

M A R X I S T L I B R A R Y
— V O L U M E X X X I I —

PROBLEMS OF
LENINISM

—
JOSEPH STALIN



PROBLEMS OF LENINISM

*Dedicated to the
Leningrad Organization
of the Communist Party
of the Soviet Union*



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Works of Marxism—Leninism

VOLUME XXXII

PROBLEMS
OF
LENINISM

By JOSEPH STALIN

NEW YORK
INTERNATIONAL PUBLISHERS

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Printed in the U. S. A.

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CONTENTS

CHAPTER	PAGE
I. DEFINITION OF LENINISM	7
II. THE CORE OF LENINISM	10
III. THE QUESTION OF "PERMANENT" REVOLUTION . .	13
IV. THE PROLETARIAN REVOLUTION AND THE DICTATORSHIP OF THE PROLETARIAT	16
V. THE PARTY AND THE WORKING CLASS WITHIN THE SYSTEM OF THE DICTATORSHIP OF THE PROLETARIAT	29
VI. THE QUESTION OF THE VICTORY OF SOCIALISM IN A SINGLE COUNTRY	60
VII. THE FIGHT FOR THE VICTORY OF SOCIALIST CONSTRUCTION	77
INDEX	93

PROBLEMS OF LENINISM

I

DEFINITION OF LENINISM

IN the pamphlet *Foundations of Leninism* the well-known definition of Leninism is given which seems to have received general acceptance. It runs as follows:

“Leninism is Marxism in the epoch of imperialism and of the proletarian revolution. Or, to be more exact, Leninism is the theory and tactics of the proletarian revolution in general, the theory and tactics of the dictatorship of the proletariat in particular.” *

Is this definition correct?

I think so. It is correct, firstly, because it correctly indicates the historical roots of Leninism, characterising it as Marxism of the *epoch of imperialism*—as against certain critics of Lenin who incorrectly consider that Leninism originated after the imperialist war. It is correct, secondly, because it correctly notes the international character of Leninism—as against the Social-Democrats, who consider that Leninism is applicable only to Russian national conditions. It is correct, thirdly, because it correctly notes the organic connection between Leninism and the teachings of Marx, characterising Leninism as *Marxism* of the epoch of imperialism—as against certain critics of Leninism who consider it not as a further development of Marxism, but merely

* Joseph Stalin, *Foundations of Leninism* (International Publishers).
—Ed.

as the restoration of Marxism and its application to Russian conditions.

One would think that all this does not need any special comment.

Nevertheless, it appears that there are comrades in our Party who consider it necessary to define Leninism somewhat differently. For example, Comrade Zinoviev thinks that: "Leninism is Marxism in the epoch of imperialist war and of the world revolution *which began directly in a country where the peasantry predominates.*" [Italics by Zinoviev. —J. S.] (Zinoviev, "Bolshevism or Trotskyism," *Pravda*, November 30, 1924.)

What can be the meaning of the words underlined by Comrade Zinoviev? What does it mean to introduce the backwardness of Russia, its peasant character, into a definition of Leninism?

It means the transformation of Leninism from an international proletarian doctrine into a specifically Russian product.

It means playing into the hands of Bauer and Kautsky, who deny that Leninism is suitable to other countries, which are capitalistically more developed.

Without a doubt the peasant question is of the greatest importance in Russia; our country is a peasant country. But what significance can this fact have in a characterisation of the fundamentals of Leninism? Was Leninism worked out only upon Russian soil, for Russia alone, and not upon imperialist soil, and for the imperialist countries generally?

Have Lenin's works, such as *Imperialism, State and Revolution*, *The Proletarian Revolution and the Renegade Kautsky*, and "*Left-Wing*" *Communism: an Infantile Disorder*, etc., significance only for Russia and not for all imperialist countries in general? Is not Leninism the generalisation

of the experience of the revolutionary movement of *all* countries? Are not the foundations of the theory and tactics of Leninism suitable and obligatory for the proletarian parties of all countries? Was Lenin wrong when he said that: "Bolshevism can serve as a model of tactics *for all*"? (*Collected Works*, Vol. XXIII, p. 386, Russian edition.) Was Lenin wrong when he spoke of the "*international significance* [My italics.—J. S.] of the Soviet power and of the foundation of Bolshevik theory and tactics"? ("*Left-Wing Communism.*")

Was not Lenin right when he wrote: "In Russia, the dictatorship of the proletariat must inevitably differ in certain special features from that in the advanced countries, by reason of the very great backwardness and petty-bourgeois character of our country. But the basic forces and the basic forms of social economy are just the same in Russia as in any capitalist country, so that *these special features cannot affect the main point.*" (*Collected Works*, Vol. XXIV, p. 508, Russian edition.)

But if this is so, does it not follow therefrom that Comrade Zinoviev's definition of Leninism cannot be recognised as correct?

How can this nationally restricted definition of Leninism be reconciled with internationalism?

II

THE CORE OF LENINISM

IN the pamphlet *Foundations of Leninism*, it is stated:

“Some think that the fundamental thing in Leninism is the peasant question, that the point of departure in Leninism is the question of the peasantry, its rôle, its relative importance. This is absolutely incorrect. The fundamental question in Leninism, its point of departure, is not the peasant question but the question of the dictatorship of the proletariat, of the conditions under which it can be won, of the conditions under which it can be consolidated. The peasant question, as the question of the ally of the proletariat in its struggle for power, is a secondary question resulting from the fundamental question.”

Is this statement correct?

I think it is. It follows completely from the definition of Leninism. For, if Leninism is the theory and tactics of the proletarian revolution, and the basic content of the proletarian revolution is the dictatorship of the proletariat, then it is clear that the core of Leninism is the question of the dictatorship of the proletariat, the working out of this question and giving a basis and concreteness to it.

It is plain, however, that Comrade Zinoviev does not agree with this view. In his article, “In Memory of Lenin,” he writes: “As I have already said, the question of the rôle of the peasantry is the *fundamental question* [My italics—

J. S.] of Bolshevism, of Leninism.” (*Pravda*, February 13, 1924.)

As you see, Comrade Zinoviev’s statement is the direct outcome of his incorrect definition of Leninism, and it is therefore as incorrect as is his definition of Leninism.

Was Lenin correct in his thesis that the dictatorship of the proletariat is the “root content of the revolution”? (*Collected Works*, Vol. XXIII, p. 337, Russian edition.) Undoubtedly he was right. Is the thesis correct that Leninism is the theory and tactics of the proletarian revolution? I think it is. But what, then, follows from this? It follows from this that the fundamental question of Leninism, its starting point, its foundation, is the question of the dictatorship of the proletariat. Is it not true that the question of imperialism, of the spasmodic character of its development, of the victory of socialism in one country, of the proletarian state, of the Soviet form of this state, of the rôle of the Party in the system of the dictatorship of the proletariat, of the lines of socialist construction—were not all these questions worked out precisely by Lenin? Is it not true that just these questions constitute the basis and foundation of the idea of the dictatorship of the proletariat? Is it not true that without a preliminary working out of these basic questions the working out of the peasant question from the standpoint of the dictatorship of the proletariat would be inconceivable?

Of course, Lenin was an expert on the peasant question. Of course, the peasant question, as the question dealing with the ally of the proletariat, is of the greatest significance to the proletariat, and forms a component part of the basic problem of the dictatorship of the proletariat, but is it not clear that if Leninism were not faced with the fundamental question of the dictatorship of the proletariat, then the sub-

sidiary question of the ally of the proletariat, namely the peasantry, would not arise? Is it not clear that if Leninism were not faced with the practical problem of the conquest of power by the proletariat, then the question of an alliance with the peasantry would not arise?

Lenin would not have been the mighty ideological leader of the proletariat, which he unquestionably was, but the simple "peasant philosopher" that foreign literary philistines are often fond of depicting him as, had he been content to work out the peasant question, not on the basis of the theory and tactics of the dictatorship of the proletariat, but independently of and apart from this basis.

One of two things:

Either the peasant question is the core of Leninism, and in that case Leninism is not suitable, not obligatory for developed capitalist countries, for such as are not peasant countries.

Or, the core of Leninism is the dictatorship of the proletariat, and in that case Leninism is the international doctrine of the proletarians of all lands, is suitable and obligatory for all countries without exception, including those where capitalism is developed.

A choice has to be made here.

III

THE QUESTION OF "PERMANENT" REVOLUTION

IN the pamphlet *Foundations of Leninism*, the "theory of permanent revolution" is appraised as one which underestimates the rôle of the peasantry. There it is stated:

"Lenin, then, fought the adherents of 'permanent' revolution not over the question of 'uninterruptedness,' because he himself held the point of view of uninterrupted revolution, but because they underestimated the rôle of the peasantry, the proletariat's greatest reserve power. . . ."

This characterisation of the Russian "permanentists" was considered as generally accepted until recently. Nevertheless, though generally correct, it cannot be regarded as exhaustive. On the one hand, the discussion of 1924 and, on the other hand, a detailed analysis of the works of Lenin, have shown that the mistake of the Russian "permanentists" consisted not only in their underestimation of the rôle of the peasantry, but also in their underestimation of the strength and ability of the proletariat to lead the peasantry, and their lack of faith in the idea of the hegemony of the proletariat.

For this reason, in my pamphlet, *The October Revolution and the Tactics of the Russian Communists* (December 1924), I broadened this characterisation, replacing it by another, more exhaustive one. This is what is said on this point in the pamphlet:

“Hitherto only *one* side of the theory of ‘permanent revolution’ has commonly been noted—lack of faith in the revolutionary possibilities inherent in the peasant movement. Now, in fairness, this side must be supplemented by *another* side—lack of faith in the strength and capacities of the proletariat in Russia.”

Of course, this does not mean that Leninism has been or is opposed to the idea of permanent revolution, without quotation marks, as proclaimed by Marx in the forties of the last century. On the contrary, Lenin was the only Marxist who correctly understood and developed the idea of permanent revolution. What distinguishes Lenin from the “permanentists” on this question is that the latter distorted Marx’s idea of permanent revolution and transformed it into lifeless, bookish wisdom, whereas Lenin took it in its pure form and made it one of the bases of his own theory of revolution. It should be remembered that the idea of the bourgeois-democratic revolution growing into the socialist revolution, propounded by Lenin as long ago as 1905, is one of the forms of the embodiment of the Marxist theory of permanent revolution. Here is what Lenin wrote about this in 1905:

“... from the democratic revolution we shall immediately begin to pass over... in proportion to our strength, to the strength of the class conscious and organised proletariat... to the socialist revolution. *We stand for uninterrupted revolution* [My italics.—J. S.], we will not halt halfway... Without falling into adventurism, without betraying our scientific conscience, without chasing after cheap popularity, we can and do say *one thing*: we will exert every effort to help the whole of the peasantry to make the democratic revolution *in order that it may be easier* for us, the

party of the proletariat, to pass over as quickly as possible to the new and higher tasks, *viz.*, the socialist revolution.” (*Collected Works*, Vol. VIII, pp. 186-87, Russian edition.)

Writing on the same topic sixteen years later, after the conquest of power by the proletariat, Lenin stated:

“The Kautskys, Hilferdings, Martovs, Chernovs, Hillquits, Longuets, MacDonalds, Turatis, and other heroes of ‘Two-and-a-Half’ Marxism have failed to understand the relationship between the bourgeois-democratic revolution and the proletarian-socialist revolution. *The first grows into the second.* [My italics.—*J. S.*] The second, in passing, solves the problem of the first. The second consolidates the work of the first. Struggle, and nothing but struggle, decides how far the second succeeds in outgrowing the first.” (*Collected Works*, Vol. XXVII, p. 26, Russian edition.)

I wish to draw special attention to the first of the foregoing quotations, which is taken from an article by Lenin entitled, “The Attitude of Social-Democracy Towards the Peasant Movement,” published September 1, 1905. I emphasise this for the information of those comrades who still continue to assert that Lenin only arrived at the idea of the bourgeois-democratic revolution growing into the socialist revolution, the idea of permanent revolution, after the outbreak of the imperialist war, somewhere about the year 1916. The quotation leaves no doubt that these comrades are profoundly mistaken.

IV

THE PROLETARIAN REVOLUTION AND THE DICTATORSHIP OF THE PROLETARIAT

WHAT are the characteristic features that distinguish the proletarian revolution from the bourgeois revolution?

The differences between the two may be reduced to five basic points.

(1) The bourgeois revolution usually begins when more or less finished forms of the capitalist order already exist, forms which have grown and ripened within the womb of feudal society prior to the open revolution; whereas the proletarian revolution begins at a time when finished forms of the socialist order are either absent, or almost completely absent.

(2) The fundamental task of the bourgeois revolution reduces itself to seizing power and wielding that power in conformity with the already existing bourgeois economy; whereas the main task of the proletarian revolution reduces itself to building up the new socialist economy after having seized power.

(3) The bourgeois revolution is usually completed with the seizure of power; whereas for the proletarian revolution the seizure of power is only its *beginning*, while power is used as a lever for the transformation of the old economy and for the organisation of the new one.

(4) The bourgeois revolution limits itself to substituting one group of exploiters for another in the seat of power, and therefore has no need to destroy the old state machine;

whereas the proletarian revolution removes all groups of exploiters from power, and places in power the leader of all the toilers and exploited, the class of proletarians, and therefore it cannot avoid destroying the old state machine and replacing it by a new one.

(5) The bourgeois revolution cannot for any length of time rally the millions of the toiling and exploited masses around the bourgeoisie, for the very reason that they are toilers and exploited; whereas the proletarian revolution can and must link them up precisely as toilers and exploited in a durable alliance with the proletariat, if it wishes to carry out its fundamental task of consolidating the power of the proletariat and building the new socialist economy.

Here are some of Lenin's fundamental postulates on the subject:

"One of the basic differences between the bourgeois revolution and the socialist revolution," says Lenin, "is that, in the case of the bourgeois revolution, which grows out of feudalism, the new economic organisations are gradually created within the womb of the old order, and by degrees modify all the aspects of feudal society. The bourgeois revolution had but one task to perform: to sweep away, to fling aside, to destroy all the fetters of the previous society. Fulfilling this task, every bourgeois revolution fulfills all that is demanded of it: it stimulates the growth of capitalism. But the socialist revolution is in an altogether different position. The more backward the country in which, thanks to the zigzag course of history, the socialist revolution has to be begun, the more difficult for it is the transition from the old capitalist relations to socialist relations. Here, to the tasks of destruction are added new organisational tasks of unheard-of difficulty. . . .

