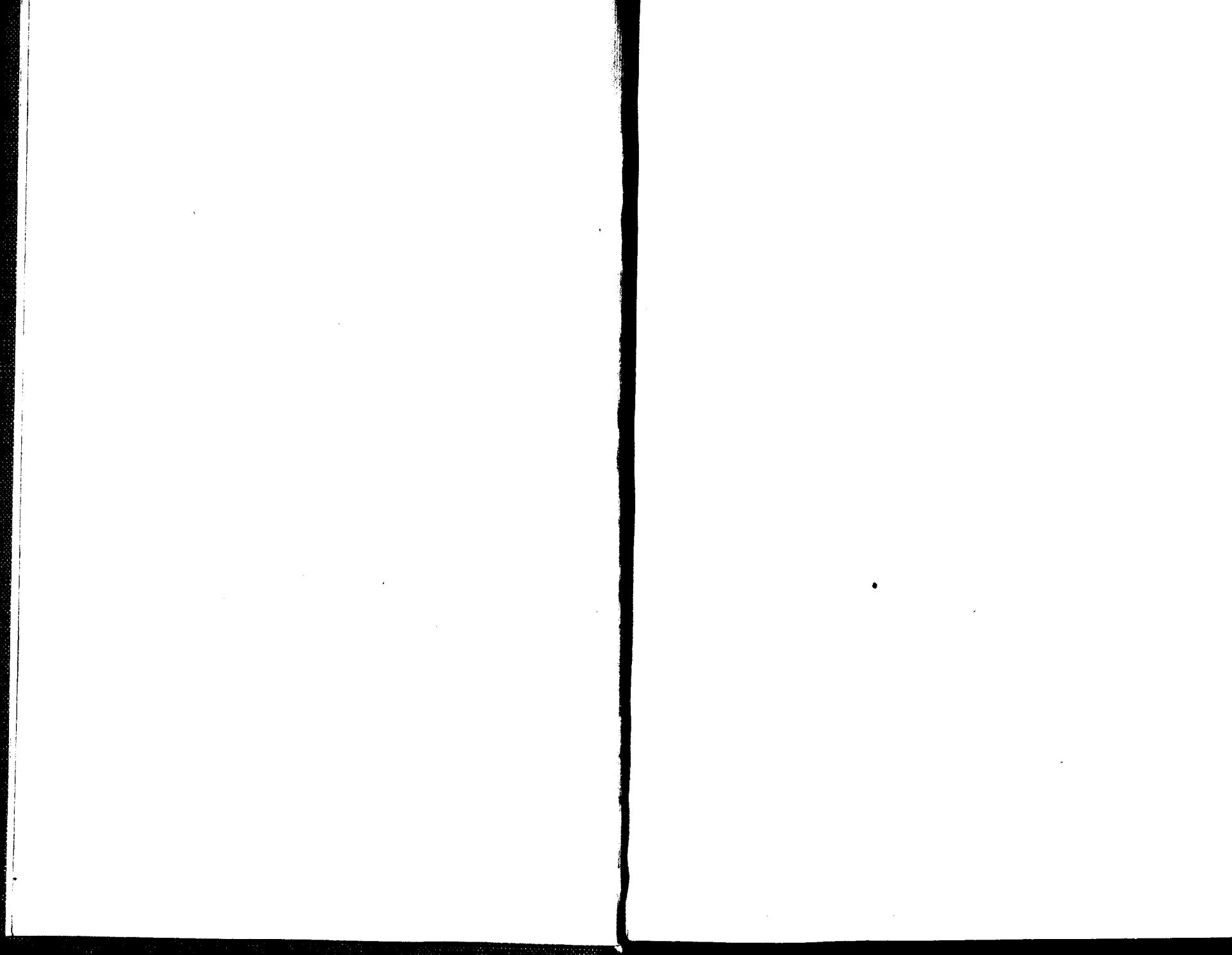


Lenin

**AGAINST DOGMATISM
AND SECTARIANISM
IN THE WORKING-CLASS MOVEMENT**



Workers of All Countries, Unite!





V. I. Lenin

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Against Dogmatism and Sectarianism in the Working-Class Movement

Articles and Speeches

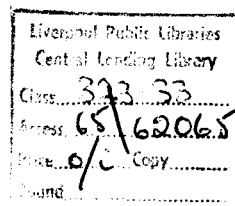


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В. И. ЛЕНИН
ПРОТИВ ДОГМАТИЗМА И СЕКТАНТСТВА
В РАБОЧЕМ ДВИЖЕНИИ

На английском языке



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From "LEFT-WING" COMMUNISM, AN INFANTILE DISORDER¹

I

IN WHAT SENSE CAN WE SPEAK OF THE INTERNATIONAL SIGNIFICANCE OF THE RUSSIAN REVOLUTION?

In the first months after the proletariat in Russia had gained political power (October 25 [November 7], 1917), it might have seemed that the tremendous difference between backward Russia and the advanced countries of Western Europe would cause the proletarian revolution in these latter countries to have very little resemblance to ours. Now we already have very considerable international experience which most definitely shows that certain fundamental features of our revolution have a significance which is not local, not peculiarly national, not Russian only, but international. I speak here of international significance not in the broad sense of the term—not a few but all the fundamental and many of the secondary features of our revolution are of international significance in the sense that our revolution influences all countries. Taking it in the narrowest sense, however, taking international significance to mean the international validity or the historical inevitability of a repetition on an international scale of what has taken place in our country, it must be admitted that certain fundamental features of our revolution do possess this significance.

Of course, it would be a very great mistake to exaggerate this truth and to apply it not only to certain fundamental features of our revolution. It would also be a mistake to lose sight of the fact that after the victory of the proletarian revolution in at least one of the advanced countries things will in

all probability take a sharp turn—Russia will soon after cease to be the model country and once again become a backward country (in the “Soviet” and the socialist sense).

But as matters stand at the present moment in history, the Russian model reveals to *all* countries something, and something very essential, of their near and inevitable future. Advanced workers in every land have long understood this; and more often they have not so much understood it as grasped it, sensed it by revolutionary class instinct. Herein lies the international “significance” (in the narrow sense of the term) of Soviet power, and of the fundamentals of Bolshevik theory and tactics.² The “revolutionary” leaders of the Second International,³ such as Kautsky in Germany and Otto Bauer and Friedrich Adler in Austria, failed to understand this, and they therefore proved to be reactionaries and advocates of the worst kind of opportunism and social treachery. Incidentally, the anonymous pamphlet entitled *The World Revolution (Weltrevolution)* which appeared in 1919 in Vienna (*Sozialistische Bücherei*, Heft 11; Ignaz Brand) very clearly reveals their whole process of thought and their whole range of ideas, or, rather, the full depth of their stupidity, pedantry, baseness and betrayal of working-class interests—and this, moreover, under the guise of “defending” the idea of “world revolution”.

But we shall have to discuss this pamphlet in greater detail some other time. Here we shall note only one more point: long, long ago, Kautsky, when he was still a Marxist and not a renegade, approaching the question as a historian, foresaw the possibility of a situation arising in which the revolutionary spirit of the Russian proletariat would serve as a model for Western Europe. This was in 1902, when Kautsky wrote an article for the revolutionary *Iskra*⁴ entitled “The Slavs and Revolution”. This is what he wrote in the article:

“At the present time [in contrast to 1848] it would seem that not only have the Slavs entered the ranks of the revolutionary nations, but that the centre of revolutionary thought and revolutionary action is shifting more and more to the Slavs. The revolutionary centre is shifting from the West to the East. In the first half of the nineteenth century it was in France, at times in England. In 1848 Germany joined the ranks of the revolutionary nations. . . . The new century opens with events which suggest the idea that we are approaching a further shift of the revolutionary centre, namely, to Russia. . . . Russia, which has bor-

rowed so much revolutionary initiative from the West, is now perhaps herself ready to serve as a source of revolutionary energy for the West. The Russian revolutionary movement that is now flaring up will perhaps prove to be the most potent means of exorcising that spirit of flabby philistinism and temperate politics which is beginning to spread in our midst, and it may cause the thirst for battle and the passionate devotion to our great ideals to flare up in bright flames again. Russia has long ceased to be merely a bulwark of reaction and absolutism for Western Europe. It might be said that today the very opposite is the case. Western Europe is becoming a bulwark of reaction and absolutism in Russia. . . . The Russian revolutionaries might perhaps have coped with the tsar long ago had they not been compelled at the same time to fight his ally, European capital. Let us hope that this time they will succeed in coping with both enemies, and that the new ‘Holy Alliance’ will collapse more quickly than its predecessors. But however the present struggle in Russia may end, the blood and suffering of the martyrs, whom, unfortunately, it will produce in too great numbers, will not have been sacrificed in vain. They will nourish the shoots of social revolution throughout the civilised world and make them grow more luxuriantly and rapidly. In 1848 the Slavs were a black frost which blighted the flowers of the people’s spring. Perhaps they are now destined to be the storm that will break the ice of reaction and irresistibly bring with it a new and happy spring for the nations.” (Karl Kautsky, “The Slavs and Revolution”, *Iskra*, Russian Social-Democratic revolutionary newspaper, No. 18, March 10, 1902.)

Karl Kautsky wrote well eighteen years ago!

II

ONE OF THE FUNDAMENTAL CONDITIONS FOR THE BOLSHEVIKS’ SUCCESS

Almost everyone today probably realises that the Bolsheviks could not have maintained power for two and a half months, let alone two and a half years, unless the strictest, truly iron discipline had prevailed in our Party, and unless the latter had been rendered the fullest and unreserved support of the whole mass of the working class, that is, of all its thinking, honest, self-sacrificing and influential elements who are capable of leading or carrying with them the backward strata.

The dictatorship of the proletariat is a most determined and most ruthless war waged by the new class against a *more powerful* enemy, the bourgeoisie, whose resistance is

increased *tenfold* by their overthrow (even if only in one country), and whose power lies not only in the strength of international capital, in the strength and durability of their international connections, but also in the *force of habit*, in the strength of *small production*. For, unfortunately, small production is still very, very widespread in the world, and small production *engenders* capitalism and the bourgeoisie continuously, daily, hourly, spontaneously, and on a mass scale. For all these reasons the dictatorship of the proletariat is essential, and victory over the bourgeoisie is impossible without a long, stubborn, desperate, life-and-death struggle, demanding perseverance, discipline, firmness, implacability and unity of will.

I repeat, the experience of the victorious dictatorship of the proletariat in Russia has clearly shown even to those who are unable to think, or who have not had occasion to give thought to this question, that absolute centralisation and the strictest discipline of the proletariat constitute one of the fundamental conditions for victory over the bourgeoisie.

This is often discussed. But not nearly enough thought is given to what it means, and under what conditions it is possible. Would it not be better if greetings in honour of Soviet power and the Bolsheviks were *more frequently* attended by a *profound analysis* of the reasons *why* the Bolsheviks were able to build up the discipline needed by the revolutionary proletariat?

As a trend of political thought and as a political party, Bolshevism has existed since 1903. Only the history of Bolshevism during the *whole* period of its existence can satisfactorily explain why it was able to build up and to maintain under most difficult conditions the iron discipline needed for the victory of the proletariat.

And first of all the question arises—how is the discipline of the revolutionary party of the proletariat maintained? How is it tested? How is it reinforced? First, by the class-consciousness of the proletarian vanguard and by its devotion to the revolution, by its perseverance, self-sacrifice and heroism. Secondly, by its ability to link itself with, to keep in close touch with, and to a certain extent, if you like, to merge with the broadest masses of the working people—primarily with the proletariat, *but also with the non-proletarian labour-*

ing masses. Thirdly, by the correctness of the political leadership exercised by this vanguard, by the correctness of its political strategy and tactics, provided that the broadest masses have been convinced *by their own experience* that they are correct. Without these conditions, discipline in a revolutionary party that is really capable of being the party of the advanced class, whose mission it is to overthrow the bourgeoisie and transform the whole of society, cannot be achieved. Without these conditions, all attempts to establish discipline inevitably fall flat and end in phrase-mongering and clowning. On the other hand, these conditions cannot emerge instantaneously. They are created only by prolonged effort and hard-won experience. Their creation is facilitated by correct revolutionary theory, which, in its turn, is not a dogma, but assumes final shape only in close connection with the practical activity of a truly mass and truly revolutionary movement.

The fact that Bolshevism was able, in 1917-20, under unprecedentedly difficult conditions, to build up and successfully maintain the strictest centralisation and iron discipline was simply due to a number of historical peculiarities of Russia.

On the one hand, Bolshevism arose in 1903 on the very firm foundation of the theory of Marxism. And the correctness of this, and only this, revolutionary theory has been proved not only by world experience throughout the nineteenth century, but particularly by the experience of the wanderings and vacillations, the mistakes and disappointments of revolutionary thought in Russia. For nearly half a century—approximately from the forties to the nineties of the last century—advanced thought in Russia, oppressed by an unprecedentedly savage and reactionary tsarism, sought eagerly for a correct revolutionary theory and followed with astonishing diligence and thoroughness each and every "last word" in this sphere in Europe and America. Russia reached Marxism, the only correct revolutionary theory, through veritable *suffering*, through half a century of unprecedented torment and sacrifice, of unprecedented revolutionary heroism, incredible energy, devoted searching, study, practical trial, disappointment, verification and comparison with European experience. Thanks to the enforced emigration

caused by tsarism, revolutionary Russia in the second half of the nineteenth century acquired a wealth of international connections and excellent information on world forms and theories of the revolutionary movement such as no other country in the world possessed.

On the other hand, having been built on this granite theoretical foundation, Bolshevism passed through fifteen years (1903-17) of practical history which in wealth of experience has no equal anywhere else in the world. For no other country during these fifteen years had anything even approximating to this revolutionary experience, this rapid and varied succession of different forms of the movement—legal and illegal, peaceful and stormy, underground and open, narrow circles and mass movements, parliamentary and terrorist forms. In no other country has there been concentrated during so short a period such a wealth of forms, shades, and methods of struggle of *all* classes of modern society, and moreover, a struggle which, owing to the backwardness of the country and the severity of the tsarist yoke, matured with exceptional rapidity and assimilated most eagerly and successfully the appropriate "last word" of American and European political experience.

III

THE PRINCIPAL STAGES IN THE HISTORY OF BOLSHEVISM

The years of preparation of the revolution (1903-05). The approach of a great storm is felt everywhere. All classes are in a state of ferment and preparation. Abroad, the press of the political exiles discusses the theoretical aspects of *all* the fundamental problems of the revolution. The representatives of the three main classes, of the three principal political trends, the liberal-bourgeois, the petty-bourgeois-democratic (concealed under the labels "social-democratic" and "social-revolutionary"), and the proletarian-revolutionary trends, anticipate and prepare the approaching open class struggle by a most bitter battle on programmatical and tactical views. *All* the issues on which the masses waged an armed struggle in 1905-07 and 1917-20 can (and should) be studied in their

embryonic form from the press of that time. Between these three main trends, there are, of course, a host of intermediate, transitional, half-way forms. Or, more correctly, those political and ideological trends which are actually class trends crystallise in the struggle of the press, parties, factions and groups; the classes forge the requisite political and ideological weapons for the impending battles.

The years of revolution (1905-07).⁵ All classes come out into the open. All programmatical and tactical views are tested by the action of the masses. The strike struggle has no parallel anywhere in the world in extent and acuteness. The economic strike grows into a political strike, and the latter into insurrection. The relations between the proletariat, as the leader, and the vacillating, unstable peasantry, as the led, are tested in practice. The Soviet form of organisation is born in the spontaneous development of the struggle. The controversies of that time over the significance of the Soviets anticipate the great struggle of 1917-20. The alternation of parliamentary and non-parliamentary forms of struggle, of tactics of boycotting parliament and tactics of participating in parliament, of legal and illegal forms of struggle, and likewise their interrelations and connections—all of this is distinguished by an astonishing richness of content. As far as teaching the fundamentals of political science—to masses and leaders, to classes and parties—was concerned, one month of this period was equivalent to a whole year of "peaceful" "constitutional" development. Without the "dress rehearsal" of 1905, the victory of the October Revolution in 1917 would have been impossible.

The years of reaction (1907-10). Tsarism is victorious. All the revolutionary and opposition parties have been defeated. Depression, demoralisation, splits, discord, renegacy, pornography take the place of politics. There is an increased drift towards philosophical idealism; mysticism becomes the garb of counter-revolutionary sentiments. But at the same time, it is this great defeat that gives the revolutionary parties and the revolutionary class a real and very useful lesson, a lesson in historical dialectics, a lesson in the understanding of the political struggle and in the skill and art of waging it. One gets to know one's friends in times of misfortune. Defeated armies learn well.

Victorious tsarism is compelled to accelerate the destruction of the remnants of the pre-bourgeois, patriarchal mode of life in Russia. The country's development along bourgeois lines proceeds with remarkable speed. Extra-class and above-class illusions, illusions concerning the possibility of avoiding capitalism, are scattered to the winds. The class struggle manifests itself in quite a new and more distinct form.

The revolutionary parties must complete their education. They have learned to attack. Now they have to realise that this knowledge must be supplemented by the knowledge how to beat an orderly retreat. They have to realise—and the revolutionary class is taught to realise it by its own bitter experience—that victory is impossible unless they have learned how to attack properly and how to retreat properly. Of all the defeated opposition and revolutionary parties, the Bolsheviks effected the most orderly retreat, with the least loss to their "army", with its core best preserved, with the least significant splits (in respect of profundity and irremediability), with the least demoralisation, and in the best condition to resume the work on the broadest scale and in the most correct and energetic manner. The Bolsheviks achieved this only because they ruthlessly exposed and expelled the revolutionary phrase-mongers, who refused to understand that one had to retreat, that one had to know how to retreat, and that one had absolutely to learn how to work legally in the most reactionary parliaments, in the most reactionary trade unions, co-operative societies, insurance societies and similar organisations.

The years of upsurge (1910-14). At first it was incredibly slow; then, following the Lena events of 1912,⁶ it became somewhat more rapid. Overcoming unprecedented difficulties, the Bolsheviks ousted the Mensheviks, whose role as bourgeois agents in the working-class movement was perfectly understood by the whole bourgeoisie after 1905, and who were therefore supported in a thousand ways by the bourgeoisie against the Bolsheviks. But the Bolsheviks would never have succeeded in doing this had they not followed the right tactics of combining illegal work with the utilisation of "legal possibilities" which they made obligatory. In the elections to the arch-reactionary Duma the Bolsheviks won the full support of the worker curia.

The first imperialist world war (1914-17). Legal parliamentarism, with an extremely reactionary "parliament", is of very useful service to the party of the revolutionary proletariat, the Bolsheviks. The Bolshevik deputies are exiled to Siberia.⁷ In the émigré press abroad all shades of social-imperialism, social-chauvinism, social-patriotism, inconsistent and consistent internationalism, pacifism, and the revolutionary repudiation of pacifist illusions find full expression. The learned fools and old women of the Second International, who had arrogantly and contemptuously turned up their noses at the abundance of "factions" in the Russian socialist movement and at the bitter struggle they waged among themselves, were unable—when the war deprived them of their vaunted "legality" in *all* the advanced countries—to organise anything even approximating such a free (illegal) interchange of views and such a free (illegal) working out of correct views as the Russian revolutionaries did in Switzerland and in a number of other countries.⁸ It was because of this that both the avowed social-patriots and the "Kautskyites" of all countries proved to be the worst traitors to the proletariat.⁹ And one of the principal reasons Bolshevism was able to achieve victory in 1917-20 was that ever since the end of 1914 it had been ruthlessly exposing the baseness, loathsomeness and vileness of social-chauvinism and "Kautskyism" (to which Longuetism in France,¹⁰ the views of the leaders of the Independent Labour Party and the Fabians in England,¹¹ of Turati in Italy, etc., correspond), and the masses later became more and more convinced by their own experience of the correctness of the Bolshevik views.

The second revolution in Russia (February to October 1917). The incredible senility and obsolescence of tsarism had created (with the aid of the blows and hardships of a most agonising war) an incredibly destructive power directed against tsarism. Within a few days Russia was transformed into a democratic bourgeois republic, more free—under war conditions—than any other country in the world. The leaders of the opposition and revolutionary parties began to set up a government, just as is done in the most "strictly parliamentary" republics; and the fact that a man had been a leader of an opposition party in parliament, even in a most

reactionary parliament, *assisted* him in his subsequent role in the revolution.

In a few weeks the Mensheviks and Socialist-Revolutionaries thoroughly imbibed all the methods and manners, arguments and sophistries of the European heroes of the Second International, of the ministerialists¹² and other opportunist scum. All that we now read about the Scheidemanns and Noskes, about Kautsky and Hilferding, Renner and Austertlitz, Otto Bauer and Fritz Adler, Turati and Longuet, about the Fabians and the leaders of the Independent Labour Party of England—all this seems to us (and really is) a dreary repetition, a reiteration of an old and familiar refrain. We have already seen all this in the case of the Mensheviks. History played a joke and made the opportunists of a backward country anticipate the opportunists of a number of advanced countries.

If the heroes of the Second International have all suffered bankruptcy and have disgraced themselves over the question of the significance and role of the Soviets and Soviet power; if the leaders of the three very important parties which have now left the Second International (namely, the German Independent Social-Democratic Party,¹³ the French Longuetists and the British Independent Labour Party) have disgraced and entangled themselves over this question in a most "striking" way; if they have all turned out to be slaves to the prejudices of petty-bourgeois democracy (fully in the spirit of the petty bourgeois of 1848 who called themselves "Social-Democrats")—we have *already* seen *all this* in the case of the Mensheviks. History played a joke; in Russia, in 1905, the Soviets were born, from February to October 1917 they were turned to a false use by the Mensheviks, who went bankrupt because of their inability to understand the role and significance of the Soviets, and now the idea of Soviet power has taken shape *throughout the world* and is spreading among the proletariat of all countries with extraordinary speed. And the old heroes of the Second International, like our Mensheviks, are *everywhere* going bankrupt, because they are not capable of understanding the role and significance of the Soviets. Experience has proved that on certain very essential questions of the proletarian revolution, *all* countries will inevitably have to do what Russia has done.

Contrary to the views that are today not infrequently met with in Europe and America, the Bolsheviks began their victorious struggle against the parliamentary (factually) bourgeois republic and against the Mensheviks very cautiously, and the preparations they made for it were by no means simple. We did *not* call for the overthrow of the government at the beginning of the period mentioned, but explained that it was impossible to overthrow it *without* first changing the composition and the sentiments of the Soviets. We did not proclaim a boycott of the bourgeois parliament, the Constituent Assembly, but said—and from the April (1917) Conference of our Party onwards began to say officially in the name of the Party—that a bourgeois republic with a Constituent Assembly is better than a bourgeois republic without a Constituent Assembly, but that a "workers' and peasants' " republic, a Soviet republic, is better than any bourgeois-democratic, parliamentary, republic. Without such careful, thorough, circumspect and prolonged preparations we could not have achieved victory in October 1917, or have maintained that victory.

IV

IN THE STRUGGLE AGAINST WHAT ENEMIES WITHIN THE WORKING-CLASS MOVEMENT DID BOLSHEVISM GROW UP AND BECOME STRONG AND STEELED?

Firstly and principally, in the struggle against opportunism, which in 1914 grew definitely into social-chauvinism and definitely sided with the bourgeoisie against the proletariat. Naturally, this was the principal enemy of Bolshevism within the working-class movement. It still remains the principal enemy internationally. The Bolsheviks devoted, and continue to devote, most attention to this enemy. This aspect of Bolshevik activities is now fairly well known abroad too.

Something different, however, must be said of the other enemy of Bolshevism within the working-class movement. Not enough is yet known abroad about how Bolshevism grew up, took shape, and became steeled in long years of struggle against *petty-bourgeois revolutionism*, which smacks of, or

borrow something from, anarchism, and which falls short, in anything essential, of the conditions and requirements of a consistently proletarian class struggle. Marxist theory has established—and the experience of all European revolutions and revolutionary movements has fully confirmed it—that the small owner, the small master (a social type that is represented in many European countries on a very wide, a mass scale), who under capitalism always suffers oppression and, very often, an incredibly acute and rapid deterioration in his conditions and ruin, easily goes to revolutionary extremes, but is incapable of perseverance, organisation, discipline and steadfastness. The petty bourgeois “driven to frenzy” by the horrors of capitalism is a social phenomenon which, like anarchism, is characteristic of all capitalist countries. The instability of such revolutionism, its barrenness, its liability to become swiftly transformed into submission, apathy, fantasy, and even a “frenzied” infatuation with one or another bourgeois “fad” —all this is a matter of common knowledge. But a theoretical, abstract recognition of these truths does not at all free revolutionary parties from old mistakes, which always crop up at unexpected moments, in a somewhat new form, in hitherto unknown vestments or surroundings, in a peculiar—more or less peculiar—situation.

Anarchism was not infrequently a sort of punishment for the opportunist sins of the working-class movement. The two monsters complemented each other. And the fact that in Russia, although her population is more petty bourgeois than that of the European countries, anarchism exercised a relatively negligible influence in the preparations for and during both revolutions (1905 and 1917) must undoubtedly be placed partly to the credit of Bolshevism, which has always combated opportunism ruthlessly and uncompromisingly. I say “partly”, for still more important in weakening the influence of anarchism in Russia was the fact that in the past (in the seventies of the nineteenth century) it had had the opportunity to develop with exceptional luxuriance and to show that it is absolutely fallacious and unfit to serve as a guiding theory for the revolutionary class.

At its inception in 1903, Bolshevism took over the tradition of ruthless struggle against petty-bourgeois, semi-anarchist (or dilettante-anarchist) revolutionism, the tradition which

had always existed in revolutionary Social-Democracy, and which had become particularly strong in 1900-03, when the foundations for a mass party of the revolutionary proletariat were being laid in Russia. Bolshevism took over and continued the struggle against the party which more than any other expressed the tendencies of petty-bourgeois revolutionism, namely, the Socialist-Revolutionary Party,¹⁴ and waged this struggle on three main points. First, this party, rejecting Marxism, stubbornly refused (or, it would be more correct to say: was unable) to understand the need for a strictly objective appraisal of the class forces and their interrelations before undertaking any political action. Secondly, this party considered itself to be particularly “revolutionary”, or “Left”, because of its recognition of individual terrorism, assassination—a thing which we Marxists emphatically rejected. Of course, we rejected individual terrorism only on grounds of expediency, whereas people who were capable of condemning “on principle” the terror of the Great French Revolution, or, in general, the terror employed by a victorious revolutionary party which is besieged by the bourgeoisie of the whole world, were ridiculed and laughed to scorn by Plekhanov, in 1900-03, when he was a Marxist and a revolutionary. Thirdly, the Socialist-Revolutionaries thought it very “Left” to sneer at the comparatively insignificant opportunist sins of the German Social-Democratic Party, while they themselves imitated the extreme opportunists of that party, for example, on the agrarian question, or on the question of the dictatorship of the proletariat.

History, by the way, has now confirmed on a broad, worldwide historic scale the opinion we have always advocated, namely, that *revolutionary* German Social-Democracy (note that as far back as 1900-03 Plekhanov demanded the expulsion of Bernstein from the party, and the Bolsheviks, always continuing this tradition, in 1913 exposed the utter baseness, vileness and treachery of Legien) *came closest* to being the party which the revolutionary proletariat requires in order to attain victory. Now, in 1920, after all the ignominious failures and crises of the war period and the early post-war years, it can be plainly seen that of all the Western parties, German revolutionary Social-Democracy produced the best leaders, and recovered, recuperated, and gained new strength more

rapidly than the others. This may be seen in the case both of the Spartacists¹⁵ and the Left, proletarian wing of the Independent Social-Democratic Party of Germany, which is waging an incessant struggle against the opportunism and spinelessness of the Kautskys, Hilferdings, Ledebours and Crispiens. If we now cast a general glance over a fully completed historical period, namely, from the Paris Commune to the first Socialist Soviet Republic, we shall find that the attitude of Marxism to anarchism in general stands out most definitely and unmistakably. In the final analysis, Marxism proved to be correct, and although the anarchists rightly pointed to the opportunist views on the state that prevailed among the majority of the socialist parties, it must be said, first, that this opportunism was connected with the distortion, and even deliberate suppression, of Marx's views on the state (in my book, *The State and Revolution*, I pointed out that for thirty-six years, from 1875 to 1911, Bebel kept back a letter by Engels which very vividly, sharply, bluntly and clearly exposed the opportunism of the stock Social-Democratic conceptions of the state); and, secondly, that the rectification of these opportunist views, the recognition of Soviet power and its superiority over bourgeois parliamentary democracy, proceeded most rapidly and extensively precisely among the trends in the socialist parties of Europe and America that were most Marxist.

On two occasions the struggle that Bolshevism waged against "Left" deviations within its own Party assumed particularly large proportions: in 1908, on the question of whether or not to participate in a most reactionary "parliament" and in the legal workers' societies, which were being restricted by most reactionary laws; and again in 1918 (the Brest-Litovsk Treaty), on the question of whether one or another "compromise" was admissible.¹⁶

In 1908 the "Left" Bolsheviks were expelled from our Party for stubbornly refusing to understand the necessity of participating in a most reactionary "parliament". The "Lefts"—among whom there were many splendid revolutionaries who subsequently bore (and still bear) the title of member of the Communist Party with credit—based themselves particularly on the successful experience of the boycott in 1905. When, in August 1905, the tsar announced the convocation of an

advisory "parliament",¹⁷ the Bolsheviks called for a boycott in the teeth of all the opposition parties and the Mensheviks and the "parliament" was actually swept away by the revolution of October 1905.¹⁸ At that time the boycott proved correct, not because non-participation in reactionary parliaments is correct in general, but because we correctly gauged the objective situation which was leading to the rapid transformation of the mass strikes into a political strike, then into a revolutionary strike, and then into an uprising. Moreover, the struggle at that time centred around the question of whether to leave the convocation of the first representative assembly to the tsar, or to attempt to wrest its convocation from the old regime. When there was not and could not have been any certainty that the objective situation was analogous, when there was no certainty of a similar trend and the same rate of development, the boycott ceased to be correct.

The Bolshevik boycott of "parliament" in 1905 enriched the revolutionary proletariat with highly valuable political experience and showed that in combining legal with illegal, parliamentary with extra-parliamentary forms of struggle, it is sometimes useful and even essential to reject parliamentary forms. But it is a very great mistake indeed to apply this experience blindly, imitatively and uncritically to *other* conditions and to *other* situations. The boycott of the Duma by the Bolsheviks in 1906 was, however, a mistake, although a small and easily remediable one.* The boycott of the Duma in 1907, 1908 and subsequent years was a serious mistake and one difficult to remedy, because, on the one hand, a very rapid rise of the revolutionary tide and its conversion into an uprising could not be expected, and, on the other hand, the whole historical situation attending the renovation of the bourgeois monarchy called for combining legal and illegal activities. Today, when we look back at this completed historical period, the connection of which with subsequent periods has now become quite clear, it becomes particularly

* What applies to individuals applies—with necessary modifications—to politics and parties. Not he is wise who makes no mistakes. There are no such men nor can there be. He is wise who makes not very serious mistakes and who knows how to correct them easily and quickly.

obvious that in 1908-14 the Bolsheviks *could not have* preserved (let alone strengthened, developed and reinforced) the firm core of the revolutionary party of the proletariat had they not upheld in strenuous struggle the viewpoint that it is *obligatory* to combine legal and illegal forms of struggle, that it is *obligatory* to participate even in a most reactionary parliament and in a number of other institutions restricted by reactionary laws (sick benefit societies, etc.).

In 1918 things did not reach a split. The "Left" Communists at that time only formed a separate group or "faction" within our Party, and that not for long. In the same year, 1918, the most prominent representatives of "Left Communism", for example, Comrades Radek and Bukharin, openly admitted their mistake. It had seemed to them that the Brest-Litovsk Treaty was a compromise with the imperialists inadmissible on principle and harmful to the party of the revolutionary proletariat. It was indeed a compromise with the imperialists, but it was a compromise which, under the circumstances, *had to be made*.

Today, when I hear our tactics at the time of the conclusion of the Brest-Litovsk Treaty assailed by the Socialist-Revolutionaries, for instance, or when I hear Comrade Lansbury say in conversation with me—"Our British trade-union leaders say that if it was permissible for the Bolsheviks to compromise it is permissible for them to compromise too," I usually reply by first of all giving a simple and "popular" example:

Imagine that your car is held up by armed bandits. You hand them over your money, passport, revolver and car. In return you are relieved of the pleasant company of the bandits. That is unquestionably a compromise. "*Do ut des*" ("I give" you money, fire-arms, a car "so that you give" me the opportunity to depart in peace). But it would be difficult to find a sane man who would declare such a compromise to be "inadmissible on principle", or who would proclaim the compromiser an accomplice of the bandits (even though the bandits might use the car and the fire-arms for further robberies). Our compromise with the bandits of German imperialism was a compromise of such a kind.

But when the Mensheviks and Socialist-Revolutionaries in Russia, the Scheidemanns (and to a large extent the Kautskys)

in Germany, Otto Bauer and Friedrich Adler (not to speak of the Renners and Co.) in Austria, the Renaudels and Longuets and Co. in France, the Fabians, the Independents and the Labourites¹⁹ in England in 1914-18 and in 1918-20 entered into *compromises* with the bandits of their own, and sometimes of the "Allied", bourgeoisie *against* the revolutionary proletariat of their own country, all these gentlemen did act as *accomplices in banditry*.

The conclusion is clear: to reject compromises "on principle", to reject the admissibility of compromises in general, no matter of what kind, is childishness, which it is difficult even to take seriously. A political leader who desires to be useful to the revolutionary proletariat must know how to distinguish *concrete* cases when compromises are inadmissible, when they are an expression of opportunism and *treachery*, and direct all the force of criticism, the full intensity of merciless exposure and relentless war, against *those concrete* compromises, and not allow the past masters at "practical" socialism and the parliamentary Jesuits to dodge and wriggle out of responsibility by disquisitions on "compromises in general". It is precisely in this way that the "leaders" of the British trade unions, as well as the Fabian society and the "Independent" Labour Party, dodge responsibility *for the treachery they have perpetrated*, for having made a compromise that is really tantamount to the worst kind of opportunism, treachery and betrayal.

There are compromises and compromises. One must be able to analyse the situation and the concrete conditions of each compromise, or of each variety of compromise. One must learn to distinguish between a man who gave the bandits money and fire-arms in order to lessen the damage they can do and facilitate their capture and execution, and a man who gives bandits money and fire-arms in order to share in the loot. In politics this is by no means always as easy as it is in this childishly simple example. But anyone who set out to invent a recipe for the workers that would provide in advance ready-made solutions for all cases in life, or who promised that the policy of the revolutionary proletariat would never encounter difficult or intricate situations, would simply be a charlatan.

So as to leave no room for misinterpretation, I shall attempt to outline, if only very briefly, a few fundamental rules for analysing concrete compromises.

The party which concluded a compromise with the German imperialists by signing the Brest-Litovsk Treaty had been evolving its internationalism in action ever since the end of 1914. It was not afraid to call for the defeat of the tsarist monarchy and to condemn "defence of the fatherland" in a war between two imperialist robbers. The parliamentary representatives of this party took the road to Siberia rather than the road leading to ministerial portfolios in a bourgeois government. The revolution that overthrew tsarism and established a democratic republic put this party to a new and tremendous test; it entered into no agreements with its "own" imperialists, but prepared and achieved their overthrow. Having taken over political power, this party did not leave a vestige either of landlord or capitalist property. Having made public and repudiated the secret treaties of the imperialists, this party proposed peace to *all* nations, and yielded to the violence of the Brest-Litovsk robbers only after the Anglo-French imperialists had frustrated the conclusion of a peace, and after the Bolsheviks had done everything humanly possible to hasten the revolution in Germany and other countries. That such a compromise, entered into by such a party in such a situation, was absolutely correct, becomes clearer and more evident to everyone every day.

The Mensheviks and Socialist-Revolutionaries in Russia (like all the leaders of the Second International all over the world in 1914-20) began with treachery by directly or indirectly justifying the "defence of the fatherland", that is, the defence of *their own* predatory bourgeoisie. They continued their treachery by entering into a coalition with the bourgeoisie of *their own* country and fighting together with *their own* bourgeoisie against the revolutionary proletariat of their own country. Their bloc, first with Kerensky and the Cadets,²⁰ and then with Kolchak and Denikin in Russia, like the bloc of their *contrères* abroad with the bourgeoisie of *their* respective countries, was a desertion to the side of the bourgeoisie against the proletariat. From beginning to end, *their* compromise with the bandits of imperialism was one of making themselves *accomplices* in imperialist banditry.

VIII

NO COMPROMISES?

In the quotation from the Frankfurt pamphlet²¹ we saw how emphatically the "Lefts" advance this slogan. It is sad to see that people who without doubt consider themselves Marxists and want to be Marxists forget the fundamental truths of Marxism. This is what Engels—who, like Marx, was one of those rarest of authors whose every sentence in every one of their great works contains remarkably profound meaning—wrote in 1874 in opposition to the manifesto of the thirty-three Blanquist Communards²²:

"We are Communists [wrote the Blanquist Communards in their manifesto], because we want to attain our goal without stopping at intermediate stations, without any compromises, which only postpone the day of victory and prolong the period of slavery."

"The German Communists are Communists because through all the intermediate stations and all compromises, created not by them, but by the course of historical development, they clearly perceive and constantly pursue the final aim—the abolition of classes and the creation of a society in which there will no longer be private ownership of land or of the means of production. The thirty-three Blanquists are Communists because they imagine that merely because *they* want to skip the intermediate stations and compromises, that settles the matter, and if 'it begins' in the next few days—which they take for granted—and they come to the helm, 'communism will be introduced' the day after tomorrow. If that is not immediately possible, they are not Communists."

"What childish innocence it is to present impatience as a theoretically convincing argument!" (F. Engels, "Programme of the Blanquist Communards", from the German Social-Democratic newspaper *Volksstaat*, 1874, No. 73, given in the Russian translation of *Articles, 1871-1875*, Petrograd, 1919, pp. 52-53.)

In the same article, Engels expresses his profound esteem for Vaillant, and speaks of the "undeniable merits" of the latter (who, like Guesde, was one of the most prominent leaders of international socialism up to August 1914, when they

both turned traitor to socialism). But Engels does not allow an obvious mistake to pass without a detailed analysis. Of course, to very young and inexperienced revolutionaries, as well as to petty-bourgeois revolutionaries of even a very respectable age and very experienced, it seems exceedingly "dangerous", incomprehensible and incorrect to "allow compromises". And many sophists (being unusually or excessively "experienced" politicians) reason exactly in the same way as the British leaders of opportunism mentioned by Comrade Lansbury: "If the Bolsheviks may make a certain compromise, why may we not make any kind of compromise?" But proletarians schooled in numerous strikes (to take only this manifestation of the class struggle) usually understand quite well the very profound (philosophical, historical, political and psychological) truth expounded by Engels. Every proletarian has been through strikes and has experienced "compromises" with the hated oppressors and exploiters, when the workers had to go back to work either without having achieved anything or agreeing to only a partial satisfaction of their demands. Every proletarian—owing to the conditions of the mass struggle and the sharp intensification of class antagonisms in which he lives—notices the difference between a compromise enforced by objective conditions (such as lack of strike funds, no outside support, extreme hunger and exhaustion), a compromise which in no way diminishes the revolutionary devotion and readiness for further struggle on the part of the workers who have agreed to such a compromise, and a compromise by traitors who try to ascribe to outside causes their own selfishness (strike-breakers also enter into "compromises"!); cowardice, desire to toady to the capitalists, and readiness to yield to intimidation, sometimes to persuasion, sometimes to sops, and sometimes to flattery on the part of the capitalists. (The history of the British labour movement provides an especially large number of cases of such treacherous compromises by British trade union leaders, but, in one form or another, nearly all workers in all countries have witnessed the same sort of thing.)

Naturally, there are individual cases of exceptional difficulty and intricacy when the real character of this or that "compromise" can be correctly determined only with the greatest difficulty; just as there are cases of homicide where

it is by no means easy to decide whether the homicide was fully justified and even necessary (as, for example, legitimate self-defence), or due to unpardonable negligence, or even to a cunningly executed perfidious plan. Of course, in politics, where it is sometimes a matter of extremely complicated—national and international—relations between classes and parties, very many cases will arise that will be much more difficult than the questions of a legitimate "compromise" in a strike or the treacherous "compromise" of a strike-breaker, traitor leader, etc. It would be absurd to formulate a recipe or general rule ("No compromises!") to serve all cases. One must use one's own brains and be able to find one's bearings in each particular case. It is, in fact, one of the functions of a party organisation, and of party leaders worthy of the title, to acquire, through the prolonged, persistent, variegated and comprehensive efforts of all thinking representatives of the given class,* the knowledge, the experience and—in addition to knowledge and experience—the political instinct necessary for the speedy and correct solution of intricate political problems.

Naïve and utterly inexperienced people imagine that it is sufficient to admit the permissibility of compromises in *general* in order to obliterate the dividing line between opportunism, against which we wage and must wage an irreconcilable struggle, and revolutionary Marxism, or communism. But if such people do not yet know that *all* dividing lines in nature and in society are constantly shifting and are to a certain extent conventional they cannot be assisted otherwise than by a long process of training, education, enlightenment, and by political and everyday experience. It is important to single out from the practical questions of the politics of each separate or specific historical moment those which reveal the principal type of impermissible, treacherous

* Within every class, even in the conditions prevailing in the most enlightened countries, even within the most advanced class, and even when the circumstances of the moment have roused all its spiritual forces to an exceptional degree, there always are—and inevitably *will be* as long as classes exist, as long as classless society has not fully entrenched and consolidated itself, and has not developed on its own foundations—representatives of the class who do *not* think and are incapable of thinking. Were this not so, capitalism would not be the oppressor of the masses it is.

compromises, compromises embodying the opportunism that is fatal to the revolutionary class, and to exert all efforts to explain them and combat them. During the imperialist war of 1914-18 between two groups of equally predatory and rapacious countries, the principal, fundamental type of opportunism was social-chauvinism, that is, support of "defence of the fatherland", which, in *such* a war, was really equivalent to defence of the predatory interests of one's "own" bourgeoisie. After the war, the defence of the robber League of Nations,²³ the defence of direct or indirect alliances with the bourgeoisie of one's own country against the revolutionary proletariat and the "Soviet" movement, and the defence of bourgeois democracy and bourgeois parliamentarism against "Soviet power" became the principal manifestations of those impermissible and treacherous compromises, the sum-total of which constituted the opportunism that is fatal to the revolutionary proletariat and its cause.

"...One must emphatically reject all compromise with other parties ... all policy of manoeuvring and agreement," write the German Lefts in the Frankfurt pamphlet.

It is a wonder that, holding such views, these Lefts do not emphatically condemn Bolshevism! For the German Lefts must know that the whole history of Bolshevism, both before and after the October Revolution, is *full* of instances of manoeuvring, making agreements and compromising with other parties, bourgeois parties included!

To carry on a war for the overthrow of the international bourgeoisie, a war which is a hundred times more difficult, protracted and complicated than the most stubborn of ordinary wars between states, and to refuse beforehand to manoeuvre, to utilise the conflict of interests (even though temporary) among one's enemies, to refuse to agree and compromise with possible (even though temporary, unstable, vacillating and conditional) allies—is not this ridiculous in the extreme? Is it not like making a difficult ascent of an unexplored and hitherto inaccessible mountain and refusing beforehand ever to move in zigzags, ever to retrace our steps, ever to abandon the course once selected and to try others? And yet people so immature and inexperienced (if youth were the explanation, it would not be so bad; young people

are ordained by God himself to talk such nonsense for a period) meet with the support—whether direct or indirect, open or covert, whole or partial, does not matter—of some members of the Communist Party of Holland!

After the first socialist revolution of the proletariat, after the overthrow of the bourgeoisie in one country, the proletariat of that country *for a long time* remains *weaker* than the bourgeoisie, simply because of the latter's extensive international connections, and also because of the spontaneous and continuous restoration and regeneration of capitalism and the bourgeoisie by the small commodity producers of the country which has overthrown the bourgeoisie. The more powerful enemy can be vanquished only by exerting the utmost effort, and by the most thorough, careful, attentive and skilful *obligatory* use of every, even the smallest, "rift" among the enemies, every antagonism of interests among the bourgeoisie of the various countries and among the various groups or types of bourgeoisie within the various countries, and also by taking advantage of every, even the smallest, opportunity of gaining a mass ally, even though this ally be temporary, vacillating, unstable, unreliable and conditional. Those who fail to understand this, fail to understand even a particle of Marxism, or of scientific, modern socialism *in general*. Those who have not proved by *deeds* over a fairly considerable period of time, and in fairly varied political situations, their ability to apply this truth in practice have not yet learned to assist the revolutionary class in its struggle to emancipate all toiling humanity from the exploiters. And this applies equally to the period *before* and *after* the proletariat has conquered political power.

Our theory is not a dogma, but a *guide to action*, said Marx and Engels; and it is the greatest mistake, the greatest crime on the part of such "patented" Marxists as Karl Kautsky, Otto Bauer, etc., that they have not understood this, have been unable to apply it at crucial moments of the proletarian revolution. "Political activity is not the pavement of the Nevsky Prospekt" (the clean, broad, smooth pavement of the perfectly straight principal street of St. Petersburg), N. G. Chernyshevsky, the great Russian socialist of the pre-Marxian period, used to say. Since Chernyshevsky's time, ignoring or forgetting this truth has cost Russian revolutiona-

ries innumerable sacrifices. We must strive at all costs to *prevent* the Left Communists and the West European and American revolutionaries who are devoted to the working class paying *as dearly* for the assimilation of this truth as the backward Russians did.

The Russian revolutionary Social-Democrats repeatedly utilised the services of the bourgeois liberals prior to the downfall of tsarism, that is, they concluded numerous practical compromises with them; and in 1901-02, even prior to the appearance of Bolshevism, the old editorial board of *Iskra* (consisting of Plekhanov, Axelrod, Zasulich, Martov, Potresov and myself) concluded (not for long, it is true) a formal political alliance with Struve, the political leader of bourgeois liberalism, while at the same time they were able to wage an unrelenting and most merciless ideological and political struggle against bourgeois liberalism and against the slightest manifestation of its influence in the working-class movement. The Bolsheviks have always adhered to this policy. Beginning with 1905, they have systematically advocated an alliance between the working class and the peasantry against the liberal bourgeoisie and tsarism, never, however, refusing to support the bourgeoisie against tsarism (for instance, during second rounds of elections, or during second ballots) and never ceasing their relentless ideological and political struggle against the bourgeois revolutionary peasant party, the Socialist-Revolutionaries, exposing them as petty-bourgeois democrats who falsely described themselves as socialists. During the Duma elections in 1907, the Bolsheviks for a brief period entered into a formal political bloc with the Socialist-Revolutionaries. Between 1903 and 1912 there were periods of several years in which we were formally united with the Mensheviks in one Social-Democratic Party; but we *never ceased* our ideological and political struggle against them as opportunists and vehicles of bourgeois influence among the proletariat. During the war we concluded certain compromises with the Kautskyites, with the Left Mensheviks (Martov), and with a section of the Socialist-Revolutionaries (Chernov and Natanson); we were together with them at Zimmerwald and Kienthal²⁴ and issued joint manifestoes; but we never ceased and never relaxed

our ideological and political struggle against the Kautskyites, Martov and Chernov (Natanson died in 1919; a "Revolutionary Communist" Narodnik,²⁵ he was very close to and almost in agreement with us). At the very moment of the October Revolution we entered into an informal but very important (and very successful) political bloc with the petty-bourgeois peasantry by adopting the *Socialist-Revolutionary* agrarian programme *in its entirety*, without a single alteration—that is, we effected an unquestionable compromise in order to prove to the peasants that we did not want to "steam-roller" them, but to reach agreement with them. At the same time we proposed (and soon after effected) a formal political bloc, including participation in the government, with the Left Socialist-Revolutionaries,²⁶ who dissolved this bloc after the conclusion of the Brest-Litovsk Treaty and then, in July 1918, went to the length of armed rebellion, and subsequently of armed struggle, against us.

