



**LENIN**  
On Compromise

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**ON**  
**COMPROMISE**  
**LENIN**

Collected articles on and related to the subject. EA

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## **Introduction**

As for most of the questions of Marxism Leninism, there always have been approaches to the question of compromise disregarding to dialectical connection and the totally of the subject as a whole. Each group, both right and left, rather than basing the approach to the theory, preferred eclecticism fitting their subjectivity and tendency.

**The “Right”** embraces compromise as principle regardless of the existing conditions, without responding to the questions; “compromise with whom, for what purposes, under what conditions.” The Rights’ tendency to reformism is the class collaboration through compromise in principle.

**The “Left”** with the subjective intentions of portraying themselves as the ‘genuine revolutionaries’, could never think of retreating or any tactical compromise forced by the circumstances, and thus cannot distinguish between policy of reformist compromise and tactical compromise, and rejects all compromise as “unprincipled”.

Blind rejection of compromise “on principle” regardless of the circumstances is due to the failure of the most elementary fact of the revolutionary struggle: revolutionary struggle does not follow a straight line, it will have ups and downs till the victory, Marxist Leninists, based on the concrete assessment of any given conditions, should determine when to retreat in an orderly fashion with minimal possible loss, and when to compromise and when to advance.

In reality, opposition to any form of compromise of the “Left deviation” , at the final analyses is an isolation from the masses, some times in the form of anarchism and thus, the complete compromise of the working class movement to the bourgeoisie.

In this sense, both “left” and “right” constitute the different sides of the same coin. The revisionist kinship so to speak.

It is important to quote Stalin here;

“I think that the **proletariat**, as a class, can be divided **into three strata**.

**One stratum** is the main mass of the proletariat, its core, its permanent part, the mass of ‘pure-blooded’ proletarians, who have long broken off connection with the capitalist class. This stratum of the proletariat is the most reliable bulwark of Marxism.

**The second stratum** consists of newcomers from the non-proletarian classes – from the peasantry, the petty bourgeoisie or the intelligentsia. These are former members of other classes who have only recently merged with the proletariat and have brought with them into the working class their customs, their habits, their waverings and their vacillations. This stratum constitutes the most favourable soil for all sorts of **anarchist, semi-anarchist and ‘ultra-Left’ groups**.

**The third stratum**, lastly, consists of the labour aristocracy, the upper stratum of the working class, the most well-to-do portion of the proletariat, with its propensity for compromise with the bourgeoisie, its predominant inclination to adapt itself to the powers that be, and its anxiety to ‘get on in life’. This stratum constitutes the most favourable soil for **outright reformists and opportunists**.

Notwithstanding **their superficial differences**, these last two strata of the working class **constitute a more or less common nutritive medium for opportunism in general**

– open opportunism when the sentiments of the labour aristocracy gain the upper hand, and opportunism camouflaged with 'Left' phrases, when the sentiments of the semi-middle-class strata of the working class which have not yet completely broken, with the petty bourgeois environment gain the upper hand. **The fact that 'ultra-Left' sentiments very often coincide with the sentiments of open opportunism is not at all surprising.** Lenin said time and again that the 'ultra-Left' opposition **is the reverse side of the Right-wing**, Menshevik, openly opportunist opposition. "Stalin, *The Seventh Enlarged Plenum of the E.C.C.I. Works Vol. 9 p. 10-11*

Reading one or two writings of Lenin on a subject and handpicking what fits the subjectivity, is a common tendency of each deviation. Lenin clearly states that "to **reject compromises "on principle"**, to reject the permissibility of compromises in general, **no matter of what kind, is childishness**, which it is difficult **even to consider seriously.**" (*Lenin, P246*)

Lenin stressing the crux of the matter says;

" It is also **incorrect to reduce the question** to a bare repudiation of compromise ..**it is ridiculous** to absolutely reject compromises that are imposed by life itself...what matters is a **clear understanding and persistent pursuit of the aims of the struggle under all circumstances.**" (*Lenin, P51*)

Lenin mentions the "left deviations"" revolutionary phrase making on the subject, states;

"solemn" **condemnation of "confusionism"**, and even of **"all compromise"—this is an empty revolutionary phrase**, because **one cannot be opposed to all compromise**), and, alongside of this, evasive, equivocal



repetition of general phrases—phrases which do not explain the concept “dictatorship of the proletariat” **but obscure it”** *Lenin, A Publicist's Notes, February, 1920, Collected Works, Volume 30, pages 352-362*

And for the “right “deviation;

“whoever exalts **this negative task** to something positive, is bound to slide into the role of a **bourgeois advocate of compromise between people's freedom and the autocracy.**” *Lenin, A New Upswing, May 6, 1906, Collected Works, Volume 10, pages 386-391.*

Lenin quotes Engel's views on compromise;

“**Compromises are often unavoidably forced upon a fighting party by circumstances....**The task of a truly revolutionary party **is not to declare that it is impossible** to renounce all compromises, but to be able, through all compromises, when they are unavoidable, **to remain true to its principles**, to its class, to its revolutionary purpose....” (*Lenin, P177*).

Based on the conditions and the existence or nonexistence of the revolutionary situation, “**Compromise** “says Lenin, “**is an attempt** on the part of the masses of workers, peasants and soldiers **to get their needs satisfied by means of reforms**, by concessions on the part of capital, **without a socialist revolution.**” (*Lenin, P206*)

Explaining, setting the aim and the duty of revolution he says; “But it is impossible to give the people peace and land **without overthrowing the bourgeoisie, without socialism.** It is the **duty of the revolution** to put an end to compromise, and to **put an end to compromise** means taking the path of socialist revolution.” (*Lenin, P206*)

Lenin explains the attitude of Marxism towards compromise in his article *"Notes of a Social-Democratic Publicist"* ;

**"Marxism's attitude towards the zigzag path of history is essentially the same as its attitude towards compromise.** Every zigzag turn in history is a **compromise**, a compromise between the old, which is no longer strong enough to completely negate the new, and the new, which is **not yet strong enough** to completely overthrow the old. Marxism **does not** altogether reject compromises. Marxism **considers it necessary to make use of them**, but that does not in the least prevent Marxism, as a living and operating historical force, **from fighting energetically against compromises.** Not to understand **this seeming contradiction** is not to know the rudiments of Marxism.