“If the creative force of the masses in the Russian revolution,” continues Lenin, “which went through the great experience of the year 1905, had not created soviets already in February 1917, then these soviets could not under any circumstances have seized power in October, for success depended upon the existence of finished organisational forms of a movement that embraced millions of people. The soviets were such a finished organisational form, and that is why the striking successes and triumphal procession that we experienced awaited us in the political field, for the new political form was ready at hand, and all we had to do was by a few decrees transform the Soviet power from the embryonic condition in which it existed during the first months of the revolution, into a form legally recognised and confirmed in the Russian state—the Russian Soviet republic. . . .

“There still remained,” says Lenin, “two tasks of enormous difficulty, the solution of which could, under no circumstances, be the same triumphal procession that our revolution was. . . .

“First, there was the task of internal organisation which faces every socialist revolution. The difference between the socialist revolution and the bourgeois revolution is precisely that, in the latter case, finished forms of capitalist relationships already exist, whereas the Soviet power, the proletarian power, does not get these relationships, if we leave out of account the most developed forms of capitalism which, as a matter of fact, embraced only a few peaks of industry and affected agriculture only to a very slight extent. The organisation of accounting, the control over large-scale enterprises, the transformation of the whole state economic mechanism into a single great machine, into an economic organism which shall work in such a way that hundreds of

millions of people shall be directed by a single plan, such is the tremendous organisational task which lay on our shoulders. The existing conditions of labour under no circumstances allowed solution in the 'hurrah' fashion by which we were able to solve the problems of the civil war. . . .

"The second enormous difficulty was . . . the international question. If we were able to cope so easily with Kerensky's bands, if we so easily established our power, if the decree on the socialisation of the land and on workers' control, was secured without the slightest difficulty—if we obtained all this so easily it was only because for a brief space of time a fortunate combination of circumstances protected us from international imperialism. International imperialism, with all the might of its capital and its highly organised military technique, which represents a real force, a real fortress of international capital, could under no circumstances, under no possible conditions, live side by side with the Soviet republic, both because of its objective situation and because of the economic interests of the capitalist class which was incorporated in it, it could not do this because of commercial ties and of international financial relationships. A conflict is inevitable. This is the greatest difficulty of the Russian Revolution, its greatest historical problem: the necessity to solve international problems, the necessity to call forth the world revolution." (*Collected Works*, Vol. XXII, pp. 315-317, Russian edition.)

Such is the inner character and the basic idea of the proletarian revolution.

Can such a radical transformation of the old bourgeois system of society be achieved without a violent revolution, without the dictatorship of the proletariat?

Obviously not. To think that such a revolution can be carried out peacefully within the framework of bourgeois democracy, which is adapted to the domination of the bourgeoisie, means one of two things. It means either madness, and the loss of normal human understanding, or else an open and gross repudiation of the proletarian revolution.

It is necessary to insist on this all the more strongly, all the more categorically, since we are dealing with the proletarian revolution which has for the time being triumphed in only one country, a country surrounded by hostile capitalist countries, a country the bourgeoisie of which cannot fail to receive the support of international capital.

That is why Lenin states that “. . . the liberation of the oppressed class is impossible not only without a violent revolution, *but also without the destruction of the apparatus of state power, which was created by the ruling class. . . .* (Collected Works, Vol. XXI, Book II, p. 155. Also *State and Revolution*, Little Lenin Library, p. 9.)

“First let the majority of the population, while private property is still maintained, that is while the power and oppression of capital are maintained, declare itself for the party of the proletariat. Only then can it, and should it, take power. That is what is said by *petty-bourgeois democrats who call themselves ‘socialists’ but are really the henchmen of the bourgeoisie.* [My italics.—J. S.]

“*But we say:* Let the revolutionary proletariat first overthrow the bourgeoisie, break the yoke of capital, break up the bourgeois state apparatus. Then the victorious proletariat will speedily gain the sympathy and support of the majority of the toiling non-proletarian masses by satisfying their wants at the expense of the exploiters. [My italics.—

J. S.] (*Collected Works*, Vol. XXIV, p. 647, Russian edition.)

"In order to win the majority of the population to its side," Lenin continues, "the proletariat must first of all overthrow the bourgeoisie and seize state power and, secondly, it must introduce Soviet rule, smash to pieces the old state apparatus, and thus at one blow undermine the rule, authority and influence of the bourgeoisie and of the petty-bourgeois compromisers in the ranks of the non-proletarian toiling masses. Thirdly, the proletariat must *completely and finally destroy* the influence of the bourgeoisie and of the petty-bourgeois compromisers among the *majority* of the non-proletarian toiling masses by the *revolutionary* satisfaction of *their* economic needs *at the expense of the exploiters*." (*Ibid.*, p. 641.)

Such are the characteristic symptoms of the proletarian revolution.

Now, if it be admitted that the dictatorship of the proletariat is the basic content of the proletarian revolution, what then are the fundamental characteristics of the dictatorship of the proletariat?

Here is the most general definition of the dictatorship of the proletariat, given by Lenin:

"The dictatorship of the proletariat is not the end of the class struggle but its continuation in new forms. The dictatorship of the proletariat is the class struggle of the proletariat which has achieved victory and has seized political power against the bourgeoisie which has been defeated but not annihilated, which has not disappeared, which has not ceased its resistance, which has increased its resistance." (*Ibid.*, p. 311.)

Replying to those who confuse the dictatorship of the proletariat with "popular," "elected" and "non-class" government, Lenin states:

"The class which has seized political power has done so conscious of the fact that it has seized power alone. This is implicit in the concept of the dictatorship of the proletariat. This concept has meaning only when one class knows that it alone takes political power into its own hands, and does not deceive either itself or others by talk about popular, elected government, sanctified by the whole people." (*Collected Works*, Vol. XXVI, p. 286, Russian edition.)

This does not mean, however, that the rule of this one class, the class of the proletarians, which does not and cannot share this rule with any other class, does not need an alliance with the toiling and exploited masses of other classes for the attainment of its objectives. On the contrary. This rule, the rule of a single class, can be firmly established and exercised to the full only by means of a special form of alliance between the class of proletarians and the toiling masses of the petty-bourgeois classes, especially the toiling masses of the peasantry.

What is this special form of alliance? What does it consist of? Does not this alliance with the toiling masses of other, non-proletarian classes generally contradict the idea of the dictatorship of one class?

This special form of alliance lies in the fact that the leading force of this alliance is the proletariat, that the leader in the state, the leader within the system of the dictatorship of the proletariat is *a single* party, the party of the proletariat, the party of the Communists, which *does not and cannot share* that leadership with other parties.

As you see, the contradiction is only an apparent, a seeming one.

“The dictatorship of the proletariat,” Lenin says, “is a *special form of class alliance* between the proletariat, the vanguard of the toilers, and the numerous non-proletarian strata of toilers (the petty bourgeoisie, the small masters, the peasantry, the intelligentsia, etc.), or the majority of these; it is an alliance against capital, an alliance aiming at the complete overthrow of capital, at the complete suppression of the resistance of the bourgeoisie and of any attempt on their part at restoration, an alliance aiming at the final establishment and consolidation of socialism. It is a special type of alliance, which is being built up under special circumstances, namely, in the circumstances of furious civil war; it is an alliance between the firm supporters of socialism and its wavering allies and sometimes ‘neutrals’ (when the agreement to fight becomes an agreement to maintain neutrality). *It is an alliance between classes which differ economically, politically, socially and ideologically.*” [My italics.—J. S.] (*Collected Works*, Vol. XXIV, p. 311, Russian edition.)

In one of his instructive reports, Comrade Kamenev, disputing such a conception of the dictatorship of the proletariat, states: “The dictatorship *is not* an alliance between one class and another.” (*Pravda*, January 14, 1925.)

I believe that Comrade Kamenev had in view, above all, a passage in my pamphlet, *The October Revolution and the Tactics of the Russian Communists*, where it is stated:

“The dictatorship of the proletariat is not simply the upper stratum of the government ‘cleverly selected’ by the

careful hand of an 'experienced strategist,' and 'sensibly relying' on the support of one section or another of the population. The dictatorship of the proletariat is a class alliance between the proletariat and the toiling masses of the peasantry, for the purpose of overthrowing capital, for bringing about the final victory of socialism, an alliance based on the condition that its leading force is the proletariat." (Joseph Stalin, *The October Revolution* [International Publishers], p. 99.—*Ed.*)

I completely endorse this formulation of the dictatorship of the proletariat, for I think that it wholly and fully corresponds to Lenin's formulation, just quoted.

I maintain that Comrade Kamenev's declaration that "the dictatorship of the proletariat *is not* an alliance between one class and another," in the categorical form in which it is made, has nothing in common with the Leninist theory of the dictatorship of the proletariat.

I maintain that only those can speak in such a fashion who have never understood the meaning of the idea of the bond,* the idea of the alliance between the workers and the peasants, the idea of the *hegemony* of the proletariat within this alliance.

Such statements can only be made by those who have failed to grasp Lenin's thesis that: "*Nothing but an agreement with the peasants* [My italics.—J. S.] can save the socialist revolution in Russia until the revolution has taken place in other countries." (*Collected Works*, Vol. XXVI, p. 238, Russian edition.)

Such statements can only be made by those who have failed to grasp Lenin's proposition that "*The supreme principle of the dictatorship* is the preservation of the alliance

* The word used in Russian is *smychka*.—*Ed.*

between the proletariat and the peasantry, in order that the proletariat may continue to retain the leading rôle and state power." (*Ibid.*, p. 460.)

Pointing to one of the most important aims of the dictatorship, namely, the suppression of the exploiters, Lenin states:

"The scientific concept, dictatorship, means nothing more nor less than power which directly rests on violence, which is not limited by any laws or restricted by any absolute rules. . . . Dictatorship means—note this once and for all, Messrs. Cadets *—unlimited power, resting on violence and not on law. During civil war, victorious power can only be dictatorship." (*Collected Works*, Vol. XXV, pp. 441 and 436, Russian edition.)

But, of course, the dictatorship of the proletariat does not merely mean violence, although there is no dictatorship without violence.

"Dictatorship," says Lenin, "does not mean violence alone, although it is impossible without violence. It likewise signifies a higher organisation of labour than that which previously existed." (*Collected Works*, Vol. XXIV, p. 30, Russian edition.)

"The dictatorship of the proletariat . . . is not merely the use of violence against the exploiters, and is not even mainly the use of violence. The economic basis of this revolutionary violence, the guarantee of its vitality and success, is that the proletariat represents and introduces a higher type of social organisation of labour compared with capitalism. That is the essential point. This is the source of the strength of Communism and the guarantee of its inevitable complete victory." (*Ibid.*, pp. 335-36.)

* The Constitutional Democrats.—*Ed.*

"Its quintessence [*i.e.*, of the dictatorship—*J. S.*] lies in the organisation and discipline of the advanced detachments of the toilers, of their vanguard, their sole leader, the proletariat. Its aim is to establish socialism, to put an end to the division of society into classes, to make all members of society toilers, to remove the basis for the exploitation of man by man. This aim cannot be achieved at one stroke. It demands quite a protracted period of transition from capitalism to socialism, because the reorganisation of production is a different matter, because time is needed for radical changes in all spheres of life, and because the enormous force of habit of petty-bourgeois and bourgeois management can be overcome only by a long stubborn struggle. That was why Marx spoke of the dictatorship of the proletariat as of a whole period, a period of transition from capitalism to socialism." (*Ibid.*, p. 314.)

Such are the characteristic features of the dictatorship of the proletariat.

Hence there are three fundamental aspects of the dictatorship of the proletariat.

(1) The utilisation of the power of the proletariat for the suppression of the exploiters, for the defence of the country, for the consolidation of the ties with the proletarians of other lands, and for the development and the victory of the revolution in all countries.

(2) The utilisation of the power of the proletariat in order to detach the toiling and exploited masses once and for all from the bourgeoisie, to consolidate the alliance of the proletariat with these masses, to enlist these masses in the work of socialist construction, and to assure the state leadership of these masses by the proletariat.

(3) The utilisation of the power of the proletariat for the organisation of socialism, for the abolition of classes, and for the transition to a society without classes, to a society without a state.

The dictatorship of the proletariat is a combination of all three aspects. None of these three aspects can be advanced as the *sole* characteristic feature of the dictatorship of the proletariat. On the other hand, it is sufficient for but one of these three characteristic features to be absent, for the dictatorship of the proletariat to cease being a dictatorship in a capitalist environment. Therefore not one of these three features can be omitted without running the risk of distorting the concept of dictatorship. Only all these three features taken together give us a complete and fully rounded out conception of the dictatorship of the proletariat.

The dictatorship of the proletariat has its periods, its special forms, its diversified methods of work. During the period of civil war, the coercive aspect of the dictatorship is especially conspicuous. But it by no means follows from this that no constructive work is carried on during the period of civil war. The civil war itself cannot be waged without constructive work. On the contrary, during the period of socialist construction, the peaceful, organisational and cultural work of the dictatorship, revolutionary law, etc., are especially conspicuous. But here again it by no means follows that during the period of construction, the coercive side of the dictatorship has fallen away, or can fall away. The organs of suppression, the army and other organisations, are as necessary now in the period of construction as they were during the civil war period. Without these institutions, constructive work by the dictatorship with any degree of security would be impossible. It should not be

forgotten that for the time being the revolution has been victorious in only one country. It should not be forgotten that as long as we live in a capitalist encirclement, so long will the danger of intervention, with all the resultant consequences, continue.

V

THE PARTY AND THE WORKING CLASS WITHIN THE SYSTEM OF THE DICTATORSHIP OF THE PROLETARIAT

I SPOKE above about the dictatorship of the proletariat from the point of view of its historical inevitability, from the point of view of its class content, from the point of view of its state nature, and, finally, from the point of view of its destructive and creative tasks which are performed throughout an entire historical period, described as the period of transition from capitalism to socialism.

Now we must consider the dictatorship of the proletariat from the point of view of its structure, of its "mechanism," of the rôle and significance of the "belts," the "levers," and the "directing force," the totality of which comprise "the system of the dictatorship of the proletariat" (Lenin), and with the help of which the daily work of the dictatorship of the proletariat is accomplished.

What are these "belts" or "levers" in the system of the dictatorship of the proletariat? What is the "directing force"? Why are they needed?

The levers or the belts are those very mass organisations of the proletariat without whose aid the dictatorship cannot be realised.

The directing force is the advanced detachment of the proletariat, its vanguard, which constitutes the main guiding force of the dictatorship of the proletariat.

The proletariat needs these belts, these levers and this

directing force, because without them it would be, in its struggle for victory, like a weaponless army in the face of organised and armed capital. It needs these organisations because without them it would suffer inevitable defeat in its fight for the overthrow of the bourgeoisie, for the consolidation of its own power and for the building of socialism. The systematic help of these organisations and the directing force of the vanguard are indispensable, because without them the dictatorship of the proletariat could not be to any degree durable and firm.

