

NEW POWERS OF THE SOVIET REPUBLICS

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*Report Of Debate On
Stalin's Proposals In
Soviet Parliament*

NEW POWERS OF SOVIET REPUBLICS

***Verbatim Report Of Debate On
Molotov's Proposals In
Soviet Parliament***



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**SPEECH AND DEBATE ON THE BILLS TO
REORGANIZE THE ALL-UNION PEOPLE'S
COMMISSARIATS FOR DEFENCE AND
FOR FOREIGN AFFAIRS INTO UNION-
REPUBLICAN PEOPLE'S COMMIS-
SARIATS AT THE JOINT
SESSION OF THE SOVIET OF
THE UNION AND SOVIET
NATIONALITIES**

Moscow, Kremlin, February 1, 1944.

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SPEECH BY V. M. MOLOTOV

VICE-CHAIRMAN OF THE COUNCIL OF PEOPLE'S COMMISSARS OF THE U.S.S.R.

COMRADES, DEPUTIES! The Supreme Soviet has before it the question of reorganizing two People's Commissariats—the People's Commissariat for Defence and the People's Commissariat for Foreign Affairs—from All-Union into Union-Republican People's Commissariats. The Council of People's Commissars is of the opinion that this question has fully matured.

This is not a matter of an ordinary reorganization of two Commissariats, but of investing the Union Republics with new and very responsible functions. The question has been raised of investing the Union Republics with new functions and rights, firstly, in the matter of defending our country, and, secondly, in the sphere of relations with foreign states, and of introducing important reforms in our Union State necessitated by this.

Hitherto, the Union Republics have participated in the common work of creating, organizing and arming the Red Army. Our Army was formed as an All-Union army and had no separate Republican military formations. It is now proposed to form Republican military formations, which shall serve as constituent parts of the Red Army. This gives rise to the necessity of forming People's Commissariats for Defence in the Union Republics, and of reorganizing the All-Union People's Commissariat for Defence into a Union-Republican People's Commissariat.

After the Union of Soviet Republics was formed in 1922, foreign political relations were concentrated entirely in the All-Union People's Commissariat for Foreign Affairs, and the individual Republics empowered this People's Commissariat to act for them in relations with foreign countries. The Government of the Union is now proposing to grant the Union Republics power to enter into direct relations with foreign countries and to conclude agreements with them. Naturally, this granting to the Republics of power to act on their own behalf in the sphere of foreign relations creates the necessity of forming People's Commissariats for Foreign Affairs in the

Union Republics, and the necessity of transforming the All-Union People's Commissariat for Foreign Affairs into a Union-Republican People's Commissariat.

The significance of the proposed reform is quite clear. It implies that the Union Republics will acquire a wider field of activity, which has become possible as a result of their political, economic and cultural growth, in other words, as a result of their national development. One cannot but regard this as a new important step towards the practical solution of the national question in our multi-national Soviet State; one cannot but regard this as a new triumph for the Lenin and Stalin national policy. (*Applause*). But this reform became possible not simply as a result of the consolidation of our Republics; it became possible as a result of the consolidation we have achieved in our All-Union State as a whole.

The consolidation of the Soviet State is most strikingly demonstrated by the fact that our Red Army, which is bearing the brunt of the struggle against the main forces of a most dangerous foe, is defeating the German fascist army and successfully bringing nearer the moment of the complete expulsion of the enemy from Soviet territory, and of his utter defeat. (*Applause*). It is now more evident than ever how miserably the enemy's calculations on defeating the Red Army have failed, and how short-sighted were Hitler's anticipations of disunity arising among the peoples of the Soviet Union. Our army—into which millions of men from all the peoples of the Soviet Union have poured, and which is receiving such invaluable assistance from our partisans in the enemy's rear—is day after day proving more and more definitely how much our country has grown in strength, how mighty is the Soviet system, and how great the friendship that binds the Soviet peoples (*Applause*).

The reforms now proposed in the sphere of the organization of defence and of foreign relations, and the wider functions the Union Republics will now assume, should serve as additional proof of our confidence in the stability and growing strength of the Soviet Union. This confidence is still more strikingly demonstrated by the fact that we propose to introduce these reforms at the height of our Patriotic War, at a time when our peoples are straining their efforts to the utmost, at a time when not every state would undertake to introduce reforms of such dimensions.

THE REORGANIZATION OF THE PEOPLE'S COMMISSARIAT FOR DEFENCE

I WILL take up the question of reforming the People's Commissariat for Defence.

The Bill proposes that the Union Republics should organize Republican military formations, and that the People's Commissariat for Defence be transformed from an All-Union to a Union-Republican People's Commissariat, and it is proposed to amend the All-Union Constitution accordingly.

We already have national military formations in the Red Army. Our army has the following national formations: Lithuanian, Lettish, Estonian, Georgian, Azerbaijan, Armenian, Kazakh and several others. Some of these military units were formed only during the Patriotic War. Now that all the peoples of the Soviet Union are striving to take their place in the ranks of the Red Army, the organization of Republican military formations is a matter of great importance for us.

It is common knowledge that in tsarist Russia certain nationalities and peoples were not called up for military service. This applied, for example, to the Uzbeks, Kazakhs, Tajiks, Turkmenians, Kirghiz, most of the peoples inhabiting the North Caucasus, and also to the peoples inhabiting the North. Naturally, tsarism did not trust the peoples which it kept in a state of colonial or semi-colonial subjection. The tsarist regime did nothing to train these peoples to become fit for being gradually recruited for the army.

In our Soviet times the situation has fundamentally changed.

Our laws, of course, impose no legal restrictions on any nationality as regards military service, but a certain amount of time had to pass before it became possible to draw contingents for the Red Army from all parts of the Soviet Union. In previous years partial enrollments in the Red Army were made in those districts of the U.S.S.R. where enrollment for military service had not been practised under the old regime. National military units of the Red Army were formed, but these formations have been unable to receive their proper development even to the present day.

Now the situation has changed for the better. Sufficient possibilities now exist for organizing military formations in

the Union Republics. All the Republics now possess not only cadres of rank-and-file soldiers, but also certain cadres of commanders, capable of leading the respective military units. Thus, the organization of military formations in the Union Republics can now be put on a firm footing. But in order to carry this out it is necessary to have Republican People's Commissariats for Defence; hence the necessity has arisen of transforming the All-Union People's Commissariat for Defence into a Union-Republican People's Commissariat. It is to be expected that this will cause the Republics to devote greater attention to the organization of military training in schools and in higher educational establishments, which we need. If that is done, the organization of Republican military formations as constituent parts of the Red Army will be a positive factor of no little importance.

How will this affect our Red Army? Will it serve to strengthen it and increase its power? Yes, there can be no doubt about that. Our army has always been near and dear to the peoples of the Soviet Union. During the period of our present Patriotic War the love of the peoples of the U.S.S.R. for their army has grown and their pride in the successes and heroism of the Red Army has become greater and more widespread. (*Applause.*) Indeed, who can fail to see the splendid fight our army is waging to liberate the Ukraine, to liberate Byelorussia? Who can fail to praise with all his heart and soul what the Red Army is doing to prepare the ground for the early liberation of Lithuania, Latvia, Estonia, Moldavia and the Karelo-Finnish Republic? (*Prolonged applause.*) Who does not remember that the Soviet troops saved Azerbaijan, Georgia and Armenia from invasion by German fascism? (*Applause.*) Who among the Soviet people does not sing the praises of our army for having saved our capital, Moscow, for having routed the Germans at Stalingrad, for having passed to the offensive all along the line, for having defended Leningrad and having completely broken the blockade of that city, and for driving the enemy hordes from our native soil without giving them any respite? (*Loud and prolonged applause.*) Who but those who are tainted with fascism now fail to understand that the Red Army is fulfilling a mission of liberation not only towards its own country, but also towards all the democratic countries which are fighting for their honour, freedom and independence against the mortal danger of fascism? (*Applause.*) And who is not aware that

the working men and working women in our factories, the men and women peasants in our collective farms, our intelligentsia, that all Soviet people are ready to devote all their strength to the task of increasing the might of the Red Army, and that by their self-sacrificing labour they are indeed performing their duty to their country and to their heroic Red Army? (*Prolonged applause*).

The formation of Republican military units will serve still further to strengthen our army as the protector of our country, as the reliable bulwark of our Soviet Union. The enemies of the Soviet Union need have no doubt that as a result of the organization of these new military formations our state will become stronger than ever. This will compel them to behave with greater caution in future. *This new embodiment of the growing friendship among the peoples of the Soviet Union will serve still further to raise the prestige of our country in the eyes of the people of the East and West. (Applause.)*

II

THE REORGANIZATION OF THE PEOPLE'S COMMISSARIAT FOR FOREIGN AFFAIRS

OF NO less significance is the reorganization of the All-Union People's Commissariat for Foreign Affairs into a Union-Republican People's Commissariat.

Before the formation of the Soviet Union there were, in addition to the People's Commissariat for Foreign Affairs of the R.S.F.S.R., People's Commissariats for Foreign Affairs in the Ukraine, Byelorussia, Georgia, Armenia and Azerbaijan, which, in certain definite cases, maintained foreign relations with other states.

In the first period, when our state had not yet been gathered together in one All-Union State but consisted of separate parts, a number of treaties and agreements were concluded between individual Soviet Republics and foreign states. In some cases the representatives of the R.S.F.S.R. received special powers from other Soviet Republics to represent them at international conferences and to conclude treaties with other states on behalf of all or several of the Soviet Republics. At the First All-Union Congress of Soviets,

Comrade Stalin stated that

"the Soviet Republics, although acting jointly, marched separately, concerned primarily with the question of their own existence."

At the first stage this was inevitable.

With the formation of the U.S.S.R. and in conformity with the common will of the Union Republics, it was decided to concentrate all relations with foreign powers in one centre. It was then that the All-Union People's Commissariat for Foreign Affairs was formed, and to it were transferred the powers of the People's Commissariats for Foreign Affairs of the separate Soviet Republics. From that time to the present day the Soviet State has been represented abroad by All-Union diplomatic representatives. Treaties and agreements with foreign states were also concluded only in the name of the Union. This was essential for a definite stage in the development of our state and produced positive results in that it consolidated the state and greatly enhanced its role in international affairs. (Applause).

But even then, at the Party Congress held as far back as 1923, Comrade Stalin said :

"We shall discuss the national question more than once, because national and international conditions change, and may change again. I do not reject the possibility that later on we shall have to divide some of the Commissariats which we are uniting in the Union of Republics."

As the greatest expert on the national question not only in our Party, and not only in our country, Comrade Stalin—who jointly with our great Lenin laid the foundations of the Soviet Union—already at that time pointed out that changes in the international situation and national development may, more than once, create the necessity of reorganizing the apparatus of the Soviet State. Nor could we conceive of the situation being different, especially in such a young and rapidly growing organism as the Soviet Union.

The question of the foreign relations of the Union Republics now stands differently from the way it stood two decades ago, when the Soviet Union was formed. It has arisen from the vital requirements of the Republics, and its settlement is dictated by the interests of the Union as a whole.

The time has long passed when certain foreign powers tried to ignore the existence of the Soviet Republic that was engendered by the October Revolution. On the contrary,

today, the desire on the part of foreign states to establish and develop diplomatic relations with our state is growing. Amidst the conditions of a world war, of course, considerable difficulties of a special kind lie in the way of this. Nevertheless, even in the period of this war the international connections of the U.S.S.R. have steadily expanded. It might even be said that it is precisely during the period of this war that the international connections of the Soviet Union were raised to a new and higher level. Universally known facts prove this. For the first time since the Soviet regime came into being we established relations not only of friendship but also of alliance with Great Britain. (*Prolonged applause.*) We have established similarly good relations with the United States of America. (*Prolonged applause.*) We have formed a powerful anti-Hitler coalition, headed by the Soviet Union, Great Britain and the United States of America, the military and political significance of which for the entire circle of democratic states is difficult to overrate. (*Applause.*) An example of the growing friendly relations between the Soviet Union and European states is provided by the recently concluded Soviet-Czechoslovak Treaty. We have laid the foundations for collaboration between the democratic countries, great and small, not only during the war against the common enemy, but also in the post-war period for the purpose of securing the world against fresh attacks on the part of aggressive powers. It is well known that the Moscow and Teheran Conferences played a most important role in the development and consolidation of the anti-Hitler coalition. The confidence of the peoples in the anti-Hitler camp that complete victory is near, that the Allies will inflict a joint crushing blow at the common enemy in the not distant future, and that the alliance and friendship of the anti-fascist countries will be still further cemented in this joint struggle, has never been so great as it is today. (*Applause.*)

Nevertheless, it cannot be said that this general, positive course of development of the international connections of the Soviet Union could fully satisfy not only the needs of our Union as a whole, but the multifarious and growing needs of the Union Republics in the sphere of foreign affairs. For example, the Union Republics have not a few specific economic and cultural needs which cannot be fully met by All-Union representation abroad, or by treaties and agreements between the Union and foreign states. These national needs

of the Republics can best be satisfied by means of direct relations between the Republics and the respective states. It goes without saying that questions of this kind must be especially and concretely discussed by the All-Union and Republican bodies. Nor can it be denied that a certain amount of time will be required to arrange for this activity of the Republics in the sphere of foreign affairs. Such questions cannot be settled by routine methods. But there can be no doubt that the question of entering the arena of foreign relations has become one of vital importance for a number of Republics. And lastly, it must be admitted that this will not only serve the interests of the individual Union Republics, but will help to expand the international connections of and strengthen the collaboration between the U.S.S.R. as a whole and other states, which is so important in wartime, and which will produce good fruit also in the post-war period.

