

THE
GREAT INITIATIVE

Including the Story of

"Communist Saturdays"

BY N. LENIN

5¢

Price 15 Cents

THE MARXIAN EDUCATIONAL SOCIETY
5941 JOS. CAMPAU AVENUE, DETROIT, MICH.

THE
GREAT INITIATIVE

Including the story of
"Communist Saturdays"

BY N. LENIN



Permission granted by
THE SOCIALIST LABOR PARTY OF GREAT BRITAIN
to
THE MARXIAN EDUCATIONAL SOCIETY
5941 Jos. Campau Avenue
DETROIT, MICH.

INTRODUCTION.

The Press reports many examples of the heroism of the soldiers of the Red Army. In the fight with the hordes of Koltchak, Denikin, and other tools of the great landlords and capitalists, the workers and peasants performed veritable miracles of bravery and endurance in defence of the Socialist Revolution. The war is being brought to an end slowly and with difficulty. Exhaustion and licentiousness are being removed, slowly, it is true, but surely. The heroism of the working masses, who work unceasingly for the victory of Socialism, is the foundation for the new fraternal discipline of the Red Army, and for its stability and development.

Not less than the brave deeds of the soldiers at the front does the heroism of the workers far from the firing line merit our attention. In this connection a tremendous significance attaches to the "Communist Saturdays," which were instituted by the workers themselves. Although only a beginning, it is a beginning of extraordinary importance. It is the commencement of a revolution which is more difficult, more fundamental, and more real than the overthrow of the bourgeoisie, because it means victory over our own indolence and poverty, victory over petit bourgeois egoism, and over the evil customs which the doomed system of capitalism has left as a heritage to the workers and peasants. Only when this victory is completed will Socialist discipline be established, and only then will Communism be, in very truth, invincible.

Translated by P. LAVIN.

820094

The Story of "Communist Saturdays"

The letter of the Central Executive Committee of the Communist Party on a work of a revolutionary nature has been a great incentive to Communists and their organizations. The general enthusiasm has urged many of the Communists who are railway workers to the front. The majority, however, have perforce to remain at their posts in order to seek new methods of working for the Revolution. The local reports of the slowness of demobilization and of bureaucratic methods caused the members of the sub-section of the Moscow-Kasan Railway to turn their attention to the mechanism of railway management. Because of the shortage of workers and of the low productivity of work, urgent orders and pressing locomotive repairs were being delayed. At the general meeting of the Communists and their friends of the sub-section on May 7th the question was raised: How can we best translate our words into actions in order to win victory over Koltchak? The following resolution was put:—

"In view of the dangerous situation created by the necessity of fighting our class enemies, the Communists and their friends decide to give up one hour of their leisure—in other words, to add one hour to the day's work. The extra hours—six in all—are to be put together and worked on Saturday. Believing, as we do, that Communists should work for the Revolution, even at the risk of losing health and life, we think that the least we can do is to work the extra time without payment. The 'Communist Saturday' shall be observed throughout the whole sub-section till complete victory over Koltchak is attained."

After some discussion the resolution was carried unanimously.

On Saturday, May 10th, at six o'clock in the evening, the Communists and their friends set out in military fashion for their work. They took their appointed places from the managers without ceremony.

The kind and the quantity of this "revolutionary work" are shown in the following table:—

Place.	Kind of Work.	No. of Workers.	No. of hr's worked.		Work Done.
			Each.	Total.	
Moscow — Central Workshops for Locomotives,	Loading material for repair of wagons and locomotives in Perowo, Murom, Alasyr and Sysran,	48 21 5	5	240	Loaded 7,500 poods. Unloaded 1,800 poods.
			3	63	
			4	20	
Moscow Depot for passenger trains,	Running repairs on the Trotzky train and others,	26	5	130	One and a half Locomotives Repaired.
Moscow — various parts,	Running repairs to locomotives,	24	6	144	Two Locomotives Repaired, Four Damaged Locomotives taken to pieces.
Moscow,	Running repairs to passenger carriages,	12	6	72	Two Carriages, 3rd class.
Perowo — Central Workshops for locomotives,	Wagon repairs, Small repairs, On Saturday, On Sunday,	46 23	5	230	Twelve Covered Goods Wagons and Two Platforms.
			5	115	
	Total,	205		1014	Four Locomotives and 16 Wagons repaired, and 9,300 poods loaded.

The total cost of this work would have been at the usual rate five million roubles. As it was done in overtime, the amount would have been one and a half times as much.

The amount of loading work done exceeded the average by about 270 per cent. The other kinds of work showed approximately the same increase.

In this way the holding up of pressing orders was avoided. Delays of from seven days to three months had occurred owing to the shortage of labor and lax methods.

The work was done with faulty tools. It is true that these were not difficult to repair, but repairs held up whole groups from thirty to forty minutes.