It is therefore understandable why attacks of the German Lefts on the Central Committee of the Communist Party of Germany for entertaining the idea of a bloc with the Independents (the Independent Social-Democratic Party of Germany, the Kautskyites) appear to us to be absolutely thoughtless and a clear proof that the "Lefts" are in the *wrong*. We in Russia also had Right Mensheviks (who participated in the Kerensky government), corresponding to the German Scheidemanns, and Left Mensheviks (Martov), corresponding to the German Kautskyites, who were in opposition to the Right Mensheviks. A gradual shift of the worker masses from the Mensheviks to the Bolsheviks was to be clearly observed in 1917. At the First All-Russia Congress of Soviets, held in June 1917, we had only 13 per cent of the votes; the Socialist-Revolutionaries and the Mensheviks had the majority. At the Second Congress of Soviets (October 25, 1917, O.S.) we had 51 per cent of the votes. Why is it that in Germany the *same*, absolutely *identical* movement of the workers from Right to Left did not immediately strengthen the Communists, but first strengthened the intermediate Independent Party, although this party never had independent political ideas or an independent policy, and only wavered between the Scheidemanns and the Communists?

Evidently, one of the reasons was the *mistaken* tactics of the German Communists, who must fearlessly and honestly admit this mistake and learn to rectify it. The mistake was in their denial of the need to take part in the reactionary bourgeois parliaments and in the reactionary trade unions; the mistake was in numerous manifestations of that "Left" infantile disorder which has now come right out and will consequently be cured more thoroughly, more quickly and with greater benefit to the organism.

The German Independent Social-Democratic Party is obviously not a homogeneous body; alongside the old opportunist leaders (Kautsky, Hilferding and, to a considerable extent, apparently, Crispian, Ledebour and others)—who have demonstrated their inability to understand the significance of Soviet power and the dictatorship of the proletariat, their inability to lead the revolutionary struggle of the proletariat—there has emerged in this party a Left, proletarian wing which is growing with remarkable rapidity. Hundreds of thousands of members of this party (which, it seems, has some three-quarters of a million members) are proletarians who are abandoning Scheidemann and are rapidly moving towards communism. This proletarian wing has already proposed—at the Leipzig (1919) Congress of the Independents—immediate and unconditional affiliation to the Third International.²⁷ To fear a "compromise" with this wing of the party is positively ridiculous. On the contrary, it is the *duty* of the Communists to seek *and to find* a suitable form of compromise with them, such a compromise as, on the one hand, would facilitate and accelerate the necessary complete fusion with this wing and, on the other, would in no way hamper the Communists in their ideological and political struggle against the opportunist Right wing of the Independents. It will probably not be easy to devise a suitable form of compromise—but only a charlatan could promise the German workers and German Communists an "easy" road to victory.

Capitalism would not be capitalism if the "pure" proletariat were not surrounded by a large number of exceedingly motley types intermediate between the proletarian and the semi-proletarian (who earns his livelihood in part by the

sale of his labour-power), between the semi-proletarian and the small peasant (and petty artisan, handicraft worker and small master in general), between the small peasant and the middle peasant, and so on, and if the proletariat itself were not divided into more developed and less developed strata, if it were not divided according to territorial origin, trade, sometimes according to religion, and so on. And from all this follows the necessity, the absolute necessity, for the vanguard of the proletariat, its class-conscious section, the Communist Party, to resort to manoeuvres, agreements and compromises with the various groups of proletarians, with the various parties of the workers and small masters. It is entirely a case of *knowing how* to apply these tactics in order to *raise*, and not lower, the *general* level of proletarian class-consciousness, revolutionary spirit, and ability to fight and win. Incidentally, it should be noted that the victory of the Bolsheviks over the Mensheviks demanded the application of tactics of manoeuvres, agreements and compromises not only before *but also after* the October Revolution of 1917, but the manoeuvres and compromises, of course, were such as would assist, speed up, consolidate and strengthen the Bolsheviks at the expense of the Mensheviks. The petty-bourgeois democrats (including the Mensheviks) inevitably vacillate between the bourgeoisie and the proletariat, between bourgeois democracy and the Soviet system, between reformism and revolutionism, between love-for-the-workers and fear of the proletarian dictatorship, etc. The proper tactics for the Communists must be to *utilise* these vacillations, not to ignore them; and utilising them calls for concessions to those elements which are turning towards the proletariat—whenever and to the extent that they turn towards the proletariat—in addition to fighting those who turn towards the bourgeoisie. The result of the application of correct tactics is that Menshevism began to disintegrate, and is disintegrating more and more in our country, that the stubbornly opportunist leaders are being isolated, and that the best of the workers and the best elements among the petty-bourgeois democrats are being brought into our camp. This is a long process, and the hasty "decision"—"No compromises, no manoeuvres"—can only injure the work of strengthening the

influence of the revolutionary proletariat and enlarging its forces.

Lastly, one of the undoubted mistakes of the "Lefts" in Germany is their outright insistence on non-recognition of the Treaty of Versailles.²⁸ The more "weightily" and "pompously", the more "emphatically" and peremptorily this viewpoint is formulated (by K. Horner, for instance), the less sensible does it appear. It is not enough, under the present conditions of the international proletarian revolution, to repudiate the preposterous absurdities of "National Bolshevism" (Lauffenberg and others), which has gone to the length of advocating a bloc with the German bourgeoisie for a war against the Entente.²⁹ One must understand that the tactics of not admitting that it would be imperative for a Soviet Germany (if a German Soviet republic were to arise soon) to recognise the Treaty of Versailles for a time and to submit to it are fundamentally wrong. It does not follow from this that the Independents—at a time when the Scheidemanns were in the government, when Soviet government in Hungary³⁰ had not yet been overthrown, and when it was still possible that a Soviet revolution in Vienna³¹ would support Soviet Hungary—were right in putting forward, *under those circumstances*, the demand that the Treaty of Versailles be signed. At that time the Independents tacked and manoeuvred very clumsily, for they more or less accepted responsibility for the Scheidemann traitors and more or less degenerated from advocacy of a merciless (and most cold-blooded) class war against the Scheidemanns to the advocacy of a "classless" or "above-class" standpoint.

But the position is now obviously such that German Communists should not tie their hands and promise positively and categorically to repudiate the Treaty of Versailles in the event of the victory of communism. That would be stupid. They must say: the Scheidemanns and the Kautskyites have perpetrated a number of acts of treachery which hindered (and in part directly ruined) the chances of an alliance with Soviet Russia and Soviet Hungary. We Communists will do all we can to *facilitate* and *pave the way* for such an alliance; and we are by no means obliged to repudiate the

Treaty of Versailles, come what may, and do so, moreover, immediately. The possibility of repudiating it with success will depend not only on the German, but also on the international successes of the Soviet movement. The Scheidemanns and Kautskyites hampered this movement; we are helping it. That is the substance of the matter, that is the fundamental difference. And if our class enemies, the exploiters and their lackeys, the Scheidemanns and Kautskyites, have missed many an opportunity of strengthening both the German and the international Soviet movement, of strengthening both the German and the international Soviet revolution, they are to blame. The Soviet revolution in Germany will strengthen the international Soviet movement, which is the strongest bulwark (and the only reliable, invincible and world-wide bulwark) against the Treaty of Versailles and against international imperialism in general. To give prime place absolutely, categorically and immediately to liberation from the Treaty of Versailles, to give it *precedence over the question* of liberating *other* countries oppressed by imperialism from the yoke of imperialism, is philistine nationalism (worthy of Kautskys, Hilferdings, Otto Bauers and Co.) and not revolutionary internationalism. The overthrow of the bourgeoisie in any of the large European countries, including Germany, would be such a gain to the international revolution that for its sake one can, and if necessary should, tolerate a *more prolonged existence of the Treaty of Versailles*. If Russia, by herself, could endure the Brest-Litovsk Treaty for several months to the advantage of the revolution, there is nothing impossible in a Soviet Germany, allied with Soviet Russia, enduring the existence of the Treaty of Versailles for a longer period to the advantage of the revolution.

The imperialists of France, England, etc., are trying to provoke the German Communists and to lay a trap for them: "Say that you will not sign the Treaty of Versailles!" And the Left Communists childishly fall into the trap laid for them, instead of skilfully manoeuvring against the crafty and, *at the present moment*, stronger enemy, and instead of telling him: "Now we will sign the Treaty of Versailles." To tie our

hands beforehand, openly to tell the enemy, who is at present better armed than we are, whether we shall fight him, and when, is stupidity and not revolutionism. To accept battle at a time when it is obviously advantageous to the enemy and not to us is a crime; and the political leader of the revolutionary class who is unable to "manoeuvre, agree, and compromise" in order to avoid an obviously disadvantageous battle is absolutely worthless.

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From REVOLUTIONARY ADVENTURISM

I

We are living in stormy times, when Russia's history is marching on with seven-league strides, and every year sometimes signifies more than decades of tranquillity. Results of the half-century of the post-Reform period are being summed up, and the corner-stone is being laid for social and political edifices which will determine the fate of the entire country for many, many years to come. The revolutionary movement continues to grow with amazing rapidity—and "our trends" are ripening (and withering) uncommonly fast. Trends firmly rooted in the class system of such a rapidly developing capitalist country as Russia almost immediately reach their own level and feel their way to the classes they are related to. An example is the evolution of Mr. Struve, from whom the revolutionary workers proposed to "tear the mask" of a Marxist only one and a half years ago and who has now himself come forward without this mask as the leader (or servant?) of the liberal landlords, people who take pride in their earthiness and their sober judgement. On the other hand, trends expressing only the traditional instability of views held by the intermediate and indefinite sections of the intelligentsia try to substitute noisy declarations for *rap-prochement* with definite classes, declarations which are all the noisier, the louder the thunder of events. "At least we make an infernal noise"—such is the slogan of many revolutionarily minded individuals who have been caught up in the maelstrom of events and who have neither theoretical principles nor social roots.

It is to these "noisy" trends that the "Socialist-Revolutionaries", whose physiognomy is emerging more and more clearly, also belong. And it is high time for the proletariat

to have a better look at this physiognomy, and form a clear idea of the real nature of these people, who seek the proletariat's friendship all the more persistently, the more palpable it becomes to them that they cannot exist as a separate trend without close ties with the truly revolutionary class of society.

Three circumstances have served most to disclose the true face of the Socialist-Revolutionaries. These are, first, the split between the revolutionary Social-Democrats and the opportunists, who are raising their heads under the banner of the "criticism of Marxism". Secondly, Balmashov's assassination of Sipyagin and the new swing towards terrorism in the sentiments of some revolutionaries. Thirdly and mainly, the latest movement among the peasantry, which has compelled such that are accustomed to sit between two stools and have no programme whatever to come out *post factum* with some semblance of a programme. We shall proceed to examine these three circumstances, with the reservation that in a newspaper article it is possible to give only a brief outline of the main points in the argument and that we shall in all likelihood return to the subject and expound it in greater detail in a magazine article, or in a pamphlet.

It was only in No. 2 of *Vestnik Russkoi Revolutsii* that the Socialist-Revolutionaries finally decided to come out with a theoretical statement of principle, in an unsigned editorial headed "The World Progress and Crisis of Socialism". We strongly recommend this article to all who want to get a clear idea of utter unprincipledness and vacillation in matters of theory (as well as of the art of concealing this behind a spate of rhetoric). The entire content of this highly noteworthy article may be expressed in a few words. Socialism has grown into a world force, socialism (=Marxism) is now splitting as a result of the war of the revolutionaries (the "orthodox") against the opportunists (the "critics"). We, Socialist-Revolutionaries, "of course" have never sympathised with opportunism, but we are overjoyed because of the "criticism" which has freed us from a dogma; we too are working for a revision of this dogma—and although we have as yet nothing at all to show by way of criticism (except bourgeois-opportunist criticism), although we have as yet revised absolutely nothing, it is nevertheless that freedom

from theory which redounds to our credit. That redounds to our credit all the more because, as people free of theory, we stand firmly for general unity and vehemently condemn all theoretical disputes over principles. "A serious revolutionary organisation," *Vestnik Russkoi Revolutsii* (No. 2, p. 127) assures us in all seriousness, "would give up trying to settle disputed questions of social theory, which always lead to disunity, although this of course should not hinder theoreticians from seeking their solution"—or, more outspokenly: let the writers do the writing and the readers do the reading and in the meantime, while they are busying themselves, we will rejoice at the blank left behind.

There is no need, of course, to engage in a serious analysis of this theory of deviation from socialism (in the event of disputes proper). In our opinion, the crisis of socialism makes it incumbent upon any in the least serious socialists to devote redoubled attention to theory—to adopt more resolutely a strictly definite stand, to draw a sharper line of demarcation between themselves and wavering and unreliable elements. In the opinion of the Socialist-Revolutionaries, however, if such things as confusion and splits are possible "even among Germans", then it is God's will that we, Russians, should pride ourselves on our ignorance of whither we are drifting. In our opinion, the absence of theory deprives a revolutionary trend of the right to existence and inevitably condemns it, sooner or later, to political bankruptcy. In the opinion of the Socialist-Revolutionaries, however, the absence of theory is a most excellent thing, most favourable "for unity". As you see, we cannot reach agreement with them, for the fact of the matter is that we even speak different languages. There is one hope: perhaps they will be made to see reason by Mr. Struve, who also (only more seriously) speaks about the elimination of dogma and says that "our" business (as is the business of any bourgeoisie that appeals to the proletariat) is not to disunite, but to unite. Will not the Socialist-Revolutionaries ever see, with the help of Mr. Struve, what is *really signified* by their stand of liberation from socialism for the purpose of unity, and unity on the occasion of liberation from socialism?

Let us go over to the second point, the question of terrorism.

In their defence of terrorism, which the experience of the Russian revolutionary movement has so clearly proved to be effective, the Socialist-Revolutionaries are talking themselves blue in the face in asseverating that they recognise terrorism only in conjunction with work among the masses, and that therefore the arguments used by the Russian Social-Democrats to refute the efficacy of this method of struggle (and which have indeed been refuted for a long time to come) do not apply to them. Here something very similar to their attitude towards "criticism" is repeating itself. We are not opportunists, cry the Socialist-Revolutionaries, and at the same time they are shelving the dogma of proletarian socialism, for reason of sheer opportunist criticism and no other. We are not repeating the terrorists' mistakes and are not diverting attention from work among the masses, the Socialist-Revolutionaries assure us, and at the same time enthusiastically recommend to the Party acts such as Balmashov's assassination of Sipyagin, although everyone knows and sees perfectly well that this act was in no way connected with the masses and, moreover, could not have been by reason of the very way in which it was carried out—that the persons who committed this terrorist act neither counted on nor hoped for any definite action or support on the part of the masses. In their naïveté, the Socialist-Revolutionaries do not realise that their predilection for terrorism is causally most intimately linked with the fact that, from the very outset, they have always kept, and still keep, aloof from the working-class movement, without even attempting to become a party of the revolutionary class which is waging its class struggle. Over-ardent protestations very often lead one to doubt and suspect the worth of whatever it is that requires such strong seasoning. Do not these protestations weary them?—I often think of these words, when I read assurances by the Socialist-Revolutionaries: "by terrorism we are not relegating work among the masses into the background". After all, these assurances come from the very people who have already drifted away from the Social-Democratic labour movement, which really arouses the masses; they come from people who are continuing to drift away from this movement, clutching at fragments of any kind of theory.

The leaflet issued by the "Party of the Socialist-Revolutionaries" on April 3, 1902, may serve as a splendid illustration of what has been stated above. It is a most realistic source, one that is very close to the immediate leaders, a most authentic source. The "presentation of the question of terrorist struggle" in this leaflet "coincides in full" also "with the Party views", according to the valuable testimony of *Revolutsionnaya Rossiya* (No. 7, p. 24).*

The April 3 leaflet follows the pattern of the terrorists' "latest" arguments with remarkable accuracy. The first thing that strikes the eye is the words: "we advocate terrorism, not in place of work among the masses, but precisely for and simultaneously with that work". They strike the eye particularly because these words are printed in letters three times as large as the rest of the text (a device that is of course repeated by *Revolutsionnaya Rossiya*). It is all really so simple! One has only to set "not in place of, but together with" in bold type—and all the arguments of the Social-Democrats, all that history has taught, will fall to the ground. But just read the whole leaflet and you will see that the protestation in bold type takes the name of the masses in vain. The day "when the working people will emerge from the shadows" and "the mighty popular wave will shatter the iron gates to smithereens"—"alas!" (literally, "alas!") "is still a long way off, and it is frightful to think of the future toll of victims!" Do not these words "alas, still a long way off" reflect an utter failure to understand the mass movement and a lack of faith in it? Is not this argument meant as a deliberate sneer at the fact that the working people are already

* True, *Revolutsionnaya Rossiya* does some juggling with this point also. On the one hand—"coincides in full", on the other—a hint about "exaggerations". On the one hand, *Revolutsionnaya Rossiya* declares that this leaflet comes from only "one group" of Socialist-Revolutionaries. On the other hand, it is a fact that the leaflet bears the imprint: "Published by the Socialist-Revolutionary Party". Moreover, it carries the motto of this same *Revolutsionnaya Rossiya* ("By struggle you will achieve your rights"). We appreciate that *Revolutsionnaya Rossiya* finds it disagreeable to touch on this ticklish point, but we believe that it is simply unseemly to play at hide-and-seek in such cases. The existence of "economism" was just as disagreeable to revolutionary Social-Democracy, but the latter exposed it openly, without ever making the slightest attempt to mislead anyone.

beginning to rise? And, finally, even if this trite argument were just as well-founded as it is actually stuff and nonsense, what would emerge from it in particularly bold relief would be the inefficacy of terrorism, for *without* the working people all bombs are powerless, patently powerless.

Just listen to what follows: "Every terrorist blow, as it were, takes away part of the strength of the autocracy and transfers (!) all this strength (!) to the side of the fighters for freedom." "And if terrorism is practised systematically (!), it is obvious that the scales of the balance will finally weigh down on our side." Yes, indeed, it is obvious to all that we have here in its grossest form one of the greatest prejudices of the terrorists: political assassination of itself "transfers strength"! Thus, on the one hand you have the theory of the transference of strength, and on the other—"not in place of, but together with...". Do not these protestations weary them?

But this is just the beginning. The real thing is yet to come. "Whom are we to strike down?" asks the party of the Socialist-Revolutionaries, and replies: the ministers, and not the tsar, for "the tsar will not allow matters to go to extremes" (! How did they find that out??), and besides "it is also easier" (this is literally what they say!): "No minister can ensconce himself in a palace as in a fortress". And this argument concludes with the following piece of reasoning, which deserves to be immortalised as a model of the "theory" of the Socialist-Revolutionaries. "Against the crowd the autocracy has its soldiers; against the revolutionary organisations its secret and uniformed police; but what will save it..." (what kind of "it" is this? The autocracy? The author has unwittingly identified the autocracy with a target in the person of a minister whom it is easier to strike down!) "...from individuals or small groups that are ceaselessly, and even in ignorance of one another (!!), preparing for attack, and are attacking? No force will be of avail against elusiveness. Hence, our task is clear: to remove every one of the autocracy's brutal oppressors by the only means that has been left (!) us by the autocracy—death." No matter how many reams of paper the Socialist-Revolutionaries may fill with assurances that they are not relegating work among the masses into the background of disorganising it by their

advocacy of terrorism—their spate of words cannot disprove the fact that the actual psychology of the modern terrorist is faithfully conveyed in the leaflet we have quoted. The theory of the transference of strength finds its natural complement in the theory of elusiveness, a theory which turns upside down, not only all past experience, but all common sense as well. That the only "hope" of the revolution is the "crowd"; that only a revolutionary organisation which leads this crowd (in deed and not in word) can fight against the police—all this is ABC. It is shameful to have to prove this. And only people who have forgotten everything and learned absolutely nothing could have decided "the other way about", arriving at the fabulous, howling stupidity that the autocracy can be "saved" from the crowd by soldiers, and from the revolutionary organisations by the police, but that there is *no salvation* from individuals who hunt down ministers!!

This fabulous argument, which we are convinced is destined to become notorious, is by no means simply a curiosity. No, it is instructive because, through a sweeping reduction to an absurdity, it reveals the principal mistake of the terrorists, which they share with the "economists" (perhaps one might already say, with the former representatives of deceased "economism"?).³² This mistake, as we have already pointed out on numerous occasions, consists in the *failure to understand* the basic defect of our movement. Because of the extremely rapid growth of the movement, the leaders lagged behind the masses, the revolutionary organisations did not come up to the level of the revolutionary activity of the proletariat, were incapable of marching on in front and leading the masses. That a discrepancy of this sort exists cannot be doubted by any conscientious person who has even the slightest acquaintance with the movement. And if that is so, it is evident that the present-day terrorists are really "economists" turned inside out, going to the equally foolish but opposite extreme. At a time when the revolutionaries *are short of* the forces and means to lead the masses, who are already rising, an appeal to resort to such terrorist acts as the organisation of attempts on the lives of ministers by individuals and groups that are not known to one another means, not

only *thereby* breaking off work among the masses, but also introducing downright disorganisation into that work.

We, revolutionaries, "are accustomed to huddling together in timid knots", we read in the April 3 leaflet, "and even [N. B.] the new, bold spirit that has appeared during the last two or three years has so far done more to raise the sentiments of the crowd than of individuals." These words unintentionally express much that is true. And it is this very truth that deals a smashing rebuff to the propagandists of terrorism. From this truth every thinking socialist draws the conclusion that it is necessary to use group action more energetically, boldly, and harmoniously. The Socialist-Revolutionaries, however, conclude: "Shoot, elusive individual, for the knot of people, alas, is still a long way off, and besides there are soldiers against the knot." This really defies all reason, gentlemen!

Nor does the leaflet eschew the theory of excitative terrorism. "Each time a hero engages in single combat, this arouses in us all a spirit of struggle and courage," we are told. But we know from the past and see in the present that *only* new forms of the mass movement or the awakening of new sections of the masses to independent struggle really rouses a spirit of struggle and courage *in all*. Single combat, however, inasmuch as it remains *single combat* waged by the Balmashovs, has the immediate effect of simply creating a short-lived sensation, while indirectly it even leads to apathy and passive waiting for the next *bout*. We are further assured that "every flash of terrorism lights up the mind", which, unfortunately, we have not noticed to be the case with the terrorism-preaching party of the Socialist-Revolutionaries. We are presented with the theory of big work and petty work. "Let not those who have greater strength, greater opportunities and resolution rest content with petty [!] work; let them find and devote themselves to a big cause—the propaganda of terrorism among the masses [!], the preparation of the intricate ... [the theory of elusiveness is already forgotten!] ... terrorist ventures." How amazingly clever this is in all truth: to sacrifice the life of a revolutionary for the sake of wreaking vengeance on the scoundrel Sipyagin, who is then replaced by the scoundrel Plehve—that is big work. But to prepare, *for instance*, the masses for an armed demon-

stration—that is petty work. This very point is explained in No. 8 of *Revolutionnaya Rossiya*, which declares that "it is easy to write and speak" of armed demonstrations "as a matter of the vague and distant future", "but up till now all this talk has been merely of a theoretical nature". How well we know this language of people who are free of the constraint of firm socialist convictions, of the burdensome experience of each and every kind of popular movement! They confuse immediately tangible and sensational results with practicalness. To them the demand to adhere steadfastly to the class standpoint and to maintain the mass nature of the movement is "vague" "theorising". In their eyes definitiveness is slavish compliance with every turn of sentiment and ... and, by reason of this compliance, inevitable helplessness at each turn. Demonstrations begin—and bloodthirsty words, talk about the beginning of the end, flow from the lips of such people. The demonstrations halt—their hands drop helplessly, and before they have had time to wear out a pair of boots they are already shouting: "The people, alas, are still a long way off. ..." Some new outrage is perpetrated by the tsar's henchmen—and they demand to be shown a "definite" measure that would serve as an exhaustive *reply* to that particular outrage, a measure that would bring about an immediate "transference of strength", and they proudly promise this transference! These people do not understand that this very promise to "transfer" strength constitutes political adventurism, and that their adventurism stems from their lack of principle.

The Social-Democrats will always warn against adventurism and ruthlessly expose illusions which inevitably end in complete disappointment. We must bear in mind that a revolutionary party is worthy of its name only when it guides *in deed* the movement of a revolutionary class. We must bear in mind that any popular movement assumes an infinite variety of forms, is constantly developing new forms and discarding the old, and effecting modifications or new combinations of old and new forms. It is our duty to participate actively in this process of working out means and methods of struggle. When the students' movement became sharper, we began to call on the workers to come to the aid of the students (*Iskra*, No. 2) without taking it upon ourselves to

forecast the forms of the demonstrations, without promising that they would result in an immediate transference of strength, in lighting up the mind, or a special elusiveness. When the demonstrations became consolidated, we began to call for their organisation and for the arming of the masses, and put forward the task of preparing a popular uprising. Without in the least denying violence and terrorism in principle, we demanded work for the preparation of such forms of violence as were calculated to bring about the direct participation of the masses and which guaranteed that participation. We do not close our eyes to the difficulties of this task, but will work at it steadfastly and persistently, undeterred by the objections that this is a matter of the "vague and distant future". Yes, gentlemen, we stand for future and not only past forms of the movement. We give preference to long and arduous work on what promises a future rather than to an "easy" repetition of what has been condemned by the past. We shall always expose people who in word war against hackneyed dogmas and in practice hold exclusively to such moth-eaten and harmful commonplaces as the theory of the transference of strength, the difference between big work and petty work and, of course, the theory of single combat. "Just as in the days of yore the peoples' battles were fought out by their leaders in single combat, so now the terrorists will win Russia's freedom in single combat with the autocracy", the April 3 leaflet concludes. The mere reprinting of such sentences provides their refutation.

Anyone who really carries on his revolutionary work in conjunction with the class struggle of the proletariat very well knows, sees and feels what vast numbers of immediate and direct demands of the proletariat (and of the sections of the people capable of supporting the latter) remain unsatisfied. He knows that in very many places, throughout vast areas, the working people are literally straining to go into action, and that their ardour runs to waste because of the scarcity of literature and leadership, the lack of forces and means of the revolutionary organisations. And we find ourselves—we see that we find ourselves—in the same old vicious circle that has so long hemmed in the Russian revolution like an omen of evil. On the one hand, the revolutionary ardour of the insufficiently enlightened and unorganised crowd

runs to waste. On the other hand, shots fired by the "elusive individuals" who are losing faith in the possibility of marching in formation and working hand in hand with the masses also end in smoke.

But things can still be put to rights, comrades! Loss of faith in a real cause is the rare exception rather than the rule. The urge to commit terrorist acts is a passing mood. Then let the Social-Democrats close their ranks, and we shall fuse the militant organisation of revolutionaries and the mass heroism of the Russian proletariat into a single whole!

Iskra, Nos. 23 and 24,
August 1 and September 1, 1902

Collected Works, Vol. 6

From THE LATEST WORD
IN BUNDIST NATIONALISM³³

"He who says A must say B"; one who has adopted the standpoint of nationalism naturally arrives at the desire to erect a Chinese Wall around his nationality, his national working-class movement; he is unembarrassed even by the fact that it would mean building separate walls in each city, in each little town and village, unembarrassed even by the fact that by his tactics of division and dismemberment *he is reducing to nil* the great call for the rallying and unity of the proletarians of all nations, all races and all languages.

Iskra, No. 46,
August 15, 1903

Collected Works, Vol. 6

From THE DRAFT RESOLUTION ON MEASURES
TO RESTORE PEACE IN THE PARTY,
MOVED IN THE R.S.D.L.P. COUNCIL
ON JANUARY 15 (28), 1904

Individual differences over all manner of questions have always arisen and inevitably will arise in a party which rests on a vast popular movement and sets out to be the conscious spokesman of that movement, emphatically rejecting all circle spirit and narrow sectarian views. But if our Party members are to be worthy representatives of the class-conscious militant proletariat, worthy participants in the world working-class movement, they must do their utmost to ensure that no individual differences over the interpretation and methods of realising the principles of our Party programme shall interfere, or be capable of interfering, with harmonious joint work under the direction of our central institutions. The deeper and broader our understanding of our programme and of the tasks of the international proletariat, the more we value positive work in developing propaganda, agitation, and organisation, and the farther removed we are from sectarianism, the petty circle spirit, and considerations of place and position, the more must we strive to have differences among Party members discussed calmly and on their merits and not to let these differences interfere with our work, disrupt our activities, impede the proper functioning of our central institutions.

Published in 1904 in the
pamphlet *The Fight for a
Congress* by N. Shakhov,
Geneva

Collected Works, Vol. 7

From GUERRILLA WARFARE

Let us begin from the beginning. What are the fundamental demands which every Marxist should make of an examination of the question of forms of struggle? In the first place, Marxism differs from all primitive forms of socialism by not binding the movement to any one particular form of struggle. It recognises the most varied forms of struggle; and it does not "concoct" them, but only generalises, organises, gives conscious expression to those forms of struggle of the revolutionary classes which arise of themselves in the course of the movement. Absolutely hostile to all abstract formulas and to all doctrinaire recipes, Marxism demands an attentive attitude to the *mass* struggle in progress, which, as the movement develops, as the class-consciousness of the masses grows, as economic and political crises become acute, continually gives rise to new and more varied methods of defence and attack. Marxism, therefore, positively does not reject any form of struggle. Under no circumstances does Marxism confine itself to the forms of struggle possible and in existence at the given moment only, recognising as it does that new forms of struggle, unknown to the participants of the given period, *inevitably* arise as the given social situation changes. In this respect Marxism *learns*, if we may so express it, from mass practice, and makes no claim whatever to *teach* the masses forms of struggle invented by "systematisers" in the seclusion of their studies. We know—said Kautsky, for instance, when examining the forms of social revolution—that the coming crisis will introduce new forms of struggle that we are now unable to foresee.

In the second place, Marxism demands an absolutely *historical* examination of the question of the forms of struggle. To treat this question apart from the concrete historical situation betrays a failure to understand the rudiments of

dialectical materialism. At different stages of economic evolution, depending on differences in political, national-cultural, living and other conditions, different forms of struggle come to the fore and become the principal forms of struggle; and in connection with this, the secondary, auxiliary forms of struggle undergo change in their turn. To attempt to answer yes or no to the question whether any particular means of struggle should be used, without making a detailed examination of the concrete situation of the given movement at the given stage of its development, means completely to abandon the Marxist position.

These are the two principal theoretical propositions by which we must be guided. The history of Marxism in Western Europe provides an infinite number of examples corroborating what has been said.

Proletary, No. 5,
September 30, 1906

Collected Works, Vol. 11

From THE PREFACE
TO THE RUSSIAN TRANSLATION OF
LETTERS BY JOHANNES BECKER, JOSEPH DIETZGEN,
FREDERICK ENGELS, KARL MARX AND OTHERS
TO FRIEDRICH SORGE AND OTHERS

It is highly instructive to compare what Marx and Engels said of the British, American and German working-class movements. Such comparison acquires all the greater importance when we remember that Germany on the one hand, and Britain and America on the other, represent different stages of capitalist development and different forms of domination of the bourgeoisie, as a class, over the entire political life of those countries. From the scientific point of view, we have here a sample of materialist dialectics, the ability to bring to the forefront and stress the various points, the various aspects of the problem, in application to the specific features of different political and economic conditions. From the point of view of the practical policy and tactics of the workers' party, we have here a sample of the way in which the creators of the *Communist Manifesto* defined the tasks of the fighting proletariat in accordance with the different stages of the national working-class movements in the different countries.

What Marx and Engels criticise most sharply in British and American socialism is its isolation from the working-class movement. The burden of all their numerous comments on the Social-Democratic Federation in Britain³⁴ and on the American socialists is the accusation that they have reduced Marxism to a dogma, to "rigid [*starre*] orthodoxy", that they consider it "a credo and not a *guide to action*",³⁵ that they are incapable of adapting themselves to the theoretically helpless, but living and powerful mass working-class move-

ment that is marching alongside them. "Had we from 1864 to 1873 insisted on working together only with those who openly adopted our platform," Engels exclaimed in his letter of January 27, 1887, "where should we be today?" And in the preceding letter (December 28, 1886), he wrote, with reference to the influence of Henry George's ideas on the American working class:

"A million or two of workingmen's votes next November for a bona fide workingmen's party is worth infinitely more at present than a hundred thousand votes for a doctrinally perfect platform."

These are very interesting passages. There are Social-Democrats in our country who have hastened to utilise them in defence of the idea of a "labour congress" or something in the nature of Larin's "broad labour party". Why not in defence of a "Left bloc"? we would ask these precipitate "utilisers" of Engels. The letters the quotations are taken from refer to a time when American workers voted at the elections for Henry George. Mrs. Wischnewetzky—an American woman married to a Russian and translator of Engels's works—had asked him, as may be seen from Engels's reply, to give a thorough criticism of Henry George. Engels wrote (December 28, 1886) that *the time had not yet arrived* for that, the main thing being that the workers' party should begin to organise itself, even if not on an entirely pure programme. Later on, the workers would themselves come to understand what was amiss, "would learn from their own mistakes", but "any thing that might delay or prevent that national consolidation of the workingmen's party—on no matter what platform—I should consider a great mistake. . .".

It goes without saying that Engels had a perfect understanding of, and frequently mentioned, the absurdity and *reactionary character* of Henry George's ideas, from the *socialist* point of view. The Sorge correspondence contains a most interesting letter from Karl Marx dated June 20, 1881, in which he characterised Henry George as an ideologist of *the radical bourgeoisie*. "Theoretically the man is utterly backward" (*total arrièrè*), wrote Marx. Yet Engels was not afraid to join with this *socialist reactionary* in the elections,

so long as there were people who could tell the masses of "the consequences of their own mistakes" (Engels, in the letter dated November 29, 1886).

Regarding the Knights of Labor,³⁶ an organisation of American workers existing at that time, Engels wrote in the same letter: "The weakest [literally: rottenest, *faulste*] side of the Knights of Labor was their *political neutrality*. . . . The first great step, of importance for every country newly entering into the movement, is always the constitution of the workers as an independent political party, no matter how, so long as it is a distinct workers' party."

Written on April 6 (19), 1907
Issued in 1907 in a book
published by P. G. Dauge,
St. Petersburg

Collected Works, Vol. 12

From the Article AGAINST BOYCOTT

(From the Notes of a Social-Democratic Publicist)³⁷

It is undoubtedly the duty of the Russian Social-Democrats to study our revolution most carefully and thoroughly, to acquaint the masses with its forms of struggle, forms of organisation, etc., to strengthen the revolutionary traditions among the people, to convince the masses that improvements of any importance and permanence can be achieved solely and exclusively through revolutionary struggle, and to systematically expose the utter baseness of those smug liberals who pollute the social atmosphere with the miasma of "constitutional" servility, treachery, and Molchalinism.³⁸ In the history of the struggle for liberty a single day of the October strike or of the December uprising³⁹ is a hundred times more significant than months of Cadet flunkey speeches in the Duma on the subject of the blameless monarch and constitutional monarchy. We must see to it—for if we do not, no one else will—that the people know much more thoroughly and in more detail those spirited, eventful, and momentous days than those months of "constitutional" asphyxia and Balalaikin-Molchalin prosperity⁴⁰ so zealously announced to the world by our liberal-party and non-party "democratic" (ugh! ugh!) press with the amiable acquiescence of Stolypin and his retinue of gendarme censors.

There is no doubt that, in many cases, sympathy for the boycott is created precisely by these praiseworthy efforts of revolutionaries to foster tradition of the finest period of the revolutionary past, to light up the cheerless slough of the drab workaday present by a spark of bold, open, and resolute struggle. But it is just because we cherish this concern for revolutionary traditions that we must vigorously protest against the view that by using one of the slogans of a particular historical period the essential conditions of that period can be restored. It is one thing to preserve the traditions of the revolution, to know how to use them for constant

propaganda and agitation and for acquainting the masses with the conditions of a direct and aggressive struggle against the old regime, but quite another thing to repeat a slogan divorced from the sum total of the conditions which gave rise to it and which ensured its success and to apply it to essentially different conditions.

Marx himself, who so highly valued revolutionary traditions and unsparingly castigated a renegade or philistine attitude towards them, at the same time demanded that revolutionaries should be able to *think*, should be able to *analyse* the conditions under which old methods of struggle could be used, and not simply to repeat certain slogans. The "national" traditions of 1792 in France will perhaps for ever remain a *model* of certain revolutionary methods of struggle; but this did not prevent Marx in 1870 in the famous Address of the International from warning the French proletariat against the mistake of applying those traditions to the conditions of a different period.

This holds good for Russia as well. We must study the conditions for the application of the boycott; we must instill in the masses the idea that the boycott is a quite legitimate and sometimes essential method at moments when the revolution is on the upswing (whatever the pedants who take the name of Marx in vain may say). But whether revolution is really on the upswing—and this is the fundamental condition for proclaiming a boycott—is a question which one must be able to raise independently and to decide on the basis of a serious analysis of the facts. It is our duty to prepare the way for such an upswing, as far as it lies within our power, and not to reject the boycott at the proper moment; but to regard the boycott slogan as being generally applicable to every bad or very bad representative institution would be an absolute mistake.

Written on June 26 (July 9), 1907
Published at the end of July
1907, in the pamphlet *Concerning the Boycott of the Third Duma*, St. Petersburg
Signed: N. Lenin

Collected Works, Vol. 13

From MARXISM AND REVISIONISM

The inevitability of revisionism is determined by its class roots in modern society. Revisionism is an international phenomenon. No thinking socialist who is in the least informed can have the slightest doubt that the relation between the orthodox and the Bernsteinians in Germany,⁴¹ the Guesdists and the Jaurèsists (and now particularly the Broussists) in France,⁴² the Social-Democratic Federation and the Independent Labour Party in Great Britain, Brouckère and Vandervelde in Belgium, the Integralists⁴³ and the Reformists in Italy, the Bolsheviks and the Mensheviks in Russia, is everywhere essentially similar, notwithstanding the immense variety of national conditions and historical factors in the present state of all these countries. In reality, the "division" within the present international socialist movement is now proceeding along the *same* lines in all the various countries of the world, which testifies to a tremendous advance compared with thirty or forty years ago, when heterogeneous trends in the various countries were struggling within the one international socialist movement. And that "revisionism from the left" which has taken shape in the Latin countries as "revolutionary syndicalism",⁴⁴ is also adapting itself to Marxism, "amending" it: Labriola in Italy and Lagardelle in France frequently appeal from Marx who is understood wrongly to Marx who is understood rightly.

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(16), 1908
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Signed: V. Ilyin

Collected Works, Vol. 15

From THE RESOLUTIONS OF THE CONFERENCE
OF THE EXTENDED EDITORIAL BOARD
OF PROLETARY⁴⁵

1

ON OTZOVISM AND ULTIMATUMISM

The slogan of boycott of the Bulygin Duma and the First Duma issued by the revolutionary wing of our Party played a great revolutionary role at the time, and was taken up with enthusiasm by all the most active and most revolutionary sections of the working class.

The direct revolutionary struggle of the broad masses was then followed by a severe period of counter-revolution. It became essential for Social-Democrats to adapt their revolutionary tactics to this new political situation, and, in connection with this, one of the exceptionally important tasks became the use of the Duma as an open platform for the purpose of assisting Social-Democratic agitation and organisation.

In this rapid turn of events, however, a section of the workers who had participated in the direct revolutionary struggle was unable to proceed at once to apply revolutionary Social-Democratic tactics in the new conditions of the counter-revolution, and continued simply to repeat slogans which *had been* revolutionary in the period of open civil war, but which now, if merely repeated, might retard the process of closing the ranks of the proletariat in the new conditions of struggle.

On the other hand, in the conditions of this painful crisis, in an atmosphere of decline in the revolutionary struggle, of apathy and dejection even among a section of the

workers, at a time when the workers' organisations were being suppressed and when the strength of their resistance to disintegrating influences was inadequate, there has developed among a section of the working class an attitude of indifference towards the political struggle in general, and of a particularly marked lack of interest in the work of Social-Democrats in the Duma.

It is in such conditions that so-called otzovism and ultimatumism may meet with temporary success among these sections of the proletariat.

The proceedings of the Third Duma, which openly flouts the needs of the workers, work up an otzovist mood among these strata of the workers, who, owing to their inadequate Social-Democratic training, are as yet unable to understand that these proceedings of the Third Duma enable the Social-Democrats to make use of that representative assembly of the exploiting classes in a revolutionary manner, in order to expose to the broadest sections of the people the real nature of the autocracy and of all the counter-revolutionary forces, as well as the need for revolutionary struggle.

Another contributing factor to this otzovist mood among this stratum of the workers has been the exceedingly grave errors committed by the Duma Social-Democratic group, especially during the first year of its activity.

Recognising that this otzovist mood has a detrimental effect on the socialist and revolutionary training of the working class, the Bolshevik wing of the Party considers it necessary:

(a) *in regard to these strata of the workers:* to persevere in the work of Social-Democratic training and organisation, to explain systematically and persistently the utter political futility of otzovism and ultimatumism, the real significance of Social-Democratic parliamentarism and the role of the Duma as a platform for the Social-Democrats during a period of counter-revolution;

(b) *in regard to the Duma Social-Democratic group and Duma work in general:* to establish close connections between the Duma group and the advanced workers; to render it every assistance; to see that the whole Party supervises and brings pressure upon it, *inter alia*, by openly explaining its mistakes; to ensure in practice that the Party guides its

activities as a Party organ; and in general that the Bolsheviks carry out the decisions of the recent Party conference on this matter; for only the increased attention of working-class circles to the activities of the Duma Social-Democratic group, and their organised participation in the Duma activities of the Social-Democrats, will be effective in straightening out the tactics of our Duma group;

(c) *in regard to the Right wing of the Party*, which is dragging the Duma group on to an anti-Party road and thereby tearing it away from the workers' vanguard: to wage a systematic, irreconcilable struggle against it, and to expose these tactics as fatal to the Party.

* * *

In the course of the bourgeois-democratic revolution a number of elements joined our Party, attracted not by its purely proletarian programme, but chiefly by its gallant and energetic fight for democracy; these elements adopted the revolutionary-democratic slogans of the proletarian party, but without connecting them with the entire struggle of the socialist proletariat as a whole.

Such elements, not sufficiently imbued with the proletarian point of view, have also been found in the ranks of our Bolshevik wing of the Party. In this period of social stagnation such elements more and more reveal their lack of Social-Democratic consistency. Coming as they do into ever sharper contradiction with the fundamentals of revolutionary Social-Democratic tactics, they have been creating, during the past year, a trend that seeks to give shape to a theory of otzovism and ultimatumism, but in reality only elevates to a principle and intensifies false notions about Social-Democratic parliamentarism and the work of Social-Democracy in the Duma.

These attempts to create a complete system of otzovist policy out of an otzovist mood lead to a theory which in substance expresses the ideology of political indifference on the one hand, and of anarchist vagaries on the other. For all its revolutionary phraseology, the theory of otzovism and ultimatumism in practice represents, to a considerable extent, the reverse side of constitutional illusions based on

the hope that the Duma itself can satisfy certain urgent needs of the people. In essence, it substitutes petty-bourgeois tendencies for proletarian ideology.

No less harmful to the Social-Democratic cause than open otzovism is so-called ultimatumism (i.e., that tendency which on principle renounces the utilisation of the Third Duma rostrum, or which tries to justify its failure to carry out this duty by considerations of expediency, and in striving for the recall of the Social-Democratic group from the Duma, abandons the prolonged work of training the Duma group and straightening its line in favour of presenting to it an immediate ultimatum). Politically, ultimatumism at the present time is indistinguishable from otzovism, and only introduces still greater confusion and disunity by the disguised character of its otzovism. The attempts of ultimatumism to assert its direct connection with the tactics of boycott practised by our wing of the Party during a particular stage of the revolution, merely distort the true meaning and character of the boycott of the Buligin Duma and the First Duma, which was quite correctly applied by the overwhelming majority of our Party. By their attempt to deduce, from the particular cases in which the boycott of representative institutions was applied at this or that moment of the revolution, that the policy of boycott is the distinguishing feature of Bolshevik tactics, even in a period of counter-revolution, ultimatumism and otzovism demonstrate that these trends are in essence the reverse side of Menshevism, which preaches indiscriminate participation in all representative institutions, irrespective of the particular stage of development of the revolution, irrespective of whether a revolutionary upsurge exists or not.

All the attempts made so far by otzovism and ultimatumism to lay down principles on which to base their theory have inevitably led to denial of the fundamentals of revolutionary Marxism. The tactics proposed by them inevitably lead to a complete break with the tactics of the Left wing of international Social-Democracy as applied to present-day Russian conditions, and result in anarchist deviations.

Otzovist-ultimatumist agitation has already begun to cause unquestionable harm to the working-class movement and to Social-Democratic work. If it continues, it may become a threat to Party unity, for this agitation has already given

rise to such ugly phenomena as the alliance between otzovists and Socialist-Revolutionaries (in St. Petersburg) for the purpose of preventing help for our Party representatives in the Duma; likewise to public speeches at workers' meetings jointly with avowed syndicalists.

In view of all this, the extended editorial board of *Proletary* declares that Bolshevism as a definite trend within the Russian Social-Democratic Labour Party has nothing in common with otzovism and ultimatumism, and that the Bolshevik wing of the Party must most resolutely combat these deviations from the path of revolutionary Marxism.

Published on July 3 (16), 1909
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No. 46

Collected Works, Vol. 15

From THE DIFFERENCES IN THE EUROPEAN LABOUR MOVEMENT

I

The principal tactical differences in the present-day labour movement of Europe and America reduce themselves to a struggle against two big trends that are departing from Marxism, which has in fact become the dominant theory in this movement. These two trends are revisionism (opportunism, reformism) and anarchism (anarcho-syndicalism, anarcho-socialism). Both these departures from the Marxist theory and Marxist tactics that are dominant in the labour movement were to be observed in various forms and in various shades in all civilised countries during the more than half-century of history and of the mass labour movement.

This fact alone shows that these departures cannot be attributed to accident, or to the mistakes of individuals or groups, or even to the influence of national characteristics and traditions, and so forth. There must be deep-rooted causes in the economic system and in the character of the development of all capitalist countries which constantly give rise to these departures. A small book, *The Tactical Differences in the Labour Movement* (*Die Taktischen Differenzen in der Arbeiterbewegung*, Hamburg, Erdmann Dubber, 1909), published last year by a Dutch Marxist, Anton Pannekoek, represents an interesting attempt at a scientific investigation of these causes. In our exposition we shall acquaint the reader with Pannekoek's conclusions, which, it must be recognised, are quite correct.

