the peasant economy and therefore, generally speaking, cannot result in the remaking of the peasantry with the spirit of collectivism and the destruction of classes, the metal-based *smychka*, by contrast, primarily effects the productive side of the peasant economy—its mechanization, its collectivization—and precisely for this reason it must have as its result a gradual transformation of the peasantry and the gradual liquidation of classes, including the peasant class.

How, in general, can the peasant—his psychology and his production methods—be transformed in spirit and remolded to align with the working class and the spirit of the socialist principle of production? What does this require?

First and foremost, it requires the most extensive agitation among the peasant masses in the spirit of collectivism. Secondly, it requires the fostering of a cooperative spirit and the inclusion of ever-expanding millions of peasant households in our supply and marketing cooperative organizations. There can be no doubt that without the broad development of our cooperatives, we would not have witnessed the shift in peasant sentiment toward the collective-farm [*kol'khoz*] movement that we see today, as under

our conditions, the development of supply and marketing cooperatives paves the way for the peasantry's transition to collectivism.

Yet all this is far from sufficient to transform the peasantry. The fundamental force in transforming the peasant with the spirit of socialism is modern agricultural technology, the mechanization of agriculture, the collective labor of the peasantry, and the electrification of the nation.

Reference is made here to Lenin, citing a well-known passage from his writings regarding the *smychka* with the peasant economy. But to take Lenin in part, while refusing to take him as a whole, means to distort Lenin. Lenin fully understood that the *smychka* with the peasantry through the supply of manufactured goods was a matter of great importance. But he did not stop there; alongside this, he insisted that the bond with the peasantry also be forged through the supply of metal, through supplying the peasantry with machinery, and through the electrification of the country—that is, through all those channels that foster the transformation and restructuring of the peasant economy along collectivist lines.

Consider, for example, the following quotation from Lenin:

[I]t will take generations to remold the small farmer, and recast his mentality and habits. The only way to solve this problem of the small farmer—to improve, so to speak, his mentality—is through the material basis, technical equipment, the extensive use of tractors and other farm machinery and electrification on a mass scale. This would remake the small farmer fundamentally and with tremendous speed.¹⁰

The matter is clear: the union [*soiuz*] between the working class and the peasantry cannot be stable and enduring, the *smychka* cannot be solid or lasting, nor can it achieve its goal of gradually transforming the peasant, bringing him closer to the working class,

¹⁰ V.I. Lenin, "Report on the Substitution of a Tax in Kind for the Surplus Grain Appropriation System," Speech to the 10th Congress of the VKP(b), March 15, 1921. *Collected Works* [English edition], vol. 32, p. 217.

and placing him on the path to collectivism—unless the *smychka* of textiles is supplemented by the *smychka* of metal.

That is how Comrade Lenin understood the *smychka*.

The third point concerns the NEP and the class struggle under the conditions of the NEP. First of all, it must be established that the foundations of the NEP were laid down by our Party not after War Communism, as some comrades sometimes claim, but before it, back in early 1918, when we first had the opportunity to begin building a new, socialist economy. I could cite Ilyich's well-known pamphlet *The Immediate Tasks of the Soviet Government*, published in early 1918,¹¹ which outlines the foundations of NEP. When the Party introduced NEP after the intervention ended, it termed it the "New Economic Policy" because that very policy had been interrupted by the intervention; we were only able to implement it after the intervention—after War Communism—in comparison with which NEP was, indeed, a new economic policy.

Bukharin. Having set it aside for a time back then.

Stalin. To confirm this, I need merely to refer to the well-known resolution adopted at the 9th Congress of Soviets, based, I believe, on Lenin's report, which states in black and white that the foundations of the New Economic Policy had been outlined even before War Communism.

Osinsky. I did not object to that.

Stalin. You may not have objected, but others do.

Osinsky. I even said so myself.

Stalin. Perhaps you will allow me, after all, to quote from that resolution. In that resolution, adopted at the 9th Congress of Soviets in late 1921—almost a year after the announcement of NEP...

¹¹ N. Lenin, *The Immediate Tasks of the Soviet Government*. [April 28, 1918] in *Collected Works*, vol. 27, pp. 235–77.

Voroshilov. That was in early 1920.

Stalin. It was in late 1921, in December, at the 10th Congress of Soviets...

Voroshilov. Correct, correct!

Stalin. This resolution, “On the Preliminary Results of the New Economic Policy,” states as follows:

The so-called New Economic Policy, the fundamental principles of which were precisely defined *as early as the first breathing space in the spring of 1918*, is based on a strict assessment of the economic forces of Soviet Russia. The implementation of this policy, interrupted by the combined attack on the workers’ and peasants’ state by the counter-revolutionary forces of Russian landowners and the bourgeoisie, alongside European imperialism, became possible only after the military liquidation of counterrevolutionary attempts by the beginning of 1921.¹²

So you see, then, how mistaken those comrades are who claim that the Party realized the necessity of building socialism under conditions that permitted the market and the New Economic Policy in general only after War Communism.

What follows from this?

It follows, first of all, that NEP cannot be viewed merely as a retreat. It follows, furthermore, that NEP presupposes a victorious and systematic offensive by socialism against the capitalist elements of our economy. The Opposition, represented by Trotsky, thinks that once NEP has been introduced, only one course remains for us—to retreat step by step, just as we retreated at the beginning of NEP, while “expanding” NEP and surrendering positions.

Bukharin. Until the “international revolution” arrives.

Stalin. Quite right—until the international revolution arrives, which will spare us from further retreats.

¹² See: “Resolutions of the Ninth All-Russian Congress of Soviets,” *Congresses of Soviets of the RSFSR in Decrees and Resolutions*, Moscow, 1939, p. 225.