On these grounds we must admit that it is necessary to transform the People's Commissariat for Foreign Affairs from an All-Union into a Union-Republican People's Commissariat. *While, in the first period, only Republican People's Commissariats for Foreign Affairs, and, in the second, only an All-Union People's Commissariat for Foreign Affairs, existed, today, the People's Commissariat for Foreign Affairs must be transformed into a more complex and more widely ramified organization, into a Union-Republican People's Commissariat.*

I have just a little to add on the question of our diplomatic practice. I have to state that the absence of special reference in our Soviet Constitution to the right of Union Republics to exchange representatives with other states and to maintain foreign relations is sometimes interpreted to the detriment of the interests of the Soviet Republics and of the Soviet Union as a whole. The proposed amendments will serve to remove this drawback.

III

ANOTHER STEP TOWARDS THE SOLUTION OF THE NATIONAL QUESTION

THE PROPOSED reorganization of the People's Commissariat for Foreign Affairs and People's Commissariat for Defence marks another step towards the solution of the national question in the Soviet Union. This reform is in complete harmony

with the principles of our Lenin and Stalin national policy. The introduction of such a measure at the present time implies that the Soviet State has reached a new stage of development and has become a more complex and full-blooded organism. This cannot but be regarded as fresh evidence of the great significance of the socialist principle upon which the Soviet Union is organized.

In his speech at the Congress of Soviets which ratified the Constitution of the U.S.S.R. in 1936, Comrade Stalin characterized the triumph of the national policy of the Soviet Government which had ensured the successful formation of a multi-national state on the basis of socialism as follows :

“The absence of exploiting classes, which are the principal organizers of strife between nations; the absence of exploitation, which cultivates mutual distrust and kindles nationalist passions; the fact that power is in the hands of the working class, which is the foe of all enslavement and the true vehicle of the ideas of internationalism; the actual practice of mutual aid among the peoples in all spheres of economic and social life, and, finally, the flourishing national culture of the peoples of the U.S.S.R., a culture which is national in form and socialist in content—all these and similar factors have brought about a radical change in the aspect of the peoples of the U.S.S.R.; their feeling of mutual distrust has disappeared, a feeling of mutual friendship has developed among them, and thus, real fraternal cooperation among the peoples has been established within the system of a single federated state.

“As a result we now have a fully formed multi-national socialist state which has stood all tests, and whose stability might well be envied by any national state in any part of the world.” (*Prolonged applause.*)

Since then seven years have elapsed—and what years! It will soon be three years that we are waging our Great Patriotic War against German fascism and its allies, who in their struggle against the Soviet Union are utilizing the material and human resources of almost the whole of Europe. This has been another test for our multi-national state, the severest it has ever had to face, but the Soviet Union has passed this test, too, with honour.

In his speech on the Twenty-Sixth Anniversary of the October Revolution, Comrade Stalin summed up this last period in the following words :

"All the peoples of the Soviet Union rose as one to defend their country, rightly regarding the present Patriotic War as the common cause of all the working people, irrespective of nationality or religion. Today the Hitlerite politicians themselves realize how hopelessly absurd were their expectations that discord and strife would break out among the peoples of the Soviet Union. *The friendship among the peoples of our country* has stood the test of all the hardships and trials of the war and has been still further cemented in the common struggle all the Soviet peoples are waging against the fascist invaders." (Applause.)

And this, added Comrade Stalin, is one of the main sources of strength of the Soviet Union.

To sum up.

In introducing big constitutional reforms at the present time we must, of course, ask ourselves how this will affect the Red Army and its hinterland. In other words, are we taking a step towards strengthening or weakening the U.S.S.R. ?

All that I have said enables us to give a definite answer to this question.

The reorganization of the People's Commissariat for Foreign Affairs and People's Commissariat for Defence necessitated by the expansion of the tasks and functions of the Union Republics at home and abroad not only does not run counter to the interests of strengthening our Union but, on the contrary, is being introduced with the object and purpose of further strengthening our great state. (Prolonged applause.) From the moment the Soviet Union was formed, the Constitution ensured for the Union Republics so high an expression of their sovereign rights as the right freely to secede from the U.S.S.R. But as time went on the peoples of the Soviet Union became more and more imbued with a desire to live in close friendship with each other, to help each other, and march together through all trials under the leadership of the Soviet Government. (Applause.) The recognition by the Union of the growing requirements of the Republics in state development, including activities in the sphere of foreign affairs, and the legislative satisfaction of these needs will only serve to strengthen the fraternal relations between the peoples of our country, and still more fully reveal to the peoples of the East and West the historical significance of the existence of the Soviet Union.

It must also be admitted that this new step towards the

solution of the national question in the U.S.S.R. is also of great significance for progressive mankind as a whole. At a time when German fascism—the worst offspring of imperialism—has raised its head and has launched a world war with the object of strangling its neighbours, of destroying the free states and of thrusting its predatory imperialist policy upon the other nations of Europe, and later, of the whole world—this new success in applying the Lenin and Stalin national policy in the Soviet State will have particularly great international significance. This step of the Soviet Government will be another moral and political blow at fascism and its misanthropic policy, which is utterly inimical to the interests of the free national development of the peoples. The Soviet Union and its Allies are already successfully beating fascism, which launched this war, and are bringing nearer the day of its utter moral and political defeat. (*Prolonged applause.*) ourselves to the military defeat of fascism. We must also secure its utter moral and political defeat. (*Prolonged applause.*) This, we are convinced, will be facilitated by the constitutional reforms of the Soviet Union which are now being submitted for your ratification.

I am confident that the Supreme Soviet will demonstrate the unanimity of the Soviet people in its settlement of the question of the constitutional reforms now proposed. (*Loud and prolonged applause. All rise.*)

DEBATE

SPEECH OF DEPUTY J. I. PALECKIS, LITHUANIAN S.S.R.

COMRADES, DEPUTIES! The Bills submitted by the Council of People's Commissars of the U.S.S.R. to the Session of the Supreme Soviet to enlarge the powers of the Union Republics in the sphere of defence and foreign relations mark a new triumph of the Lenin and Stalin national policy.

In his report Comrade Molotov stressed the importance of these Bills as fresh evidence of the stability and strength of the Soviet Union, of the growth and development of the Union Republics, of the indestructible friendship and unity of the Soviet peoples, and as a step forward in human progress.

That is how every Soviet citizen, and every honest person outside of the Soviet Union, will appraise them. They will not be so appraised only by those who fail, or do not wish to understand what the Soviet Union is.

The cornerstone of the Soviet Union's policy are clarity and definiteness. Only warmongers, the fascists of all shades, are always interested in dimming clarity, in contaminating the relations between nations with various myths and insane theories, and in fomenting race and national strife. Hitler, that savage butcher of nations, after achieving easy victories in the West, believed that he would be able by means of a Blitzkrieg to win at small cost a vast Lebensraum for the Germans by destroying the Soviet Union, and massacring and enslaving the Soviet people. Hitler counted on disuniting our people, on fomenting a "scrap" among the peoples of the U.S.S.R., but all his plans went astray. Under the leadership of the great strategist Comrade Stalin, our valiant Red Army at Stalingrad and Orel, Leningrad, the Don and the Dnieper, shattered and dispelled the myth about the invincibility of Hitler's army and wrecked Hitler's dreams of world conquest. In the vast expanse of our country millions of Germans found not living space, but graves.

As Comrade Stalin said:

"The friendship among the peoples of our country has stood the test of all the hardships and trials of the

war and has been still further cemented in the common struggle all the Soviet people are waging against the fascist invaders."

It was not for nothing that for 26 years the peoples of the Soviet Union have pursued the road indicated by our great teachers Lenin and Stalin, the road that led from distrust to friendship, from strife to unity, from enmity to the fraternity of the peoples.

We, the people of the young Soviet Republics, are best of all able to appreciate the genuine independence and freedom that every Republic in the Soviet Union enjoys.

It was only in 1940 that the Lithuanian people emerged from the fascist *cul-de-sac* on to the Soviet highroad. The time was too brief to enable our people to make full use of the advantages of the Soviet system, but even what we achieved proved clearly to our people that they had chosen the only correct road. It proved to them the great significance of the friendship and assistance of the fraternal Soviet peoples.

Our constructive efforts were interrupted by the invasion of Hitler's barbarians. Soviet Lithuania, situated on the western boundaries of our great Motherland, was the first to be attacked. The Hitlerites invaded Soviet Lithuania with the object of exterminating the Lithuanian people and establishing on their bones their *Ostland* as a continuation of East Prussia, the home of the ancient Lithuanian tribe of Pruczi whom the Germans conquered and completely exterminated in the past. They are striving to execute their plan by massacring and deporting to Germany hundreds of thousands of Lithuanians, by plunder and colonization.

In the Taurage County, where there was not a single German before the war, there were already in the summer of 1943, 29 German elementary and secondary schools. Confident of victory, the Germans arrogantly and openly put their plans into operation from the moment they occupied our country.

Today the situation has undergone a radical change. The advancing Red Army is at the gates of the Soviet Baltic. The Hitlerite butchers, with their trunks packed ready for departure, are trying to fool the Lithuanian people by means of fraudulent political manoeuvres, or to break their resistance by means of fresh outbursts of terrorism.

They try to play on the national sentiments of the Lithuanian people in order to obtain the manpower they

need, but they meet with no success. The Germans themselves have been obliged to admit the utter failure of their attempts to organize a Lithuanian S. S. Legion, as well as of their attempts to carry out mobilization. Only by savage round-ups, regular man-hunts in the streets, in the market places and in the churches, are the German slaveowners able to obtain slaves for hard labour in Germany.

The resistance which the Lithuanian people are offering the invaders is steadily growing. 1943 marked the rapid growth of the partisan movement in Lithuania. This movement is more and more assuming a nation-wide character and is diverting considerable Hitlerite military forces.

The heroic exploits of the *Vilnius*, *Grunwald*, *Margiris*, and *For our Motherland* partisan units are widely known even beyond the borders of Lithuania. In the second half of 1943 the larger Lithuanian partisan units alone blew up 56 troop trains, exterminating thousands of fascist bandits and destroying a large quantity of war material.

Foaming at the mouth, the German butcher von Renteln is threatening to take fresh reprisals against the population which supports the partisans. Not long ago the fascist barbarians cynically reported that they had completely destroyed the village of Miliunai and massacred its inhabitants. This is only one of the numerous Lithuanian villages which the fascists have razed to the ground. But these savage reprisals only serve to fan the hatred of the people towards the invaders and create thousands of new fighters and heroes.

Marja Melnikaite, a partisan, heroine of the Lithuanian people, who stoically bore inhuman torture, proudly flung into the face of the German butchers as she stood under the gallows: "*I have fought and am dying for Soviet Lithuania! What are you German curs fighting for here?*"

These words expressed the thoughts of the fighting Lithuanian people, who have not bowed their heads to the German invaders.

The Lithuanian people know that this is a life and death struggle. They also know that they can be saved from this greatest menace that ever faced them in their history only by the fraternal assistance of the peoples of the Soviet Union. They see that Comrade Stalin's statement that the day is not far distant when all our Soviet Land will be liberated, when Soviet Lithuania will be free, is coming true.

The State Budget of the U.S.S.R. for 1944 which the

Supreme Soviet has passed, this victory Budget, is an additional source of hope for speedy liberation. An earnest of this is Clause 7 of the Finance Act which instructs the Council of People's Commissars of the U.S.S.R. to examine the Budgets of the Moldavian, Lithuanian, Latvian and Estonian Soviet Socialist Republics for 1944.

The Lithuanian people are impatiently waiting for the day when the Red Army will free them from the heavy chains of Hitlerite slavery. In the ranks of our valiant Red Army there is the X. Lithuanian Rifle Division, which is reviving the finest fighting traditions of the Lithuanian people, the Grunwald traditions. This Division is making the Lithuanian people's contribution to the Patriotic War which the peoples of the Soviet Union are waging against the German invaders.

The Lithuanian warriors are loyally carrying out the behests of their ancestors expressed by the classical Lithuanian author Walancius in the words: *"Let us stand by one another, for better death a hundred times than slavery to the Germans."* And they are standing by one another. Shoulder to shoulder with their brothers, the Russians, Ukrainians, Byelorussians, Kazakhs and warriors of the other peoples of the Soviet Union, the Lithuanian warriors participated in the decisive battles of July, 1943. They fought valiantly in the Orel area where, during the offensive, they fought their way forward 120 kilometres. And today they are fighting in the fields of Byelorussia for their native Soviet Lithuania. They have twice earned the thanks of the Supreme Commander-in-Chief, Marshal of the Soviet Union, Comrade Stalin. Over 3,300 men, non-commissioned officers and officers of the Lithuanian Division have been awarded Orders and Medals of the Soviet Union.