The management was hard put to it to find sufficient work to keep the men going. The statement of an old foreman that on a "Communist Saturday" as much work was done as was performed in a whole week by ignorant and careless workmen may not have been much of an exaggeration.

As only supporters of the Soviets took part in this work, and as a large accession to the number is expected on future Saturdays, when other sections follow the example of the Communist workers of the Moscow--Kasan Railway, I will now give some details from local reports.

Ten per cent of the Communists who took part in the work were regular employees. The others occupied responsible positions in, or were trusted employees of railway and other boards. Commissars, trade union officials, etc.

The zeal and the harmony shown in the work were remarkable. There was not the slightest friction between workers and officials. As they took a cylinder intended for a passenger train and rolled it away they experienced a feeling of joy in the community of work, and their belief grew stronger in the certainty of victory for the working class. They felt that the world robbers would not be able to defeat the workers, and that the saboteurs at home would have to wait a long time for the coming of Kolchak.

At the end of the work the spectator would witness an unforgettable scene. About a hundred Communists, tired with their exertions, but with eyes flashing with joy, would greet the completion of their task with the solemn strains of the "Interantionale." It seemed as if the triumphant waves of sound of the hymn of victory would float out over the walls of Moscow, and would rouse to action the dull and the lazy.

"Pravda" of May 20th had an article signed I. R. on this wonderful example—an example to be imitated. He wrote:—

"Cases of this kind are not rare. The same thing has been done in an electricity works and on various railways.

On the Nicolaj Railway, Communists worked all night long for several nights in succession in order to raise a derailed locomotive. On the Northern Railway, Communists and friends worked all day on several successive Saturdays clearing snow off the track. The Communist sections at many goods stations made nightly rounds in order to prevent theft of goods. But all this work was casual and not systematically done. The comrades of Kasan were the first to infuse into it that living spirit which has made it permanent and systematic. "Till the final victory over Koltchak!" cried the Kasan Communists. Therein lies the significance of their work. They lengthen their working day by a full hour for the period of the war, and at the same time they show an example of productive work.

The example has already found imitators, and its influence will be felt over a continually increasing area. The general meeting of the Communists and their friends of the Alexander Railway, after considering the military situation, decided (1) to introduce Saturdays for Communists on that railway, beginning on May 17th; (2) Communists must set an example of how work should be done, and of what can be accomplished with modern tools and materials.

According to the statements of our Kasan comrades, their example has made a great impression, and on future

Saturdays a great number of non-Communist workers are expected to fall into line. While these lines were being written the voluntary work of the Communists in the workshops of the Alexander Railway had not yet begun. But already the mere report of the unpaid work has caused great excitement amongst the workers who are not in the Communist Party. From all sides can be heard statements like these: "If we had only known, we should have arranged to work with you." "Next Saturday we shall be there." The impression created by the Communists amongst the others is tremendous.

The example of the men of Kasan must be imitated by Communist sections elsewhere. Not only the Communists of the Moscow district, but the whole party organization throughout Russia must follow.

In the villages, too, Communists must take the lead in tilling the fields of the soldiers of the Red Army and in assisting their families.

The comrades of Kasan concluded their first Communist Saturday by singing the "Internationale." If the Communist organizations all over Russia follow the Kasan example and resolutely carry out their task, the difficulties ahead of the Russian Soviet Republic in the near future will be overcome, and the strains of the "Internationale" will be heard in every workshop in the country. "To work, Communist comrades!"

"Pravda" of May 23rd, 1919, reports that May 17th was the first "Communist Saturday" on the Alexander Railway. Ninety-eight Communists and friends have, in accordance with the decision of the general meeting, worked five hours overtime without payment. They have, however, a second meal hour, when in their capacity as hard workers they get an extra allowance of a half-pound of bread.

Although the preparations made were insufficient and the work was badly organized, the normal production was exceeded twofold, and in some cases threefold. Here are some examples:

The productivity in a turning department showed an increase over the previous output of 213 per cent. In four hours 20 unskilled workers carried 70 wagon springs, each weighing $3\frac{1}{2}$ poods,* and 600 poods of scrap—845 poods in all. Production was increased by 300 per cent.

The comrades explain the increased production by saying that previously work was distasteful to them, but that now they like it and do it enthusiastically. They would be ashamed, too, to produce less on a Communist Saturday than on any other day.

Many workers who do not belong to the Communist Party express the wish to help on Saturdays. The "locomotive brigade" offer, on any single Saturday, to take an engine out of the "hospital," adjust it, and put it in working order.

News has arrived that "Saturdays" have begun on the Wiasma line.

Comrade A. Diatschenko describes in "Pravda" of June 7th how the work on Communist Saturdays goes forward. The chief part of his article, which bears the title, "Notes on a Communist Saturday," is as follows:—

"I set out joyfully with another comrade for a day's work on Saturday, in accordance with the decision of our party. . . . We enter, meet old acquaintances, greet one another, pass a few jesting remarks, count number of workers—30 men. . . . And before us lies a locomotive boiler, of a considerable weight—between 600 and 700 poods. It has to be removed to a place from a fourth to a third of a kilometer distant. We begin to doubt.