It is upon this flawed understanding of NEP that Trotsky bases his assertion that the Party supposedly “expanded” NEP—and departed from Lenin’s position—by introducing land leasing and hired labor in the countryside. Let us consider Trotsky’s own words:

And what are the Soviet government’s recent measures in the countryside—permitting land leasing and the use of hired labor—if not what we call the expansion of the rural NEP? But was it possible not to expand the NEP in the countryside? No, because then the peasant economy would have withered, the market would have contracted, and industry would have been stifled.¹³

That is the sort of thing one can end up saying if one gets the mistaken idea into one’s head that NEP is a retreat—and nothing but a retreat.

Can it be claimed that the Party, by introducing hired labor and land leasing in the countryside, “expanded” NEP, “retreated” from Lenin, and so on? Of course not! People who assert such nonsense have nothing in common with Lenin or Leninism. I could cite here Lenin’s well-known letter to Comrade Osinsky dated April 1, 1922, in which he speaks explicitly of the need to employ hired labor and land leasing in the countryside. This was at the end of the 11th Congress,¹⁴ where the question of work in the countryside, the NEP, and its consequences was widely discussed among the delegates.

Here is a quote from that letter, which presented a draft resolution for the delegates of the Party congress:

Regarding the conditions for the employment of hired labor in agriculture and land leasing, the Party Congress recommends that all workers in this department avoid hampering either practice with

¹³ See: L.D. Trotsky, *Eight Years: Results and Prospects. Speech at the Ceremonial Meeting in Kislovodsk Marking the 8th Anniversary of the October Revolution, Nov. 8, 1925.* (in Russian). Moscow–Leningrad, 1926; pp. 16–7.

¹⁴ The 11th Congress of the Russian Communist Party was held from March 27 to April 2, 1922.

excessive formalities; instead, they should confine themselves to implementing the resolution of the latest Congress of Soviets and studying which specific practical measures would be appropriate for curbing the excesses and harmful exaggerations associated with these practices.¹⁵

You can see how hollow and devoid of substance the talk coming from certain groups is regarding an “expansion” of NEP or a “retreat” from Lenin regarding the introduction of land leasing and hired labor in the countryside, etc.

Why do I mention this? Because people who prattle about “expanding” NEP are seeking, with this very prattle, justification for retreating before capitalist elements in the countryside. Because people have emerged, both within and around the Party, who see the “expansion” of NEP as the “salvation” of the *smychka* between workers and peasants; who, in light of the lifting of emergency measures, demand an end to restrictions on the kulaks and call for unleashing capitalist elements in the countryside—in the interests of the *smychka*.

Because it is essential to safeguard the Party against such anti-proletarian sentiments with every ounce of strength and by every possible means.

To take a ready example, I shall refer to a memorandum by a certain comrade, a staff member of *Bednota*, Osip Chernov,¹⁶ in which he demands a whole series of concessions for the kulaks, amounting to nothing less than a genuine and undisguised “expansion” of NEP. I do not know whether he is a Communist or a non-Party man.

Bukharin. Now, it seems, he is a Communist.

¹⁵ *Leninskii sbornik* IV, p. 396. This letter does not appear in the English edition of the *Lenin Collected Works*.

¹⁶ **Osip I. Chernov** (1880–?), hailing from a peasant family, joined the PSR in 1907 and was arrested and sentenced to Siberian exile. He was a staff writer who contributed frequently to *Bednota*.

Stalin. He appears to be a non-Party still, but when it comes to devotion to the cause of Soviet power, many a Communist might well envy him.

Kalinin. Right!

Stalin. But this comrade, Osip Chernov, who supports Soviet power and the alliance between workers and peasants, has become so confused regarding the peasant question that he is hard to distinguish from an ideologue of the rural bourgeoisie. What does he see as the causes of our difficulties on the grain front? “The first cause,” he says, “is undoubtedly the progressive income tax system... The second cause lies in the legal changes made to the election instructions—specifically, the lack of clarity in the instructions regarding who should be classified as a kulak.”

What must be done to eliminate these difficulties? “First of all,” he says,

it is necessary to abolish the progressive income tax system as it currently stands and replace it with a system of land-based taxation, while imposing a light levy on draft animals and large agricultural implements... The second measure, no less important, is to revise the election instructions and define more broadly the criteria that mark the beginning of an exploitative kulak farm.

So there you have it—the “expansion” of the NEP. As you can see, the seed sown by Trotsky did not fall on barren ground. A misunderstanding of NEP gives rise to chatter about “expanding” NEP, and chatter about “expanding” NEP spawns all manner of memoranda, articles, letters, and proposals to give the kulak free rein, to relieve him of restrictions, and to enable him to enrich himself without hindrance.

In this same context, regarding the question of NEP and the class struggle under NEP conditions, I would like to point out one

more fact. I have in view Comrade Petrovsky's¹⁷ statement that the class struggle under NEP, specifically in connection with grain procurements, is supposedly of only tertiary importance; that this class struggle supposedly has, and can have, no significant bearing on the difficulties we are facing with grain procurement.

I must say, comrades, that I cannot agree with this statement at all. I believe that under the dictatorship of the proletariat, there is not, and cannot be, a single political or economic fact of any significance that does not reflect the existence of class struggle in the city or the countryside. Does NEP abolish the dictatorship of the proletariat? Of course not! On the contrary, NEP is a specific form and instrument of the dictatorship of the proletariat. And is the dictatorship of the proletariat not a continuation of the class struggle? (*Voices: True!*) After this, how can one claim that the class struggle plays a third-rate role in such important political and economic events as the kulaks' opposition to Soviet policy during grain procurement, and the Soviet government's countermeasures and offensive actions against kulaks and profiteers in connection with that procurement?

Is it not a fact that, during the grain procurement crisis, we witnessed the first serious challenge to Soviet policy by capitalist elements in the countryside under NEP?

Are there no longer classes and class struggle in the countryside?