What are these organisations?

First of all there are the workers' *trade unions*, with their national and local ramifications in the shape of a whole series of production, cultural, educational and other organisations. These unite the workers of all trades. They are not Party organisations. The trade unions may be termed the all-embracing organisation of the working class which holds power in our country. They constitute a school of communism. They promote from their midst the best people to carry out leading work in all branches of administration. They form the link between the advanced and the backward elements in the ranks of the working class. They unite the masses of the workers with their vanguard.

Secondly, we have the *soviets* and their numerous central and local ramifications in the shape of administrative, business, military, cultural and other state organisations, together with innumerable voluntary mass organisations of the toilers which group themselves about the first-mentioned organisations and connect them with the general population. The soviets are mass organisations of all the toilers of town and country. They are not Party organisations. The soviets are the direct expression of the dictatorship of the proletariat. All and sundry measures for the strengthening

of the dictatorship and for the building of socialism are carried out through the soviets. Through them, the political leadership of the peasantry by the proletariat is realised. The soviets unite the vast toiling masses with the proletarian vanguard.

Thirdly, we have *co-operative* societies of all kinds, with all their ramifications. These are mass organisations of toilers, not Party organisations, in which the toilers are united, primarily as consumers, but also in the course of time as producers (agricultural co-operation). Co-operative societies assume special significance after the consolidation of the dictatorship of the proletariat, during the period of widespread construction. They facilitate the contact between the proletarian vanguard and the peasant masses, and create the possibility of drawing the latter into the channel of socialist construction.

Fourthly, there is the *Young Communist League*. This is a mass organisation of the young workers and peasants, not a Party organisation, but in close touch with the Party. Its task is to help the Party educate the younger generation in the spirit of socialism. It provides young reserves for all the other mass organisations of the proletariat in all branches of administration. The Young Communist League acquired special significance after the consolidation of the dictatorship of the proletariat, when widespread cultural and educational work was undertaken by the proletariat.

Lastly, there is the *Party* of the proletariat, its vanguard. The Party's strength lies in the fact that it draws into its ranks all the best elements of the proletariat from all the mass organisations of the proletariat. Its function is to *combine* the work of all the mass organisations of the proletariat, without exception, and to *guide* their activi-

ties towards a single goal, that of the emancipation of the proletariat. And it is absolutely essential to unite and guide them towards one goal, for otherwise the unity of the struggle of the proletariat and the leadership of the proletarian masses in their fight for power and for the building of socialism is impossible. Only the vanguard of the proletariat, its Party, is capable of combining and directing the work of the mass organisations of the proletariat. Only the Party of the proletariat, only the Party of the Communists, is capable of fulfilling this rôle of chief leader in the system of the dictatorship of the proletariat.

Why is this?

“ . . . because, in the first place, it is the common meeting ground of the best elements in the class which have direct connections with the non-Party organisations of the proletariat and very frequently leading them; because, secondly, the Party, as the meeting ground of the best members of the working class, is the best school for training leaders of the working class, capable of directing every form of organisation of their class; because, thirdly, the Party, as the best school for training leaders of the working class, is, by reason of its experience and authority, the only organisation capable of centralising the leadership of the struggle of the proletariat, and in this way of transforming each and every non-Party organisation of the working class into an auxiliary body, a transmission belt linking it with the class.”*

The Party is the main guiding force within the system of the dictatorship. As Lenin puts it, “the Party is the supreme form of the class organisation of the proletariat.” To sum up: the *trade unions*, as the mass organisations of

* *Foundations of Leninism.*—Ed.

the proletariat, linking the Party with the class primarily in the sphere of production; the *soviets*, as the mass organisations of all toilers, linking the Party with these latter, primarily in the sphere of the state; the *co-operative* societies as mass organisations, mainly of the peasants, linking up the Party with the peasant masses, primarily in the economic field, and serving to draw the peasantry into the work of socialist construction; the *Young Communist League*, as the mass organisation of the young workers and peasants, whose mission is to help the proletarian vanguard in the socialist education of the new generation and in training young reserves; and, finally, the *Party*, as the main directing force within the system of the dictatorship of the proletariat, whose mission it is to lead all these mass organisations—such, in broad outline, is the picture of the “mechanism” of the dictatorship, the picture of the “system of the dictatorship of the proletariat.”

Without the Party as the main leading force, a dictatorship of the proletariat at all durable and firm is impossible.

Thus, in the words of Lenin:

“... on the whole, we have a formally non-Communist, flexible, relatively wide and very powerful proletarian apparatus by means of which the Party is closely linked up with the *class* and with *the masses*, and by means of which, under the leadership of the Party, the *class dictatorship* of the class is realised.” (*“Left-Wing” Communism: an Infantile Disorder* [International Publishers], p. 32.)

Of course, this does not mean that the Party can or should become a substitute for the trade unions, the soviets and the other mass organisations. The Party realises the dictatorship of the proletariat. It does so, however, not

directly, but with the help of the trade unions, and through the soviets and their ramifications. Without these "belts," anything like a firm dictatorship would be impossible.

"The dictatorship cannot be realised," says Lenin, "without several 'belts' stretching from the vanguard to the mass of the advanced class, and from this to the mass of the toilers. . . . The Party, so to speak, absorbs the vanguard of the proletariat, and this vanguard realises the dictatorship of the proletariat. In the absence of a foundation such as the trade unions, the dictatorship could not be realised, the functions of the state could not be fulfilled. They have to be fulfilled *through* a series of special institutions which are likewise of a new type, namely *through* the Soviet apparatus." [My italics.—J.S.] (*Collected Works*, Vol. XXVI, pp. 64-65, Russian edition.)

Here in the Soviet Union, in the land of the dictatorship of the proletariat, the fact that not a single important political or organisational question is decided by our Soviet and other mass organisations without directions from the Party must be regarded as the highest expression of the leading rôle of the Party. *In this sense* it could be said that the dictatorship of the proletariat is *in essence* the "dictatorship" of its vanguard, the "dictatorship" of its Party, as the main guiding force of the proletariat. This is what Lenin said in reference to this matter at the Second Congress of the Communist International:

"Tanner says that he stands for the dictatorship of the proletariat, but that he pictures the dictatorship of the proletariat to be something different from what we picture it. He says that by the dictatorship of the proletariat we mean,

in essence, the dictatorship of its organised and class conscious minority.

“As a matter of fact, in the epoch of capitalism, when the masses of the workers are constantly subjected to exploitation and cannot develop their human faculties, the most characteristic feature of working class political parties is that they can embrace only a minority of their class. The political party can organize only a minority of the class in the same way as the really class conscious workers in capitalist society can represent only a minority of all the workers. That is why we must admit that only this class conscious minority can lead the broad masses of the workers. And if Comrade Tanner says that he is opposed to parties and at the same time is in favour of the minority, representing the best organised and the most revolutionary workers, showing the way to the whole of the proletariat, then I say that there is no difference between us.” (*Collected Works*, Vol. XXV, p. 347, Russian edition.)

Does this mean that the dictatorship of the proletariat and the leading rôle of the Party (the “dictatorship” of the Party) are *equal*, that the two are *identical*, that the latter can be *substituted* for the former? Of course not. Comrade Sorin, for example, declares that “*the dictatorship of the proletariat is the dictatorship of our Party.*” [My italics. —*J.S.*] (See *The Teachings of Lenin on the Party*, p. 95 [In Russian.—*Ed.*].) This proposition, as you see, identifies the “dictatorship of the Party” with the dictatorship of the proletariat. Can one regard this identification as being correct and still remain a Leninist? No! And for the following reasons:

First, in the passage from his speech at the Second Congress of the Communist International quoted above, Lenin

does not identify the leading rôle of the Party with the dictatorship of the proletariat. He simply says that "only the class conscious minority [*i.e.*, the Party—*J. S.*] can lead the broad masses of the workers," that it is precisely *in this sense* that "by the dictatorship of the proletariat we mean, *in essence*, the dictatorship of its organised and class conscious minority." When we say "in essence," we do not imply "wholly." We often say that the national question is, essentially, a peasant question. This is perfectly true. But this does not mean that the national question is covered by the peasant question, that the peasant question is equal in scope to the national question, that the peasant question and the national question are identical. There is no need to prove that the scope of the national question is wider and of fuller content than that of the peasant question. The same must be said by analogy in regard to the leading rôle of the Party and the dictatorship of the proletariat. Although the Party carries out the dictatorship of the proletariat, and, in this sense, the dictatorship of the proletariat is *essentially* the "dictatorship" of its Party, this does not imply that the "dictatorship of the Party" (the leading rôle) is *identical* with the dictatorship of the proletariat, that the scope of the former is *equal* to that of the latter. There is no need to prove that the scope of the dictatorship of the proletariat is wider and of fuller content than the leading rôle of the Party. The Party carries out the dictatorship of the proletariat, but what it carries out is the dictatorship of the *proletariat*, and not of anything else. Anyone who identifies the leading rôle of the Party with the dictatorship of the proletariat substitutes the "dictatorship" of the Party for the dictatorship of the proletariat.

Secondly, not a single important decision is arrived at by the mass organisations of the proletariat without directions

from the Party. This is perfectly true. But does this mean that the functions of the dictatorship of the proletariat are exhausted by the Party's giving directions? Does this mean that, in view of this, the directions given by the Party can be identified with the dictatorship of the proletariat? Of course not. The dictatorship of the proletariat consists of the directions given by the Party plus the carrying out of these directions by the mass organisations of the proletariat, plus their fulfilment by the general population. Here, as you see, we are dealing with a whole series of transitions and intermediary grades which comprise by no means unimportant elements of the dictatorship of the proletariat. Hence, between the directions of the Party and their fulfilment there lie the will and actions of those who are led, the will and actions of the class, its willingness (or unwillingness) to support such directions, its ability (or inability) to apply them, its ability (or inability) to apply them in accordance with the demands of the situation. It is hardly necessary to prove that the Party, in assuming the responsibility of leadership, cannot but take into account the will, the condition, the level of class consciousness of those who are being led, cannot leave out of account the will, the condition, the level of class consciousness of its class. Consequently, anyone who identifies the leading rôle of the Party with the dictatorship of the proletariat substitutes the directions given by the Party for the will and actions of the class.

Thirdly, "the dictatorship of the proletariat," says Lenin, "is the class struggle of the proletariat which has achieved victory and has seized political power." (*Collected Works*, Vol. XXIV, p. 311, Russian edition.) How can this *class* struggle find expression? It may find expression in a series of armed actions by the proletariat to repel the sorties of

the deposed bourgeoisie or resist the intervention of the foreign bourgeoisie. It may find expression in civil war if the power of the proletariat has not yet been consolidated. It may find expression, after that power has already been consolidated, in widespread organisational and constructive work on the part of the proletariat with the enlistment of the masses in these activities. In all these cases, the active body is the proletariat *as a class*. It has never happened that the Party by itself has been able to undertake all these activities solely by its own efforts and without the support of the class. Usually the Party only leads these actions, and it can lead them only to the extent that it has the support of the class. For the Party cannot replace or be a substitute for the class. For, however important its leading rôle may be, the Party still remains only *part* of the class. Consequently, any one who identifies the leading rôle of the Party with the dictatorship of the proletariat substitutes the Party for the class.

Fourthly, the Party realises the dictatorship of the proletariat. "The Party is the direct governing vanguard of the proletariat; it is the leader." (Lenin.) In this sense the Party *takes* power, the Party *governs* the country. But this does not yet mean that the Party realises the dictatorship of the proletariat separately from and without the state power; that the Party governs the country apart from the soviets, and not through them. But this does not yet mean that the Party can be identified with the soviets, with the state power. The Party is the core of this power, but it is not and cannot be identified with the state power itself.

"As the ruling party," writes Lenin, "we could not but merge the 'upper stratum' of the Party with the 'upper stratum' of the soviets; we have merged them, and they will

continue so.” (*Collected Works*, Vol. XXVI, p. 208, Russian edition.)

This is perfectly correct. But by this Lenin by no means wishes to assert that our Soviet institutions as a whole (as, for instance, our army, our transport service, our economic institutions, etc.) are Party institutions, that the Party can take the place of the soviets and their ramifications, that the Party can be identified with the state power. Lenin has repeatedly stated that “the Soviet system is the dictatorship of the proletariat,” and that “the Soviet power is the dictatorship of the proletariat.” (*Collected Works*, Vol. XXIV, pp. 14-15, Russian edition.)

But he never stated that the Party is the state power, that the soviets and the Party are one and the same. The Party, with a membership of several hundred thousand, leads the soviets, with their national and local ramifications, which embrace several millions of people, both Party and non-Party, but it cannot and should not replace them by itself. That is why Lenin writes that “the dictatorship is realised by the Soviet-organised proletariat which is led by the Communist Party of Bolsheviks,” that “all the work of the Party is carried out *through* [My italics.—J.S.] the soviets which unite the toiling masses without distinction of occupation” (*Collected Works*, Vol. XXV, pp. 193-94, Russian edition); and that the dictatorship “must be realised . . . *through* the Soviet apparatus.” (*Collected Works*, Vol. XXVI, p. 64, Russian edition.) Consequently, anyone who identifies the leading rôle of the Party with the dictatorship of the proletariat substitutes the Party for the soviets, for the state power.

Fifthly, the concept of the dictatorship of the proletariat is a concept of the state. The dictatorship of the prole-

tariat must necessarily include the concept of violence. There is no dictatorship without violence if dictatorship is to be understood in the strict sense of the term. Lenin defines the dictatorship of the proletariat as "power based directly on violence." (*Collected Works*, Vol. XIX, p. 315, Russian edition.) Hence, to talk of the dictatorship of the Party as applying to the proletarian class, and to identify it with the dictatorship of the proletariat, is tantamount to saying that in relation to its own class, the Party must be not only a guide, not only a leader and teacher, but must also be a sort of state power employing violence against it. Consequently, anyone who identifies the "dictatorship of the Party" with the dictatorship of the proletariat tacitly starts out from the proposition that the authority of the Party can be built up on violence, which is absurd and absolutely incompatible with Leninism. The authority of the Party is sustained by the confidence of the working class. The confidence of the working class is gained not by violence—violence only kills it—but by the Party's correct theory, by the Party's correct policy, by the Party's devotion to the working class, by its contact with the masses of the working class, by its readiness and ability to *convince* the masses of the correctness of its slogans.

What, then, follows from all this?