One of the most profound causes that periodically give rise to differences over tactics is the very growth of the

labour movement. If this movement is not measured by the criterion of some fantastic ideal, but is regarded as the practical movement of ordinary people, it will be clear that the enlistment of larger and larger numbers of new "recruits", the attraction of new sections of the working people must inevitably be accompanied by waverings in the sphere of theory and tactics, by repetitions of old mistakes, by a temporary reversion to antiquated views and antiquated methods, and so forth. The labour movement of every country periodically spends a varying amount of energy, attention and time on the "training" of recruits.

Furthermore, the rate at which capitalism develops varies in different countries and in different spheres of the national economy. Marxism is most easily, rapidly, completely and lastingly assimilated by the working class and its ideologists where large-scale industry is most developed. Economic relations which are backward, or which lag in their development, constantly lead to the appearance of supporters of the labour movement who assimilate only certain aspects of Marxism, only certain parts of the new world outlook, or individual slogans and demands, being unable to make a determined break with all the traditions of the bourgeois world outlook in general and the bourgeois-democratic world outlook in particular.

Again, a constant source of differences is the dialectical nature of social development, which proceeds in contradictions and through contradictions. Capitalism is progressive because it destroys the old methods of production and develops productive forces, yet at the same time, at a certain stage of development, it retards the growth of productive forces. It develops, organises, and disciplines the workers—and it crushes, oppresses, leads to degeneration, poverty, etc. Capitalism creates its own grave-digger, itself creates the elements of a new system, yet, at the same time, without a "leap" these individual elements change nothing in the general state of affairs and do not affect the rule of capital. It is Marxism, the theory of dialectical materialism, that is able to encompass these contradictions of living reality, of the living history of capitalism and the working-class movement. But, needless to say, the masses learn from life and not from books, and therefore certain individuals or groups constantly

exaggerate, elevate to a one-sided theory, to a one-sided system of tactics, now one and now another feature of capitalist development, now one and now another "lesson" of this development.

Bourgeois ideologists, liberals and democrats, not understanding Marxism, and not understanding the modern labour movement, are constantly jumping from one futile extreme to another. At one time they explain the whole matter by asserting that evil-minded persons "incite" class against class—at another they console themselves with the idea that the workers' party is "a peaceful party of reform". Both anarcho-syndicalism and reformism must be regarded as a direct product of this bourgeois world outlook and its influence. They seize upon *one* aspect of the labour movement, elevate one-sidedness to a theory, and declare mutually exclusive those tendencies or features of this movement that are a specific peculiarity of a given period, of given conditions of working-class activity. But real life, real history *includes* these different tendencies, just as life and development in nature include both slow evolution and rapid leaps, breaks in continuity.

The revisionists regard as phrase-mongering all arguments about "leaps" and about the working-class movement being antagonistic in principle to the whole of the old society. They regard reforms as a partial realisation of socialism. The anarcho-syndicalists reject "petty work", especially the utilisation of the parliamentary platform. In practice, the latter tactics amount to waiting for "great days" along with an inability to muster the forces which create great events. Both of them hinder the thing that is most important and most urgent, namely, to unite the workers in big, powerful and properly functioning organisations, capable of functioning well under *all* circumstances, permeated with the spirit of the class struggle, clearly realising their aims and trained in the true Marxist world outlook.

We shall here permit ourselves a slight digression and note in parentheses, so as to avoid possible misunderstandings, that Pannekoek illustrates his analysis *exclusively* by examples taken from West-European history, especially the history of Germany and France, not referring to Russia *at all*. If at times it seems that he is alluding to Russia, it is only because

the basic tendencies which give rise to definite departures from Marxist tactics are to be observed in our country too, despite the vast difference between Russia and the West in culture, everyday life, and historical and economic development.

Finally, an extremely important cause of differences among those taking part in the labour movement lies in changes in the tactics of the ruling classes in general and of the bourgeoisie in particular. If the tactics of the bourgeoisie were always uniform, or at least of the same kind, the working class would rapidly learn to reply to them by tactics just as uniform or of the same kind. But, as a matter of fact, in every country the bourgeoisie inevitably devises two systems of rule, two methods of fighting for its interests and of maintaining its domination, and these methods at times succeed each other and at times are interwoven in various combinations. The first of these is the method of force, the method which rejects all concessions to the labour movement, the method of supporting all the old and obsolete institutions, the method of irreconcilably rejecting reforms. Such is the nature of the conservative policy which in Western Europe is becoming less and less a policy of the landowning classes and more and more one of the varieties of bourgeois policy in general. The second is the method of "liberalism", of steps towards the development of political rights, towards reforms, concessions, and so forth.

The bourgeoisie passes from one method to the other not because of the malicious intent of individuals, and not accidentally, but owing to the fundamentally contradictory nature of its own position. Normal capitalist society cannot develop successfully without a firmly established representative system and without certain political rights for the population, which is bound to be distinguished by its relatively high "cultural" demands. These demands for a certain minimum of culture are created by the conditions of the capitalist mode of production itself, with its high technique, complexity, flexibility, mobility, rapid development of world competition, and so forth. In consequence, vacillations in the tactics of the bourgeoisie, transitions from the system of force to the system of apparent concessions have been characteristic of the

history of all European countries during the last half-century, the various countries developing primarily the application of the one method or the other at definite periods. For instance, in the sixties and seventies of the nineteenth century Britain was the classical country of "liberal" bourgeois policy, Germany in the seventies and eighties adhered to the method of force, and so on.

When this method prevailed in Germany, a one-sided echo of this particular system of bourgeois government was the growth of anarcho-syndicalism, or anarchism, as it was then called, in the labour movement (the "Young" at the beginning of the nineties,⁴⁶ Johann Most at the beginning of the eighties). When in 1890 the change to "concessions" took place, this change, as is always the case, proved to be even more dangerous to the labour movement, and gave rise to an equally one-sided echo of bourgeois "reformism": opportunism in the labour movement. "The positive, real aim of the liberal policy of the bourgeoisie," Pannekoek says, "is to mislead the workers, to cause a split in their ranks, to convert their policy into an impotent adjunct of an impotent, always impotent and ephemeral, sham reformism."

Not infrequently, the bourgeoisie for a certain time achieves its object by a "liberal" policy, which, as Pannekoek justly remarks, is a "more crafty" policy. A part of the workers and a part of their representatives at times allow themselves to be deceived by seeming concessions. The revisionists declare that the doctrine of the class struggle is "antiquated", or begin to conduct a policy which is in fact a renunciation of the class struggle. The zigzags of bourgeois tactics intensify revisionism within the labour movement and not infrequently bring the differences within the labour movement to the point of an outright split.

All causes of the kind indicated give rise to differences over tactics within the labour movement and within the proletarian ranks. But there is not and cannot be a Chinese wall between the proletariat and the sections of the petty bourgeoisie in contact with it, including the peasantry. It is clear that the passing of certain individuals, groups and sections of the petty bourgeoisie into the ranks of the proletariat is

bound, in its turn, to give rise to vacillations in the tactics of the latter.

The experience of the labour movement of various countries helps us to understand on the basis of concrete practical questions the nature of Marxist tactics; it helps the younger countries to distinguish more clearly the true class significance of departures from Marxism and to combat these departures more successfully.

Zvezda, No. 1,
December 16, 1910
Signed: V. Ilyin

Collected Works, Vol. 16

From the Article WORKING-CLASS UNITY

The working class needs unity. But unity can be effected only by a united organisation whose decisions are conscientiously carried out by all class-conscious workers. Discussing the problem, expressing and hearing different opinions, ascertaining the views of the *majority* of the organised Marxists, expressing these views in the form of decisions adopted by delegates and carrying them out conscientiously—this is what reasonable people all over the world call *unity*. Such a unity is infinitely precious, and infinitely important to the working class. Disunited, the workers are nothing. United, they are everything.

Za Pravdu, No. 50,
December 3, 1913

Collected Works, Vol. 19

From the Article
UNITY

The workers do need unity. And the important thing to remember is that *nobody* but themselves will "give" them unity, that *nobody can* help them achieve unity. Unity cannot be "promised"—that would be vain boasting, self-deception; unity cannot be "created" out of "agreements" between intellectualist groups. To think so is a profoundly sad, naïve, and ignorant delusion.

Unity must be *won*, and only the workers, the class-conscious workers themselves can win it—by stubborn and persistent effort.

Nothing is easier than to write the word "unity" in yard-long letters, to promise it and to "proclaim" oneself and advocate of unity. In reality, however, unity can be furthered only by the efforts and organisation of the advanced workers, of *all* the class-conscious workers.

Unity without organisation is impossible. Organisation is impossible unless the minority bows to the majority.

Trudovaya Pravda, No. 2,
May 30, 1914

Collected Works, Vol. 20

REPLY TO P. KIEVSKY (Y. PYATAKOV)⁴⁷

Like every crisis in the life of individuals or in the history of nations, war oppresses and breaks some, steels and enlightens others.

The truth of that is making itself felt in Social-Democratic thinking on war and in connection with the war. It is one thing to give serious thought to the causes and significance of an imperialist war that grows out of highly developed capitalism, Social-Democratic tactics in connection with such a war, the causes of the crisis within the Social-Democratic movement, and so on. But it is quite another to allow the war to *oppress* your thinking, to stop thinking and analysing *under the weight* of the terrible impressions and tormenting consequences or features of the war.

One such form of *oppression* or *repression* of human thinking caused by the war is the contemptuous attitude of imperialist Economism towards *democracy*. P. Kievsky does not notice that running like a red thread through all his arguments is this war-inspired oppression, this fear, this refusal to analyse. What point is there in discussing defence of the fatherland when we are in the midst of such a terrible holocaust? What point is there in discussing nations' rights when outright strangulation is everywhere the rule? Self-determination and "independence" of nations—but look what they have done to "independent" Greece! What is the use of talking and thinking of "rights", when rights are everywhere being trampled upon in the interests of the militarists! What sense is there in talking and thinking of a republic, when there is absolutely no difference whatsoever between the most democratic republics and the most reactionary monarchies, when the war has obliterated every trace of difference!

Kievsky is very angry when told that he has given way to fear, to the extent of rejecting democracy in general. He

is angry and objects: I am not against democracy, only against *one* democratic demand, which I consider "bad". But though Kievsky is offended, and though he "*assures*" us (and himself as well, perhaps) that he is not at all "against" democracy, his *arguments*—or, more correctly, the endless *errors* in his arguments—*prove* the very opposite.

Defence of the fatherland is a lie in an imperialist war, but not in a democratic and revolutionary war. All talk of "rights" seems absurd during a war, because *every* war replaces rights by direct and outright violence. But that should not lead us to forget that history has known in the past (and very likely will know, must know, in the future) wars (democratic and revolutionary wars) which, while replacing every kind of "right", every kind of democracy, by violence during the war, nevertheless, in their social content and implications, *served* the cause of democracy, and *consequently* socialism. The example of Greece, it would seem, "*refutes*" all national self-determination. But if you stop to think, analyse and weigh matters, and do not allow yourself to be deafened by the sound of words or frightened and oppressed by the nightmarish impressions of the war, then this example is no more serious or convincing than ridiculing the republican system because the "democratic" republics, the most democratic—not only France, but also the United States, Portugal and Switzerland—have already introduced or are introducing, in the course of this war, exactly the same kind of militarist arbitrariness that exists in Russia.

That imperialist war obliterates the difference between republic and monarchy is a fact. But to therefore reject the republic, or even be contemptuous towards it, is to allow oneself to be frightened by the war, and one's thinking to be *oppressed* by its horrors. That is the mentality of many supporters of the "disarmament" slogan (Roland-Holst, the younger element in Switzerland, the Scandinavian "Lefts" and others). What, they imply, is the use of discussing revolutionary utilisation of the army or a militia when there is no difference in this war between a republican militia and a monarchist standing army, and when militarism is *everywhere* doing its horrible work?⁴⁸

That is all *one* trend of thought, *one and the same* theoretical and practical political error Kievsky unwittingly makes

at every step. He *thinks* he is arguing only against self-determination, he *wants* to argue only against self-determination, but the *result*—against his will and conscience, and that is the curious thing!—is that he has adduced *not a single* argument which could not be just as well applied to democracy in general!

The real source of all his curious logical errors and confusion—and this applies to not only self-determination, but also to defence of the fatherland, divorce, "rights" in general—lies in the *oppression* of his thinking by the war, which makes him completely distort the Marxist position on democracy.

Imperialism is highly developed capitalism; imperialism is progressive; imperialism is the negation of democracy—"hence", democracy is "unattainable" under capitalism. Imperialist war is a flagrant violation of all democracy, whether in backward monarchies or progressive republics—"hence", there is no point in talking of "rights" (i.e., democracy!). The "*only*" thing that can be "*opposed*" to imperialist war is socialism; socialism alone is "*the way out*"; "hence", to advance democratic slogans in our minimum programme, i.e., under capitalism, is a deception or an illusion, befuddlement or postponement, etc., of the slogan of socialist revolution.

Though Kievsky does not realise it, that is the real source of all his mishaps. That is his *basic* logical error which, precisely because it is basic and is not realised by the author, "*explodes*" at every step like a punctured bicycle tire. It "*bursts out*" now on the question of defending the fatherland, now on the question of divorce, now in the phrase about "rights", in this remarkable phrase (remarkable for its utter contempt for "rights" and its utter failure to understand the issue): we shall discuss *not* rights, *but* the destruction of age-old slavery!

To say that is to show a lack of understanding of the relationship between capitalism and democracy, between socialism and democracy.

Capitalism in general, and imperialism in particular, turn democracy into an illusion—though at the same time capitalism engenders democratic aspirations in the masses, creates democratic institutions, aggravates the antagonism between imperialism's denial of democracy and the mass striving for

democracy. Capitalism and imperialism can be overthrown only by economic revolution. They cannot be overthrown by democratic transformations, even the most "ideal". But a proletariat not schooled in the struggle for democracy is incapable of performing an economic revolution. Capitalism cannot be vanquished without *taking over the banks*, without repealing *private ownership* of the means of production. These revolutionary measures, however, cannot be implemented without organising the entire people for democratic administration of the means of production captured from the bourgeoisie, without enlisting the entire mass of the working people, the proletarians, semi-proletarians and small peasants, for the democratic organisation of their ranks, their forces, their participation in state affairs. Imperialist war may be said to be a triple negation of democracy (a. every war replaces "rights" by violence; b. imperialism as such is the negation of democracy; c. imperialist war fully equates the republic with the monarchy), but the awakening and growth of socialist revolt against imperialism are *indissolubly* linked with the growth of democratic resistance and unrest. Socialism leads to the withering away of *every* state, consequently also of every democracy, but socialism can be implemented only *through* the dictatorship of the proletariat, which combines violence against the bourgeoisie, i.e., the minority of the population, with *full* development of democracy, i.e., the genuinely equal and genuinely universal participation of the *entire* mass of the population in all *state* affairs and in all the complex problems of abolishing capitalism.

It is in these "contradictions" that Kievsky, having forgotten the Marxist teaching on democracy, got himself confused. Figuratively speaking, the war has so oppressed his thinking that he uses the agitational slogan "break out of imperialism" to replace all thinking, just as the cry "get out of the colonies" is used to replace analysis of what, properly speaking, is the *meaning*—economically and politically—of the civilised nations "getting out of the colonies".

The Marxist solution of the problem of democracy is for the proletariat to *utilise all* democratic institutions and aspirations in its class struggle against the bourgeoisie in order to prepare for its overthrow and assure its own victory.

Such utilisation is no easy task. To the Economists, Tolstoyans, etc., it often seems an unpardonable concession to "bourgeois" and opportunist views, just as to Kievsky defence of national self-determination "in the epoch of finance capital" seems an unpardonable concession to bourgeois views. Marxism teaches us that to "fight opportunism" by renouncing utilisation of the democratic institutions created and distorted by the bourgeoisie of the *given*, capitalist, society is to *completely surrender* to opportunism!

The slogan of *civil war* for socialism indicates the quickest way out of the imperialist war and *links* our struggle against the war with our struggle against opportunism. It is the only slogan that correctly takes into account both war-time peculiarities—the war is dragging out and threatening to grow into a whole "epoch" of war—and the general character of our activities as distinct from opportunism with its pacifism, legalism and adaptation to one's "own" bourgeoisie. In addition, civil war against the bourgeoisie is a *democratically* organised and *democratically* conducted war of the propertyless mass against the propertied minority. But civil war, like every other, must inevitably replace rights by violence. However, violence in the name of the interests and rights of the majority is of a different nature: it tramples on the "rights" of the exploiters, the bourgeoisie, it is *unachievable* without democratic organisation of the army and the "rear". Civil war forcibly expropriates, immediately and first of all, the banks, factories, railways, the big estates, etc. But *in order* to expropriate all this, we shall have to introduce election of all officials and officers by the people, *completely merge* the army conducting the war against the bourgeoisie with the mass of the population, completely democratise administration of the food supply, the production and distribution of food, etc. The object of civil war is to seize the banks, factories, etc., destroy all possibility of resistance by the bourgeoisie, destroy *its* armed forces. But that aim cannot be achieved *either* in its purely military, *or* economic, *or* political aspects, unless we, during the war, simultaneously introduce and extend democracy among *our* armed forces and in *our* "rear". We tell the masses now (and they instinctively feel that we are right): "They are deceiving you in making you fight for imperialist capitalism in a war

disguised by the great slogans of democracy. You must, you shall wage a *genuinely* democratic war *against* the bourgeoisie for the achievement of genuine democracy and socialism." The present war unites and "merges" nations into coalitions by means of violence and financial dependence. In our civil war against the bourgeoisie, *we* shall unite and merge the nations *not* by the force of the ruble, *not* by the force of the truncheon, not by violence, but by *voluntary* agreement and solidarity of the working people against the exploiters. For the bourgeoisie the proclamation of equal rights for all nations has become a deception. For us it will be the truth that will facilitate and accelerate the winning over of all nations. Without effectively organised *democratic* relations between nations—and, consequently, without freedom of secession—civil war of the workers and working people generally of all nations against the bourgeoisie is *impossible*.

Through utilisation of bourgeois democracy to socialist and consistently democratic organisation of the proletariat against the bourgeoisie and against opportunism. There is no other path. There is *no* other way out. Marxism, just as life itself, knows no other way out. We must direct free secession and free merging of nations along that path, not fight shy of them, not fear that this will "defile" the "purity" of our economic aims.

Written in August-September
1916

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Collected Works, Vol. 23

From THE LETTERS ON TACTICS

First Letter

ASSESSMENT OF THE PRESENT SITUATION

Marxism requires of us a strictly exact and objectively verifiable analysis of the relations of classes and of the concrete features peculiar to each historical situation. We Bolsheviks have always tried to meet this requirement, which is absolutely essential for giving a scientific foundation in policy.

"Our theory is not a dogma, but a guide to action," Marx and Engels always said, rightly ridiculing the mere memorising and repetition of "formulas", that at best are capable only of marking out *general* tasks, which are necessarily modifiable by the *concrete* economic and political conditions of each particular *period* of the historical process.

What, then, are the clearly established objective *facts* which the party of the revolutionary proletariat must now be guided by in defining the tasks and forms of its activity?

Both in my first *Letter from Alar* ("The First Stage of the First Revolution") published in *Pravda*, Nos. 14 and 15, March 21 and 22, 1917, and in my theses,⁴⁹ I define "the specific feature of the present situation in Russia" as a period of *transition* from the first stage of the revolution to the second. I therefore considered the basic slogan, the "task of the day" at *this* moment to be: "Workers, you have performed miracles of proletarian heroism, the heroism of the people, in the civil war against tsarism. You must perform miracles of organisation, organisation of the proletariat and of the whole people, to prepare the way for your victory in the second stage of the revolution" (*Pravda* No. 15).

What, then, is the first stage?

It is the passing of state power to the bourgeoisie.

Before the February-March revolution of 1917, state power in Russia was in the hands of one old class, namely, the feudal landed nobility, headed by Nicholas Romanov.

After the revolution, the power is in the hands of a *different* class, a new class, namely, the *bourgeoisie*.

The passing of state power from one *class* to another is the first, the principal, the basic sign of a *revolution*, both in the strictly scientific and in the practical political meaning of that term.

To this extent, the bourgeois, or the bourgeois-democratic, revolution in Russia is *completed*.

But at this point we hear a clamour of protest from people who readily call themselves "old Bolsheviks". Didn't we always maintain, they say, that the bourgeois-democratic revolution is completed only by the "revolutionary-democratic dictatorship of the proletariat and the peasantry"? Is the agrarian revolution, which is also a bourgeois-democratic revolution, completed? Is it not a fact, on the contrary, that it has *not even started*?

My answer is: The Bolshevik slogans and ideas *on the whole* have been confirmed by history; but *concretely* things have worked out *differently*; they are more original, more peculiar, more variegated than anyone could have expected.

To ignore or overlook this fact would mean taking after those "old Bolsheviks" who more than once already have played so regrettable a role in the history of our Party by reiterating formulas senselessly *learned by rote* instead of *studying* the specific features of the new and living reality.

"The revolutionary-democratic dictatorship of the proletariat and the peasantry" has *already* become a reality* in the Russian revolution, for this "formula" envisages only a *relation of classes*, and not a *concrete political institution implementing* this relation, this co-operation. "The Soviet of Workers' and Soldiers' Deputies"—there you have the "revolutionary-democratic dictatorship of the proletariat and the peasantry" already accomplished in reality.

This formula is already antiquated. Events have moved it from the realm of formulas into the realm of reality, clothed it with flesh and bone, concretised it and *thereby* modified it.

* In a certain form and to a certain extent.

A new and different task now faces us: to effect a split *within* this dictatorship between the proletarian elements (the anti-defencist, internationalist, "Communist" elements, who stand for a transition to the commune) and the *small-proprietor* or *petty-bourgeois* elements (Chkheidze, Tsereteli, Steklov, the Socialist-Revolutionaries and the other revolutionary defencists, who are opposed to moving towards the commune and are in favour of "supporting" the bourgeoisie and the bourgeois government).

The person who *now* speaks only of a "revolutionary-democratic dictatorship of the proletariat and the peasantry" is behind the times, consequently, he has in effect *gone over* to the petty bourgeoisie against the proletarian class struggle; that person should be consigned to the archive of "Bolshevik" pre-revolutionary antiques (it may be called the archive of "old Bolsheviks").

The revolutionary-democratic dictatorship of the proletariat and the peasantry has already been realised, but in a highly original manner, and with a number of extremely important modifications. I shall deal with them separately in one of my next letters. For the present, it is essential to grasp the incontestable truth that a Marxist must take cognisance of real life, of the true facts of *reality*, and not cling to a theory of yesterday, which, like all theories, at best only outlines the main and the general, only *comes near* to embracing life in all its complexity.

"Theory, my friend, is grey, but green is the eternal tree of life."⁵⁰

To deal with the question of "completion" of the bourgeois revolution *in the old way* is to sacrifice living Marxism to the dead letter.

According to the old way of thinking, the rule of the bourgeoisie could and should be *followed* by the rule of the proletariat and the peasantry, by their dictatorship.

In real life, however, things have *already* turned out *differently*; there has been an extremely original, novel and unprecedented *interlacing of the one with the other*. We have side by side, existing together, simultaneously, *both* the rule of the bourgeoisie (the government of Lvov and Guchkov) and a revolutionary-democratic dictatorship of the proletariat and the peasantry, which is *voluntarily* ceding power to

the bourgeoisie, voluntarily making itself an appendage of the bourgeoisie.

For it must not be forgotten that actually, in Petrograd, the power is in the hands of the workers and soldiers; the new government is *not* using and cannot use violence against them, because *there is no* police, *no* army standing apart from the people, *no* officialdom standing all-powerful *above* the people. This is a fact, the kind of fact that is characteristic of a state of the Paris Commune type. This fact does not fit into the old schemes. One must know how to adapt schemes to facts, instead of reiterating the now meaningless words about a "dictatorship of the proletariat and the peasantry" *in general*.

To throw more light on this question let us approach it from another angle.

A Marxist must not abandon the ground of careful analysis of class relations. The bourgeoisie is in power. But is not the mass of the peasants *also* a bourgeoisie, only of a different social stratum, of a different kind, of a different character? Whence does it follow that *this* stratum *cannot* come to power, thus "completing" the bourgeois-democratic revolution? Why should this be impossible?

This is how the old Bolsheviks often argue.

My reply is that it is quite possible. But, in assessing a given situation, a Marxist must proceed *not* from what is possible, but from what is real.

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(21-26), 1917

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Collected Works, Vol. 24

ON COMPROMISES

The term compromise in politics implies the surrender of certain demands, the renunciation of part of one's demands, by agreement with another party.

The usual idea the man in the street has about the Bolsheviks, an idea encouraged by a press which slanders them, is that the Bolsheviks will never agree to a compromise with anybody.

The idea is flattering to us as the party of the revolutionary proletariat, for it proves that even our enemies are compelled to admit our loyalty to the fundamental principles of socialism and revolution. Nevertheless, we must say that this idea is wrong. Engels was right when, in his criticism of the Manifesto of the Blanquist Communists (1873), he ridiculed their declaration: "No compromises!" This, he said, was an empty phrase, for compromises are often unavoidably forced upon a fighting party by circumstances, and it is absurd to refuse once and for all to accept "payments on account". The task of a truly revolutionary party is not to declare that it is impossible to renounce all compromises, but to be able, *through all compromises*, when they are unavoidable, to remain true to its principles, to its class, to its revolutionary purpose, to its task of paving the way for revolution and educating the mass of the people for victory in the revolution.

To agree, for instance, to participate in the Third and Fourth Dumas was a compromise, a temporary renunciation of revolutionary demands. But this was a compromise absolutely forced upon us, for the balance of forces made it impossible for us for the time being to conduct a mass revolutionary struggle, and in order to prepare this struggle over a long period we *had* to be able to work even from *inside* such a "pigsty". History has proved that this approach to the

question by the Bolsheviks as a party was perfectly correct.

Now the question is not of a forced, but of a voluntary compromise.

Our Party, like any other political party, is striving after political domination *for itself*. Our aim is the dictatorship of the revolutionary proletariat. Six months of revolution have proved very clearly, forcefully and convincingly that this demand is correct and inevitable in the interests of *this particular* revolution, for otherwise the people will never obtain a democratic peace, land for the peasants, or complete freedom (a fully democratic republic). This has been shown and proved by the course of events during the six months of our revolution, by the struggle of the classes and parties and by the development of the crises of April 20-21, June 9-10 and 18-19, July 3-5 and August 27-31.⁵¹

The Russian revolution is experiencing so abrupt and original a turn that we, as a party, may offer a voluntary compromise—true, not to our direct and main class enemy, the bourgeoisie, but to our nearest adversaries, the “ruling”, petty-bourgeois democratic parties, the Socialist-Revolutionaries and Mensheviks.

We may offer a compromise to these parties only by way of exception, and only by virtue of the particular situation, which will obviously last only a very short time. And I think we should do so.

The compromise on our part is our return to the pre-July demand of all power to the Soviets and a government of S.R.s and Mensheviks responsible to the Soviets.

Now, and only now, perhaps *only for a few days* or a week or two, such a government could be set up and consolidated in a perfectly peaceful way. In all probability it could secure the peaceful *advance* of the whole Russian revolution, and provide exceptionally good chances for great strides in the world movement towards peace and the victory of socialism.

In my opinion, the Bolsheviks, who are partisans of world revolution and revolutionary methods, may and should consent to this compromise only for the sake of the revolution's peaceful development—an opportunity that is *extremely* rare in history and *extremely* valuable, an opportunity that only occurs once in a while.

The compromise would amount to the following: the Bolsheviks, without making any claim to participate in the government (which is impossible for the internationalists unless a dictatorship of the proletariat and the poor peasants has been realised), would refrain from demanding the immediate transfer of power to the proletariat and the poor peasants and from employing revolutionary methods of fighting for this demand. A condition, that is self-evident and not new to the S.R.s and Mensheviks would be complete freedom of propaganda and the convocation of the Constituent Assembly without further delays or even at an earlier date.

The Mensheviks and S.R.s, being the government bloc, would then agree (assuming that the compromise had been reached) to form a government wholly and exclusively responsible to the Soviets, the latter taking over all power locally as well. This would constitute the “new” condition. I think the Bolsheviks would advance no other conditions, trusting that the revolution would advance peacefully and party strife in the Soviets would be *peacefully overcome* thanks to really complete freedom of propaganda and to the immediate establishment of a new democracy in the composition of the Soviets (new elections) and in their functioning.

Perhaps this is *already* impossible? Perhaps. But if there is even one chance in a hundred, the attempt at realising this opportunity is still worthwhile.

What would both “contracting” parties gain by this “compromise”, i.e., the Bolsheviks, on the one hand, and the S.R. and Menshevik bloc, on the other? If *neither* side gains anything, then the compromise must be recognised as impossible, and nothing more is to be said. No matter how difficult this compromise may be at present (after July and August, two months equivalent to two decades in “peaceful”, somnolent times), I think it stands a small chance of being realised. This chance has been created by the decision of the S.R.s and Mensheviks not to participate in a government together with the Cadets.

The Bolsheviks would gain the opportunity of quite freely advocating their views and of trying to win influence in the Soviets under a really complete democracy. In words, “everybody” now concedes the Bolsheviks this freedom. In reality,

this freedom is *impossible* under a bourgeois government or a government in which the bourgeoisie participate, or under any government, in fact, other than the Soviets. Under a Soviet government, such freedom would be *possible* (we do not say it would be a certainty, but still it would be possible). For the sake of such a possibility at such a difficult time, it would be worth compromising with the present majority in the Soviets. *We* have nothing to fear from real democracy, for reality is on our side, and even the course of development of trends within the S.R. and Menshevik parties, which are hostile to us, proves us right.

The Mensheviks and S.R.s would gain in that they would at once obtain every opportunity to carry out *their* bloc's programme with the support of the obviously overwhelming majority of the people and in that they would secure for themselves the "peaceful" use of their majority in the Soviets.

Of course, there would probably be two voices heard from this bloc, which is heterogeneous both because it is a bloc and because petty-bourgeois democracy is *always* less homogeneous than the bourgeoisie and the proletariat.

One voice would say: we cannot follow the same road as the Bolsheviks and the revolutionary proletariat. It will demand too much anyway and will entice the peasant poor by demagoguery. It will demand peace and a break with the Allies. That is impossible. We are better off and safer with the bourgeoisie; after all, we have not parted ways with them but only had a temporary *quarrel*, and only over the Kornilov incident. We have quarrelled, but we shall make it up. Moreover, the Bolsheviks are not "ceding" us anything, for their attempts at insurrection are as doomed to defeat as was the Commune of 1871.

The other voice would say: the allusion to the Commune is very superficial and even foolish. For, in the first place, the Bolsheviks have learnt something since 1871; they would not fail to seize the banks, and would not refuse to advance on Versailles. Under such conditions even the Commune might have been victorious. Furthermore, the Commune could not immediately offer the people what the Bolsheviks will be able to offer if they come to power, namely, land to the peasants, an immediate offer of peace, real control over production, an honest peace with the Ukrainians, Finns, etc.

The Bolsheviks, to put it bluntly, hold ten times more "trumps" than the Commune did. In the second place, the Commune, after all, means a strenuous civil war, a set-back to peaceful cultural development for a long time to come, an opportunity for all sorts of MacMahons and Kornilovs to operate and plot with greater ease—and such operations are a menace to our whole bourgeois society. Is it wise to risk a Commune?

Now a Commune is inevitable in Russia if we do not take power into our own hands, if things remain in as grave a state as they were between May 6 and August 31. Every revolutionary worker and soldier will inevitably think about the Commune and believe in it; he will inevitably attempt to bring it about, for he will argue: "The people are perishing; war, famine and ruin are spreading. Only the Commune can save us. So let us all perish, let us die, but let us set up the Commune." Such thoughts are inevitable with the workers, and it will not be as easy to crush the Commune now as it was in 1871. The Russian Commune will have allies throughout the world, allies a hundred times stronger than those the Commune had in 1871. . . . Is it wise for us to risk a Commune? I cannot agree, either, that the Bolsheviks virtually cede us nothing by their compromise. For, in all civilised countries, civilised ministers value highly every agreement with the proletariat in war-time, however small. They value it very, very highly. And these are men of action, real ministers. The Bolsheviks are rapidly becoming stronger, in spite of repression, and the weakness of their press. . . . Is it wise for us to risk a Commune?

We have a safe majority; the peasant poor will not wake up for some time to come; we are safe for our lifetime. I do not believe that in a peasant country the majority will follow the extremists. And against an obvious majority, no insurrection is possible in a really democratic republic. This is what the second voice would say.

There may also be a third voice coming from among the supporters of Martov or Spiridonova, which would say: I am indignant, "comrades", that both of you, speaking about the Commune and its likelihood, unhesitatingly side with its opponents. In one form or another, both of you side with those who suppressed the Commune. I will not undertake to

campaign for the Commune and I cannot promise beforehand to fight in its ranks as every Bolshevik will do, but I must say that *if* the Commune does start *in spite of* my efforts, I shall rather help its defenders than its opponents.

The medley of voices in the "bloc" is great and inevitable, for a host of shades is represented among the petty-bourgeois democrats—from the complete bourgeois, perfectly eligible for a post in the government, down to the semi-pauper who is not yet capable of taking up the proletarian position. Nobody knows what will be the result of this medley of voices at any given moment.

* * *

The above lines were written on Friday, September 1, but due to unforeseen circumstances (under Kerensky, as history will tell, not all Bolsheviks were free to choose their domicile) they did not reach the editorial office that day. After reading Saturday's and today's (Sunday's) papers, I say to myself: perhaps it is already too late to offer a compromise. Perhaps the few days in which a peaceful development was *still* possible have passed *too*. Yes, to all appearances, they have already passed. In one way or another, Kerensky will abandon both the S.R. Party and the S.R.s themselves, and will consolidate his position with the aid of the bourgeoisie *without* the S.R.s, and thanks to their inaction. . . . Yes, to all appearances, the days when by chance the path of peaceful development became possible have *already* passed. All that remains is to send these notes to the editor with the request to have them entitled: "Belated Thoughts". Perhaps even belated thoughts are sometimes not without interest.

Written on September 1-3 (14-16),
1917

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Signed: N. Lenin

Collected Works, Vol. 25

THE REVOLUTIONARY PHRASE⁵²

When I said at a Party meeting that the revolutionary phrase about a revolutionary war might ruin our revolution, I was reproached for the sharpness of my polemics. There are, however, moments, when a question must be raised sharply and things given their proper names, the danger being that otherwise irreparable harm may be done to the Party and the revolution.

Revolutionary phrase-making, more often than not, is a disease from which revolutionary parties suffer at times when they constitute, directly or indirectly, a combination, alliance or intermingling of proletarian and petty-bourgeois elements, and when the course of revolutionary events is marked by big, rapid zigzags. By revolutionary phrase-making we mean the repetition of revolutionary slogans irrespective of objective circumstances at a given turn in events, with the given state of affairs obtaining at the time. The slogans are superb, alluring, intoxicating, but there are no grounds for them; such is the nature of the revolutionary phrase.

Let us take a look at the set of arguments, if only at the most important, in favour of a revolutionary war in Russia today, in January and February 1918, and the comparison of this slogan with objective reality will tell us whether the characteristic I give is correct.

1

Our press has always spoken of the need to prepare for a revolutionary war in the event of the victory of socialism in one country with capitalism still in existence in the neighbouring countries. That is indisputable.

The question is—how have those preparations *actually* been made since our October Revolution?

We have prepared in this way: we had to demobilise the army, we were compelled to, compelled by circumstances so obvious, so weighty and so insurmountable that, far from a "trend" or mood having arisen in the Party against demobilisation, there was not a single voice raised against it. Anyone who wants to *give some thought* to the class causes of such an unusual phenomenon as the demobilisation of the army by the Soviet Socialist Republic before the war with a neighbouring imperialist state is finished will without great difficulty discover these causes in the social composition of a backward country with a small-peasant economy reduced to extreme economic ruin after three years of war. An army of many millions was demobilised and the creation of a Red Army on *volunteer* lines was begun—such are the facts.

Compare these facts with the talk of a revolutionary war in January and February 1918, and the nature of the revolutionary phrase will be clear to you.

If this "championing" of a revolutionary war by, say, the Petrograd and Moscow organisations had not been an empty phrase we should have had other *facts* between October and January; we should have seen a determined struggle on their part against demobilisation. But there has been nothing of the sort.

We should have seen the Petrograders and Muscovites sending *tens of thousands* of agitators and soldiers to the front and should have received daily reports from there about their struggle against demobilisation, about the successes of their struggle, about the halting of demobilisation.

There has been nothing of the sort.

We should have had hundreds of reports of regiments forming into a Red Army, using terrorism to halt a demobilisation, renewing defences and fortifications against a possible offensive by German imperialism.

There has been nothing of the sort. Demobilisation is in full swing. The old army does not exist. The new army is only just being born.

Anyone who does not want to comfort himself with mere words, bombastic declarations and exclamations must see that the "slogan" of revolutionary war in February 1918 is the emptiest of phrases, that it has nothing real, nothing objective behind it. This slogan today *contains* nothing but

sentiment, wishes, indignation and resentment. And a slogan with such a content is called a revolutionary phrase.

Matters as they stand with our own Party and Soviet power as a whole, matters as they stand with the Bolsheviks of Petrograd and Moscow show that *so far* we have not succeeded in getting beyond the first steps in forming a volunteer Red Army. To hide from this unpleasant fact—and fact it is—behind a screen of words and at the same time not only do nothing to halt demobilisation but even *raise no objection* to it, is to be intoxicated with the sound of words.

A typical substantiation of what has been said is, for instance, the fact that in the Central Committee of our Party *the majority* of the most prominent opponents of a separate peace voted *against* a revolutionary war, voted against it both in January and in February. What does that mean? It means that everybody who is not afraid to look truth in the face recognises the impossibility of a revolutionary war.

In such cases the truth is evaded by putting forward, or attempting to put forward, arguments. Let us examine them.

2

Argument No. 1. In 1792 France suffered economic ruin to no less an extent, but a revolutionary war cured everything, was an inspiration to everyone, gave rise to enthusiasm and carried everything before it. Only those who do not believe in the revolution, only opportunists could oppose a revolutionary war in our, more profound, revolution.

Let us compare this reason, or this argument, with the facts. It is a fact that in France at the end of the eighteenth century, the *economic* basis of the new, higher mode of production was *first created*, and then, as a result, as a superstructure, the powerful revolutionary army appeared. France abandoned feudalism before other countries, swept it away *in the course of a few years* of victorious revolution, and led a people who were not fatigued from any war, who had won land and freedom, who had been made stronger by the elimination of feudalism, led them to war against a number of economically and politically backward peoples.

Compare this to contemporary Russia. Incredible fatigue from war. A new economic system, superior to the organised

state capitalism of technically well-equipped Germany, *does not yet exist*. It is only being founded. Our peasants have only a law on the socialisation of the land, but not one single year of free (from the landowner and from the torment of war) work. Our workers have begun to throw the capitalists overboard but have not yet managed to organise production, arrange for the exchange of products, arrange the grain supply and *increase* productivity of labour.

This is what we advanced towards, this is the road we took, but it is obvious that the new and higher economic system *does not yet exist*.

Conquered feudalism, consolidated bourgeois freedom, and a well-fed peasant opposed to feudal countries—such was the economic basis of the “miracles” in the sphere of war in 1792 and 1793.

A country of small peasants, hungry and tormented by war, only just beginning to heal its wounds, opposed to technically and organisationally higher productivity of labour—such is the objective situation at the beginning of 1918.

That is why any reminiscing over 1792, etc., is nothing but a revolutionary phrase. People repeat slogans, words, war cries, but are afraid of an analysis of objective reality.

3

Argument No. 2. Germany “cannot attack”, *her* growing revolution will now allow it.

The Germans “cannot attack” was an argument repeated millions of times in January and at the beginning of February 1918 by opponents of a separate peace. The more cautious of them said that there was a 25 to 33 per cent probability (approximately, of course) of the Germans being unable to attack.

The facts refuted these calculations. The opponents of a separate peace here, too, frequently brush aside facts, fearing their iron logic.

What was the source of this mistake, which real revolutionaries (and not revolutionaries of sentiment) should be able to recognise and analyse?

Was it because we, in general, manoeuvred and agitated *in connection with* the peace negotiations? It was not. We had

to manoeuvre and agitate. But we also had to choose “our own time” for manoeuvres and agitation—while it was still possible to manoeuvre and agitate—and also for calling a halt to all manoeuvres when the issue became acute.

The source of the mistake was that our relations of revolutionary co-operation with the German revolutionary workers were turned into an empty phrase. We helped and are helping the German revolutionary workers in every way we can—fraternisation, agitation, the publication of secret treaties, etc. That was help in deeds, real help.

But the declaration of some of our comrades—“the Germans cannot attack”—was an empty phrase. We have only just been through a revolution in our own country. We all know very well why it was easier to *start* a revolution in Russia than in Europe. We saw that we could not check the offensive of Russian imperialism in June 1917, although our revolution had not only begun, had not only overthrown the monarchy, but had set up Soviets everywhere. We saw, we knew, we explained to the workers—wars are conducted by governments. To stop a bourgeois war it is necessary to overthrow the bourgeois government.

The declaration “the Germans cannot attack” was, therefore, tantamount to declaring “we know that the German government will be overthrown *within the next few weeks*”. Actually we did not and could not know this, and for this reason the declaration was an empty phrase.

It is one thing to be certain that the German revolution is maturing and to do your part towards helping it mature, to serve it as far as possible by *work*, agitation and fraternisation, anything you like, but help the maturing of the revolution by *work*. That is what revolutionary proletarian internationalism means.

It is another thing to declare, directly or indirectly, openly or covertly, that the German revolution is *already mature* (although it obviously is not) and to base your tactics on it. There is not a grain of revolutionism in that, there is nothing in it but phrase-mongering.

Such is the source of the error contained in the “proud, striking, spectacular, resounding” declaration “the Germans cannot attack”.

4

The assertion that "we are helping the German revolution by resisting German imperialism, and are thus bringing nearer Liebknecht's victory over Wilhelm" is nothing but a variation of the same high-sounding nonsense.

It stands to reason that Liebknecht's victory—which will be possible and inevitable when the German revolution reaches maturity—would deliver us from all international difficulties, would keep us out of a revolutionary war. Liebknecht's victory would deliver us from the consequences of any foolish act of ours. But surely that does not justify foolish acts?

Does any sort of "resistance" to German imperialism help the German revolution? Anyone who cares to think a little, or even to recall the history of the revolutionary movement in Russia, will quite easily realise that resistance to reaction helps the revolution only when it is *expedient*. During a half century of the revolutionary movement in Russia we have experienced many cases of resistance to reaction that were not expedient. We Marxists have always been proud that we determined the expediency of any form of struggle by a precise calculation of the mass forces and class relationships. We have said that an insurrection is not always expedient; unless the prerequisites exist among the masses it is a gamble; we have often condemned the most heroic forms of resistance by individuals as inexpedient and harmful from the point of view of the revolution. In 1907, on the basis of bitter experience we rejected resistance to participation in the Third Duma as inexpedient, etc., etc.

To help the German revolution we must either limit ourselves to propaganda, agitation and fraternisation as long as the forces are not strong enough for a firm, serious, decisive blow in an open military or insurrectionary clash, or we must accept that clash, *if we are sure* it will not help the enemy.

It is clear to everyone (except those intoxicated with empty phrases) that to undertake a serious insurrectionist or military clash *knowing* that we have no forces, *knowing* that we have

5

no army, is a gamble that will not help the German workers but will make their struggle more difficult and make matters easier for their enemy and for our enemy.

There is yet another argument that is so childishly ridiculous that I would never have believed it possible if I had not heard it with my own ears.

"Back in October, didn't the opportunists say that we had no forces, no troops, no machine-guns and no equipment, but these things all appeared during the struggle, when the struggle of class against class began. They will also make their appearance in the struggle of the proletariat of Russia against the capitalists of Germany, the German proletariat will come to our help."

As matters stood in October, we had made a precise calculation of the *mass* forces. We not only thought, we *knew* with certainty, from the experience of the *mass* elections to the Soviets, that the overwhelming majority of the workers and soldiers had *already* come over to our side in September and in early October. We knew even if only from the voting at the Democratic Conference⁵³ that the coalition had also lost the support of the peasantry—and that meant that our cause had *already* won.

The following were the *objective* conditions for the October insurrectionary struggle:

(1) there was no longer any bludgeon over the heads of the soldiers—it was abolished in February 1917 (Germany has not yet reached "her own" February);

(2) the soldiers, like the workers, had already had enough of the coalition and had finished their conscious, planned, heartfelt *withdrawal* from it.

This, and this alone determined the *correctness* of the slogan "for an insurrection" in October (the slogan would have been incorrect in July, when we did *not* advance it).

The mistake of the opportunists of October⁵⁴ was not their "concern" for objective conditions (only children could think it was) but their *incorrect appraisal of facts*—they got hold of trivialities and did not see the *main thing*, that the Soviets had come over from conciliation to us.

To compare an armed clash with Germany (that has not yet experienced "her own" February or her own "July", to say nothing of October), with a Germany that has a *monarchist*, bourgeois-imperialist government—to compare that with the October insurrectionist struggle against the enemies of the Soviets, the Soviets that had been maturing since February 1917 and had reached maturity in September and October, is such childishness that it is only a subject for ridicule. Such is the absurdity to which people are led by empty phrases!

6

Here is another sort of argument. "But Germany will strangle us economically with a separate peace treaty, she will take away coal and grain and will enslave us."

A very wise argument—we must accept an armed clash, *without an army*, even though that clash is certain to result not only in our bondage, but also in our strangulation, the seizure of grain without any equivalent, putting us in the position of Serbia or Belgium; we have to accept that, because *otherwise* we shall get a worse treaty, Germany will take from us 6,000 or 12,000 million in tribute by instalments, will take grain for machines, etc.

O heroes of the revolutionary phrase! In renouncing the "bondage" to the imperialists they *modestly* pass over in silence the fact that it is necessary to *defeat* imperialism to be completely delivered from bondage.

We are accepting an unfavourable treaty and a separate peace knowing that *today* we are not yet ready for a revolutionary war, that we have to bide our time (as we did when we tolerated Kerensky's bondage, tolerated the bondage of our own bourgeoisie from July to October), we must wait until we are stronger. Therefore, *if there is a chance* of obtaining the most unfavourable separate peace, we *absolutely must* accept it in the interests of the socialist revolution, which is *still* weak (since the maturing revolution in Germany has not yet come to our help, to the help of the Russians). Only if a separate peace is *absolutely* impossible shall we have to fight immediately—not because it will be correct tactics, but because we shall have no choice. If it proves impossible there

will be no occasion for a dispute over tactics. There will be nothing but the inevitability of the most furious resistance. But as long as we have a choice we must choose a separate peace and an extremely unfavourable treaty, because that will still be a hundred times better than the position of Belgium.⁵⁵

Month by month we are growing stronger, although we are today still weak. Month by month the international socialist revolution is maturing in Europe, although it is not yet fully mature. Therefore ... therefore, "revolutionaries" (God save us from them) argue that we must accept battle when German imperialism is *obviously* stronger than we are but is *weakening* month by month (because of the slow but certain maturing of the revolution in Germany).