But in a moment we are at work. The comrades put wooden rollers under the boiler, fasten two ropes to it, and the work begins. . . . The boiler moves, unwillingly, but still it moves. We rejoice; we are few . . . have not almost three times as many workers pulled at it for nearly fourteen days, and it did not move till we came. . . . We

* Pood equals about 36 lbs.

work away strenuously for an hour, under the direction of our foreman. The boiler moves further and further. But all at once—what is wrong? A jerk, a row of comrades slip—the rope has broken in their hands. . . . A halt of a minute; we fasten another rope. . . . It grows dark. We have a hill to climb, and then our work is finished. The skin of our hands burns; we are warm. We push, and it goes! The ‘administrator’ stands by. He is delighted at our success, and lends a hand occasionally. . . . A Red Guardsman watches us, a harmonica in his hand. What is he thinking of? Is he saying to himself, “What kind of people are these? Why are they working on Saturday, while others are sitting at home?” . . . I resolve his doubts and say to him, ‘Comrade, play us a merry tune. We are not only workers, but thorough-going Communists. Don’t you see how we succeed in our work? We are not sloths, but hard workers.’ The Red Guardsman puts away his instrument, and with a bound he is beside us, pulling at the rope.

“Comrade W. strikes up, in his clear tenor voice, the song of work (‘Der Engländer schlau’) from the ‘Knüppel,’ and we join in the chorus.

“Our muscles are tired with the unwonted exertion. Our shoulders and backs ache, but—we have a day’s rest before us, and we can sleep off the effects of our work. Our goal is near. After another little struggle our boiler is on the platform. Planks are placed under it, it is put in position, and it is now ready to do the work expected of it.

“We betake ourselves to the ‘club-room’ of the section. It is well lighted and hung with placards, and contains many rifles. After a rendering of the ‘Internationale’ we have tea, with so-called rum and bread. This refreshment, prepared for us by the local comrades, is very acceptable after the hard work we have done. Then we bid our comrades good-night and, lining up, take our departure. The stillness of the night is broken by the sounds of revolutionary songs and the rythmical tread of marching feet.

“A week has passed. Our arms and shoulders are now inured to toil. We drive to our work—wagon-building—nine kilometres away. Our comrades have made themselves comfortable on the roof of a car, and are lustily singing the ‘Internationale.’ The public listens, and is clearly astonished. The carriages rattle along, and those of us who had not time to clamber to the roof cling to the racks. The train halts, we are at our destination, and are met by the Commissar, Comrade G.

“There is plenty of work, but not many men! Only thirty workers, and a huge number of wagons to be repaired. There are wheels lying around, empty wagons—the whole shed full. But we will soon alter that, comrades!”

The work goes forward. I and five comrades work at the levers. Tires weighing sixty and seventy poods are transferred from one track to the other. The refuse is put in a scoop. A crane lifts it and deposits it away from the track. The hammers clang in the darkness. Busy as bees, the comrades work at the damaged carriages. Joinery work, covering, painting fly through their hands, to our joy and that of the ‘Comrade Commissar.’ By and by we need the smith. In the portable forge is a bent piece of iron. In a little while it is white hot. It is put on the cast-iron plate, and our skillful blows, under the guidance of an experienced comrade, restores it to its former shape. It is now quickly put in its place—a couple of blows and it fits. The work goes on, it grows darker, the torches flash more brightly. We have finished. Some of our comrades squat together in a corner and sip hot tea. The May night is cool. The crescent moon shines in the sky. . . . Laughter, jests, humor.

“Comrade G., you have thirteen wagons. Is that enough?” But Comrade G. says it is not enough.

“Tea is over. We sing our song of victory and march off. . . .”

The Communist Saturday movement is not confined to

Moscow. "Pravda" for June 6th reports:—"On May 31st the first Communist Saturday was observed in Twer. One hundred and twenty-eight Communists worked on the railway. In 3½ hours 14 wagons were loaded, 3 locomotives repaired, 10 klafter* of wood sawn, and other work done. The output of the Communist workers was about thirteen times greater than the usual."

"Pravda" for June 8th has the following paragraph:—

"Communist Saturdays.—Saratov, June 5th.—The Communist railway workers, in response to the appeal of their Moscow comrades, have decided to work five hours' overtime on Saturdays without payment, in order to increase production."

* * * *

I have given the reports of Communist Saturdays in full because they throw light on one of the most important aspects of Communist reconstruction—one which our Press has not paid sufficient attention to, and which none of us has appraised at its true value.

What is wanted is less political fooling and more attention to the plain but important facts of Communist reconstruction—facts gathered from and tested by the daily life of the people. These watchwords should be remembered by us all—writers, propagandists, and organizers.