Engels once expressed **the Marxist attitude to compromises very vividly**, clearly, and concisely in an article on the manifesto of the Blanquist fugitives of the Commune (1874). These **Blanquists wrote** in their manifesto that **they accepted no compromises whatever.** Engels ridiculed this manifesto. **It was not**, he said, a **question of rejecting compromises** to which circumstances condemn us (or to which circumstances compel us—I must beg the reader's pardon for being obliged to quote from memory, as I am unable to check with the original text). **It was a question of clearly realizing the true revolutionary aims of the proletariat and of being able to pursue them through all and every circumstances, zigzags, and compromises."** *Lenin, Against Boycott, Notes of a Social-Democratic Publicist*

The compromises and concessions of the Bolsheviks, their assent to resolutions which in many respects were not forceful enough,

were necessary for a **clear-cut demarcation based on principle**. "The subordination of the minority to the majority, not compromise with intellectualist groups' says Lenin, "**only this can serve as the principle of the working-class movement.**" *Lenin, The Political Significance of Vituperation, Collected Works, Volume 20, pages 378-380. June 24, 1914*

In reference to the attitude towards compromise when there is a revolutionary situation Lenin says; "The slogan "All Power to the Soviets" is nothing **but a call for insurrection**. And the blame will be wholly and undoubtedly ours, if we, who for months have been **calling upon the people to revolt and repudiate compromise**, fail to lead them to revolt on the eve of the revolution's collapse, after the people have expressed their confidence in us." *Lenin, Letter to the Bolshevik Comrades, October 1917, Collected Works, Volume 26, 1972, pp. 182-187*

In reference to the general statement of German Revolutionaries;

"all compromise with other parties, all reversion to parliamentary forms of struggle which have become historically and politically obsolete, and any policy of **maneuvering and compromise must be emphatically rejected.**" "Specifically, proletarian methods of revolutionary struggle must be strongly emphasised."

Lenin says;

"Any Bolshevik who has consciously participated in the development of Bolshevism since 1903 or has closely observed that development **will at once say**, after reading these arguments, "**What old and familiar rubbish! What 'Left-wing' childishness!**" (*Lenin, P265*)

"We had to go into the Second Duma, we had to reckon with compromise once the circumstances forced it upon

us against our will, despite our efforts, and at the cost of the defeat of our struggle." *Lenin, Notes of a Social-Democratic Publicist*

Marxist Leninists always determine their attitude based on the concrete assessment of any given situation without leaving the real ground. Proceeding from that principle, it is impossible to reject or embrace "compromise" totally without betraying Marxism Leninism.

**Compromise** is a negative task **forced upon** the Marxist Leninist party or organization by circumstances at any given time especially when there is no objective and/or subjective conditions of revolution lacking. That is why, in Lenin's words "to **reject compromises "on principle"**, to reject the permissibility of compromises in general, **no matter of what kind, is childishness**, which it is difficult **even to consider seriously.**" And in Engels words **It is not a question of rejecting compromises** to which circumstances condemn us, **it is a question of clearly realizing the true revolutionary aims of the proletariat** and of being able to pursue them **through all and every circumstances, zigzags, and compromises."**

What differentiates the Marxist Leninists from the "revisionist kinship" of right and left is, the principle that, determination of attitude at any given time should always be based on the existing conditions and the interests of the working class and their struggle in mind without any compromise on theory and maximum goal.

Erdogan A

August 2020

Lenin

**From; The Tasks of the Russian Social-Democrats**

1897

Collected Works, Volume 2, pages 323-352.

While concentrating all its forces on activity among the factory workers, Russian Social-Democracy is ready to support those Russian revolutionaries who, in practice, come to base their socialist activities on the class struggle of the proletariat; but it does not in the least conceal the point that **no practical alliances with other groups of revolutionaries can, or should, lead to compromises or concessions on matters of theory, programme or banner.**

The attitude of the working class, as a fighter against the autocracy, towards all the other social classes and groups in the political opposition is very precisely determined by the basic principles of Social-Democracy expounded in the famous Communist Manifesto. The Social-Democrats support the progressive social classes against the reactionary classes, the bourgeoisie against the representatives of privileged landowning estate and the bureaucracy, the big bourgeoisie against the reactionary strivings of the petty bourgeoisie. **This support does not presuppose, nor does it call for, any compromise** with non-Social-Democratic programmes and principles—it is support given to an ally against a particular enemy. Moreover, the Social-Democrats render this support in order to expedite the fall of the common enemy, but expect nothing for themselves from these temporary allies, and concede nothing to them. The Social-Democrats support every revolutionary movement against the present social system, they support all oppressed nationalities, persecuted religions, downtrodden social estates, etc., in their fight for equal rights.

The proletariat alone can be—and because of its class position must be—a consistently democratic, determined enemy of absolutism, incapable of making any concessions or compromises. The proletariat alone can be the vanguard fighter for political liberty and for democratic institutions. Firstly, this is because political tyranny bears most heavily upon the proletariat whose position gives it no opportunity to secure a modification of that tyranny—it has no access to the higher authorities, not even to the officials, and it has no influence on public opinion. Secondly, the proletariat alone is capable of bringing about the complete democratisation of the political and social system, since this would place the system in the hands of the workers. That is why the merging of the democratic activities of the working class **with the democratic aspirations of other classes** and groups would weaken the democratic movement, would weaken the political struggle, would make it less determined, less consistent, more likely to compromise **On the other hand**, if the working class stands out as the vanguard fighter for democratic institutions, this will strength the democratic movement, will strengthen the struggle for political liberty, because the working class will spur on all the other democratic and political opposition elements, will push the liberals towards the political radicals, will push the radicals towards an irrevocable rupture with the whole of the political and social structure of present society

Lenin

**TO G. V. PLEKHANOV**

Collected Works, Volume 36, pages 115-116.

July 2, 1902

Dear G. V.,

Excuse my writing in such a hurry. I have come here to Brittany for a rest (I am awaiting my family here as well), but in Paris Berg gave me his item, and I have received the article over the signature of Veteran which you sent.

I am completely in agreement with Veteran. On account of the note about Lekkert in Iskra I had a little battle with Berg and Velika Dmitrievna, who both, as usual, had an attack of nerves, and began to talk about the inevitability of terror, and the need for us to express this (in one way or another). The item in Iskra was thus a compromise: that was all I managed to secure.[2]

Now Berg himself has become more resolutely opposed to terror, even that of the Lekkerts.

But the question is whether it is all right to insert your article with the Veteran signature. Of course, if you wish, it will certainly go in (and there is time for it to go into the next issue)—but wouldn't it be better for you to turn it into a leading article for No. 22, combining it, so to speak, with Berg's article "How to Fight"? I enclose this article which, in my opinion, contains passages requiring corrections, passages which are undesirably evasive on the question of Lekkert.

I also enclose an item about the priest's letter. What is your opinion?

And so please reply as soon as possible, dear G. V., and send all three articles straight back to London (J. Richter, 30. Holford Sq. 30. Pentonville: London W. C.). Write to me at the same address.