Is it not true that Lenin's slogan—on *reliance* upon the village poor, *alliance* [*soiuz*] with the middle peasant, and *struggle* with the kulaks—is the fundamental slogan of our work in the

¹⁷ **Grigory I. Petrovsky** (1878–1958) was a social democratic revolutionary from 1897 and a member of the RSDLP from 1898. He was twice jailed before being named a member of the 4th state Duma in 1912. After the Bolshevik seizure of power in 1917 he served as the first People's Commissar of Internal Affairs, a portfolio which included supervision of the secret police, the Cheka. Petrovsky was a top official of the Ukrainian Central Executive Committee of Soviets, narrowly missing death in the terror when he was denounced and sacked in 1939. He was ultimately able to find a position working at the Museum of the Revolution, where he remained until the time of his death.

countryside under present conditions? And what is this slogan if not an expression of the class struggle in the countryside?

Of course, our policy is not one of fomenting class struggle. Why? For, given that we hold power, that we have consolidated this power, and that the commanding heights are concentrated in the hands of the working class, it is in our interest that the class struggle should not take the form of civil war and that we should have the opportunity to continue our constructive work in a more or less tranquil atmosphere. But this does not mean that the class struggle has thereby been abolished, or that this very class struggle will not intensify. Still less does it mean that the class struggle is not the decisive force in our forward advance. No, it does not mean that.

We often say that we are developing socialist forms of economic activity in the sphere of trade. But what does this mean? It means that, in doing so, we are ousting thousands upon thousands of small and medium-sized traders from commerce. Is it conceivable that these traders, ousted from the marketplace, will sit idly by without attempting to organize resistance? Clearly not.

We often say that we are developing socialist forms of economic activity in the sphere of industry. But what does this mean? It means that, through our advance toward socialism, perhaps without even realizing it, we are ousting and ruining thousands upon thousands of small and medium-sized capitalist industrialists. Is it conceivable that these ruined individuals will sit idly by without attempting to organize resistance? Certainly not.

We often say that it is necessary to curb the exploitative tendencies of the kulaks in the countryside, to impose heavy taxes on them, to restrict their leasing rights, to bar them from election to the Soviets, and so on. But what does this mean? It means that we are gradually squeezing and suppressing the capitalist elements in the countryside, sometimes driving them to ruin. Is it conceivable that the kulaks will be grateful to us for this, or that they will not

attempt to organize a section of the poor or middle peasants against the policy of the Soviet government? Certainly not.

Is it not clear that our entire advance, and every significant success we achieve in the sphere of socialist construction, is an expression and result of the class struggle in our country? It follows from all this that, as we advance, the resistance of capitalist elements will increase and the class struggle will intensify; meanwhile, Soviet power—its strength ever-growing—will pursue a policy of isolating these elements, a policy of disintegrating the enemies of the working class, and, finally, a policy of suppressing the resistance of the exploiters, thereby creating the foundation for the further advance of the working class and the broad masses of the peasantry.

It is impossible to imagine that socialist forms will develop, displacing the enemies of the working class, while the latter retreat silently, making way for our advancement; that we will then advance again, while they retreat again; and then, “unexpectedly,” all social groups without exception, both kulaks and the poor, both workers and capitalists, will suddenly, “unnoticed,” without struggle or turmoil, find themselves within the fold of socialist society. Such fairy tales do not exist and cannot exist at all, especially under the dictatorship of the proletariat.

There has never been, nor will there ever be, a case of moribund classes voluntarily surrendering their positions without attempting to organize resistance. There has never been, nor will there ever be, a case of the working class advancing toward socialism in a class society without struggle and turmoil. On the contrary, the advance toward socialism inevitably leads to resistance from exploitative elements, and the exploiters’ resistance inevitably leads to an inevitable intensification of class struggle.

This is why the working class must not be lulled into silence by talk of the secondary role of class struggle.

The fourth question concerns the problem of extraordinary measures against the kulaks and profiteers. Extraordinary measures

cannot be regarded as something absolute or fixed once and for all. Extraordinary measures are necessary and expedient under certain extraordinary conditions when we have no other measures available for maneuvering. Extraordinary measures are unnecessary and harmful under other conditions, when we have at our disposal other, flexible measures for maneuvering in the market. Those who think that extraordinary measures are bad under all conditions are mistaken. A systematic struggle must be waged against such people. But those who think that extraordinary measures are always necessary and expedient are also mistaken. With such people we must wage a decisive struggle.

Was the use of extraordinary measures during the grain procurement crisis a mistake? Everyone now acknowledges that it was not a mistake, that, on the contrary, extraordinary measures saved the country from a general economic crisis. What compelled us to adopt these measures? A grain deficit of 128 million *poods* [2.1 million metric tons] by January of this year—a deficit we had to make up before the onset of the impassable mud season, while simultaneously establishing a normal pace of grain procurement.

Could we have avoided resorting to extraordinary measures given the absence of grain reserves amounting to some 100 million *poods* [1.64 million metric tons], which would have allowed us to wait and intervene in the market, or the lack of sufficient foreign currency reserves to import large quantities of grain from abroad? Clearly, we could not.

But what would have happened had we not made up this deficit? We would now be facing a most serious crisis of the entire national economy, with famine in the cities and famine in the army.

If we had a grain reserve of hundreds of millions of *poods* in order to wait things out, intervening in the market in order to reduce the price of grain and wearing down the kulak...

Voroshilov. For the future, it is essential to have a reserve.

Stalin. ...we, of course, would not have resorted to extraordinary measures. But you know very well that we had no such reserve.

If we had possessed a hard-currency reserve of 100–150 million rubles at the time, enough to import grain from abroad, we likely would not have resorted to extraordinary measures. But you know full well that we lacked this reserve.