It is inevitable that in the days immediately after the proletarian revolution the first and most essential task before us should be the crushing of the opposition of the bourgeoisie, the suppression of counter-revolutionary plots—as, for example, the "conspiracy of the slave-holders", for the surrender of Petrograd—in which so many have taken part, from the Black Hundreds and the Cadets to the Mensheviks and the Social Revolutionaries. To this is added another inevitable task—that of building a new economic system, of creating a new social order.

The dictatorship of the proletariat—as I have insisted

* Klafter is a cubic measure, generally a pile three ells long, three ells high, and usually three feet broad.—Translator.

several times, as, for instance, in my speech at the session of the Petrograd Soviet on May 13th—is not merely force used against the exploiter, and not even essentially force. The economic foundation of the revolutionary exercise of power, the guarantee of its permanence and success, consists in this: that the proletariat has created a higher form of social organization of labor than Capitalism. That is the great thing. That is the source of the power and the earnest of the final and complete victory of Communism.

The social organization of labor in the era of slavery was maintained by the whip. The workers were kept in profound ignorance, and were exploited by a handful of masters. Capitalist organization of labor is based on hunger. Even in the most progressive, civilized and democratic Republics the great majority of the workers are wage-slaves or oppressed peasants, exploited by a handful of capitalists. The Communist organization of labor—to which Socialism is the first step—is based upon the free and conscious discipline of the workers themselves who have thrown off the yoke of landlords and capitalists.

This discipline does not fall from heaven, nor is it born of good intentions. It springs from the material conditions of great Capitalist production, and from these alone. Without these conditions it is inconceivable. The power destined to turn these conditions to account is an historical class created, organized, trained and hardened by Capitalism. That class is the proletariat.

The dictatorship of the proletariat, stripped of its Latin, scientific and historico-philosophical dress, and clothed in simple language, means that only a certain class, and that the industrial workers, especially the workers in large factories, is able to lead the general body of the exploited masses in their fight to end Capitalist exploitation. In the actual process of destroying Capitalism, in securing and consolidating the victory, in the creation of a new Socialist order of society—in short, in every sector of the struggle for the final abolishment of classes, it is these workers who

must take the lead. It may be remarked here that the scientific difference between Socialism and Communism consists solely in this, that whereas Socialism is the first step from the outworn system of Capitalism to the new society, Communism represents a further and higher stage.

The error of the Berne Yellow International lies in the fact that, while its leaders recognize, in *words*, the class war and the qualifications of the proletariat for leadership in the fight, they shrink from the logical inference, which for the bourgeoisie is especially unpleasant, but absolutely inevitable. They do not perceive that the dictatorship of the proletariat is a period of class war, which cannot be escaped so long as classes exist, which changes its form, and in which the period immediately following the Revolution is especially bitter. After the conquest of political power the proletariat does not declare the class war at an end. It prosecutes it till classes are abolished; but it naturally does so under other forms, and by other means.

But what is the meaning of "abolition of classes"? All who call themselves Socialists recognize this as the ultimate aim of Socialism, but all of them do not grasp the real significance of this aim. By "classes" we mean large groups of people distinguished from one another by their status in an historically-determined system of social production, by the proportion of the means of wealth production they possess, by the part they play in the social organization of labor, and by the kind and the quantity of socially produced wealth they have at their disposal. In a class society there are groups of men who, by virtue of their favored position in the social order, can appropriate the results of the labor of other groups.

It is clear that, in order to achieve the total abolition of classes, not only must the power of the landlord and the capitalist be broken, and their rights of property taken from them, but that *every* private interest in the means of wealth production must be destroyed. The contrast between hand and brain worker must also be ended. That

will be a difficult task. That it may be possible, it is necessary that a great step forward in the development of the power of production be taken; it is necessary to break the resistance of the numerous remnants of small production (a resistance which is often passive, and therefore extremely obstinate and difficult to overcome); and necessary also to move the huge mass bound by the strong chains of custom and indifference.

The theory that all classes of workers are alike capable of performing these tasks is either an empty phrase or an illusion of pre-Marxian Socialism; for the capacity to do so comes not of itself, but grows out of the material conditions of large Capitalist production. This capacity, at the beginning of the road from Capitalism to Socialism, is possessed by the proletariat, and by it *alone*. That class only is in a position to do this great and urgent work. Firstly, because it is the most powerful and progressive class in civilized societies. Secondly, because in the most advanced countries it comprises the majority of the population. Thirdly, because in backward Capitalist countries, as in Russia, the majority of the people consist of proletarians and semi-proletarians—that is, people who eke out a miserable existence by hiring themselves to a Capitalist undertaking.