It follows that:

(1) Lenin uses the word *dictatorship* of the Party not in the strict sense of the word ("power based on violence"), but uses it figuratively, in the sense of leadership.

(2) Anyone who identifies the leadership of the Party with the *dictatorship* of the proletariat distorts Lenin, and incorrectly attributes to the Party the function of employing violence against the working class as a whole.

(3) Anyone who attributes to the Party the function of

employing violence against the working class, which is not one of its attributes, violates the elementary requirements of correct mutual relationships between the vanguard and the class, between the Party and the proletariat.

Thus, we come to the question of the mutual relationships between the Party and the class, between Party and non-Party members of the working class.

Lenin defines these mutual relationships as “mutual confidence between the vanguard of the working class and the working masses.” (*Collected Works*, Vol. XXVI, p. 235, Russian edition.)

What does this mean?

First of all, it means that the Party must closely heed the voice of the masses, must pay close attention to their revolutionary instinct, must study the practice of the struggle of the masses and on this basis test the correctness of its own policy—and must, therefore, not only teach the masses, but also learn from them.

It means, in the second place, that the Party must from day to day win the confidence of the proletarian masses; that, by its policy and its work, it must secure the support of the masses; that it must not command but above all convince the masses and help them to realise by their own experience the correctness of the policy of the Party; that it must, therefore, be the guide, the leader and teacher of its own class.

To violate these conditions means to violate the proper mutual relationships between the vanguard and the class, to undermine “mutual confidence,” and to shelter both class and Party discipline.

“Certainly,” Lenin writes, “almost everyone now realises that the Bolsheviks could not have maintained themselves in

power for two and one-half years, and not even for two and one-half months, without the strictest discipline, the truly iron discipline in our Party and *without the fullest and unre-served support rendered it by the whole mass of the working class* [My italics.—J.S.], that is, by all those belonging to this class who think, who are honest, self-sacrificing, influential and capable of leading and attracting the backward masses.” (“*Left-Wing*” *Communism*, p. 9.)

“The dictatorship of the proletariat is a persistent struggle,” Lenin says further, “sanguinary and bloodless, violent and peaceful, military and economic, educational and administrative—against the forces and traditions of the old society. The force of habit of millions and of tens of millions is a terrible force. Without an iron party steeled in the struggle, without a party *enjoying the confidence of all who are honest in the given class* [My italics.—J. S.], without a party capable of keeping track of and influencing the mood of the masses, it is impossible to conduct such a struggle successfully.” (*Ibid.*, pp. 28-29.)

But how does the Party acquire this confidence and support of the class? How is the iron discipline necessary for the dictatorship of the proletariat built up; on what soil does it grow up?

Here is what Lenin has to say about the matter:

“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 firmness, self-sacrifice and heroism. Secondly, by its ability to link itself with, to keep in close touch with, and, to a certain degree, if you will, *merge itself with the broadest masses of*

the toilers [My italics.—J.S.], primarily with the proletarian but also with the non-proletarian toiling masses. Thirdly, by the correctness of the political leadership exercised by this vanguard and by the correctness of its political strategy and tactics, provided that the broadest masses become convinced of this correctness *by their own experience*. Without these conditions discipline in a revolutionary party that is really capable of being a party of the advanced class, whose mission it is to overthrow the bourgeoisie and to transform the whole of society, cannot be achieved. Without these conditions all attempts to establish discipline are inevitably transformed into trifling phrase-mongering and empty gestures. On the other hand, these conditions cannot arise all at once. They are created only through prolonged effort and hard-won experience. Their creation is facilitated only by correct revolutionary theory, which in its turn is not a dogma but assumes complete shape only in close connection with the practical activity of the truly mass and truly revolutionary movement." (*Ibid.*, pp. 10-11.)

"The successful victory over capitalism," Lenin says further, "requires a correct relationship between the leading Communist Party and the revolutionary class, the proletariat, on the one hand, and the masses, *i.e.*, all those who toil and are exploited, on the other. Only the Communist Party, if it really is the vanguard of the revolutionary class, if it incorporates all the best representatives of that class, if it is composed of fully conscious and devoted Communists who have been educated and steeled by the experience of stubborn revolutionary struggle, if this party has succeeded in linking itself inseparably with the whole life of its class and through this class with the whole mass of the exploited, and in imbuing this class and *these masses with*

complete confidence [My italics.—J.S.]—only such a party is capable of leading the proletariat in the most ruthless, decisive and final struggle against all the forces of capitalism. On the other hand, only under the leadership of such a party is the proletariat capable of developing the full power of its revolutionary onslaught, nullifying the inevitable apathy, and sometimes resistance, of the small minority of the labour aristocracy which has been corrupted by capitalism, of the old leaders of the trade unions and the co-operative societies, etc., capable of developing its full strength, which, by reason of the very economic structure of capitalist society, is immeasurably greater than the numerical ratio of the proletariat to the total population.” (*Collected Works*, Vol. XXV, p. 315, Russian edition.)

From the foregoing quotations it follows that:

(1) The authority of the Party and the iron discipline of the working class indispensable for the dictatorship of the proletariat are built up not on fear, nor on “the unrestricted” rights of the Party, but upon the confidence of the working class in the Party and on the support which the Party receives from the working class.

(2) Confidence of the working class in the Party is not attained at one stroke, and not through the medium of force directed against the working class, but by the Party’s prolonged work among the masses, by a correct Party policy, by the ability of the Party to convince the masses through their own experience of the correctness of its policy, and by the ability of the Party to gain the support of the working class and to induce the masses of the working class to follow its lead.

(3) Without a correct Party policy, strengthened by the experience of the struggle of the masses, and without the

confidence of the working class, there is not and there cannot be real Party leadership.

(4) If the Party and the Party leadership enjoy the confidence of the class, and if this leadership is a real leadership, they cannot be contrasted with the dictatorship of the proletariat, because, without the leadership of the Party (the "dictatorship" of the Party) enjoying the confidence of the working class, a dictatorship of the proletariat that would be at all firm is impossible.

Without these conditions "authority of the Party" and "iron discipline" are empty phrases, an idle boast and a swindle.

The dictatorship of the proletariat must not be contrasted with the leadership (the "dictatorship") of the Party. It is inadmissible because the leadership of the Party is the principal thing in the dictatorship of the proletariat, if we have in view a dictatorship which is at all firmly established and at all complete, and not one like the Paris Commune, for instance, which was neither firmly established nor complete. It is inadmissible because the dictatorship of the proletariat and the leadership of the Party rest, as it were, on one line of activity, and operate in one direction.

"The very presentation of the question," says Lenin, "dictatorship of the Party *or* dictatorship of the class, dictatorship (Party) of the leaders *or* dictatorship (Party) of the masses?—is evidence of the most incredible and hopeless confusion of mind. . . . Everyone knows that the masses are divided into classes . . . that in modern civilized countries at least, classes are usually, and in the majority of cases, led by political parties; that political parties, as a general rule, are directed by more or less stable groups composed of the most authoritative, influential and experienced members who

are elected to the most responsible positions and are called leaders. . . . To go so far . . . as to draw a contrast *in general* between the dictatorship of the masses and the dictatorship of the leaders, is ridiculously absurd and stupid." (*"Left-Wing" Communism*, pp. 25-27.)

This is absolutely correct. But this correct statement starts out from the premise that correct relationships exist between the vanguard and the working masses, between the Party and the class. It starts out from the supposition that the relationships between the vanguard and the class remain, so to say, normal, remain within the bounds of "mutual confidence."

But what is to be done if the correct relationships between the vanguard and the class, if the relations of "mutual confidence" between the Party and the class are disturbed? What is to be done if the Party itself begins, in some way or other, to draw a contrast between itself and the class, thus disturbing the foundations of its correct relationships with the class, disturbing the foundations of "mutual confidence"? Are such cases, in general, possible? Yes, they are. They are possible:

(1) *If* the Party begins to base its authority among the masses, not on its work and on the confidence of the masses, but upon its "unrestricted" rights;

(2) *If* the Party's policy is obviously incorrect and yet the Party will not reconsider and rectify its mistake;

(3) *If* the policy of the Party, although in general correct, is one which the masses are not yet ready to adopt, while the Party either does not wish to or is not able to wait long enough to give the masses a chance to convince themselves from their own experience that the Party policy is correct.

The history of our Party provides a whole series of such cases. Various groupings and factions within our Party have fallen and have been dispersed because they violated one of these three conditions, or sometimes all these conditions taken together.

But it follows from this that contrasting the dictatorship of the proletariat to the "dictatorship" (leadership) of the Party can be regarded as incorrect only in the following cases:

(1) *If*, under the dictatorship of the Party in relation to the working class, we mean just what Lenin meant—not a dictatorship in the strict sense of the term ("power based on violence"), but the leadership of the Party, which excludes the use of violence against the class as a whole, against its majority;

(2) *If* the Party has the qualifications to be the real leader of the class, in other words, if the Party's policy is correct, if its policy corresponds to the interests of the class;

(3) *If* the class, if the majority of the class, accepts the Party policy, makes that policy its own, becomes convinced, as a result of the work of the Party, that this policy is correct, has confidence in the Party and supports it.

The violation of these conditions inevitably calls forth a conflict between the Party and the class, a split between them, and leads to their being set off against each other.

Can the Party impose its leadership on the class by force? No, it cannot. At all events, *such* a leadership cannot be to any degree lasting. If the Party wishes to remain the party of the proletariat, it must know that it is, above all and mainly, the *guide*, the *leader*, the *teacher* of the working class. We must not forget what Lenin said in this connection in his pamphlet, *State and Revolution*:

“By educating a workers’ party, Marxism educates the vanguard of the proletariat capable of assuming power and of leading the whole people to socialism, of directing and organising the new order, of being the *teacher, guide and leader* [My italics.—J. S.] of all the toiling and exploited in the task of building up their social life without the bourgeoisie and against the bourgeoisie.” (*Collected Works*, Vol. XXI, Book II, pp. 169-70. Also *State and Revolution*, Little Lenin Library, pp. 23-24.)

But can we regard the Party as the real leader of the working class if its policy is wrong, if its policy comes into conflict with the interests of the class? Of course not! In such circumstances, if the Party wishes to remain the leader, it must reconsider its policy, must correct it, must acknowledge its mistakes and correct them. In support of this argument one could, for example, cite a fact in the history of our Party—such as the period of the abolition of the food quotas, when the masses of workers and peasants were obviously discontented with our policy and when the Party openly and honestly agreed to revise this policy. This is what Lenin said at the time, at the Tenth Party Congress, on the question of abolishing the food quotas and on the introduction of the New Economic Policy:

“We must not try to hush anything up but must frankly admit that the peasants are discontented with the form of relationships that have been established between us and them, that they do not want it and will not put up with it any longer. This is indisputable. They have expressed their will definitely. This is the will of the vast masses of the toiling population. We must take this into account and we are sufficiently sober-minded politicians to declare openly: *Let us reconsider the question of our policy toward the*

peasantry." [My italics.—J. S.] (*Collected Works*, Vol. XXVI, p. 238, Russian edition.)

Suppose the Party does not enjoy the confidence and support of the class, owing, say, to its political backwardness, suppose the Party has not yet succeeded in convincing the class of the correctness of its policy, owing to the fact, say, that events have not yet matured, should the Party take the initiative in leading and organizing decisive actions of the masses merely on the ground that its policy in general is correct? No, certainly not! In such cases, if the Party wishes to be a real leader, it must know how to bide its time, must convince the masses that its policy is correct, must help the masses to convince themselves by their own experience that this is so.

Lenin writes:

"If a revolutionary party has no majority in the vanguard of the revolutionary classes and throughout the country, then there can be no question of an uprising." (*Collected Works*, Vol. XXI, Book II, p. 53. Also *Will the Bolsheviks Retain State Power?*, Little Lenin Library, Vol. XII, p. 44.)

". . . Revolution is impossible without a change in the views of the majority of the working class and this change is brought about by the political experience of the masses. . . ." (*"Left-Wing" Communism*, p. 64.)

"The proletarian vanguard has been ideologically won over. This is the most important thing. Without this, we cannot take even the first step towards victory. But from this first step it is still a long way to victory. With the vanguard alone victory is impossible. To throw the vanguard alone into the decisive battle when the whole class,

when the broad masses have not yet taken up a position either of direct support of the vanguard, or at least of benevolent neutrality towards it and one in which they cannot possibly support the enemy, would not merely be folly, but a crime. And in order that actually the whole class, that actually the broad masses of toilers and those oppressed by capital may take up such a position, propaganda and agitation alone are not sufficient. For this, the masses must have their own political experience." (*Ibid.*, p. 72.)

We know that this is just how the Party acted during the period from the time Lenin wrote his April theses down to the time of the October uprising of 1917. And it was precisely for the reason that it did act according to these directions of Lenin that the uprising was successful.

Such, in the main, are the conditions of the correct inter-relationships between the vanguard and the class.

What does *leadership* mean when the Party policy is correct and when the proper relationships between the vanguard and the class remain undisturbed?

In such circumstances, leadership means: the ability to convince the masses of the correctness of the Party policy; the ability to put forward and to carry out such slogans as bring the masses to the Party position, and which make it easier for them on the basis of their own experience to realise the correctness of the Party policy; the ability to raise the masses to the level of Party consciousness, and thus to ensure the support of the masses and their readiness for decisive struggle.

Therefore the method of persuasion is the basic method employed by the Party in its leadership of the class.

"If, in Russia today," says Lenin, "after two and a half years of unprecedented victories over the bourgeoisie of Rus-

sia and the Entente, we were to make the 'recognition of the dictatorship' a condition of membership in the trade unions, we should be doing a stupid thing, we should damage our influence over the masses, we should be helping the Mensheviks. For the whole task of the Communists is to be able to *convince* the backward elements, to be able to work *among* them, and *not to fence themselves off* from them by artificial and childish 'Left-wing' slogans." (*Ibid.*, pp. 37-38.)

This does not mean, of course, that the Party must first convince all the workers down to the last man, and only then proceed to action, that only after this may it commence operations. Nothing of the sort. It only means that before entering upon decisive political actions the Party must, by means of prolonged revolutionary work, ensure for itself the support of the majority of the working masses, or at least the benevolent neutrality of the majority of the class. Otherwise there would be absolutely no meaning in Lenin's proposition that a necessary condition for a victorious revolution is that the Party must win over the majority of the working class to its side.