I think a leader would be the best place to say what you do say: the substance of the matter will be brought out (the "objection" to Iskra will be smoothed out) and the integral impression will be made stronger. You will find it easy and natural to develop your article into a leader, thereby substituting it for the article "How to Fight". Such a substitution would, in my opinion, be the best result.

All good wishes,

Yours,

Lenin

[2] A reference to an unsigned editorial note to a letter from Vilna (about the mass corporal punishment of demonstrators arrested on May Day). It was published in Iskra No. 21, June 1, 1902, in the "From Our Social Life" section, and dealt with the attempt on the life of the Vilna Governor von Wal by the worker G. D. Lekkert (Lekukha). Lenin and Iskra had repeatedly exposed the harmful effect of individual acts of terrorism on the mass workers' movement, and in the event censured Martov and Zasulich who approved of Lekkert's act.



Lenin

### **Political Sophisms**

May 18 (5), 1905

Collected Works, Volume 8, pages 425-432.

The movement of the proletariat, by reason of the essential peculiarities of the position of this class under capitalism, has a marked tendency to develop into a desperate all-out struggle, a struggle for complete victory over all the dark forces of exploitation and oppression. **The movement of the liberal bourgeoisie**, on the contrary, and for the same reasons (i.e., by virtue of the essential peculiarities of the bourgeoisie's position), has a tendency towards compromise instead of struggle, towards opportunism instead of radicalism, towards modest calculation of the likeliest and most possible immediate gains instead of a "tactless", bold, and determined bid for complete victory. He who puts up a real fight will naturally go all out; he who prefers compromise to struggle will naturally point out beforehand what "morsels" he would be inclined, at best, to content himself with (at worst, he would be content even with no struggle at all, i.e., he would make a lasting peace with the masters of the old world).

Lenin

### **The Zemstvo Congress**

October 3 (September 20), 1905

Collected Works, Volume 9, pages 301-306.

On Monday, September 12 (25), there opened in Moscow a Zemstvo and Municipal Congress, which discussed and finally determined the attitude to the Duma. Like previous Zemstvo congresses, this Congress marks a further step in the political development and political organisation of the Russian bourgeoisie. That is why every class-conscious worker must give attention to this birth of a bourgeois constitutional party. The political development of the proletariat as a class has always and everywhere proceeded hand in hand with the political development of the bourgeoisie as a class.

But besides this general significance, the Zemstvo Congress is also of tremendous importance in connection with the burning question of our attitude towards the Duma. A compromise between the bourgeoisie and tsarism, or the former's more resolute struggle against the latter—such is the gist of this question, which, as is known, is giving rise to differences on Social-Democracy's tactics too.

To begin with, let us remind the reader that at their preceding Congress the Zemstvo people roundly condemned the Bulygin Duma, and accepted the well-known Osvobozhdeniye draft constitution (a monarchy and a two-chamber system). The question of boycotting the Duma was at first decided in the affirmative by the majority, but later it was reconsidered and deferred until the next congress, which was to be called immediately following the promulgation of the State Duma Act—there was even talk of calling it by telegraph. In fact, the

Congress was not called for a long time. At first, as we noted in Proletary, No. 14, rumour had it that the Zemstvos had cancelled the Congress. Later, the public learned of the negotiations between Mr. Golovin and Durnovo, which we described and appraised in the preceding issue of Proletary, and which resulted in the police permitting the Congress. The Congress was therefore held under conditions entirely different from the preceding, which had been banned by the police, who had threatened to disperse it, had made out a report and, after the Congress, ordered a Senate investigation. This time the Zemstvos and the police came to terms and reached an agreement in advance.

To give the reader a better idea of **the significance of the difference between "then" and "now"**, let us remind him of the statement that appeared in the latest issue of Osvobozhdeniye. Mr. "Independent" (probably, independent of the police?) wrote the following in No. 76, in full accord with the author of the leading article in that issue: "There should be no question of any sort of compromise whatever. As before, liberty must be won and not begged for.... **We should not**—and this is in the highest degree important—**for a moment renounce either the former methods of struggle or the positions that have already been won.** If compromises are possible here too, then that possibility must be removed immediately and in good earnest. All that has till now been done to organise the forces of emancipation must also be done in the future.... The activities of the congresses, unions, and assemblies should continue in the same spirit and in the same direction as hitherto."

It is impossible to express oneself more clearly. After August 6, the organ of the Zemstvo or "Constitutional Democratic" Party resolutely and unconditionally expresses itself against renouncing the former methods of struggle. However, the gist of

the false stand taken by the liberal bourgeoisie lies in the fact that, along with a desire for liberty, they no less ardently desire a deal with tsarism. That is why they say one thing and do another. In order “not to renounce the former methods of struggle”, they should be boycotting the Duma. After renouncing the boycott, it was logically inevitable for them to renounce some of the “former methods of struggle”. Osvobozhdeniye began to fulminate against compromises at the very moment Golovin was making a compromise with Durnovo. Osvobozhdeniye began to vociferate, “we should not for a moment renounce”, just when the Zemstvo Congress renounced the former freedom of its sessions. On the occasion of the “granting” of a Duma, that purported inception of liberty, the Zemstvos agreed to confer less freely.

And indeed: 1) the programme for the Congress was cut down by Mr. Durnovo, i.e., by the police; 2) the chairman promised to adjourn the Congress in the event of a discussion on questions not on the agenda authorised by the police; 3) the Congress consented to hold its sittings in the presence of a police agent—sent by Durnovo (chef de cabinet)—who was empowered to close the Congress if the “terms” of the agreement between Mr. Golovin and Mr. Durnovo were infringed; 4) also on pain of closure of the Congress, police forbade all “seditious outcries” (according to a wire from the special correspondent of the conservative paper *Le Temps*, who added that all these terms were faithfully observed).

It goes without saying that since we derive our information from foreign newspapers we cannot vouch for the absolute accuracy or the exhaustive nature of this information. But there are no grounds for doubting that on the whole it is accurate. On the contrary, Mr. Golovin (who certainly did not intend his negotiations with Durnovo to become known to the public!) most

likely promised the police even more regarding the loyal behaviour of the Zemstvos!

The undeniable fact is that Osvobozhdeniye's words are utterly at variance with the deeds of its adherents. Osvobozhdeniye's journalists harangue against the police, while the wirepullers most amicably arrange matters with the police. The beginning of the Zemstvo campaign for the Duma elections coincided with the beginning of agreement between the Zemstvo bourgeoisie and the autocracy.

Foreign correspondents speak unanimously of the peaceful nature of this Zemstvo Congress as compared with the preceding. Only one speaker, or according to other information two, favoured boycotting the Duma. The majority stood for participation (we stated in No. 12 of Proletary, even before the Duma Act was promulgated, that the Zemstvo Right wing had already made up its mind on this question). The majority considered that non-participation in the elections would be a "sign of timidity" — a view fully shared, as we know, by Parvus and the new Iskra. On the other hand, our Zemstvos displayed their boldness... by coming to terms with the police....