Those who wish to solve the problem of the transition from Capitalism to Socialism, and who start from the general conceptions of Freedom, Equality and Democracy (especially Democracy), only reveal their true nature as members of the petit bourgeoisie and Philistines. Representatives of this type are Kautsky, Martoff, and the other heroes of the Berne Yellow International who slavishly cling to bourgeois ideology. A correct solution of the problem can only be effected by a thorough investigation of the special relations between the class which has seized political power—the proletariat—and the whole non-proletarian and semi-proletarian masses of the working population. These relations, however, are not formed in a fan-

tastic or arbitrary manner, but are determined by the conditions of the struggle to overcome the frenzied and many-sided opposition to the bourgeoisie.

The great majority of the people of any Capitalist country—Russia amongst others—and especially the majority of the working class, have experienced in their own persons and in those of their nearest and dearest, the exploitation and degradation of every kind inseparable from Capitalism. The Imperialist war, the slaughter of ten million human beings in order to decide whether English or German capital should have precedence in the world exploitation, has made these wrongs immeasurably greater and more conspicuous. That irresistibly forced the great majority of the people, and especially of the working class, to sympathize with the proletariat when it broke the power of Capitalism and prepared the way for the creation of a new social order in which no place can be found for the exploiter.

So great is the wavering of the petit bourgeoisie and so evident their hankering after the old bourgeois "order," that the non-proletarian and semi-proletarian masses cannot fail to see that the moral and political power belongs to the proletariat. It is the proletariat which has not only thrown down the exploiter and overcome his resistance, but has formed a higher bond of social union, created a social discipline, the discipline of class-conscious and united workers, which recognizes no power but its own will.

In order to bring Socialism into being, and afterwards to maintain it, the proletariat has a two-fold task to perform. It must, by its heroism in the revolutionary fight against Capitalism, carry with it the whole mass of the working and exploited people, organize them, and lead them to the overthrow of the bourgeoisie and the complete destruction of every kind of resistance. It must also lead the entire body of workers, as well as all the petit bourgeois strata of society, in breaking the ground for the economic reconstruction of society, while it creates a new

bond of social union, a new discipline of labor, a new organization of work, which will avail itself of the latest discoveries of science and of the advantages of Capitalist technique. In this way the masses of conscious workers, welded closely together, will carry through the work of Socialist production on a large scale.

The latter task is the more difficult, because it cannot be achieved by deeds of heroism or in occasional moments of enthusiasm. It requires the much more enduring and persevering courage of the every-day work of the people. It is also more essential than the former, for by it can be secured the greatest source of power for the suppression of the bourgeoisie, and the only guarantee for the permanence and security of the victory; and by it can Capitalist or petit bourgeois production be abolished and Socialist great production introduced.

The "Communist Saturdays" have therefore a deep historical meaning. They demonstrate the conscious and spontaneous initiative of the workers in their endeavor to increase the productivity of labor during the transition to the new labor discipline, in the creation of Socialist conditions of life and work.

J. Jakobi, one of the few German middle-class Democrat who did not go over to Chauvinism or National Liberalism after the war of 1870-71, once said that the founding of a trade union had a greater historical significance than the battle of Königgrätz. He was right. That battle only decided which of two capitalist nations—Austria and Prussia—should be the leader of the German Capitalist States; but the establishment of a trade union is a step—if only a short one—towards the world victory of the proletariat. In the same way we can say that the first Communist Saturday, instituted by the workers of the Moscow-Kasan Railway on May 10th, 1919, is of greater historical importance than any of the victories of Hindenburg or Foch or the English during the Imperialist war of 1914-18. The world war meant the slaughter of millions

of workers in the interest of Anglo-American and French millionaires, and showed the brutality of the dying Capitalist system. The Communist Saturday of the Moscow-Kasan railwaymen is a germ-cell of the new Socialist society which will free all the peoples of the earth from the yoke of Capitalism and put an end to wars.

The members of the bourgeoisie and their henchmen—including the Mensheviks and the Social Revolutionaries—naturally endeavor to belittle the work of the Bolsheviks. They point to the small number of Saturday workers, to the spread of theft, slacking and decreased production, the waste of raw materials, etc. To this we reply that if the educated classes of Russia would devote their knowledge to the cause of the workers, instead of to the service of domestic and foreign Capitalism the Revolution would be completed much more quickly and peacefully than seems likely now to be the case. But the wish is vain. The question will be decided by the conflict of classes, and the majority of the educated people will side with the bourgeoisie. Not with the help of the Intellectuals, but in spite of their opposition—in spite, at least, of the opposition of the majority of them—the proletariat will conquer. It will force to one side the incorrigibly bourgeois amongst them, will educate the waverers and gradually win them over to its support. The shameful jubilation over the difficulties and mistakes of the Revolution, the endeavor to create a feeling of panic, the general reactionary propaganda—all these are means and methods employed in the class war by the bourgeois Intellectuals. The proletariat, however, will not be led astray.

