

point specialists and technicians, place them in responsible positions, and simply let them bear the responsibility.

Those who are afraid of this procedure unconsciously reveal a deep inner distrust of the Soviet rule. Those who believe that to call the former saboteurs to the administration of specialized technical positions threatens the proper foundations of the Soviet regime, fail to realize that the Soviet regime cannot trip up on any engineer or on any former general—from a political, revolutionary, military point of view the Soviet regime is beyond all danger of being overcome—but that it may trip up on its own inability to cope with the problems of creative organization.

To avail itself of all that was vital and valuable in the old institutions and use it to do the new work, is essential for the Soviet regime. If we do not do this, Comrades, we will not accomplish our fundamental tasks for to produce all the necessary specialists from our own midst after casting aside all that the past had stored up, would be simply impossible.

Fundamentally, it would be the same thing if we should decide to throw away all the machines which up to now have served for the exploitation of the workers. That would be insanity. To make use of the trained specialists is just as important for us as to take all the means of production and distribution under our control, all the values in general that the country contains. We must—and at once—line up all the technical experts we have and actually introduce the obligation to work, for them, at the same time, of course, allowing them a wide field of activity. Incidentally, however, we shall have to place them under effectual political control.

In this direction, Comrades, there are difficulties which lie in the working class itself. Here, too, the past centuries of Russian history are in evidence, the times when the masses of the people were oppressed, despoiled materially and spiritually, and devoid of all essential experience in administration.

And we knew all along that we lacked the necessary organization, the necessary discipline, and the necessary historical experience; all this we knew, and it did not in any way prevent us from proceeding with open eyes to the conquest of power. We were certain that we would learn and manage it all. Now that we have taken the power into our hands, we, the representatives of the working class, must be perfectly clear and absolutely honest with ourselves on the internal sins and failings which represent the greatest menace to the cause of Socialist construction.

These shortcomings, as I have said, have their historical roots in the old, purely agrarian form of life, when there as yet existed no awakened, free and independent human individuality, but only a compact mass which vegetated, wore itself down, died, as a compact mass of locusts lives and dies. The Revolution, which awakened the human personality even in the most oppressed individual, naturally gave him in the earliest days of this awakening an outwardly—if you will, anarchical—character. This awakening of the most elementary instincts of the individual not infrequently has a coarse egoistic or, to use a philosophical expression, “ego-centric” character. But yesterday he was nothing, a slave of the Czar, of the nobility, of the bureaucracy, the accessory of a manufacturer’s machine. In agrarian life, he was a serf, a tithe-payer. Today, freed of all these restrictions he for the first time feels his own personality and begins to imagine that he is—all; that he is the center of the universe. He strives to get all he can for himself, thinks only of himself, and is not inclined to reckon with the general class point of view. Hence the flood of the sort of disintegrating sentiments and individualistic, anarchistic, and grasping tendencies which we may observe particularly in the extensive ranks of the lowest elements of the land, who never belonged to any class, among the members of the former army, and also within certain elements of the working class.

This is nothing but a disease of growth. We should be blind and cowardly, Comrades, if we were to see in this any mortal danger, any pernicious symptom. No, it is no such fatal thing, but like measles in a child or the pain which the teeth come through, it is the organic disease of growth of our class, the pangs of the awakening of its class powers, its creative urge. Nevertheless, it is a disease, and we must strive to overcome it in the shorest time possible. These negative phenomena are evident everywhere—in the large works, in factories and shops, in the industrial unions, in the railroad system, in the state departments among the new employes—under all conditions and on every side.

We have smashed the old sabotage and swept out the majority of the old officials and employes with a broom. In all the branches of administration the successors of the old officials frequently proved to be far from first-class material. On the one hand the vacated positions were taken by our party comrades, who had done the underground work, who had revolutionary training behind them, the best elements, the fighters, the most honest, the most unselfish. On the other hand there came