

Why? Because if we do not go through with it, it will mean that we are beaten, and this fact would be entered in the books of history of the proletariat on the debit side. We understand as a matter of course that eventually the proletariat will conquer, but it will not be passed by—no, it will count heavily against us—that at the given moment our Party and our class did not stand the test. Do you see, it is for this reason that all these creative national tasks or organization are transformed directly and immediately into political obligations for our Party.

All this on the whole relates also to the field with which I am now most closely connected, the military branch of our regime. I will not at this time speak of the international situation of the country, of the international perspectives and dangers. My report will be sufficient if I say that in so far as the fate of the Russian Revolution depends on the world situation, this fate is bound up with the fate of the European Revolution. If the Revolution should not come in Europe, if the European working class should prove incapable of rising up against Capital at the conclusion of the war, if this monstrous premise should turn true, it would mean that European culture is doomed. It would mean that at the culmination of the powerful evolution of capitalism, at the conclusion of the world slaughter into which world capitalism hurled the peoples of the world, the European working class had shown itself incapable of appropriating the power and delivering Europe from the strangle hold of capitalism and the hell of imperialism. It would mean that Europe is doomed to disintegration, to degeneracy, to retrogression. Why, of course, if Europe should fall back into barbarism, and if civilization should then develop somewhere in the east, in Asia, in America, if Europe should be transformed into a backward peninsula of Asia, like the Balkan peninsula, which was once the seat of the development of civilization, then fell back, died, and was converted into that most backward southeastern corner of Europe—if all this should happen, then of course we, too, could not resist the current. But in so far as we have decidedly no grounds at all for such a monstrous hypothesis, in so far as we are convinced that the European proletariat at the conclusion of this war, and probably even in the course of it, will rise—it is being driven to this course by the new offensive on the western front, which is once more revealing to the laboring masses the whole desperateness of their situation—in so far as we are able to say that the fate of our Revolution in its international aspect is inseparably bound up with the fate of the European Revolution, and hence with the fate of Europe. And therefore we, as a factor of this European Revolution, as a component part

of it, must see to it that we should be strong, that is, taken individually, that we should be equipped with an army that shall be representative of the character and spirit of our Soviet regime.

You have read the general decrees of the Commissariat for Military Affairs which we are presenting to you. We assume that since the further development of the international situation may in the very near future hold new and cruel trials in store for us, we must at once proceed to create efficient and dependable cadres of any officers, which for this very reason cannot be formed on the basis of general compulsory recruiting, for it is obvious that such a conscription could not be accomplished within the next two months. You see, therefore, we must for the time being depend on the method of volunteering, which, of course, will have to be safeguarded by a vigorous personal and political examination of all these volunteers.

The duty of the Party organizations, the Party cells will consist in making sure that the elements entering the army are in a political and moral sense of good quality and that after becoming members of the army they do not lose their connection with the working class, which shall subject them to its systematic influence. Anticipating a little, I will say that there are many in our own party ranks who fear that the army may become a tool or a breeding place of counter-revolutionary attacks. This fear, in so far as it has a certain justification, must compel us to concentrate our attention entirely upon the lower strata, the ranks of the soldiers of the Red Army. Here we must create such a foundation, that every attempt to use the Red Army as a tool for counter-revolutionary attacks will be fruitless. The noblest task in this direction seems to me the perfection of the backbone, the officers' staffs, through general training in the shops and factories, and among the poor peasantry. Thus far, Comrades, many decrees, many provisions have existed only on paper. The task of first importance for the Party should be to see to it that the decree concerning compulsory military training in the industrial plants, factories, workshops, schools, etc., which we shall publish in the course of the next few days, are actually carried out in practice. Only the extensive military training of the masses of workers and peasants wherever it can be immediately put into practice will make it possible to convert the voluntary cadres into that skeleton which at the instant of danger can be surrounded with flesh and blood, that is with really extensive armed masses.

And here I come to a ticklish point, which to a certain ex-