The "revolutionaries" of sentiment argue magnificently, they argue superbly!

7

The last argument, the most specious and most widespread, is "this obscene peace is a disgrace, it is betrayal of Latvia, Poland, Courland and Lithuania".

Is it any wonder that the Russian *bourgeoisie* (and their hangers-on, the *Novy Luch*, *Dyelo Naroda* and *Novaya Zhizn*⁵⁶ gang) are the most zealous in elaborating this allegedly internationalist argument?

No, it is no wonder, for this argument is a trap into which the bourgeoisie are deliberately dragging the Russian Bolsheviks, and into which some of them are falling unwittingly, because of their love of phrases.

Let us examine the argument from the standpoint of theory; which should be put first, the right of nations to self-determination or socialism?

Socialism should.

Is it permissible, because of a contravention of the right of nations to self-determination, to allow the Soviet Socialist Republic to be devoured, to expose it to the blows of imperialism at a time when imperialism is obviously stronger and the Soviet Republic obviously weaker?

No, it is not permissible—that is *bourgeois* and not socialist politics.

Further, would peace on the condition that Poland, Lithuania and Courland are returned "to us" be *less* disgraceful, be any less an annexationist peace?

From the point of view of the Russian bourgeois, *it would*.

From the point of view of the socialist-internationalist, *it would not*.

Because if German imperialism set Poland free (which at one time some *bourgeois* in Germany desired), it would squeeze Serbia, Belgium, etc., all the more.

When the Russian bourgeoisie wail against the "obscene" peace, they are correctly expressing their class interests.

But when some Bolsheviks (suffering from the phrase disease) repeat that argument, it is only sad.

Examine the *facts* relating to the behaviour of the Anglo-French bourgeoisie. They are doing everything they can to drag us into the war against Germany now, they are offering us millions of benefits, boots, potatoes, shells, locomotives (on credit... that is not "bondage", don't fear that! It is "only" credit!). They want us to fight against Germany *now*.

It is obvious why they should want this; they want it because, in the first place, we should engage part of the German forces. And secondly, because Soviet power might collapse most easily from an untimely armed clash with German imperialism.

The Anglo-French bourgeoisie are setting a trap for us; please be kind enough to go and fight *now*, our gain will be magnificent. The Germans will plunder you, will "make profit" in the East, will agree to cheaper terms in the West, and furthermore, Soviet power will be swept away... Please do fight, Bolshevik "allies", we shall help you!

And the "Left" (God save us from them) Bolsheviks are walking into the trap by reciting the most revolutionary phrases...

Oh yes, one of the manifestations of the traces of the petty-bourgeois spirit is surrender to revolutionary phrases. This is an old truism, an old story that is far too often renewed...

8

In the summer of 1907 our Party also experienced the disease of the revolutionary phrase that was, in some respects, analogous.

Almost all the Bolsheviks in St. Petersburg and Moscow were in favour of boycotting the Third Duma; they were guided by "sentiment" instead of an objective analysis and walked into a trap.

The disease has recurred.

The times are more difficult. The issue is a million times more important. To fall ill at such a time is to risk ruining the revolution.

We must fight against the revolutionary phrase, we have to fight, we absolutely must fight so that at some future time people will not say of us the bitter truth that "a revolutionary phrase about revolutionary war ruined the revolution".

Pravda, No. 31,
February 21 (8), 1918
Signed: Karpov

Collected Works, Vol. 27

STRANGE AND MONSTROUS

The Moscow Regional Bureau of our Party, in a resolution adopted on February 24, 1918, has expressed lack of confidence in the Central Committee, refused to obey those of its decisions "that will be connected with the implementation of the terms of the peace treaty with Austria and Germany", and in an "explanatory note" to the resolution, declared that it "considers a split in the Party in the very near future hardly avoidable".*

There is nothing monstrous, nor even strange in all this. It is quite natural that comrades who sharply disagree with the Central Committee over the question of a separate peace sharply condemn the Central Committee and express their conviction that a split is inevitable. All that is the most legitimate right of Party members, which is quite understandable.

But here is what is strange and monstrous. An "explanatory note" is appended to the resolution. Here it is in full:

"The Moscow Regional Bureau considers a split in the Party in the very near future hardly avoidable, and it sets itself the aim of helping to unite all consistent revolutionary Communists who equally oppose both the advocates of the conclusion of a separate peace and all moderate opportunists in the Party. *In the interests of the world revolution, we consider it expedient to accept the possibility of losing Soviet power, which is now becoming purely formal.* We maintain as before that our primary task is to spread the ideas of the socialist revolution to all other countries and resolutely to promote the workers' dictatorship, ruthlessly to suppress bourgeois counter-revolution in Russia."

* Here is the full text of the resolution: "Having discussed the activities of the Central Committee, the Moscow Regional Bureau of the R.S.D.L.P. expressed lack of confidence in the Central Committee in view of its political line and composition, and will at the first opportunity insist that a new Central Committee be elected. Furthermore, the Moscow Regional Bureau does not consider itself bound to obey unreservedly those decisions of the Central Committee that will be connected with the implementation of the terms of the peace treaty with Austria and Germany." The resolution was adopted unanimously.

It is the words we have emphasised in this passage that are strange and monstrous.

It is in these words that the crux of the matter lies.

These words reduce to an absurdity the whole line put forward by the authors of the resolution. These words expose the root of their error with exceptional clarity.

"In the interests of the world revolution it is expedient to accept the possibility of losing Soviet power..." That is strange, for there is even no connection between the premises and the conclusion. "In the interests of the world revolution it is expedient to accept the *military defeat* of Soviet power"—such a proposition might be right or wrong, but it could not be called strange. That is the first thing.

Second thing: Soviet power "is now becoming purely formal". Now this is not only strange but downright monstrous. Obviously, the authors have got themselves thoroughly entangled. We shall have to disentangle them.

As regards the first question, the authors' idea evidently is that it would be expedient in the interests of the world revolution to accept the possibility of defeat in war, which would lead to the loss of Soviet power, in other words, to the triumph of the bourgeoisie in Russia. By voicing this idea the authors indirectly admit the truth of what I said in the theses (on January 8, 1918, published in *Pravda* on February 24, 1918), namely, that refusal to accept the peace terms presented by Germany would lead to Russia's defeat and the overthrow of Soviet power.

And so, *la raison finit toujours par avoir raison*—the truth always triumphs! My "extremist" opponents, the Muscovites who threaten a split, have been obliged—just because they have got to the point of talking openly of a split—to be equally explicit about their *real* reasons, the reasons which people who confine themselves to general phrase-making about revolutionary war prefer to pass over in silence. The very essence of my theses and arguments (as anyone who cares to read attentively my theses of January 7, 1918, may see) is that we must accept this extremely harsh peace *now*, at once, while at the same time seriously *preparing* for a revolutionary war (and accept it, moreover, precisely *in the interest* of such serious preparations). Those who confined themselves to general phrase-making about a revolutionary war ignored or

failed to notice, or did not want to notice, the very essence of my arguments. And now it is my "extremist" opponents, the Muscovites, whom I have to thank from the bottom of my heart for having broken the "conspiracy of silence" over the *essence* of my arguments. The Muscovites have been the *first* to reply to them.

And what is their reply?

Their reply is an *admission of the correctness* of my *concrete* argument. Yes, the Muscovites have admitted, we shall certainly be defeated if we fight the Germans now.* Yes, this defeat would certainly lead to the fall of Soviet power.

Again and again I thank my "extremist" opponents, the Muscovites, from the bottom of my heart for having broken the "conspiracy of silence" against the essence of my arguments, i.e., against my *concrete* statement as to what the conditions of war would be, if we were to accept it at once, and for having fearlessly admitted the correctness of my concrete statement.

Further, on what grounds are my arguments, the substantial correctness of which the Muscovites have been compelled to admit, rejected?

On the grounds that in the interests of the world revolution *we must* accept the loss of Soviet power.

Why should the interests of the world revolution demand that? This is the crux of the matter; this is the very essence of the reasoning of those who would like to defeat my arguments. And it is on this, the most important, fundamental and vital point, that not a word is said, either in the resolution or in the explanatory note. The authors of the resolution found time and space to speak of what is universally known and indisputable—of "ruthlessly suppressing bourgeois counter-revolution in Russia" (using the methods and means of a policy which would lead to the loss of Soviet power?), and of opposing all moderate opportunists in the Party—but

* As to the counter-argument, that to avoid fighting was anyway impossible, the reply has been given by the facts: On January 8 my theses were read; by January 15 we *might* have had peace. A respite would have been certainly assured (and for us even the briefest respite would have been of gigantic significance, both materially and morally, for the *Germans* would have had to declare a *new war*), if ... if it had not been for revolutionary phrase-making.

of that which is really disputable and which concerns the very essence of the position of the opponents of peace—not a word!

Strange. Extremely strange. Did the authors of the resolution keep silent about this because they felt that on this point they were particularly weak? To have plainly stated *why* (this is demanded by the interests of the world revolution) would most likely have meant exposing themselves. ...

However that may be, we have to *seek out* the arguments which *may* have guided the authors of the resolution.

Perhaps the authors believe that the interests of the world revolution forbid making any peace at all with imperialists? This opinion was expressed by some of the opponents of peace at one of the Petrograd meetings, but only an insignificant minority of those who objected to a separate peace supported it. It is clear that this opinion would lead to a denial of the expediency of the Brest negotiations and to a rejection of peace, "even" if accompanied by the return of Poland, Latvia and Courland. The incorrectness of this view (which was rejected, for example, by a majority of the Petrograd opponents of peace) is as clear as day. A socialist republic surrounded by imperialist powers could not, from this point of view, conclude any economic treaties, and could not exist at all, without flying to the moon.

Perhaps the authors believe that the interests of the world revolution require that it should be *given a push*, and that such a push can be given only by war, never by peace, which might give the people the impression that imperialism was being "legitimised"? Such a "theory" would be completely at variance with Marxism, for Marxism has always been opposed to "pushing" revolutions, which develop with the growing acuteness of the class antagonisms that engender revolutions. Such a theory would be tantamount to the view that armed uprising is a form of struggle which is obligatory always and under all conditions. Actually, however, the interests of the world revolution demand that Soviet power, having overthrown the bourgeoisie in our country, should *help* that revolution, but that it should choose a *form* of help which is commensurate with its own strength. To help the socialist revolution on an international scale by accepting the possibility of defeat of that revolution in *one's own*

country is a view that does not follow even from the "pushing" theory.

Perhaps the authors of the resolution believe that revolution has already begun in Germany and has already reached the stage of an open, nation-wide civil war, that we must therefore devote our strength to helping the German workers, and must perish ourselves ("losing Soviet power") to *save* a German revolution which has already started its decisive fight and is being hard pressed? According to this theory, we, while perishing ourselves, would be diverting part of the forces of German counter-revolution, thereby saving the German revolution.

It is quite conceivable that, given these premises, it would not only be "expedient" (as the authors of the resolution put it) but a downright *duty* to accept the possibility of defeat and the possibility of the loss of Soviet power. But obviously these premises do not exist. The German revolution is ripening, but it has obviously not reached the stage of an explosion in Germany, of civil war in Germany. By "accepting the possibility of losing Soviet power", we certainly would not be helping the German revolution to reach maturity, but *would be hindering* it. We would be helping German reaction, playing into its hands, hampering the socialist movement in Germany and repelling from socialism large masses of German proletarians and semi-proletarians who have not yet come over to socialism and would be scared by the defeat of Soviet Russia, just as the British workers were scared by the defeat of the Paris Commune in 1871.

Twist and turn them as much as you like, but you will find no logic in the authors' contentions. There are no sensible arguments to support the view that "in the interests of the world revolution it is expedient to accept the possibility of losing Soviet power".

"Soviet power is now becoming purely formal"—this, as we see, is the monstrous view the authors of the Moscow resolution have come to proclaim.

Since the German imperialists are going to make us pay indemnities and forbid us to carry on propaganda and agitation against Germany, Soviet power loses all significance and "becomes purely formal"—this is probably the line of "reasoning" of the authors of the resolution. We say "probably",

for the authors offer nothing clear and specific in support of their thesis.

Profound and hopeless pessimism and complete despair—such is the sum and substance of the "theory" that the significance of Soviet power is purely formal, and that tactics which will risk the possible loss of Soviet power are permissible. Since there is no salvation anyway, then let even Soviet power perish—this is the sentiment that dictated this monstrous resolution. The allegedly "economic" arguments in which such ideas are sometimes clothed reveal the same hopeless pessimism: what sort of Soviet republic is it—the implication is—when not just tribute, but tribute on such a scale can be exacted from it?

Nothing but despair: we shall perish anyhow!

It is a quite understandable mood in the extremely desperate situation in which Russia finds herself. But it is not "understandable" among conscious revolutionaries. The typical thing about it is that here we have the views of the Muscovites reduced to absurdity. The Frenchmen of 1793 would never have said that their gains—the republic and democracy—were becoming purely formal and that they would have to accept the possibility of losing the republic. They were not filled with despair, but with faith in *victory*. To call for a revolutionary war, and at the same time to talk in an official resolution of "accepting the possibility of losing Soviet power" is to expose oneself completely.

Early in the nineteenth century, at the time of the Napoleonic wars, Prussia and a number of other countries suffered incomparably and immeasurably greater hardships and burdens of defeat, conquest, humiliation and oppression on the part of the conqueror than Russia is suffering in 1918. Yet the best men of Prussia, when Napoleon's military jackboots trampled upon them a hundred times more heavily than we can be trampled upon now, did not despair, and did not say that their national political institutions were "purely formal". They did not drop their hands or give way to the feeling: "We shall perish anyhow." They signed peace treaties infinitely more drastic, brutal, humiliating and oppressive than the Brest Treaty, and then knew how to bide their time; they staunchly bore the conqueror's yoke, fought again, fell under the conqueror's yoke again, again signed the vilest

of vile peace treaties, and again rose, and *in the end* liberated *themselves* (not without exploiting the dissensions among the stronger competing conquerors).

Why shouldn't this be repeated in our history?

Why should we give way to despair and write resolutions—which, by heavens, are more disgraceful than the most disgraceful peace—saying that “Soviet power is becoming purely formal”?

Why shouldn't the most crushing military defeats in the struggle against the giants of modern imperialism steel the national character in Russia too, strengthen self-discipline, put an end to the bragging and phrase-mongering, teach fortitude and bring the people round to the correct tactics of the Prussians when they were crushed by Napoleon—the tactics of signing the most humiliating of peace treaties when you haven't an army, then mustering your forces and rising again and again?

Why should we give way to despair at the first peace treaty, incredibly harsh though it be, when other nations were able staunchly to bear even bitterer misfortunes?

Is it the staunchness of the proletarian who knows that one must submit when strength is lacking, and is then nevertheless able to rise again and again at any price and to build up strength under *all* circumstances, that corresponds to these tactics of despair, or, rather the spinelessness of the petty bourgeois, who in our country, in the shape of the Left Socialist-Revolutionary Party, has beaten the record for phrase-mongering about a revolutionary war?

No, dear Moscow “extremist” comrades, every day of trial will drive away from you those very workers who are the most class-conscious and the staunchest. Soviet power, they will say, is not *becoming*, and will not *become*, purely formal; and not only now, when the conqueror is in Pskov and is making us pay a ten-thousand-million-ruble tribute in grain, ore and money, but even if he gets as far as Nizhni-Novgorod and Rostov-on-Don and makes us pay a tribute of twenty thousand million rubles.

Never will any foreign conquest render a popular political institution “purely formal” (and Soviet power is *not* only a political institution far and away superior to anything known to history). On the contrary, alien conquest will only

strengthen popular sympathy for Soviet power, provided—provided it does not indulge in reckless follies.

And to refuse to sign even the vilest peace when you have no army would be a reckless gamble, for which the people would be justified in condemning the government that refused to do so.

Immensely more harsh and humiliating peace treaties than the Brest Treaty have been signed before in history (we gave some instances above) without discrediting the regime or turning it into a formality; they ruined neither the regime nor the people, but rather steeled the people, *taught* them the stern and difficult science of building up an effective army even in the most desperate conditions and under the heel of the conqueror.

Russia is making for a new and genuine patriotic war, a war for the preservation and consolidation of Soviet power. It is possible that another epoch—like the epoch of the Napoleonic wars—will be an epoch of liberation *wars* (not one war, but wars) imposed by aggressors upon Soviet Russia. That is possible.

And, therefore, more humiliating than any harsh or even extremely harsh peace, rendered imperative owing to the lack of an army—more humiliating than any humiliating peace is humiliating despair. We shall not perish even from a dozen obnoxious peace treaties if we take revolt and war *seriously*. No conquerors can destroy us if we do not destroy ourselves by despair and phrase-mongering.

Pravda, Nos. 37 and 38,
February 28 (15) and
March 1 (February 16), 1918
Signed: N. Lenin

Collected Works, Vol. 27

"LEFT-WING" CHILDISHNESS AND THE PETTY-BOURGEOIS MENTALITY

The publication by a small group of "Left Communists" of their journal, *Kommunist* (No. 1, April 20, 1918), and of their "theses" strikingly confirms my views expressed in the pamphlet, *The Immediate Tasks of the Soviet Government*. There could not be better confirmation, in political literature, of the utter naïveté of the defence of petty-bourgeois sloppiness that is sometimes concealed by "Left" slogans. It is useful and necessary to deal with the arguments of "Left Communists" because they are characteristic of the period we are passing through. They show up with exceptional clarity the negative side of the "core" of this period. They are instructive, because the people we are dealing with are the best of those who have failed to understand the present period, people who by their knowledge and loyalty stand far, far above the *ordinary* representatives of the same mistaken views, namely, the Left Socialist-Revolutionaries.

I

As a political magnitude, or as a group claiming to play a political role, the "Left Communist" group has presented its "Theses on the Present Situation". It is a good Marxist custom to give a coherent and complete exposition of the principles underlying one's views and tactics. And this good Marxist custom has helped to reveal the mistake committed by our "Lefts", because the mere attempt to argue and not to declaim exposes the unsoundness of their argument.

The first thing that strikes one is the abundance of allusions, hints and evasions with regard to the old question of whether it was right to conclude the Brest Treaty. The "Lefts" dare not put the question in a straightforward manner. They

flounder about in a comical fashion, pile argument on argument, fish for reasons, plead that "on the one hand" it may be so, but "on the other hand" it may not, their thoughts wander over all and sundry subjects, they try all the time not to see that they are defeating themselves. The "Lefts" are very careful to quote the figures: twelve votes at the Party Congress against peace, twenty-eight votes in favour, but they discreetly refrain from mentioning that of the hundreds of votes cast at the meeting of the Bolshevik group of the Congress of Soviets they obtained less than one-tenth. They have invented a "theory" that the peace was carried by "the exhausted and declassed elements", while it was opposed by "the workers and peasants of the southern regions, where there was greater vitality in economic life and the supply of bread was more assured"... Can one do anything but laugh at this? There is not a word about the voting at the All-Ukraine Congress of Soviets in favour of peace, nor about the social and class character of the typically petty-bourgeois and declassed political conglomeration in Russia who were opposed to peace (the Left Socialist-Revolutionary Party). In an utterly childish manner, by means of amusing "scientific" explanations, they try to conceal their own bankruptcy, to conceal the facts, the mere review of which would show that it was precisely the declassed, intellectual "cream" of the Party, the élite who opposed the peace with slogans couched in revolutionary petty-bourgeois phrases, that it was precisely the *mass* of workers and exploited peasants who carried the peace.

Nevertheless, in spite of all the above-mentioned declarations and evasions of the "Lefts" on the question of war and peace, the plain and obvious truth manages to come to light. The authors of the theses are compelled to admit that "the conclusion of peace has for the time being weakened the imperialists' attempts to make a deal on a world scale" (this is inaccurately formulated by the "Lefts", but this is not the place to deal with inaccuracies). "The conclusion of peace has already caused the conflict between the imperialist powers to become more acute."

Now this is a fact. Here is something that has *decisive* significance. That is why those who opposed the conclusion of peace were unwittingly playthings in the hands of the

imperialists and fell into the trap laid for them by the imperialists. For, until the world socialist revolution breaks out, until it embraces several countries and is strong enough to overcome *international imperialism*, it is the direct duty of the socialists who have conquered in one country (especially a backward one) *not* to accept battle against the giants of imperialism. Their duty is to try to avoid battle, to wait until the conflicts between the imperialists weaken them *even more*, and bring the revolution in other countries even nearer. Our "Lefts" did not understand this simple truth in January, February and March. Even now they are afraid of admitting it openly. But it comes to light through all their confused reasoning like "on the one hand it must be confessed, on the other hand one must admit".

"During the coming spring and summer," the "Lefts" write in their theses, "the collapse of the imperialist system must begin. In the event of a victory for German imperialism in the present phase of the war this collapse can only be postponed, but it will then express itself in even more acute forms."

This formulation is even more childishly inaccurate despite its playing at science. It is natural for children to "understand" science to mean something that can determine in what year, spring, summer, autumn or winter the "collapse must begin".

These are ridiculous, vain attempts to ascertain what cannot be ascertained. No serious politician will ever say *when* this or that collapse of a "system" "must begin" (the more so that the collapse of the *system* has already begun, and it is now a question of the moment when the outbreak of revolution in *particular* countries will begin). But an indisputable truth forces its way through this childishly helpless formulation, namely, the outbreaks of revolution in other, more advanced, countries are *nearer* now, a month since the beginning of the "respite" which followed the conclusion of peace, than they were a month or six weeks ago.

What follows?

It follows that the peace supporters were absolutely right, and their stand has been justified by the course of events. They were right in having drummed into the minds of the lovers of ostentation that one must be able to calculate the

balance of forces and *not help* the imperialists by making the battle against socialism easier for them, when socialism is still weak, and when the chances of the battle are manifestly *against* socialism.

Our "Left" Communists, however, who are also fond of calling themselves "proletarian" Communists, because there is very little that is proletarian about them and very much that is petty-bourgeois, are incapable of giving thought to the balance of forces, to calculating it. This is the main point of Marxism and Marxist tactics, but they disdainfully brush aside the "main point" with "proud" phrases such as

"...That the masses have become firmly imbued with an inactive 'peace mentality' is an objective fact of the political situation..."

What a gem! After three years of the most agonising and reactionary war, the people, thanks to Soviet power and its correct tactics, which never lapsed into mere phrase-mongering, have obtained a very, very brief, insecure and far from sufficient respite. The "Left" intellectual striplings, however, with the magnificence of a self-infatuated Narcissus,⁵⁷ profoundly declare "that the masses [??] have become firmly imbued [!!!] with an inactive [!!!??] peace mentality". Was I not right when I said at the Party Congress that the paper or journal of the "Lefts" ought to have been called not *Kommunist* but *Szlachcic*?

Can a Communist with the slightest understanding of the mentality and the conditions of life of the toiling and exploited people descend to the point of view of the typical declassed petty-bourgeois intellectual with the mental outlook of a noble or *Szlachcic*, which declares that a "peace mentality" is "inactive" and believes that the brandishing of a cardboard sword is "activity"? For our "Lefts" merely brandish a cardboard sword when they ignore the universally known fact, of which the war in the Ukraine has served as an additional proof, that peoples utterly exhausted by three years of butchery cannot go on fighting without a respite; and that war, if it cannot be organised on a national scale, very often creates a mentality of disintegration peculiar to petty proprietors, instead of the iron discipline of the proletariat. Every page of *Kommunist* shows that our "Lefts" have no idea of

iron proletarian discipline and how it is achieved, that they are thoroughly imbued with the mentality of the declassed petty-bourgeois intellectual.

II

Perhaps all these phrases of the "Lefts" about war can be put down to mere childish exuberance, which, moreover, concerns the past, and therefore has not a shadow of political significance? This is the argument some people put up in defence of our "Lefts". But this is wrong. Anyone aspiring to political leadership must be able to *think out* political problems, and lack of this ability converts the "Lefts" into spineless preachers of a policy of vacillation, which objectively can have only one result, namely, by their vacillation the "Lefts" *are helping* the imperialists to provoke the Russian Soviet Republic into a battle that will obviously be to its disadvantage, they *are helping* the imperialists to draw us into a snare. Listen to this:

"...The Russian workers' revolution cannot 'save itself' by abandoning the path of world revolution, by continually avoiding battle and yielding to the pressure of international capital, by making concessions to 'home capital'.

"From this point of view it is necessary to adopt a determined class international policy which will unite international revolutionary propaganda by word and deed, and to strengthen the organic connection with international socialism (and not with the international bourgeoisie)..."

I shall deal separately with the thrusts at home policy contained in this passage. But examine this riot of phrase-mongering-and timidity in deeds-in the sphere of foreign policy. What tactics *are binding* at the *present* time on all who do not wish to be tools of imperialist provocation, and who do not wish to walk into the snare? Every politician must give a clear, straightforward reply to this question. Our Party's reply is well known. At the *present* moment we must *retreat* and avoid battle. Our "Lefts" dare not contradict this and shoot into the air: "A determined class international policy"!!

This is deceiving the people. If you want to fight now, say so openly. If you don't wish to *retreat* now, say so openly. Otherwise, in your objective role, you are a tool of

imperialist provocation. And your subjective "mentality" is that of a frenzied petty bourgeois who swaggers and blusters but senses perfectly well that the proletarian is *right* in retreating and in trying to retreat in an organised way. He senses that the proletarian is right in arguing that because we lack strength we must retreat (before Western and Eastern imperialism) even as far as the Urals, for in this lies the *only* chance of playing for time while the revolution in the West matures, the revolution which is not "bound" (despite the twaddle of the "Lefts") to begin in "spring or summer", but which is coming nearer and becoming more probable *every month*.

The "Lefts" have no policy of their "own". They *dare not* declare that retreat at the *present moment* is unnecessary. They twist and turn, play with words, substitute the question of "continuously" avoiding battle for the question of avoiding battle at the *present moment*. They blow soap-bubbles such as "international revolutionary propaganda by deed"!! What does this mean?

It can only mean one of two things: either it is mere Nozdryovism⁵⁸ or it means an offensive war to overthrow international imperialism. Such nonsense cannot be uttered openly, and that is why the "Left" Communists are obliged to take refuge from the derision of every politically conscious proletarian behind high-sounding and empty phrases. They hope the inattentive reader will not notice the real meaning of the phrase "international revolutionary propaganda by deed".

The flaunting of high-sounding phrases is characteristic of the declassed petty-bourgeois intellectuals. The organised proletarian Communists will certainly punish this "habit" with nothing less than derision and expulsion from all responsible posts. The people must be told the bitter truth simply, clearly and in a straightforward manner: it is possible, and even probable, that the war party will again get the upper hand in Germany (that is, an offensive against us will commence at once), and that Germany together with Japan, by official agreement or by tacit understanding, will divide and strangle us. Our tactics, if we do not want to listen to the ranters, must be to wait, procrastinate, avoid battle and retreat. If we shake off the ranters and "brace

ourselves" by creating genuinely iron, genuinely proletarian, genuinely communist discipline, we shall have a good chance of gaining many months. And then by retreating even, if the worst comes to the worst, to the Urals, we shall *make it easier* for our allies (the international proletariat) to come to our aid, to "cover" (to use the language of sport) the distance between the beginning of revolutionary outbreaks and revolution.

These, and these alone, are the tactics which can in fact strengthen the connection between one temporarily isolated section of international socialism and the other sections. But to tell the truth, all that your arguments lead to, dear "Left Communists", is the "strengthening of the organic connection" between one high-sounding phrase and another. A bad sort of "organic connection", this!

I shall enlighten you, my amiable friends, as to why such disaster overtook you. It is because you devote more effort to learning by heart and committing to memory revolutionary slogans than to thinking them out. This leads you to write "the defence of the socialist fatherland" in quotation marks, which are probably meant to signify your attempts at being ironical, but which really prove that you are muddleheads. You are accustomed to regard "defencism" as something base and despicable; you have learned this and committed it to memory. You have learned this by heart so thoroughly that some of you have begun talking nonsense to the effect that defence of the fatherland in an imperialist *epoch* is impermissible (as a matter of fact, it is impermissible only in an imperialist, reactionary war, waged by the bourgeoisie). But you have not thought out why and when "defencism" is abominable.

To recognise defence of the fatherland means recognising the legitimacy and justice of war. Legitimacy and justice from what point of view? Only from the point of view of the socialist proletariat and its struggle for its emancipation. We do not recognise any other point of view. If war is waged by the exploiting class with the object of strengthening its rule as a class, such a war is a criminal war, and "defencism" in *such* a war is a base betrayal of socialism. If war is waged by the proletariat after it has conquered the bourgeoisie in its own country, and is waged with the object of strength-

ening and developing socialism, such a war is legitimate and "holy".

We have been "defencists" since October 25, 1917. I have said this more than once very definitely, and you dare not deny this. It is precisely in the interests of "strengthening the connection" with international socialism that we *are in duty bound* to defend our *socialist* fatherland. It is those who would treat frivolously the defence of the country in which the proletariat has already achieved victory, that destroy the connection with international socialism. When we were the representatives of an oppressed class we did not adopt a frivolous attitude towards defence of the fatherland in an imperialist war. We opposed such defence on principle. Now that we have become representatives of the ruling class, which has begun to organise socialism, we demand that everybody adopt a *serious* attitude towards defence of the country. And adopting a serious attitude towards defence of the country means thoroughly preparing for it, and strictly calculating the balance of forces. If our forces are obviously small, the best means of defence is *retreat into the interior of the country* (anyone who regards this as an artificial formula, made up to suit the needs of the moment, should read old Clausewitz, one of the greatest authorities on military matters, concerning the lessons of history to be learned in this connection). The "Left Communists", however, do not give the slightest indication that they understand the significance of the question of the balance of forces.

When we were opposed to defensism on principle we were justified in holding up to ridicule those who wanted to "save" their fatherland, ostensibly in the interests of socialism. When we gained the right to be proletarian defensists the whole question was radically altered. It has become our duty to calculate with the utmost accuracy the different forces involved, to weigh with the utmost care the chances of our ally (the international proletariat) being able to come to our aid in time. It is in the interest of capital to destroy its enemy (the revolutionary proletariat) bit by bit, before the workers in all countries have united (actually united, i.e., by beginning the revolution). It is in our interest to do all that is possible, to take advantage of the slightest opportunity

to postpone the decisive battle until the moment (or "*until after*" the moment) the revolutionary workers' contingents have united in a single great international army.

III

We shall pass on to the misfortunes of our "Left Communists" in the sphere of home policy. It is difficult to read the following phrases in the theses on the *present* situation without smiling.

"...The systematic use of the remaining means of production is conceivable only if a most determined policy of socialisation is pursued" ... "not to capitulate to the bourgeoisie and its petty-bourgeois intellectualist servitors, but to rout the bourgeoisie and to put down sabotage completely..."

Dear "Left Communists", how determined they are, but how little thinking they display. What do they mean by pursuing "a most determined policy of socialisation"?

One may or may not be determined on the question of nationalisation or confiscation, but the whole point is that even the greatest possible "determination" in the world is not enough to pass *from* nationalisation and confiscation to socialisation. The misfortune of our "Lefts" is that by their naïve, childish combination of words "most determined policy of socialisation" they reveal their utter failure to understand the crux of the question, and crux of the "present" situation. The misfortune of our "Lefts" is that they have missed the very essence of the "present situation", the transition from confiscation (the carrying out of which requires above all determination in a politician) to socialisation (the carrying out of which requires a *different* quality in the revolutionary).

Yesterday, the main task of the moment was, as determinedly as possible, to nationalise, confiscate, beat down and crush the bourgeoisie, and put down sabotage. Today, only a blind man could fail to see that we have nationalised, confiscated, beaten down and put down more *than we have had time to count*. The difference between socialisation and simple confiscation is that confiscation can be carried out by

"determination" alone, without the ability to calculate and distribute properly, *whereas socialisation cannot be brought about without this ability*.

The historical service we have rendered is that yesterday we were determined (and we shall be tomorrow) in confiscating, in beating down the bourgeoisie, in putting down sabotage. To write about this today in "Theses on the Present Situation" is to fix one's eyes on the past and to fail to understand the transition to the future.

"...To put down sabotage completely..." What a task they have found! Our saboteurs are quite sufficiently "put down". What we lack is something quite different. We lack the proper *calculation* of which saboteurs to set to work and where to place them. We lack the organisation of *our own* forces that is needed for, say, one Bolshevik leader or controller to be able to supervise a hundred saboteurs who are now coming into our service. When that is how matters stand, to flaunt such phrases as "a most determined policy of socialisation", "routing", and "completely putting down" is just missing the mark. It is typical of the petty-bourgeois revolutionary not to notice that routing, putting down, etc., is not enough for socialism. It is sufficient for a small proprietor enraged against a big proprietor. But no proletarian revolutionary would ever fall into such error.

If the words we have quoted provoke a smile, the following discovery made by the "Left Communists" will provoke nothing short of Homeric laughter. According to them, under the "Bolshevik deviation to the right", the Soviet Republic is threatened with "evolution towards state capitalism". They have really frightened us this time! And with what gusto these "Left Communists" repeat this threatening revelation in their theses and articles...

It has not occurred to them that state capitalism would be a *step forward* as compared with the present state of affairs in our Soviet Republic. If in approximately six months' time state capitalism became established in our Republic, this would be a great success and a sure guarantee that within a year socialism will have gained a permanently firm hold and will have become invincible in our country.

I can imagine with what noble indignation a "Left Communist" will recoil from these words, and what "devastating

criticism" he will make to the workers against the "Bolshevik deviation to the right". What! Transition to state *capitalism* in the Soviet *Socialist* Republic would be a step forward? . . . Isn't this the betrayal of socialism?

Here we come to the root of the *economic* mistake of the "Left Communists". And that is why we must deal with this point in greater detail.

Firstly, the "Left Communists" do not understand what kind of *transition* it is from capitalism to socialism that gives us the right and the grounds to call our country the Socialist Republic of Soviets.

Secondly, they reveal their petty-bourgeois mentality precisely by *not recognising* the petty-bourgeois element as the *principal* enemy of socialism in our country.

Thirdly, in making a bugbear of "state capitalism", they betray their failure to understand that the Soviet state differs from the bourgeois state economically.

Let us examine these three points.

No one, I think, in studying the question of the economic system of Russia, has denied its transitional character. Nor, I think, has any Communist denied that the term Socialist Soviet Republic implies the determination of Soviet power to achieve the transition to socialism, and not that the new economic system is recognised as a socialist order.

But what does the word "transition" mean? Does it not mean, as applied to an economy, that the present system contains elements, particles, fragments of *both* capitalism and socialism? Everyone will admit that it does. But not all who admit this take the trouble to consider what elements actually constitute the various socio-economic structures that exist in Russia at the present time. And this is the crux of the question.

Let us enumerate these elements:

- 1) patriarchal, i.e., to a considerable extent natural peasant farming;
- 2) small commodity production (this includes the majority of those peasants who sell their grain);
- 3) private capitalism;
- 4) state capitalism;
- 5) socialism.

Russia is so vast and so varied that all these different types of socio-economic structures are intermingled. This is what constitutes the specific feature of the situation.

The question arises: what elements predominate? Clearly, in a small-peasant country, the petty-bourgeois element predominates and it must predominate, for the great majority of those working the land are small commodity producers. The shell of our state capitalism (grain monopoly, state-controlled entrepreneurs and traders, bourgeois co-operators) is pierced now in one place, now in another by *profiteers*, the chief object of profiteering being *grain*.

It is in this field that the main struggle is being waged. Between what elements is this struggle being waged if we are to speak in terms of economic categories such as "state capitalism"? Between the fourth and the fifth in the order in which I have just enumerated them? Of course not. It is not state capitalism that is at war with socialism, but the petty bourgeoisie plus private capitalism fighting together against both state capitalism and socialism. The petty bourgeoisie oppose *every* kind of state interference, accounting and control, whether it be state capitalist or state socialist. This is an absolutely unquestionable fact of reality, and the root of the economic mistake of the "Left Communists" is that they have failed to understand it. The profiteer, the trade marauder, the disrupter of monopoly—these are our principal "internal" enemies, the enemies of the economic measures of Soviet power. A hundred and twenty-five years ago it might have been excusable for the French petty bourgeoisie, the most ardent and sincere revolutionaries, to try to crush the profiteer by executing a few of the "chosen" and by making thunderous declamations. Today, however, the purely rhetorical attitude to this question assumed by some Left Socialist-Revolutionaries can rouse nothing but disgust and revulsion in every politically conscious revolutionary. We know perfectly well that the economic basis of profiteering is both the small proprietors, who are exceptionally widespread in Russia, and private capitalism, of which *every* petty bourgeois is an agent. We know that the million tentacles of this petty-bourgeois hydra now and again encircle various sections of the workers, that, *instead of state*

monopoly, profiteering forces its way through all the pores of our social and economic organism.

Those who fail to see this show by their blindness that they are slaves of petty-bourgeois prejudices. This is precisely the case with our "Left Communists", who in words (and of course in their deepest convictions) are merciless enemies of the petty bourgeoisie, while in deeds they help only the petty bourgeoisie, serve only this section of the population and express only its point of view by fighting—in April 1918!!—against ... "state capitalism". They are wide of the mark!

The petty bourgeoisie have money put away, the few thousand that they made during the war by "honest" and especially by dishonest means. They are the economic type, the typical characters who serve as the basis of profiteering and private capitalism. Money is a certificate entitling the possessor to receive social wealth; and a vast section of small proprietors, numbering millions, cling to this certificate and conceal it from the "state". They do not believe in socialism or communism, and "mark time" until the proletarian storm blows over. Either we subordinate the petty bourgeoisie to our control and accounting (we can do this if we organise the poor, that is, the majority of the population or semi-proletarians, around the politically conscious proletarian vanguard), or they will overthrow our workers' power as surely and as inevitably as the revolution was overthrown by the Napoleons and Cavaignacs who sprang from this very soil of petty proprietorship. This is how the question stands. Only the Left Socialist-Revolutionaries fail to see this plain and evident truth through their mist of empty phrases about the "toiling" peasants. But who takes these phrase-mongering Left Socialist-Revolutionaries seriously?

The petty bourgeois who hoards his thousands is an enemy of state capitalism. He wants to employ his thousands just for himself, against the poor, in opposition to any kind of state control. And the sum total of these thousands, amounting to many thousands of millions, forms the base for profiteering, which undermines our socialist construction. Let us assume that a certain number of workers produce in a few days values equal to 1,000. Let us then assume that 200 of this total vanishes owing to petty profiteering, various kinds

of embezzlement and the "evasion" by the small proprietors of Soviet decrees and regulations. Every politically conscious worker will say that if better order and organisation could be obtained at the price of 300 out of the 1,000 he would willingly give 300 instead of 200, for it will be quite easy under Soviet power to reduce this "tribute" later on to, say, 100 or 50, once order and organisation are established and once the petty-bourgeois disruption of state monopoly is completely overcome.

This simple illustration in figures, which I have deliberately simplified to the utmost in order to make it absolutely clear, explains the present *correlation* of state capitalism and socialism. The workers hold state power and have every legal opportunity of "taking" the whole thousand, without giving up a single kopek, except for socialist purposes. This legal opportunity, which rests upon the actual transition of power to the workers, is an element of socialism.

But in many ways, the small proprietary and private capitalist element undermines this legal position, drags in profiteering, hinders the execution of Soviet decrees. State capitalism would be a gigantic step forward *even if* we paid *more* than we are paying at present (I took a numerical example deliberately to bring this out more sharply), because it is worth while paying for "tuition", because it is useful for the workers, because victory over disorder, economic ruin and laxity is the most important thing; because the continuation of the anarchy of small ownership is the greatest, the most serious danger, and it will *certainly* be our ruin (unless we overcome it), whereas not only will the payment of a heavier tribute to state capitalism not ruin us, it will lead us to socialism by the surest road. When the working class has learned how to defend the state system against anarchy of small ownership, when it has learned to organise large-scale production on a national scale, along state capitalist lines, it will hold, if I may use the expression, all the trump cards, and the consolidation of socialism will be assured.

In the first place, *economically*, state capitalism is immeasurably superior to our present economic system.

In the second place, there is nothing terrible in it for Soviet power, for the Soviet state is a state in which the

power of the workers and the poor is assured. The "Left Communists" failed to understand these unquestionable truths, which, of course, a "Left Socialist-Revolutionary", who cannot connect any ideas on political economy in his head in general, will never understand, but which every Marxist *must* admit. It is not even worth while arguing with a Left Socialist-Revolutionary. It is enough to point to him as a "repulsive example" of a windbag. But the "Left Communists" *must* be argued with because it is Marxists who are making a mistake, and an analysis of their mistake will help the *working class* to find the true road.

IV

To make things even clearer, let us first of all take the most concrete example of state capitalism. Everybody knows what this example is. It is Germany. Here we have "the last word" in modern large-scale capitalist engineering and planned organisation, *subordinated to Junker-bourgeois imperialism*. Cross out the words in italics, and in place of the militarist, Junker, bourgeois, imperialist state put *also a state*, but of a different social type, of a different class content—a *Soviet* state, that is, a proletarian state, and you will have the *sum total* of the conditions necessary for socialism.

Socialism is inconceivable without large-scale capitalist engineering based on the latest discoveries of modern science. It is inconceivable without planned state organisation, which keeps tens of millions of people to the strictest observance of a unified standard in production and distribution. We Marxists have always spoken of this, and it is not worth while wasting two seconds talking to people who do not understand *even* this (anarchists and a good half of the Left Socialist-Revolutionaries).

At the same time socialism is inconceivable unless the proletariat is the ruler of the state. This also is ABC. And history (which nobody, except Menshevik blockheads of the first order, ever expected to bring about "complete" socialism smoothly, gently, easily and simply) has taken such a peculiar course that it *has given birth* in 1918 to two unconnected halves of socialism existing side by side like two future chickens in the single shell of international imperial-

ism. In 1918 Germany and Russia have become the most striking embodiment of the material realisation of the economic, the productive and the socio-economic conditions for socialism, on the one hand, and the political conditions, on the other.

A successful proletarian revolution in Germany would immediately and very easily smash any shell of imperialism (which unfortunately is made of the best steel, and hence cannot be broken by the efforts of *any* . . . chicken) and would bring about the victory of world socialism for certain, without any difficulty, or with slight difficulty—if, of course, by "difficulty" we mean difficult on a world-historical scale, and not in the very narrow sense.

While the revolution in Germany is still slow in "coming forth", our task is to study the state capitalism of the Germans, to spare *no effort* in copying it and not shrink from adopting *dictatorial* methods to hasten the copying of it. Our task is to hasten even more than Peter hastened the copying of Western culture by barbarian Russia, and we must not hesitate to use barbarous methods in fighting barbarism. If there are anarchists and Left Socialist-Revolutionaries (I recall offhand the speeches of Karelin and Ghe at the meeting of the Central Executive Committee) who indulge in Narcissus-like reflections and say that it is unbecoming for us revolutionaries to "take lessons" from German imperialism, there is only one thing we can say in reply: the revolution that took these people seriously would perish irrevocably (and deservedly).

At present, petty-bourgeois capitalism prevails in Russia, and it is *one and the same road* that leads from it to *both* large-scale state capitalism and to socialism, through *one and the same* intermediary station called "national accounting and control of production and distribution". Those who fail to understand this are committing an unpardonable mistake in economics. Either they do not know the facts of life, do not see what actually exists and are unable to look the truth in the face, or they confine themselves to abstractly comparing "capitalism" with "socialism" and fail to study the concrete forms and stages of the transition that is taking place in our country. Let it be said in parenthesis that this is the very theoretical mistake which misled the best people

in the *Novaya Zhizn* and *Vperyod*⁵⁹ camp. The worst and the mediocre of these, owing to their stupidity and spinelessness, tag along behind the bourgeoisie, of whom they stand in awe. The best of them have failed to understand that it was not without reason that the teachers of socialism spoke of a whole period of transition from capitalism to socialism and emphasised the "prolonged birth-pangs" of the new society. And this new society is again an abstraction which can come into being only by passing through a series of varied, imperfect concrete attempts to create this or that socialist state.

It is because Russia cannot advance from the economic situation now existing here without traversing the ground which is *common* to state capitalism and to socialism (national accounting and control) that the attempt to frighten others as well as themselves with "evolution *towards* state capitalism" (*Kommunist* No. 1, p. 8, col. 1) is utter theoretical nonsense. This is letting one's thoughts wander away from the true road of "evolution", and failing to understand what this road is. In practice, it is equivalent to pulling us back to small proprietary capitalism.

In order to convince the reader that this is not the first time I have given this "high" appreciation of state capitalism and that I gave it *before* the Bolsheviks seized power I take the liberty of quoting the following passage from my pamphlet *The Impending Catastrophe and How to Combat It*, written in September 1917.

"...Try to substitute *for* the Junker-capitalist state, for the landowner-capitalist state, a *revolutionary-democratic* state, i.e., a state which in a revolutionary way destroys *all* privileges and does not fear to introduce the fullest democracy in a revolutionary way, and you will find that, given a really revolutionary-democratic state, state-monopoly capitalism inevitably and unavoidably implies a step, and more than one step, towards socialism!

"...For socialism is nothing but the next step forward from state-capitalist monopoly.

"...State-monopoly capitalism is a complete *material* preparation for socialism, the *threshold* of socialism, a rung in the ladder of history between which and the rung called socialism *there are no intermediate rungs*" (pp. 27 and 28).

Please note that this was written when Kerensky was in power, that we are discussing *not* the dictatorship of the proletariat, *not* the socialist state, but the "revolutionary-democratic" state. Is it not clear that the *higher* we stand on this political ladder, *the more completely* we incorporate the socialist state and the dictatorship of the proletariat in the Soviets, *the less* ought we to fear "state capitalism"? Is it not clear that from the *material*, economic and productive point of view, we are not yet on "the threshold" of socialism? Is it not clear that we cannot pass through the door of socialism without crossing "the threshold" we have not yet reached?

From whatever side we approach the question, only one conclusion can be drawn: the argument of the "Left Communists" about the "state capitalism" which is alleged to be threatening us is an utter mistake in economics and is evident proof that they are complete slaves of petty-bourgeois ideology.

V

The following is also extremely instructive.

When we argued with Comrade Bukharin in the Central Executive Committee, he declared, among other things, that on the question of high salaries for specialists "we" (evidently meaning the "Left Communists") were "more to the right than Lenin", for in this case "we" saw no deviation from principle, bearing in mind Marx's words that under certain conditions it is more expedient for the working class to "buy out the whole lot of them"⁶⁰ (namely, the whole lot of capitalists, i.e., *to buy* from the bourgeoisie the land, factories, works and other means of production).

This extremely interesting statement shows, in the first place, that Bukharin is head and shoulders above the Left Socialist-Revolutionaries and anarchists, that he is by no means hopelessly stuck in the mud of phrase-mongering, but on the contrary is making efforts to think out the *concrete* difficulties of the transition—the painful and difficult transition—from capitalism to socialism.

In the second place, this statement makes Bukharin's mistake still more glaring.

Let us consider Marx's idea carefully.