Let us put a concrete case. Does history record a single instance of a new method of production having been established at a stroke without a great number of failures and mistakes? Fifty years after the abolition of serfdom in Russia there still remained in the country districts many customs of the old order. Fifty years after the abolition of negro slavery in America the position of the colored

people was still one of semi-slavery. The bourgeois Intellectuals, the Mensheviks, and the Social Revolutionaries remain true to type when, in the service of Capitalism, they employ such thoroughly dishonest tactics as these: before the Revolution they reproached us with being Utopians; after the Revolution they tell us that we must immediately destroy every remnant of the old régime!

We are not Utopians, however, and we know the value of bourgeois "arguments." We know also that after the overthrow of a system of society many evidences of the old order will remain for a certain time. Even when the new is born the old remains for a period stronger than the new. That is always the case, in social life as in nature. The cheap sneers and the shallow scepticism of the Intellectuals are used by the bourgeoisie in the war against Socialism, in defense of Capitalism. It is our duty to tend and cultivate these shoots of the new society. It is inevitable that many of them will perish. It can positively be said that "Communist Saturdays" will play a very important part in the further development of society.

We need not inquire if all the buds of the new order will survive. Those which are fitted to live will be selected, and will flower in due time. Just as a Japanese scientist in trying to find a cure for syphilis had sufficient patience to investigate the properties of 605 preparations before his efforts were crowned with success, so must those who are engaged in the formidable task of overcoming Capitalism be prepared to try method after method until they find the one which answers their purpose best.

The "Communist Saturdays" are of great importance because they have been introduced by the workers themselves, and under very unfavorable conditions. They were instituted by workers in the most diverse callings, unskilled as well as skilled. The root causes of the decline of production which has taken place, not only in Russia, but throughout the world, should be clear to everyone. These are the ruin and impoverishment brought about by the Im-

perialistic war, disease and hunger. The last is the most terrible of all. The word famine expresses every horror. In order to overcome famine the productivity of labor must be increased in agriculture, in transport, in all industries. We are in a kind of vicious circle. In order to increase the productivity of labor, hunger must be removed; and in order to remove hunger, the productivity of labor must be increased. But in reconciling these contradictions we are escaping from the circle. The feelings of the people undergo a sudden change, and some group or groups, by heroically seizing the initiative and taking advantage of this change, play a decisive part. The railwaymen of Moscow—the working men, and not the handful of speculators and such specimens of the rabble of White Guards—belong to a class who live in very poor circumstances. Their lot is chronic underfeeding, and already, in the summer of 1919, before the harvest is brought in, the food situation is so serious as almost to amount to a famine. It is these hungry workers—surrounded by the malicious counter-revolutionary agitation of the bourgeoisie, the Mensheviks, and the Social Revolutionaries—who have instituted “Communist Saturdays,” who have worked overtime without payment, and who are determined to effect a huge improvement in the productivity of labor. Is not this heroism of the highest order? Is not this the beginning of a change of world-wide significance?

The productivity of labor is the most important factor in the victory of the new social order. Capitalism evolved a productivity of labor unknown during the period of serfdom. Capitalism can, and will be overthrown, because Socialism will create a new and higher productivity. That will be a long and tedious process. However, it has begun, and that is the main thing. If in the summer of 1919 the starving workers of Moscow, after four terrible years of the Imperialist war and six months of still more terrible civil strife, are able to undertake this work, how much greater will be the capacity for development when we have

come off victorious in the civil war and have conquered our foreign enemies.

Communism will achieve a greater productivity than Capitalism, because it will have an unfettered, conscious, and united body of workers availing themselves of the most advanced technique. Communist Saturdays are extremely valuable as an actual beginning of Communism. They are serviceable because they place us in a position from which, as our party program rightly phrases it, “the first steps in the transition from Capitalism to Communism” can be taken.

Communism begins where the unselfish and difficult work of the people is devoted to increasing the output of wealth, to preserving every bushel of corn, every hundredweight of coal and other necessities, destined not for the producers themselves and their “nearest,” but for those who are “distant”—for society as a whole, for the millions of human beings, at first living in separate Socialist countries, and later united in a League of Soviet Republics.

In “Capital” Karl Marx mocks at the emptiness and conceit of the bourgeois-democratic Magna Charta of freedom and the rights of man, at the hollow phrases of liberty, equality and fraternity mouthed by the Philistines of all lands, and at the present time dazzling the ragged heroes of the ragged Berne International. Marx places against these pompous proclamations of the rights of man the simple conception of the dictatorship of the proletariat. A typical example of this is the legal shortening of the working day. The fundamental truth of the Marxian theory reveals itself ever more plainly as the proletarian revolution develops. The formulæ of actually existing Communism are distinguished from the pompous phrase-mongering of the Kautskys, the Mensheviks the Social Revolutionaries and their dear “little brothers” of Berne in that they all lead back to the conditions of labor. Let us have less meaningless talk about “democracy,” “freedom,” “government by the people,” etc. The class-conscious workers

and peasants of our day can easily see in these phrases the fraud of the Intellectuals; while the man of affairs has no difficulty in detecting behind the pleasing features of the "fine cavalier" the mind of a swindler.