I must state that I do not consider grain imports shameful, given the specific conditions of our foreign trade. I can easily envision a situation where we import one type of grain—one crop—from abroad while exporting another, and come out ahead in the balance. (**Voice: Correct!**) But we did not have these reserves. And precisely because we lacked these reserves, we were forced to resort to extraordinary measures. One can hardly deny that without these measures we would now be facing a most serious crisis throughout the entire national economy. (**Voices: Quite right.**)

Does this mean that we should continue to remain without reserves and once again resort to extraordinary measures? No, it does not. On the contrary, we must take every measure within our power to build up reserves and eliminate the need for any extraordinary measures whatsoever. Those who contemplate turning extraordinary measures into a permanent or long-term policy for our Party are dangerous people, for they are playing with fire and threatening the *smychka*.

Does it follow from this that we must once and for all renounce the use of extraordinary measures? No, it does not. We have no grounds to assert that extraordinary conditions requiring the use of extraordinary measures could never recur. Such an assertion would be mere quackery. Lenin, who laid the groundwork for the New Economic Policy, did not consider it possible, even under NEP conditions, to rule out, once and for all, the use of *Kombed*

methods,¹⁸ given specific circumstances and a specific situation. All the more reason why we cannot rule out, once and for all, the use of emergency measures—measures which cannot be placed on the same level as such an extreme method of combating the kulaks as the *Kombed* methods.

It may be worth recalling an episode involving Preobrazhensky at the 11th Party Congress that has a direct bearing on this matter. It is well known that, in his theses on work in the countryside presented at the 11th Congress, Preobrazhensky attempted to reject “once and for all,” the policy of using *Kombed* methods to combat the kulaks under NEP conditions. Preobrazhensky wrote in his theses: “A policy of rejecting this stratum (the kulaks and well-to-do peasantry) and of brutally suppressing it through extra-economic means using the *Kombed* methods of 1918 would be a most harmful error” (Paragraph 2).

Lenin’s response to this is well known:

The second sentence of the second paragraph (opposing *Kombed* methods) is harmful and incorrect, as war, for example, *might compel a resort to Kombed methods*. This needs to be stated quite differently—for example, like this: given the overriding importance of boosting agriculture and increasing its output, *at the present moment*,¹⁹ the proletariat’s policy toward the kulaks and the well-to-do peasantry must be aimed primarily at *curbing* their exploitative tendencies, and so on. How to curb these tendencies, and how our state ought to and can protect the rural poor—that is the crux of the matter. This requires study, and practical study at that, whereas general phrases are *empty*.²⁰

¹⁸ **Committees of Poor Peasants**, *Kombedy*, were local groups of rural collaborators organized by the Bolsheviks under War Communism who identified wealthy members of the rural community and their likely hiding places for grain and thus aided with the process of forced requisitions. “*Kombed* methods” is therefore a euphemism for armed requisition squads.

¹⁹ In the version published in the *Stalin Works*, edited personally by Stalin, he adds the notation here, “*italics mine*.”

²⁰ *Leninskii sbornik* IV, p. 391

It is clear that extraordinary measures must be viewed dialectically, for everything depends on the conditions of time and place. That is how things stand, comrades, with the questions of a general nature that arose during the debate.

Let me now turn to the question of the grain [*zerno*] problem and the basis of our difficulties on the bread [*khleb*] front.²¹

I believe a number of comrades have made a mistake by lumping together the various causes of our difficulties on the grain front by confusing temporary and situational (specific) causes with long-term, fundamental ones. There are two kinds of reasons for grain difficulties: long-term, fundamental reasons, the elimination of which will require a number of years, and specific, situational reasons, which can be eliminated now if a number of necessary measures are taken and implemented. To lump all these reasons together is to confuse the whole issue.

What is the fundamental meaning and significance of the difficulties we face on the grain front? It is that they confront us squarely with the problem of grain, of grain production—of agriculture in general and of grain farming in particular.

Do we actually have a grain problem at all, an actual issue? Undoubtedly, we do. Only the blind could doubt that the grain problem is now making itself felt in every aspect of Soviet public life. We cannot live like Gypsies—without grain reserves, without known reserves for the event of a crop failure, without reserves for maneuvering in the market, without reserves in the event of war, and, finally, without some reserves for export. Even the small-scale peasant, for all the meagerness of his holding, cannot do without reserves, without some stocks. Is it not clear that a great state occupying one-sixth of the Earth's surface cannot do without grain reserves for maneuvering both domestically and internationally?

²¹ The English translation of this speech in the Stalin *Works* has this simply as “grain problem ... grain front.” This does, however, mark the first time in the speech that Stalin used the word “*zerno*” for grain, rather than “*khleb*,” which also means bread.

Let us suppose that the winter crops in Ukraine had not perished and we had ended the grain procurement year just “breaking even” [*tak na tak*]*—could we consider that sufficient? No, we could not. We cannot go on living on a “break-even” basis. We must have a certain minimum of reserves at our disposal if we wish to uphold the position of Soviet power on the domestic front just as we do on the foreign front.*

Firstly, we have no guarantee against military attack. Do you think it is possible to defend the country without having any grain reserves for the army? Comrade Rykov was absolutely right when he said that the present-day peasant is no longer the same as he was six years ago, when he feared losing his land to the landlord. The peasant is already forgetting the landlord. Now he demands new, better living conditions. In the event of an enemy attack, could we wage war simultaneously against the Poles at the front and against peasants in the rear for the sake of urgently obtaining grain for the army? No, we neither can nor should do so. To defend the country, we must have certain stocks to supply the army, enough for at least the first six months. Why is this six-month breathing space necessary? To give the peasant time to collect himself, to adjust to the dangers of war, to make sense of events, and to rally his efforts for the common cause of the country’s defense. If we are content with just “breaking even,” we will never have any reserves in case of war.

Secondly, we have no guarantee against complications in the grain market. We absolutely need a grain reserve for intervention in the grain market and to implement our price policy. For we cannot and must not resort to extraordinary measures every time. But we will never possess such reserves if we constantly skirt the edge of disaster, contenting ourselves to end of the procurement year “breaking even.”