Marx was talking about the Britain of the seventies of the last century, about the culminating point in the development of pre-monopoly capitalism. At that time Britain was a country in which militarism and bureaucracy were less pronounced than in any other, a country in which there was the greatest possibility of a "peaceful" victory for socialism in the sense of the workers "buying out" the bourgeoisie. And Marx said that under certain conditions the workers would certainly not refuse to buy out the bourgeoisie. Marx did not commit himself, or the future leaders of the socialist revolution, to matters of form, to ways and means of bringing about the revolution. He understood perfectly well that a vast number of new problems would arise, that the whole situation would change in the course of the revolution, and that the situation would change *radically* and *often* in the course of revolution.

Well, and what about Soviet Russia? Is it not clear that *after* the seizure of power by the proletariat and *after* the crushing of the exploiters' armed resistance and sabotage, *certain* conditions prevail which correspond to those which might have existed in Britain half a century ago had a peaceful transition to socialism begun there? The subordination of the capitalists to the workers in Britain would have been assured at that time owing to the following circumstances: (1) the absolute preponderance of workers, of proletarians, in the population owing to the absence of a peasantry (in Britain in the seventies there was hope of an extremely rapid spread of socialism among agricultural labourers); (2) the excellent organisation of the proletariat in trade unions (Britain was at that time the leading country in the world in this respect); (3) the comparatively high level of culture of the proletariat, which had been trained by centuries of development of political liberty; (4) the old habit of the well-organised British capitalists of settling political and economic questions by compromise—at that time the British capitalists were better organised than the capitalists of any country in the world (this superiority has now passed to Germany). These were the circumstances which at that time gave rise

to the idea that the *peaceful* subjugation of the British capitalists by the workers was possible.

In our country, at the present time, this subjugation is assured by certain premises of fundamental significance (the victory in October and the suppression, from October to February, of the capitalists' armed resistance and sabotage). But *instead of* the absolute preponderance of workers, of proletarians, in the population, and *instead of* a high degree of organisation among them, the important factor of victory in Russia was the support the proletarians received from the poor peasants and those who had experienced sudden ruin. Finally, we have neither a high degree of culture nor the habit of compromise. If these concrete conditions are carefully considered, it will become clear that we can and ought to employ two methods *simultaneously*. On the one hand we must ruthlessly suppress* the uncultured capitalists who refuse to have anything to do with "state capitalism" or to consider any form of compromise, and who continue by means of profiteering, by bribing the poor peasants, etc., to hinder the realisation of the measures taken by the Soviets. On the other hand we must use the *method of compromise*, or of buying off the cultured capitalists who agree to "state capitalism", who are capable of putting it into practice and who are useful to the proletariat as intelligent and experienced organisers of the *largest* types of enterprises, which actually supply products to tens of millions of people.

Bukharin is a highly educated Marxist economist. He therefore remembered that Marx was profoundly right when he taught the workers the importance of preserving the

* In this case also we must look truth in the face. We still have too little of that ruthlessness which is indispensable for the success of socialism, and we have too little not because we lack determination. We have sufficient determination. What we do lack is the ability to *catch* quickly enough a sufficient number of profiteers, marauders and capitalists—the people who infringe the measures passed by the Soviets. The "ability" to do this can only be acquired by establishing accounting and control! Another thing is that the courts are not sufficiently firm. Instead of sentencing people who take bribes to be shot, they sentence them to six months' imprisonment. These two defects have the same social root: the influence of the petty-bourgeois element, its flabbiness.

organisation of large-scale production, precisely for the purpose of facilitating the transition to socialism. Marx taught that (as an exception, and Britain was then an exception) the idea was conceivable of *paying the capitalists well*, of buying them off, *if* the circumstances were such as to compel the capitalists to submit peacefully and to come over to socialism in a cultured and organised fashion, provided they were paid.

But Bukharin went astray because he did not go deep enough into the specific features of the situation in Russia at the present time—an exceptional situation when we, the Russian proletariat, are in *advance* of any Britain or any Germany as regards our political order, as regards the strength of the workers' political power, but are *behind* the most backward West European country as regards organising a good state capitalism, as regards our level of culture and the degree of material and productive preparedness for the "introduction" of socialism. Is it not clear that the specific nature of the present situation creates the need for a specific type of "buying out" which the workers must offer to the most cultured, the most skilled, the most capable organisers among the capitalists who are ready to enter the service of Soviet power and to help honestly in organising "state" production on the largest possible scale? Is it not clear that in this specific situation we must make every effort to avoid two mistakes, both of which are of a petty-bourgeois nature? On the one hand, it would be a fatal mistake to declare that since there is a discrepancy between our economic "forces" and our political strength, it "follows" that we should not have seized power.⁶¹ Such an argument can be advanced only by a "man in a muffler",⁶² who forgets that there will always be such a "discrepancy", that it always exists in the development of nature as well as in the development of society, that only by a series of attempts—each of which, taken by itself, will be one-sided and will suffer from certain inconsistencies—will full socialism be created by the revolutionary co-operation of the proletarians of *all* countries.

On the other hand, it would be an obvious mistake to give free rein to ranters and phrase-mongers who allow themselves to be carried away by the "dazzling" revolutionary spirit, but who are incapable of sustained, thoughtful and

deliberate revolutionary work which takes into account the most difficult stages of transition.

Fortunately, the history of the development of the revolutionary parties and of the struggle that Bolshevism waged against them has left us a heritage of sharply defined types, of which the Left Socialist-Revolutionaries and anarchists are striking examples of bad revolutionaries. They are now shouting hysterically, choking and shouting themselves hoarse, against the "compromise" of the "Right Bolsheviks". But they are incapable of thinking *what* is bad in "compromise", and *why* "compromise" has been justly condemned by history and the course of the revolution.

Compromise in Kerensky's time meant the surrender of power to the imperialist bourgeoisie, and the question of power is the fundamental question of every revolution. Compromise by a section of the Bolsheviks in October-November 1917 either meant that they feared the proletariat seizing power or wished to *share* power equally, not only with "unreliable fellow-travellers" like the Left Socialist-Revolutionaries, but also with the enemies, with the Chernovists and the Mensheviks. The latter would inevitably have hindered us in fundamental matters, such as the dissolution of the Constituent Assembly,⁶³ the ruthless suppression of the Bogayevskys, the universal setting up of the Soviet institutions, and in every act of confiscation.

Now power has been seized, retained and consolidated in the hands of a single party, the party of the proletariat, even without the "unreliable fellow-travellers". To speak of compromise at the present time when there is no question, and can be none, of sharing *power*, of renouncing the dictatorship of the proletariat over the bourgeoisie, is merely to repeat, parrot-fashion, words which have been learned by heart but not understood. To describe as "compromise" the fact that, having arrived at a situation when we can and must rule the country, we try to win over to our side, not grudging the cost, the most skilled people capitalism has trained and to take them into our service against small proprietary disintegration, reveals a total incapacity to think out the economic tasks of socialist construction.

Therefore, while it is to Comrade Bukharin's credit that on the Central Executive Committee he "felt ashamed" of the

"service" he had been rendered by Karelin and Ghe, nevertheless, as far as the "Left Communist" *trend* is concerned, the reference to their political comrades-in-arms still remains a serious warning.

Take for example *Znamya Truda*, the organ of the Left Socialist-Revolutionaries, of April 25, 1918, which proudly declares, "The present position of our party coincides with that of another trend in Bolshevism (Bukharin, Pokrovsky and others)." Or take the Menshevik *Vperyod* of the same date, which contains among other articles the following "thesis" by the notorious Menshevik Isuv:

"The policy of Soviet power, from the very outset devoid of a genuinely proletarian character, has lately pursued more and more openly a course of compromise with the bourgeoisie and has assumed an obviously anti-working-class character. On the pretext of nationalising industry, they are pursuing a policy of establishing industrial trusts, and on the pretext of restoring the productive forces of the country, they are attempting to abolish the eight-hour day, to introduce piece-work and the Taylor system, black lists and victimisation. This policy threatens to deprive the proletariat of its most important economic gains and to make it a victim of unrestricted exploitation by the bourgeoisie."

Isn't it marvellous?

Kerensky's friends, who, together with him, conducted an imperialist war for the sake of the secret treaties, which promised annexations to the Russian capitalists, the colleagues of Tsereteli, who, on June 11, threatened to disarm the workers,⁶⁴ the Lieberdants,⁶⁵ who screened the rule of the bourgeoisie with high-sounding phrases—these are the very people who accuse Soviet power of "compromising with the bourgeoisie", of "establishing trusts" (that is, of establishing "state capitalism"!), of introducing the Taylor system.

Indeed, the Bolsheviks ought to present Isuv with a medal, and his thesis ought to be exhibited in every workers' club and union as an example of the *provocative speeches of the bourgeoisie*. The workers know these Lieberdants, Tseretelis and Isuvs very well now. They know them from experience, and it would be extremely useful indeed for the workers to think over the reason why *such lackeys of the bourgeoisie* should incite the workers to resist the Taylor system and the "establishment of trusts".

Class-conscious workers will carefully compare the "thesis" of Isuv, a friend of the Lieberdants and the Tseretelis, with the following thesis of the "Left Communists":

"The introduction of labour discipline in connection with the restoration of capitalist management of industry cannot considerably increase the productivity of labour, but it will diminish the class initiative, activity and organisation of the proletariat. It threatens to enslave the working class; it will rouse discontent among the backward elements as well as among the vanguard of the proletariat. In order to implement this system in the face of the hatred prevailing among the proletariat against the 'capitalist saboteurs', the Communist Party would have to rely on the petty bourgeoisie, as against the workers, and in this way would ruin itself as the party of the proletariat" (*Kommunist*, No. 1, p. 8, col. 2).

This is most striking proof that the "Lefts" have fallen into the trap, have allowed themselves to be provoked by the Isuvs and the other Judases of capitalism. It serves as a good lesson for the workers, who know that it is precisely the vanguard of the proletariat which stands for the introduction of labour discipline, and that it is precisely the petty bourgeoisie which is doing its utmost to disrupt this discipline. Speeches such as the thesis of the "Lefts" quoted above are a terrible disgrace and imply the complete renunciation of communism in practice and complete desertion to the camp of the petty bourgeoisie.

"In connection with the restoration of capitalist management"—these are the words with which the "Left Communists" hope to "defend themselves". A perfectly useless defence, because, in the first place, when putting "management" in the hands of capitalists Soviet power appoints workers' Commissars or workers' committees, who watch the manager's every step, who learn from his management experience and who not only have the right to appeal against his orders, but can secure his removal through the organs of Soviet power. In the second place, "management" is entrusted to capitalists only for executive functions while at work, the conditions of which are determined by Soviet power, by which they may be abolished or revised. In the third place, "management" is entrusted by Soviet power to capitalists not as capitalists, but as technicians or organisers for higher salaries. And the workers know very well that ninety-nine per cent of the organisers and first-class technicians of really

large-scale and giant enterprises, trusts or other establishments belong to the capitalist class. But it is precisely these people whom we, the proletarian party, must appoint to "manage" the labour process and the organisation of production, for there are *no* other people who have practical experience in this matter. The workers, having grown out of their infancy when they could have been misled by "Left" phrases or petty-bourgeois loose thinking, are advancing towards socialism precisely through the capitalist management of trusts, through gigantic machine industry, through enterprises which have a turnover of several millions per year—only through such a system of production and such enterprises. The workers are not petty bourgeois. They are not afraid of large-scale "state capitalism", they prize it as their *proletarian* weapon which *their Soviet* power will use against small proprietary disintegration and disorganisation.

This is incomprehensible only to the declassed and consequently thoroughly petty-bourgeois intelligentsia, typified among the "Left Communists" by Osinsky, when he writes in their journal:

"...The whole initiative in the organisation and management of any enterprise will belong to the 'organisers of the trusts'. We are not going to *teach* them, or make rank-and-file workers out of them, we are going to *learn* from them" (*Kommunist*, No. 1, p. 14, col. 2).

The attempted irony in this passage is aimed at my words "learn socialism from the organisers of the trusts".

Osinsky thinks this is funny. He wants to make "rank-and-file workers" out of the organisers of the trusts. If this had been written by a man of the age of which the poet wrote "But fifteen years, not more?..."⁶⁶ there would have been nothing surprising about it. But it is somewhat strange to hear such things from a Marxist who has been taught that socialism is impossible unless it makes use of the achievements of the engineering and culture created by large-scale capitalism. There is no trace of Marxism in this.

No. Only those are worthy of the name of Communists who understand that it is *impossible* to create or introduce socialism *without learning* from the organisers of the trusts. For socialism is not a figment of the imagination, but the

assimilation and application by the proletarian vanguard, which has seized power, of what has been created by the trusts. We, the party of the proletariat, have *no other way* of acquiring the ability to organise large-scale production on trust lines, as trusts are organised, except by acquiring it from first-class capitalist experts.

We have nothing to teach them, unless we undertake the childish task of "teaching" the bourgeois intelligentsia socialism. We must not teach them, but expropriate them (as is being done in Russia "determinedly" enough), *put a stop* to their sabotage, *subordinate* them as a section or group to Soviet power. We, on the other hand, if we are not Communists of infantile age and infantile understanding, must learn from them, and there is something to learn, for the party of the proletariat and its vanguard have *no experience* of independent work in organising giant enterprises which serve the needs of scores of millions of people.

The best workers in Russia have realised this. They have begun to learn from the capitalist organisers, the managing engineers and the technicians. They have begun to learn steadily and cautiously with easy things, gradually passing on to the more difficult things. If things are going more slowly in the iron and steel and engineering industries, it is because they present greater difficulties. But the textile and tobacco workers and tanners are not afraid of "state capitalism" or of "learning from the organisers of the trusts," as the declassed petty-bourgeois intelligentsia are. These workers in the central leading institutions like Chief Leather Committee and Central Textile Committee take their place by the side of the capitalists, *learn from them*, establish trusts, establish "state capitalism", which under Soviet power represents the threshold of socialism, the condition of its firm victory.

This work of the advanced workers of Russia, together with their work of introducing labour discipline, has begun and is proceeding quietly, unobtrusively, without the noise and fuss so necessary to some "Lefts". It is proceeding very cautiously and gradually, taking into account the lessons of practical experience. This hard work, the work of *learning* practically how to build up large-scale production, is the guarantee that we are on the right road, the guarantee that

the class-conscious workers in Russia are carrying on the struggle against small proprietary disintegration and disorganisation, against petty-bourgeois indiscipline*—the guarantee of the victory of communism.

VI

Two remarks in conclusion.

In arguing with the "Left Communists" on April 4, 1918 (see *Kommunist* No. 1, p. 4, footnote), I put it to them bluntly: "Explain what you are dissatisfied with in the railway decree; submit *your* amendments to it. It is your duty as Soviet leaders of the proletariat to do so, otherwise what you say is nothing but empty phrases."

The first issue of *Kommunist* appeared on April 20, 1918, but did not contain a *single word* about how, according to the "Left Communists", the railway decree should be altered or amended.

The "Left Communists" stand condemned by their own silence. They did nothing but *attack* the railway decree with all sorts of insinuations (pp. 8 and 16 of No. 1), they *gave no* articulate answer to the question. "How should the decree be amended if it is wrong?"

No comment is needed. The class-conscious workers will call *such* "criticism" of the railway decree (which is a typical example of our line of action, the line of firmness, the line of dictatorship, the line of proletarian discipline) either "Isvian" criticism or empty phrase-mongering.

Second remark. The first issue of *Kommunist* contained a very flattering review by Comrade Bukharin of my pamphlet *The State and Revolution*. But however much I value the opinion of people like Bukharin, my conscience compels me to say that the *character* of the review reveals a sad and

* It is extremely characteristic that the authors of the theses do not say a single word about the significance of the *dictatorship* of the proletariat in the *economic* sphere. They talk only of the "organisation" and so on. But that is accepted also by the petty bourgeoisie, who shun *dictatorship* by the workers in economic relations. A proletarian revolutionary could never at such a moment "forget" this core of the proletarian revolution, which is directed against the economic foundations of capitalism.

significant fact. Bukharin regards the tasks of the proletarian dictatorship from the point of view of the *past* and not of the future. Bukharin noted and emphasised what the proletarian revolutionary and the petty-bourgeois revolutionary may have in common on the question of the state. But Bukharin "failed to note" the very thing that distinguishes the one from the other.

Bukharin noted and emphasised that the old state machinery must be "smashed" and "blown up", that the bourgeoisie must be "finally and completely strangled" and so on. The frenzied petty bourgeoisie may also want this. And this, in the main, is what our revolution has *already* done between October 1917 and February 1918.

In my pamphlet I also mention what even the most revolutionary petty bourgeois cannot want, what the class-conscious proletarian does want, what our revolution has *not yet* accomplished. On this task, the task of tomorrow, Bukharin said nothing.

And I have all the more reason not to be silent on this point, because, in the first place, a Communist is expected to devote greater attention to the tasks of tomorrow, and not of yesterday, and, in the second place, my pamphlet was written *before* the Bolsheviks seized power, when it was impossible to treat the Bolsheviks to vulgar petty-bourgeois arguments such as: "Yes, *of course, after* seizing power, you 'begin to talk about discipline.'"

"...Socialism will develop into communism...since people will become accustomed to observing the elementary conditions of social life without violence and without subordination." (*The State and Revolution*, pp. 77-78; thus, "elementary conditions" were discussed *before* the seizure of power.)

"...Only then will democracy begin to wither away" when "people gradually become accustomed to observing the elementary rules of social intercourse that have been known for centuries and repeated for thousands of years in all copy-book maxims; they will become accustomed to observing them without force, without compulsion, without the special apparatus for compulsion called the state" (*ibid.*, p. 84; thus mention was made of "copy-book maxims" *before* the seizure of power).

"...The higher phase of the development of communism" (from each according to his ability, to each according to his needs) "...presupposes not the present productivity of labour and not the present ordinary run of people, who, like the seminary students in Pomyalovsky's stories, are capable of damaging the stocks of public wealth just for fun, and of demanding the impossible" (ibid., p. 91).

"Until the higher phase of communism arrives, the socialists demand the strictest control by society and by the state of the measure of labour and the measure of consumption. . ." (ibid.).

"Accounting and control—that is the main thing required for arranging the smooth working, the correct functioning of the first phase of communist society" (ibid., p. 95). And this control must be established not only over "the insignificant minority of capitalists, over the gentry who wish to preserve their capitalist habits", but also over those workers who "have been profoundly corrupted by capitalism" (ibid., p. 96) and over the "idlers, the gentlefolk, the swindlers and suchlike guardians of capitalist traditions" (ibid.).

It is significant that Bukharin did *not* emphasise *this*.

May 5, 1918

Published May 9, 10 and 11, 1918
in *Pravda* Nos. 88, 89 and 90
Signed: *N. Lenin*

Collected Works, Vol. 27

From THE ADDRESS TO THE SECOND ALL-RUSSIA
CONGRESS OF COMMUNIST ORGANISATIONS
OF THE PEOPLES OF THE EAST
NOVEMBER 22, 1919⁶⁷

Permit me, in conclusion, to say something about the situation that is developing insofar as concerns the nationalities of the East. You are representatives of the communist organisations and Communist Parties of various Eastern peoples. I must say that if the Russian Bolsheviks have succeeded in forcing a breach in the old imperialism, in undertaking the exceedingly difficult, but also exceedingly noble, task of blazing new paths of revolution, you, the representatives of the working people of the East, have a still greater and still more unusual task before you. It is becoming quite clear that the socialist revolution which is impending for the whole world will not be merely the victory of the proletariat of each country over its own bourgeoisie. That would be possible if revolutions came easily and swiftly. We know that the imperialists will not allow this, that all countries are armed against their domestic Bolshevism and that their one thought is how to defeat Bolshevism at home. That is why in every country a civil war is brewing, in which the old socialist compromisers are enlisted on the side of the bourgeoisie. Hence, the socialist revolution will not be solely, or chiefly, a struggle of the revolutionary proletarians in each country against their bourgeoisie—no, it will be a struggle of all the imperialist-oppressed colonies and countries, of all dependent countries against international imperialism. Characterising the approach of the world social revolution in the Party Programme we adopted in March of last year, we said that the civil war of the working people against the imperialists and exploiters in all the advanced countries is

beginning to be combined with national wars against international imperialism. That is confirmed by the course of the revolution and will be more and more confirmed as time goes on. It will be the same in the East.

We know that the popular masses of the East will rise as independent participants, as builders of a new life, because hundreds of millions of the people belong to dependent nations, robbed of their full rights, which until now have been objects of international imperialist policy, and have only existed as material to fertilise capitalist culture and civilisation. And when they talk of handing out mandates for colonies, we know very well that it means handing out mandates for spoliation and plunder—handing out to an insignificant section of the world's population the right to exploit the majority of the population of the globe. That majority, which up till then had been completely outside the orbit of historical progress, because it could not constitute an independent revolutionary force, ceased, as we know, to play such a passive role at the beginning of the twentieth century. We know that 1905 was followed by revolutions in Turkey, Persia and China, and that a revolutionary movement developed in India. The imperialist war likewise contributed to the growth of the revolutionary movement, because the European imperialists had to enlist whole colonial regiments in their struggle. The imperialist war aroused the East also and drew its peoples into international politics. Britain and France armed colonial peoples and helped them to familiarise themselves with military technique and up-to-date machines. That knowledge they will use against the imperialist gentry. The period of the awakening of the East in the contemporary revolutions is being succeeded by a period in which all the Eastern peoples will participate in deciding the destiny of the whole world, so as not be simply objects of the enrichment of others. The peoples of the East are becoming alive to the need for practical action, for every nation to take part in shaping the destiny of all mankind.

That is why I think that in the history of the development of the world revolution—which, judging by its beginning, will continue for many years and will demand much effort—

that in the revolutionary struggle, in the revolutionary movement you will be called upon to play a big part and to merge with our struggle against international imperialism. Your participation in the international revolution will confront you with a complicated and difficult task, the accomplishment of which will serve as the foundation for our common success, because here the majority of the people for the first time come into independent motion and will be an active factor in the fight to overthrow international imperialism.

The majority of the Eastern peoples are in a worse position than the most backward country in Europe—Russia. But in our struggle against feudal survivals and capitalism, we succeeded in uniting the peasants and workers of Russia; and our struggle proceeded so easily because the peasants and workers united against capitalism and feudalism. Here contact with the peoples of the East is particularly important, because the majority of the Eastern peoples are typical representatives of the toiling masses—not workers who have passed through the school of capitalist factories, but typical representatives of the toiling, exploited peasant masses who are victims of medieval oppression. The Russian revolution showed how the proletarians, after defeating capitalism and uniting with the vast diffuse mass of working peasants, rose up victoriously against medieval oppression. Now our Soviet Republic has to rally round it all the awakening peoples of the East and, together with them, wage a struggle against international imperialism.

Here you are confronted with a task which did not previously confront the Communists of the world: relying upon the general theory and practice of communism, you must adapt yourselves to peculiar conditions which do not exist in the European countries and be able to apply that theory and practice to conditions in which the bulk of the population are peasants, and in which the task is to wage a struggle against medieval survivals and not against capitalism. That is a difficult and specific task, but a very thankful one, because the masses being drawn into the struggle have taken no part in it until now, and, on the other hand, because the organisation of communist nuclei in the East gives you an

opportunity to maintain the closest contact with the Third International. You must find specific forms for this alliance of the foremost proletarians of the world with the toiling and exploited masses of the East whose conditions are in many cases medieval. We have accomplished on a small scale in our country what you will do on a big scale in big countries. And that latter task you will, I hope, perform with success. Thanks to the communist organisations in the East, of which you here are the representatives, you have contact with the advanced revolutionary proletariat. Your task is to continue to ensure that communist propaganda is carried on in every country in a language the people understand.

It is self-evident that final victory can be won only by the proletariat of all the advanced countries of the world, and we, the Russians, are beginning the work which the British, the French or the German proletariat will consolidate. But we see that they will not be victorious without the aid of the toiling masses of all the oppressed colonial peoples, and primarily of the Eastern peoples. We must realise that the transition to communism cannot be accomplished by the vanguard alone. The task is to arouse the masses to revolutionary activity, to independent action and to organisation, regardless of the level they have reached; to translate the true communist doctrine, which was intended for the Communists of the more advanced countries, into the language of every people; to carry out those practical tasks which must be carried out immediately, and to join the proletarians of other countries in a common struggle.

Such are the problems whose solution you will not find in any communist book, but will find in the common struggle begun by Russia. You will have to tackle that problem and solve it by your own independent experience. In that you will be assisted, on the one hand, by close alliance with the vanguard of the working people of other countries, and, on the other, by ability to find the right approach to the peoples of the East whom you here represent. You will have to base yourselves on the bourgeois nationalism which is awakening, and must awaken, among those peoples, and which has its historical justification. At the same time, you must find your way to the toiling and exploited masses of every country and tell them in a language they understand that their only hope

of emancipation lies in the victory of the international revolution, and that the international proletariat is the only ally of all the hundreds of millions of the toiling and exploited peoples of the East.

Such is the immense task which confronts you, and which, thanks to the era of revolution and the growth of the revolutionary movement—of that there can be no doubt—will, by the joint efforts of the communist organisations of the East, be successfully accomplished and crowned by complete victory over international imperialism.

Izvestia of the C.C. R.C.P.(B.),
No. 9, December 20, 1919

Collected Works, Vol. 30

PRELIMINARY DRAFT OF THESES ON THE NATIONAL AND COLONIAL QUESTIONS

FOR THE SECOND CONGRESS OF THE COMMUNIST INTERNATIONAL⁶⁸

In submitting for discussion the following draft theses on the national and colonial questions for the Second Congress of the Communist International, I would request all comrades, especially those who possess concrete information on one or another of these very complex problems, to let me have their opinions, amendments, addenda and concrete remarks *in the most concise form (no more than two or three pages)*, particularly on the following points:

- Austrian experience.
- Polish-Jewish and Ukrainian experience.
- Alsace-Lorraine and Belgium.
- Ireland.
- Danish-German, Italo-French and Italo-Slav relations.
- Balkan experience.
- Eastern peoples.
- Struggle against Pan-Islamic movement.
- Relations in the Caucasus.
- The Bashkir and Tatar republics.
- Kirghizia.
- Turkestan, its experience.
- Negroes in America.
- Colonies.
- China-Korea-Japan.

N. Lenin

June 5, 1920

1) The abstract or formal treatment of equality in general, and national equality in particular, is in the very nature of bourgeois democracy. Under the guise of the equality of individuals in general, bourgeois democracy proclaims the formal or legal equality of the property-owner and the proletarian, the exploiter and the exploited, thereby grossly deceiving the oppressed classes. On the plea that all men are absolutely equal, the bourgeoisie is transforming the idea of equality, which is itself a reflection of the relations of commodity production, into a weapon in its struggle against the abolition of classes. The demand for equality has real meaning only as a demand for the abolition of classes.

2) In conformity with its fundamental task of combating bourgeois democracy and exposing its falsity and hypocrisy, the Communist Party, as the conscious champion of the proletarian struggle to overthrow the bourgeois yoke, must base its policy in the national question too, not on abstract and formal principles, but, firstly, on an exact appraisal of the specific historical situation and, primarily, of economic conditions; secondly, on a clear distinction between the interests of the oppressed classes, of the working and exploited people, and the general concept of national interests as a whole, which implies the interests of the ruling class; thirdly, on an equally clear distinction between the oppressed, dependent and subject nations and the oppressing, exploiting and sovereign nations, in order to counter the bourgeois-democratic lies obscuring the colonial and financial enslavement of the vast majority of the world's population by an insignificant minority of the richest and advanced capitalist countries, which is characteristic of the era of finance capital and imperialism.

3) The imperialist war of 1914-18 has very clearly revealed to all nations and to the oppressed classes of the whole world the falsity of the bourgeois-democratic phrase-mongering by practically demonstrating that the Treaty of Versailles of the celebrated "Western democracies" is an even more brutal and despicable act of violence against weak nations than was the Treaty of Brest-Litovsk of the German Junkers and the Kaiser. The League of Nations and the whole post-war policy of the Entente reveal this truth with

even greater clarity and distinctness; they are everywhere intensifying the revolutionary struggle, both of the proletariat in the advanced countries and of the labouring masses in the colonial and dependent countries. They are hastening the collapse of the petty-bourgeois nationalist illusion that under capitalism nations can live together in peace and equality.

4) From these fundamental premises it follows that the whole policy of the Communist International on the national and colonial questions should rest on closer union of the proletarians and working masses generally of all nations and countries for a joint revolutionary struggle to overthrow the landowners and the bourgeoisie. For this alone will guarantee victory over capitalism, without which the abolition of national oppression and inequality is impossible.

5) The world political situation has now placed the dictatorship of the proletariat on the order of the day. World political developments inevitably revolve around one central point—the struggle of the world bourgeoisie against the Soviet Russian Republic, around which are inevitably grouping, on the one hand, the Soviet movements of the advanced workers of all countries, and, on the other, all the national-liberation movements in the colonies and among the oppressed nationalities, who are being taught by bitter experience that their only salvation lies in the victory of the Soviet system over world imperialism.

6) Consequently, one cannot confine oneself at the present time to the bare recognition or proclamation of the need for closer union between the working people of the various nations; it is necessary to pursue a policy that will achieve the closest alliance of all the national and colonial liberation movements with Soviet Russia, the form of this alliance to be determined by the degree of development of the communist movement among the proletariat of each country, or of the bourgeois-democratic liberation movement of the workers and peasants in backward countries or among backward nationalities.

7) Federation is a transitional form to the complete unity of the working people of different nations. The advisability

of federation has already been demonstrated in practice both by the relations between the R.S.F.S.R. and other Soviet Republics (the Hungarian, Finnish and Latvian⁶⁹ in the past, and the Azerbaijan and Ukrainian in the present), and by the relations within the R.S.F.S.R. in respect of the nationalities which formerly enjoyed neither statehood nor autonomy (e.g., the Bashkir and Tatar autonomous republics in the R.S.F.S.R., founded in 1919 and 1920).

8) The task of the Communist International in this respect is further to develop and also to study and to test by experience these new federations which are arising on the basis of the Soviet system and the Soviet movement. In recognising that federation is a transitional form to complete unity, it is necessary to strive for ever closer federal unity, bearing in mind, firstly, that the Soviet republics, surrounded as they are by the imperialist powers of the whole world—which from the military standpoint are immeasurably stronger—cannot possibly continue to exist without the closest alliance; secondly, that close economic alliance between the Soviet republics is necessary, otherwise it will be impossible to restore the productive forces ruined by imperialism and ensure the well-being of the working people; and thirdly, that there is a tendency towards the creation of a single world economy, regulated by the proletariat of all nations as an integral whole and according to a common plan. This tendency is already quite clearly revealed under capitalism and is bound to be further developed and fully consummated under socialism.

9) As far as interstate relations are concerned, the national policy of the Communist International cannot be limited to the bare, formal, purely declaratory and in reality non-committal recognition of the equality of nations to which the bourgeois democrats confine themselves—both those who frankly admit themselves to be such and those who assume the name of socialists (the socialists of the Second International, for example).

In all their propaganda and agitation—both inside and outside parliament—the Communist parties must consistently expose the constant violation of the equality of nations and of the guaranteed rights of national minorities that takes place in all capitalist countries, despite their “democratic”

constitutions. But in addition it is necessary, firstly, constantly to explain that only the Soviet system is capable of securing real equality of nations, by uniting at first the proletarians and then the whole mass of the working population in the struggle against the bourgeoisie; and, secondly, all Communist parties should render direct aid to the revolutionary movements among the dependent and underprivileged nations (for example, Ireland, the Negroes in America, etc.) and in the colonies.

Without the latter condition, which is particularly important, the struggle against the oppression of dependent nations and colonies as well as recognition of their right to secede are but a mendacious signboard, as is evidenced by the parties of the Second International.

10) Recognition of internationalism in word, and its replacement by petty-bourgeois nationalism and pacifism in deed, in all propaganda, agitation and practical work, is very common not only among the parties of the Second International, but also among those which have withdrawn from it, and often even among parties which now call themselves communist. The struggle against this evil, against the most deep-rooted petty-bourgeois national prejudices, becomes the more necessary, the more the task of transforming the dictatorship of the proletariat from a national one (i.e., existing in one country and incapable of determining world politics) into an international one (i.e., a dictatorship of the proletariat covering at least several advanced countries and capable of exercising decisive influence upon the whole of world politics) becomes a pressing question of the day. Petty-bourgeois nationalism proclaims as internationalism the bare recognition of the equality of nations, and nothing more. Quite apart from the fact that this recognition is purely verbal, petty-bourgeois nationalism preserves national egoism intact, whereas proletarian internationalism demands, firstly, that the interests of the proletarian struggle in one country be subordinated to the interests of that struggle on a world scale, and, secondly, that a nation which is achieving victory over the bourgeoisie be able and willing to make the greatest national sacrifices for the sake of overthrowing international capital.

Thus, in countries that are already fully capitalist and have workers' parties that really act as the vanguard of the proletariat, the struggle against opportunist and petty-bourgeois pacifist distortions of the concept and policy of internationalism is a primary and cardinal task.

11) With regard to the more backward states and nations, in which feudal or patriarchal and patriarchal-peasant relations predominate, it is particularly important to bear in mind:

first, that all Communist parties must assist the bourgeois-democratic liberation movement in these countries, and that the duty of rendering the most active assistance rests primarily with the workers of the country upon which the backward nation is dependent colonially or financially;

second, the need for struggle against the clergy and other influential reactionary and medieval elements in backward countries;

third, the need to combat the Pan-Islamic and similar trends which strive to combine the liberation movement against European and American imperialism with an attempt to strengthen the positions of the khans, landowners, mulahs, etc.;

fourth, the need, in backward countries, to give special support to the peasant movement against the landowners, against landed proprietorship, and against all manifestations or survivals of feudalism, and to strive to lend the peasant movement the most revolutionary character by establishing the closest possible alliance between the West European communist proletariat and the revolutionary peasant movement in the East, in the colonies, and in the backward countries generally. It is particularly necessary to exert every effort to apply the basic principles of the Soviet system in countries where pre-capitalist relations predominate—by setting up "working people's Soviets", etc.:

fifth, the need for determined struggle against attempts to give a communist colouring to bourgeois-democratic liberation trends in the backward countries; the Communist International should support bourgeois-democratic national movements in colonial and backward countries only on condition that, in these countries, the elements of future prole-

tarian parties, which will be communist not only in name, are brought together and trained to understand their special tasks, i.e., to fight the bourgeois-democratic movements within their own nations. The Communist International must enter into a temporary alliance with bourgeois democracy in colonial and backward countries, but must not merge with it and must under all circumstances uphold the independence of the proletarian movement even if it is in its earliest embryonic form;

sixth, the need constantly to explain and expose among the broadest working masses of all countries, and particularly of the backward countries, the deception systematically practised by the imperialist powers, which, under the guise of politically independent states, set up states that are wholly dependent upon them economically, financially and militarily. Under modern international conditions there is no salvation for dependent and weak nations except in a union of Soviet republics.

12) The age-old oppression of colonial and weak nationalities by the imperialist powers has not only fired the working masses of the oppressed countries with animosity towards the oppressor nations, but also aroused the distrust of these nations in general, even of their proletariat. The despicable betrayal of socialism by the majority of the official leaders of this proletariat in 1914-19, when "defence of the fatherland" was used as a social-chauvinist cloak to conceal the defence of the "right" of "their own" bourgeoisie to oppress colonies and rob financially dependent countries, was certain to enhance this perfectly legitimate distrust. On the other hand, the more backward the country, the stronger is the hold of small agricultural production, patriarchalism and isolation which inevitably lend particular strength and tenacity to the deepest of petty-bourgeois prejudices, to national egoism and national narrowness. These prejudices are bound to die out very slowly, for they can disappear only after imperialism and capitalism have disappeared in the advanced countries, and after the whole foundation of the economic life of the backward countries has radically changed. It is therefore the duty of the class-conscious communist proletariat of all countries to treat with particular caution and attention the survivals of

national sentiments among the countries and nationalities which have been longest oppressed, and it is equally necessary to make certain concessions with a view to more rapidly overcoming this distrust and these prejudices. Unless the proletariat and, following it, the mass of working people of all countries and nations all over the world voluntarily strive for alliance and unity, the victory over capitalism cannot be successfully accomplished.

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Collected Works, Vol. 31

From THE REPORT
ON THE INTERNATIONAL SITUATION
AND THE FUNDAMENTAL TASKS OF THE
COMMUNIST INTERNATIONAL AT THE SECOND
CONGRESS OF THE COMMUNIST INTERNATIONAL
JULY 19, 1920

Comrades, in conclusion I shall deal with one other aspect of the subject. Our comrade, the chairman, has said that our Congress deserves the title of World Congress. I think he is right, particularly because we have here quite a number of representatives of the revolutionary movement in backward colonial countries. This is only a small beginning; but the important thing is that a beginning has been made. The uniting of the revolutionary proletarians of the advanced capitalist countries with the revolutionary masses of those countries where there is no proletariat, or hardly any, with the oppressed masses of colonial, Eastern countries, is taking place at this Congress. The riveting of the bonds of unity depends upon us, and I am sure we shall achieve it. World imperialism must fall when the revolutionary onslaught of the exploited and oppressed workers in each country, overcoming the resistance of the petty-bourgeois elements and the influence of the small upper layer of labour aristocrats, merges with the revolutionary onslaught of hundreds of millions of people who have hitherto stood outside of history and have been regarded merely as the object of history.

The imperialist war has helped the revolution; the bourgeoisie dragged soldiers out of the colonies, out of backward countries, out of isolation, with a view to their taking part in this imperialist war. The British bourgeoisie impressed on soldiers from India that it was the business of the Indian peasants to defend Great Britain against Germany; the French bourgeoisie impressed on soldiers from the French

colonies that it was the business of the coloured people to defend France. They taught them the use of arms. This is a very useful thing, and we might express our deep gratitude to the bourgeoisie for it—express our gratitude on behalf of all the Russian workers and peasants, and on behalf of the entire Russian Red Army, in particular. The imperialist war has drawn the dependent peoples into world history. And one of the most important tasks confronting us now is to consider how the foundation-stone of the organisation of the Soviet movement can be laid in the *non*-capitalist countries. Soviets are possible there; they will not be Workers' Soviets, but Peasants' Soviets, or Soviets of Working People.

Much work will have to be done; mistakes will be inevitable; many difficulties will be encountered on this path. The fundamental task of the Second Congress is to elaborate, or indicate, the practical principles that will enable the work, carried on until now among hundreds of millions of people in an unorganised way, to be carried on in an organised, coherent and systematic way.

Now, a year, or a little more, after the First Congress of the Communist International, we come out as the victors over the Second International; the ideas of the Soviets have now spread not only among the workers of the civilised countries, they are intelligible and known not only to them; the workers of all countries laugh at the wiseacres, not a few of whom call themselves socialists and argue in a learned or quasi-learned manner about the Soviet "system", as the German system-makers are fond of calling it, or the Soviet "idea", as the British Guild Socialists⁷⁰ call it. Not infrequently, these arguments about the Soviet "system" or "idea" have clouded the eyes and the minds of the workers. But the workers are brushing aside this pedantic rubbish and are taking up the weapon which the Soviets have provided. An appreciation of the role and significance of Soviets has now also spread to the lands of the East.

A basis for the Soviet movement has been laid all over the East, all over Asia, among all the colonial peoples.

The proposition that the exploited must rise against the exploiters and set up their Soviets is not a very complicated one. After our experience, after two and a half years of the existence of the Soviet Republic in Russia, after the First

Congress of the Third International, it is becoming intelligible all over the world to hundreds of millions of people oppressed by the exploiters; and if we in Russia are often obliged to compromise, to bide our time, for we are weaker than the international imperialists, we know that we are the defenders of the interests of masses numbering 1,250 million. For the time being we are hampered by obstacles, prejudices and ignorance which hour by hour are becoming things of the past; but we are increasingly representing and really defending this 70 per cent of the world's population, this mass of working and exploited people. We can proudly say: at the First Congress we were actually only propagandists, we only spread the main ideas among the proletariat of the whole world, we only issued a call for struggle, we only asked—where are the people who are capable of taking this path? Now, however, the advanced proletariat is everywhere with us. Everywhere we have a proletarian army, although sometimes it is badly organised and needs reorganising; and if our international comrades now help us to organise a united army, no shortcomings will prevent us from performing our task. And this task is the task of world proletarian revolution, the task of creating a world Soviet Republic. (*Prolonged applause.*)

Pravda No. 162, July 24, 1920

Collected Works, Vol. 31

REPORT OF THE COMMISSION ON THE NATIONAL AND COLONIAL QUESTIONS AT THE SECOND CONGRESS OF THE COMMUNIST INTERNATIONAL JULY 26, 1920

Comrades, I shall confine myself to a brief introduction, after which Comrade Maring, who was secretary of our commission, will give you a detailed account of the changes we have made in the theses. He will be followed by Comrade Roy who formulated supplementary theses. Our commission unanimously adopted both the preliminary theses, as amended, and the supplementary theses. We have thus reached complete unanimity on all major issues. I shall now make a few brief remarks.

First, what is the cardinal, underlying idea of our theses? The distinction between oppressed and oppressor nations. And unlike the Second International and bourgeois democracy, we emphasise this distinction. In this age of imperialism, it is particularly important for the proletariat and the Communist International to establish concrete economic facts and to proceed from concrete realities and not from abstract postulates in the solution of all colonial and national problems.

The characteristic feature of imperialism is the division of the whole world, as we now see, into a large number of oppressed nations and an insignificant number of oppressor nations which, however, command colossal wealth and powerful armed forces. The overwhelming majority of the world's population, more than a thousand million, very probably even 1,250 million people—if we take the total population of the world as 1,750 million—or about 70 per cent of the world's population, is accounted for by oppressed nations, which are either in a state of direct colonial dependence or represent semi-colonies, as, for example, Persia,

Turkey and China, or, having suffered defeat at the hands of a big imperialist power, have been made greatly dependent on that power by virtue of peace treaties. This distinction, this idea of dividing the nations into oppressor and oppressed, runs through all the theses, not only the first theses published earlier over my signature, but also the theses presented by Comrade Roy. The latter were framed chiefly from the standpoint of the situation in India and other big Asian countries oppressed by Britain. That is what makes them so valuable.

The second basic idea of our theses is that in the present world situation, after the imperialist war, international relations, the whole world system of states, are determined by the struggle of a small group of imperialist nations against the Soviet movement and the Soviet states headed by Soviet Russia. Unless we bear that in mind, we shall not be able to present a single national and colonial question correctly, even if it concerns a very remote part of the world. The Communist parties, both in civilised and backward countries alike, can present and settle political questions correctly only if they make this their starting-point.

Thirdly, I should like especially to emphasise the question of the bourgeois-democratic movement in backward countries. It was this question that gave rise to some differences. We discussed whether it would be correct, in principle and in the theory, to state that the Communist International and the Communist parties must support the bourgeois-democratic movement in backward countries. As a result of our discussion, we arrived at the unanimous decision to speak of the national revolutionary movement rather than the "bourgeois-democratic" movement. There need not be the slightest doubt that every national movement can only be a bourgeois-democratic movement, for the overwhelming mass of the population in backward countries consists of peasants who represent bourgeois-capitalist relationships. It would be utopian to believe that proletarian parties, if indeed they can emerge in these backward countries, could pursue communist tactics and a communist policy without establishing definite relations with the peasant movement and without giving it effective support. But it was objected that if we speak of the bourgeois-democratic movement, we shall be

obliterating all distinction between the reformist and the revolutionary movement. Yet that distinction has been very clearly revealed of late in backward and colonial countries, for the imperialist bourgeoisie is doing everything within its power to implant a reformist movement among the oppressed nations too. There has been a certain *rapprochement* between the bourgeoisie of the exploiting countries and those of the colonial countries, so that very often—perhaps even in most cases—although the bourgeoisie of the oppressed countries does support the national movement, it is working hand in glove with the imperialist bourgeoisie, that is, joins forces with it against all revolutionary movements and revolutionary classes. This was irrefutably demonstrated in the commission, and we decided that the only correct thing was to take this distinction into account and in nearly all cases substitute the term "national revolutionary" for the term "bourgeois-democratic". The significance of this change is that we, as Communists, should and will support bourgeois liberation movements in the colonies only when they are genuinely revolutionary, and when their exponents do not hinder our work of educating and organising the peasantry and the broad mass of the exploited in a revolutionary spirit. If these conditions do not exist, the Communists in these countries must combat the reformist bourgeoisie, among which are also the heroes of the Second International. Reformist parties already exist in the colonial countries, and in some cases their spokesmen call themselves Social-Democrats and socialists. The distinction I referred to has been made in all the theses with the result, I think, that our view is now formulated much more precisely.

Next, I would like to make a remark on peasants' Soviets. The practical activities of the Russian Communists in the former tsarist colonies, in such backward countries as Turkestan, etc., confronted us with the question of how to apply the communist tactics and policy in pre-capitalist conditions. For the chief determining feature in these countries is the domination of pre-capitalist relationships, and there can therefore be no question of a purely proletarian movement. There is practically no industrial proletariat in these countries. Despite this, however, even there we have assumed, we must assume, the role of leader. Experience showed the

colossal difficulties we have to overcome in these countries. But the practical results achieved are proof that despite these difficulties we are in a position to inspire in the masses the urge for independent political thought and independent political action even where there is practically no proletariat. For us this work is more difficult than it will be for comrades in the West European countries, because in Russia the proletariat is overwhelmed with the work of state administration. And it is quite understandable that peasants living in semi-feudal dependence can fully appreciate the idea of Soviet organisation and translate it into practice. It is also clear that the oppressed masses, those who are exploited not only by merchant capital but also by the feudals, and by a state based on feudalism, can apply this weapon, this type of organisation in their own conditions too. The idea of Soviet organisation is a simple one, and is applicable not only to proletarian, but also to peasant feudal and semi-feudal relations. Our experience in this respect is not very considerable as yet, but the debate in the commission, in which several representatives from colonial countries participated, convincingly demonstrated that the Communist International theses should indicate that peasants' Soviets, Soviets of the exploited, are a weapon that can be employed not only in capitalist countries, but also in countries with pre-capitalist relations, and it is the bounden duty of Communist parties, and of the elements that are prepared to found Communist parties, to conduct propaganda in favour of peasants' Soviets, or working people's Soviets, everywhere, backward countries and colonies included. Wherever conditions permit, they must make immediate attempts to set up Soviets of the working people.

This opens up a very interesting and very important field for practical activity. So far our common experience in this respect is not very great, but gradually more and more data will accumulate. There can be no question but that the proletariat of the advanced countries can and should assist the labouring masses of the backward countries and that the backward countries can develop and emerge from their present state when the victorious proletariat of the Soviet Republics extends a helping hand to these masses and is in a position to give them support.

There was a rather lively debate on this question in the commission, and not only in connection with my theses, but still more in connection with Comrade Roy's theses, which he will defend here and certain amendments to which were adopted unanimously.

This is how the question had been presented. Is it true that the capitalist stage of economic development is inevitable for those backward nations which are now liberating themselves and in which some progress is to be observed since the war? We replied in the negative. If the victorious revolutionary proletariat conducts systematic propaganda among them, while the Soviet governments come to their assistance with all the means at their command—in that event, it would be wrong to assume that the capitalist stage of development is inevitable for the backward nationalities. In all the colonies and backward countries, we should not only build independent contingents of fighters and party organisations, not only launch immediate propaganda for the organisation of peasants' Soviets and strive to adapt them to pre-capitalist conditions, but the Communist International should advance and theoretically substantiate the proposition that these backward countries can, with the aid of the proletariat of the advanced countries, go over to the Soviet system and, through definite stages of development, to communism, without having to pass through the capitalist stage.