The Lithuanian Division is fighting successfully because it is not alone, but is part and parcel of the victorious Red Army; because it is equipped with splendid up-to-date weapons manufactured in our own Soviet factories. It is defending a just cause, fighting for the liberation of its people, and for the freedom and independence of all the peoples of the Soviet Union.

Bourgeois Lithuania also had an army, but that army offered no resistance to the aggressor, nor could it do so. It lacked both the manpower and the necessary war material for this. The old Lithuanian army was entirely dependent for its supplies upon foreign war industry, which could stop

its deliveries at any moment. To illustrate how this army was equipped it is sufficient to say that it had in all 60 light tanks and about 150 aeroplanes. In the hands of the ruling cliques the Lithuanian army could serve only as a weapon against its own people; and it was used precisely as such on more than one occasion to suppress popular revolts against the fascist regime.

The honest and patriotic section of the Lithuanian army officers were sincerely outraged by this, but they could do nothing to alter it. Being isolated from the other peoples of the Soviet Union, the Lithuanian people could only suffer humiliation, impotent in the face of the arrogant German and Polish aggressors. But today the Lithuanian people are proud of their sons who have inscribed glorious pages of the history of their people by fighting in the ranks of the Red Army against their ancient foes—the German invaders.

That is why we, Lithuanians, particularly welcome the Bill to organize military formation in the Union Republics and to reorganize the All-Union People's Commissariat for Defence into a Union-Republican People's Commissariat.

The organization of military formations in the Republics will provide the peoples of the Soviet Union with further opportunities to demonstrate their national strength in such an important sphere as the military sphere. These Republican military formations, while being trained in the best traditions of their respective peoples, will also imbibe the best traditions of the Red Army, of whom the entire Soviet people are proud. The organization of military formations in the Union Republics will serve as another important link that will still further strengthen the friendship of the Soviet peoples.

Comrades, Deputies! In the course of our Patriotic War the prestige of the Soviet Union in the international arena has grown immensely and has become firmly established. There is a growing desire to establish and develop diplomatic relations with the Soviet Union. At the same time, the Union Republics have developed and have become more consolidated, and they have a number of specific needs and requirements which can be fully satisfied only by means of direct foreign relations. For example, about one-third of the Lithuanian people live abroad, mainly in America. These fellow countrymen of ours have maintained close connection with their Motherland. This is one of the specific features of the Lithuanian S.S.R. which has to be reckoned with.

The desire to preserve and stabilize peace after the war must inevitably lead to closer acquaintance and collaboration between the nations. We rejoice that the enemy underrated our strength, but it will be sad if our friends fail to know and understand us. From this aspect it is important to establish relations with foreign countries. Both the individual Union Republics and the Soviet Union as a whole are interested in this. In its foreign relations every Union Republic will be guided by the general principles and tasks confronting Soviet diplomacy as a whole. On the other hand, the Union-Republican People's Commissariat for Foreign Affairs will protect and promote the specific interests of the respective Union Republics.

That is why the peoples of the Soviet Union sincerely welcome the Bill to grant the Union Republics powers in the sphere of foreign relations and to reorganize the All-Union People's Commissariat for Foreign Affairs into a Union-Republican People's Commissariat.

Small as any Soviet Republic may be, it will rest assured that its interests will be protected by the entire strength and might of the Soviet Union, and no aggressor will dare to bully and intimidate it as was the case more than once with bourgeois Lithuania. We, Lithuanians, have had evidence enough of what it means for a small nation to depend only on its own strength; to be in "splendid isolation" covered up with highfaluting phrases about independence, but actually to be at an *impasse*, in the position of a defenceless orphan whom anybody can rob with impunity and in whose face they can unceremoniously slam the door when it knocks.

The foreign policy of bourgeois Lithuania was, in the main, anti-Soviet and could not create the prerequisites for defending the real interests of the people. The lack of independence and the impotence of this policy were clearly demonstrated by the seizure of the ancient Lithuanian capital, Vilnius, by the Polish squirearchy. It was also demonstrated by the Polish-Lithuanian conflict, which lasted 20 years and ended with the acceptance of the shameful Polish ultimatum dictated by the clique headed by Beck and Rydz-Smigly after Poland had rattled her sword on the frontiers of Lithuania. It was also demonstrated by the Hitlerites' seizure of the only Lithuanian port of Klaipeda and the entire Klaipeda Region, and by Lithuania's forced recognition of fascist Italy's seizure of Abyssinia and of Franco Spain. Realizing the weakness of

Lithuania and her army, the Germans lorded it in that country as if they were at home. The German ambassador Zechlin censored the Lithuanian press and dismissed editors who displeased him. He, too, compelled the government to release German spies from prison and to prohibit the demonstration of cinema films which he disapproved of.

It is common knowledge that in every anti-Soviet plot Lithuania was regarded as a *place d'armes* and springboard for an attack upon the Soviet Union. In September 1939 that venal diplomat Skirpa, the Lithuanian ambassador in Berlin, in complicity with Ribbentrop, arranged in Danzig negotiations between representatives of the Smetona government and the Hitlerite rulers for the entry of German troops into Lithuania. In July 1940 the Smetonaites plotted with the Hitlerites to attack the Soviet garrisons in Lithuania and to occupy the country. For this purpose 80,000 Storm Troopers and frontier "tourists," and 200 army aeroplanes were concentrated on the Lithuanian-German frontier, waiting for the signal to cross it. These plots were thwarted in time, however, and the treacherous policy of the ruling fascist cliques was exposed. By proclaiming Lithuania a Soviet Republic the Lithuanian people saved themselves from the shameful fate shared by the peoples of Finland, Hungary and Rumania. As an equal participant in the struggle to crush Hitlerism, Soviet Lithuania will be an equal participant in the great victory of the Soviet Union. The Lithuanian people will send the Hitlerite tyrants their own bill for all the violence, sacrifice and suffering they have endured.

In the Soviet Union there are no defenceless Republics and peoples. Every Union Republic knows that it has a reliable bulwark in all other Republics. All the Soviet peoples know that their elder brother, the great Russian people, has always been and always will be their faithful and trustworthy friend and protector. We shall never forget that it is precisely in the stern days of our Patriotic War that the sovereignty of every Union Republic and the rights of every Soviet people have expanded and become more firmly established. Herein lie the greatness and strength of the Soviet Union.

Comrades, Deputies! German fascism, dreaming of world conquest, desired to put the motto of German imperialism, "Germany over all," into effect by means of violence. It set out to exterminate entire countries and entire nations and trampled upon the independence of civilized states. The

Soviet Union is bringing salvation to all enslaved peoples. We cannot confine ourselves to the military defeat of fascism, said Comrade Molotov, we must inflict final moral and political defeat upon it. We must completely eradicate the venom of fascism in all its manifestations. Herein, in particular, lies the enormous historical and political significance of the Bills submitted to the Tenth Session of the Supreme Soviet of the U.S.S.R. As Comrade Molotov said: "This... will be another moral and political blow at fascism and its misanthropic policy which is utterly inimical to the interests of the free national development of the peoples."

The Bills before you, which, I propose, should be unanimously passed, impose new and responsible tasks upon the Union Republics. By putting them into effect we shall still further increase the might of our great and beloved Motherland. These Bills are a further illustration of the great wisdom of the Bolshevik Party and the brilliant perspicacity of the leader of the peoples of the Soviet Union, our friend and teacher, great Stalin, who is leading us from victory to victory. *(Applause.)*

SPEECH OF DEPUTY M. D. BAGIROV, AZERBAIJAN S.S.R.

COMRADES, DEPUTIES! We have heard Comrade Molotov's splendid report on the proposed reorganization of the All-Union People's Commissariats for Defence and Foreign Affairs into Union-Republican People's Commissariats.

The fact that the Council of People's Commissars of the U.S.S.R. has submitted these questions to the Tenth Session of the Supreme Soviet for discussion and ratification is of exceptional historical importance.

The fact that these questions have been raised at the present time, when the Soviet people are fighting the decisive battles in the most gigantic struggle ever waged in human history against fascist Germany, shows that the Soviet Union has grown still stronger in the course of the war, and that the Soviet peoples have rallied still more closely around the Soviet Government and around our leader and teacher, Comrade Stalin. *(Applause.)*

It shows that the Union Republics which constitute the Soviet Union, and which have grown strong and stable under the

Soviet regime, represent a single and mighty family united by the principles of Lenin and Stalin.

On November 6, 1941, when the war had been in progress only a few months and the Red Army was sustaining temporary reverses, Comrade Stalin stated in his speech at the Meeting of the Moscow Soviet held to celebrate the Twenty-Fourth Anniversary of the Great October Socialist Revolution :

“Far from weakening, the reverses of the Red Army only served still further to strengthen both the alliance of the workers and farmers and the friendship of the peoples of the U.S.S.R. More, they converted the family of the peoples of the U.S.S.R. into a single and indomitable camp, selflessly supporting their Red Army and their Red Navy. Never has the Soviet hinterland been as solid as it is today.”

This appraisal of Comrade Stalin's has been confirmed by the daily deeds and exploits of all the Soviet peoples at the front in our Patriotic War, as well as in the rear.

It was precisely the stability of the Soviet system, the wise and peaceful foreign policy of our Government, and the mighty strength of our Red Army, which, under the leadership of our great Stalin, is inflicting crushing blows upon the German fascist troops day after day, which shattered Hitler's insane anticipation of the speedy defeat of the armed forces of our country and thwarted the plans of the German imperialists to form a universal coalition against the U.S.S.R.

A coalition was indeed formed, not against the U.S.S.R., however, but in conjunction with the U.S.S.R. against Hitlerite Germany.

In the course of the world war which the fascist misrulers have instigated, the peoples of Europe whom Germany has subjugated, and the freedom-loving nations of the whole world, have united around the great democratic powers—the U.S.S.R., Great Britain and the United States.

Thus, during the course of the war, the internal situation in our country has become more stable than ever, the international ties of the Soviet State have grown still wider, and the prestige of the Land of Soviets in the international arena has risen higher than ever. The friends of the Soviet Union have multiplied and look to us with hope and gratitude. The working people of the whole world, all progressive people, fully realize that the holy Patriotic War the Soviet Union is waging against the main forces of imperialist Germany is at

the same time a war to liberate all mankind from the menace of reaction and obscurantism—the brown plague of fascism.

Comrades, Deputies! Simultaneously with the growth and consolidation of the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics, all the Union Republics which constitute the U.S.S.R., have grown and become consolidated politically, economically and culturally.

To obtain a clearer picture of the degree to which the Union Republics have grown since the U.S.S.R. has been in existence, to obtain a better understanding of the significance of the Soviet system as a splendid model of the commonwealth of nations and of the correct solution of the national problem in a multi-national state, it is sufficient to recall the state our Republics were in at the time of their inception.

Many of the Union Republics, which previously, under tsarism, had been merely colonies, were weak not only militarily and in the sphere of foreign relations, but also as regards organization, economics and culture.

They needed considerable assistance in all spheres of state building, and for this assistance they turned primarily to the citadel of the Great October Socialist Revolution—the R.S.F.S.R.

The working people of Azerbaijan reverentially remember, and will never forget, immortal Lenin's telegram to the Revolutionary Committee of the Azerbaijan Soviet Republic in which he stated:

“...under the leadership of the Soviet Government the independent Republic of Azerbaijan will, jointly with the R.S.F.S.R., uphold its freedom and independence against the enemy of the oppressed peoples of the East—against imperialism.”

From the earliest days of the October Socialist Revolution the great Russian people, who, under the leadership of the working class and under the guidance of Lenin and Stalin, overthrew the capitalist and landlords system in Russia and were the first to establish the Soviet regime in their country, paid exceptional care and attention to all the peoples of the Union Republics, including the Azerbaijan people, and rendered them every assistance.

But notwithstanding the enormous assistance and support the Union Republics received from the moment of their inception, the situation at that time was such that the individual

Union Republics could not go on living separately, not only for internal reasons, but also because of dangers that threatened from without in the military, economic and diplomatic spheres.

In explaining the necessity of forming the Soviet Union and of transferring to the Union Government the functions of the Governments of the Union Republics in the spheres of defence and foreign relations, Comrade Stalin said at the Tenth All-Russian Congress of Soviets :

“...in spite of the fact that our Republics have happily emerged from the condition of civil war, the danger of attack from without is far from having been eliminated. This danger demands that our military front should be absolutely united, that our army should be an absolutely united army....”

“There is a danger of our Republics being economically isolated. This new form of intervention, which is no less dangerous than military intervention, can be eliminated only by the creation of a united economic front of our Soviet Republics....”

Comrade Stalin went on to say :

“The organized diplomatic boycott of our federation was broken.... There are no grounds for assuming that such and similar cases of diplomatic isolation of our federation will not be repeated. Hence the necessity for a united front along diplomatic lines also.”

Because of these circumstances, the Union Republics united in a single Union of Soviet Socialist Republics and, while retaining all rights of independence, they voluntarily transferred to the Union Government some of their rights, including those in the sphere of foreign relations and national defence.

Today, all the peoples of the Union Republics have every ground for saying with gratitude that the Government of the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics has splendidly coped with its historical task, that it has guarded, and is guarding, the interests of the Soviet Union as a whole, and of all the Union Republics severally, in the spheres of defence and foreign relations, like the apple of its eye.

