

The Peasantry as an Ally of the Working Class

Reply to Comrades P. F. Boltnev, V. I. Efremov and V. I. Ivlev

- **J.V.Stalin**

I apologise for not having been able to reply to you sooner.

I did not say anywhere in my speech^[1] that the working class needs the peasantry as an ally only at the present time.

I did not say in that speech that after the victory of the revolution in one of the European countries the alliance of the working class and the peasantry would be superfluous in Russia. It seems to me that you have not read my speech at the Moscow Conference very carefully.

What is stated there is only that "the peasantry is the only ally that can be of direct assistance to our revolution *at this very moment.*" Does it follow from this that after a victorious revolution in Europe the peasantry may become superfluous for the working class of our country? Of course not.

You ask: "What will happen when the world revolution takes place, when the fourth ally—the peasantry—is no longer needed? How will it be looked upon then?"

In the first place, to say that "after the world revolution" the peasantry will no longer be needed is untrue. It is untrue, because "after the world revolution" our economic constructive work should proceed with giant strides, and socialism cannot be built without the peasantry, any more than the peasantry can extricate itself from its poverty without the proletariat. Consequently, far from weakening after a victorious revolution in the West, the alliance of the workers and peasants should grow stronger.

Secondly, "after the world revolution," when our constructive work is intensified a hundredfold, the trend will be for the workers and peasants to disappear as two entirely different economic groups, to be converted into working people of the land and of the factories, that is, to become equal in economic status. And what does that mean? It means that the alliance of the workers and peasants will gradually be converted into a fusion, a complete union, into a single socialist society of former workers and former peasants, and later simply of working people of a socialist society.

That is our view as regards the peasantry "after the victory of the world revolution."

The matter at issue in my speech was not how our Party would look upon the peasantry in the future, but which of the four allies of the working class is its most direct ally and

immediate assistant at the present moment, at the present juncture, when the capitalists in the West are to some extent beginning to recuperate.

Why did I present the question in my speech precisely in this light? Because there are people in our Party who, out of stupidity and folly, believe that the peasantry is not our ally. Whether it is a good or a bad thing that there are such people in our Party is another matter, but the fact remains that there are. It was against such people that my speech was levelled, and I therefore pointed out that at the present juncture the peasantry is the most direct ally of the working class, and that those who sow distrust towards the peasantry may, without themselves realising it, wreck the cause of our revolution, that is to say, they may wreck both the cause of the workers and the cause of the peasants.

That is what, I was talking about.

It seems to me that you are somewhat offended at my calling the peasantry a not very firm ally, an ally not as reliable as the proletariat of the capitalistically developed countries. I see that you have taken offence at this. But am I not right? Must I not tell the truth bluntly? Is it not true that at the time of the Kolchak and Denikin invasions the peasantry quite often vacillated, siding now with the workers, now with the generals? And were there not plenty of peasant volunteers in Denikin's and Kolchak's armies?

I am not blaming the peasants, because their vacillations are due to their inadequate political understanding. But, since I am a Communist, I must tell the truth bluntly. That is what Lenin taught us. And the truth is that at a difficult moment, when the workers were being hard pressed by Kolchak and Denikin, the peasantry did not always display sufficient staunchness and firmness as an ally of the working class.

Does this mean that we may wash our hands of the peasantry, as certain unwise comrades are doing now, who do not consider it an ally of the proletariat at all? No. To wash our hands of the peasantry would be to commit a crime against both the workers and the peasants.

We shall do everything in our power to raise the political understanding of the peasants, to enlighten them, to bring them closer to the working class, the leader of our revolution—and we shall see to it that the peasantry becomes the ever firmer and ever more reliable ally of the proletariat in our country.

And when the revolution breaks out in the West, the peasantry will become thoroughly firm and one of the most loyal allies of the working class in our country.

That is how the attitude of the Communists towards the peasantry as an ally of the working class should be understood.

With comradely greetings,

J. Stalin

February 9, 1926

Notes:

1 See *Resolutions and Decisions of the C.P.S.U. Congresses, Conferences and Central Committee Plenums*, Part II, 1953, pp. 73-82.

[Source: *Works*, Vol. 8, January–November, 1926, pp. 97-100]