The Congress adopted a resolution which, instead of condemning the Duma, merely states (we are at a loss to say whether timidly or boldly) that the "Duma will not be a popular representative body in the literal sense of the term". Russian citizens are invited to unite on the programmes adopted at previous Zemstvo Congresses and to carry on their struggle on the basis of the Duma. The resolution does not say a single word about fighting outside the Duma and apart from the Duma: that is what the Osvobozhdeniye writer, who is "independent" of the police, calls "not for a moment renouncing the former methods of struggle...."

Moderating their formerly excessive “revolutionary” zeal, the Zemstvos are applying their efforts to “constructive” work in connection with the Duma. They have drawn up a detailed political programme (we are not yet in possession of its complete text); they have endeavoured to cover up their retreat from democracy by reiterating the main points of moderate constitutionalism; they have dealt in detail with the question of the election campaign, the organisation of local and central election committees, drawing up lists of candidates, etc.

After all this it is still not clear what the landlord and merchant liberalism of the Zemstvos and Osvobozhdeniye League is driving at?

What they want is: to start discarding, one by one, the militant demands of democracy, everything that guarantees the rights of the revolutionary people, that develops and extends the struggle for liberty (while maintaining silence in the resolution about the struggle apart from the Duma, etc.); to start clinching all such demands of democracy that secure power for the bourgeoisie alone (snug berths in the Duma above all)! Less agitation among the people and more activity in the Duma!

As William Stead, that “liberal” who but yesterday was an admirer of the autocracy, so aptly put it (see his letter to The Times of September 26), external peace called for peace within the country, peace between the tsar and the liberal bourgeoisie, such as was proclaimed by the Law of August 6! By their behaviour the Zemstvos are proving that they are willing to make peace, although, of course, by no means immediately or in all respects. “Mr. Mikhail Stakhovich, a friend and colleague of Shipov’s,” wrote the Temps correspondent on September 27, “is counting on the creation of a party of the centre, which would favour the autocracy and a consultative Duma; he asserts that many members of the extreme parties” (!! what aspersion on the

Osvobozhdeniye supporters—Editors of “Proletary”) “are prepared to join this party.” Mr. Stakhovich’s assertion is confirmed not only by the statements of many legally published newspapers, but even more so by the Zemstvo gentlemen’s deeds. The Times correspondent informs us on September 26 that Mr. M. Stakhovich was present at the Congress. “The last named is still a strong believer in the victory of the moderate elements, indeed, the almost total absence of the usual fiery denunciations of the government, except casual [!!] references to the horrors of the Caucasus, rather confirms his forecast.” The same correspondent of this conservative British paper writes: “The temper of the Assembly offers a singular contrast to the sentiment dominating the July Congress, when a large number of delegates advocated a boycott of the government [Duma] scheme.”

Can it be that Iskra will still refuse to abandon its erroneous opinion that those who favoured a boycott wanted passive abstention, whereas the Stakhoviches, who favour participation, want a serious struggle? Will it really continue even now to stand, together with Parvus, for an agreement with the Osvobozhdeniye adherents and support for them, after they have obviously begun to come to terms with the Durnovos?

P. S. In all fairness it must be said that more and more information keep coming in showing that the Russian new Iskristis do not agree with the new Iskra. We have just received a leaflet issued by the St. Petersburg (Menshevik) group, entitled: “The State Duma or a Constituent Assembly.” Together with criticism of the Duma we find here the slogan “Down with the Duma!” The workers’ representatives are urged to tell the liberals “that they must not recognise the State Duma”, “that they must renounce their right [the print in the leaflet is not legible] of election to the Duma”, that they must help the workers “to arm

for the struggle against the Black Hundreds and the State Duma". The St. Petersburg Mensheviks have thus adopted the slogan of an active boycott. Here too, as in the well-known case of the "Zemstvo campaign plan", Iskra is at variance with its adherents in Russia. Only in one respect do the St. Petersburg Mensheviks come close to Iskra: they urge the workers immediately to elect "representatives in factories, workshops, and departments, just as they did for the Shidlovsky Commission.... When they meet, let our representatives wage a struggle against the State Duma, just as our delegates in the Shidlovsky Commission fought against that cunning trap set by the autocracy." This slogan is very similar to the Iskra slogan calling for "revolutionary self-government", although the comrades of the St. Petersburg group do not, of course, use this inept and high-sounding phrase. We have no doubt but that the St. Petersburg workers will see the erroneousness of this slogan and a false analogy with the Shidlovsky Commission. At that time the workers were boycotting the Commission; now the Duma is boycotting the workers.

While the tsar retains power, revolutionary self-government can be only a fragment of the revolution (the decision of the Smolensk Municipal Council, etc.). Making it the main slogan of the revolutionary proletariat means sowing confusion and playing into the hands of the Osvobozhdeniye people. In developing, extending, strengthening, and spreading the organisation of the revolutionary forces of the proletariat and the peasantry, we must not confuse this organisation of war, this organisation of an uprising, with self-government. In purpose, manner of origin, and character, the organisation of an armed uprising, the organisation of a revolutionary army, is quite unlike the organisation of revolutionary self-government. The more zealously the liberal bourgeoisie, the Osvobozhdeniye gentry, endeavour to curtail, blur, and dock the consistent



revolutionary-democratic slogans, the more clearly and directly must we bring forward such slogans—the convocation of a popular constituent assembly by a provisional revolutionary government, the organisation of an armed uprising, and a revolutionary army for the overthrow of tsarist rule.

Lenin

**Friends Meet**

September 26 (13), 1905.

Collected Works, Volume 9, pages 253-261.

The fundamental error of the new-Iskrists has come to the fore. They have constantly turned a blind eye to the theory of compromise, the political theory underlying the Osvobozhdeniye trend, and the truest and most profound expression of the Russian bourgeoisie's class stand and class interests. They have kept harping on only one aspect of the matter—the conflicts between the bourgeoisie and the autocracy, with complete disregard of the other aspect—the compromise between the bourgeoisie and the autocracy, against the people, the proletariat, and the revolution. And yet it is precisely this second aspect that is coming more and more to the fore acquiring ever greater and more fundamental importance with each advance of the Russian revolution, each month of a situation which is so intolerable to bourgeois adherents of law and order.