The Soviet Union, which was formed by the will of the peoples, has upheld the freedom and independence of all the peoples of our country and their right to arrange their lives in their own way as our great Lenin taught us.

During the 22 years the Soviet Union has been in

existence our Union Republics, including Soviet Azerbaijan, thanks to the correct application of the Lenin and Stalin national policy and to the daily care and assistance of the Union Government and of Comrade Stalin personally, have by concentrating their attention mainly on their organizational, economic, cultural and educational tasks, succeeded not only in eliminating the former economic and cultural inequality of the peoples of our country, but also in becoming mighty industrial, agricultural and, consequently, defence bases of our glorious Motherland.

Under the leadership of the Bolshevik Party, and with the aid of the great Russian people, our Union Republics have trained splendid national cadres in all spheres of state life. These cadres are successfully coping with the tasks facing their respective Republics, and many of them are doing splendid work outside of their Republics, in All-Union People's Commissariats and organizations.

Numerous examples from all the Union Republics could be quoted in proof of this. Suffice it to say that, during the period of the war alone, in addition to the thousand skilled workers, engineers and technicians who were sent to the East to help to develop the oil industry there, the Azerbaijan S.S.R. has provided a large number of leading specialists for other territories and regions of our Union.

During the period of the war alone, scores of young Azerbaijanians have obtained the scientific degrees of Candidates and Doctors of Science in chemistry, geology, medicine, mathematics and so forth.

It is gratifying to note that most of the theses presented for these degrees dealt with subjects connected with national defence.

One of the main achievements of many of the peoples of the Union Republics, including Azerbaijan, during the period the Soviet regime has been in existence, is the widespread military training of the peoples of these Republics and the creation of military cadres. The effect of this is being felt particularly in the present Great Patriotic War.

This is all the more significant for the reason that, as Comrade Molotov said in his report, under tsarism a number of peoples and nationalities were not called up for military service and, consequently, had no opportunity of learning the art of war. Tsarism feared to trust these peoples with arms.

The October Socialist Revolution alone removed all the

restrictions imposed upon the peoples inhabiting Russia, including the restriction as regards joining the armed forces of the country for protecting their honour and freedom. The very first decree on the formation of the Workers' and Peasants' Red Army, which was signed by immortal Lenin, stated that the ranks of the Red Army were open to all those who were prepared to devote their strength and their lives to the defence of the gains of the October Revolution, the Soviet regime and socialism.

This decree created wide opportunities for all the peoples of our country to acquire knowledge also in military affairs.

As a result of this, today, thousands of the sons of Azerbaijan, having mastered the art of modern warfare and having revived the glorious fighting traditions of their ancestors, are setting wonderful examples of heroism and valour in the fight for the liberation of our Motherland.

Today, in the ranks of our valiant Red Army, fighting shoulder to shoulder with all our fraternal peoples, there are entire Azerbaijan divisions, of which the 416th Red Banner Division has twice earned the thanks of our great Stalin for liberating the Russian town of Taganrog and the Ukrainian town of Melitopol.

Thus, in Azerbaijan, as well as in the other Union Republics, a firm foundation has been laid for developing the armed forces of the Union Republics as part and parcel of the armed forces of the Soviet Union.

The Bill introduced by the Council of People's Commissars of the U.S.S.R. to reorganize the People's Commissariat for Defence will, if passed, enable the Union Republics to proceed to organize and train military formations on a still wider scale, and to raise the military training of the population at large to a higher level.

The same applies to the proposal to reorganize the People's Commissariat for Foreign Affairs. Under present conditions, when the international ties of the Soviet Union have expanded and have become more stable, the Union Republics must play an increasingly important role in the international relations of the Soviet Union.

At the present time Azerbaijan, like all the Union Republics, is mainly interested in consolidating collaboration with all the peoples who are fighting fascism with the object of securing the speediest and fullest defeat of Hitlerite Germany.

The Soviet peoples are vitally interested in the establish-

ment of such a post-war organization of the world as will prevent the creation of hotbeds of war, which, more than once, has approached the frontiers of the Transcaucasian Union Republics and has devastated the lands of our fraternal peoples in a number of regions of the R.S.F.S.R. and in the whole of the Ukrainian, Byelorussian, Karelo-Finnish, Moldavian, Estonian, Latvian and Lithuanian Republics.

It is no accident that the peoples of Azerbaijan display such keen interest in these questions. Our people will never forget the danger that threatened them in the period when the enemy had invaded the North Caucasus, and also as a result of German intrigues in Iran, which Hitlerite Germany tried to convert into a *place d'armes* for a villainous attack on Azerbaijan.

In addition to this, the economic growth and consolidation of the Union Republics, and of the Azerbaijan S. S. R. in particular, has given rise to a number of new specific economic and cultural needs in each Republic which cannot be fully dealt with by our All-Union representatives abroad.

That is why the proposal of the Council of People's Commissars of the U.S.S.R. to restore to the Union Republics the rights in the sphere of foreign relations, which they voluntarily transferred to the Union Government in 1922, is correct and opportune.

Comrades, Deputies! This new historical step forward in the life of our country not only extends the rights of our Union Republics, but also enhances their responsibility both to their respective peoples and to the Soviet Union as a whole. There can be no doubt that the Union Republics, having during the 22 years the Soviet Union has been in existence successfully coped with all their tasks and having brilliantly stood the test of the stern days of our Great Patriotic War, will, just as successfully, cope with the new tasks that confront them. The friendship of the peoples of our country cemented by Stalin is a guarantee of this. It is also guaranteed by the leadership exercised by our glorious Bolshevik Party. It is guaranteed by the fact that we, Soviet people, have been reared and steeled in battle by the great founders of the Soviet State, Lenin and Stalin, and it is guaranteed by the fact that we are being guided and led forward by our teacher and great leader, the greatest military commander of all times, Marshal of the Soviet Union, Joseph Vissarionovich Stalin. (*Loud Applause.*)

SPEECH OF DEPUTY V. T. LACIS, LATVIAN S.S.R.

COMRADES, DEPUTIES! Two Bills of enormous historical importance have been introduced in the Tenth Session of the Supreme Soviet of the U. S. S. R.—the Bill to organize military formations in the Union Republics and to reorganize the All-Union People's Commissariat for Defence into a Union-Republican People's Commissariat, and the Bill to grant the Union Republics powers in the sphere of foreign relations and to reorganize the All-Union People's Commissariat for Foreign Affairs into a Union-Republican People's Commissariat.

In his speech Comrade Molotov most clearly and convincingly revealed the profound historical and political significance of the Bills. Indeed, they mark another great triumph for our Lenin and Stalin national policy, another important step towards the practical solution of the national question in our multi-national Soviet State. Comrade Molotov said that the Soviet State has reached a new stage of development and has become a more complex and full-blooded organism.

How did we achieve this? What enabled us to take such an important step forward in the constitutional progress of our Soviet Union, particularly in such a complicated and grave historical situation like the present, when the greatest battles of all times are being fought, and when the fate of many future generations is being determined? We find a definite reply to this question in the words uttered by Comrade Stalin at the Congress of Soviets as far back as 1936. He said:

“...We now have a fully formed multi-national socialist state which has stood all tests, and whose stability might well be envied by any national state in any part of the world.”

The despicable enemy who wantonly attacked our peaceful country banked on the instability of the Soviet system, on a rift between the workers and the peasants, and on national strife, which, he anticipated, would break out as a consequence of the severe trials of the war. But the enemy was guilty of a gross miscalculation. As Comrade Stalin said:

“*The friendship among the peoples of our country has stood the test of all the hardships and trials of the war and has been still further cemented in the common struggle all the Soviet peoples are waging against the fascist invaders.*”

The friendship among the peoples of the Soviet Union has stood the great test of fire and steel and is now stronger than ever it was before. That is why we are able to introduce reforms of this magnitude in a complicated situation such as the present. It is a testimony to our strength, to the might of our Soviet State, to the solidarity and indestructible friendship of its peoples. And we are confident that the reorganization of the two most important fields of our State activity will really help to strengthen the Red Army and enhance the forces of our State.

Comrades, Deputies! Concerning the question of organizing military formations in the Union Republics I would like to make a brief excursion into the history, into the recent past of my Latvian people. The tsarist autocracy distrusted the peoples which it kept in colonial and semi-colonial subjection. Although Latvians were recruited for the tsarist army, Latvia had no military units of its own. It was only in 1915, when Riga was in danger of being captured by the German troops, that the tsarist government permitted the formation of several Lettish rifle battalions. Notwithstanding the heroic struggle the Lettish Rifles waged against the ancient enemies of their people—the German invaders—the Lettish units were still distrusted. All sorts of intrigues were carried on against them, and this reached such a pitch that the Tsarina went to the length of urging the Commander-in-Chief of the front to get the Lettish battalions exterminated, to drive them to certain death in order to get rid of them as quickly as possible. There was one thing, of course, in which the autocracy was not mistaken, and that was the hatred the Lettish Rifles entertained for the tsarist despotism, and their loyalty to the working people. As soon as the Revolution broke out Lettish Rifles were among the first to join the ranks of the fighters for freedom, and in the civil war and struggle against the foreign interventionists they fought like heroes to defend the young Soviet State against its enemies. Under the leadership of Lenin and Stalin, the Lettish Rifles won many a glorious victory. Orel, Kharkov, Kakhovka and Perekop—such are the milestones on the glorious road traversed by the Red Lettish Rifles.

The moment our Great Patriotic War broke out the sons of the Lettish people recalled the fighting traditions of the Red Lettish Rifles. They fought stalwartly and bravely on the line of the River Velikaya, and for a long time held the ap-

proaches to Pskov. Two Lettish Regiments which had been formed out of detachments of Workers' Guards fought on the Estonian sector of the front, and since the autumn of 1941 have been taking part in the defence of Leningrad.

Immediately after our evacuation to the fraternal Soviet Republics all Latvians capable of bearing arms expressed an ardent desire to join the ranks of the Red Army. In August 1941, the Central Committee of the Communist Party of Latvia and the Council of People's Commissars of the Latvian S. S. R. applied to Comrade Stalin for permission to form Lettish national units of the Red Army. Comrade Stalin treated our request with fatherly consideration and granted us permission to form a Lettish Rifle Division, and when that Division went to the front he permitted us to form a Lettish reserve unit. Now that our Division has been fighting at the front for over two years we may holdly assert that by its deeds on the battlefield it has justified the confidence placed in it by our beloved leader and commander, Comrade Stalin. The Division fought heroically near Moscow, shoulder to shoulder with the warriors of the other fraternal peoples of the Soviet Union. In the battles near Staraya Russa, in the Demyansk *place d'armes*, and at Novosokolniki, the Lettish Rifles set brilliant examples of heroism and staunchness. Over three thousand men and officers of the Lettish Division have been awarded Orders and Medals of the Soviet Union. Guards Captain Janis Wilhelms, who was reared by this Division, has been awarded the lofty title of Hero of the Soviet Union. In the autumn of 1942 Comrade Stalin promoted our Division to the Guards. The Lettish Guards Rifles promised to prove that they were worthy of this great honour by their deeds on the battlefield, and they are keeping their promise. In this way they are expressing their gratitude to our country, and to our beloved Stalin, for the confidence they have placed in them.

How shortsighted were the enemy's anticipations of a rift among the peoples of the Soviet Union! The greater the danger, and the more arduous the struggle, the stronger became the friendship of the peoples of our multi-national country. In defending Leningrad, in defeating the German hordes near Moscow, in the great battle for Stalingrad, and in forcing the Dnieper, the warriors of all the fraternal peoples of the Soviet Union covered themselves with glory. Among the list of Heroes of the Soviet Union who earned this lofty title by forcing the Dnieper are to be found the names of sons of all

the peoples of our great country. We, Latvians, are proud of the fact that the names of four sons of the Latvian people are in that list.

In the fire of battle we have reared and steeled our own fighting cadres of men and officers. In the ranks of the Red Army there is a dozen or more Latvian Generals seasoned in battle, and a large number of officers who have received their training in the Stalin school. The knowledge, the great fighting and organizing experience they have acquired, is a guarantee that we shall cope successfully with the new task that now faces us in the sphere of increasing the defence power of the Soviet Union.

Forcibly cut off from the Soviet Union, the Latvian people for 20 years were pawns in the hands of their imperialist western neighbours. During the entire period from 1919 to 1940 the alleged independence of Latvia was a mere illusion. Ministerial posts were occupied by the placemen and agents of Hitler fascism. The German Ambassador Kotze, unceremoniously, without even attempting to display ordinary diplomatic courtesy, ordered the ministers of the reactionary government of Latvia about as he pleased and placed his spies and agents in the government service, among the Latvian representatives abroad, and in the Latvian army. The Latvian people were fully aware of the treacherous policy pursued by the pro-fascist government of Latvia, which was plundering and oppressing the country. That is why, in July 1940, the Latvian people with such unprecedented unanimity expressed their desire to join the great commonwealth of Soviet nations. From a small and defenceless country Latvia became an equal Union Republic of a mighty Soviet power, and the entire economic, defence and political might of the Land of Soviets became the bulwark of the young Union Republic. Latvia was freed from the whims and caprices of the imperialist powers, and the Hitler fascists could no longer dictate their will and hinder the political, economic and cultural development of our industrious country.