Fewer high-sounding phrases and more work! The coal and wheat required by the suffering workers and peasants cannot be obtained by Capitalist means, but only through the unselfish, voluntary labor of the simple wealth-producers, such as the workers of the Moscow-Kasan Railway.

We must all do what we can to expose the true nature of the sentiments of the bourgeoisie democrats. Our Press does not combat with sufficient vigor the decaying remnants of the "democratic" past; nor does it sufficiently emphasize the significance of the simple and unassuming, but important, beginnings of Communism.

Take, for instance, the position of women. No democratic party in the most advanced bourgeois Republic in the world has done in ten years the hundredth part of what we have accomplished in this matter in the first year after seizing power. We have literally left not one stone standing upon another of the edifice of degrading laws which denied rights to women, which placed formidable obstacles in the way of divorce, which penalized children born out of wedlock, etc. Such laws are still, to the shame of the bourgeoisie and Capitalism, very numerous in all civilized countries. We are entitled to feel somewhat proud of what we have accomplished in this respect. But the further we proceed in clearing away the débris of the old laws and institutions, the more clearly do we see that the site must first be prepared for the building before the actual constructive work can begin.

Woman, however, remains a house slave as she was before the oppressive laws were repealed. She is still engrossed in, and stultified by, the petty details of household management; she is still chained to the kitchen and the nursery, still engaged in the same unproductive and nerve-

destroying labor. The real emancipation of woman, real Communism, can only begin when the proletariat, at the helm of State, leads the fight of the masses against the system of small housekeeping, can only begin with the transformation to Socialist great economy.

Do we in practice really tackle seriously this question, whose importance we theoretically recognize? By no means! Do we handle with sufficient care the shoots of Communism which already are seen emerging from the ground? No, a thousand times no! People's restaurants, creches, kindergärten—these are the modest beginnings of a process which, when fully developed, will emancipate woman, and which, by removing sex inequality, will abolish the part hitherto played by her in social life analogous to that performed by her in the sphere of production.

These means are not new. They are—as indeed are all the essential conceptions of Socialism—created by highly-developed Capitalism. But in Capitalist States they were at first merely curiosities and remain, moreover—and this is worth noting—either commercial undertakings, with all the inevitable accompaniments of speculation, profit-snatching, fraud and falsehood, or the "offspring of bourgeois philanthropy," rightly despised by the better kind of workers.

There is no doubt that we shall have more institutions of this kind, and that they are about to change their character. Women of the worker and peasant class exhibit a considerable amount of organizing talent. It is admitted that they have the ability to carry out to a successful conclusion schemes of the utmost importance to a large number of working people, and to a still larger number of consumers; and that without a great display of oratory, without the quarrelling and idle talk about plans, systems, etc.—those eternal weaknesses of the Intellectuals and of the half-baked "Communists." But, unfortunately, when indications of this faculty appear we do not pay sufficient attention to them.

Take an example from the bourgeoisie. How well that class understands the value of propaganda in any matter in which it is interested! Bourgeois newspapers are always singing the praises of Capitalist "model" undertakings. They represent some object of shame as something of which the nation ought to be proud. Our Press, on the other hand, does not concern itself sufficiently with questions affecting the welfare of the people. It does not discuss so fully how best to establish people's restaurants and creches; it does not dwell with sufficient emphasis on the fact that the saving of labor which naturally results from Communal effort and sanitary improvements not only conduces to the comfort of the people, but frees woman from much of her present drudgery; it does not devote enough space to pointing out that this Communist work could be extended throughout the country with increasingly beneficial results to society as a whole.

A well-organized system of production, carefully arranged "Saturdays," meticulous care and conscientiousness in the winning and distribution of every ounce of bread, model restaurants, extreme cleanliness of workers' houses and of streets—all these must receive much more attention in future than they do now, not only from our Press, but also from the workers' and peasants' organizations. All such measures are shoots of Communism, and the care of these shoots is our first and principal task.

Serious as our situation with regard to food supplies undoubtedly is, a forward move along the whole line can be perceived in that matter in the eighteen months of Bolshevik rule. The yield of corn has risen from 30 million poods in the year from August, 1917, to August, 1918, to 100 millions for the period since August 1918. The output of vegetables has increased; there are fewer untilled fields; the transport system is slowly improving, in spite of the immense difficulty of obtaining fuel, and so on. In these conditions, and with the encouragement of the Proletarian State, the shoots of Communism will not wither,

but will wax strong, and finally expand into complete Communism.

We must be clear as to the significance of the "Communist Saturdays" in order to fully realize the importance of the practical lessons to be learned from this Great Initiative.

General support of this initiative is the first and most important lesson. The word "Commune" is of late being all too lightly used. Every enterprise initiated or taken part in by Communists is forthwith trumpeted forth as a "Commune." Men often lose sight of the fact that that honored name can be earned only by long and patient work, by the practical results achieved in actual Communist reconstruction.