Thirdly, we are not immune to crop failure. We absolutely need a certain grain reserve to supply famine-stricken regions in the event of a crop failure—at least to a certain extent, at least for a

certain period. But we will not have such a reserve unless we increase the production of marketable grain and decisively abandon the old habit of living without stockpiles.

Finally, we absolutely need a reserve for grain exports. We need to import equipment for industry. We need to import agricultural machinery, tractors, and spare parts for them. But this is impossible without exporting grain, without accumulating foreign currency reserves through grain exports. In the pre-war period, we exported between 500 and 600 million *poods* [8.2 to 9.8 million metric tons] of grain annually. We exported so much because we ourselves went underfed. That is perfectly true. But we must realize that, even so, we had twice as much marketable grain in the pre-war period as we do now. And it is precisely because we now have half the amount of marketable grain that grain has dropped out of our exports.

And what does the loss of grain exports mean? It means losing the source which enabled us to import, as we must import, equipment for industry, tractors and machines for agriculture. Can we go on like this without accumulating grain reserves for export? No, we cannot.

That is just how insecure and unstable is the position of our grain reserves.

I am not even mentioning the fact that we lack not only grain reserves across all these four categories, but also the necessary minimum stock to make a smooth transition from one procurement year to the next and to ensure an uninterrupted supply to the cities during difficult months, such as June and July.²²

Can anyone, after this, deny the acuteness of the grain problem and the seriousness of the difficulties we face on the grain front?

However, the difficulties regarding grain have also given rise to difficulties of a political character. We must by no means lose sight of this, comrades. I am referring to the discontent that has arisen

²² These being the end months of the previous crop cycle, before the new grain harvest was available for the market.

among a certain segment of the peasantry, among the poor as well as the middle peasants, and which has posed a definite threat to the *smychka*. Of course, it would be entirely wrong to say that we are already facing a *razmychka*,²³ as Comrade Osinsky spoke of it, or as Comrade Frumkin²⁴ did in his well-known memorandum. That is incorrect, comrades. A *razmychka* is a serious matter. A *razmychka* marks the beginning of civil war, if not civil war itself. We must not frighten ourselves with “dreadful” words. We must not give way to panic. That is unworthy of Bolsheviks. *Razmychka* signifies a rupture between the peasantry and Soviet power. But if the peasant had truly broken with Soviet power—the principal purchaser of peasant grain, he would certainly not be expanding his sown acreage for you—absolutely not! Yet we see that the spring-sown area has expanded in every single grain-producing region without exception. What kind of *razmychka* is that? Can one really describe this situation as a “lack of prospects” for peasant farming, as spoken of, for instance, by Comrade Frumkin? What sort of lack of prospects is that?

What lies at the root of our grain difficulties, if we consider the long-term, fundamental causes rather than temporary, circumstantial ones?

The root of our grain difficulties lies in the increasingly scattered and divided character of agriculture. It is a fact that agricultural holdings, especially grain-producing ones, are becoming smaller, less profitable [*rentabel'nyi*], and less market-oriented. Whereas before the revolution we had about 15 or 16 million peasant households, we now have up to 24 or 25 million, and this process of fragmentation is showing a tendency to

²³ *Razmychka*, the shattering of the alliance based on superclass common interests of the working class and the working peasantry. Created from *raz* (prefix meaning *apart-*) + *smychka*. So: *shattering of the smychka*. The translator of the *Stalin Works* renders this term as “estrangement,” which is vague. The urgent need to maintain the *smychka* in a 90% peasant country was a central component of 1920s Bolshevik ideology.

²⁴ **Mosei I. Frumkin** (1878–1938), was a member of the RSDLP from 1898. A Siberian, Frumkin was a top official in various Soviet trade and finance ministries until meeting his demise in the Terror.

intensify. It is a fact that our sown areas now differ little in size from those of the pre-war period, and grain production is only about 5% lower than pre-war levels; yet the production of marketable grain lags behind pre-war figures by half—that is, by 50 percent. Why is this so? Because small-scale farming is less profitable, less market-oriented, and less stable than large-scale farming. The well-known Marxist tenet that small-scale production is less efficient than large-scale production holds fully true for agriculture as well. It is precisely upon this fact that the strength and economic significance of the kulak farm in the countryside are founded.

What is the way out of this situation?

We have three courses of action open to us, as stated in the Politburo resolution.²⁵

1. The first way out is to raise the productivity of small and medium-sized peasant farms: to replace the wooden plough with the iron plough; to provide small and medium-sized machinery, fertilizers, and seeds; to offer agronomic assistance; to organize the peasantry into cooperatives; to conclude contracts with entire villages, loaning them the best seeds and thereby ensuring collective credit for the peasants; and, finally, to rent out large machines to them through rental stations [*prokatnye punkty*].

Comrade Karpinsky²⁶ is wrong to assert that small-scale peasant farming has exhausted the possibilities for its further development and that, consequently, it is not worth continuing to assist it. This is entirely incorrect. Individual peasant farming still

²⁵ See: *KPSS v rezoliutsiakh i resheniakh s"ezdov, konferentsii i plenumov Ts.K.* Ninth edition. Moscow: Politizdat, 1984; vol. 4, pp. 348–54. This resolution on grain requisition policy is from the same plenum at which this speech was delivered.

²⁶ **Viacheslav A. Karpinsky** (1888–1965), joined the RSDLP in 1898 and made a career as a party journalist, editing *Kommuna* and *Krasnaia Zvezda* in 1918 and moving to the editorial boards of *Pravda* and the party's paper targeted to the peasantry, *Bednota*. From 1927 he was chief editor of the latter publication. During the 1930s he obtained a doctorate in economics and moved to work at the Economics Institute of the Academy of Science.

possesses considerable potential for development. We simply need to know how to assist it and how to maximize that potential.