But in spite of the fact that the Latvian people, in July 1940, had so vividly and unanimously expressed their desire to join the Soviet State, there are still people abroad who refuse to reckon with this historical decision of the Latvian people. Former agents of the pro-fascist government of pre-Soviet Latvia—the Bilmanises, Zarinses, Salnaises and Balodises—whom the Latvian people had ignominiously expelled, have

found refuge in Sweden, the United States and several other countries. These men, who always represented not their people, but the enemies of their people, are acting as Hitler's flunkys and are stirring up trouble in the international arena. Extremely characteristic is the conduct of the former Latvian ambassador in the United States, Bilmanis. This adventurer, who is abusing the hospitality of the great Trans-atlantic Power, is, in his public speeches and utterances in the American press, lauding the enemy and butcher of the Latvian people, General Dankers who, as the Latvian Quisling, has during the two and a half years of German occupation massacred about 150,000 of the civilian inhabitants of Latvia. Birds of a feather flock together. Bilmanis's hands are also dripping with blood. He was implicated in the brutal assassination of that great popular leader, Sergei Kirov. And now this scoundrel, this enemy of the Latvian people, and enemy of all progressive mankind, this Hitlerite flunkey in the United States, is singing paeons of praise to the bloody deeds of his colleague, General Dankers!

Comrades, Deputies! This fact alone shows that the Union Republics will have a large field of activity in the sphere of foreign relations, and if we exert all our efforts to cope with this task successfully, our international ties will grow, will become wider, and the collaboration between the Soviet Union and other countries will become more close.

A difficult, complex and responsible task faces the Union Republics. The general scope of political functions of the Union Republics will greatly expand, and we shall have to exert all our efforts, exercise all our energy, successfully to cope with this new and responsible task, and thus justify the confidence our great leader and commander, Comrade Stalin, places in us.

Comrades, Deputies! The Bill which the Government of the Union has introduced in the Tenth Session of the Supreme Soviet of the U.S.S.R. to grant the Union Republics powers in the sphere of foreign relations and to reorganize the All-Union People's Commissariat for Foreign Affairs into a Union-Republican People's Commissariat, and the Bill to organize military formations in the Union Republics and to reorganize the All-Union People's Commissariat for Defence into a Union-Republican People's Commissariat, are, in my opinion, opportune, and I urge you to pass them.

The Latvian people spent only one year under the Soviet regime, but this was enough to convince them of the advantages

of living in this great commonwealth of Soviet nations. They received immense assistance from the fraternal Republics in the work of building up their Soviet Socialist Republic and in developing their economy and culture. Today they see how the entire Soviet Union is cooperating in order speedily to restore the life and economy of the districts and Republics of the Soviet Union liberated from the German vandals. All this convinces them that, when the Hitler robbers are expelled, Soviet Latvia will receive the same assistance and will rapidly heal the wounds inflicted upon our country by German rule. The Latvian army units, our valiant partisans, the entire Latvian people will exert all their efforts to secure the speedy and utter defeat of the enemy, and to achieve complete victory over misanthropic Hitlerite fascism—the worst enemy of free national development.

The day is not far distant when the sun of the Stalin Constitution will again shine in Soviet Latvia, and again the Latvian people will march along the glorious road of peaceful construction to a free and happy future, guided and comforted by the genius of great Stalin. (*Loud applause.*)

**SPEECH OF DEPUTY P. K. PONOMARENKO,
BYELORUSSIAN S.S.R.**

COMRADES, DEPUTIES! Comrade Molotov, People's Commissar for Foreign Affairs, has reported to us on the Bills the Council of People's Commissars of the U.S.S.R. has submitted to the Session of the Supreme Soviet for examination and ratification. As is evident from Comrade Molotov's report, and from the Bills submitted to us, the question is one of making important changes in our Union Constitution, of setting before the Union Republics new, extremely important and responsible tasks in the sphere of national defence and in the sphere of foreign affairs. These Bills mark a further stage in the development of the Lenin and Stalin national policy, and are striking illustrations of the sovereign rights of the Union Republics, which constitute the Soviet Union.

The Great October Socialist Revolution smashed the chains of national oppression and freed the peoples of former tsarist Russia from political tyranny, from unbearable political, economic and national oppression. It brought freedom for the working people and created the conditions for building the national statehood of the peoples of multi-national Russia.

During the Great October Revolution, Lenin and Stalin issued to the people the Declaration of Rights of the Peoples of Russia, which was the program of our Party and of the first Soviet State in the world on the national question, a document which embodied the highest expression of the sovereign rights of the peoples of Russia.

Comrade Stalin, the continuator of great Lenin's cause and leader of our Party and of the people, amplified Lenin's tenets, formulated the only scientific and revolutionary theory for the solution of the national problem, and applied it in our state.

Comrades Lenin and Stalin proceeded to solve the problem of forming, developing and consolidating the Soviet statehood of the peoples of Russia in a practical manner at the very beginning of the Great October Revolution. They formed the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics—the strongest and most united multi-national state in the world—and forged the great friendship of the peoples; which is one of the unshakeable foundations of the stability of our socialist state. This friendship had already been cemented with the blood of the October Revolution; it became still stronger in the years of peaceful construction, and in the stern days of our Great Patriotic War it has united all the peoples of our country by their unquenchable love for their Motherland.

The Byelorussian Soviet Socialist Republic, created by Lenin and Stalin, grew and became consolidated under the Soviet regime. Under this regime the Byelorussian people, whose frightful poverty before the Revolution had become a byword, the people who left their country in thousands in search of a better lot, took the path of prosperity, of freedom, happiness and security.

In the course of the 25 years of the Soviet regime Byelorussia became a land of developed industry and socialist agriculture. The conditions of life and culture of the Byelorussian people improved immensely. From a backward, poverty-stricken, downtrodden colony of tsarist Russia, Byelorussia became, thanks to the Soviet system, one of the advanced Soviet Republics.

Rapid progress in political, economic and cultural development was also made in the historically brief period the Soviet regime has been in existence by the Ukrainian, Uzbek, Kazakh, Azerbaijan, Georgian, Armenian and other Soviet Union Republics.

The Bills submitted to the Session mark a further important step in the development and consolidation of our state and provide for an enormous extension of the rights and field of activity of the Union Republics in the spheres of foreign relations and the organization of our armed forces. It became possible to introduce these Bills because of the national development and consolidation the Union Republics have undergone under the Soviet regime, and also because of the immense growth and consolidation of our All-Union State—the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics.

The granting to the Union Republics of the right to have their own military formations and Republican People's Commissariats for Defence will be welcomed by the Soviet people with tremendous joy and enthusiasm.

For the Byelorussian Soviet Socialist Republic these acts will be of immense historical importance.

The history of the Byelorussian people is a history of sanguinary struggle and popular revolt against alien conquerors. In this struggle the Byelorussian people for centuries relied on the support of their brothers—the Russian people. They always gravitated towards the Russian people and linked their hopes with theirs. Shoulder to shoulder with the Russian people, they fought and dreamed of a better lot. No alien force could crush the Byelorussian people who, in their struggle, relied on the great Russian people.

During the war for the reunification of the Russian state, the peasants and city dwellers of Western Byelorussia joyously welcomed the Russian troops and rendered them active assistance in liberating Byelorussia from Polish feudal rulers.

During the Northern War against the Swedes, the Byelorussian peasants everywhere assisted the troops of Peter I. This assistance greatly affected the issue of the battle of Lesnaya, in the Moghilev Region, where Peter's troops utterly defeated the army commanded by the Swedish General Levenhaupt, who was marching to the Ukraine to join the troops under the command of Charles XII. Peter I called this battle "the mother of the victory of Poltava."

One of Peter's Generals reported from Byelorussia that the inhabitants of that country "were loyal, refused to sell anything to the Swedes and, gathering in companies, attacked and killed many Swedes and blocked the roads in the forests."

Byelorussian partisans played an important part in the

war of 1812, and in defeating the German and Polish invaders in 1918-1920.

In the present Great Patriotic War, the Byelorussian people, imbued with uncompromising mortal hatred for the German invaders who robbed Byelorussia of her liberty and destroyed her state, at the behest and under the leadership of Comrade Stalin rose to defend their Soviet Motherland, their liberty, their honour and their lives.

The German invaders have caused the Byelorussian people incalculable suffering. They have methodically and systematically destroyed towns, villages, industry, agriculture and the national and cultural treasures of the people, and have massacred the civilian population wholesale.

The peoples of our country saw that these fascists were the hunting dogs of German imperialism, reactionaries and obscurantists, butchers and murderers, thugs who strangled liberty, the mortal enemies of the working people.

Their aim was to impose the yoke of slavery on the necks of the Byelorussian people. By means of mass terrorism and atrocities they wanted to intimidate the Byelorussian people, to break their determination to fight, and to convert them into obedient slaves. But their designs have failed! The Byelorussian people did not bend the knee to the invaders; they retaliated to the atrocities committed by the invaders by waging an uncompromising popular war against them.

At the front in our Great Patriotic War, the Byelorussian warriors are devoting all their strength, all their capabilities, energy and will, they stint nothing in their efforts to defeat the German invaders and completely to liberate our Soviet soil.

In the rear of the German invaders the Byelorussian people have developed a nation-wide partisan movement. Hundreds of thousands of avengers of the people, men and women partisans, are waging fierce, uncompromising guerilla warfare against the invaders in a multitude of ways. The Byelorussian men and women partisans are striking heavy blows at the Hitler war machine, are destroying the German army administrations and communications, and by their valiant struggle are assisting the Red Army.

The military formations of our Republic will inherit the glorious fighting traditions which have been historically laid down in the common struggle against foreign invaders shoulder to shoulder with the Russian people and under the leadership of the captains of the great Russian people.

The Byelorussian people are united and devoted to their Soviet Motherland, and they love their Workers' and Peasants' Red Army—their liberator. The Red Army's attraction for the Byelorussian people was always great, but particularly great is it in the present stern days of the war, when the Red Army is waging an uncompromising struggle against the German invaders. This is vividly illustrated by the fact that during the course of this war over 150,000 Byelorussians, aided by partisans, have crossed the fighting line from Byelorussia to join the ranks of the Workers' and Peasants' Red Army and take part in the fight against the hated enemy.

Two thousand collective farmers of the Rossony District in the Vitebsk Region, arming themselves with whatever weapons that came to hand, fought their way across the river, crossed the fighting line, reached the dispositions of our troops and joined the ranks of the Red Army. I could quote many other examples of the same kind. Over 50,000 Byelorussian partisans who had been fiercely fighting in the rear of the German invaders for two years have already joined units of the Red Army. They joined immediately they came in contact with these units, and are now continuing the struggle against the German invaders in the ranks of the Red Army.

Hundreds of thousands of sons of the Byelorussian people are fighting on all fronts of our Great Patriotic War. Hundreds of thousands of Byelorussian partisans are waging a fierce struggle in the enemy's rear. Both the regular and irregular forces have become hardened in battle and have acquired experience in conducting modern warfare. It is obvious, therefore, that the military formations of the Republic will consist of seasoned and fearless fighters who are devoted heart and soul to their Soviet Motherland.

Comrade Molotov's statement in his report that all the Republics possess not only cadres of rank-and-file soldiers, but also certain cadres of officers who are capable of commanding the respective military units, is confirmed, as far as Byelorussia is concerned, by the fact that during the period of the Great Patriotic War 21,000 Byelorussian officers and men have been awarded Orders and Medals of the Soviet Union. Moreover, while pre-revolutionary Byelorussia provided the tsarist army only with uneducated and half-educated recruits, today there are fighting on the different fronts of our Great Patriotic War several thousands of Byelorussian officers, 4 Admirals and 157 Generals—all sons of the Byelo-

russian people. Clearly, the Byelorussian people could not even have dreamed of anything like this before the Revolution.

Thus, there is a firm foundation for building a commanding personnel for the military formations of the Republic.

The establishment of a People's Commissariat for Defence and the organization of military formations will greatly enhance the Republic's responsibility as regards the further strengthening of our defence, and will create all the necessary conditions for the successful execution of this task by the Republican authorities. This Bill imposes on the Republic serious duties and responsibilities connected with the military upbringing and training of the entire people, the physical training of the younger generation, and the daily tasks of consolidating the military formations of the Republic.

The Bill to grant the Union Republics powers in the sphere of foreign relations and, accordingly, to reorganize the All-Union People's Commissariat for Foreign Affairs into a Union-Republican People's Commissariat, is also a great event in the life of the Union Republics.

The heroic and victorious struggle the Red Army is waging against the German fascist invaders, and the straightforward, unambiguous and just policy pursued by the Soviet Union, which contains not the slightest element of aggression, have enhanced the international prestige of our Soviet state very considerably. The international ties of the Soviet Union have become firmer and wider and, as a consequence, the field of operations of the People's Commissariat for Foreign Affairs has become greatly enlarged. On the other hand, the Union Republics now have specific economic and cultural needs in the sphere of international relations which cannot always be met by the All-Union representatives abroad and by the All-Union People's Commissariat for Foreign Affairs.

The granting to the Union Republics of the right to establish foreign relations will serve still further to enhance the international prestige of the Union Republics. The granting of the right to the Union Republics to establish foreign relations and to set up their own People's Commissariats for Foreign Affairs is a necessity under present conditions. It marks a new stage in the development of the Union Republics and will result in the further consolidation of our state.