The necessary means for this cannot be indicated beforehand. Practical experience will suggest them. But it has been definitely established that the idea of Soviets is understood by the mass of working people of even the most remote nations, that the Soviets should be adapted to the conditions of the pre-capitalist social system, and that the Communist parties should immediately, and in all parts of the world, begin work in this direction.

I wish also to mention the importance of revolutionary work by the Communist parties not only in their own countries, but also in colonial countries, and particularly among the troops which the exploiting nations employ to keep the colonial peoples in subjection.

Comrade Quelch of the British Socialist Party spoke of this in our commission. He said that the rank-and-file British worker would consider it treachery to help the

enslaved nations in their revolts against British rule. True, the jingoist⁷¹ and chauvinist-minded labour aristocrats of Britain and America represent a very great danger for socialism, and a very strong pillar of the Second International. We are here confronted with the greatest treachery by the leaders and workers belonging to this bourgeois International. The colonial question was discussed in the Second International too. The Basle Manifesto⁷² is quite clear on this point, too. The parties of the Second International pledged revolutionary action, but they have given no sign of genuine revolutionary work or of assistance to the exploited and dependent nations in their revolt against the oppressor nations. And this, I think, applies also to most of the parties that have withdrawn from the Second International and wish to join the Third International. This we must declare publicly, for all to hear, and this cannot be refuted. We shall see if any attempt is made to refute it.

All these considerations were made the basis of our resolutions which undoubtedly are too long, but which, I feel sure, will nevertheless prove of value and will assist in the development and organisation of genuine revolutionary work in connection with the colonial and national questions. And that is our principal task.

*The Second Congress of the
Communist International*
No. 6, August 7, 1920
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Collected Works, Vol. 31

LETTER TO AUSTRIAN COMMUNISTS

The Austrian Communist Party has decided to boycott the elections to the bourgeois-democratic parliament. The recently concluded Second Congress of the Communist International recognised Communist *participation* in elections to bourgeois parliaments and in the work of these parliaments to be the correct tactics.

Judging by the reports of the delegates of the Austrian Communist Party, I have no doubt that it will place the decision of the Communist International above the decisions of one of the parties. Nor can there be any doubt that the Austrian Social-Democrats, traitors to socialism who have gone over to the bourgeoisie, will gloat over the Communist International decision, which is at variance with the boycott decision of the Austrian Communist Party. However, politically conscious workers will, of course, pay no attention to the malicious glee of such gentlemen as the Austrian Social-Democrats, associates of the Scheidemanns and Noskes, the Albert Thomas and Gomperses. The servility of Messrs. the Renners to the bourgeoisie has become adequately manifest, and in all countries the workers' indignation against the heroes of the Second, or Yellow, International is growing and spreading.

The Austrian Social-Democratic gentry behave in the bourgeois parliament, as in all fields of their "work", down to their own press, like petty-bourgeois democrats who are only capable of spineless vacillation, while actually being completely dependent on the capitalist class. The reason Communists enter the bourgeois parliament is that the platform of this thoroughly rotten capitalist institution, where the working class and all other working people are deceived, is another medium for exposing deception.

One of the arguments advanced by the Austrian Communists against participation in a bourgeois parliament deserves somewhat more careful consideration. This argument is as follows:

"Parliament is important to Communists only as a platform for propaganda. We in Austria have the Council of Workers' Deputies as a platform for propaganda. We therefore refuse to take part in the elections to the bourgeois parliament. In Germany there is no Council of Workers' Deputies to speak of. That is why the German Communists employ different tactics."

I consider this argument unsound. So long as we are not strong enough to sweep away the bourgeois parliament we must work against it from without and from within. So long as any considerable number of working people (not only proletarians, but also semi-proletarians and small peasants) trust bourgeois-democratic instruments employed by the bourgeoisie for deceiving the workers, we must explain this deception *from the very platform* which backward sections of the workers, and particularly of the non-proletarian labouring masses, consider most important and most authoritative.

So long as we Communists are unable to seize state power and hold elections, in which only working people vote for *their* Soviets against the bourgeoisie, so long as the bourgeoisie wields state power and calls on the different classes of the population to take part in the elections, it is our duty to participate in the elections for the purpose of conducting propaganda among all the working people, and not only among the proletarians. So long as the bourgeois parliament is a medium for deceiving the workers, phrases about "democracy" being used to cover up financial swindles and all sorts of bribery (nowhere is bribery of the particularly "subtle" kind practised by the bourgeoisie towards writers, members of parliament, lawyers, and others on so large a scale as in the bourgeois parliament), it is the duty of us Communists to be in this very institution (which is supposed to *express the people's will* but actually covers up the *deception of the people by the rich*) and consistently expose deception, expose each and every instance of Renner and Co.'s defection to the capitalists against the workers. In parliament the relations between bourgeois parties and groups manifest themselves most frequently and mirror the relations

between all the classes of bourgeois society. That is why in the bourgeois parliament, from within, we Communists must explain to the people the *truth* about the attitude of the classes to the parties, about the attitude of the landowners to the farm labourers, of the rich peasants to the poor peasantry, of big capitalists to office workers and petty proprietors, and so on.

The proletariat *must* know all this in order to learn to understand all the foul and refined tricks of the capitalists, in order to learn to influence the petty-bourgeois masses, the non-proletarian masses of the working people. Without this "schooling" the proletariat cannot cope successfully with the tasks of the *dictatorship of the proletariat*, for even then the bourgeoisie, operating from its new position (that of a deposed class), will continue, in different forms and in different fields, its policy of duping the peasants, of bribing and intimidating office workers, of covering its mercenary and filthy aspirations with phrases about "democracy".

No, the Austrian Communists will not be frightened by the malicious glee of the Renners and similar minions of the bourgeoisie. The Austrian Communists will not be afraid to declare their open and forthright recognition of international proletarian discipline. We are proud that we settle the great problems of the workers' struggle for emancipation by submitting to the international discipline of the revolutionary proletariat, taking due account of the experience of the workers in different countries, reckoning with their knowledge and their will, and thus giving effect in deeds (and not in words, as the Renners, Fritz Adlers and Otto Bauers do) to the unity of the working-class struggle for communism throughout the world.

August 15, 1920

N. Lenin

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PRELIMINARY DRAFT OF THE RESOLUTION
OF THE TENTH CONGRESS
OF THE RUSSIAN COMMUNIST PARTY
ON PARTY UNITY⁷³

1. The Congress calls the attention of all members of the Party to the fact that the unity and cohesion of the ranks of the Party, the guarantee of complete mutual confidence among Party members and genuine team-work that really embodies the unanimity of will of the vanguard of the proletariat, are particularly essential at the present juncture when a number of circumstances are increasing the vacillation among the petty-bourgeois population of the country.

2. Notwithstanding this, even before the general Party discussion on the trade unions, certain signs of factionalism had been apparent in the Party—the formation of groups with separate platforms, striving to a certain degree to segregate and create their own group discipline. Such symptoms of factionalism were manifested for example, at a Party conference in Moscow (November 1920) and in Kharkov, both by the so-called “Workers’ Opposition”,⁷⁴ and partly by the so-called “Democratic-Centrism”⁷⁵ group.

All class-conscious workers must clearly realise that factionalism of any kind is pernicious and impermissible, for no matter how members of individual groups may desire to safeguard Party unity, in practice factionalism inevitably leads to the weakening of team-work and to intensified and repeated attempts by the enemies of the Party, who have wormed their way into it because it is the governing Party, to widen the cleavage and to use it for counter-revolutionary purposes.

The way the enemies of the proletariat take advantage of every deviation from a thoroughly consistent communist line

was perhaps most strikingly shown in the case of the Kronstadt mutiny, when the bourgeois counter-revolutionaries and whiteguards in all the countries of the world immediately expressed their readiness to accept even the slogans of the Soviet system, if only they might thereby secure the overthrow of the dictatorship of the proletariat in Russia, and when the Socialist-Revolutionaries and the bourgeois counter-revolutionaries in general resorted to Kronstadt to slogans calling for an insurrection against the Soviet Government of Russia ostensibly in the interest of Soviet power.⁷⁶ These facts fully prove that the whiteguards can and do disguise themselves as Communists, and even as the most Left Communists, solely for the purpose of weakening and destroying the bulwark of the proletarian revolution in Russia. Menshevik leaflets distributed in Petrograd on the eve of the Kronstadt mutiny likewise show how the Mensheviks took advantage of the disagreements and certain rudiments of factionalism in the Russian Communist Party actually in order to egg on and support the Kronstadt mutineers, the Socialist-Revolutionaries and the whiteguards, while claiming to be opponents of mutiny and supporters of Soviet power, only with supposedly slight modifications.

3. In this question, propaganda should consist, on the one hand, of a comprehensive explanation of the harmfulness and danger of factionalism from the point of view of Party unity and of achieving unanimity of will among the vanguard of the proletariat as the fundamental condition for the success of the dictatorship of the proletariat; and, on the other hand, of an explanation of the peculiar features of the latest tactical devices of the enemies of Soviet power. These enemies, having realised the hopelessness of counter-revolution under an openly whiteguard flag, are now doing their utmost to utilise the disagreements within the Russian Communist Party and to further the counter-revolution in one way or another by transferring power to political groups which outwardly are closest to the recognition of Soviet power.

Propaganda must also teach the lessons of preceding revolutions, in which the counter-revolution supported that opposition to the extreme revolutionary party which stood closest to the latter in order to undermine and overthrow the revolutionary dictatorship and thus pave the way for the

subsequent complete victory of the counter-revolution, of the capitalists and landowners.

4. In the practical struggle against factionalism, every organisation of the Party must take strict measures to prevent any factional actions whatsoever. Criticism of the Party's shortcomings, which is absolutely necessary, must be conducted in such a way that every practical proposal shall be submitted immediately, without any delay, in the most precise form possible, for consideration and decision to the leading local and central bodies of the Party. Moreover, everyone who criticises must see to it that the form of his criticism takes into account the position of the Party, surrounded as it is by a ring of enemies, and that the content of his criticism is such that, by directly participating in Soviet and Party work, he can test the rectification of the errors of the Party or of individual Party members in practice. The analysis of the general line of the Party, the estimate of its practical experience, the verification of the fulfilment of its decisions, the study of methods of rectifying errors, etc., must under no circumstances be submitted for preliminary discussion to groups formed on the basis of "platforms", etc., but must in all cases be submitted for discussion directly to all the members of the Party. For this purpose, the Congress orders that the *Diskussionny Listok* and special symposiums be published more regularly, and the unceasing efforts be made to ensure that criticism shall be concentrated on essentials and not assume a form capable of assisting the class enemies of the proletariat.

5. Rejecting in principle the deviation towards syndicalism and anarchism, to the examination of which a special resolution is devoted, and instructing the Central Committee to secure the complete elimination of all factionalism, the Congress at the same time declares that every practical proposal concerning questions to which the so-called Workers' Opposition group, for example, has devoted special attention, such as purging the Party of non-proletarian and unreliable elements, combating bureaucracy, developing democracy and the initiative of the workers, etc., must be examined with the greatest care and tried out in practical work. The Party must know that we do not take all the measures that are necessary in regard to these questions because we encounter

a number of obstacles of various kinds, and that, while ruthlessly rejecting unpractical and factional pseudo-criticisms, the Party will unceasingly continue-trying out new methods—to fight with all the means at its disposal against bureaucracy, for the extension of democracy and initiative, for detecting, exposing and expelling from the Party elements that have wormed their way into its ranks, etc.

6. The Congress, therefore, hereby declares dissolved and orders the immediate dissolution of all groups without exception that have been formed on the basis of one platform or another (such as the Workers' Opposition group, the Democratic Centralism group, etc.). Non-observance of this decision of the Congress shall incur absolute and immediate expulsion from the Party.

7. In order to ensure strict discipline within the Party and in all Soviet work and to secure the maximum unanimity in eliminating all factionalism, the Congress authorises the Central Committee, in cases of breach of discipline or of a revival or toleration of factionalism, to apply all Party penalties, including expulsion, and in regard to members of the Central Committee to reduce them to the status of candidate members and even, as an extreme measure, to expel them from the Party. A necessary condition for the application of such an extreme measure to members of the Central Committee, candidate members of the Central Committee and members of the Control Commission is the convocation of a Plenary Meeting of the Central Committee, to which all candidate members of the Central Committee and all members of the Control Commission shall be invited. If such a general assembly of the most responsible leaders of the Party, by a two-thirds majority, deems it necessary to reduce a member of the Central Committee to the status of candidate member, or to expel him from the Party, this measure shall be put into effect immediately.

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Collected Works, Vol. 32

PRELIMINARY DRAFT OF THE RESOLUTION OF THE TENTH CONGRESS OF THE RUSSIAN COMMUNIST PARTY ON THE SYNDICALIST AND ANARCHIST DEVIATION IN OUR PARTY

1. A syndicalist and anarchist deviation has been definitely revealed in our Party in the past few months. It calls for the most resolute measures of ideological struggle and also for purging the Party and restoring its health.

2. The said deviation is due partly to the influx into the Party of former Mensheviks, and also of workers and peasants who have not yet fully assimilated the communist world outlook. Mainly, however, this deviation is due to the influence exercised upon the proletariat and on the Russian Communist Party by the petty-bourgeois element, which is exceptionally strong in our country, and which inevitably engenders vacillation towards anarchism, particularly at a time when the conditions of the masses have greatly deteriorated as a consequence of the crop failure and the devastating effects of war, and when the demobilisation of the army numbering millions releases hundreds and hundreds of thousands of peasants and workers unable immediately to find regular means of livelihood.

3. The most theoretically complete and clearly defined expression of this deviation (*or*: one of the most complete, etc., expressions of this deviation) is the theses and other literary productions of the so-called Workers' Opposition group. Sufficiently illustrative of this is, for example, the following thesis propounded by this group: "The organisation of the administration of the economy is the function of an All-Russia Congress of Producers organised in industrial trade unions, which elect a central organ for the administration of the entire economy of the republic."

The ideas at the bottom of this and numerous analogous statements are radically wrong in theory, and represent a complete rupture with Marxism and communism as well as with the practical experience of all semi-proletarian revolutions and of the present proletarian revolution.

First, the concept "producer" combines proletarians with semi-proletarians and small commodity producers, thus radically departing from the fundamental concept of the class struggle and from the fundamental demand that a precise distinction be drawn between classes.

Secondly, banking on the non-Party masses, flirting with them, as expressed in the above-quoted theses, is no less a radical departure from Marxism.

Marxism teaches—and this tenet has not only been formally endorsed by the whole of the Communist International in the decisions of the Second (1920) Congress of the Comintern on the role of the political party of the proletariat, but has also been confirmed in practice by our revolution—that only the political party of the working class, i.e., the Communist Party, is capable of uniting, training and organising a vanguard of the proletariat and of the whole mass of the working people that alone will be capable of withstanding the inevitable petty-bourgeois vacillations of this mass and the inevitable traditions and relapses of narrow craft unionism or craft prejudices among the proletariat, and of guiding all the united activities of the whole of the proletariat, i.e., of leading it politically, and through it, the whole mass of the working people. Without this the dictatorship of the proletariat is impossible.

The wrong understanding of the role of the Communist Party with regard to the non-Party proletariat, and in respect of the first and second factor to the whole mass of working people, is a radical, theoretical departure from communism and a deviation towards syndicalism and anarchism, and this deviation permeates all the views of the Workers' Opposition group.

4. The Tenth Congress of the Russian Communist Party declares that it also regards as radically wrong all attempts on the part of the said group and of other persons to defend their fallacious views by referring to point 5 of the economic section of the Programme of the Russian Communist Party

which deals with the role of the trade unions. This point says that "eventually the trade unions must actually concentrate in their hands the entire administration of the economy as a single economic unit" and that they will "ensure in this way indissoluble ties between the central state administration, the economy and the broad masses of the working people", "drawing" these masses "into the direct work of managing the economy".

This point in the Programme of the Russian Communist Party also states that a condition precedent to the trade unions "eventually concentrating" is that they must "to an increasing degree free themselves from the narrow craft spirit" and embrace the majority "and gradually all" the working people.

Lastly, this point in the Programme of the Russian Communist Party emphasises that "according to the laws of the R.S.F.S.R., and by established practice, the trade unions already participate in all the local and central organs of administration of industry".

Instead of studying the practical experience of participation in administration, and instead of developing this experience further, strictly in conformity with successes achieved and mistakes rectified, the syndicalists and anarchists advance as an immediate slogan "congresses or a congress of producers" "which elect" the organs of administration of the economy. Thus, the leading, educational and organising role of the Party in relation to the trade unions of the proletariat, and of the latter to the half petty-bourgeois and even wholly petty-bourgeois masses of working people, is completely evaded and eliminated, and instead of continuing and correcting the practical work of building new forms of economy already begun by the Soviet state, we get petty-bourgeois-anarchist disruption of this work, which can only lead to the triumph of the bourgeois counter-revolution.

5. In addition to theoretical fallacies and a radically wrong attitude towards the practical experience of economic organisation already begun by the Soviet government, the Congress of the Russian Communist Party discerns in the views of these and analogous groups and persons a gross political mistake and a direct political danger to the very existence of the dictatorship of the proletariat.

In a country like Russia, the overwhelming preponderance of the petty-bourgeois element and the devastation, impoverishment, epidemics, crop failures, extreme want and hardship inevitably resulting from the war, engender particularly sharp vacillations in the temper of the petty-bourgeois and semi-proletarian masses. At one moment the wavering is towards strengthening the alliance between these masses and the proletariat, and at another moment towards bourgeois restoration. The whole experience of all revolutions in the eighteenth, nineteenth, and twentieth centuries shows most clearly and convincingly that the only possible result of these vacillations—if the unity, strength and influence of the revolutionary vanguard of the proletariat is weakened in the slightest degree—can be the restoration of the power and property of the capitalists and landowners.

Hence, the views of the Workers' Opposition and of like-minded elements are not only wrong in theory, but are a practical expression of petty-bourgeois and anarchist wavering. In practice they weaken the consistency of the leading line of the Communist Party and help the class enemies of the proletarian revolution.

6. In view of all this, the Congress of the Russian Communist Party, emphatically rejecting the said ideas which express a syndicalist and anarchist deviation, deems it necessary:

First, to wage an unswerving and systematic ideological struggle against these ideas;

Secondly, the Congress regards the propaganda of these ideas as being incompatible with membership of the Russian Communist Party.

The Congress instructs the Central Committee of the Party strictly to enforce these decisions and at the same time points out that space can and should be devoted in special publications, symposiums, etc., to a most comprehensive interchange of opinion among Party members on all the questions herein indicated.

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Collected Works, Vol. 32

SPEECH AT THE CONCLUSION OF THE
TENTH ALL-RUSSIA CONFERENCE OF THE R.C.P.(B.)⁷⁷
MAY 28, 1921

Comrades, I think I may be quite brief. As you know, we have convened the present conference at short notice with the chief aim of achieving complete clarity between the centre and the local organisations, between Party workers and all Soviet officials with regard to economic policy. I think the conference has quite definitely accomplished this aim. It has been noted here by several comrades that Comrade Osinsky quite correctly expressed the mood of very many, probably even the majority of Party workers in the local organisations, when he said that all doubts must be removed; the policy outlined by the Tenth Party Congress and subsequently confirmed by decrees and resolutions is accepted definitely by the Party as a policy to be carried out seriously and for a long time to come. This is just what the conference has done most emphatically, adding a whole series of further points. When the comrades go back to their local organisations, there will be not the slightest possibility of any incorrect interpretation. Of course, when we outline a policy that is to be implemented over a long period of years, we do not forget for a moment that the international revolution, its pace and development may change everything. The present international situation is marked by the establishment of something in the nature of equilibrium—it is temporary and unstable, but is nevertheless an equilibrium; it is the sort of equilibrium that has made the imperialist powers, for all their hatred of Soviet Russia and their desire to pounce on her, abandon that idea; this is due to the steadily progressing decay of the capitalist world and its constantly diminishing unity at a time when pressure exerted by the oppressed colonial peoples, who number over a thousand million, is grow-

ing stronger year by year, month by month and even week by week. We cannot, however, make conjectures on this score. Today we are influencing the international revolution mainly through our economic policy. Everybody is now looking to the Russian Soviet Republic, the eyes of the working people of all countries, without exception, are turned towards the Soviet Republic—and this is no exaggeration. This much we have achieved. The capitalists cannot hush up, they cannot conceal things; they are, therefore, clutching at our economic mistakes, at our weakness. And the struggle has been carried into this sphere on a world scale. If we solve this problem we shall have made a definite and conclusive gain on a world scale. Questions of economic development, therefore, acquire very exceptional significance. We must achieve victory on this front by a slow, gradual—it is impossible for it to be quick—but steady improvement and progress. It seems to me that the work done by our conference will result in our reaching that goal, absolutely and under any circumstances. (*Applause.*)

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Collected Works, Vol. 32

SPEECH IN DEFENCE OF THE TACTICS OF THE
COMMUNIST INTERNATIONAL AT THE THIRD
CONGRESS OF THE COMMUNIST INTERNATIONAL
JULY 1, 1921⁷⁸

Comrades, to my great regret I must confine myself to self-defence. (*Laughter.*) I say to my great regret, because after acquainting myself with Comrade Terracini's speech and the amendments introduced by three delegations, I should very much like to take the offensive, for, properly speaking, offensive operations are essential against the views defended by Terracini and these three delegations. If the Congress is not going to wage a vigorous offensive against such errors, against such "Left" idiocies, the whole movement is doomed. This is my deep conviction. But we are organised and disciplined Marxists. We cannot be satisfied with speeches against individual comrades. We Russians are already sick to death of these Left phrases. We are people of organisation. In drawing up our plans, we must proceed in an organised way and try to find the correct line. Of course, it is no secret to anyone that our theses are a compromise. But why should they not be? Among Communists, who have already convened their Third Congress and have worked out definite fundamental principles, compromises under certain conditions are necessary. Our theses, put forward by the Russian delegation, were studied and prepared in the most careful way and were the result of long arguments and meetings with various delegations. They aim at establishing the basic line of the Communist International and are especially necessary now after we have not only formally condemned the real Centrists but have expelled them from the Party. Such are the facts. I have to take these theses under my protection. And when now Terracini comes forward and says that we must continue the fight against the Centrists, and further tells how it

is intended to wage this fight, then I say that if these amendments denote a definite trend, a relentless fight against this trend is essential, for otherwise there is no communism and no Communist International. I am surprised that the signature of the Communist Workers' Party of Germany⁷⁹ is not under these amendments. (*Laughter.*) Indeed, just listen to what Terracini is defending and what his amendments say. They begin in this way: "On page 1, column 1, line 19, the word 'majority' should be deleted." Majority! That is extremely dangerous! (*Laughter.*) Then further: instead of the words "basic propositions, insert 'aims'". Basic propositions and aims are two different things; even the anarchists will agree with us about aims, because they too stand for the abolition of exploitation and class differences.

I have met and talked with few anarchists in my life, but all the same I have seen enough of them. I sometimes succeeded in reaching agreement with them about aims, but never as regards principles. Principles—that is not aim, not programme, not tactics and not theory. Tactics and theory are not principles. What distinguishes us from the anarchists as regards principles? The principles of communism consist in the establishment of the dictatorship of the proletariat and in the use of state coercion in the transitional period. Such are the principles of communism, but they are not its aim. And the comrades who have made this proposal have committed an error.

Secondly, it is stated there: "The word 'majority' should be deleted." Read the whole passage:

"The Third Congress of the Communist International is setting out to review questions of tactics under conditions when in a whole number of countries the objective situation has become aggravated in a revolutionary sense, and when a whole number of communist mass parties have been organised, which, incidentally, in their actual revolutionary struggle have nowhere taken into their hands the virtual leadership of the majority of the working class."

And so, they want the word "majority" deleted. If we cannot agree on such simple things, then I do not understand how we can work together and lead the proletariat to victory. Then it is not at all surprising that we cannot reach agree-

ment either on the question of principles. Show me a party which has already won the majority of the working class. Terracini did not even think of adducing any example. Indeed, no such example exists.

And so, the word "aims" is to be put instead of "principles", and the word "majority" is to be deleted. Thank you very much! We shall not do it. Even the German Party—one of the best—does not have the majority of the working class behind it. That is a fact. We, who are facing a most severe struggle, are not afraid to utter this truth, but here you have three delegations who wish to begin with an untruth, for if the Congress deletes the word "majority" it will show by that that it wants an untruth. That is quite clear.

Then comes the following amendment: "On page 4, column 1, line 10, the words 'Open Letter',⁸⁰ etc., should be deleted." I have already heard one speech today in which I found the same idea. But there it was quite natural. It was the speech of Comrade Hempel, a member of the Communist Workers' Party of Germany. He said: "The 'Open Letter' was an act of opportunism." To my great regret and deep shame, I have already heard such views privately. But when at the Congress, after such prolonged debate, the "Open Letter" is declared opportunist—that is a shame and a disgrace! And now Comrade Terracini comes forward in the name of three delegations and wants to delete the words "Open Letter". What is the good then of the fight against the German Communist Workers' Party? The "Open Letter" is a model political step. That is stated in our theses and we must certainly stand by it. It is a model because it is the first act of a practical method of winning over the majority of the working class. Anyone who fails to understand that in Europe—where almost all the proletarians are organised—we must win the majority of the working class is lost to the communist movement; he will never learn anything if he has still not learnt this during three years of the great revolution.

Terracini says that we were victorious in Russia although the Party was very small. He is dissatisfied with what is said in the theses about Czechoslovakia. Here there are 27 amendments, and if I thought of criticising them I should, like some orators, have to speak for not less than three hours. . . . We have said here that in Czechoslovakia the Communist Party

numbers 300,000-400,000 members, that it is essential to win over the majority, to create an invincible force and continue enlisting fresh masses of workers. Terracini is already prepared to attack. He says: if there are already 400,000 workers in the Party, why should we want more? Delete! (*Laughter.*) He is afraid of the word "masses" and wants to eradicate it. Comrade Terracini has little understood the Russian revolution.

We were a small party in Russia, but we had with us in addition the majority of the Soviets of Workers' and Peasants' Deputies throughout the country. (*Shouts: "Quite true!"*) Where do you have that? We had with us almost half the army, which then numbered at least ten million men. Do you really have the majority of the army behind you? Show me such a country! If these views of Comrade Terracini are shared by three other delegations, then not everything is in order in the International! Then we must say: "Stop! A decisive fight! Otherwise the Communist International is ruined."

On the basis of my experience I must say, although I am taking up a defensive position (*laughter*), that the aim and the principle of my speech consist in defense of the resolution and theses prepared by our delegation. It would, of course, be pedantic to say that not a letter in them must be altered. I have had to read many resolutions and I am well aware that very good amendments could be introduced in every line of them. But that would be pedantry. If, nevertheless, I declare now that in a political sense not a single letter can be altered, it is because the amendments, as I see, are of a quite definite political nature and because they lead us along a path that is harmful and dangerous to the Communist International. Therefore, I and all of us and the Russian delegation must insist that not a single letter in the theses is altered. We have not only condemned our Right-wing elements—we have expelled them. But if, like Terracini, people make the fight against the Rights into a sport, then we must say: "Stop! Otherwise the danger will become too serious!"

Terracini has defended the theory of an offensive struggle.⁸¹ In this connection the notorious amendments propose a formula two or three pages long. There is no need for us

to read them. We know what is written there. Terracini stated quite clearly what the issue is about. He defended the theory of an offensive, pointing out "dynamic tendencies" and the "transition from passivity to activity". We in Russia have already had adequate political experience in the struggle against the Centrists. As far back as fifteen years ago we were waging a struggle against our opportunists and Centrists, and also against the Mensheviks, and we were victorious not only over the Mensheviks, but also over the semi-anarchists.

If we had not done this, we would not have been able to retain power in our hands for three and a half years, or even for three and a half weeks, and we would not have been able to convene communist congresses here. "Dynamic tendencies", "transition from passivity to activity"—all these are phrases which the Left Socialist-Revolutionaries used against us. Now they are sitting in prison, defending there the "aims of communism" and thinking of the "transition from passivity to activity". (*Laughter.*) To argue as is done in the proposed amendments is impossible because there is neither Marxism, nor political experience, nor reasoning in them. Have we in our theses elaborated a general theory of the revolutionary offensive? Has Radek or any of us committed such a stupidity? We have spoken of the theory of an offensive in relation to a quite definite country and at a quite definite period.

From our struggle against the Mensheviks we can quote instances showing that even before the first revolution people could be met with who doubted whether the revolutionary party ought to conduct an offensive. If such doubts assailed any Social-Democrat—as we all called ourselves at that time—we took up the struggle against him and said that he was an opportunist, that he did not understand anything of Marxism and the dialectics of the revolutionary party. Is it really possible for a party to dispute whether in general a revolutionary offensive is permissible? To find such examples in our country one would have to go back some fifteen years. If there are Centrists or disguised Centrists who dispute the theory of the offensive, such people should be immediately expelled. That question cannot give rise to disputes. But the fact that even now, after three years of the existence of the

Communist International, we are disputing about "dynamic tendencies", about the "transition from passivity to activity"—that is a shame and a disgrace.

We do not have any dispute about this with Comrade Radek, who drafted these theses jointly with us. Perhaps it was not quite correct to begin talking in Germany about the *theory* of the revolutionary offensive when an actual offensive had not been prepared. Nevertheless the March action was a great step forward in spite of the mistakes of its leaders. But this does not matter. Hundreds of thousands of workers fought heroically. However courageously the Communist Workers' Party of Germany fought against the bourgeoisie, we must say the same thing that was said by Comrade Radek in a Russian article about Hölz. If anyone, even an anarchist, fights heroically against the bourgeoisie, that is, of course, a big matter; but if hundreds of thousands fight against the vile provocation of the social-traitors and against the bourgeoisie, that is a real step forward.

It is very important to be critical of one's mistakes. We began with that. If anyone, after a struggle in which hundreds of thousands have taken part, comes out against this struggle and behaves like Levi, then he should be expelled. And that is what was done. But we must draw a lesson from this. Had we really prepared for an offensive? (*Radek: "We had not even prepared for defence."*) Indeed only newspaper articles talked of an offensive. This theory as applied to the March action in Germany in 1921 was incorrect—we have to admit that—but, in general, the theory of the revolutionary offensive is not at all untrue.

We were victorious in Russia, and, moreover, with such ease, because we prepared for our revolution during the imperialist war. That was the first condition. Ten million workers and peasants in Russia were armed, and our slogan was: an immediate peace at all costs. We were victorious because the vast mass of the peasants were revolutionarily disposed against the big landlords. The Socialist-Revolutionaries, the adherents of the Second and Two-and-a-Half Internationals,⁸² were a big peasant party in November 1917. They demanded revolutionary methods but, like true heroes of the Second and Two-and-a-Half Internationals, lacked sufficient courage to act in a revolutionary way. In August and September 1917

we said: "Theoretically we are fighting the Socialist-Revolutionaries as we did before, but practically we are ready to accept their programme because only we are able to put it into effect." We did as we said. The peasantry, ill-disposed towards us in November 1917, after our victory, who sent a majority of Socialist-Revolutionaries into the Constituent Assembly, were won over by us, if not in the course of a few days—as I mistakenly presupposed and predicted—at any rate in the course of some weeks. The difference was not great. Can you point out any country in Europe where you could win over the majority of the peasantry in the course of some weeks? Perhaps Italy? (*Laughter.*) If it is said that we were victorious in Russia in spite of not having a big party, that only proves that those who say it have not understood the Russian revolution and that they absolutely do not understand how to prepare for a revolution.

Our first step was to create a real Communist Party so as to know who we were talking to and whom we could fully trust. The slogan of the First and Second Congresses was "Down with the Centrists!" If, all along the line and throughout the world, we do not demarcate ourselves from the Centrists and semi-Centrists, whom in Russia we call Mensheviks, then we cannot master even the ABC of communism. Our first task is to create a genuinely revolutionary party and to break with the Mensheviks. But that is only a preparatory school. We are already convening the Third Congress, and Comrade Terracini asserts as before that the task of the preparatory school consists in hunting out, pursuing and exposing Centrists and semi-Centrists. Thank you very much! We have already done this sufficiently. At the Second Congress we already said that the Centrists are our enemies. But, really, we need to go forward now. The second stage after we have organised into a party will consist in learning to prepare for revolution. In many countries we have not even learnt how to assume the leadership. We were victorious in Russia not only because the undisputed majority of the working class (during the elections in 1917 the overwhelming majority of the workers was with us against the Mensheviks) was on our side, but also because half the army, immediately after our seizure of power and nine-tenths of the peasants, in the course of some weeks, came over to our side;

we were victorious because we took not our agrarian programme, but that of the Socialist-Revolutionaries, and put it into effect. Our victory lay in the fact that we carried out the Socialist-Revolutionary programme; that is why this victory was so easy. Is it possible that you in the West can have such illusions? It is ridiculous! Just compare the concrete economic conditions, Comrade Terracini and all of you who have signed the proposed amendments! In spite of the fact that the majority so rapidly came to be on our side, the difficulties confronting us after our victory were very great. Nevertheless we won through because we kept in mind not only our aims but also our principles, and did not tolerate in our Party persons who kept silent about principles but talked of aims, "dynamic tendencies" and the "transition from passivity to activity". Perhaps we shall be blamed because we prefer to keep such gentlemen in prison. But dictatorship is impossible in any other way. We must prepare for dictatorship, and this consists in combating such phrases and such amendments. (*Laughter.*) Throughout, our theses speak of the masses. But, comrades, we need to understand what is meant by the masses. The Communist Workers' Party of Germany, the Left-wing comrades, misuse this word. But Comrade Terracini too, and all those who have signed these amendments, do not know what should be understood by the word "masses".

I have already been speaking too long; hence I wish to say only a few words about the concept "masses". The concept "masses" is one that changes in accordance with changes in the nature of the struggle. At the beginning of the struggle several thousand genuinely revolutionary workers were enough for it to be possible to talk of the masses. If the party succeeds in drawing into the struggle not only its own members, if it succeeds in arousing also non-party people, that is the beginning of winning the masses. During our revolutions there were instances when several thousand workers represented the masses. In the history of our movement, in the history of our struggle against the Mensheviks, you will find many examples where several thousand workers in a town were enough to give a clearly mass character to the movement. If several thousand non-party workers, who usually live a philistine life and drag out a miserable existence,

and who have never heard anything about politics, begin to act in a revolutionary way—there you are confronted with the masses. If the movement spreads and intensifies, it gradually develops into a real revolution. We saw this in 1905 and 1917 during three revolutions, and you too will have to be convinced of this. When the revolution has been sufficiently prepared, the concept “masses” becomes different: several thousand workers no longer constitute the masses. This word begins to denote something else. The concept “masses” undergoes a change so that it implies the majority, and not simply a majority of the workers alone, but the majority of all the exploited. Any other kind of interpretation is impermissible for a revolutionary, any other sense of the word becomes incomprehensible. It is possible that even a small party, the British or American party, for example, after it has thoroughly studied the course of political development and become acquainted with the life and customs of the non-party masses, will at a favourable moment evoke a revolutionary movement (Comrade Radek has pointed to the miners’ strike as a good example). If such a party at that time comes forward with its slogans and succeeds in getting millions of workers to follow it, then you are confronted with a mass movement. I am certainly not denying that a revolution can be begun by a very small party and brought to a victorious conclusion. But we have to know the methods by which the masses can be won over to our side. For this thoroughgoing preparation of revolution is essential. But here you have comrades coming forward with the assertion that we should immediately give up the demand for “big” masses. It is necessary to challenge such comrades. Without thoroughgoing preparation you will not achieve victory in any country. A quite small party is sufficient to lead the masses. At certain times there is no necessity for big organisations.

For victory, however, we must have the sympathy of the masses. An absolute majority is not always essential; but for victory and for retaining power, what is essential is not only the majority of the working class—I use the term “working class” in its West European sense, i.e., in the sense of the industrial proletariat—but also the majority of the working and exploited rural population. Have you thought about this? Do we find in Terracini’s speech even a hint of this thought?

He speaks only of a “dynamic tendency” and the “transition from passivity to activity”. Does he devote even a single word to the food question? And yet the workers demand their daily bread, although they can also put up with a great deal and go hungry, as we saw to a certain extent in Russia. We must therefore win over to our side not only the majority of the working class, but also the majority of the working and exploited rural population. Have you prepared for this? Almost nowhere.

And so, I repeat: I must unreservedly defend our theses and I consider this defence obligatory for me. We not only condemned the Centrists but expelled them from the Party. Now we must deal with another aspect, which we also consider dangerous. We must tell the comrades the truth in the most polite form (and in our theses it is told in a kind and considerate way) so that no one feels insulted: we are confronted now by other, more important questions than that of attacks on the Centrists. We have had enough of this question. It has already becomes somewhat boring. Instead, the comrades ought to learn to wage a real revolutionary struggle. The German workers have already begun this. Hundreds of thousands of proletarians in that country have been fighting heroically. Anyone who opposes this struggle should be immediately expelled. But after that we must not engage in empty word-spinning but must immediately begin to learn, on the basis of the errors that have been committed, how to organise the struggle better. We must not hide our mistakes from the enemy. Anyone who is afraid of this is no revolutionary. On the contrary, if we openly declare to the workers: “Yes, we made mistakes,” it will mean that they will not be repeated and we shall be able better to choose the moment. And if during the struggle itself the majority of the working people prove to be on our side—not only the majority of the workers but the majority of all the exploited and oppressed—then we shall really be victorious. (*Prolonged, stormy applause.*)

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Collected Works, Vol. 32

SPEECHES AT A CONFERENCE OF MEMBERS OF THE
GERMAN, POLISH, CZECHOSLOVAK, HUNGARIAN AND
ITALIAN DELEGATIONS TO THE THIRD CONGRESS
OF THE COMINTERN
JULY 11, 1921

1

Yesterday in *Pravda* I read reports which convinced me that the time for the offensive is possibly closer than we thought at the Congress when we were so severely attacked for it by the younger comrades. But I shall speak of these reports later. At the moment I must say that the closer the general offensive draws the more "opportunistically" we must act. Now you shall all return home and tell the workers that we have become more prudent than we were before the Third Congress. You must not be confused, you will tell people that we have made mistakes and want to act more cautiously; we shall thereby win the masses over from the Social-Democratic and the Independent Social-Democratic parties, masses who by the entire run of things are objectively being drawn to us but who are afraid of us. Our example shows us that we must act more carefully.

At the outbreak of the war we Bolsheviks only had one slogan—a civil war and a relentless war at that. We branded as a traitor anyone who spoke against a civil war. But in March 1917, when we returned to Russia, we changed our position completely. When we returned to Russia and spoke with the peasants and workers, we saw that all of them stood for the defence of the Motherland, naturally, in a quite different way than the Mensheviks, and we could not call all these ordinary workers and peasants rascals and traitors. We characterised them as "conscientious defencists". I should like to write a long article about it and publish all the materials. On April 7, I published theses, in which I stressed the need

for caution and patience. The stand that we adopted at the beginning of the war was correct, for at that time it was important to set up a certain, determined nucleus. Our subsequent stand was likewise correct. It stemmed from the need to win over the masses. Already then we were opposed to the idea of the immediate overthrow of the Provisional Government. I wrote: "We should overthrow the government for it is an oligarchic and not a people's government, since it cannot give us either bread or peace. But it cannot be overthrown immediately because it relies on workers' Soviets and still enjoys the confidence of the workers. We are not Blanquists and do not want to rule with a minority of the working class against the majority." The Cadets, who are subtle politicians, at once noted the contradiction between our former and our new stand and called us hypocrites. But inasmuch as in the same breath they called us spies, traitors, rascals and German agents, the first epithet made no impression at all. The first crisis took place on April 20. Milyukov's Note on the Dardanelles⁸³ exposed the government as imperialist. Soon after that armed soldiers closed in on the government building and threw Milyukov out. They were headed by a certain Linde, a non-Party man. This act was not organised by the Party. We characterised it as something more than an armed demonstration and something less than an armed uprising. At our conference of April 22 the Left trend demanded the immediate overthrow of the government. The Central Committee, on the contrary, spoke against the slogan of civil war, and all agitators in the provinces were instructed to refute the outrageous lie that the Bolsheviks want a civil war. On April 22, I wrote that the slogan "Down with the Provisional Government" was wrong, because without the backing of the majority of the people it will become either an empty phrase or a gamble.

We did not scruple to name our Lefts "adventurists" in face of our enemies. The Mensheviks gloated over this and said we were on the verge of bankruptcy. But we said that any attempt to be a little, even slightly, left of the C.C. is silly and that anyone who is left of the C.C. has already lost his common sense. We will not allow ourselves to be cowed by the fact that the enemy is rejoicing over our blunders.

Our only strategy today is to become stronger and there-

fore wiser, more prudent, "more opportunistic", and that is exactly what we must say to the masses. But after we have won the masses over thanks to our prudence, we shall adopt offensive tactics in the full meaning of the word.

Now regarding the three reports:

1. The strike of the Berlin municipal workers. Most of these workers are conservative, belong to the Social-Democratic majority and to the Independent Social-Democratic Party, have good jobs but are compelled to strike.

2. The strike of the textile workers in Lille.

3. The third fact is the most important one. A meeting of 50,000 workers—representatives of all parties: Communists, Socialists as well as Republicans—was held in Rome to organise the struggle against the fascists. It was attended by 5,000 war veterans in military uniform and not a single fascist dared show himself in the street. This proves that in Europe there is more fuel than we thought. Lazzari praised our resolution on tactics. That is a great achievement of our Congress. If Lazzari recognises it, the thousands of workers that follow him will most assuredly go over to us and their leaders will be unable to frighten them away from us. *Il faut reculer, pour mieux sauter*. That leap is inevitable because the objective situation is becoming unendurable.

We are thus beginning to apply our new tactics. There must be no nervousness. We cannot be late, in fact it is more likely that we may begin too soon, and if you ask whether Russia can hold out for so long we reply that at present we are waging a war against the petty bourgeoisie, against the peasants, an economic war that is much more dangerous for us than the past war. As Clausewitz said, there is danger in the element of war, and we have not stood outside danger for a single moment. I am positive that if we begin to act more cautiously, if we make concessions in time, we shall win in this war as well even if it lasts for more than three years.

Let me sum up:

1. Throughout Europe we shall unanimously say that we are applying new tactics. In this way we shall win over the masses.

2. Co-ordination of the offensive in the major countries: Germany, Czechoslovakia and Italy. On this issue prepara-

tions and constant co-operation are necessary. Europe is pregnant with revolution, but it is impossible to draw up a time-table of the revolution beforehand. We in Russia will hold out not only for five years, but longer. The only correct strategy is the one that we have adopted. I am certain that we shall win positions for the revolution which the Entente will be unable to counter, and that will be the beginning of victory on a world scale.

2

Šmeral seemed to be satisfied with my speech, but he interprets it one-sidedly. In the Commission I said that in order to find the right line Šmeral must take three steps to the left, and Kreibich a step to the right. Regrettably, Šmeral said nothing about his taking these steps. Neither has he said anything about how he assesses the situation. Regarding difficulties, he repeated what we have already heard, and said nothing new. He said that I had allayed his fears. In spring he was afraid the Communist leadership would require him to act inopportunistically, but events allayed his apprehensions. However, we are now worried by something else, namely: whether in Czechoslovakia matters will really come to the stage of preparing for action or be restricted to mere talk about difficulties. The leftist error is simply an error. It is not big and is easily rectified. If it concerns the determination to act, it is no longer a small error, but treachery. These errors are incomparable. The theory that we shall accomplish a revolution only after others act first is basically wrong.

3

The retreat made at this Congress must, in my opinion, be compared with our actions in 1917 in Russia and thereby show that it must serve to prepare for an offensive. Our adversaries will say that today we are not saying what we said formerly. They will not profit much by it, but the working-class masses will understand us if we tell them in what sense the March action can be regarded as successful and why we criticise its mistakes and say that we must prepare better in

future. I agree with Terracini when he says that Šmeral's and Burian's interpretations are wrong. If co-ordination is taken to mean that we must wait for another, richer country with a larger population to act, it is no longer a communist interpretation but downright deceit. Co-ordination must mean that the comrades of the other countries know what moments are significant. The most important interpretation of co-ordination is that good examples should be emulated as best and as quickly as possible. The example of the workers of Rome is good.

First published in 1958: the first speech in full, the second and third—according to the abridged report in the magazine *Voprosy Istorii KPSS*, No. 5

Collected Works, fifth Russian edition, Vol. 44

From THE FOURTH ANNIVERSARY OF THE OCTOBER REVOLUTION

The difficulties are immense. But we are accustomed to grappling with immense difficulties. Not for nothing do our enemies call us "stone-hard" and exponents of a "bone-breaking policy". But we have also learned, at least to some extent, another art that is essential in revolution, namely, flexibility, the ability to effect swift and sudden changes of tactics if changes in objective conditions demand them, and to choose another path for the achievement of our goal if the former path proves to be inexpedient or impossible at the given moment.

Borne along on the crest of the wave of enthusiasm, rousing first the political enthusiasm and then the military enthusiasm of the people, we expected to accomplish economic tasks just as great as the political and military tasks we had accomplished by relying directly on this enthusiasm. We expected—or perhaps it would be truer to say that we presumed without having given it adequate consideration—to be able to organise the state production and the state distribution of products on communist lines in a small-peasant country directly as ordered by the proletarian state. Experience has proved that we were wrong. It appears that a number of transitional stages are necessary—state capitalism and socialism—in order to *prepare*, to prepare by many years of effort, for the transition to communism. Not directly relying on enthusiasm, but aided by the enthusiasm engendered by the great revolution, and on the basis of personal interest, personal incentive and business principles, we must first set to work in this small-peasant country to build solid gangways to socialism by way of state capitalism. Otherwise we shall never get to communism; we shall never bring scores of millions of people to communism. That is what experience, the objective course of the development of the revolution, has taught us.

And we, who during these three and four years have learned to make abrupt changes of front (when abrupt changes

of front are needed), have begun zealously, attentively and sedulously (although still not zealously, attentively and sedulously enough) to learn to make a new change of front, namely, the New Economic Policy. The proletarian state must become a cautious, assiduous and shrewd "business-man", a punctilious *wholesale merchant*—otherwise it will never succeed in putting this small-peasant country economically on its feet. Under existing conditions, living as we are side by side with the capitalist (for the time being capitalist) West, there is no other way of progressing to communism. A wholesale merchant is an economic type as remote from communism as heaven from earth. But this is one of the contradictions which, in the actual conditions of life, lead from a small-peasant economy via state capitalism to socialism. Personal incentive will develop production; and our primary task is to increase production at all costs. Wholesale trade economically unites millions of small peasants: it gives them a personal incentive, links them up and leads them to the next step, namely, to various forms of association and alliance in the process of production itself. We have already set to work to make the necessary changes in our economic policy; and here we already have certain successes to our credit; it is true they are small and partial, but nonetheless they are successes. In this new field of "tuition" we are already finishing our preparatory class. By persistent and assiduous study, by making practical experience the test of every step we take, by not fearing to alter over and over again what we have already begun, by correcting our mistakes and most carefully analysing their significance, we shall pass to the higher classes. We shall go through the whole "course", although the present state of world economics and world politics has made that course much longer and much more difficult than we would like. No matter at what cost, no matter how severe the hardships of the transition period may be—despite disaster, famine and ruin, we shall not flinch; we shall triumphantly carry our cause to its goal.