Well, and what is to be done with the minority, if it does not wish, if it does not agree to submit voluntarily to the will of the majority? When the Party enjoys the confidence of the majority, can it and should it force the minority to submit to the will of the majority? Yes, it can and it must. Leadership is assured by utilising the method of persuading the masses, as the principal method by which the Party influences the masses. This, however, does not preclude, but presupposes the use of coercion if such coercion is based upon the confidence and support the majority of the working class display towards the Party, and if it is applied to the minority after the majority has been won over. We ought to recall the controversies that took place on this account in

our Party during the discussion on the trade union question. What was the error the opposition, the Central Committee of the Transport Workers' Union, committed at that time? Perhaps it was that the opposition then considered it possible to resort to coercion? No! It was not that. The mistake the opposition made then was that, not being in a position to convince the majority of the correctness of their position, and having lost the confidence of the majority, they nevertheless began to apply coercion, began to insist on "shaking up" those who enjoyed the confidence of the majority.

This is what Lenin said at that time, at the Tenth Congress of the Party, in his speech on the trade unions:

"In order to establish mutual relations and mutual confidence between the vanguard of the working class and the masses of the workers, it was necessary, if the Central Committee of the Transport Workers' Union had made a mistake . . . to correct this mistake. But when people begin to defend this error, it becomes a source of political danger. Had not the utmost possible democratic advantage been taken of the moods expressed here by Kutuzov, we would have met with political bankruptcy. First of all *we must persuade and coerce afterwards*. *We must at all costs first persuade and coerce afterwards*. [My italics.—J.S.] We did not succeed in convincing the broad masses and disturbed the proper relationships between the vanguard and the masses." (*Collected Works*, Vol. XXVI, p. 235, Russian edition.)

Lenin says the same thing in his pamphlet, *On the Trade Unions*: "We applied coercion correctly and successfully when we had succeeded in first laying a basis for it by persuasion." (*Ibid.*, p. 74.)

This is perfectly correct, for without these conditions no leadership is possible. For only in this way can we be assured of unity of action in the Party, if we are speaking of the Party, and of unity of action of the class, if we are speaking of the class as a whole. Without this there is schism, confusion and demoralisation in the ranks of the workers.

Such in general are the fundamentals of correct Party leadership.

Any other conception of leadership is syndicalism, anarchism, bureaucracy or anything you please: but not Bolshevism, not Leninism.

The dictatorship of the proletariat must not be counterposed to the leadership ("dictatorship") of the Party, if correct interrelationships exist between the Party and the working class, between the vanguard and the working masses. But what follows from this is that it is all the more impermissible to identify the Party with the working class, the leadership ("dictatorship") of the Party with the dictatorship of the working class. *From the circumstance* that the "dictatorship" of the Party must not be set up in contrast to the dictatorship of the proletariat, Comrade Sorin came to the incorrect conclusion that "*the dictatorship of the proletariat is the dictatorship of our Party.*" But Lenin speaks not only of the impermissibility of making such a contrast; he also speaks of the impermissibility of counterposing the "dictatorship of the masses" to the "dictatorship of the leaders." *On that basis*, ought we not to identify the dictatorship of the leaders with the dictatorship of the proletariat? If we took that road, we would have to say that the "*dictatorship of the proletariat is the dictatorship of our leaders.*" But, properly speaking, it is precisely to this absurdity that the policy of identifying the "dictatorship"

of the Party with the dictatorship of the proletariat leads.

Where does Comrade Zinoviev stand on this subject?

Comrade Zinoviev, at bottom, shares Comrade Sorin's point of view of identifying the "dictatorship" of the Party with the dictatorship of the proletariat, with this difference, however, that Comrade Sorin expresses himself more openly and clearly, whereas Comrade Zinoviev "wriggles." It is sufficient to take, say, the following passage in Comrade Zinoviev's book, *Leninism*, to be convinced of this.

"What," says Comrade Zinoviev, "is the prevailing system in the U.S.S.R. from the standpoint of its class content? It is the dictatorship of the proletariat. What is the direct mainspring of power in the U.S.S.R.? Who gives effect to the power of the working class? The Communist Party! In this sense, we have *the dictatorship of the Party*. [My italics.—J.S.] What is the juridical form of power in the U.S.S.R.? What is the new type of state system that was created by the October Revolution? The Soviet system. The one does not in the least contradict the other." (*Leninism*, pp. 370-71.)

That there is no contradiction between the one and the other is, of course, correct, if by dictatorship of the Party in relation to the working class as a whole we mean the leadership of the Party. But how is it possible, *on this basis*, to place a sign of equality between the dictatorship of the proletariat and the "dictatorship" of the Party, between the Soviet system and the "dictatorship" of the Party? Lenin identified the Soviet system with the dictatorship of the proletariat, and he was right, for the soviets, *our soviets*, are organisations which rally the toiling masses around the proletariat under the leadership of the Party. But when,

where, and in which of his writings, did Lenin place a sign of equality between the "dictatorship" of the Party and the dictatorship of the proletariat, between the "dictatorship" of the Party and the Soviet system, as Comrade Zinoviev does now? Neither the leadership ("dictatorship") of the Party, nor the leadership ("dictatorship") of the leaders contradicts the dictatorship of the proletariat. Ought we not, on that basis, proclaim that our country is the country of the dictatorship of the proletariat, *that is to say*, the country of the dictatorship of the Party, *that is to say*, the country of the dictatorship of leaders? It is precisely to this absurdity that we are led by the "principle" of identifying the "dictatorship" of the Party with the dictatorship of the proletariat, that Comrade Zinoviev so stealthily and timidly advocated. In Lenin's numerous works, I have been able to note only five cases in which he cursorily touches on the question of the dictatorship of the Party.

The first case is in his dispute with the Socialist-Revolutionaries and the Mensheviks, where he states:

"When we are reproached with having the dictatorship of one party, and, as you have heard, a proposal is made to establish a united socialist front, we reply: 'Yes, the dictatorship of one party! We stand by it, and cannot depart from it, for it is the Party which, in the course of decades, has won the position of vanguard of the whole factory and industrial proletariat.' " (*Collected Works*, Vol. XXIV, p. 423, Russian edition.)

The second case is in the "Letter to the Workers and Peasants on the Victory over Kolchak."

"Some people (especially the Mensheviks and the Socialist-Revolutionaries, all, even the 'Lefts' among them) are trying

to scare the peasants with the bogey of the 'dictatorship of one party,' the party of Bolsheviks, Communists. The peasants have learned from the example of Kolchak not to be terrified by this bogey. Either the dictatorship (*i.e.*, the iron rule) of the landlords and the capitalists, or else the dictatorship of the working class." (*Ibid.*, p. 436.)

The third case is in Lenin's speech at the Second Congress of the Communist International in his controversy with Tanner. I have quoted it above.

The fourth case comprises several lines in "*Left-Wing*" *Communism: an Infantile Disorder*. The passage in question has already been quoted above.

And the fifth case is in his draft scheme of the dictatorship of the proletariat, published in the *Lenin Miscellany*, Volume III, where there is a sub-heading: "Dictatorship of One Party." (See *Lenin Miscellany*, Vol. III, p. 97, Russian edition.)

It should be noted that in two cases out of the five, the second and the fifth, Lenin has the words "dictatorship of one party" in quotation marks, thus clearly emphasizing the inexact, figurative sense of this formula.

It should also be pointed out that in *every one* of these cases when Lenin speaks of the "dictatorship of the Party" *in relation to the working class*, he means not dictatorship in the actual sense of the term ("power based on violence") but the leadership of the Party.

It is characteristic that in *none* of his works, major or secondary, where Lenin discusses or merely alludes to the dictatorship of the proletariat and the function of the Party in the system of the dictatorship of the proletariat, is there any hint whatever that "the dictatorship of the proletariat is the dictatorship of our Party." On the contrary, every

page, every line of these works cries out against such a formulation. (See *State and Revolution*, *The Proletarian Revolution and the Renegade Kautsky*, “Left-Wing” Communism: an Infantile Disorder, etc.)

Even more characteristic is the fact that in the theses of the Second Congress of the Communist International concerning the rôle of a political party, theses worked out under the direct guidance of Lenin, which he repeatedly referred to in his speeches as a model of the correct formulation of the rôle and tasks of the Party, we do not find *one word*, literally *not one word*, about the dictatorship of the Party.

What does all this mean?

It means that:

(a) Lenin did not regard the formula “the dictatorship of the Party” as being irreproachable and exact, for which reason it is very rarely used in Lenin’s works, and is sometimes put in quotation marks.

(b) On the few occasions that Lenin was obliged, in controversy with opponents, to speak of the dictatorship of the Party, he usually referred to the “dictatorship of *one* party,” *i.e.*, to the fact that our Party holds power *alone*, that it *does not share* power with *other* parties. Moreover, he always made it clear that the dictatorship of the Party *in relation to the working class* meant the leadership of the Party, its leading rôle.

(c) In all those cases in which Lenin found it necessary to give a scientific definition of the rôle of the Party in the system of the dictatorship of the proletariat, he spoke *exclusively* of the leading rôle of the party in relation to the working class (and there are thousands of such cases).

(d) That was why it “never occurred” to Lenin to include the formula “dictatorship of the Party” in the fundamental resolution on the rôle of the Party (I have in mind

the resolution adopted at the Second Congress of the Communist International).

(e) Those comrades who identify, or try to identify the "dictatorship" of the Party and, consequently, the "dictatorship of the leaders," with the dictatorship of the proletariat are wrong from the point of view of Leninism, and are politically short-sighted, for they thereby violate the conditions of the correct relations between the vanguard and the class.

Needless to say, the formula "dictatorship of the Party," when taken without the above-mentioned qualifications, can create a whole series of perils and political lapses in our practical work. When this formula is employed without qualification, it is as though the word is given:

(a) *To the non-Party masses:* Don't dare to contradict, don't argue, for the Party can do everything, for we have the dictatorship of the Party.

(b) *To the Party cadres:* Act more resolutely; tighten the screws; and there is no need to heed what the non-Party masses say; we have the dictatorship of the Party.

(c) *To the Party leaders:* You can enjoy the luxury of a certain amount of self-complaisance; you can even give yourselves a few airs, if you like; for we have the dictatorship of the Party, and of course that "means" the dictatorship of the leaders.

It is quite opportune to recall these dangers precisely at the present moment when the political activity of the masses is on the upgrade; when the readiness of the Party to pay close attention to the voice of the masses is of particular value; when sensitiveness to the demands of the masses is a basic precept of our Party; when the Party is called upon to display political caution and particular flexibility in its policy, when the danger of becoming conceited is one of the

most serious dangers confronting the Party in its task of correctly leading the masses.

One cannot but recall Lenin's golden words uttered at the Eleventh Congress of our Party: "Among the masses of the people, we [Communists—*J. S.*] are but drops in the ocean, and we will be able to govern only when we properly express that which the people appreciate. Without this the Communist Party will not lead the proletariat, the proletariat will not take the lead of the masses, and the whole machine will fall to pieces." (*Collected Works*, Vol. XXVII, p. 256, Russian edition.)

"Properly express that which the people appreciate"—this is precisely the necessary condition that ensures for the Party the honourable rôle of the main guiding force in the system of the dictatorship of the proletariat.

VI

THE QUESTION OF THE VICTORY OF SOCIALISM IN A SINGLE COUNTRY

My pamphlet, *Foundations of Leninism* (April 1924, first edition), contains two formulations on the question of the victory of socialism in a single country. The first of these runs as follows:

“Formerly, the victory of the revolution in a single country was considered impossible, on the assumption that the combined action of the proletarians of all, or at least of a majority, of the advanced countries was necessary in order to achieve victory over the bourgeoisie. This point of view no longer corresponds with reality. Now we must start out from the possibility of such a victory, because the uneven and spasmodic character of the development of the various capitalist countries under the conditions of imperialism, the development of catastrophic contradictions within imperialism, leading inevitably to wars, the growth of the revolutionary movement in all countries of the world—all these lead, not only to the possibility, but also to the necessity of the victory of the proletariat in individual countries.”

This proposition is perfectly correct, and needs no comment. It is directed against the theory of the Social-Democrats, who regard the seizure of power by the proletariat in a single country without the simultaneous victory of the revolution in other countries as utopian.

But the pamphlet contains a second formulation. Here it is (I quote from the first edition):

“But overthrowing the power of the bourgeoisie and establishing the power of the proletariat in a single country does not yet guarantee the complete victory of socialism. The chief task of socialism—the organisation of socialist production—has still to be fulfilled. Can this task be fulfilled, can the final victory of socialism be attained in a single country without the joint efforts of the proletariat in several advanced countries? No, it cannot. In order to overthrow the bourgeoisie, the efforts of a single country are sufficient; this is proved by the history of our revolution. For the final victory of socialism, for the organisation of socialist production, the efforts of a single country, and particularly of such a peasant country as Russia, are inadequate; for that, the efforts of the proletariat of several advanced countries are required.” (*Foundations of Leninism*, first Russian edition.)

This second formulation was directed against the assertion made by the critics of Leninism, against the Trotskyists, who declared that the dictatorship of the proletariat in a single country “could not hold out against conservative Europe,” in the absence of victory in other lands.

To that extent—but only to that extent—this formulation was then (April 1924) adequate, and undoubtedly it served a certain purpose.

Subsequently, however, when the criticism of Leninism in this sphere had already been overcome in the Party, and when a new question had come to the fore, *i.e.*, the question of the possibility of completing the construction of socialist society by the efforts of our country, without help from

without, the second formulation became obviously inadequate, and therefore inaccurate.

What is the defect in this formulation?

The defect is that it links up two different questions. First there is the question of the *possibility* of completely constructing socialism by the efforts of a single country, which must be answered in the affirmative. Then there is the question: can a country, in which the dictatorship of the proletariat has been established, consider itself *fully guaranteed* against foreign intervention, and consequently against the restoration of the old order, without the victory of the revolution in a number of other countries, a question which must be answered in the negative. I need hardly say that this second formulation may give grounds for thinking that the organisation of socialist society by the efforts of a single country is impossible—which, of course, is wrong.

On these grounds, I revised, corrected this formulation, in my pamphlet, *The October Revolution and the Tactics of the Russian Communists* (December 1924), and divided the question into two, into the question of having *absolute guarantees against the restoration of the bourgeois order* and that of the *possibility of completely constructing socialism* in a single country. This was effected, first of all, by treating the “complete victory of socialism” as the “absolute guarantee against the restoration of the old order,” and which is possible only through “the joint efforts of the proletarians of several countries”; and, secondly, by proclaiming, on the basis of Lenin’s pamphlet, *On Co-operation*, the indisputable truth, that we * have all the requisites for constructing a complete socialist society.** (See “The October Revolution

* In the Soviet Union.—*Ed.*

** This new formulation of the question was used in subsequent editions of *Foundations of Leninism* in place of the old formulation.

and the Tactics of the Russian Communists," in Joseph Stalin, *The October Revolution*, pp. 95-129.—*Ed.*)

This new formulation of the question also lay at the base of the well-known resolution of the Fourteenth Party Conference, "Concerning the Tasks of the Comintern and the Communist Party of Russia," which examines the question of the victory of socialism in a single country in connection with the stabilisation of capitalism (April 1925), and considers that the complete construction of socialism by the efforts of our country is possible and necessary.