Comrades, Deputies! The entire Soviet people will welcome these wise Stalinist decisions, which will serve the interests of the peoples of our country.

Under the leadership of the Party of Lenin and Stalin, our country won freedom and independence for itself and built up its state—the Great Union of Soviet Socialist Republics.

Under the banner of the Party of Lenin and Stalin, and under the leadership of great Stalin, our people will crush the invaders, liberate the entire territory of our Motherland and proceed further along the path of prosperity and increasing might of our Soviet State. (*Applause.*)

**SPEECH OF DEPUTY A. A. BOGOMOLETS,
UKRAINIAN S.S.R. (SPEAKS IN UKRAINIAN)**

COMRADES, DEPUTIES! The Bills submitted to the Supreme Soviet of the U.S.S.R. for ratification, namely :

“To Organize Military Formations of the Union Republics and, Accordingly, to Reorganize the All-Union People’s Commissariat for Defence into a Union-Republican People’s Commissariat,” and

“To Grant the Union Republics Powers in the Sphere of Foreign Relations and, Accordingly, to Reorganize the All Union People’s Commissariat for Foreign Affairs into a Union-Republican People’s Commissariat,”

will undoubtedly serve as important factors in strengthening the power of defence of the U.S.S.R. and of enhancing its prestige in international affairs.

Under the mighty blows of the heroic Red Army which is directed by our great leader, Supreme Commander-in-Chief, Marshal of the Soviet Union, Comrade Joseph Vissarionovich Stalin, the robber army of Hitlerite Germany, suffering severe defeats, is rolling further and further westward every day.

The hour when our Soviet soil will be completely freed from the fascist barbarians is already near. Every day brings nearer the hour of the final defeat of Hitlerite Germany, for which all the freedom-loving nations of the world, and primarily the peoples of Europe, who for over four years have been groaning under the jackboot of fascist barbarism, are impatiently longing.

Just retribution for the suffering and oppression endured by the peoples is already being meted out on the fields of the Ukraine, in the forests and marshes of Byelorussia, and in the Leningrad Region, and is inexorably reaching the frontiers

of Germany, the cities of which are collapsing under the bombs dropped upon them by the aircraft of our Allies.

The vast territories that belong to the Republics of our multi-national U.S.S.R. do not divide these fraternal Republics. On the contrary, they have served as the arena in which during our Great Patriotic War the fraternal friendship and unprecedented heroism of our peoples have been so vividly displayed.

During this Great Patriotic War all the peoples of the U.S.S.R. have realized that in defending even the most remote frontier of our Union they are defending their Motherland, the freedom and happiness they enjoy under the Stalin Constitution.

The granting to the Union Republics of the right to organize their own military formations will still further enhance the Soviet patriotism of the peoples of these Republics and still further strengthen the power of defence of our great Soviet Union.

I urge the Supreme Soviet of the U.S.S.R. to pass the Bill submitted to it for the organization of military formations in the Union Republics and to reorganize the All-Union People's Commissariat for Defence into a Union-Republican People's Commissariat.

Comrades, Deputies! After the already impending defeat of Hitlerite Germany, the question of the post-war organization of the world will arise in all its magnitude, an organization which must make the freedom and happiness of all the peoples inhabiting our planet secure for many years to come. Such is the will of the three great allied powers: the U.S.S.R., Great Britain and the United States, which have united to fight fascist barbarism; and such is the will of all the freedom-loving nations of the entire globe.

A number of the problems connected with the post-war organization of the world will, of course, be solved by the International Peace Congress. A number of problems of All-Union importance will, of course, be settled by the Union-Republican People's Commissariat for Foreign Affairs of the U.S.S.R.

But there remain numerous other problems, the solution of which will call for the constant and prolonged collaboration of all countries whose frontiers are contiguous and whose interests will be found to be particularly close in matters of further economic and cultural development, which are matters

also of considerable political importance.

By way of example I will briefly deal with the problems, in the successful solution of which Soviet Ukraine is particularly interested.

After the war, the Ukraine's immediate western neighbours will be the two Slav republics—Poland and Czechoslovakia. The three republics have a common mortal enemy—fascist Germany—which long ago openly set out to exterminate the Slav peoples and seize their territories, primarily the territories of Poland, Czechoslovakia, and Soviet Ukraine and Byelorussia.

Only the fascist government of Poland, blinded by predatory imperialist aims, could have dragged Poland into the channel of pro-German policy. It created absolutely intolerable conditions of existence for that section of the Ukrainian people which was under its rule up to 1939. It is difficult to picture more inhuman treatment of national minorities than that of which the Ukrainians living in Polish territory were the victims.

The insane policy pursued by the fascist Polish government towards the U.S.S.R., of which the Ukrainian S.S.R. is an inalienable part, very severely affected the economy of Poland herself.

For years Polish industry depended on raw materials which were obtained in large quantities from the Ukraine. Until the first imperialist war, Krivoy Rog ore, Donets coke and Ukrainian manganese were used in the Polish iron and steel industry in enormous quantities. Poland's textile industry utilized Russian raw materials and found the best markets for its output in Russia and the Ukraine.

The disturbance of normal political and economic relations with the U.S.S.R., and with the Ukrainian S.S.R., in particular, led to the decline of Polish industry and to the still further impoverishment of the Polish people.

The fascist government of Poland failed to carry out Clause 7 of the Treaty of Riga which reads:

“Poland grants to persons of Russian, Ukrainian and Byelorussian nationality residing in Poland, on the basis of equality of nationalities, all rights ensuring the free development of culture and language, and the performance of religious rites.”

Instead of carrying out this Clause it systematically trampled upon Russian, Ukrainian and Byelorussian national culture.

Even today the *emigre* Polish government displays imperialist, pro-fascist tendencies in its policy. It goes without saying that such tendencies put the very possibility of friendly agreements out of the question.

Victory is already near. The great liberating powers—the U.S.S.R., Great Britain and the United States—around whom the other freedom-loving peoples of the world have rallied, will in the very near future free the Polish people from the fascist yoke. Then a new, democratic Poland will arise, and all the conditions will be created for friendly collaboration between the Ukrainian and Polish peoples. Then the community of political, economic and cultural interests of the democratic Polish Republic and the Ukrainian Soviet Socialist Republic may serve to promote rapprochement between these states, and may call for the conclusion between them of special agreements for the purpose of consolidating these friendly ties.

Equally natural, probably, will be the growing intimacy between Soviet Ukraine and her other western neighbour, the Czechoslovak Republic.

As is evident from the example I have quoted, it is necessary to establish People's Commissariats for Foreign Affairs in the Union Republics in order to give effect to the various agreements which may be concluded between the Union Republics constituting the U.S.S.R. and their foreign neighbours, and this will facilitate the consolidation of peace and friendly collaboration among the nations.

Comrades, Deputies! Our great Soviet Union is built on the foundation of national equality. In our country there is no longer a trace of national inequality, or of privilege for some nations as against others. In our Union all nations are equal. There is no longer, nor can there be, any danger of somebody encroaching upon our Ukrainian soil. That soil is in our possession. Nobody now restricts, or ever will restrict our national-cultural and constitutional development. On the contrary, we are receiving every possible assistance in developing our Ukrainian culture and our Ukrainian statehood. In the shape of the Soviet Union we, Ukrainians, like all the other peoples constituting the U.S.S.R., have acquired a family in which we meet with respect and fraternal assistance; the free, new family of fraternal peoples of which Taras Shevchenko, the great poet of the Ukrainian people, dreamed a hundred years ago.

I urge you to pass the Bills submitted to you for discussion to organize military formations in the Union Republics and, accordingly, to reorganize the All-Union People's Commissariat for Defence into a Union-Republican People's Commissariat, and to grant the Union Republics powers in the sphere of foreign relations and, accordingly, to reorganize the All-Union People's Commissariat for Foreign Affairs into a Union-Republican People's Commissariat. These Bills mark a further important step in the development of the wise Lenin and Stalin national policy, an important step on the road of historical truth and justice, along which our great leader, Comrade Joseph Vissarionovich Stalin, is leading the fraternal peoples of the U.S.S.R. (*Loud applause.*)

SPEECH OF DEPUTY J. J. VARES, ESTONIAN S.S.R.

COMRADES, DEPUTIES! The Council of People's Commissars of the U.S.S.R. has submitted to this Session, in terms that are concrete in form and profound in content, the question of reorganizing the All-Union People's Commissariats for Defence and Foreign Affairs into Union-Republican People's Commissariats.

We were thrilled and gratified by Vyacheslav Molotov's report on the Bills submitted to the Tenth Session of the Supreme Soviet of the U.S.S.R. to grant the Union Republics wider powers in matters concerning national defence and foreign relations. In his report Comrade Molotov very clearly formulated the reasons why it is necessary to reorganize the aforesaid People's Commissariats from All-Union into Union-Republican People's Commissariats.

These Bills impose on the Union Republics an immense responsibility, present them with entirely new tasks, enlarge their field of activity and invest them with new powers in the spheres of national defence and foreign relations. All the Republics must understand correctly and fully the importance of this new step for the practical solution of the national question in our multi-national Soviet State. This is a new victory, a new triumph for the Lenin and Stalin national policy. The Bills which have been introduced are further evidence of the stability and might of the Soviet State; they testify to the inviolable friendship and unity that exist among all the Soviet peoples who have rallied closer than ever in the

struggle against the common enemy—the German fascist invaders.

The reorganization of the All-Union People's Commissariat for Defence into a Union Republican People's Commissariat, and the right granted to the Union Republics to organize their own military formations, which are to be component parts of the Red Army, open new paths in the sphere of organizing the defence of our Soviet Land as a whole, and will undoubtedly facilitate the further growth of the might of our beloved Red Army.

The organization of military formations in the Union Republics opens up new and wide possibilities for displaying the finest national qualities and military traditions of the peoples which constitute the U.S.S.R., and will rouse the martial pride of every nationality in our Soviet Land.

The organization of military units in the Union Republics will undoubtedly serve still further to strengthen the Red Army as the protector of our Motherland, as the reliable bulwark of the Soviet Union. Evidence of this is provided by the already existing national units of the Red Army, including the Estonian National Corps which, inheriting the finest fighting traditions of the Estonian people, shattered the Germans at Velikiye Luki. The Estonian National Territorial Corps went into action against the fascist aggressors the moment our Great Patriotic War broke out and, under the difficult conditions of retreat, staunchly and heroically defended the approaches to Staraya Russa, Ostrov and Porkhov. Later, this Corps was reformed into the X. Estonian National Corps, which consists of seasoned fighters, among whom was Arnold Meri, the first Estonian to receive the title of Hero of the Soviet Union. Absorbing the men of the parachute troop destroyer battalions and other cadres evacuated from Estonia, the X. Estonian Corps grew into a formidable and splendidly equipped force as part of the Red Army. Never in their history have the Estonian people had such a strong and well-equipped army, as the X. Estonian Corps of the Red Army.

The Lenin and Stalin national policy created all the conditions for achieving what the Estonian people could not achieve under the rule of the reactionary clique which ruled the country to the detriment of the Estonian people. The small Estonian army that existed at that time was incapable of offering the fascist aggressors serious resistance. It was inadequately equipped owing to the absence of a war industry,

and it lacked the necessary forces and means for protecting Estonia's frontiers from the menace of invasion by the predatory imperialists.

While it was in power, the Estonian reactionary clique transformed the army, which, like all armies, consisted of workers, peasants and intellectuals, into a weapon against its own people and used it to serve the bidding of the imperialist countries. During the 22 years that Estonia was forcibly isolated from the fraternal family of peoples of the Soviet Union, the reactionary ruling clique exerted all its efforts not only to make Estonia serve as a barrier, a so-called "*cordon sanitaire*" against the Land of Socialism, but also as a *place d'armes* and springboard against it. As everybody knows, the reactionary clique veiled this policy with talk about protecting Estonia's "independence," which was actually only nominal and illusory. At that time the Estonian army actually served the interests, first of the Franco-Polish and then of the "Northern" bloc, and from 1934 onwards it was an instrument in the German fascist drive to the East, that is, against the Soviet Union. The various machinations of the Estonian reactionary clique in pursuit of this object are common knowledge. The Estonian people never supported or approved of the policy of the reactionary pro-fascist government of Estonia, and this they proved in June-July 1940 by establishing the Soviet regime in Estonia and joining the friendly family of peoples of the Soviet Union as an equal Union Republic.

The Estonian people have waged a stubborn and heroic struggle against the German conquerors for over seven centuries, and they will never betray their ancient traditions, nor relax their fierce resistance to the German invaders. The hatred the masses of the Estonian people feel towards the Germans was most vividly demonstrated in 1943, on the 600th anniversary of the popular revolt against the German invaders on St. George's night, April 23, 1343. True to their traditions, all the Estonians in the Red Army, all Estonian partisans, and all honest Estonian patriots took a sacred vow to fight to the last drop of blood and avenge the crimes the German tyrants have committed, the tears and blood they have caused our long-suffering people to shed.