Therefore, in my opinion, the resolution of the Central Executive Committee of the Communist Party annulling the order of the Soviet of Public Economy re the naming of "Consumption Communes" is completely justified. Let the names be less ambitious, so that the blunders and the inconveniences of the first steps of the neworganizing work may be laid, not at the door of the "*Communes*," but, as is proper, at that of the *Communists*, who alone are responsible. It would be better to banish the word "Commune" from every-day speech altogether than to use it in a careless fashion.

The name ought to belong to the *real* Communes—those which have shown by their deeds that they possess the knowledge and the capacity to build securely on Communist foundations, and whose possession of these attributes is acknowledged by the unanimous voice of surrounding peoples. First let us show our willingness to work for society without payment, the capacity to perform "revolutionary work," to increase the productivity of labor, to set up high standards everywhere—and then we may claim the right to use the word "Commune."

"Communist Saturdays" are not affected by this criticism, because by them the men of the Moscow-Kasan

Railway have demonstrated their ability to work as Communists, and by their initiative have earned the name of "Communist Saturday Workers."

We must see to it that in future those men will be mercilessly pilloried as swindlers or laughed at as blockheads who name their enterprises or experiments Communes unless they can show by hard work and practical results that their activities are really of a Communist nature and rest upon a real Communist basis.

The great initiative of the Communist Saturdays must be utilized also in another direction—that of purifying the party. It was, of course, inevitable that in the period immediately after the Revolution, adventurers and "crooks" should have found their way into responsible positions. It was therefore inevitable that the great mass of "reasonable" people, led by the bourgeoisie, were prepared, as were the Intellectuals, including the Mensheviks and Social Revolutionaries, to sabotage the work of the Soviets and to cringe before the bourgeoisie. Without this phenomenon there never has been, and never can be, a revolution. The position now is that the party which finds itself at the helm, and which has the support of the most powerful and progressive class in society, is able to undertake the clearing out of undesirables from its ranks.

It is true that work was begun in this direction long ago. It must, however, be prosecuted uninterruptedly and unweariedly. The military mobilization of the Communists has already assisted us in one way, because when the call sounded the cowards and the weaklings turned their backs on the party. A pleasant journey to them! A decrease of this kind in the number of party members really means an increase of power and authority. We should continue the purifying process while utilizing to the full the initiative of the "Communist Saturdays." Admission to the party should follow a half-year of "testing time," which should be spent in "revolutionary work." In the same way should be proved the soundness of all those who have joined our

ranks since October 25th, 1917, and who have not, by special work or merit of some kind, proved their absolute trustworthiness and loyalty.

The purification of the party on the lines of an uninterrupted increase of demands in relation to real Communist performance will improve the apparatus of State management, and will greatly accelerate the process of joining the peasants to the revolutionary proletariat.

"The Communist Saturdays" have, amongst other things, thrown light on the class character of the apparatus of State under the dictatorship of the proletariat. The Central Committee of the Party issued a circular on the question of "revolutionary work." The question was considered by the members—between 100,00 and 300,000. The idea was readily taken up by the organized workers. Their number in Russia and the Ukraine is about four millions. In overwhelming numbers they have declared for the proletarian State authority—the Dictatorship of the Proletariat.

Two hundred thousand to four millions—here we have, so to speak, two hundred thousand cogs driving the great wheels of the social machinery. Then there are four million peasants. These fall into three groups: the largest, and the one most nearly resembling the proletariat, is the semi-proletarian or poor peasants; then there is the middle class; and, finally, the small number of wealthy usurers or village bourgeoisie.

As long as the possibility exists of haggling with grain and of making profits from famine the peasant will be half-worker and half-speculator; and so long as that condition exists the proletarian dictatorship is essential. As speculator, the peasant must be considered an enemy of the proletarian power. He is disposed to enter into a pact with the bourgeoisie and its hangers-on, who are in favor of "free trade" in corn. But in his capacity as worker the peasant is a friend of the proletarian State, and a true comrade of the worker in the fight against the landlord

and the capitalist. As the workers in their millions support the peasants, the machinery of State, which is set in motion and directed by a few hundred thousand Communists, assisted by millions of organized workers, itself consists of the organized working class.

There has never yet been a democratic State in the true meaning of the word—never yet a State which has been closely united to the poor and exploited masses.

Only the Communist idea of which "Communist Saturdays" are a sign, and through which it is being realized, can awaken and secure to the proletarian State the affection and esteem of the peasant. We have a very important work to do, and that is to convince the peasant of the justice of our case and of the righteousness of Communism. This will make him our true comrade, and that means the complete solution of the food problem, and the complete victory of Communism over Capitalism on the question of food production and distribution. It means the consolidation of Communism.

Moscow, June 28th, 1919.