Krasnaia Gazeta is also wrong to claim, as Comrade Bukharin informed me, that the plan to organize individual peasant farms into supply and marketing cooperatives has not justified itself. This is entirely incorrect, comrades. On the contrary, the plan for supply and marketing cooperatives has fully justified itself by creating a real foundation for a shift in peasant sentiment toward the collective farm movement. Without the development of supply and marketing cooperatives, we undoubtedly would not have witnessed the breaking [*perelom*] of the peasants' attitude toward collective farms that we see today, which is helping us to further advance collective farm construction.

2. A further way out lies in helping the poor and middle peasants gradually combine their scattered smallholdings into large collective farms based on new technology and collective labor, as more profitable and more market-oriented. I am referring to all forms of consolidating smallholdings into large, communal enterprises—ranging from simple associations to artels and communes—which are incomparably more productive and market-oriented than scattered, small peasant farms.

Comrade Miliutin²⁷ is mistaken when, while advocating for collective farms, he accuses comrades of seeking to “rehabilitate” small-scale peasant farming. Comrade Miliutin evidently believes that the relationship between the collective and the individual peasant farm should be one of struggle and eradication, rather than one of assistance and elevation. This is entirely incorrect, comrades. Individual peasant farming is in no need of

²⁷ **Vladimir P. Miliutin** (1884–1937), a university graduate, joined the Bolsheviks in 1903. He was briefly the first People's Commissar of Agriculture in November 1917. During the Civil War period he was the assistant head of the Supreme Council of National Economy. During the early 1920s he was a top official in the Workers' and Peasants' Inspectorate (Rabkrin). He became director of the Central Statistical Administration and a deputy chairman of Gosplan in 1928, in which capacity he was an unflinching supporter of collectivization and the first Five Year Plan. A former associate of Lev Kamenev, Miliutin was arrested and executed during the Terror as a “Rightist.”

“rehabilitation.” It is true that its profitability is low. But that does not mean it is entirely unprofitable. We would destroy the *smychka* if we adopted the standpoint of struggling against and eradicating individual peasant farming, thereby abandoning the Leninist position of providing daily assistance and support to individual peasant farms from the collectives.

Even more mistaken is Comrade Sokolnikov when he, while extolling collective farms, declares individual peasant farming to be our “curse.” This smacks of outright war against peasant farming. Where did Comrade Sokolnikov get this idea? If peasant farming is a “curse,” how can one explain the alliance between the working class and the broad masses of the peasantry? An alliance between the working class and a “curse”—do such absurdities really exist? How can one say such things while simultaneously preaching the *smychka*? Comrade Sokolnikov recalled Lenin’s words about the need to gradually switch from the peasant “nag” to the “steel horse” of industry. That is all very well. But is that how one switches from one horse to another? To declare peasant farming a “curse” without having created a broad and powerful foundation in the form of an extensive network of collectives—does that not mean being left without any foundation at all? (*Voices: Right! Right!*) Comrade Sokolnikov’s error lies in his pitting collectives against individual peasant farms. We, however, want these two forms of farming not to be pitted against each other, but to be linked together—so that, through this link, the collective might assist the individual peasant and help him gradually shift onto the path of collectivism. We want the peasantry to view collective farms not as an enemy, but as a friend—one that helps them and will help them break free from poverty. (*Voices: True!*) If that is true, then there is no need to speak of the “rehabilitation” of the individual peasant farm, or to claim that the peasant farm is a “curse” for us.

One should have said that the small peasant farm is less profitable, or even the least profitable, compared to the large-scale

collective farm, yet is not devoid of certain significant advantages. But the impression created by your argument is that the small peasant farm is altogether unprofitable and, perhaps, even harmful.

That was not how Lenin viewed the small peasant farm. Here is what he said on the subject in his “Report on the Tax in Kind”:

If peasant farming is to develop, we must also assure its transition to the next stage which must inevitably be one of gradual amalgamation of small, isolated peasant farms—the least profitable and most backward—into large-scale collective farms. That is how socialists have always visualized it, and that is exactly how our own Communist Party sees it.²⁸

It turns out, then, that the individual peasant farm does indeed offer certain advantages. It is one thing when a higher form of farming—large-scale agriculture—struggles against a lower form, ruining and destroying it. That is the situation under capitalism. It is an entirely different matter when the higher form of farming does not ruin the lower form but helps it rise and shift onto the path of collectivism. That is the situation under the Soviet system.

Here is what Lenin says regarding the relationship between collective farms and individual peasant holdings:

In particular, efforts must be made to give real and full effect to the law issued by the Soviet government which requires of state farms, agricultural communes, and all other similar associations that they render immediate and all-round assistance to the middle peasants in their neighborhood. Only on the basis of such actual assistance is it possible to achieve agreement with the middle peasants. Only in this way can and must their confidence be won.²⁹

It follows, then, that collective farms and state farms must assist peasant holdings precisely in their capacity as individual holdings. Finally, a third quotation from Lenin:

²⁸ V.I. Lenin, “Report on the Tax in Kind Delivered at a Meeting of Secretaries and Responsible Representatives of RKP(b) Cells of Moscow and Moscow Guberniia, April 9, 1921,” *Collected Works* [English edition], vol. 32, p. 288.

²⁹ V.I. Lenin, “Resolution on the Attitude to the Middle Peasants [8th Congress of the RKP(b), March 1919],” *Collected Works* [English edition], vol. 29, p. 219.

Only if we succeed in proving to the peasants in practice the advantages of common, collective, cooperative, *artel* cultivation of the soil, only if we succeed in helping the peasant by means of cooperative or *artel* farming, will the working class, which wields state power, be really able to convince the peasant that its policy is correct and thus secure the real and lasting following of the millions of peasants.³⁰

Such was the high value Lenin placed on the significance of the collective farm movement in the socialist transformation of our country.

It is extremely strange that some comrades, in their lengthy speeches, have focused all their attention on the issue of individual peasant holdings without saying a single word—literally not a single word—about the task of strengthening collective farms, which is a pressing and decisive task for our Party.

3. A final way out lies in strengthening existing state farms [*sovkhozy*] and establishing new ones, as these represent the most profitable and market-oriented economic units.