Lenin

**From; Revolutionary Office Routine and Revolutionary Action**

November 20, 1905

Collected Works, Volume 10, pages 62-65.

the experience of our revolution, despite the fact that it is only just beginning, has already shown clearly what jugglery may be performed with words and promises in general, and with the constituent assembly slogan in particular. Just call to mind the recent congress of Zemstvo and municipal leaders—the “Cadets”—in Moscow. Recall their famous formula: a State Duma with constituent functions for drawing up a constitution to be approved by the Emperor.... Even the bourgeois-democratic press noted the inherently contradictory nature and absurdity of this formula. To “constitute” a new political order “to be approved” by the head of the old government—what does this mean but legalising two governments, two equal (on paper) supreme authorities—the authority of the people risen in revolt and the authority of the old autocracy. It is obvious that equality between them is a sheer semblance, that in practice the terms of any “compromise” between them depend on which side has the preponderance of force. Thus, in their “ideal” plan of transition from the old Russia to the new, the liberal bourgeois were legitimising the coexistence of two equal, mutually hostile and contending forces, i.e., they were legitimising an eternal and hopeless struggle.

This contradiction cannot be explained by simple formal logic. But it is fully explained by the logic of the class interests of the bourgeoisie. The bourgeoisie is afraid of complete freedom, of full democracy, for it knows that the class-conscious, i.e., socialist, proletariat will use this freedom to fight against the domination of capital. Therefore, what the bourgeoisie really

wants is not complete freedom, not the full sovereignty of the people, but a deal with reaction, with the autocracy. The bourgeoisie wants parliamentarism in order to ensure the domination of capital rather than that of the bureaucracy, and at the same time it wants the monarchy, a standing army, the preservation of certain privileges for the bureaucracy, because it does not want to allow the revolution to reach its final goal, because it does not want to arm the proletariat—"arming" meaning both direct arming with weapons and arming with complete freedom. The contradictory class position of the bourgeoisie between the autocracy and the proletariat inevitably gives rise, irrespectively of the will or consciousness of this or that individual, to senseless and absurd formulas of "compromise. The constituent assembly slogan is turned into an empty phrase the great demand of the proletariat which has risen to win freedom is reduced to a farce—this is the way the bourgeoisie profanes absolutely everything, substituting haggling for struggle.

Lenin

**In the Wake of the Monarchist Bourgeoisie, or In the Van of the Revolutionary Proletariat and Peasantry? -**

September 5 (August 23), 1905.

Lenin Collected Works, Volume 9, pages 212-223.

Social-Democracy's tactics towards the State Duma still heads all the questions of the revolutionary struggle on the agenda of the day. The differences which have arisen between the opportunist (Iskra) and the revolutionary (Proletary) wings of the R.S.D.L.P. on the score of these tactics must be analysed most painstakingly not for the sake of captious polemising (which sometimes degenerates into a squabble), but for the purpose of thoroughly elucidating the question and assisting the comrades on the spot to work out the most exact, definite, and uniform slogans possible.

First of all, a few words on the origin of these differences. Even before the State Duma Act had been promulgated, we set forth in Proletary, No. 12 the fundamentals of our tactics and of our differences with Iskra. We demanded: 1) support for the idea of a boycott, in the sense of increased agitation and an appeal to the people, in the sense of the proletariat's support for the Left wing of bourgeois democracy, and constant exposure of the treachery of its Right wing; 2) an active boycott at all costs, and not "passive abstention", i.e., "increasing agitation tenfold", going so far as "to force our way into election meetings", and, finally, 3) "a clear, precise, and immediate agitational slogan", namely, for an armed uprising, a revolutionary army, and a provisional revolutionary government. We categorically rejected the slogan of Iskra (No. 106) for "organisation of a revolutionary self-government", as confusing and as playing into the hands of the Osvobozhdeniye League, i.e., the monarchist bourgeoisie. At the

same time, anticipating, as it were, that Iskra would once more "beget" more differences we immediately added that we agreed with Iskra's condemnation of the idea of a passive boycott.

So if Iskra, No. 108, now drops sundry hints about a theory of "non-interference", "absenteeism", "abstention", "folded arms", and the like, we must first of all brush aside "objections" of this sort, since this is not polemising, but merely an attempt to "get under the opponent's skin". By such methods of "polemising", culminating in the aspersion that some of the leaders would like to get into a provisional government themselves, the new Iskra has long evoked a very definite attitude towards itself among the widest circles of Social-Democrats.

Thus, the essence of the differences is that Iskra does not accept our slogan of agitation, which we consider the main slogan (for an armed uprising, a revolutionary army, and a provisional revolutionary government). Proletary, on the other hand, considers it absolutely impermissible "to obscure or relegate into the background the slogan of insurrection by bringing forward the slogan of revolutionary self-government" (Proletary, No. 12). All the other points of disagreement are relatively less important. On the contrary, what is especially important is that (as has been the case on more than one occasion) in No. 108 Iskra begins to back out, to twist and turn; to the slogan of revolutionary self-government it adds the slogan of "active militant action by the masses of the people" (wherein this differs from an armed uprising God only knows). Iskra goes even so far as to say that the "organisation of a revolutionary self-government is the only means of really 'organising' an uprising of the whole people". Iskra, No. 108, is dated August 13 (26); and on August 24 (N. S.) the Vienna Arbeiter Zeitung carried an article by Comrade Martov setting forth Iskra's "plan" wholly in the spirit of No. 106, and not in the spirit of the "amendments" in No. 108. We are

giving below a translation of the most important parts of this invaluable article by Comrade Martov, as a specimen of "Social Democratic Manilovism".

Let us try to unravel this tangle.

To make matters clear it is necessary first of all to realise what forces are at present "making history" for the Russian revolution, and just how they are doing it. The autocracy has adopted the theory of "consultation" between the tsar and the people. Desirous of consulting with a police-screened handful of persons elected by the landowners and shop keepers, the autocracy is beginning with desperate ferocity to suppress the revolution. Broader circles of the monarchist bourgeoisie are in favour of the theory of compromise between the tsar and the people (the *Osvobozhdeniye* League, or the Constitutional-"Democratic" Party). By this theory the bourgeoisie is showing its treachery to the revolution, its readiness first to support it and then to unite with the reactionaries against it. The revolutionary proletariat, inasmuch as it is led by Social-Democracy, demands the sovereignty of the people, i.e., the complete destruction of the forces of reaction, and, above all, the actual overthrow of the tsarist government and its replacement by a provisional revolutionary government. The proletariat strives (often without being aware of it, but unswervingly and energetically) to win over the peasantry, and with the latter's assistance to carry forward the revolution to complete victory, despite the bourgeoisie's instability and treachery.

The State Duma is undoubtedly a concession to the revolution, but a concession made (and this is still more indubitable) so as to suppress the revolution and withhold a constitution. The bourgeois "compromisers" want to achieve a constitution so as to suppress the revolution; this desire of the liberal bourgeoisie,

which is an inevitable result of its class position, has been most clearly expressed by Mr. Vinogradov (in *Russkiye Vedomosti*).