This new formulation also served as the basis for my pamphlet, *Results of the Work of the Fourteenth Party Conference*, published in May 1925, immediately after the Fourteenth Party Conference.

On the question of the method of presentation of the question of the victory of socialism in a single country the following is stated in this pamphlet:

"Our country represents two groups of contradictions. One group of contradictions consists of the internal contradictions that exist between the proletariat and the peasantry (this is in connection with the complete construction of socialism in a single country—*J. S.*). The other group of contradictions consists of the external contradictions that exist between our country as the country of socialism and all the other countries as countries of capitalism (this is in connection with the question of the final victory of socialism—*J. S.*). . . . Whoever confuses the first group of contradictions, which can be quite overcome by the efforts of a single country, with the second group of contradictions, which requires the efforts of the proletariat of several countries to solve, commits a grave error against Leninism; he is either a muddle-head or an incorrigible opportunist."

On the question of the *victory* of socialism in our country, the pamphlet states: "We can build socialism and we will build it together with the peasantry under the leadership of the working class . . . for we possess, under the dictatorship of the proletariat, all the requisites for the building of a complete socialist society by overcoming all internal difficulties, for we can and must overcome them by our own efforts." (*Ibid.*)

On the question of the *final* victory of socialism, it states: "The final victory of socialism is a complete guarantee against attempted intervention, and that means against restoration, for any serious attempt at restoration can take place only with support from outside, only with the support of international capital. Hence the support of our revolution by the workers of all countries, and still more the victory of these workers in at least several countries, is a necessary condition for completely guaranteeing the first victorious country against attempts at intervention and restoration, a necessary condition for the final victory of socialism." (*Ibid.*)

Clear, one would think!

It is well known that this question was treated in the same spirit in my pamphlet, *Questions and Answers* (June 1925) and in the *Political Report of the Central Committee to the Fourteenth Congress of the Communist Party of the Soviet Union* (December 1925).

Such are the facts.

These facts, I think, are well known to all and sundry, including Comrade Zinoviev.

If, now, nearly two years after the ideological struggle in the Party and after the resolution that was adopted at the Fourteenth Party Conference (April 1925), Comrade

Zinoviev finds it possible in his concluding remarks at the Fourteenth Party Congress (December 1925) to dig up the old and completely inadequate formulation contained in Stalin's pamphlet, written in April 1924, and to make it the basis for a settlement of the already settled question of the victory of socialism in a single country—then this peculiar trick of his serves only to show that he has got himself completely muddled on this question. Dragging the Party back after it has moved forward, evading the resolution of the Fourteenth Party Conference after it has been confirmed by the plenum of the Central Committee, lands one in a hopeless mire of contradiction, reveals lack of faith in the building of socialism, means abandoning the path of Lenin, and is a confession of one's own defeat.

What does the *possibility* of the victory of socialism in a single country mean?

It means the possibility of solving the contradictions between the workers and the peasants with the aid of the internal forces of our country; it means the possibility of the proletariat's seizing power and using that power for the construction of complete socialist society in our country, with the sympathy and the support of the workers of other countries, but without the preliminary victory of the proletarian revolution in other countries.

In the absence of such a possibility, the building of socialism is building without prospects, building without the assurance that socialism can be completely constructed. It is no use building socialism without the assurance that we will be able to complete it, without the conviction that the technical backwardness of our country is not an *insuperable* obstacle to the construction of complete socialist society. To deny such a possibility is to display lack of faith in the task of building socialism, is to abandon Leninism.

What is the meaning of the impossibility of the complete and final victory of socialism in a single country without the victory of the revolution in other countries?

It means the impossibility of having full guarantees against intervention, and hence against the restoration of the bourgeois order, without the victory of the revolution in at least a number of countries. To deny this indisputable fact is to abandon internationalism, to abandon Leninism.

"We are living," Lenin writes, "not merely in a state, but in a *system of states*; and it is inconceivable that the Soviet republic should continue to exist for a long period side by side with imperialist states. Ultimately one or the other must conquer. Meanwhile a number of terrible clashes between the Soviet republic and the bourgeois states is inevitable. This means that if the proletariat, as the ruling class, wants to and will rule, it must prove it also by military organisation." (*Collected Works*, Vol. XXIV, p. 122, Russian edition.)

"We now have before us an extremely unstable equilibrium," Lenin says in another place, "but an undoubted, indisputable, certain equilibrium nevertheless. Will it last long? I cannot tell; nor, I think, can anyone tell. That is why we must exercise the greatest possible caution. And the first precept of our policy, the first lesson to be learned from our governmental activities during the past twelve months, the lesson which all the workers and peasants must learn, is that we must always be on the *qui vive*, to remember that we are surrounded by people, classes and governments, which openly express their intense hatred for us. We must remember that we are at all times but a hair's breadth from intervention." (*Collected Works*, Vol. XXVII, p. 117, Russian edition.)

Clear, one would think!

But what are Comrade Zinoviev's views concerning the question of the victory of socialism in a single country? Listen:

"When we talk of the final victory of socialism, we must mean this much, at least: (1) the abolition of classes, and therefore (2) the abolition of the dictatorship of one class, in this case of the dictatorship of the proletariat. . . . If we are to get a clearer grasp of the way in which the question stands here, in the U.S.S.R., in the year 1925," says Zinoviev further, "we must distinguish between two things: (1) the assured *possibility* of building socialism—such a possibility, it stands to reason, is quite conceivable within the limits of a single country; and (2) the complete construction and consolidation of socialism, *i.e.*, the achievement of the socialist system, of socialist society." (Zinoviev, *Leninism*, pp. 291 and 293, Russian edition.)

What can all this mean?

It means this, that by the final victory of socialism in a single country, Comrade Zinoviev means, not the guarantee against intervention and restoration, but the possibility of completely constructing socialist society. And by the victory of socialism in a single country Comrade Zinoviev means the sort of socialist construction which cannot lead to the complete construction of socialism. Haphazard construction, construction without prospects, building socialism although the complete construction of socialist society is impossible—that is Comrade Zinoviev's attitude.

Let us go on building socialism *without the possibility* of its complete construction, let us build knowing that it can-

not be completely constructed—such are the absurdities in which Comrade Zinoviev has involved himself.

But this is a mockery of the question—not a solution of it!

Here is another extract from Comrade Zinoviev's concluding speech at the Fourteenth Party Congress: "Consider, for instance, the conclusion reached by Comrade Yakovlev at the last Kursk Province Party Conference. He asked: 'Is it possible for us, surrounded as we are on all sides by capitalist enemies, to construct socialism in a single country under such conditions?' And answers: 'On the ground of all that has been said, we are entitled to declare that we are not only building socialism, but that, in spite of the fact that we are for the time being alone, that we are for the moment the only Soviet country, the only Soviet state in the world, we shall completely construct this socialism.' (*Kursk Pravda*, December 8, 1925.) Is this the *Leninist method of presenting the question? Does not this smack of national narrow-mindedness?*" [My italics—J. S.]

Thus, according to Zinoviev, the recognition of the possibility of the complete construction of socialism in a single country signifies the adoption of the point of view of national narrow-mindedness, while the denial of such a possibility signifies the adoption of an internationalist point of view.

But if this is true, is it worth while fighting for victory over the capitalist elements in our own economy? Does it not follow from this that such a victory is impossible?

Capitulation to the capitalist elements of our economy—that is where the inherent logic of Comrade Zinoviev's arguments leads.

And this absurdity, which has nothing in common with Leninism, is presented to us by Comrade Zinoviev as "internationalism" as "hundred-per-cent Leninism"!

I assert that on this most important question of the con-

struction of socialism, Comrade Zinoviev is departing from Leninism, and is slipping into the standpoint of the Menshevik Sukhanov.

Let us turn to Lenin. This is what he said about the victory of socialism in a single country even before the October Revolution, in August 1915:

“Uneven economic and political development is an absolute law of capitalism. Hence, the victory of socialism is possible, first in a few or even in one single capitalist country taken separately. The victorious proletariat of that country, having expropriated the capitalists and *organised its own socialist production* [My italics.—J. S.], would rise against the rest of the capitalist world, attract to itself the oppressed classes of other countries, raise revolts among them against the capitalists, and in the event of necessity, come out even with armed force against the exploiting classes and their states.” (*Collected Works*, Vol. XVIII, p. 272.)

What does Lenin mean by the phrase “having organised socialist production” which I have emphasised? He means that the proletariat of the victorious country, having seized power, *can* and *must* organise socialist production. And what does “organising socialist production” mean? It means “the complete construction of socialist society.” It is hardly necessary to show that this clear and definite statement of Lenin does not need further comment. If he meant anything else than this, his appeals to the proletariat to seize power in October 1917 would be incomprehensible.

You see that this clear proposition of Lenin is as different as heaven is from earth from Comrade Zinoviev’s muddled and anti-Leninist “proposition that we can go on building socialism within the bounds of one country,” but that it is *impossible* to completely construct it.

The statement quoted above was made by Lenin in 1915, before the proletariat had seized power. But perhaps he modified his views after the seizure of power, after 1917? Let us turn to his pamphlet, *On Co-operation*, written in 1923.

“As a matter of fact,” he writes here, “the power of state over all large-scale means of production, the power of state in the hands of the proletariat, the alliance of this proletariat with the many millions of small and very small peasants, the assured leadership of the peasantry by the proletariat, etc.—*is not this all that is necessary in order to build complete socialist society* from the co-operatives, from the co-operatives alone, which we formerly treated as huckstering and which from a certain aspect we have the right to treat as such now, during N.E.P.? Is this not all that is necessary for the purpose of building a complete socialist society? This is not yet the building of socialist society, but it is all that is *necessary and sufficient* [My italics.—*J. S.*] for this building.” (Cf. *Collected Works*, Vol. XXVII, p. 392, Russian edition.)

In other words, we can and must construct complete socialist society, for we have at our disposal all that is necessary and requisite for this construction. It would be difficult to express oneself more clearly, I think.

Compare this classical thesis of Lenin with the anti-Leninist reproof Comrade Zinoviev hurled at Comrade Yakovlev, and you will realise that Comrade Yakovlev was only repeating Lenin's words about the possibility of constructing socialism in a single country, whereas Zinoviev, by attacking this thesis and castigating Comrade Yakovlev, turned away from Lenin to adopt the point of view of Sukhanov, the Menshevik, the point of view that, owing to the

technical backwardness of our country, it is impossible to completely construct socialist society.

The only thing that is obscure is: why did we seize power in November 1917, if we did not calculate on completely constructing socialism?

We should not have seized power in November 1917— such is the conclusion to which the inherent logic of Comrade Zinoviev's line of argument leads us.

I declare further that, as regards the most important question of the victory of socialism, Comrade Zinoviev has gone *counter* to the definite decisions of our Party, as registered in the well-known resolution of the Fourteenth Party Conference, "The Tasks of the Communist International and the Communist Party of Russia in Connection with the Enlarged Plenum of the Executive Committee of the Communist International."

Let us refer to this resolution. This is what is said there about the victory of socialism in a single country:

"The existence of two diametrically opposed social systems gives rise to the constant menace of capitalist blockade, of other forms of economic pressure, of armed intervention, of restoration. Consequently, nothing but a victorious socialist revolution in a number of countries can provide the guarantee for the final victory of socialism, that is to say, *guarantees against restoration*. . . . Leninism teaches that the final victory of socialism, in the sense of *full guarantee against the restoration* of bourgeois relations, is possible only on an international scale. . . . But *this does not mean* that it is impossible to construct *complete socialist society* in a backward country like Russia, without the 'state aid' (Trotsky) of technically and economically more highly developed countries!" [My italics.—J. S.]

You see that the resolution interprets the final victory of socialism as a guarantee against intervention and restoration, which is the *very opposite* to the interpretation given by Comrade Zinoviev in his *Leninism*.

You see that the resolution recognises the possibility of the construction of complete socialist society in a backward country like Russia, without "state aid" from countries that are technically and economically more developed, which is the very opposite to what Comrade Zinoviev said when he reproved Comrade Yakovlev in his concluding speech at the Fourteenth Party Congress.

How else can this be described if not as a struggle by Comrade Zinoviev *against* the resolution of the Fourteenth Party Conference?

Of course, Party resolutions are sometimes not free from error. They contain mistakes. Speaking generally, one may assume that the resolution of the Fourteenth Party Conference also contains certain errors. Perhaps Comrade Zinoviev thinks that the resolution in question is erroneous. But if that is the case he should say so clearly and openly as befits a Bolshevik. Comrade Zinoviev, however, for some reason or other does not do this. He prefers to choose another path, that of attacking the resolution of the Fourteenth Party Conference in the rear, while keeping silent about the resolution and refraining from any open criticism of it whatsoever. Comrade Zinoviev obviously thinks that this will be the best way of achieving his purpose. And he has but one purpose, namely—to "improve" the resolution, and to rectify Lenin "just a little bit." It is hardly necessary to show that Comrade Zinoviev is mistaken in his calculations.

What is the source of Comrade Zinoviev's mistake? What is the root of this mistake?

The root of this mistake, in my opinion, lies in Comrade Zinoviev's conviction that the technical backwardness of our country is an *insuperable* obstacle to the construction of complete socialist society in Russia, that the proletariat cannot completely construct socialism owing to the technical backwardness of our country. At one of the sessions of the Central Committee of the Party prior to the April Party Conference, Comrade Zinoviev and Comrade Kamenev made an attempt to advance this argument. But they received a rebuff and were compelled to retreat, and *formally* they submitted to the opposite point of view, the point of view of the majority of the Central Committee. But while formally submitting to it, Comrade Zinoviev has all the time continued the struggle against it. (See Comrade Zinoviev's book, *Leninism*, and his concluding speech at the Fourteenth Party Congress.) This is what the Moscow Committee of our Party has to say in its "reply" to the letter issued by the Leningrad Province Party Conference, about the "incident" in the Central Committee of the Party:

"In the Political Bureau, not long ago, Comrades Kamenev and Zinoviev advocated the point of view that we cannot cope with the internal difficulties arising out of our technical and economic backwardness, unless an international revolution comes to our rescue. We, however, with the majority of the members of the Central Committee, hold that we can build socialism, are building it and shall completely construct it, notwithstanding our technical backwardness. We believe, of course, that this construction will proceed far more slowly than it would have done had there been a world victory; nevertheless, we are making progress and will continue to do so. Furthermore, we consider that the view held by Comrade Kamenev and Comrade Zinoviev expresses

lack of faith in the internal forces of our working class and of the peasant masses who follow its lead. We consider that it is a departure from the Leninist position.”

