

# A Letter to V. I. Lenin

March 1921

---

Source : *Works*, Vol. 5, 1921 - 1923

Publisher : Foreign Languages Publishing House, Moscow, 1954

Transcription/Markup : Salil Sen for MIA, 2008

Public Domain : Marxists Internet Archive (2008). You may freely copy, distribute, display and perform this work; as well as make derivative and commercial works. Please credit "Marxists Internet Archive" as your source.

---

Comrade Lenin,

During the last three days I have had the opportunity to read the symposium: *A Plan for the Electrification of Russia*.<sup>1</sup> My illness made this possible (it is an ill wind that blows nobody any good!). An excellent, well-compiled book. A masterly draft of a really *single* and really state economic plan, *not in quotation marks*. The only Marxist attempt in our time to place the Soviet superstructure of economically backward Russia on a really practical technical and production basis, the only possible one under present conditions.

You remember Trotsky's "plan" (his theses) of last year for the "economic revival" of Russia on the basis of the mass application of the labour of unskilled *peasant*-worker masses (the labour army) to the remnants of pre-war industry. How wretched, how backward, compared with the Goelro plan! A medieval handicraftsman who imagines he is an Ibsen hero called to "save" Russia by an ancient saga. . . . And of what value are the dozens of "single plans" which to our shame appear from time to time in our press—the childish prattle of preparatory-school pupils. . . . Or again, the philistine "realism" (in fact *Manilovism*) of Rykov, who continues to "criticise" the Goelro and is immersed to his ears in routine. . . .

In my opinion:

1) Not a single minute more must be wasted on idle talk about the plan.

2) A *practical start* on the work *must be made* immediately.

3) To this *start* must be devoted at least one-third of our work (two-thirds will be required for "current" needs) in transporting materials and men, restoring enterprises, distributing labour forces, delivering foodstuffs, organising supply bases and supply itself, and so on.

4) Since the staff of the Goelro, for all their excellent qualities, lack a sound practical outlook (a professorial impotence can be detected in the articles), we must without fail include in the planning commission live practical men who act on the principle — "Report the fulfilment," "Fulfil on time," etc.

5) *Pravda*, *Izvestia*, and especially *Ekonomicheskaya Zhizn*<sup>2</sup> must be instructed to popularise the Plan for the Electrification both as a whole and as regards its concrete points dealing with individual parts, bearing in mind that there is only one "single economic plan" — the *Plan for the Electrification*, and that all other "plans" are just idle talk, empty and harmful.

Yours,  
**Stalin**

### Note

1. The symposium entitled *A Plan for the Electrification of the R.S.F.S.R. Report of the State Commission for the Electrification of Russia to the Eighth Congress of Soviets* was published in December 1920 by the Scientific and Technical Department of the Supreme Council of National Economy.

2. *Ekonomicheskaya Zhizn (Economic Life)*—a daily newspaper, organ of the economic and financial People's Commissariats and institutions of the R.S.F.S.R. and U.S.S.R. (Supreme Council of National Economy, Council of Labour and Defence, State Planning Commission, State Bank, People's Commissariat of Finance, and others); it was published from November 1918 to November 1937.

---

[Collected Works Index](#) | [Volume 5 Index](#)  
[Works by Decade](#) | [J. V. Stalin Archive](#)  
[Marxists Internet Archive](#)