The question now arises: under such circumstances, what is the significance of the decision to boycott the Duma, passed by the Union of Unions (see *Proletary*, No. 14), i.e., by the most comprehensive organisation of the bourgeois intelligentsia? By and large, the bourgeois intelligentsia also wants “a compromise”. That is why, as *Proletary* has repeatedly pointed out, it too vacillates between reaction and revolution, between haggling and fighting, between a deal with the tsar and an uprising against him. Nor can it be otherwise, in view of the class position of the bourgeois intelligentsia. However, it would be a mistake to forget that this intelligentsia is more capable of expressing the essential interests of the bourgeois class as a whole, in their broadest implications, as distinct from the temporary and narrow interests of the bourgeoisie’s “upper crust”. The intelligentsia is more capable of expressing the interests of the masses of the petty bourgeoisie and the peasantry. With all its vacillations, it is therefore more capable of waging a revolutionary struggle against the autocracy, and, provided it draws closer to the people, it could become an important force in this struggle. Powerless by itself, it could nevertheless give quite considerable sections of the petty bourgeoisie and the peasantry just what they lack— knowledge, programme, guidance, and organisation.

Thus, the essence of the “boycott” idea, as it first arose in the Union of Unions, is that the big bourgeoisie’s first step towards consultation, towards compromise with the tsar has inevitably led to the petty-bourgeois intelligentsia’s first step towards drawing close to the revolutionary people. The landlords and capitalists have swung to the right, while the bourgeois intelligentsia, representing the petty bourgeoisie, has swung to



the left. The former are going to the tsar, although they have by no means given up their intention of threatening him again and again with the might of the people. The bourgeois intelligentsia is considering whether it should not rather go to the people, without as yet finally breaking with the theory of "compromise", and without fully taking the revolutionary path.

Such is the essence of the boycott idea, which, as we have pointed out in *Proletary*, No. 12, arose among the bourgeois democrats. Only very short-sighted and superficial people could discern in this idea non-interference, absenteeism, abstention, and so on. The bourgeois intelligentsia need not abstain, since the high property qualification actually keeps it out of the State Duma. In its resolution on the boycott the bourgeois intelligentsia makes "the mobilisation of all the democratic elements of the country" its most important point. The bourgeois intelligentsia is the most active, resolute, and militant element of the *Osvobozhdeniye* League, the Constitutional-"Democratic" Party. To accuse this intelligentsia of abstention, etc., because of its boycott idea, or even to refuse to support its idea and to develop it means to display short-sightedness and thus play into the hands of the monarchist big bourgeoisie, whose organ, *Osvobozhdeniye*, has good reason to combat the idea of a boycott.

Besides the general and basic considerations, the correctness of the view just outlined is supported by the valuable admissions of Mr. S.S. in *Osvobozhdeniye*, No. 75. It is highly significant that Mr. S.S. describes advocates of the boycott idea as the "radical" group, and opponents of that idea as the "moderate" group. He accuses the former of a "Narodnaya Volya attitude", of repeating the mistakes of the "active revolutionary groups" (an accusation doing honour to those it is levelled against by *Osvobozhdeniye*); about the latter he states flatly that they stand "between two fires", between the autocracy and the "social [sic!] revolution",

poor Mr. S.S. being so terrified that he has very nearly mistaken the democratic republic for a social revolution! But the most valuable admission by Mr. S. S. is the following: for the radicals — he says, comparing the Congress of the Union of Unions with the Zemstvo Congress — “everything undoubtedly centred [mark this!] around the demand to amend the electoral system, whereas for the more moderate group the main interest lay in extending the rights of the Duma”.

This sums up matters in a nutshell! Mr. S. S. has blurted out the innermost “thoughts” of the landlords and capitalists, which we have laid bare hundreds of times. Their “main interest” lies not in getting the people to take part in the elections (they are afraid of that), but in extending the rights of the Duma, i.e., in converting the assembly of the big bourgeoisie from a consultative into a legislative body. That is the crux of the matter. The big bourgeoisie will never be satisfied with a “consultative” Duma. Hence, the inevitability of constitutional conflicts in the State Duma. But the big bourgeoisie can never become a true and dependable supporter of people’s sovereignty. It will always be taking the constitution (for itself) with one hand, and taking away the rights of the people, or opposing the extension of popular rights, with the other. The big bourgeoisie cannot but strive for a constitution that secures privileges for the big bourgeoisie. The radical intelligentsia cannot but strive to express the interests of the broader strata of the petty bourgeoisie and the peasantry. Once it got the bird in the hand the Right wing of bourgeois democracy immediately began to see reason, and, as we have seen, is already renouncing “illegal” congresses. The Left wing saw itself without even a bird in the hand; it saw that the landlords and capitalists, having taken advantage of the services of the “third element” (agitation, propaganda, organisation of the press, etc.), are now prepared to betray it, directing their efforts in the State Duma not towards securing the

people's rights but towards securing their own rights, which militate against those of the people. And now sensing incipient treachery the bourgeois intelligentsia brands the State Duma as an "audacious challenge" made by the government to all the peoples of Russia, declares a boycott, and counsels "the mobilisation of the democratic elements".

**Under such conditions** the Social-Democrats would be playing the part of political simpletons if they were to attack the idea of a boycott. The revolutionary proletariat's unerring class instinct has prompted most of the comrades in Russia to adopt the idea of an active boycott. This means supporting the Left wing and drawing it closer to us, means endeavouring to single out the elements of revolutionary democracy, so as to strike at the autocracy together with them. The radical intelligentsia has held out a finger to us—we must catch it by the hand! If the boycott is not mere bragging, if mobilisation is more than a word, if indignation at the audacious challenge is not just mummery, then you must break with the "compromisers", come over to the theory of the sovereignty of the people, and adopt, adopt in deed, the only consistent and integral slogans of revolutionary democracy—an armed uprising, a revolutionary army, and a provisional revolutionary government. To make all those who indeed accept these slogans join us, and to pillory all who remain on the side of the "compromisers — such is the only correct tactics of the revolutionary proletariat.