This document appeared in the press during the first sessions of the Fourteenth Party Congress, and Comrade Zinoviev, of course, had the opportunity of taking the floor at the Congress against it. But it is characteristic of Comrade Zinoviev and Comrade Kamenev that they found no arguments against the grave accusation directed against them by the Moscow Committee of our Party. Is this accidental? I think not! The accusation apparently hit the mark. Comrades Zinoviev and Kamenev “replied” to this accusation by keeping silent, because they had no “card to beat it.”

The new opposition is offended because Comrade Zinoviev is accused of lacking faith in the victory of socialist construction in our country. But if, after a whole year of discussion on the question of the victory of socialism in a single country, after Comrade Zinoviev’s viewpoint was rejected by the Political Bureau of the Central Committee (April 1925), after the Party as a whole had arrived at a definite opinion on this question, as recorded in the well-known resolution of the Fourteenth Party Conference (April 1925)—if, after all this, Comrade Zinoviev thinks fit to oppose the Party point of view in his book, *Leninism* (September 1925), if he then repeats this opposition at the Fourteenth Party Congress—how else can we explain this stubbornness, this persistence in his error, than by the fact that Comrade Zinoviev is infected, hopelessly infected, with a lack of faith in the possibility of the victory of socialist construction in our country?

It suits Comrade Zinoviev to interpret this lack of faith

as internationalism. But since when have we begun to interpret a departure from Leninism on a cardinal question of Leninism as internationalism?

Will it not be truer to say that it is not the Party but Comrade Zinoviev who is sinning against internationalism and the world revolution? For what else is our country, "the country that is building socialism," if not the base of the world revolution? And how can it be a real base of the world revolution if it is not competent to completely construct socialist society? Can it remain that mighty centre of attraction for the workers of all countries that it undoubtedly is now, if it is incapable of achieving victory over the capitalist elements in its own economy, achieving the victory of socialist construction? I think not. But does it not follow from this that lack of faith in the victory of socialist construction and the dissemination of this lack of faith, will lead to our country's being deprived of the position of the base of the world revolution, which, in turn, will lead to the weakening of the world revolutionary movement? How have Messrs. the Social-Democrats tried to scare the workers away from us? By their incessant propaganda to the effect that: "The Russians will get nowhere." With what do we beat the Social-Democrats when we attract workers' delegation after workers' delegation to our country, and by that very means strengthen the position of communism throughout the world? By our successes in the building of socialism. Is it not obvious then that anyone who disseminates lack of faith in our successes in the construction of socialism thereby indirectly helps the Social-Democrats, weakens the impetus of the international revolutionary movement and inevitably departs from internationalism?

You see that Comrade Zinoviev is in no better position in regard to his "internationalism" than he is in regard to

his "hundred-per-cent Leninism" on the question of the building of socialism in one country.

That is why the Fourteenth Party Congress rightly defined the views of the new opposition as a "lack of faith in the building of socialism," as a "distortion of Leninism."

VII

THE FIGHT FOR THE VICTORY OF SOCIALIST CONSTRUCTION

I THINK that lack of faith in the victory of socialist construction is the basic mistake of the new opposition. It is a basic mistake, in my opinion, because all the other mistakes of the new opposition spring from it. The mistakes of the opposition on the question of the new economic policy, state capitalism, the nature of our socialist industry, the rôle of co-operation under the dictatorship of the proletariat, the methods of fighting the kulaks, the rôle and importance of the middle peasants—all these mistakes are the outcome of this basic mistake of the opposition, of their lack of faith in the possibility of constructing socialist society with the efforts of our own country.

What does lack of faith in the victory of socialist construction in our own country mean?

It means, first of all, lack of confidence in the fact that, owing to certain conditions of development in our country, the basic masses of the peasantry can be *drawn into* the work of socialist construction.

It means, secondly, lack of confidence in the fact that the proletariat of our country, which holds the key positions in our national economy, is *capable* of drawing the basic masses of the peasantry into the work of socialist construction.

It is from these postulates that the opposition tacitly starts out in constructing their arguments concerning the

paths of our development—no matter whether they do so consciously or unconsciously.

Can the mass of the Soviet peasantry be drawn into the work of socialist construction?

In the pamphlet, *Foundations of Leninism*, there are two basic propositions bearing upon this matter, as follows:

“First, the peasantry in the Soviet Union should not be confused with the peasantry in the West. A peasantry that has been schooled in three revolutions, that has fought against the Tsar and the power of the bourgeoisie side by side with the proletariat, under the leadership of the proletariat, a peasantry that received land and peace at the hands of the proletarian revolution and by reason of this became the reserve of the proletariat—such a peasantry must necessarily be different from a peasantry which during the bourgeois revolution fought under the leadership of the liberal bourgeoisie, which received land at the hands of that bourgeoisie and in view of this became the reserve of the bourgeoisie. It hardly requires proof that the Soviet peasantry, which is accustomed to appreciate political friendship and political collaboration with the proletariat and which obtained its freedom because of that friendship and collaboration cannot but serve as exceptionally favourable material for economic collaboration with the proletariat. . . .

“Secondly, agriculture in Russia must not be confused with agriculture in the West. There, agriculture is developing along the usual lines of capitalism, situated as it is in an environment of profound differentiation among the peasantry, with immense landed estates and private capitalist latifundia at the one extreme, and pauperism, destitution and wage slavery at the other. It is natural, therefore, that

ruin and deterioration should exist there. Not so in Russia. With us, agriculture cannot develop along this path, if for no other reason than that the existence of the Soviet power and the nationalisation of the principal instruments and means of production will not permit of such a development. In Russia, the development of agriculture must take a different course, the course of organising millions of small and middle peasants in co-operative societies, the course of developing mass co-operation in the countryside supported by the state in the form of credits on easy terms. Lenin rightly pointed out in his articles on co-operation that with us the development of agriculture must take a different course, a course that will draw the majority of the peasants into socialist construction through co-operation, a course that will constantly introduce into agriculture the principles of collectivism, at first in the sphere of marketing and afterwards in the sphere of raising agricultural products. . . . It is hardly necessary to prove that the vast majority of the peasantry will eagerly take to this new road of development and will abandon the old road of large landed estates and wage slavery, the road of poverty and ruin."

Are these propositions correct?

I think they are both correct and incontrovertible for the whole of our construction period under the New Economic Policy.

They are merely the expression of Lenin's well-known theses concerning the *smychka*, the alliance between the workers and peasants; concerning the inclusion of peasant economy within the system of the socialist development of our country; that the proletariat in its advance towards socialism must march shoulder to shoulder with the main masses of the peasantry; that the organisation of the vast

masses of the peasantry into co-operative undertakings is the highroad of socialist construction in the rural districts; and that with the growth of our socialist industry, "the simple growth of co-operation is identical with the growth of socialism." (*Collected Works*, Vol. XXVII, p. 396, Russian edition.)

And, indeed, what is the possible and necessary course of development of peasant economy in our country?

Peasant economy is not capitalist economy. As far as the overwhelming majority of the peasant farms is concerned, peasant economy is petty commodity economy. And what is petty commodity peasant economy? It is an economy standing at the cross roads between capitalism and socialism. It may develop in the direction of capitalism, as is now happening in capitalist countries; or it may develop in the direction of socialism as should happen here in our country under the dictatorship of the proletariat.

Whence arises the instability, the lack of independence of peasant economy? How can we explain it?

The explanation is to be found in the scattered character of the peasant farms, in their lack of organisation, in their dependence on the towns, on industry, on the credit system, on the character of the state power in the country, and, lastly, upon the well-known fact that both in material and in cultural matters the village follows, and necessarily must follow, the town.

The capitalist path of development of peasant economy signifies development through the profound differentiation among the peasantry, with the formation of huge latifundia at one pole, and of mass impoverishment at the other. Such a path of development is inevitable in capitalist countries because the countryside, peasant economy, is dependent on the town, on industry, on the concentrated credit of the

town, on the character of the state power—and in the town we have the rule of the bourgeoisie, of capitalist industry, of the capitalist credit system, of the capitalist state power.

Is this path of development of peasant households obligatory for our country where the town has quite another aspect, where industry is in the hands of the proletariat, where the means of transportation, the credit system, the state power, etc., are concentrated in the hands of the proletariat, where the nationalisation of the land is the general law throughout the country? Of course it is not. On the contrary. It is precisely because the town does lead the country, and because in the town we have the rule of the proletariat, which holds all the key positions of national economy, it is precisely for this reason that the development of peasant economy must proceed by another path, the path of socialist construction.

What is this path?

It is the path of the mass co-operation of millions of peasant farms in all branches of the co-operative movement, the path of uniting the scattered peasant farms around socialist industry, of implanting the principles of collectivism among the peasantry, first of all, in the way of *marketing* of agricultural produce, and *supplying* the peasant household with the products of urban industry, and subsequently in the way of agricultural *production*.

And the further we go, the more this path becomes inevitable in the conditions of the dictatorship of the proletariat, because co-operative marketing, co-operative purchase of supplies and finally co-operative credit and co-operative production (agricultural co-operative societies) is the only way to raise the well-being of the countryside, the only way to save the wide masses of peasants from poverty and ruin.

We are told that our peasantry, by its very position, is not socialistic, and, therefore, is incapable of socialist development. It is true, of course, that the peasantry, by its very position, is not socialistic. But this does not prove that the peasant farms cannot develop along socialist lines, if it can be shown that the country follows the town, and that socialist industry is predominant in the town. The peasants, by their position, were not socialistic at the time of the October Revolution and they did not by any means want the establishment of socialism in our country. Their main striving then was for the overthrow of the power of the landlords and the cessation of the war, the establishment of peace. Nevertheless, they followed the lead of the socialist proletariat. Why did they do this? Because there was no other way of ending the imperialist war, no other way of bringing peace to Russia than by overthrowing the bourgeoisie, and by establishing the dictatorship of the proletariat. Because there was no other way then, nor could there be any other way. Because our Party was able to discover to what extent the specific interests of the peasantry (the overthrow of the landlords, peace) could be joined with and subordinated to the general interests of the country (the dictatorship of the proletariat) which proved acceptable and advantageous to the peasants. And so the peasants, at that time, in spite of their being non-socialistic, followed the lead of the socialist proletariat.

The same must be said about socialist construction in our country, about drawing the peasantry into the stream of this construction. The peasantry are not socialistic by their position. But the peasants must, and certainly will, take the path of socialist development, for there is no other way nor can there be any other way of saving them from poverty and ruin than by the bond with the proletariat, by

the bond with socialist industry, than by including peasant economy in the general stream of socialist development, by the widespread organisation of the peasant masses in co-operative societies.

But why by the widespread organisation of the peasant masses in co-operative societies?

Because mass organisation in co-operative societies "provided that degree of unification of private interest, private trading interest, of state supervision and control of this interest, the degree of its subordination to the common interests" (Lenin) which is acceptable and advantageous to the peasantry and which assures to the proletariat the possibility of drawing in the basic masses of the peasantry into the work of socialist construction. It is precisely because it is advantageous to the peasantry to organise the sale of their products and the purchase of machines for their farms through co-operative societies, it is precisely for that reason that they should and will proceed along the path of mass co-operation.

What is the significance of the mass organisation of peasant farms in co-operative societies when socialist industry is supreme?

It is that petty commodity farming will leave the old capitalist path which is pregnant with the mass ruin of the peasantry, and *enter* a new path of development, the path of socialist construction.

This is why the fight for the new path of development of peasant farming, the fight to enlist the basic mass of the peasantry in the work of socialist construction is the next task facing our Party.

The Fourteenth Congress of the C.P.S.U. was therefore right in declaring: "The basic path of the construction of socialism in the countryside is, with the growing economic

leadership of socialist state industry, the state credit institutions and with the other economic key positions in the hands of the proletariat, to draw the basic mass of the peasantry into co-operative organisation, to secure for this organisation a socialist development, while utilising, overcoming and dislodging the capitalist elements within it.” (Resolution of the Report of the Central Committee.)

The fundamental error the new opposition commits is that it does not believe in this new path of development of the peasantry, that it does not see or understand the inevitability of this path under the conditions of the dictatorship of the proletariat. And it does not understand this because it does not believe in the victory of socialist construction in our country, it does not believe in the competence of our proletariat to lead the peasantry along the path to socialism.

Hence the failure to understand the dual character of the New Economic Policy, the exaggeration of the negative aspects of N.E.P. and the interpretation of N.E.P. as mainly a retreat.

Hence the exaggeration of the rôle of the capitalist elements in our economic life, and the belittling of the rôle of the levers of our socialist development (socialist industry, the credit system, co-operation, the rule of the proletariat, etc.).

Hence the failure to understand the socialist nature of our state industry and the doubts concerning the correctness of Lenin’s co-operative plan.

Hence the exaggeration of the differentiation in the rural districts, the panic in face of the kulak, the belittling of the rôle of the middle peasants, the endeavours to disrupt the Party’s policy of securing a firm alliance with the middle peasants, and, in general, the rushing about from one side

to another on the question of the Party's policy in the rural districts.

Hence the failure to understand the great work our Party is doing in drawing the vast masses of workers and peasants into the task of building up industry and agriculture, the task of stimulating the co-operative societies and the soviets, the management of the country, the struggle against bureaucracy, the struggle for the improvement and the remodelling of our state apparatus, which is entering a new phase of development and without which no socialist construction is conceivable.

Hence the hopelessness and consternation in face of the difficulties of our construction, the doubts about the possibility of industrialising our country, the pessimistic chatter about the degeneration of the Party, etc. "Over there, among the bourgeoisie, all is going on fairly well, but over here, among the proletarians, things are fairly bad; and unless the revolution takes place in the West pretty soon, our cause is lost."

Such is the general tone of the new opposition which, in my opinion, is a liquidationist tone, but which, for some reason or other (probably in jest), is claimed by the opposition to be "internationalism."

"N.E.P. is capitalism," declares the opposition. "N.E.P. is mainly a retreat," says Comrade Zinoviev. All this of course is untrue. In actual fact N.E.P. is the Party policy which admits the struggle between the socialist and the capitalist elements, and which calculates on a victory of the socialist elements over the capitalist elements. As a matter of fact, N.E.P. only began as a retreat and the calculation was that in the course of this retreat we would regroup our forces and take the offensive. As a matter of fact, we have been pursuing the offensive for several years already, and

are doing so successfully, developing our industries, developing Soviet trade, and pressing down hard upon private capital.