During the past few months the Hitlerite fiends have dug their claws into the body and soul of the Estonian people with greater ferocity than ever. Aware of their impending doom, the Hitlerites are trying by means of still further terror-

ism and further crime to stave off the hour of retribution, but the crafty designs of the Hitlerites to use the Estonian people as a means of continuing the bloody regime of the blond Aryan beast, to bleed the Estonian people white in the interests of predatory fascism, will be thwarted. Now that the heroic and victorious Red Army has reached the frontiers of Estonia and today has captured the town of Kingissepp (*Applause*) the entire Estonian people, inspired by their age-long passion for vengeance, will strike still heavier blows at the despicable German fascist invaders. Shoulder to shoulder with all the friendly peoples of our great Soviet Union, and the freedom-loving peoples of all the democratic countries, the Estonian people will achieve victory over the most despicable, crafty and bitter enemy of all mankind—fascism—and ensure for themselves a bright and happy future in the fraternal family of peoples of the Soviet Union.

The Bill to organize military formations in the Union Republics and to reorganize the All-Union People's Commissariat for Defence into a Union-Republican People's Commissariat will be welcomed by all the Soviet peoples, including the Estonian people, with the greatest enthusiasm. This Bill imbues us with fresh energy and will help us to strike still heavier blows at the enemy. It will serve as a splendid weapon in the hands of our Soviet people.

Comrades, Deputies! The proposal to reorganize the All-Union People's Commissariat for Foreign Affairs into a Union-Republican People's Commissariat is also of immense importance. The Bill which the Soviet Government has introduced for this purpose proposes that the Union Republics be granted powers to enter into direct relations with foreign states and to conclude agreements with them. This enlarges the tasks and functions of the Union Republics.

There can be no doubt that this step is of vital importance for all the Union Republics, that it will play an important role in expanding the international ties of the U.S.S.R. and consolidate its collaboration with other states during the present war as well as in the post-war period. The reorganization of the People's Commissariat for Foreign Affairs is a continuation of the correct, wise and far-sighted foreign policy of the Soviet Union, and marks a new stage in the development of the Lenin and Stalin national policy. How prophetic were the words uttered by great Stalin in 1923 :

“I do not reject the possibility that later on we shall have to divide some of the Commissariats which we are uniting in the Union of Republics.”

The glorious victories our heroic Red Army has won in the course of our Great Patriotic War have raised the prestige and authority of the Soviet Union to an unprecedented level, and this has stimulated a striving abroad to develop diplomatic relations with our country on a wider scale.

The Union Republics have not a few specific needs and requirements of their own. Life itself proves the expediency of the proposed measure to reorganize the All-Union People's Commissariat for Foreign Affairs into a Union-Republican People's Commissariat.

It goes without saying that in its diplomatic activities every Union Republic will be guided by the principles and tasks that face Soviet diplomacy as a whole. The Estonian people have never enjoyed such real independence in foreign affairs as they enjoy now. The diplomacy of the ruling reactionary clique in pre-Soviet Estonia was never independent, it was entirely at the service of its imperialist protectors, and swung from side to side as their interests dictated. The diplomacy of pre-Soviet pro-fascist Estonia ran counter to the interests of the Estonian people. The results of this policy are common knowledge.

The establishment by the Union Republics of direct relations with foreign states will open up new prospects for the Soviet people. The specific interests of the different Union Republics will be protected and promoted by the Soviet Union as a whole through the Union-Republican People's Commissariat for Foreign Affairs of the U.S.S.R. The interests of every Union Republic, no matter how small, will continue to be backed by the entire might and strength of the Soviet Union. We now need fear no enemy and no aggressor.

On behalf of the Estonian people I heartily welcome the Bill to grant the Union Republics powers in the sphere of foreign relations and to reorganize the All-Union Commissariat for Foreign Affairs into a Union-Republican People's Commissariat, and I urge you all unanimously to ratify and pass the historically important Bills which the Council of People's Commissars of the U.S.S.R. has introduced.

Comrades, Deputies! I am profoundly convinced that these new and important constitutional reforms will serve still

further to cement the sincere friendship and mutual confidence that prevail among the Soviet people. The introduction of a measure of this kind at the present time does indeed indicate that the Soviet State has reached a new stage of development and has become a more complex and full-blooded organism. These new Bills testify to the further consolidation of our socialist state—the great Soviet Union. We may proudly repeat great Stalin's statement that the Soviet, multi-national, socialist State has come through all trials, and that it is a state whose stability might well be envied by any national state in any part of the world.

These new Bills submitted to the Supreme Soviet of the U.S.S.R. testify to the wisdom of the Bolshevik Party, to the perspicacity and far-sightedness of the leader of the peoples of the Soviet Union, our teacher and friend, our great commander, Stalin, who is leading us from victory to victory. (*Loud applause.*)

SPEECH OF DEPUTY M. S. GRECHUKHA,
UKRAINIAN S.S.R.

COMRADES, DEPUTIES! The constitutional reforms submitted to the Supreme Soviet by the Union Government in the Bills to organize military formations in the Union Republics and also to grant the Union Republics powers in the sphere of foreign relations are opportune and of exceptional political importance.

The fact that these constitutional reforms are being introduced in the midst of our present Great Patriotic War, at a time when the Soviet people are straining their efforts to the utmost, testifies to the might of our socialist state, to the political, economic and cultural might of the Union Republics, and to the great moral and political unity of the peoples of our multi-national Soviet Land.

In explaining the principles which guided the Union Government in submitting this question to the Supreme Soviet, Comrade Molotov emphasized that this was not an ordinary reform, but the setting of new and responsible tasks to the Union Republics in the sphere of defending our country, and also in the sphere of relations with foreign countries. The organization of military formations in the Republics and the establishment of direct relations with foreign countries will greatly enhance the responsibility of each Republic in the

matter of still further increasing the defence power of the Soviet Union, of still further cementing the friendship of the peoples, and in the matter of expanding international ties and consolidating the collaboration between the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics and other countries.

The hopes our enemies entertained of strife breaking out among the peoples of the Soviet Union, and of our multinational Soviet State breaking up, have utterly collapsed. In the very first days of the war against the Soviet Union the enemy became convinced that he was powerless to do anything to shake in the slightest degree the indestructible foundations of the Soviet Union, the friendship and unity of the peoples of the Land of the Soviets.

In retaliation to the perfidious and wanton attack of the Hitler gangs of murderers and robbers, the peoples of the Soviet Union, in the stern years of severe trials, have rallied still more closely around the Soviet Government, the Bolshevik Party and their beloved leader, our great and wise commander, Stalin.

The friendship of the peoples which had grown as a result of the Lenin and Stalin national policy, the firm moral and political unity of the workers, peasants and intelligentsia of our country, and the Red Army, which had become stronger as a result of this, prevented the enemy from executing his nefarious plans.

As Comrade Stalin said :

"It is quite likely that if any other country had lost as much territory as we have lost now it would not have stood the test and would have fallen into decline. If the Soviet system has stood the test so well and has even strengthened its hinterland, it must mean that the Soviet system is now a most stable one."

Fighting shoulder to shoulder in the ranks of the Red Army are the devoted sons of the Russian, Ukrainian, Byelorussian, Georgian, Armenian and other peoples of our multinational Soviet Union, beating the enemy with conscious national pride. In these fierce battles new heroes and new talented commanders come to the front every day, the pride not only of the people from whose ranks they have sprung, but of all the peoples of the Soviet Union. It must be said that these cadres of commanders and military leaders will

undoubtedly play an exceptional role in the organization and training of the military formations in their respective Republics.

The right that is to be granted to the Union Republics to organize their own military formations will induce them to pay more attention to the organization of military training in the schools, technical colleges and higher educational establishments, and stimulate the people at large to train manly, brave and heroic warriors and defenders of their country worthy of their people.

I am firmly convinced that the Bill submitted by the Union Government to organize military formations in the Union Republics will undoubtedly be passed by the Supreme Soviet and unanimously approved of by all the peoples of the Soviet Union, for its object is still further to strengthen the Red Army—the loyal defender of our country, the trustworthy bulwark of the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics.

I can assure the Union Government and the Supreme Soviet of the U.S.S.R. that the Ukrainian people will welcome the Bill for the organization of army formations in the Union Republics, and the reorganization of the All-Union People's Commissariat for Defence into a Union-Republican People's Commissariat with the greatest joy. If the present world war fails to knock common sense into certain people's heads, then in future battles for the honour, freedom and independence of our socialist country the men and officers of the Ukrainian formations will prove once again how well the descendants of the glorious Ukrainian heroes—Bogdan Khmelnitsky, Danila of Galich and Nikolai Shchors—can fight.

The Ukrainian people will no less joyously welcome the Bill to grant the Union Republics powers in the sphere of foreign relations and to reorganize the All-Union People's Commissariat for Foreign Affairs into a Union-Republican People's Commissariat. For Soviet Ukraine this reform will be of exceptional importance. Her geographical position, and her economic importance in particular, calls for daily attention and exceptional vigilance not only towards our immediate and rather troublesome neighbours, but also towards somewhat more remote countries who betray a wolfish appetite for Soviet Ukraine. The growing political and cultural importance of the Ukrainian Soviet Socialist Republic naturally gives rise to growing and multifarious cultural and economic requirements which cannot be fully met by the All-Union representatives abroad and necessitate the establishment of direct

relations between Soviet Ukraine and foreign countries. At one time the Ukraine had its own Republican Commissariat for Foreign Affairs, but that was before the formation of the U.S.S.R. Soviet Ukraine was then a young, still nascent and unstabilized Soviet Republic which, bleeding from the wounds it received in the struggle against the foreign interventionists, and the home bourgeois nationalist scum and the kulaks, was fighting for its legitimate right to sovereignty.

Naturally, under the conditions of civil war and increasing attacks from outside, Soviet Ukraine could not sufficiently protect her rights in the international arena, and very often she was obliged to request the People's Commissariat for Foreign Affairs of the R.S.F.S.R. to represent her in relations with foreign powers. That is why the Ukrainian people recall with the utmost gratitude the fraternal assistance the great Russian people rendered them in those grave and trying days by extending their protection to Soviet Ukraine.

With the formation of the U.S.S.R. and the All-Union People's Commissariat for Foreign Affairs, Soviet Ukraine transferred her rights in the sphere of relations with foreign countries to the People's Commissariat for Foreign Affairs of the U.S.S.R. in which were concentrated the rights of all the Union Republics in this sphere. Today, however, as a result of the historic victories achieved by the peoples of the Soviet Union under the leadership of the great Party of Lenin and Stalin, the Soviet Union has won the respect of foreign countries, and against the background of these victories the political, economic and cultural importance of the Union Republics will assume a new aspect in the international arena.

Notwithstanding wartime difficulties, the international connections of the U.S.S.R. are growing and expanding. For the first time since the Soviet regime exists the Soviet Government has succeeded in establishing relations not only of friendship but also of alliance with Great Britain. At the height of the world war there has been created a powerful anti-Hitler coalition, headed by the Soviet Union, Great Britain and the United States; and we have concluded the Soviet-Czechoslovak Treaty, which has laid the foundation for collaboration between the large and small democratic countries against the common enemy not only during the present war, but also after it, with the object of preserving peace.

An exceptionally important role in developing and consolidating the anti-Hitler coalition was played by the decisions

of the Moscow and Teheran Conferences. All this is evidence of the considerable growth of the might and prestige of the Soviet Union in the eyes of all the democratic countries of the world. Besides these big international questions, which must be handled by the Union Government, the Union Republics have specific economic and cultural needs which can be met by the Union Republics having direct relations with certain foreign countries to the advantage of the common cause of expanding the international ties and strengthening collaboration between the U.S.S.R. and other countries. That is why I think that the proposal to extend the rights of the Union Republics in the sphere of international relations, and the reforms proposed by the Union Government in this connection, are correct and opportune. Our frontiers—the frontiers of Soviet Ukraine and foreign countries in the West and South—are at the same time the frontiers of the Soviet Union, and all questions affecting the interests of the Soviet Union will be handled by the Union Government in conjunction with the Government of Soviet Ukraine.

In view of certain groundless claims made by the so-called government of a neighbouring country, I, on behalf of the Ukrainian people, request the Government of the Soviet Union, in discussing the question of determining the state frontiers between the Soviet Union and western foreign countries, to bear in mind the legitimate and just desire of our people to reunite all the ancient lands of Ukraine in a single Ukrainian Soviet State. (*Loud applause*). By the will of the people of Western Ukraine, the National Assembly in 1939 petitioned the Union Government to incorporate the liberated territories of Western Ukraine in the Ukrainian state. The Supreme Soviet of the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics granted that petition. Nevertheless, beyond the frontiers established in 1939 there have remained certain districts inhabited by our brother Ukrainians who are longing to join their kinsmen.

I request the Government of the U.S.S.R. and its head, Comrade Stalin, to help our brother Ukrainians who inhabit the territory of Holm, Grubeshov, Zamostye, Yaroslav and other western districts to join the fraternal family of peoples of the Land of Soviets (*Loud and prolonged applause*.)

Comrades, Deputies! The constitutional reforms connected with the extension of the rights of the Union Republics will be a crushing blow to the Ukrainian-German-nationalist gang of traitors who, in return for the crumbs that fall from

their masters' table, and to please their masters, are ready to utter the worst of slanders against our country and our people. Not long ago we in the Soviet Union heard of the disgusting conduct of the Ukrainian-German-fascist gang in America who, flaunting the nationalist flag which has become frayed from wagging in the pothouses of Berlin and Cracow, tried to turn public opinion against us and demanded a revision of the sovereign rights of the Ukrainian Soviet Republic.