October 14, 1921
Pravda, No. 234,
 October 18, 1921
 Signed: N. Lenin

Collected Works, Vol. 33

From THE IMPORTANCE OF GOLD NOW AND AFTER THE COMPLETE VICTORY OF SOCIALISM

The greatest, perhaps the only danger for the genuine revolutionary is that of extreme revolutionism, ignoring the limits and conditions in which revolutionary methods are appropriate and can be successfully employed. Genuine revolutionaries came a cropper most often when they began to write "revolution" with a capital R, to elevate "revolution" to something almost divine, to lose their heads, to lose the ability to reflect, weigh and ascertain in the coolest and most dispassionate manner at what moment, under what circumstances and in which sphere of action it is necessary to act in a revolutionary manner, and at what moment, under what circumstances and in which sphere it is necessary to apply reformist action. Genuine revolutionaries will perish (not that they will be defeated from outside, but that their work will suffer internal collapse) only if they abandon their sober outlook and take it into their heads that the "great, victorious, world" revolution can and must solve all problems in a revolutionary manner under all circumstances and in all spheres of action. If they do this, their doom is certain.

Whoever gets such ideas into his head, must perish, because he is getting foolish ideas in connection with a fundamental problem; and in the midst of fierce war (and revolution is the fiercest sort of war) the penalty for folly is defeat.

What grounds are there for assuming that the "great, victorious, world" revolution can and must employ only revolutionary methods? There are none at all. It is absolutely untrue, and if we stick to Marxism it is proved by purely theoretical propositions. The experience of our revolution also shows it to be untrue. From the theoretical point of view, foolish things are done in time of revolution just as at any other time, said Engels, and he was right. We must try to

do as few foolish things as possible and rectify those that are done as quickly as possible; we must estimate as soberly as possible which problems can be solved by revolutionary methods at any given time and which cannot. From the point of view of our own practical experience—the Brest Peace was an example of action that was not revolutionary at all; it was reformist, and even worse, because it was a retreat, whereas, as a general rule, reformist action advances slowly, cautiously, gradually, and does not move backwards. The proof that our tactics in signing the Brest Peace were correct is now so complete, is so evident to all and generally admitted, that there is no need to say any more about it.

Pravda, No. 251,
November 6-7, 1921
Signed: *N. Lenin*

Collected Works, Vol. 33

LETTER TO N. I. BUKHARIN AND G. Y. ZINOVIEV

February 1, 1922

Comrades Bukharin and Zinoviev,

Consideration must be given beforehand to selecting the most sharp-tongued men to represent the Comintern at the Conference with the Second and Two-and-a-Half Internationals.⁸⁴ The main questions of the tactics and strategy at this Conference must also be examined beforehand.

The agenda of the Conference must be considered beforehand and unquestionably drawn up in agreement with each of the sides taking part in the Conference. We must include in this agenda only questions that directly concern the practical joint actions of the working-class masses in those spheres that are recognised as indisputable in the official statements of the press of each of the three sides. We must comprehensively motivate why in the interests of a united front we are limiting ourselves to these questions. In the event the Yellow⁸⁵ gentlemen put forward issues of politics, e.g., the attitude to the Mensheviks, on Georgia, and so on, our tactics must be to: 1) declare that the agenda can be drawn up only by the unanimous decision of the three participating sides; 2) declare that in drawing up our agenda we were guided exclusively and solely by the unity of the working-class masses in action, which unity can be achieved at once even if there are basic political differences; 3) declare that we are quite prepared to raise questions of the attitude to the Mensheviks, on Georgia and any other questions suggested by the Second and Two-and-a-Half Internationals on the condition that they agree to raise the following questions: 1) on the renegade attitude of the Second and Two-and-a-Half Internationals to the Basle Manifesto; 2) on the complicity of these parties in the assassination of Luxemburg, Liebknecht

and other German Communists through the bourgeois governments that these parties support; 3) on the same attitude of these parties to the murder of revolutionaries in the colonies by the bourgeois parties that the Second and Two-and-a-Half Internationals support, and so on and so forth. We must prepare a list of these and similar questions beforehand and also theses and reporters on some of the most important of these questions.

We must find grounds for declaring officially that we regard the Second and Two-and-a-Half Internationals solely as inconsistent and vacillating participants in the bloc with the counter-revolutionary world bourgeoisie and that we are going to a conference on a united front in order to achieve possible practical unity in the direct actions of the masses and in order to expose the political erroneousness of the entire stand taken by the Second and Two-and-a-Half Internationals in the same way as the latter (the Second and the Two-and-a-Half) are going to a conference with us in order to achieve practical unity in the direct actions of the masses and in order to expose the political erroneousness of our stand.

Lenin

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Lenin Miscellany XXXVI,
pp. 418-19

WE HAVE PAID TOO MUCH

Imagine that a representative of the Communists wants to enter premises in which agents of the bourgeoisie are carrying on their propaganda at a fairly large meeting of workers. Imagine also that the bourgeoisie demands from us a high price for admission to these premises. If the price has not been agreed on beforehand we must bargain, of course, in order not to impose too heavy a burden upon our Party funds. If we have paid too much for admission to these premises we have undoubtedly committed an error. But it is better to pay a high price—at any rate until we have learned to bargain properly—than to reject an opportunity of speaking to workers who hitherto have been in the exclusive “possession”, so to speak, of the reformists, i.e., of the most loyal friends of the bourgeoisie.

This analogy came into my mind when in today's *Pravda* I read a communication from Berlin stating the terms on which agreement had been reached between the representatives of the three Internationals.

In my opinion our representatives were wrong in agreeing to the following two conditions: first, that the Soviet Government would not apply death penalty in the case of the forty-seven Socialist-Revolutionaries;⁸⁶ second, that the Soviet Government would permit representatives of the three Internationals to be present at the trial.

These two conditions are nothing more nor less than a political concession on the part of the revolutionary proletariat to the reactionary bourgeoisie. If anyone doubts the correctness of this definition, then—to reveal the political naïveté of such a person—it is sufficient to put the following question: Would the British or any other modern government permit representatives of the three Internationals to attend the trial of Irish workers charged with rebellions? Or the trial of

workers implicated in the recent rebellion in South Africa? Would the British or any other government, in such, or similar circumstances, agree to promise that they will not apply death penalty to its political opponents? A little reflection over these questions will be sufficient to enable one to understand the following simple truth: All over the world a struggle is going on between the reactionary bourgeoisie and the revolutionary proletariat. In the present case, the Communist International, which represents one side in this struggle, makes a political concession to the other side, i.e. the reactionary bourgeoisie; for everybody in the world knows (except those who want to conceal the obvious truth) that the Socialist-Revolutionaries have shot at Communists and have organised rebellions against them, and that they have done this actually, and sometimes formally, in a united front with the whole of the international reactionary bourgeoisie.

The question arises: What concession has the international bourgeoisie made to us in return? There can only be one reply to this question, *viz.*, it has made no concession to us whatsoever.

This obvious fact can be clouded only by arguments that obscure the simple and clear truth of the class struggle, that throw dust in the eyes of the masses of workers and other working people. Under the agreement signed in Berlin by the representatives of the Third International we have made two political concessions to the international bourgeoisie. But we have obtained no concession in return.

The representatives of the Second and Two-and-a-Half Internationals acted as blackmailers to extort a political concession from the proletariat for the benefit of the bourgeoisie, while emphatically refusing, or at any rate making no attempt, to induce the international bourgeoisie to make some political concession to the revolutionary proletariat. Of course, this incontrovertible political fact was obscured by the shrewd representatives of bourgeois diplomacy (in the course of many centuries the bourgeoisie trained representatives of its class to become good diplomats) but the attempt to obscure the fact does not alter it in the least. Whether the various representatives of the Second and Two-and-a-Half Internationals are in direct or indirect collusion with the bourgeoisie is a matter of tenth-rate importance in the present

case. We do not accuse them of being in direct collusion. The question of whether there has been direct collusion or fairly intricate, indirect connection has nothing to do with the case. The only point that has anything to do with it is that as a result of the pressure brought to bear by the representatives of the Second and Two-and-a-Half Internationals, the Communist International has made a political concession to the international bourgeoisie and has obtained no concession in return.

What conclusion should be drawn from this?

First, that Comrades Radek, Bukharin, and the others, who represented the Communist International, acted wrongly.

Further. Does it follow from this that we must tear up the agreement they have signed? No. I think it would be wrong to draw such a conclusion. We ought not to tear up the agreement. All we have to do is to realise that on this occasion the bourgeois diplomats proved to be more skilful than ours, and that next time, if the price for admission is not fixed beforehand, we must bargain and manoeuvre more skilfully. It must become a rule that no political concessions are to be made to the international bourgeoisie (no matter how skilfully these concessions are concealed by intermediaries, whoever they may be) unless in return we receive more or less equivalent concessions from it to Soviet Russia or to other contingents of the international proletariat, which is fighting capitalism.

Perhaps the Italian Communists and a section of the French Communists and syndicalists, who were opposed to the united front tactics, will infer from the above argument that the united front tactics are wrong. But such an inference will obviously be incorrect. If the representatives of the Communists have paid too much for admission to premises in which they have an opportunity, even if it is a small one, of addressing the workers who hitherto have been in the exclusive "possession" of the reformists, such a mistake must be rectified next time. But it would be an ever so much greater mistake to reject all terms, or all payment for admission to these fairly closely-guarded and barred premises. The mistake that Comrades Radek, Bukharin and others made is not a grave one, especially as the only risk we run is that the enemies of Soviet Russia may be encouraged by the result of the Berlin

Conference to make two or three perhaps successful attempts on the lives of certain persons; for they know beforehand that they can shoot at Communists in the expectation that conferences like the Berlin Conference will hinder the Communists from shooting them.

At all events, we have made some breach in the premises that were closed to us. At all events, Comrade Radek has succeeded in exposing, at least to a section of the workers, the fact that the Second International refused to include among the slogans of the demonstration a demand for the annulment of the Versailles Treaty. The biggest mistake the Italian Communists and a section of the French Communists and syndicalists make is that they are content with the knowledge they already possess. They are content with being well aware that the representatives of the Second International and Two-and-a-Half Internationals, and also Messrs. Paul Levi, Serrati and others, are very shrewd representatives of the bourgeoisie and vehicles of its influence. But the people and the workers who are really aware of this and who really understand its significance are undoubtedly in the minority in Italy, England, America and France. Communists must not stew in their own juice, but must learn to penetrate into prohibited premises where the representatives of the bourgeoisie are influencing the workers; and in this they must not shrink from making certain sacrifices and not be afraid of making mistakes, which are inevitable, at first, in every new and difficult undertaking. The Communists who refuse to understand this and who do not want to learn how to do it, cannot hope to win over the majority of the workers; at any rate they hinder and retard the work of winning this majority. For Communists and all genuine adherents of the workers' revolution this is absolutely unpardonable.

Once again, the bourgeoisie, in the persons of their diplomats, have outwitted the representatives of the Communist International. Such is the lesson of the Berlin Conference. We shall not forget this lesson. We shall draw all the necessary conclusions from it. The representatives of the Second and Two-and-a-Half Internationals need a united front, for they hope to weaken us by inducing us to make exorbitant concessions; they hope to penetrate into our Communist premises without any payment; they hope to utilise the united

front tactics for the purpose of convincing the workers that the reformist tactics are correct and that revolutionary tactics are wrong. We need a united front because we hope to convince the workers of the opposite. We shall put the blame for the mistakes on our Communist representatives who committed them, and on those parties which commit them, while we shall try to learn from these mistakes and to prevent a repetition of them in the future. But under no circumstances shall we thrust the blame for the mistakes of our Communists upon the masses of the proletariat, who all over the world are facing the onslaught of advancing capital. We adopted the united front tactics in order to help these masses fight capital, to help them understand the "cunning mechanism" of the two fronts in international economics and in international politics; and we shall pursue these tactics to the end.

April 9, 1922

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Signed: *Lenin*

Collected Works, Vol. 33

From LETTER TO G. Y. ZINOVIEV

April 11, 1922

The nature of the criticism of the Second and Two-and-a-Half Internationals must now be somewhat modified, namely: it must be more explanatory (particularly at meetings attended by workers who support the Second and Two-and-a-Half Internationals, and in special leaflets and articles for them). The irreconcilable contradictions between the slogans adopted by their representatives in Berlin (for example: the struggle against capital, an eight-hour working day, defence of Soviet Russia, aid to the starving) and the entire reformist policy must be explained to these workers with particular patience and thoroughness without frightening them away with sharp words.

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p. 472

ON THE TENTH ANNIVERSARY OF *PRAVDA*

Ten years have passed since *Pravda*, the legal-legal under tsarist law-Bolshevik daily paper, was founded. This decade was preceded by approximately another decade-nine years (1903-12)-since the emergence of Bolshevism, or thirteen years (1900-12) if we count from the founding in 1900 of the "Bolshevik-oriented" old *Iskra*.

Ten years of publication in Russia of a daily Bolshevik paper. . . . Only ten years! But measured in terms of our struggle and movement these ten years are equivalent to a hundred years. Measured by the old yardstick of European philistines, the heroes of the Second and Two-and-a-Half Internationals, the pace of social development in the past five years has been positively staggering. These civilised philistines are accustomed to regard as "natural" a situation in which hundreds of millions of people (over a thousand million, to be exact) in the colonies and semi-dependent and appallingly poor countries tolerate the treatment meted out to the Indians and Chinese. They tolerate incredible exploitation, and outright depredation, and hunger, and violence, and humiliation, all in order that "civilised" men might "freely", "democratically", according to "parliamentary procedure", decide whether the booty should be divided up peacefully, or whether ten or twenty million must be done to death in this division of the imperialist booty, yesterday between Germany and Britain, tomorrow between Japan and America (with France and Britain participating in one form or another).

The basic reason for this tremendous acceleration of world development is that further hundreds of millions have been drawn into it. The old bourgeois and imperialist Europe, accustomed to look upon itself as the centre of the universe, rotted and burst like a putrid ulcer in the first imperialist

holocaust. No matter how the Spenglers, and all the enlightened philistines who are capable of admiring (or even studying) Spengler may lament it, this decline of the old Europe is but an episode in the history of the downfall of the world bourgeoisie, oversatiated by imperialist rapine and oppression of the majority of the world's population.

That majority has now awakened and has begun a movement which even the "mightiest" powers cannot stem. They stand no chance. For the present "victors" in the first imperialist slaughter have not the strength to defeat small-tiny, I might say—Ireland, nor can they emerge victorious from the financial confusion that reigns in their own midst. Meanwhile, India and China are seething. They represent over 700 million people, and together with the neighbouring Asian countries, that are in all ways similar to them, over half of the world's population. Inexorably and with mounting momentum they are approaching their 1905, with the essential and important difference that in 1905 the revolution in Russia could still proceed (at any rate at the beginning) in isolation, that is, without other countries being immediately drawn in. But the revolutions that are maturing in India and China are being drawn into—have already been drawn into—the revolutionary struggle, the revolutionary movement, the world revolution.

The tenth anniversary of *Pravda*, the legal Bolshevik daily, strikingly illustrates one aspect of this acceleration of the greatest world revolution. In 1906-07, it seemed that the tsarist government had utterly crushed the revolution. A few years later the Bolshevik Party was able—in a different form, by a different method—to penetrate into the very citadel of the enemy and daily, "legally", proceed with its work of undermining the accursed tsarist and landlord autocracy from within. A few more years passed, and the proletarian revolution, organised by Bolshevism, triumphed.

Only half a score of revolutionaries shared in the founding of the old *Iskra* in 1900, and only two score or so attended the birth of Bolshevism at the illegal congresses in Brussels and London in 1903.

In 1912-13, when the legal Bolshevik *Pravda* came into being, it had the support of hundreds of thousands of workers who made modest contributions and were able to over-

come both the oppression of tsarism and the competition of the Mensheviks, those petty-bourgeois betrayers of socialism.

In November 1917, nine million electors out of a total of thirty-six million voted for the Bolsheviks in the elections to the Constituent Assembly. But if we take the actual struggle, and not merely the elections, at the close of October and in November 1917, the Bolsheviks had the support of the majority of the proletariat and class-conscious peasants, as represented by the majority of the delegates at the Second All-Russia Congress of Soviets,⁸⁷ and by the majority of the most active and politically conscious section of the people, namely, the 12-million strong army.

These few figures illustrating the "acceleration" of the world revolutionary movement in the past twenty years provide a small and very incomplete picture. They give only a very rough idea of the history of no more than 150 million people, whereas in these twenty years the revolution has developed into an invincible force in countries with a total population of over a thousand million (the whole of Asia, not to forget South Africa, which recently reminded the world of its claim to *human* and not slavish existence, and by methods which were not altogether "parliamentary").

Some Spenglerite freaks—I apologise for the expression—may conclude (every variety of nonsense can be expected from the "clever" leaders of the Second and Two-and-a-Half Internationals) that this assessment of the revolutionary forces fails to take into account the European and American proletariat. These "clever" leaders always argue as if the fact that birth comes nine months after conception necessarily means that the exact hour and minute of birth can be defined beforehand, also the position of the infant during delivery, the condition of the mother and the exact degree of pain and danger both will suffer. Very "clever"! These gentry cannot for the life of them understand that from the point of view of the development of the international revolution the transition from Chartism⁸⁸ to the servility of a Henderson, or the transition from Varlin to Renaudel, from Wilhelm Liebknecht and Bebel to Südekum, Scheidemann and Noske, can only be likened to an automobile passing from a smooth highway stretching for hundreds of miles to

a dirty stinking puddle on that highway stretching for a few yards.

Men are the makers of history. But the Chartists, the Varlins and the Liebknechts create it with their minds and hearts. The leaders of the Second and Two-and-a-Half Internationals apply another part of the anatomy: they fertilise the ground for the appearance of new Chartists, new Varlins and new Liebknechts.

At this *most difficult* moment, it would be most harmful for revolutionaries to indulge in self-deception. Though Bolshevism *has become* an international force, though in *all* the civilised and advanced countries new Chartists, new Varlins, new Liebknechts have come to the fore, and are growing in the legal (just as legal as our *Pravda* was under the tsars ten years ago) Communist Parties, nonetheless, for the time being, the international bourgeoisie still remains incomparably stronger than its class enemy. This bourgeoisie, which has done everything in its power to hamper the birth of proletarian power in Russia and to multiply tenfold the dangers and suffering attending its birth, is still in a position to condemn millions and tens of millions to torment and death through its whiteguard and imperialist wars, etc. We must not forget that. And we must skilfully adapt our tactics to this particular situation. The bourgeoisie is still able freely to torment, torture and kill. But it cannot halt the inevitable and—from the standpoint of world history—rapidly approaching complete triumph of the revolutionary proletariat.

May 2, 1922

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Signed: N. Lenin

Collected Works, Vol. 33

OUR REVOLUTION

APROPOS OF N. SUKHANOV'S NOTES

I

I have lately been glancing through Sukhanov's notes on the revolution. What strikes one most is the pedantry of all our petty-bourgeois democrats, and of all the heroes of the Second International. Apart from the fact that they are all extremely faint-hearted, that when it comes to the minutest deviation from the German model even the best of them fortify themselves with reservations—apart from this characteristic which is common to all petty-bourgeois democrats and has been abundantly manifested by them throughout the revolution, what strikes one is their slavish imitation of the past.

They all call themselves Marxists, but their conception of Marxism is impossibly pedantic. They have completely failed to understand what is decisive in Marxism, namely, its revolutionary dialectics. They have even absolutely failed to understand Marx's plain statements that in times of revolution the utmost flexibility is demanded, and have even failed to notice, for instance, the statement Marx made in his letters—I think it was in 1856—expressing the hope of combining a peasant war in Germany, which might create a revolutionary situation, with the working-class movement⁸⁹—they avoid even this plain statement and walk round and about it like a cat around a bowl of hot porridge.

Their conduct betrays them as cowardly reformists who are afraid to deviate from the bourgeoisie, let alone break with them, and at the same time they disguise their cowardice with the wildest rhetoric and braggartry. But what strikes one in all of them even from the purely theoretical point of

view is their utter inability to grasp the following Marxist considerations. Up to now they have seen capitalism and bourgeois democracy in Western Europe follow a definite path of development, and cannot conceive that this path can be taken as a model only *mutatis mutandis*, only with certain amendments (quite insignificant from the standpoint of the general development of world history).

First—the revolution connected with the first imperialist world war. Such a revolution was bound to reveal new features, or variations, resulting from the war itself, for the world has never seen such a war in such a situation. We find that since the war the bourgeoisie of the wealthiest countries have to this day been unable to restore "normal" bourgeois relations. Yet our reformists—petty bourgeois who make a show of being revolutionaries—believed, and still believe, that normal bourgeois relations are the limit (thus far shalt thou go and no farther). And even their conception of "normal" is extremely stereotyped and narrow.

Secondly, they are complete strangers to the idea that, while the development of world history as a whole follows general laws, it is by no means precluded, but, on the contrary, presumed, that certain periods of development may display peculiarities in either the form or the sequence of this development. For instance, it does not even occur to them that because Russia stands on the border-line between the civilised countries and the countries which this war has for the first time definitely brought into the orbit of civilisation, that is, all the Oriental, non-European countries, she could, and was, indeed, bound to reveal certain distinctive features; although these, of course, are in keeping with the general line of world development, they distinguish her revolution from those which took place in the West European countries and introduce certain partial innovations as the revolution moves on to the countries of the East.

Infinitely stereotyped, for instance, is the argument they learned by rote during the development of West-European Social-Democracy, namely, that we are not yet ripe for socialism, that, as certain "learned" gentlemen among them put it, the objective economic premises for socialism do not exist in our country. It does not occur to any of them to ask, but what about a people that found itself in a revolu-

tionary situation such as that created during the first imperialist war? Might it not, influenced by the hopelessness of its situation, fling itself into a struggle that would offer it at least some chance of securing conditions for the further development of civilisation that were somewhat unusual?

"The development of the productive forces of Russia has not attained the level that makes socialism possible." All the heroes of the Second International, including, of course, Sukhanov, beat the drums about this proposition. They keep harping on this incontrovertible proposition in a thousand different keys, and think that it is the decisive criterion of our revolution.

But what if, first, at the time of the imperialist world war that involved every more or less influential West European country, peculiar circumstances put Russia and Russia's development on the eve of the revolutions maturing or partly already begun in the East in a situation which enabled us to achieve precisely that combination of a "peasant war" with the working-class movement suggested in 1856 by no less a "Marxist" than Marx himself as a possible prospect for Prussia?

What if the complete hopelessness of the situation, by stimulating the efforts of the workers and peasants tenfold, offered us the opportunity to create the fundamental requisites of civilisation in a different way from that of the West European countries? Has that altered the general line of development of world history? Has that altered the basic relations between the basic classes of all the countries that are being, or have been, drawn into the general course of world history?

If a definite level of culture is required for the building of socialism (although nobody can say just what that definite "level of culture" is, for it differs in every West European country), why cannot we begin by first achieving the prerequisites for that definite level of culture in a revolutionary way, and *then*, with the aid of the workers' and peasants' government and the Soviet system, proceed to overtake the other nations?

January 16, 1923

II

You say that civilisation is necessary for the building of socialism. Very good. But why could we not first create such prerequisites of civilisation in our country as the expulsion of the landowners and the Russian capitalists, and then start moving towards socialism? Where, in what books, have you read that such variations of the customary historical order of events are impermissible or impossible?

Napoleon, I think, wrote: "*On s'engage et puis... on voit.*" Rendered freely this means: "First engage in a serious battle and then see what happens." Well, we did first engage in a serious battle in October 1917, and then saw such details of development (from the standpoint of world history they were certainly details) as the Brest Peace, the New Economic Policy, and so forth. And now there can be no doubt that in the main we have been victorious.

Our Sukhanovs, not to speak of Social-Democrats still farther to the right, never even dream that revolutions could be made otherwise. Our European philistines never even dream that the subsequent revolutions in Oriental countries, which possess much vaster populations and a much vaster diversity of social conditions, will undoubtedly display even greater peculiarities than the Russian revolution.

It need hardly be said that a textbook written on Kautskian lines was a very useful thing in its day. But it is time, for all that, to abandon the idea that it foresaw all the forms of development of subsequent world history. It would be timely to say that those who think so are simply fools.

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NOTES

¹ "*Left-Wing" Communism, an Infantile Disorder* was written by Lenin specially for the Second Congress of the Communist International; the Russian edition appeared on June 12, 1920, and the French and English editions in July. It was handed out to the Congress delegates and its major propositions and conclusions were used as the basis for the decisions adopted at the Congress.

This work, repeatedly published in many languages, has been widely disseminated. p. 7

² Theory and tactics of the Bolsheviks, members of the revolutionary Marxist Party of Russia founded by Lenin.

At the Second Congress of the Russian Social-Democratic Labour Party (1903) the name Bolsheviks was given to Lenin's supporters, who won the majority in the elections to the Party leading bodies. Lenin's opponents, the opportunists, were called Mensheviks. For a long time the Bolsheviks and the Mensheviks were formally two factions of the R.S.D.L.P., but in fact they comprised two separate parties. The final rupture took place in January 1912 at the Sixth All-Russia (Prague) R.S.D.L.P. Conference, which expelled the Mensheviks from the Party.

In March 1918 the Seventh Congress of the R.S.D.L.P. (Bolsheviks) decided that the Party would be called the Russian Communist Party (Bolsheviks). After the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics was formed, the Fourteenth Party Congress, held in December 1925, changed the name to the Communist Party of the Soviet Union (Bolsheviks). The Nineteenth Party Congress, which sat in October 1922, shortened the name to Communist Party of the Soviet Union.

p. 8

³ The *Second International*, an international association of Socialist Parties, was founded in 1889. Opportunist trends began to predominate in it with the advent of the imperialist epoch. When the First World War broke out in 1914 the opportunist leaders of the Second International openly supported the imperialist policy of the bourgeois governments of their countries with the result that this association broke up. p. 8

⁴ Founded by Lenin in 1900, *Iskra*, the first national illegal Marxist newspaper, played the decisive role in helping to create a revolutionary Marxist Party of the working class in Russia. The first

issue was printed in Leipzig; subsequent issues were put out in Munich, London and Geneva. The editors were V. I. Lenin, G. V. Plekhanov, Y. O. Martov, P. B. Axelrod, A. N. Potresov and V. I. Zasulich. To all intents and purposes Lenin was the newspaper's editor-in-chief and director. On his initiative and with his direct participation the editors of *Iskra* drafted the Party's programme and prepared the ground for the Second R.S.D.L.P. Congress, which laid the foundation for a genuinely revolutionary Marxist Party in Russia.

Soon after the Second R.S.D.L.P. Congress in 1903, the Menshevik opportunists seized control of *Iskra*. Beginning with the fifty-second issue, the newspaper ceased being the spokesman of revolutionary Marxism. p. 8

- ⁵ The bourgeois-democratic revolution of 1905-07 in Russia was the first popular revolution of the epoch of imperialism. It drew broad strata of the people into active political life. Led by the Bolsheviks, the workers and peasants of Russia sought to overthrow the tsarist autocracy, abolish the landed estates and establish a democratic republic. The working class with the peasants as its ally was the main guiding force of the revolution.

Soviets of Workers' Deputies sprang up in a number of towns in the course of the revolution. Set up originally to direct strikes, they gradually broadened out their functions and were, in fact, embryos of a new type of power, prototypes of Soviet power.

The revolution of 1905-07 gave a tremendous impetus to the working-class movement in Europe and to the national liberation movements of the peoples of Asia. p. 13

- ⁶ On April 4 (17), 1912, tsarist troops opened fire on unarmed strikers at the Lena goldfields. Protest strikes swept the country and involved nearly 300,000 workers. Up to 400,000 workers downed tools on May Day in 1912. p. 14

- ⁷ The Fourth Duma deputies concerned were A. Y. Badayev, M. K. Muranov, G. I. Petrovsky, F. N. Samoilov and N. R. Shagov. At the sitting on July 26 (August 8), 1914, at which the representatives of all the bourgeois-landowner factions in the Duma approved Russia's entry into the imperialist war, the Bolshevik faction tabled an emphatic protest. It refused to vote for war credits and took its case to the masses. In November 1914 the Bolshevik deputies were arrested, and in February 1915 they were tried and exiled for life to Turukhan Territory in Eastern Siberia. p. 15

- ⁸ Lenin refers to the activity of Bolsheviks who lived as émigrés abroad. p. 15

- ⁹ Members of the Socialist Parties in the Second International (social-patriots), who openly backed up their imperialist governments when World War I broke out, and the Centrist Kautskyites (supporters of K. Kautsky, chief theoretician of Centrism)—oppor-

tunists who did not break their organisational ties with overt opportunism and used revolutionary Marxist slogans as a screen. p. 15

- ¹⁰ *Longuetism*, a trend initiated within the French Socialist Party by Jean Longuet. During the imperialist war of 1914-18 the Longuetists pursued a policy of conciliation with the social-chauvinists, rejecting revolutionary struggle. When the October Socialist Revolution triumphed they gave the dictatorship of the proletariat verbal support but retained their reformist views. p. 15

- ¹¹ The *Independent Labour Party* was founded in 1893. Holding bourgeois reformist views, it concentrated its attention on parliamentary forms of struggle and on parliamentary deals with the Liberal Party.

Fabians—members of the Fabian Society, an English reformist organisation founded in 1884. It called itself after Fabius Maximus, the 3rd century B.C. Roman military leader who was nicknamed Cunctator (the Delayer) for his wait-and-see tactics and his evasion of decisive battles in the war with Carthage. Most of the members were intellectuals, who rejected the need for a socialist revolution, declaring that the proletariat did not have to carry on a class struggle. They maintained that the transition from capitalism to socialism was a gradual, slow process stemming from various reforms. In 1900 the Fabian Society merged with the Labour Party. p. 15

- ¹² *Ministerialism*—an opportunist doctrine justifying Socialists holding posts in reactionary bourgeois governments. p. 16

- ¹³ The *Independent Social-Democratic Party of Germany*, a centrist organisation, was formed in April 1917 on the basis of the Kautskyite Labour Commonwealth. It preached unity with the social-chauvinists and rejected the class struggle. A split occurred in the Party at its Congress in Halle in October 1920; in December 1920 a large section of the Independents joined the Communist Party of Germany. The Right-wing elements formed a separate party, which adopted the old name—Independent Social-Democratic Party of Germany. It was dissolved in 1922. p. 16

- ¹⁴ *Socialist-Revolutionaries*. The petty-bourgeois Socialist-Revolutionary Party was set up in Russia at the close of 1901 or the beginning of 1902. It demanded the abolition of private ownership of land and equalitarian land tenure. Although the Socialist-Revolutionaries called themselves socialists, in fact their programme was not socialist because the abolition of private ownership of land without the establishment of the power of the working class and the transition into its hands of all basic means of production (banks, large factories, railways) could not put an end to capitalist exploitation. The Socialist-Revolutionaries did not see any class distinction between the proletariat and the peasants, closed their eyes to the class stratification and contradictions within the peasantry, between

the working peasants and the kulaks, and rejected the idea that the proletariat had to play the leading role in the revolution. Adventurism in politics was a feature of the Socialist-Revolutionaries, while individual terrorism was their principal weapon in the struggle against tsarism.

After the bourgeois-democratic revolution of February 1917 the Socialist-Revolutionaries and the Mensheviks were the principal supporters of the counter-revolutionary bourgeois-landowner Provisional Government, and their leaders held portfolios in that government. The Socialist-Revolutionary Party refused to support the peasants' demand that the landed estates be abolished; Socialist-Revolutionary Ministers in the Provisional Government sanctioned the sending of punitive forces against peasants who had seized landed estates.

At the close of November 1917, its Left wing formed the independent Left Socialist-Revolutionary Party.

During the foreign military intervention and the Civil War in Russia the Socialist-Revolutionaries took part in counter-revolutionary plots and organised terrorist acts against leaders of the Soviet Government and the Communist Party. p. 19

- ¹⁵ *Spartacists*—members of a revolutionary Left Social-Democratic organisation formed in Germany at the outbreak of the First World War by Karl Liebknecht, Rosa Luxemburg, Franz Mehring, Clara Zetkin, Julian Marchlewski, Leon Jogiches (Tyszká) and Wilhelm Pieck. They spread revolutionary ideas among the people, organised mass anti-war actions, directed strikes and exposed the imperialist nature of the war and the treachery of the opportunist leaders of the Social-Democratic Party.

In April 1917, the Spartacists joined the Independent Social-Democratic Party of Germany, retaining their organisational independence within that party. In November 1918, in the course of the revolution in Germany, they formed the Spartacus Union and broke with the Independents after publishing their programme on December 14. At their Constituent Congress on December 30, 1918-January 1, 1919 they set up the Communist Party of Germany. p. 20

- ¹⁶ A reference to the struggle against the Left opportunists, known as *otzovists* and Left Communists.

Although the Third Duma, convened in 1907 by the tsarist government, was the most reactionary of all preceding Dumas, the Bolsheviks considered it necessary to take part in it in view of the failure of the revolution and the beginning of a period of reaction. The *otzovists* demanded the recall of the Social-Democratic deputies from the Third Duma and a rupture with legal trade unions, co-operatives and other organisations. Ultimatumism was a variety of *otzovism*. Without appreciating the need for persevering, painstaking work with Social-Democratic deputies and getting them to be consistent revolutionary parliamentarians, the ultimatumists wanted to present an ultimatum to the Social-Democratic faction

in the Duma and in the event the ultimatum was not complied with to recall Social-Democratic deputies from the Duma.

The signing of the Brest Treaty by Soviet Russia was the bone of contention between the Communist Party and the Left Communists.

In November 1917, when France, Britain and the U.S.A. rejected the Soviet proposal for joint peace talks with Germany and her allies, the Soviet Government decided to initiate talks with the Austro-German bloc in an effort to take Russia out of the war. The peace talks were started in Brest-Litovsk on November 9. The German delegation offered onerous terms, under which Poland, Lithuania, Estonia, Latvia and a part of Byelorussia, that were occupied by German troops, were to be controlled by Germany. The Ukraine was to become dependent on Germany. Despite the piratical nature of these terms, Lenin insisted on signing the peace treaty because the army had lost its efficiency and the people were tired of the savage and senseless war that had been raging for nearly four years. He considered that the Soviet Government had to have a respite in order to be able to embark upon the building of socialism. On this issue Lenin and his supporters were opposed by Trotsky and the Left Communists, who demanded that the talks be broken off, insisting upon the war against Germany being continued. Trotsky's view was that the peace treaty should not be signed, but that the war should be discontinued and the Army demobilised. Acceptance of the programme proposed by Trotsky and the Left Communists could have only spelled disaster for Soviet Russia.

After a prolonged and difficult struggle against the Left Communists and Trotsky, the peace treaty with Germany was signed on March 3, 1918, thanks to the tremendous effort made by Lenin and his supporters. The conclusion of this treaty was a striking example of the wisdom and flexibility of Leninist tactics, of the ability to work out a correct policy in an extremely complex situation. The Brest Treaty gave the Soviet state the respite it needed to begin socialist construction and accumulate strength for the struggle against the counter-revolution and foreign interventionists. The Treaty was annulled after the November 1918 Revolution in Germany, which overthrew the monarchist regime. p. 20

- ¹⁷ The Bulygin Duma (named after Bulygin, Minister of the Interior), which the tsarist government decided to convene under the law of August 6 (19), 1905, in order to distract the people from the revolution. Under the law proposed by Bulygin, most of the population were denied suffrage, while the Duma itself would only be a consultative body. The upsurge of the revolution prevented the Bulygin Duma from being convened. p. 21

- ¹⁸ This was the nation-wide political strike in October 1905 during the first Russian Revolution. More than two million people were involved. This strike demonstrated the vitality and power of the

working-class movement, gave an impetus to the revolutionary struggle in the countryside as well as in the Army and the Navy, and brought the working class to an armed uprising. p. 21

¹⁹ *Labourites*, members of the Labour Party of Great Britain, which was founded in 1900 as an association of trade unions and socialist organisations and groups with the purpose of installing workers' representatives in Parliament. From the very outset the leaders of the Labour Party followed a policy of class co-operation with the bourgeoisie. During the First World War of 1914-18, Labour Party leaders adhered to a social-chauvinist platform, accepted ministerial posts in the government and aided and abetted in the promulgation of laws directed against the workers. p. 23

²⁰ *Cadets*, members of the Constitutional-Democratic Party, which was the main organisation of the liberal-monarchist bourgeoisie in Russia. This party, set up in October 1905, consisted of representatives of the bourgeoisie, landowners and bourgeois intellectuals. The Cadets were eager to enter into a compact with tsarism. Calling for the creation of a constitutional monarchy, they were opposed to Russia becoming a republic. They wanted to preserve the landed estates and approved the measures taken by tsarism to suppress the revolutionary movement. During the First World War they were the ideologists of imperialism and supported tsarism's predatory policy.

When the Great October Socialist Revolution triumphed, the Cadets took part in all armed counter-revolutionary actions and the campaigns of the interventionists against Soviet Russia. p. 24

²¹ The pamphlet published by a group of Communists in Frankfurt-on-Main and setting forth the views of the Left opposition. These views are criticised by Lenin in parts V, VI and VII of "*Left-Wing Communism, an Infantile Disorder*".

In October 1919, the Left or "principled opposition", as it called itself, was expelled from the Communist Party of Germany. In April 1920, it formed its own Left opportunist party, calling itself the Communist Workers' Party of Germany. This party did not have the support of the working class and subsequently degenerated into a sectarian group. p. 25

²² The programme issued in 1874 by a group of Blanquists, who emigrated to London after the defeat of the Paris Commune. They were supporters of the trend started in the French socialist movement by Louis Auguste Blanqui (1805-1881). As Lenin pointed out, they expected to "deliver mankind from hired labour not through the class struggle of the proletariat but through a conspiracy of a small minority of intellectuals". p. 25

²³ *League of Nations*, an international body that existed in the period between the First and Second World wars. It was set up in 1919 by

the Paris Peace Conference of the victor powers. Its purpose, according to its charter, was to strengthen peace and security. Actually, however, the League leaders encouraged the arms race and the preparations for the Second World War. p. 28

²⁴ International socialist conferences in Zimmerwald and Kienthal, Switzerland.

The *Zimmerwald* or First International Socialist Conference was held on September 5-8, 1915.

The *Kienthal* or Second International Socialist Conference was held on April 24-30, 1916.

In the socialist movement these conferences helped to unite the leftist internationalist elements who opposed the imperialists and the imperialist war. p. 30

²⁵ *Revolutionary Communists* were a group who held Narodnik views. They withdrew from the Left Socialist-Revolutionary uprising of July 1918. In September 1918 this group formed the Revolutionary Communist Party, which advocated co-operation with the Communist Party and support for Soviet rule. p. 31

²⁶ *The Left Socialist-Revolutionary* (Internationalist) Party took shape at its First All-Russia Congress on November 19-28 (December 2-11), 1917. After long vacillation, the Left Socialist-Revolutionaries, who strove to retain their influence over the peasants, decided to co-operate with the Bolsheviks. At the talks between the Bolsheviks and the Left Socialist-Revolutionaries in November and the beginning of December 1917 agreement was reached on the latter's participation in the Government. After the Left Socialist-Revolutionaries undertook to follow the general policy of the Soviet Government their representatives were given posts in the Council of People's Commissars and in a number of the collegiums of people's commissariats.

While co-operating with the Bolsheviks, the Left Socialist-Revolutionaries disagreed with them on basic questions of the building of socialism and were in opposition to the dictatorship of the proletariat. In January-February 1918, the Central Committee of the Left Socialist-Revolutionary Party made it plain that it was against the conclusion of the Brest Peace Treaty, and after the treaty was ratified by the Fourth Congress of Soviets in March 1918 the Left Socialist-Revolutionaries withdrew from the Council of People's Commissars. In July 1918 the Central Committee of the Left Socialist-Revolutionary Party organised the provocative assassination in Moscow of the German Ambassador Wilhelm Mirbach and an armed uprising against Soviet rule. Losing all support in the masses, the party began an armed struggle against Soviet rule.

Lenin characterised the Left Socialist-Revolutionaries as petty-bourgeois revolutionaries who vacillated at each turn of events, and pointed out that that party "proved to be as much a soap bubble among the peasantry as it was among the working class". p. 31

²⁷ The *Third International* was an international revolutionary working-class organisation that united the Communist Parties of different countries. It was in existence from 1919 to 1943.

The establishment of the Third International was called forth by historical necessity following the split caused in the working-class movement by the opportunist leaders of the Second International when they betrayed socialism at the outbreak of the First World War and by the collapse of the Second International. Lenin played a prominent role in setting up the Communist International.

The First Congress of the Communist International, held in Moscow on March 2-6, 1919, adopted a Manifesto to the workers of the world, in which it was stated that the Communist International was the successor to the ideas expressed by Marx and Engels in the *Manifesto of the Communist Party*.

The Communist International restored and strengthened the ties between the working people of all countries and helped to expose opportunism in the world working-class movement, strengthen the young Communist Parties and work out the strategy and tactics of the world Communist movement.

In May 1943 the Comintern Executive Committee took into consideration the fact that the organisational form of uniting the workers, which had met the requirements of a given stage of historical development, had outlived itself and passed a decision to dissolve the Communist International. p. 32

²⁸ The *Versailles Peace Treaty*, which ended the imperialist world war of 1914-18, was signed on June 28, 1919, by the U.S.A., Great Britain, France, Italy, Japan and their allies on the one hand and Germany on the other. Its purpose was to legalise the re-division of the capitalist world in favour of the victor powers and also to set up a system of international relations aimed at strangling Soviet Russia and crushing the revolutionary movement throughout the world. p. 34

²⁹ The *Entente*, an imperialist bloc, derived its name from the Anglo-French *Entente cordiale* concluded in 1904. Russia was a member of the Entente prior to the October Revolution. During the First World War the Entente was joined by the U.S.A., Japan and other countries. After the October Revolution, the principal members of this bloc—Britain, France, the U.S.A. and Japan—organised military intervention against Soviet Russia and inspired the defeat of the revolutionary movement in other countries. p. 34

³⁰ *Soviet rule* was established in Hungary on March 21, 1919. The Entente imposed an economic blockade on the Hungarian Soviet Republic and organised military intervention against it. This intervention revitalised the Hungarian counter-revolution. The treachery of the Right-wing Social-Democrats, who entered into an alliance with international imperialism, was another factor contributing to the downfall of the Hungarian Soviet Republic. In the

summer of 1919 Soviet Russia was besieged on all sides and was therefore unable to come to the aid of the Hungarian Soviet Republic. On August 1, 1919, Soviet rule was overthrown in Hungary. p. 34

³¹ A revolution took place in Austria in the autumn of 1918. The workers and soldiers overthrew the Hapsburg dynasty, which had ruled the country for more than 650 years. Austria was proclaimed a republic. Soviets of Workers' Deputies sprang up in Vienna and other cities. The Communist Party of Austria was formed during the revolution. However, large sections of the Austrian workers were strongly influenced by Social-Democracy, which did everything in its power to prevent the further development of the revolution and to block the struggle of the working class for power. As a consequence of the policy pursued by the Social-Democratic Party, which deceived the workers, the Soviets lost their importance. The offensive of the working class was thus arrested. p. 34

³² *Economism*, an opportunist trend in the Russian Social-Democratic movement at the end of the nineteenth and beginning of the twentieth century, was a variety of international opportunism. The Economists urged the working class to limit its task to an economic struggle for higher wages, better working conditions and so forth, maintaining that the political struggle should be left to the liberal bourgeoisie. Claiming that the working-class movement was of a spontaneous nature, the Economists belittled the significance of revolutionary theory, rejected the need for socialist consciousness in the working-class movement and opposed the creation of an independent, centralised party of the working class. p. 43

³³ This article exposes the nationalist, separatist views of the Bund. *The Bund* (General Jewish Workers' Union of Lithuania, Poland and Russia), organised in 1897, united mainly semi-proletarian elements among Jewish artisans. A bearer of nationalism in the working-class movement, the Bund was a member of the R.S.D.L.P. as an autonomous organisation, which acted independently in questions relating to the Jewish proletariat. It withdrew from the Party when the Second R.S.D.L.P. Congress rejected its demand that it be recognised as the sole representative of the Jewish proletariat, but rejoined the Party in 1906. In basic political questions the members of the Bund supported the Party's opportunist, Menshevik wing. p. 48

³⁴ The *Social-Democratic Federation of Britain* was founded in 1884. In addition to reformists (Henry Hyndman and others) and anarchists, it included a group of revolutionary Social-Democrats, adherents of Marxism (Harry Quelch, Thomas Mann, Edward Aveling, Eleanor Marx and others), who formed the Left wing of the socialist movement in Britain. Friedrich Engels scathingly criticised the Socialist-Democratic Federation for its dogmatism and sectarianism,

for isolating itself from the mass working-class movement of Britain and ignoring its features. In 1907 the Federation changed its name to the Social-Democratic Party. In 1911, the latter, jointly with Left elements of the Independent Labour Party, formed the British Socialist Party. In 1920 most of the members of that party helped to found the Communist Party of Great Britain.

p. 52

³⁵ Lenin quotes a letter written by Engels to F. A. Sorge on November 29, 1886.

p. 52

³⁶ The *Knights of Labor* or the Noble Order of the Knights of Labor, an American workers' organisation, was founded in 1869 in Philadelphia by Uriah Stephens. Until 1881 the Knights of Labor was a secret organisation uniting shop unions and mixed associations of various categories of skilled and unskilled workers. By 1884 its membership rose to over 70,000, reaching nearly 700,000 in 1886. The Order regarded its principal aim as enlightening the workers and defending their interests by promoting their solidarity. The leadership enjoined the rank-and-file to refrain from political struggle and obstructed the setting up of a workers' party.

In 1886 the Order's leadership opposed the national strike for an eight-hour day and helped to disrupt it by forbidding its members to take part in it. Despite these instructions, the rank-and-file members participated in the strike. The contradictions between the rank-and-file and the opportunist leadership increased. After 1886 the Order began to lose its influence among the masses and disintegrated towards the close of the 1890s.

Despite the perfidy of its leaders, the Order, particularly in the early period of its existence, played a positive role in the working-class movement of the U.S.A.

p. 54

³⁷ *Against Boycott* was written in anticipation of the 1907 elections to the Third Duma. In it Lenin criticises those Social-Democrats who insisted on boycotting the Third Duma despite the changed political situation in Russia arising from the offensive started by the forces of reaction.

p. 55

³⁸ *Molchalinism*, a synonym of servility and toadyism (after Molchalin, a character in A. S. Griboyedov's comedy *Wit Works Woe*).

p. 55

³⁹ *December uprising*, an armed uprising against tsarism in Moscow in December 1905. A general political strike, which developed into an armed uprising, started in Moscow on December 7 (20), 1905. The workers, who built barricades in the streets, engaged the Cossacks, police and tsarist troops in sanguinary fighting.