But what is the meaning of the thesis that N.E.P. is capitalism, the N.E.P. is mainly a retreat? What is its starting point?

Its starting point is the incorrect assumption that what is now taking place in Soviet Russia is simply the restoration of capitalism, simply the "return to capitalism." It is this assumption alone that can explain the doubts of the opposition regarding the socialist nature of our industry. It is this assumption alone that can explain the panic of the opposition in face of the kulak. It is this assumption alone that can explain the hate with which the opposition seized upon the inaccurate statistics on the differentiation among the peasants. It is this assumption alone that can explain the forgetfulness of the opposition regarding the fact that the middle peasant is the central figure in our agriculture. This assumption alone can explain the underestimation of the importance of the middle peasants and the doubts concerning Lenin's co-operative plan. This assumption alone can serve as "grounds" for the new opposition's lack of faith in the new path of development of the countryside, the path of drawing the rural population into the work of socialist construction.

Actually, what is taking place in our country now is not a one-sided process of restoration of capitalism, but a two-sided process of development of capitalism and development of socialism, a contradictory process of struggle between the socialist elements and the capitalist elements, a process in which the socialist elements are overcoming the capitalist elements. This is equally incontestable both in regard to the town, where state industry is the basis of socialism, and

in regard to the countryside, where the main lever of socialist development is mass co-operation, linked up with socialist industry.

The simple restoration of capitalism is impossible if only for the reason that ours is a proletarian government, large-scale industry is in the hands of the proletariat, while the transport system and the credit system are in the hands of the proletarian state.

Differentiation among the peasants cannot assume previous proportions. The middle peasants continue to be the basic mass of the peasantry, while the kulak cannot regain his former strength, if only for the reason that the land has been nationalised, and has been withdrawn from the market, while our trade, credit, fiscal and co-operative policy are directed towards restricting the kulaks' exploiting proclivities, towards promoting the welfare of the broadest masses of peasants and abolishing the extremes in the countryside.

This is quite apart from the fact that the fight against the kulaks is no longer proceeding along the old lines of organising the poor peasants against the kulaks, but along the new lines of strengthening the alliance between the proletariat and the poor peasants, on the one side, and the mass of the middle peasants, on the other, against the kulaks. The fact that the opposition does not understand the sense and significance of the fight against the kulaks along this second line once more confirms the view that the opposition is straying towards the old path of the development of the countryside, the path of capitalist development on which the kulak and the poor peasant comprised the basic forces of the rural districts and the middle peasant was "washed out."

"Co-operation is a variety of state capitalism," says the opposition, citing, in this connection, Lenin's pamphlet, *The*

Tax in Kind, and consequently they do not believe it is possible to utilise the co-operative societies as the main coupling for socialist development. Here, likewise, the opposition commits a gross error. Such an interpretation of the co-operative movement was adequate and satisfactory in 1921, when *The Tax in Kind* was written, when we had no developed socialist industry, when Lenin conceived of state capitalism as a possible basic form of our economic life, and when he envisaged the co-operative movement in conjunction with state capitalism. But this interpretation has now become inadequate and has been rendered obsolete by history, for times have changed, our socialist industry has developed, state capitalism did not take root to the degree that was desired, while the co-operative movement, which now embraces more than ten million members, has begun to link up with socialist industry.

How else are we to explain the fact that in 1923, two years after *The Tax in Kind* was written, Lenin began to regard the co-operative movement in a different light, and considered that: "under our conditions, co-operation very often completely coincides with socialism?" (*Collected Works*, Vol. XXVII, p. 396, Russian edition.)

How else can this be explained except by the fact that during these two years, socialist industry had grown, whereas state capitalism had failed to take root to the required extent, and that, consequently, Lenin had begun to envisage the co-operative movement, not in conjunction with state capitalism, but in conjunction with socialist industry?

The conditions of development of the co-operative movement had changed. And so the approach to the question of co-operation had to be changed also.

Here, for instance, is a remarkable passage from Lenin's

pamphlet *On Co-operation* (1923), which throws light on this matter:

“Under state capitalism, co-operative enterprises differ from state capitalist enterprises, first, as private enterprises and, secondly, as collective enterprises. Under the system of society prevailing in our country, the co-operative enterprises differ from private capitalist enterprises in that they are collective enterprises; they do not, however, differ from socialist enterprises if they operate upon land and means of production belonging to the state, that is to say, the working class.” (*Ibid.*)

In this short passage two big problems are solved. First, the problem that “our present system” is not state capitalism. Secondly, that co-operative enterprises taken in conjunction with “our system” “do not differ” from socialist enterprises.

I think it would be difficult to express oneself more clearly.

Here is another quotation from the same pamphlet: “The simple growth of co-operation, for us, is (with the “trifling” exception mentioned above) identical with the growth of socialism and in this connection we are obliged to admit a radical change in our point of view about socialism.” (*Ibid.*)

Obviously, the pamphlet, *On Co-operation*, gives a new evaluation of co-operation, a thing which the new opposition does not wish to admit, and which it is studiously hushing up in defiance of the facts, in defiance of the plain truth, in defiance of Leninism.

Co-operation taken in conjunction with state capitalism is one thing, and co-operation taken in conjunction with socialist industry is another.

It would be wrong, however, to deduce from this that a gulf lies between Lenin’s *Tax in Kind* and his *On Co-opera-*

tion. Such a deduction would, of course, be incorrect. It is sufficient, for instance, to refer to the following passages in *The Tax in Kind* to immediately discern the inseparable link between the two pamphlets on the question of the estimation of co-operation. Here it is:

“The transition from concessions to socialism is the transition from one form of large-scale production to another form of large-scale production. The transition from the co-operation of small masters to socialism is the transition from small-scale production to large-scale production, *i.e.*, a transition which is more complicated, but which in the event of success is capable of embracing wider masses of the population, is capable of tearing out the deeper and more tenacious roots of the old, *pre-socialist* [My italics.—J.S.] and even pre-capitalist relationships, those which most stubbornly resist ‘innovations.’” (*Collected Works*, Vol. XXVI, p. 337, Russian edition.)

From this quotation it can be seen that even when he wrote *The Tax in Kind*, when we had not as yet a developed socialist industry, Lenin was of the opinion that, *in the event of success*, co-operative societies could be transformed into a powerful weapon in the struggle against “pre-socialist,” and therefore *against capitalist conditions* as well. I think that it was precisely this thought that subsequently served as the starting point for his pamphlet *On Co-operation*.

But what follows from all this?

From all this it follows that the new opposition approaches the question of co-operation, not in a Marxist fashion, but metaphysically. It regards co-operation not as a historical phenomenon, taken in conjunction with other phenomena, in conjunction, shall we say, with state capitalism (in 1921), or with socialist industry (in 1923), but

as something constant and immutable, as a "thing in itself."

Hence the mistakes of the opposition on the question of co-operation, hence their lack of faith in the development of the countryside towards socialism through co-operation, hence the opposition's return to the old road, the road of the capitalist development of the countryside.

Such, in general terms, is the position of the new opposition on the practical questions of socialist construction.

Only one conclusion can be drawn. The line of the opposition, so far as it has a line, its wavering and vacillation, its lack of faith and its consternation in the face of difficulties, lead to capitulation to the capitalist elements of our economic life. For, if N.E.P. is mainly a retreat, if doubt is thrown on the socialist character of state industry, if the kulak is almost omnipotent, little hope can be placed in co-operation. If the rôle of the middle peasant is progressively declining, if the new path of development of the countryside is open to doubt, if the Party is almost degenerating, while the revolution in the West is not very near, then what is there left in the arsenal of the opposition that it can count on in the struggle against the capitalist elements in our economic life? You cannot go into battle with *The Philosophy of the Epoch* as your only weapon.

Clearly, the arsenal of the new opposition, if it can be termed an arsenal, is an unenviable one. It is not an arsenal for battles. Still less is it one for victory.

Clearly, if it entered the fight equipped with such an arsenal the Party would be doomed "in two ticks"; it would simply have to capitulate to the capitalist elements in our economic life.

That is why the Fourteenth Congress of the Party was right in declaring that "the fight for the victory of socialist construction in the U.S.S.R. is the next task facing our

Party”; that one of the necessary conditions for the fulfilment of this task is “to combat lack of faith in the building of socialism in our country, and the attempts to represent our enterprises, which are of a ‘consistently socialist type’ (Lenin) as being state-capitalist enterprises”; that “such ideological trends which prevent the masses from adopting a conscious attitude towards the building of socialism in general and socialist industry in particular can only serve to hinder the growth of the socialist elements in our economic life and to facilitate the struggle of private capital against them”; that “the Congress therefore considers that widespread educational work must be carried on for the purpose of overcoming these distortions of Leninism.” (Resolution on the Report of the Central Committee of the C.P.S.U.)

The historical significance of the Fourteenth Congress of the Communist Party of the Soviet Union lies in that it was able to expose the mistakes of the new opposition to the very roots, that it threw aside its lack of faith and snivelling, clearly and distinctly indicated the path of the further struggle for socialism, gave the Party prospects of victory and thereby armed the proletariat with invincible faith in the victory of socialist construction.

January 25, 1926.

INDEX

A.

Agriculture, in Soviet Union and West, 78-79.

Attitude of Social-Democracy Towards the Peasant Movement, 15.

B.

Bauer, O., 8.

Bolshevism or Trotskyism, 8.

Bourgeois Revolution, 14; and Proletarian Revolution, 16-19.

C.

Cadets, 25.

Chernov, V., 25.

Communist International, Second Congress of, 34, 35, 56, 57, 58.

Communist Party, 29-59; as guide of proletarian dictatorship, 32; as leader of proletariat, 32; source of its strength, 31.

Communist Party of Soviet Union, 14th Conference of, 63, 64, 65, 68, 71, 72, 73, 74; 14th Congress of, 65, 68, 72, 73, 74, 83, 91, 92; tenth Congress of, 48.

Constitutional Democrats, 25.

Cooperative Societies, 79, 80, 81, 83; under capitalism and under Soviets, 89-90; link between peasantry and proletarian vanguard in system of dictatorship of proletariat, 31; weapon in struggle for socialism, 89-90.

D.

Dictatorship of Proletariat, 16-28; fundamental characteristics, 21-

28; fundamental question of Leninism, 10-12; and "dictatorship of Party," 34, 56; Party and working class within system of, 29-59; and Soviet apparatus, 39; as form of class alliance, 23; necessity of allies for, 22; structure and mechanism, 29-33; supreme principle of, 24; and cooperative societies, 31.

F.

Foundations of Leninism, 7, 10, 13, 32, 60, 61, 78.

H.

Hilferding, R., 15.

I.

Imperialism, 8.

K.

Kamenev, L. B., 23, 24, 73, 74.

Kautsky, K., 8, 15.

Kerensky, A., 19.

Kolchak, 55, 56.

Kursk Pravda, 68.

Kursk Province Party Conference, 68.

Kutuzov, 52.

L.

Lenin, 7, 8, 9, 10, 11, 12, 13, 14, 15, 16, 17, 18, 20, 21, 22, 23, 24, 25, 28, 32, 33, 34, 35, 37, 38, 39, 40, 41, 43, 45, 47, 48, 49, 50, 51, 52, 54, 55, 56, 57, 62, 65, 66, 69, 70, 72, 79, 83, 84, 86, 87, 88.

"Left-Wing" Communism: an Infantile Disorder, 8, 9, 33, 42, 46, 49, 50, 51, 56, 57.

Leningrad Province Party Conference, 73.

Leninism, 54, 67, 73, 74.

Leninism, definition of, 7; historical roots of, 7, international character of, 7-9, organic connection with Marxism, 7.

Longuet, J., 15.

M.

MacDonald, J. R., 15.

Martov, L., 15.

Marx, K., 14, 26.

Marxism, 48; and Leninism, 7.

Mensheviks, 51, 56.

N.

National Question and Peasant Question, 36.

New Economic Policy, 48, 84; errors of opposition on, 85-86.

O.

October Revolution, 63.

October Revolution and the Tactics of the Communists, 13, 23, 62.

On Cooperation, 62, 70, 89, 90.

On the Trade Unions, 52.

P.

Peasant Question in the Soviet Union, 8, 11, 12, 80.

Peasant Movement and Social-Democracy, 15.

Peasantry, as allies of workers, 23, 24, 79; as allies of revolution, 82-91.

Permanent Revolution, 13-15; Lenin on, 13, 14.

Permanentists, Russian, their mistakes, 13-15.

Political Report of the C. C. to the 14th Congress of the C. P. S. U., 64.

Power, Seizure of, 16-28.

Proletarian Revolution, characteristic symptoms, 21; and bourgeois revolution, 16-19; and dictatorship of the proletariat, 16-28.

Proletarian Revolution and the Renegade Kautsky, 8, 57.

Q.

Questions and Answers, 64.

R.

Results of the Work of the 14th Party Conference, 63, 64.

Revolution, conditions for, 49-50.

Revolutionary discipline, 42, 43.

Russian Revolution and World Revolution, 19.

S.

Smychka, 79.

Social-Democracy and Peasant Movement, 15.

Social-Democrats, 7, 60, 75.

Socialist-Revolutionaries, 55.

Socialism, Victory of in a single country, 60-62; Lenin on, 69; as base of world revolution, 75.

Socialist Construction, 77-92; peasantry in, 77-92.

Sorin, 35, 53, 54.

Soviet Power, its international significance, 9.

Soviets, merging of Party and, 38-39; reasons for success of, 18; as weapons of proletarian dictatorship, 30; cooperative societies and, 89-90; Soviet Union, agriculture in, 78-79.

State and Revolution, 8, 20, 47, 48, 57.

Sukhanov, H., 69, 70.

T.

Tanner, 34, 35, 56.

Tasks of the Communist International and the Communist

Party of Russia in Connection with the Enlarged Plenum of the Executive Committee of the Communist International, 71.
Tax in Kind, 87, 89, 90.
Teachings of Lenin on the Party, 35.
 Trade Unions, as belt in system of proletarian dictatorship, 30.
 Transport Workers' Union, 52.

U.

Uneven development as law of capitalism, 69.

W.

Will the Bolsheviks Retain State Power?, 49.

Y.

Yakovlev, Y. A., 68, 70, 72.
 Young Communist League, 31.

Z.

Zinoviev, G., 8, 9, 10, 11, 54, 55, 64, 65, 67, 68, 69, 70, 72, 73, 74, 75, 85; his incorrect definition of Leninism, 8-12.

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