The Ukrainian people expelled this bourgeois-nationalist scum long ago, and in fraternal alliance with the peoples of the Land of the Soviets and under the leadership of the great Party of Lenin and Stalin, built up their own state, in which nearly all Ukrainian territory was united, and they are now confidently marching towards a bright and happy future. No tricks or sorties on the part of fascist hirelings will divert our people from the true Lenin and Stalin road. I wholly and entirely support the proposal made by previous speakers to pass the Bill introduced by the Union Government to organize military formations in the Union Republics and to reorganize the All-Union People's Commissariat for Defence into a Union-Republican People's Commissariat, and also the Bill to grant the Union republics powers in the sphere of foreign relations and to reorganize the All-Union People's Commissariat for Foreign Affairs into a Union-Republican People's Commissariat. I am confident that not only the Supreme Soviet, but the entire Soviet people will once again demonstrate the indestructibility of the union of fraternal nations, their moral and political unity and their love and devotion to the wise Soviet Government, the Bolshevik Party and great and beloved Stalin. (*Loud and prolonged applause.*)

SPEECH OF DEPUTY P. S. PROKKONEN,
KARELO-FINNISH S.S.R.

COMRADES, DEPUTIES ! The fact that the question of reorganizing the All-Union Commissariats for Defence and Foreign Affairs into Union-Republican Commissariats has been submitted for discussion to the present Session of the Supreme Soviet of the U.S.S.R. is a striking testimony to the increased might of our multi-national Soviet State, and marks a fresh triumph for the Lenin and Stalin national policy.

The Bolshevik Party at its very inception proclaimed as

one of the most important demands of its program the right of nations to self-determination, the right of nations to independent state existence. The Great October Socialist Revolution liberated our peoples from exploitation and national oppression. Karelia, too, obtained the right to national independence.

The Third Olonets Gubernia Congress of Peasant Deputies, which met in Petrozavodsk at the beginning of February 1918, proclaimed the establishment of the Soviet regime over the entire territory of the former Olonets Gubernia, but the working people of Karelia were unable to proceed immediately with the work of organizing their lives on the new and happy lines, for they were obliged to fight, bravely and self-sacrificingly, to protect their Motherland, their native soil, from their enemies.

The avaricious clique of White Finnish misrulers who harboured insane designs to form a "Great Finland," to tear Soviet Karelia from the Soviet Union, hurled their gangsters against the young Soviet Republic. These White Finnish gangsters tried to cover up their predatory designs with the fraudulent motto of "national reunion" between the Karelians and White Finland.

The masses of the working people of Karelia saw through the peaceful mask of the "liberators" and discerned the brutal features of the robbers, murderers and exploiters. The Karelo-Finnish people realized that only with the aid of the great Russian people, only as members of the fraternal family of Soviet peoples, would they be able to protect their freedom and independence. Hence, on July 1, 1920, the delegates at the Constituent Congress of the Working People of Karelia declared :

"The working people of Karelia have no wish to break their cultural, economic, political and constitutional ties with Soviet Russia, and have no intention whatever of joining White Finland.

"The Karelian people feel free within the boundaries of Soviet Russia and have no intention of placing on their necks the capitalist yoke of Finland, or of any other country.

"The Karelian people will not permit the natural wealth of Karelia—its waters, forests, waterfalls, minerals and fisheries—to be pillaged by capitalist White Finland on the pretext of protecting Karelians from Soviet Russia, or the pretext of 'national reunion' between the Karelians and White Finland."

On numerous occasions in the course of many years the White Finns made predatory incursions into Soviet Karelia, but they always encountered the unanimous resistance of the Red Army, Karelian partisans and Finnish Red Guards who displayed marvels of heroism and bravery in defending their sacred Soviet soil.

As far back as 1919, in connection with the remarkable landing of forces in the region of Vidlitsa, which was a decisive factor in bringing about the defeat of the White Finns, Comrade Stalin sent a telegram to the commander of the 1st Rifle Division in which he heartily congratulated the self-sacrificing and heroic Red Army men and sailors on having broken up this nest of the enemies of Russia, and expressed confidence that the Workers' and Peasants' Government would rightly appraise this valiant exploit.

To this telegram from their leader, the men of the Division sent the following reply: "For Workers' and Peasants' Russia we shall conquer or die." They conquered!

A striking page of the history of the fight for Soviet Karelia was inscribed by the brilliant ski raid deep in the White Finns' rear at Lake Kiiimas carried out by Finnish skiers from the International Military School under the command of that devoted son of the Karelo-Finnish people, Toivo Antikainen.

The Red Army, backed by the broad masses of the working people, expelled the White Finnish bandits from Soviet soil. The Karelo-Finnish people obtained the opportunity of proceeding with peaceful construction for the economic development of the young Soviet Republic.

Thanks to the consistent application of the Lenin and Stalin national policy, the Karelo-Finnish Union Republic, in the united fraternal family of Soviet Republics, with the aid of the great Russian people and under the leadership of the Party of Lenin and Stalin, in a short space of time achieved enormous successes in political, economic and cultural development. From the backward tsarist colony it had been, Karelia was converted into an industrial Republic. During the period of the Stalin Five-Year Plans we built a large number of factories. Huge paper and pulp mills sprang up in the country.

In an unprecedentedly short period we built the Stalin White Sea-Baltic Canal. We built new railway trunk lines. The population of Karelia became nearly 100 per cent. literate. During this period of peaceful construction we trained cadres

of specialists in numerous branches of industry and culture who are whole-heartedly devoted to the cause of Lenin and Stalin.

In June 1941, the Finnish plutocracy, which had sold itself to Hitler, joined Germany in wantonly attacking the Soviet Union and thereby interrupted our peaceful labours and our economic development.

The White Finnish troops who invaded the Karelo-Finnish S. S. R. are in no way behind the Germans in pillaging, robbing and destroying our towns and villages and in torturing our Soviet citizens. The Finnish fascists are committing monstrous crimes in the districts and towns of our Republic they have temporarily seized. It was they who demolished our flourishing Petrozavodsk, and razed Pryazha, Kondupoga and other towns and villages to the ground. As far back as 1941, the People's Commissariat for Foreign Affairs stated in its declaration :

"The present Finnish rulers are helping bloodthirsty Hitler to wage a predatory war against the peoples of Europe and of the U.S.S.R. By waging a predatory war against the U.S.S.R. they are helping the Hitler gang to consolidate Hitler tyranny over the peoples of Europe. It will not be surprising if the peoples of Europe and the U.S.S.R. deal with these gentlemen as they intend to deal with the Hitler clique."

We, the representatives of the Karelo-Finnish people, have a right, on behalf of our long-suffering people, to indict the criminal misrulers of fascist Finland and demand stern retribution for every one of the crimes the despicable White Finnish butchers have committed.

The White Finns banked on strife breaking out among the nationalities, on the Karelians and Finns in our Republic coming into conflict with the Russians, but all these sordid anticipations of the enemy came to nothing.

For over two and a half years the Red Army is fighting the Hitler hordes, driving them westward and defending the freedom, honour and independence of the peoples of our multinational state. In this heroic struggle for our Motherland all the peoples of the U.S.S.R. are fighting in the ranks of the Red Army. The people of the Karelo-Finnish Republic also rose, united and solid, against the enemy.

Karelians, Finns, Russians and the representatives of the other nationalities are fighting with equal courage in the

ranks of the Red Army and in the partisan units. The names and exploits of the best sons and daughters of the Karelo-Finnish people—the heroes of the Patriotic War—will fill one of the most glorious pages of the history of our Republic.

The working men and working women, men and women collective farmers, and the Soviet intelligentsia are working with might and main to achieve complete victory over the enemy. The Red Army is doing all in its power to secure the speediest expulsion of the German-Finnish invaders from the temporarily occupied districts and towns of our Republic and is bringing nearer the hour of the complete liberation of the Karelo-Finnish S. S. R. Like all the peoples of the Soviet Union, the Karelo-Finnish people love their Red Army, and will do all in their power to make it even stronger than it is now.

Our people fully appreciate the heroism of the Red Army which ensured the independence of the Karelo-Finnish S. S. R., and are sincerely grateful to the great Russian people as well as to all the peoples of our Motherland, for the immense assistance they have rendered our young Republic in its political, economic and cultural development.

The reorganization of the People's Commissariat for Defence and the organization of military formations in the Union Republics mark a further step towards increasing the defence of the U.S.S.R. and strengthening the Red Army. The organization of military formations in the Soviet Republics as component parts of the Red Army will still further strengthen the Red Army and enhance the responsibility of the Union Republics for the future security of our country.

The Karelo-Finnish Republic, the frontiers of which are contiguous to White Finland whose hostility to the Soviet Union and Soviet Karelia has been proved for a quarter of a century, will do all in its power to secure the speediest organization of its military formations, so that it may become a firm bulwark of the peace and security of the U.S.S.R. on its north-western frontier.

Since the Soviet regime has been in existence the Soviet Republics have developed politically, economically and culturally. The Bill to reorganize the All-Union People's Commissariat for Foreign Affairs provides for the further political and economic development of the Soviet Republics and grants them powers to enter into direct relations with foreign countries and to conclude agreements with them. This reform.

was made possible by the results we have achieved in consolidating the Soviet State and by the triumph of the Lenin and Stalin national policy.

Comrades, Deputies! I wholeheartedly support the proposal of the Union Government and the motion before you to reorganize the All-Union People's Commissariats for Defence and for Foreign Affairs into Union-Republican People's Commissariats.

The adoption of these proposals will still further enhance the political, defence and economic might of the Union Republics, will still further enhance the might of our entire Soviet Union, will expand the international ties of our great Soviet Union and promote closer collaboration between the U.S.S.R. and other countries.

Under the banner of the Lenin and Stalin national policy, forward to new victories!

AN ACT

To Organize Military Formations of the Union Republics and, Accordingly, to Reorganize the All-Union Commissariat for Defence into a Union-Republican People's Commissariat

With the object of strengthening the power of defence of the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics, the Supreme Soviet of the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics decrees :

1. That it be laid down that the Union Republics shall organize military formations of their Republics ;

2. That the following addenda be introduced in the Constitution of the U.S.S.R. :

a) To add to Articles 14, point (g), of the Constitution of the U.S.S.R., after the words : "Organization of the defence of the U.S.S.R. and direction of all the armed forces of the U.S.S.R.," the words : "laying down the guiding principles for the organization of military formations of the Union Republics ;" making this point read as follows :

"g) Organization of the defence of the U.S.S.R., direction of all the armed forces of the U.S.S.R., and laying down the guiding principles for the organization of military formations of the Union Republics ;"

b) To add to the Constitution of the U.S.S.R. Article 18-b, couched in the following terms :

"ARTICLE 18-b. Every Union Republic has its own Republican military formations ;"

c) To add to Article 60, of the Constitution of the U.S.S.R. point (f), couched in the following terms :

"f) Lays down the procedure of organizing Republican military formations ;"

3. That the All-Union People's Commissariat for Defence be reorganized into a Union-Republican People's Commissariat.

Signed :

M. KALININ

*Chairman of the Presidium of the
Supreme Soviet of the U.S.S.R.*

A. GORKIN

*Secretary of the Presidium of the
Supreme Soviet of the U.S.S.R.*

Moscow, Kremlin,
February 1, 1944.

AN ACT

To Grant the Union Republics Powers in the Sphere of Foreign Relations and, Accordingly, to Reorganize the All-Union People's Commissariat for Foreign Affairs into a Union-Republican People's Commissariat

With the object of expanding the international ties and strengthening collaboration between the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics and other states, and taking into account the growing need of the Union Republics for establishing direct relations with foreign states, the Supreme Soviet of the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics decrees :

1. That it be laid down that the Union Republics may enter into direct relations with foreign states and conclude agreements with them ;

2. That the following addenda be introduced in the Constitution of the U.S.S.R. :

a) To add to Article 14, point (a), of the Constitution of the U.S.S.R., after the words : "Representation of the Union in international relations, conclusion and ratification of treaties with other states," the words : "laying down the general procedure in relations between Union Republics and foreign states ;" making it read as follows :

"a) Representation of the Union in international relations, conclusion and ratification of treaties with other states and laying down the general procedure in relations between Union Republics and foreign states ;"

b). To add to the Constitution of the U.S.S.R. Article 18-a, couched in the following terms :

"ARTICLE 18-a. Every Union Republic has the right to enter into direct relations with foreign states, conclude agreements with them, and exchange diplomatic and consular representatives ;"

c) To add to Article 60, of the Constitution of the U.S.S.R., point (e), couched in the following terms :

"e) Determines the representation of the Union Republic in international relations."

3. That the All-Union People's Commissariat for Foreign

Affairs be reorganized into a Union-Republican People's Commissariat.

Signed:

M. KALININ

*Chairman of the Presidium of the
Supreme Soviet of the U.S.S.R.*

A. GORKIN

*Secretary of the Presidium of the
Supreme Soviet of the U.S.S.R.*

**Moscow, Kremlin,
February 1, 1944**

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