

Is there a gulf which cannot be bridged between the petite bourgeoisie and the masses? Is the means ineffective which makes the Intelligentsia socialist only in words and in reality more sympathetic to the exploiters than to the exploited? Yes, it is so—in essence. In essence, the Intelligentsia is, as a whole, petite bourgeois. But at the same time, it is the bearer of special functions in society—it is the organ and servitor of social knowledge and consciousness. For, in the words of Lassalle, the union of science and the fourth estate is a most natural phenomenon. A real artist must be sensitive to truth, to the beauty of heroism and of the will to freedom. The teacher, the true teacher, must first of all be with the masses in all their experiences and through all their wanderings.

Is there really no hope? Will the attacks not cease? Is it possible that at the brink of the abyss when the proletariat at last with its uttermost strength, has overthrown the old regime, and the bourgeois octopus—that it will be seized by the throat by the intelligent social-revolutionist, social-democrat-menshevik, so that both they and the proletariat be thrown into their graves and the graves of their common aspirations?

You teachers—men and women—show them the example. Down with the boycott! Let us build a new school of the people. I, the people's commissary of education, do not want to force anything on you or on the schools. I say to you—away with the power of the bureaucracy! Conquer the bureaucracy! From now on the ministry (of education) is an executive organ. Let us build together a parliament of enlightenment, a vast government committee for the education of the people. With friendly efforts let us build together a commission instead of a minister—a commission which will not hinder and command but which will make the work easier and aid all healthy initiative. Let us finish the process of decentralization of schools and the transfer of their management to self-governing bodies. Can we even take count of the many problems which confront us? But they must all be decided by

conferences of teachers directly with the representatives of the organized working people. I published a series of statements dealing with the basic problems of education in Russia, and lately I issued a decree of the Central Executive Committee creating a Commission of Public Education. It is possible, and very probable, that these do not meet with everybody's approval. But the statements contain my own personal views, which I intend to apply not as a leader but as a collaborator. The decree has merely a preliminary character, for some sort of an apparatus had to be created to commence the work.

I picture to myself a perspective of the following sort: The Government Committee of Public Education will meet in an extraordinary session to work out the broad democratic basis for the call of an Educational Convention of teachers and direct representatives of the organized working masses. At this convention, in a friendly and open discussion, we will elaborate the underlying principles of a new people's school in Russia and will submit these for confirmation to the constitutional convention.

We will create in the sphere of education an atmosphere of true co-operation. Here class differences do not frighten us. A sincere and true teacher yearns for that perfect school which would transform the greatest number of citizens into completely developed men. The proletariat yearns for the same.

If engineers and workers were to take up the creation of productive machines, apart from any calculations of an entrepreneur character, and guided only by the objective sign of the greatest productivity, they could no doubt co-operate without the least friction. Likewise with the schools. The people has gained its freedom. It wants more light for itself and its children. I have been called by the Congress of Soviets, which represented 15 million of the foremost citizens, to be the People's Commissary of Education. I undertake this task without any pretense or pomp but with a clear sense of re-