These are the three fundamental tasks; their fulfillment will enable us to resolve the grain problem and thereby eliminate the very root of our difficulties on the grain front.

The specifics of the present moment involve the primary task of boosting individual peasant farming, which while it still remains the central focus of our work, is already insufficient to solve the grain problem.

The specifics of the present moment require us to supplement that first task with two practical new ones: developing collective farms [*kholkozy*] and developing state farms [*sovkozy*]. Without combining these tasks, without persistent effort along all three of these lines, it is impossible to solve the grain problem, whether in terms of supplying the country with marketable grain or in terms of transforming our entire national economy along socialist lines.

³⁰ V.I. Lenin, "Speech Delivered at the First Congress of Agricultural Communes and Agricultural Artels, December 4, 1919," *Collected Works* [English edition], vol. 30, pp. 195–6.

How did Lenin view this matter? We have a well-known document showing that the Politburo resolution submitted to the plenum fully coincides with the practical plan for agricultural development outlined by Lenin in that document. I am referring to the “Directive of STO” (Council of Labour and Defense), written in Lenin’s own hand. It was issued in May 1921. In this document, Lenin analyzes three groups of practical issues: the first group concerns commodity exchange and industry; the second group concerns the upswing of agriculture; and the third group concerns various economic councils and regional conferences on economic regulation. What does the document say about agriculture?

Here is an excerpt from the “Directive of STO”:

Second Group of Questions.

9. Revival of Agriculture: a) Peasant Farming, b) State Farms, c) Communes, d) Artels, e) Cooperatives, f) Other Forms of Collective Farming.³¹

You can see that the practical conclusions of the Politburo resolution regarding the solution to the grain problem—and the agricultural problem in general—fully coincide with the plan Lenin set forth in the “Directive of STO” in 1921.

It is very interesting to note the almost boyish joy with which Lenin—that giant who moved mountains and clashed them against one another—greeted every piece of news about the founding of one or two collective farms or the delivery of tractors to a particular state farm. Here, for instance, is an excerpt from a letter to the Society for Technical Aid to Soviet Russia³²:

Dear Comrades,

³¹ V.I. Lenin, “Instructions of the Council of Labor and Defense to Local Soviet Bodies (Draft)” [May 21, 1921]. *Collected Works* [English edition], vol. 32, p. 390.

³² The **Society for Technical Aid to Soviet Russia** was an early mass organization of the Communist Party of America, launched to lend material aid to Soviet Russia during the 1921 famine. It was administratively absorbed by the Friends of Soviet Russia shortly after its launch. It was headed by the party’s expert on agricultural affairs, Harold Ware.

Extremely favorable information has appeared in our press about the work of members of your society at the state farms in Kirsanov Uezd, Tambov Gubernia, and at Mitino Station, Odessa Guberniia, and also about the work of the group of miners in the Donets Basin....

I am sending a recommendation to the Presidium of the All-Russia Central Executive Committee that it should recognize the most successful farms as model farms, and render them the special and extraordinary assistance necessary for the successful promotion of their work.

Once again on behalf of our Republic, I express to you our profound gratitude, and ask you to bear in mind that the work you are doing to cultivate land with the aid of tractors is particularly timely and important for us.

It gives me particular satisfaction to be able to congratulate you on your proposal to organize 200 agricultural communes.³³

And here is another excerpt from a letter to the Friends of Soviet Russia³⁴ in America:

Dear Comrades:

I have just verified by a special request to the Perm Executive Committee, the extraordinarily favorable news published in our press with reference to the work of the members of your society headed by Harold Ware³⁵ and organized as a tractor unit in the Government of Perm

³³ V.I. Lenin, "To the Society for Technical Aid for Soviet Russia," [Oct. 20, 1922] *Collected Works* [English edition], vol. 33, p. 381.

³⁴ **Friends of Soviet Russia** (FSR) was established in 1921 in the United States as the primary fundraising organization gathering donations for Soviet famine relief. The group was the American branch of Workers International Relief (WIR), a Comintern adjunct. The organization published a monthly magazine, *Soviet Russia*, and raised over a million dollars of food, clothing, and machinery for Soviet Russia. The organization changed its name to Friends of the Soviet Union in 1924 and continued into the 1950s as one of the Communist Party USA's largest "mass organizations."

³⁵ **Harold "Hal" Ware** (1889–1935) was, along with his mother, Ella Reeve Bloor, a founding member of the Communist Labor Party of America. Ware studied agriculture at Penn State and was soon regarded as the Communist Party's top agricultural expert, using the pseudonym "H.R. Harrow" during the party's underground period. In May 1922 he and his wife left for Soviet Russia with medical equipment and several tons of foodstuffs. They established a model collective farm in Toikino, Perm guberniia, with which he would be closely connected for the rest of the 1920s, either as a director on site or as a fundraiser abroad. Ware was an agricultural organizer for the CPUSA after returning to the United States, circa 1930. He died in a car accident in 1935 and was later accused of organizing espionage by Whittaker Chambers in a popular 1952 book.

on a Soviet farm “Toikino” ... I am appealing to the Presidium of the All-Russian Central Executive Committee to place this soviet farm in the ranks of model farms and to render it in every possible way special and extraordinary assistance in its constructive work, as well as supplying it with gasoline, metals, and other material necessary for the organization of a repair shop. Once more, I wish to thank you in the name of our Republic and to point out that no other form of relief is so timely and so important for us as the one rendered by you.³⁶

Such was the joy with which Lenin welcomed every scrap of news about the development of collective farms and state farms.

Let this serve as a lesson to those who think they can outwit history and dispense with collective and state farms in the task of victoriously building socialism in our country.

Now, let me turn to the question of the temporary, circumstantial difficulties that transformed our grain-related problems into a procurement crisis.