Our new-Iskrists have failed to see both the class origin and the real political significance of the boycott idea and have opened fire ... into the air. Comrade Cherevanin writes in No. 108: "As is evident from the bulletins of the Don Committee and the St. Petersburg group, both these organisations [N. B.: Menshevik organisations. Note by the Proletary Editorial Board I have declared for the boycott. They consider participation in elections

to such a Duma a disgrace, treason to the cause of the revolution, and they condemn in advance those liberals who will take part in the elections. Thus, the very possibility of making the State Duma a weapon of the democratic revolution is precluded, and agitation directed towards that end is evidently rejected." The words we have italicised reveal the mistake indicated just now. Those who rant against "non-intervention" are only obscuring the really important question of the methods of intervention. There are two methods of intervention, two types of slogans. The first method is: "increasing agitation tenfold, organising meetings everywhere, taking advantage of election meetings, even if we have to force our way into them, holding demonstrations, political strikes, and so on and so forth". (Proletary, No. 12.) We have already explained the slogans of this campaign of agitation. The other method is: to demand "a revolutionary pledge to enter the State Duma for the purpose of bringing about its transformation into a revolutionary assembly which will depose the autocracy and convene a constituent assembly" (Comrade Cherevanin in Iskra, No. 108), or "to bring pressure to bear on the electors so that only resolute advocates of democratic and free representation should be elected to the Duma" (Comrade Martov in the Vienna Arbeiter Zeitung).

It is just this difference in methods that reflects the difference in the "two tactics" of Social-Democracy. The opportunist wing of Social-Democracy is always inclined to "bring pressure to bear" on bourgeois democracy by demanding pledges from it. The revolutionary wing of Social-Democracy "brings pressure to bear" on bourgeois democracy and impels it to the left by condemning it for its shifts to the right, by spreading among the masses the slogan of a determined revolution. The theory of "demanding pledges", this famous Starover litmus-test theory, is sheer naïveté and can only serve to sow confusion among the proletariat and corrupt it. Whom will Comrade Cherevanin hold

responsible for the carrying out of the "pledges" he has received? Perhaps God Almighty? Can it be that Comrade Cherevanin does not know that under the pressure of material class interests all pledges will go by the board? Is it not childishness on the part of the selfsame Comrade Cherevanin to think that the bourgeois deputies to the State Duma can be bound to the revolutionary proletariat by means of "binding instructions"? And if Comrade Martov were to begin actually to carry out his plan he would have to announce to the working class that certain members of the given assembly of landlords are "resolute advocates of free and democratic representation!" To make such announcements would mean sowing the greatest political corruption!

And now note another thing: all these "revolutionary pledges" on the part of the Petrunkeviches, Rodichevs, and tutti quanti, all these "binding instructions", all these pledges "resolutely to support democratic and free representation" (could anyone have picked a more general, vague, and nebulous phrase?) would be demanded and given in the name of Social-Democracy and behind the proletariat's back. After all, this cannot be done openly, for even in free countries, where agitation is carried on openly, political figures are bound not so much by private deals as by party programmes; in our case we do not and shall not have definite and established parties at the elections to the State Duma! Just see, comrades of the new Iskra, what a mess you have again managed to get into: you keep repeating "the masses", "to the masses", "with the masses", "the initiative of the masses", but in fact your "plan" boils down to secret deals obliging Mr. Petrunkevich to be not a traitor to the revolution but its "resolute" advocate!

The new-Iskrists have themselves reduced their position to absurdity. No one, anywhere in Russia, even among their followers, would dream of concluding deals on the basis of those

absurd “revolutionary pledges”. No. This is not the way to intervene. You must intervene by ruthlessly branding the theory of compromise and the bourgeois compromisers, all those Petrunkeviches, etc. Expose their bourgeois betrayal of the revolution and unite the revolutionary forces for an uprising against the autocracy (and, to be on the safe side, against the Duma as well)—that is the only reliable method of really “bringing pressure to bear” on the Duma, of really paving the way for the victory of the revolution. It is only with such a slogan that we should intervene in the election campaign, not for electioneering purposes, deals, or pledges, but in order to preach insurrection. And it is only the real strength of the armed people that will enable us to take advantage of possible and probable future conflicts within the State Duma, or between the State Duma and the tsar, in the interests of the revolution (and not of a strictly bourgeois constitution). Less confidence in the State Duma, gentlemen, and more confidence in the forces of the proletariat which is now arming itself!

We have now come to the slogan of the organisation of revolutionary self-government bodies. Let us examine it more closely.

In the first place it is wrong from a purely theoretical standpoint to give pre-eminence to the slogan of revolutionary self-government instead of the slogan of the people’s sovereignty. The former bears on the administration, the second on the organisation of the state. The former is, therefore, compatible with the treacherous bourgeois theory of “compromise” (a self-governing people headed by the tsar, “who reigns but does not govern”); the latter is wholly incompatible with it. The first is acceptable to the Osvobozhdeniye League, the second is not.

In the second place, it is utterly absurd to identify the organisation of revolutionary self-government with the

organisation of a people's uprising. An uprising is civil war, and war requires an army, whereas self-government does not in itself require an army. There are countries with a system of self-government, but without an army. And revolutionary self-government does not require a revolutionary army where a revolution takes place in the Norwegian fashion: the king was "sacked" and a plebiscite held. But when the people are oppressed by a despotic government which relies on an army and starts civil war, then to identify revolutionary self-government with a revolutionary army, to advocate the former and to maintain silence about the latter, is almost indecent and signifies either betrayal of the revolution or the utmost stupidity.

Thirdly, history also confirms the- truth (incidentally, a self-evident truth) that only the complete and decisive victory of an uprising can make it fully possible to establish genuine self-government. Would the municipal revolution in France in July 1789 have been possible if on July 14 the people of Paris, who had risen in arms, had not defeated the royal troops, taken the Bastille, and completely smashed the resistance of the autocracy? Or will the new Iskrist, perhaps, cite in this connection the example of the city of Montpellier, where the municipal revolution, the establishment of revolutionary local self-government took place peacefully, and a vote of thanks to the intendant was even passed for the kindness with which he had assisted in his own deposition? Does the new Iskra perhaps expect that during our Duma election campaign we shall thank the governors for having eliminated themselves before the capture of the Russian Bastilles? Is it not significant that in the France of 1789 the period of the municipal revolution took place when the emigration of reactionaries was under way, while in our country the slogan of revolutionary self-government instead of the slogan of an uprising is being advanced at a time when the emigration of revolutionaries is still going on? When a certain

Russian high official was asked why an amnesty was not granted on August 6 he replied: "Why should we set free 10,000 people whom it took us considerable trouble to arrest and who tomorrow would start a desperate struggle against us?" This dignitary reasoned intelligently, whereas those who speak about "revolutionary self—government" before the release of these 10,000 reason unintelligently.