In Moscow the uprising was crushed within nine days. Similar uprisings, which broke out in other towns in December 1905 and January 1906, were likewise quenched. These uprisings were the

culminating point of the Russian Revolution of 1905 and, to quote Lenin, gave the Russian people their "baptism of fire" for the assault on the autocracy in 1917.

p. 55

⁴⁰ Liberal idle talk, servility and toadyism. Balalaikin, a character in M. Y. Saltykov-Shchedrin's satire *A Modern Idyll*.

p. 55

⁴¹ An allusion to the opportunist, anti-Marxist trend in the German Social-Democratic Party initiated at the close of the nineteenth century and named after the German Social-Democrat Eduard Bernstein, who was the most vehement advocate of revisionism. The Bernsteinians' revision of Marxism was aimed at turning the Social-Democratic organisation from a party working for a social revolution into a party seeking social reforms.

Bernsteinism was supported by opportunist elements in other parties of the Second International.

The Orthodox were German Social-Democrats who opposed a revision of Marxism.

p. 57

⁴² *Guesdists*, followers of Jules Guesde, represented a revolutionary Marxist trend in the French socialist movement. In 1901 they formed the Socialist Party of France. In 1905 they merged with the French Socialist Party founded by the Jaurèsists. During the imperialist war of 1914-18 Guesde, Sembat and other leaders of this party adopted social-chauvinist views, betraying the cause of the working class.

Jaurèsists were supporters of the French Socialist Jean Jaurès. In 1902 they founded the French Socialist Party, which adopted a reformist stand.

Broussists (after Paul Brousse) or Possibilists represented a petty-bourgeois, reformist trend that arose in the French socialist movement in the 1880s. They rejected the revolutionary programme and tactics of the proletariat, veiled the socialist objectives of the working-class movement and suggested limiting the workers' struggle to the "possible", hence the name of the party. Subsequently, most of the Possibilists joined the reformist French Socialist Party.

p. 57

⁴³ *Integralists* were a faction representing petty-bourgeois socialism in the Italian Socialist Party. In the 1900s they clashed with the reformists, who held extreme opportunist views and co-operated with the reactionary bourgeoisie.

p. 57

⁴⁴ *Revolutionary syndicalism* was a petty-bourgeois semi-anarchist trend that arose in the working-class movement of a number of West-European countries at the close of the nineteenth century. The syndicalists disputed the need for a political struggle of the working class and for a dictatorship of the proletariat. They rejected the idea that the Party plays the leading role, considering that by organising general strikes the trade unions (syndicates)

could destroy capitalism and take the management of production into their own hands without a revolution. p. 57

- ⁴⁵ *Proletary* was a Bolshevik illegal newspaper published in the period from August 21 (September 3), 1906 to November 28 (December 11), 1909. It was edited by Lenin first in Vyborg and then in Geneva and Paris. In fact, *Proletary* was the central newspaper of the Bolshevik Party.

The conference of the extended editorial board was held in Paris on June 8-17 (21-30), 1909, on Lenin's initiative. It discussed otzovism and ultimatumism and also the activity of the Social-Democrats in the Duma.

Its decisions, approved by local Party organisations, were of great importance to the Party as a whole. p. 58

- ⁴⁶ The *Young* represented the petty-bourgeois, semi-anarchist opposition organised in the German Social-Democratic Party in 1890. The nucleus of this opposition comprised young writers and students (hence the name), who laid claim to the role of the party's theoreticians and leaders. Without understanding the change that had taken place in the conditions for the party's activities following the repeal of the Anti-Socialist Law (1878-90), they saw no need for utilising legal forms of struggle, opposed the participation of Social-Democrats in parliament and accused the party of opportunism. Engels denounced the opposition of the "Young". p. 67

- ⁴⁷ *Reply to P. Kievsky (Y. Pyatakov)* exposes the Left-opportunist, non-Marxist, sectarian views of "imperialist Economism", a Left-opportunist trend that appeared in the Social-Democratic movement during the First World War. In the same way as the Economists in the Russian Social-Democratic movement in 1894-1902, following the consolidation of capitalism in Russia, drew the erroneous conclusion that the working class does not require a political struggle to achieve democracy, the "imperialist Economists" distorted the Marxist understanding of imperialism, declared that under conditions of monopoly capitalism there was no need to struggle for democracy and demanded that the slogan of the right of nations to self-determination and the minimum-programme as a whole should be rejected. They propagandised semi-anarchist views on the question of the attitude to the state. These views were upheld by N. Bukharin, Y. Pyatakov and Y. Bosh, who claimed they were creating a "new Bolshevism", and also by a number of Left Social-Democrats in the Netherlands, Poland, Germany, the U.S.A. and the Scandinavian countries.

Lenin called "imperialist Economism" an ugly caricature of Marxism and characterised it as a striking manifestation of dogmatism and sectarianism in the world socialist movement. Pointing out that the dissemination among Marxists of the ideas of "imperialist Economism", which have "nothing in common either with Marxism or revolutionary Social-Democracy", would be a

"grave blow at our cause", Lenin called for an open, energetic struggle against this trend. p. 71

- ⁴⁸ During the First World War the Kautskyites preached disarmament. Some Left Socialists in Switzerland, the Netherlands and the Scandinavian countries suggested that the demand for arming the people made in the programmes of the Socialist Parties be replaced by the demand for disarming them. Lenin explained why this stand was erroneous. He considered that it was wrong to put forward the slogan of disarmament when a revolutionary crisis was growing in the warring capitalist countries, when revolutionary Marxists were calling upon the workers and all working people to turn the imperialist war into a civil war, to turn the weapons received by them as soldiers against the exploiters.

However, Lenin did not oppose disarmament in principle. He regarded disarmament as the ideal of socialism. Approaching the question of disarmament from a concrete, historical point of view, he appreciated that under certain conditions it was necessary to demand disarmament as a democratic measure aimed at preserving peace and reducing the danger of war between states. Prior to World War I, the Stuttgart and Copenhagen International Socialist Congresses, with Lenin's participation, drew up and adopted resolutions obliging Socialists in all countries to come forward actively against militarism and demand a reduction of armaments and the peaceful settlement of all issues between states. After the October Socialist Revolution in Russia, acting on instructions from Lenin, the Soviet delegation at the World Conference in Genoa in 1922 proposed a world-wide reduction of arms and the complete banning of weapons of mass annihilation. p. 72

- ⁴⁹ These were the famous *April Theses* put forward by Lenin in a speech on April 4, 1917. They mapped out the tasks of the working class and all the working people of Russia in the struggle to accomplish the socialist revolution and put forward the idea of creating a Soviet Republic as a state form of the dictatorship of the proletariat. p. 77

- ⁵⁰ Quotation from Goethe's *Faust*. p. 79

- ⁵¹ On April 21 (May 4), 1917, responding to an appeal by the Bolshevik Party, the workers of Petrograd downed tools and marched in protest against the imperialist policy of the bourgeois Provisional Government. They demanded peace. More than 100,000 workers and soldiers took part in this April demonstration, which sparked off a government crisis. A coalition government, which included Socialist-Revolutionaries and Mensheviks, was formed.

On June 9 (22), 1917, the First All-Russia Congress of Soviets, in which the Mensheviks and Socialist-Revolutionaries had the majority, passed a decision banning the demonstration set for June 10 (23) at a conference between Bolsheviks and workers' and soldiers' representatives. Late at night on June 9-10 (22-23), in order to

avoid coming into conflict with the decision of the Congress, the Central Committee of the Bolshevik Party, acting on Lenin's proposal, called off the demonstration.

A demonstration organised by the Mensheviks and Socialist-Revolutionaries took place on *June 18 (July 1)*. Nearly half a million Petrograd workers and soldiers took part in it but the vast majority of them carried revolutionary slogans of the Bolshevik Party. Only a few people carried slogans of the conciliator parties expressing trust in the Provisional Government. The demonstration showed that the masses were becoming revolution-conscious and that the influence of the Bolshevik Party had grown tremendously.

In Petrograd, on *July 4 (17), 1917*, troops of the bourgeois Provisional Government, with the agreement of the Mensheviks and Socialist-Revolutionaries, fired on a demonstration carrying revolutionary Bolshevik slogans demanding the transfer of power to the Soviets. The Provisional Government followed up this action by disarming workers and soldiers and brutally repressing the Bolshevik Party. A warrant was issued for Lenin's arrest, as a result of which Lenin had to go into hiding. The peaceful development of the revolution ended. Lenin put forward slogans calling upon the people to gather strength for an armed uprising.

On *August 25, 1917*, in a bid to restore the monarchy that had been overthrown by the people in February, General Kornilov instigated a counter-revolutionary mutiny and led troops against revolutionary Petrograd. The mutiny was snuffed out by the workers and peasants led by Bolsheviks. Under pressure from the people the Provisional Government ordered Kornilov's arrest and his arraignment before a court.

p. 82

⁵² This article is directed against the Left Communists, who opposed the signing of the Brest Peace Treaty.

p. 87

⁵³ The *All-Russian Democratic Conference* was convened in September 1917 in Petrograd by the Menshevik-Socialist-Revolutionary Central Executive Committee of the Soviets of Workers' and Soldiers' Deputies to discuss the question of power. The real aim of the organisers of this conference was to divert the attention of the people from the growing socialist revolution.

p. 93

⁵⁴ The stand taken by G. Y. Zinoviev and L. B. Kamenev, who in October 1917 spoke against launching an armed uprising.

p. 93

⁵⁵ At the outset of the First World War Belgium was occupied by German troops. The occupation of Belgium continued for nearly four years, until Germany's defeat in 1918.

p. 95

⁵⁶ *Novy Luch* people—Mensheviks who grouped around *Novy Luch*, the newspaper published by the Menshevik Central Committee in

Petrograd from December 1 (14), 1917 to June 1918, when it was closed for counter-revolutionary agitation.

Dyelo Naroda people—Right Socialist-Revolutionaries who grouped around *Dyelo Naroda*, mouthpiece of the Socialist-Revolutionary Party. This newspaper was published in Petrograd from March 1917 to July 1918. It was closed for counter-revolutionary agitation.

Novaya Zhizn people—Menshevik-internationalists who grouped around the newspaper *Novaya Zhizn*, which was published in Petrograd from April 18 (May 1), 1917 to July 1918.

p. 95

⁵⁷ *Narcissus*—in Greek mythology the son of the river god. An unusually beautiful youth, he fell in love with his own reflection in the water of a fountain.

p. 109

⁵⁸ *Nozdryovism*—self-confidence, high-handedness, mendacity after Nozdryov, a character in Nikolai Gogol's *Dead Souls*.

p. 111

⁵⁹ *Vperyod*—a Menshevik daily newspaper, whose publication was started in Moscow in March 1917. It was closed in February 1919 for counter-revolutionary agitation.

p. 122

⁶⁰ A quotation from Marx used by Engels in *The Peasant Question in France and Germany*.

p. 123

⁶¹ Here Lenin speaks of the Mensheviks' assertion that the Bolsheviks had seized power prematurely, that Russia had not reached the level of the development of the productive forces allowing it to build socialism.

p. 126

⁶² *The Man in a Muffler*, a person who is isolated from life and apprehensive of anything new; a character in a Chekhov story of the same name.

p. 126

⁶³ The elections to the Constituent Assembly in mid-November 1917 were held according to lists drawn up long before the October Socialist Revolution. Most of the seats in it were received by Right Socialist-Revolutionaries and other counter-revolutionary elements. The Assembly did not mirror the new balance of political forces that had taken shape in the country as a result of the revolution. Nonetheless, the Communist Party and the Soviet Government considered it necessary to convene this Assembly because the backward sections of the working population still believed in bourgeois parliamentarism. The Constituent Assembly opened on January 5, 1918. It was dissolved on the next day when the counter-revolutionary majority in it refused to adopt the Soviet Government's Declaration of the Rights of the Working and Exploited People proclaiming Russia a Soviet Republic and to approve the decrees passed by the Soviet Government and the All-Russia Central Executive Committee of the Soviets. The decision to dissolve the Assembly was warmly received by broad sections of workers, soldiers and peasants.

p. 127

⁶⁴ On June 11 (24), 1917, when the Executive Committee of the Petrograd Soviet of Workers' and Soldiers' Deputies discussed the question of the peaceful demonstration of workers and soldiers that had been arranged in Petrograd by the Central Committee of the Bolshevik Party, the Menshevik I. G. Tsereteli threatened to take resolute steps to disarm the workers who supported the Bolsheviks. p. 128

⁶⁵ *Lieberdants*—ironic name for the Menshevik leaders M. I. Lieber and F. I. Dan and their supporters. 128

⁶⁶ Line from an epigram of V. L. Pushkin. p. 130

⁶⁷ The *Second All-Russian Congress of Communist Organisations of Peoples of the East*, convened by the Central Bureau of Communist Organisations of Peoples of the East at the Central Committee of the Russian Communist Party, was held in Moscow on November 22 to December 3, 1919. p. 135

⁶⁸ The *Second Congress of the Communist International* was held on July 19-August 7, 1920.

At the first sitting of the Congress the report on the international situation and the basic tasks of the Communist International was delivered by Lenin. The decisions adopted by the Congress were based on his analysis of the international economic and political situation after the First World War and the Great October Socialist Revolution. Aiming to unite the working-class forces and strengthen the Communist Parties, Lenin advanced the task of cleansing the Communist Parties of opportunist elements and, at the same time, criticised the sectarian errors and anarcho-syndicalist trends in a number of Communist Parties and organisations. Lenin's "Theses on the Basic Tasks of the Second Congress of the Communist International" were endorsed by the Congress as a resolution.

At this Congress Lenin also delivered the report of the Commission for National and Colonial Questions. On this point of the agenda the Congress adopted two resolutions: "Theses on the National and Colonial Question", that were drafted by Lenin, and "Additional Theses on the National and Colonial Questions".

On the agrarian question the Congress adopted a resolution based on theses written by Lenin. This resolution stressed the need for an alliance between the working class and the working peasants, emphasised the idea of the hegemony of the proletariat, defined the tasks of the Communist Parties in relation to various sections of the peasants both in the period of the struggle for the victory of the socialist revolution and in the period after the establishment of the dictatorship of the proletariat.

One of the central issues before the Congress was that of the role played by the Communist Party and the relations between the Party and the class. The Congress adopted a resolution "On the Role of the Communist Party in the Proletarian Revolution", which was drawn up with Lenin's participation. The resolution emphasised

that the leadership of the Communist Party is the basic condition for the victory of the socialist revolution and socialism.

The "Terms for Acceptance in the Communist International", adopted by this Congress, played a major role in strengthening and uniting the Communist Parties and preventing opportunist parties and groups from infiltrating into the Comintern.

The Second Comintern Congress was an important milestone in the development of the world Communist movement. It laid down the programme, tactical and organisational foundations of the Communist International. Lenin said that after the Congress "communism became the central question of the working-class movement as a whole". p. 140

⁶⁹ In Finland the bourgeois government of Swinhufvud was overthrown and the power was seized by the workers as a result of the revolution of January 27, 1918. A revolutionary government, the Council of People's Representatives, was set up on January 29.

A treaty between the Finnish Socialist Workers' Republic and the R.S.F.S.R. was signed in Petrograd on March 1, 1918. Based on principles of complete equality and respect for each other's sovereignty, it was the first treaty in history between two socialist states.

Aided by German troops, the reactionary forces crushed the revolution in Finland in May 1918.

Mass action by the Latvian workers and peasants against the German invaders and the Ulmanis counter-revolutionary government led to the formation on December 17, 1918, of a provisional Soviet Government, which promulgated a Manifesto on the transition of state power to the hands of the Soviets. A Red Army was created in Soviet Latvia, the landed estates were confiscated, the banks and large trading enterprises and factories were nationalised, social insurance was introduced, the working day was shortened to eight hours and public catering was organised for the people.

The German army and the Russian whiteguards, who were armed and equipped by the U.S. and other Entente imperialists, started a sweeping offensive against Soviet Latvia in March 1919. Early in 1920, after savage fighting, the whole of Latvia was seized by the interventionists. The bourgeois counter-revolution established a reign of terror in the land. p. 143

⁷⁰ *Guild socialism*, a reformist trend in the British trade-union movement, arose prior to World War I. The Guild Socialists argued that the state did not consist of classes and urged the setting up of guilds on the basis of the existing trade unions and the transfer of the management of industry to these organisations, which would be united in a federation.

In the 1920s guild socialism lost all influence in the working class movement of Britain. p. 149

⁷¹ *Jingoism*—militant chauvinism, which preached an aggressive, imperialist policy. The term was borrowed from the lines of a chauvinist English music-hall song of the 1870s. p. 156

⁷² The 1912 *Basle Manifesto* on war was adopted by the Extraordinary World Socialist Congress held in Basle on November 24-25, 1912. It warned the peoples of the threat of an imperialist world war, showed the predatory objectives of this war and called upon the workers of all countries to struggle resolutely for peace. It included a point, formulated by Lenin, from the resolution adopted at the Stuttgart Congress of 1907, stating that if the imperialist war broke out the Socialists had to utilise the resultant economic and political crisis to accelerate the downfall of capitalist class rule and promote the struggle for a socialist revolution. p. 156

⁷³ The *Tenth Congress of the Russian Communist Party (Bolsheviks)* was held in Moscow on March 8-16, 1921.

It heard and debated a report on the political activity of the Central Committee and also on the replacement of assessment by a tax in kind, on the unity of the Party, the anarcho-syndicalist deviation, and other questions.

It adopted the resolutions "On Party Unity" and "On the Syndicalist and Anarchist Deviation in Our Party", which were proposed by Lenin, a decision on the transition to the New Economic Policy, a resolution on the immediate tasks of the Party in the national question, and other decisions. p. 160

⁷⁴ The *Workers' Opposition* was an anti-Party factional group that was formed in the Russian Communist Party in 1920. This opposition took final shape during the debate on the role of the trade unions in 1920-21. There was nothing of the working class about this opposition, which expressed the sentiments and aspirations of the petty bourgeoisie. It counterposed the Soviet state and the Communist Party with the trade unions, considering them and not the Party as the highest form of the organisation of the working class.

After the Tenth Party Congress, which found the advocacy of the ideas of the Workers' Opposition incompatible with membership in the Communist Party, this opposition lost most of its supporters. p. 160

⁷⁵ The *Democratic-Centralism Group* was an opportunist faction, which spoke against Lenin's principles of Party and Soviet development at the Eighth Congress of the R.C.P.(B) in 1919. This group rejected the idea that the Party should play the leading role in the Soviets and trade unions, opposed the principle that in industry directors should bear personal responsibility, and demanded freedom of action for factions and groups. It had no influence among the Party membership. At the Tenth Party Congress the Democratic Centralists refused to defend their stand. After the Congress, anti-Party activity was continued only by the leaders of the group, who formed a bloc with the Trotskyites and were expelled from the C.P.S.U.(B.). p. 160

⁷⁶ The counter-revolutionary uprising in Kronstadt, organised by the Russian counter-revolutionaries and foreign imperialists with the

complicity of the Mensheviks, Socialist-Revolutionaries and anarchists, broke out on February 28, 1921. Its ringleaders put forward the slogan "Power to the Soviets and not to Parties", hoping to deceive the masses and make them rise against the Revolution and destroy the Soviet system. The counter-revolutionaries sought to remove the Communists from the leadership of the Soviets and thereby nullify these organs of power and restore the bourgeois dictatorship and the capitalist system in Russia.

The uprising was stamped out on March 18, 1921. p. 161

⁷⁷ The *Tenth All-Russia Conference of the R.C.P.(B.)* was held in Moscow on May 26-28, 1921. Attention was concentrated mainly on the ways and means of implementing the New Economic Policy. Lenin delivered a report on the food tax and made the concluding speech on the report. He also delivered a report on the work of the Communist faction at the Fourth All-Russia Trade-Union Congress. p. 168

⁷⁸ The *Third Congress of the Communist International* was held in Moscow on June 22-July 12, 1921. Lenin delivered a report on the tactics of the R.C.P.(B.) and made speeches in defence of the tactics of the Communist International on the Italian question. He also spoke in the Congress commissions and at the conference of Congress delegates. All the main decisions adopted by the Congress were drawn up with his participation.

This Congress played an important role in helping to form and develop young Communist Parties. The question of tactics was the major issue before the Congress. The offensive launched against the working class by capitalism and the defeat of the revolutionary actions of the proletariat in a number of countries in 1920-21 brought about changes in the world that slowed down the development of the world revolution. This demanded a radical change in the tactics of the Communist Parties. The Congress, therefore, concentrated chiefly on working out the tactics of the Comintern and its organisational principles. At the Congress Lenin devoted much attention to the struggle against "Left" dogmatism, pseudo-revolutionary phrase-mongering and sectarianism.

The resolutions that were adopted set the Communist Parties the task of winning the majority of the working class over to communism, achieving unity in the working class and implementing united front tactics. p. 170

⁷⁹ *Communist Workers' Party of Germany*, see Note 21. p. 171

⁸⁰ The *Open Letter* of the Central Committee of the United Communist Party of Germany to the Socialist Party of Germany, the Communist Workers' Party of Germany and all trade-union organisations published on January 8, 1921. In it the U.C.P.G. called upon all workers and socialist and trade-union organisations to wage a joint struggle against the intensifying reaction and the offensive of capitalism against the vital rights of the people. p. 172

⁸¹ The supporters of the *theory of an offensive struggle* or the *theory of offensive*, which appeared in Germany in 1920, believed that the Party always had to hold to offensive tactics without taking into consideration if the objective requisites for revolutionary action were on hand or if the Party had the support of broad sections of the people. The theory of offensive also had supporters among the "Lefts" in Hungary, Czechoslovakia, Italy, Austria and France.

After the defeat of the workers' uprising in Central Germany in March 1921, the German "Lefts" used this theory in an effort to justify the errors committed by the Central Committee of the United Communist Party of Germany in the course of the preparations for the uprising and during the uprising itself (the U.C.P.G. leadership yielded to the provocation of the government, which wanted the uprising to break out before all the preparations were completed and in this way to rout the Communists).

At the Third Congress of the Comintern some members of the delegations from the U.C.P.G. and the Italian, Hungarian, Austrian and other Communist Parties wanted the theory of offensive to be used as the foundation for the theses on the tactics of the Communist International. The Congress condemned this non-Marxist, adventurist "theory", throwing it overboard in favour of the Leninist tactics of patient preparation for the revolution and winning the majority of the working class over to the Communist movement. p. 173

⁸² *Two-and-a-Half International* or the Vienna International (officially called the International Association of Socialist Parties) was an international organisation of socialist parties and groups that had to withdraw from the Second International under pressure of the revolutionary masses. It was formed at the conference in Vienna in February 1921. Criticising the Second International in words, its leaders showed by their deeds that on all major questions of the working-class movement they pursued an opportunist, dissentient policy and strove to utilise the newly created association to oppose the Communists' growing influence among the working-class masses.

In May 1923 the Second and the Two-and-a-Half Internationals merged to form the so-called Socialist Workers' International.

p. 175

⁸³ The latter written by P. N. Milyukov, Foreign Minister of the bourgeois Provisional Government, to Russian diplomatic representatives in the Entente countries on April 18 (May 1), 1917, in which he alleged that the nation was determined to fight the war to the end and declared that the Provisional Government intended to fulfil Russia's commitments to the Allies. This letter evoked the indignation of broad sections of the people, who staged a protest demonstration on April 20-21 (May 3-4). The demonstration was organised by the Central Committee of the Russian Communist Party under the slogans "Down with the Provisional Government!", "Publish All Secret Treaties!" and "All Power to the Soviets!"

p. 181

⁸⁴ Conference of the Second, Two-and-a-Half and Third Internationals, which was held on April 2-5, 1922, in Berlin. p. 189

⁸⁵ Opportunists of the Second International. p. 189

⁸⁶ On February 28, 1922, Soviet newspapers published a decree of the State Political Administration on the trial before the Supreme Revolutionary Tribunal of members of the Central Committee and other prominent members of the Socialist-Revolutionary Party for counter-revolutionary, terrorist acts against Soviet rule. The leaders of the Second and Two-and-a-Half Internationals, to whom a group of émigré Socialist-Revolutionaries appealed, demanded that the Soviet Government postpone the trial until the Berlin Conference of the three Internationals.

The trial was held in Moscow on June 8-August 7, 1922. It unfolded a picture of the counter-revolutionary activity of the Central Committee of the Socialist-Revolutionary Party: organisation of plots and uprisings against Soviet rule, assassination of working-class leaders, support for the foreign intervention. The Supreme Tribunal passed the death sentence on twelve of the accused (the Presidium of the Central Executive Committee endorsed the sentence and decreed that it would be carried out if the Socialist-Revolutionary Party persisted in its armed struggle against Soviet rule). A number of the accused were sentenced to prison terms ranging from two to ten years. Others, who repented and exposed the criminal activity of the Central Committee of the Socialist-Revolutionary Party, were released from custody. p. 191

⁸⁷ The *Second All-Russia Congress of Soviets of Workers' and Soldiers' Deputies* was held in Petrograd on October 25-26 (November 7-8), 1917, during the October armed uprising. It proclaimed the transition of power to the Soviets of Workers', Soldiers' and Peasants' Deputies and approved the Soviet Government's first decrees, which were written by Lenin. The latter were the Decree on Peace and the Decree on Land. The Congress formed the first workers' and peasants' government with Lenin at its head. p. 199

⁸⁸ *Chartism* was a mass revolutionary movement of the British workers in the 1830s-40s. The Chartists drew up a document (Charter), in which they presented demands to Parliament. In this Charter they petitioned for universal suffrage of men over the age of 21, vote by ballot, abolition of the property qualification for a seat in Parliament, and so on. The National Charter Association, the first mass workers' party in the history of the working-class movement, was formed in 1840. The Chartist movement declined after 1848, but it powerfully influenced the political history of Britain and the development of the world working-class movement. Lenin characterised it as the "first broad, really mass, politically mature, proletarian, revolutionary movement". p. 199

⁸⁹ See letter from Marx to Engels of April 16, 1856. p. 201

NAME INDEX

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Adler, Friedrich (1879-1960)—Austrian Social-Democrat, Centrist, preached "Austro-Marxism" that rejected revolutionary Marxism behind a screen of Marxist terminology. In 1916 assassinated Count Karl von Stürgkh, Prime Minister of Austria.—8, 16, 23, 159

Austerlitz, Friedrich (1862-1931)—a leader of the Austrian Social-Democratic Party. Became a social-chauvinist during World War I.—16

Axelrod, P. B. (1850-1928)—Russian Social-Democrat, became a leader of the Mensheviks after the Second R.S.D.L.P. Congress in 1903. Was hostile to the October Socialist Revolution. Went abroad where he advocated armed intervention against Soviet Russia.—30

B

Balmashev, S. V. (1882-1902)—participated in the student revolutionary movement in Russia. In April 1902 assassinated Minister of the Interior Sipyagin in protest against repressions by the tsarist government and was executed.—38

Bauer, Otto (1882-1938)—a leader of the Austrian Social-Democratic Party and the Second International. Ideologist of "Austro-Marxism". Was active in suppressing revolutionary actions of the working class in 1919, 1927 and 1934.—8, 16, 23, 29, 35, 159

Bebel, August (1840-1913)—a prominent leader of the German Social-Democratic Party and the international working-class movement.—20, 199

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Brouckère, Louis de (b. 1870)—a leader and theoretician of

the Belgian Labour Party; prior to World War I headed its Left wing.—57

Brousse, Paul (1844-1912)—French petty-bourgeois Socialist, a leader and ideologist of Possibilism, an opportunist trend in the socialist movement in France.—57

Bukharin, N. I. (1888-1938)—joined the Bolshevik Party in 1906. After the October Socialist Revolution was a member of the Central Committee of the Russian Communist Party (Bolsheviks) and a member of the Comintern Executive Committee. Repeatedly opposed the Party's Leninist line. In 1918 headed a group of "Left Communists". Subsequently became a leader of the opposition in the Party and was expelled from the Party in 1937 for anti-Party activities.—22, 125, 126, 127, 128, 132, 133, 134, 189, 193

Burian, Edmund (1878-1935)—Czech Social-Democrat. Joined the Communist Party of Czechoslovakia in 1920; became a member of its Executive Committee; in 1922 represented it in the Comintern. In 1929 was expelled from the C.P.C. for his deviation to the right and for liquidationism. Rejoined the Social-Democrats and worked in trade unions.—184

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Chernov, V. M. (1876-1952)—a leader and theoretician of the Socialist-Revolutionary Party. In May-August 1917 Minister of Agriculture in the bourgeois Provisional Government, pursued a policy of brutal repressions against peasants who seized land belonging to landowners. After the October Socialist Revolution helped to organise the counter-revolutionary armed struggle against Soviet Russia. In 1920 emigrated abroad, where he continued his anti-Soviet activities.—30, 127

Chernyshevsky, N. G. (1828-1889)—eminent Russian revolutionary democrat and utopian socialist, scientist, writer, literary critic. Ideological inspirer and leader of the revolutionary-democratic movement of the 1860s in Russia.—29

Chkheidze, N. S. (1864-1926)—a leader of the Mensheviks. Deputy in the Third and Fourth State Dumas, chairman of the Menshevik faction in the Fourth Duma. Was a Centrist and social-pacifist during World War I. After the October Socialist Revolution was chairman of the counter-revolutionary Transcaucasian Sejm in Georgia, then lived abroad as an emigrant.—79

Clausewitz, Karl von (1780-1831) Prussian general, a distinguished military theoretician, author of books on the history of the Napoleonic and other wars.—113, 182

Crispien, Arthur (1875-1946)—a leader of the German Social-Democratic Party, publicist.—20, 32

D

Denikin, A. I. (1872-1947)—general of the tsarist Army; puppet of the British, French and U.S. imperialists during the foreign military intervention and Civil War in Russia (1918-20); commander-in-chief of the counter-revolutionary armed forces in the south of Russia. Emigrated abroad after these forces were defeated.—24

Dietzgen, Josef (1828-1888)—German tannery worker, Social-Democrat, philosopher, who independently arrived at dialectical materialism.—52

E

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Guchkov, A. I. (1862-1936)—big capitalist, leader of the Octoberists, a party of the bourgeois

and landowners in Russia; minister in the bourgeois Provisional Government in 1917. Was active in the counter-revolution following the triumph of the Socialist Revolution in Russia; fled abroad when the counter-revolution was crushed.—79

Guesde, Jules (1845-1922)—an organiser and leader of the French socialist movement and the Second International. Did much to popularise the ideas of Marxism in France. Opposed the policy of the Right-wing Socialists, committed errors of a sectarian nature in theoretical questions and in problems of tactics. In 1914, when the world imperialist war broke out, betrayed socialism and became a member of the bourgeois government in France.—25, 57

H

Hempel—a representative of the Left-wing opportunist Communist Workers' Party of Germany at the Third Congress of the Comintern.—172

Henderson, Arthur (1863-1935)—a leader of the Labour Party and the British trade-union movement. In 1919 was one of the organisers of the Berne International. In 1923 was Chairman of the Executive Committee of the so-called Socialist Labour International. Held ministerial posts in the bourgeois governments of Britain.—199

Hilferding, Rudolf (1877-1941)—an opportunist leader of the German Social-Democratic Party and the Second International. Creator of the

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J

Jaurès, Jean-Léon (1859-1914)—prominent leader of the French and world socialist movement, founder and editor of the newspaper *L'Humanité*. Leader of the reformist Right wing of the French Socialist Party. Was active in the struggle against militarism. Assassinated on the eve of World War I by a thug hired by the militarists.—57

K

Karelin, V. A. (1891-1938)—one of the organisers of the Left Socialist-Revolutionary Party and a member of its Central Committee. Became a member of the Soviet Government in December 1917. In July 1918 helped to organise the Left Socialist-Revolutionary uprising. Emigrated when the uprising was crushed.—121, 128

Kautsky, Karl (1854-1938)—a leader of the German Social-Democratic Party and the Second International; maintained a Marxist stand in the initial period of his political career, then betrayed Marx-

ism.—8, 9, 15, 16, 20, 22, 29, 31, 32, 34, 35, 50, 204

Kelley-Wischniewetzky, Florence (1859-1932)—American Socialist, translated Engels's book *The Condition of the Working Class in England* into the English language, subsequently advocated reformist views.—53

Kerensky, A. F. (b. 1881)—a leader of the Socialist-Revolutionary Party in Russia. In 1917 headed the bourgeois Provisional Government. Fled abroad in 1918.—24, 31, 86, 94, 123, 127, 128

Kievsky, P. [*Pyatakov, G. L.*] (1890-1937)—joined the Bolshevik Party in 1910. Held a number of responsible posts after the October Socialist Revolution in Russia. Headed a group of "Left Communists" in the Ukraine; actively supported Trotsky. Expelled from the Party in 1936.—71, 72, 73, 74, 75

Kolchak, A. V. (1873-1920)—Admiral of the tsarist Navy, monarchist. One of the principal leaders of the Russian counter-revolution in 1918-20.—24

Kornilov, L. G. (1870-1918)—general of the tsarist Army; in August 1917 headed a counter-revolutionary uprising, which aimed to restore the monarchy in Russia.—85

Kreibich, Karel (b. 1883)—prominent figure of the Czechoslovak and world Communist movement. Was a delegate to the Third Congress of the Comintern; in that period advocated "Left" views. In 1922, 1924 and 1925 was a member of the Executive Committee of the Comintern,

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Lagardelle, Hubert (b. 1874)-
French petty-bourgeois poli-
tician, anarcho-syndicalist. In
1942-43 Minister of Labour
in the Vichy Government; in
1946 sentenced to life impris-
onment for participation in
that government. - 57

Lansbury, George (1859-1940)-
a leader of the British Labour
Party. - 22, 26

Lautenberg, Heinrich (1872-1932)-
German Left-wing Social-
Democrat, publicist. After the
Revolution of 1918 in Germa-
ny joined the Communist
Party of Germany; in the
C.P.G. headed the "Left" op-
position, which advocated
anarcho-syndicalist views and
a petty-bourgeois-nationalist
programme of "national
Bolshevism". Expelled from
the Communist Party of
Germany in 1919. - 34

Lazzari, Constantino (1857-1927)-
prominent leader in the
Italian socialist movement,
one of the founders and
leaders of the Italian Social-
ist Party. After the October
Socialist Revolution advocated
support for the Soviet state;
attended the Second and
Third Congresses of the
Comintern. - 182

Ledebour, Georg (1850-1947)-
German Social-Democrat; was
a member of the German
Reichstag from the German
Social-Democratic Party. - 20,
32

Levi, Paul (1883-1930)-German
Social-Democrat; belonged to
the Spartacus Union and was
a member of the Central
Committee of the Communist
Party of Germany. In 1921
headed the Right-wing op-
position in the C.P.G., was
expelled from the Party for
flagrant violations of Party
discipline. - 175, 194

Legien, Karl (1861-1920)-Ger-
man Right-wing Social-Demo-
crat, a trade-union leader, re-
visionist. Opposed the work-
ing-class revolutionary move-
ment. - 19

Liebknecht, Wilhelm (1826-1900)-
prominent leader of the
German and world working-
class movement, one of the
founders and leaders of the
German Social-Democratic
Party. Was active in the Re-
volution of 1848-49 in Ger-
many. Became a socialist
under the direct influence of
Karl Marx and Friedrich
Engels. Was one of the most
active propagators of the re-
volutionary ideas of the First
International and the orga-
niser of its German sections.
From 1875 to the end of his
life he was a member of the
Central Committee of the
German Social-Democratic
Party and the Editor-in-Chief
of *Vorwärts*, its central organ.
Imprisoned time and again
for revolutionary activity. -
199

Liebknecht, Karl (1871-1919)-
outstanding figure in the
German and world working-
class movement, one of the
leaders of the Left wing of
the Social-Democratic Party
of Germany. One of the found-
ers of the Communist Party
of Germany; headed the

uprising of the Berlin work-
ers in January 1919. When
the uprising was suppressed
he was killed by counter-
revolutionaries. - 190

Linde, F. F. (1881-1917)-a mem-
ber of the Petrograd Soviet
of Workers' and Soldiers'
Deputies; took part in the
April 1917 demonstrations.
Later was a commissar of the
bourgeois Provisional Govern-
ment. - 181

Longuet, Jean (1876-1938)-a
leader of the French Socialist
Party and the Second Inter-
national; in 1923 became one
of the leaders of the so-called
Socialist Workers' Interna-
tional. In the thirties advo-
cated unity of action between
Socialists and Communists
against nazism. - 16, 23

Luov, G. Y. (1861-1925)-prince,
big landowner. After the
bourgeois-democratic revolu-
tion of February 1917 in
Russia was Chairman of the
Council of Ministers and
Minister of the Interior of
the bourgeois Provisional
Government. After the Octo-
ber Socialist Revolution
emigrated abroad and was
one of the organisers of the
foreign military intervention
against Soviet Russia. - 79

Luxemburg, Rosa (1871-1919)-
prominent leader of the
German and Polish working-
class movement and the
Second International, one of
the founders of the Commu-
nist Party of Germany. Arrest-
ed in January 1919 and
murdered by counter-revolu-
tionaries. - 189

M

MacMahon, Patrice (1808-1893)-
French statesman, military

leader, monarchist. Took part
in crushing the Paris Com-
mune in May 1871. President
of France from 1873 to 1879.
- 85

Maring, Heinrich (1883-1942)-
Dutch Social-Democrat. In
1913-19 lived on Java, where
he joined the Left Social-
Democrats and then became
a member of the Communist
Parties of Java and the
Netherlands. Was a delegate
to the Second Congress of
the Comintern. In 1927
resigned from the Communist
Party and began advocating
Trotskyite views. - 151

Marx, Karl (1818-1883)-founder
of scientific communism,
leader and teacher of the
world proletariat. - 18, 25, 29,
50, 52, 53, 123, 124, 125, 201,
203

Martov, L. (1873-1923)-Russian
Social-Democrat, one of the
leaders of Menshevism in
Russia after the Second
R.S.D.L.P. Congress (1903).
After the October Socialist
Revolution opposed Soviet
rule. Emigrated abroad in
1920. - 30, 31, 85

Milyukov, P. N. (1859-1943)-
ideologist of the Russian
imperialist bourgeoisie and a
leader of the Constitutional
Democratic Party in Russia.
After the October Revolution
was active in helping to
organise foreign military in-
tervention against Soviet Rus-
sia, then emigrated. - 181

Most, Johann Joseph (1846-1906)-
German Social-Democrat,
then an anarchist. Published
an anarchist newspaper in
London, in which he urged
the workers to engage in
individual terrorism, regard-
ing this as the most effective

means of revolutionary struggle. Marx sharply condemned Most's revolutionary phrase-mongering.-67

N

Napoleon I (1769-1821)-Emperor of France in 1804-14 and in 1815.-104, 105, 118, 204

Natanson, M. A. (1850-1919)-prominent participant in the revolutionary movement in Russia, member of the Central Committee of the Socialist-Revolutionary Party.-30

Noske, Gustav (1868-1946)-an opportunist leader of the German Social-Democratic Party; organiser of reprisals against the workers of Berlin and the murder of Karl Liebknecht and Rosa Luxemburg, leaders of the German proletariat.-16, 157, 199

O

Osinsky, V. V. (1887-1938)-joined the Bolshevik Party in 1907; occupied leading posts after the October Socialist Revolution. Became a "Left Communist" in 1918. Joined the Trotskyite opposition in 1923.-130, 168

P

Pannekoek, Anton (Horner, Karl) (1873-1960)-Dutch Social-Democrat; was a member of the Communist Party of the Netherlands in 1918-21 and took part in the work of the Comintern. Advocated ultra-Left, sectarian views. Resigned from the Communist Party in 1924 and soon afterwards retired from active politics.-34, 63, 65, 67

Peter the Great (1672-1725)-Russian tsar from 1682 to 1725, first Emperor of Russia.-121

Plehve, V. K. (1846-1904)-reactionary statesman of tsarist Russia. His policy of cruel repressions earned him the hatred of broad sections of Russian society. Assassinated by the Socialist-Revolutionary Sazonov.-44

Plekhanov, G. V. (1856-1918)-outstanding figure in the Russian and world working-class movement. Lenin highly appraised his theoretical works and his role in disseminating Marxism in Russia; at the same time Lenin sharply criticised him for his departures from Marxism and his gross errors in political activity.-19, 30

Pokrovsky, M. N. (1868-1932)-joined the Bolshevik Party in 1905; a prominent Soviet statesman and historian. For some time, in 1918, was a "Left Communist". Opposed the signing of the Brest Peace Treaty.-128

Pomyalovsky, N. G. (1835-1863)-noted Russian writer and democrat.-134

Potresov, A. N. (1869-1934)-Russian Social-Democrat. After the Second R.S.D.L.P. Congress (1903) became a Menshevik leader. Emigrated abroad after the October Socialist Revolution.-30

Pyatakov, Y.-see *Kievsky, P.* (q.v.)

Q

Quelch, Thomas (1886-1954)-English socialist, then Communist; trade-union leader and publicist. Left the Com-

munist Party in the last years of his life.-155

R

Radek, K. B. (1885-1939)-early in the twentieth century became active in the Social-Democratic movement in Galicia, Poland and Germany. Joined the Bolshevik Party in 1917. Steadfastly opposed the Bolshevik Party's Leninist line; became a "Left Communist" in 1918, and an active Trotskyite in 1923. Was expelled from the Party in 1936 for anti-Party activities.-22, 174, 175, 178

Renaudel, Pierre (1871-1935)-a reformist leader of the French Socialist Party. Withdrew from the leadership of the Socialist Party in 1924, and was expelled from that Party in 1933.-23, 199

Renner, Karl (1870-1960)-Austrian politician, leader and theoretician of the Austrian Right-wing Social-Democrats. Chancellor of Austria in 1919-20; President of Austria in 1945-50.-16, 23, 157, 159

Roland-Holst, Henriette (1869-1952)-Dutch Socialist, author-ess. Was a member of the Communist Party of the Netherlands in 1918-27 and took part in the work of the Comintern. Resigned from the Communist Party in 1927 and subsequently advocated Christian socialism.-72

Romanov, Nicholas (1868-1918)-last Russian Emperor; reigned from 1894 to 1917.-78

Roy, Manabendra Nath (1892-1948)-Indian politician; delegate to the Second, Third, Fourth and Fifth congresses of the Comintern. Subsequent-

ly resigned from the Communist Party.-151, 152, 155

S

Scheidemann, Philipp (1865-1939)-a leader of the opportunist, extreme Right wing of the German Social-Democratic Party. In 1918-21 organised the ruthless suppression of the working-class movement in Germany.-16, 22, 31, 34, 35, 157, 199

Serrati, Giacinto Menotti (1872-1926)-was prominent in the Italian working-class movement; one of the leaders of the Italian Socialist Party. Joined the Italian Communist Party in 1924.-194

Sipyagin, D. S. (1853-1902)-became Minister of the Interior of Russia in 1899; ruthlessly persecuted revolutionaries.-38, 40, 44

Šméral, Bohumir (1880-1941)-prominent leader of the Czechoslovak and world working-class movement, one of the founders of the Communist Party of Czechoslovakia.-183

Sorge, Friedrich Adolf (1828-1906)-German Socialist, prominent figure of the world working-class and socialist movement, friend and associate of Karl Marx and Friedrich Engels.-52, 53

Spengler, Oswald (1880-1936)-German idealist philosopher, ideological predecessor of German nazism. Was bitterly opposed to the democratic rights of the working-class masses, to Marxism and proletarian internationalism.-198

Spiridonova, M. A. (1884-1941)-a leader of the Socialist-Revolutionary Party; opposed

the conclusion of the Brest Treaty. Later retired from political activity.-85

Steklov, Y. M. (1873-1941)-Russian Social-Democrat, joined the Bolsheviks after the Second R.S.D.L.P. Congress (1903). Following the February 1917 bourgeois-democratic revolution adhered to revolutionary defensism, and then went over to the Bolsheviks.-79

Stolypin, P. A. (1862-1911)-tsarist statesman, big landowner; Chairman of the Council of Ministers and Minister of the Interior of Russia in 1906-11; relentlessly persecuted revolutionaries. Was assassinated in 1911.-55

Struve, P. B. (1870-1944)-bourgeois economist and publicist, liberal, a leader of the Cadet Party in Russia. A rabid enemy of Soviet rule after the October Socialist Revolution.-30, 37, 39

Südekum, Albert (1871-1944)-revisionist, opportunist leader of the German Social-Democratic Party. Preached imperialist views on the colonial question, opposed the revolutionary movement of the working class. Minister of Finance of Prussia in 1918-20. His name epitomised extreme opportunism.-199

Sukhanov, N. (Gimmer, N. N.) (b. 1882)-economist, petty-bourgeois publicist, Menshevik.-201, 203, 204

T

Taylor, Frederick Winslow (1856-1915)-American engineer, President of the American engineers' union in 1905-06; developed a system

of labour efficiency and the maximum use of the means and implements of labour. Under capitalism this system is used for intensifying the exploitation of the workers.-128

Terracini, Umberto (b. 1895)-prominent in the working-class movement in Italy and a foundation member of the Italian Communist Party. Committed leftist-sectarian errors, which were condemned by Lenin at the Third Congress of the Comintern. Influenced by criticism, soon surmounted these errors.-172, 173, 176, 177, 179, 184

Thomas, Albert (1878-1932)-French politician, Right-wing Socialist. Was a social-chauvinist during World War I. In 1919 helped to organise the Berne International.-157

Tsereteli, I. G. (1882-1959)-a Menshevik leader. Emigrated abroad after the October Socialist Revolution.-79, 128, 129

Turati, Filippo (1857-1932)-was prominent in the Italian working-class movement, one of the founders of the Italian Socialist Party, leader of its reformist Right wing.-16

V

Vaillant, Edouard Marie (1840-1915)-French Socialist and a leader of the Second International.-25

Vandervelde, Emile (1866-1938)-a leader of the Belgian Labour Party. Chairman of the International Socialist Bureau of the Second International, advocated extreme opportunist views. Was hostile to the October Socialist

Revolution in Russia and actively helped the armed intervention against Soviet Russia. Minister of Foreign Affairs of Belgium in 1925-27.-57

Varlin, Louis Eugène (1839-1871)-French revolutionary, prominent figure of the Paris Commune of 1871. Joined the First International in 1865 and was one of the organisers and leaders of its Paris section. During the period of the Paris Commune was a member of its Council (government); fought heroically at the barricades. Was captured, tortured and shot without trial.-199

W

Wilhelm II (Hohenzollern) (1895-1941)-Emperor of Germany and King of Prussia (1888-1918).-92

Wischniewetzky See *Kelley-Wischniewetzky* (q. v.)

Z

Zasulich, V. I. (1849-1919)-a leading participant in the Social-Democratic movement in Russia. Became a Menshevik after the Second R.S.D.L.P. Congress in 1903.-30

Zinoviev, G. Y. (1883-1936)-joined the R.S.D.L.P. in 1901 and was a Bolshevik. After the October Revolution a member of the Political Bureau of the Central Committee of the Russian Communist Party (Bolsheviks) and Chairman of the Executive Committee of the Comintern. Repeatedly opposed the Party's Leninist policy; expelled from the Party for anti-Party activities in 1934.-189, 197

TO THE READER

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