The resolution describes these causes quite clearly. Four main causes are listed: a disruption of market equilibrium, errors in planning and management, shortcomings in the procurement and Party-Soviet apparatus, and the exploitation of these difficulties by capitalist elements in the countryside (kulaks and speculators). Since a great deal has already been said about this here, I do not think it is necessary to dwell further on these causes.

I would like to say a few words regarding Comrade Petrovsky’s remark. I refer to the first point of the resolution concerning the disruption of market equilibrium and the fact that the countryside in general—and the well-to-do and kulak strata of the countryside in particular—have increased their income and raised their demand for goods, thereby creating an imbalance between the demand for goods and their supply. Comrade Petrovsky refuses to acknowledge the validity of this assessment. He asks: how can it

³⁶ As written in English, reprinted in *Stalin Works*, vol. 11, pp. 195–6. Letter dated October 20, 1922, published in *Pravda*, October 24. Retranslation in *Lenin Collected Works*, English edition, vol. 33, p. 380 differs slightly, as would be expected.

be that, on the one hand, it is stated that the countryside has increased its income, while on the other, the resolution describes peasant farming as extremely backward—implying a contradiction here? I believe there is no contradiction whatsoever. The fact is that the point discussing the rise in rural income compares this year's income with that of previous years; and it is undeniable that rural income has indeed risen this year, if only because of three consecutive years of good harvests. If this were not the case, there would have been no reason to increase the agricultural tax or to rush into measures regarding self-taxation, and so forth. As for the other point of the resolution, it speaks of the excessive backwardness of agriculture in terms of its rate of development compared to industry, which is also correct, for it is indisputable that the pace of agricultural development is indeed lagging excessively behind the pace of our industrial development. Clearly, there is no contradiction here. Therefore, both these points of the resolution must be considered correct.

I think that to the list of temporary causes creating difficulties on the grain front, we must add one more: namely, the over-consumption of grain and the improper use of grain stocks by our supply agencies...³⁷

Therefore, it is necessary to include a clause in the resolution regarding the over-consumption of grain. I have already spoken about the need to take measures that would obviate the necessity for any kind of emergency measures, so there is no need to dwell on that here.

I would like to touch upon just three purely practical issues raised here during the discussion by comrades from the grain-producing regions.

First, we must acknowledge that during the grain procurement campaign, our Party organizations pushed themselves too far to the fore, sidelining Soviet and cooperative bodies—and sometimes

³⁷ Ellipses in original. Possible deletion from the stenographic record.

even supplanting them entirely. (*Voice: Nothing else could have been done.*) I understand this, and I mention it not to cast blame on anyone. This situation arose because it was extremely difficult to spur our procurement agencies into action, making maximum oversight by Party organizations necessary. (*Voice: And the directive was stern indeed.*) The directive was indeed stern, for the Party organizations were also slow to get moving, yet the grain situation was becoming critical and further delay was impossible. Be that as it may, we must bear in mind that, in the future, Party organizations must not supplant cooperative and Soviet bodies. (*Voice: Correct.*) We must remember once and for all that guidance by Party organizations is one thing, while pushing Soviet and cooperative organizations into the background is something else entirely. The former is absolutely essential; the latter is impermissible and harmful. Under no circumstances and on no account must the former turn into the latter. Otherwise, we risk ruining the cause of our construction work.

Secondly, the question of the milling fee. I believe Comrade Sheboldaev³⁸ has raised a most serious practical issue here regarding the milling fee. The situation is that peasants grind about a billion *poods* [16.38 million metric tons] of grain at mills for their own personal needs. This grain is ground partly at windmills and partly—reportedly about half of the total amount—at our state and cooperative mills. Payment for milling is usually made in kind, at a rate of three or five *funts* per *pood*.³⁹ For cooperative and state mills, this amounts to about 50 million *poods* of grain [409,500 metric tons], if not more. What becomes of this grain? Could we not establish strict controls to ensure that this grain enters the general pool of our procurement organizations? (*Mikoyan: Quite*

³⁸ **Boris P. Sheboldaev** (1895–1937), hailing from a doctor's family, joined the Bolsheviks in 1914. He was a top official of the party in Dagestan and became Secretary for the Northern Caucasus in 1934. Arrested and executed in the Terror.

³⁹ A *funt* was 1/40 of a *pood*—that is, about 4/10 of a kilo or a little more than 14 ounces. The milling fee is thus stated here as ranging between 7.5 and 12.5 percent.

right!) We must bear in mind that these 50 million *poods* of grain represent a completely secure and indisputable reserve that should be taken into account when planning our stockpiles.

Mikoyan: It is possible and necessary.⁴⁰ (**Voice:** *We are working on it now.*)

Thirdly, the question of communal stores, raised here by Comrade Medvedev.⁴¹ It would be highly expedient to establish stores where a certain minimum reserve of supplies could be accumulated to serve the poor and the less well-off middle peasants during the most difficult months of the procurement year.

I shall conclude now, comrades. I believe that the difficulties regarding grain will not pass without leaving their mark on us. Our Party has learned and moved forward by overcoming difficulties and crises of all kinds. I believe that the current difficulties will temper our Bolshevik ranks and compel them to tackle the resolution of the grain problem in earnest. And to solve this problem means to remove one of the greatest obstacles standing in the path of the socialist transformation of our country.



⁴⁰ A common sing-song phrase in Russian: “*Mozhno i dolzhno.*”

⁴¹ **Sergei P. Medvedev** (1885–1937) joined the Bolsheviks in 1900. He was a metal worker and trade union organizer who became a leading member of the Workers’ Opposition in 1920, for which he was nearly expelled. He worked in the Peoples’ Commissariat of Heavy Industry in the 1920s until being ousted when Sergo Ordzhonikidze took over the department. He was investigated in connection with the Riutin Affair in 1932 but was cleared, although expelled the following year and administratively exiled to the far north in 1934. After the assassination of Sergei Kirov, Medvedev was returned to Moscow for interrogation. He was convicted under Article 58 and executed in September 1937.