Fourthly, present-day Russian life plainly shows the inadequacy of the slogan of "revolutionary self-government" and the need for a direct and definite slogan of insurrection. Consider what took place in Smolensk on August 2 (Old Style). The Municipal Council declared the billeting of the Cossacks contrary to law, stopped all payments to them, organised a city militia to protect the population, and appealed to the soldiers to refrain from violence against citizens. We should like to know whether our good new Iskristis find this adequate. Should not this militia be regarded as a revolutionary army, as an organ of attack as well as of defence?—and of attack not only against the Smolensk Cossack detachment, but against the autocratic government in general? Should not this idea of proclaiming a revolutionary army and its tasks be popularised? Can the administration of the city of Smolensk by genuine government of the people be considered secure until a revolutionary army has won a decisive victory over the tsarist army?

Fifthly, the facts prove incontrovertibly that the slogan of revolutionary self-government instead of the slogan of insurrection, or as implying (?) the slogan of insurrection, is not only "acceptable" to the Osvobozhdeniye League but has actually been accepted by it. Take Osvobozhdeniye, No. 74. You will find there a sweeping condemnation of the "senseless and criminal advocacy of insurrection" and at the same time a plea for city militias and the establishment of local self-government



bodies as elements of a future provisional government (cf. *Proletary*, No. 12).

No matter how one approaches the question, it will invariably turn out that the new slogan of the new *Iskra* is an *Osvobozhdeniye* slogan. The Social-Democrats who either relegate to the background or reject a slogan calling for an armed uprising, a revolutionary army, and a provisional government in favour of one demanding the organisation of revolutionary self-government are trailing along in the wake of the monarchist bourgeoisie, instead of marching in the van of the revolutionary proletariat and peasantry.

We are accused of stubbornly “hammering away” at the same slogans. We think such an accusation a compliment. For it is plainly our task to hammer away persistently at vital political slogans, while spreading the general truths of the Social-Democratic programme. We succeeded in giving the widest publicity to the “quartet” formula so repugnant to the liberals (universal and equal suffrage, direct elections and a secret ballot). We acquainted the masses of the working people with the “sextet” of political liberties (freedom of speech, conscience, the press, assembly, association, and the right to strike). We must now repeat millions and billions of times the “trio” of immediate revolutionary tasks (an armed uprising, a revolutionary army, and a provisional revolutionary government). The popular forces which will accomplish these tasks are shooting up spontaneously, not only with every day but with every hour that passes. Attempted uprisings are becoming more frequent, their organisation is growing, and arming is proceeding apace. From the ranks of the workers and peasants clad in rustic coats, city suits, and uniforms nameless heroes are emerging, people fused with the mass and ever more deeply imbued with a noble obsession to liberate the people. It is our business to see to it that

all these rivulets merge into a mighty torrent, that the light of a class-conscious, direct, clear, and precise revolutionary programme of our immediate tasks be thrown on the spontaneous movement, multiplying its strength tenfold.

To sum up. Our tactics with regard to the State Duma may be formulated in five points: 1) intensified agitation in connection with the State Duma Act and the elections to the Duma, the organisation of meetings, utilisation of the election campaign, demonstrations, etc., etc.; 2) the centring of this entire agitational campaign on slogans calling for an insurrection, a revolutionary army, and a provisional revolutionary government; popularisation of the programme of this provisional government; 3) gaining the adherence for the promotion of this agitation and of the armed struggle of all revolutionary democratic elements, and of such elements only, i.e., only those who accept the above-mentioned slogans in deed; 4) support of the boycott idea, which arose among the Left-wing bourgeois democrats, with the purpose of making it an active boycott in the sense of the most wide spread agitation as described above; winning over the Left-wing representatives of bourgeois democracy to the revolutionary-democratic programme and to activities which will draw them closer to the petty bourgeoisie and the peasantry; 5) ruthless exposure of the bourgeois theory of "compromise" and the bourgeois "compromisers", and their denunciation to the broadest masses of workers and peasants; making public and explaining every treacherous and irresolute step they take, both before and after they enter the Duma; warning the working class against these bourgeois betrayers of the revolution.

Lenin

Two Tactics: What Do the Bourgeois Liberal

**Realists Praise the Social-Democratic "Realists" For? – 1905**

Collected Works, Volume 9, pp. 15-140.

The articles entitled "The Split in Russian Social-Democracy" and "The Triumph of Common Sense" (Osvobozhdeniye, No. 72) set forth the opinion on Social-Democracy held by the representatives of the liberal bourgeoisie, an opinion which is of remarkable value for class-conscious proletarians. We cannot too strongly recommend every Social-Democrat to read these articles in full and to ponder over every sentence in them. We shall reproduce first of all the most important propositions contained in both these articles.

"It is fairly difficult," writes the Osvobozbdeniye, "for an outside observer to grasp the real political meaning of the disagreements that have split the Social-Democratic Party into two factions. A definition of the 'Majority' faction as the more radical and unswerving, as distinct from the 'Minority' which allows of certain compromises in the interests of the cause would not be quite exact, and in any case would not provide an exhaustive characterisation. At any rate the traditional dogmas of Marxian orthodoxy are observed by the Minority faction with even greater zeal perhaps than by the Lenin faction. The following characterisation would appear to us to be more accurate. The fundamental political temper of the 'Majority' is abstract revolutionism, rebellion for the sake of rebellion, an eagerness to stir up insurrection among the popular masses by any and every means and to seize power immediately in their name; to a certain extent this brings the 'Leninists' close to the Socialist-Revolutionaries and overshadows in their minds the idea of the class struggle with the idea of a Russian revolution involving the

whole people; while abjuring in practice much of the narrow-mindedness of the Social-Democratic doctrine, the 'Leninists' are, on the other hand, thoroughly imbued with the narrow-mindedness of revolutionism, renounce all practical work except the preparation of an immediate insurrection, ignore on principle all forms of legal and semi-legal agitation and every species of practically useful compromise with other oppositional trends. The Minority, on the contrary, while steadfastly adhering to the doctrine of Marxism, at the same time preserves the realistic elements of the Marxian world outlook. The fundamental idea of this faction is to oppose the interests of the 'proletariat' to the interests of the bourgeoisie. But, on the other hand, the struggle of the proletariat is conceived—of course within certain bounds dictated by the immutable dogmas of Social-Democracy—in realistically sober fashion, with a clear realisation of all the concrete conditions and aims of this struggle. Neither of the two factions pursues its basic point of view quite consistently, for in their ideological and political activity they are bound by the strict formulae of the Social Democratic catechism, which keep the 'Leninists' from becoming unswerving rebels, after the fashion of some, at least, of the Socialist-Revolutionaries, and the 'Iskra-ists' from becoming the practical leaders of the real political movement of the working class."

And, after quoting the contents of the most important resolutions, the *Osvobozhdeniye* writer goes on to illustrate his general "thoughts," with several concrete remarks about them. In comparison with the Third Congress, he says, "the Minority Conference takes a totally different attitude towards armed insurrection." "In connection with the attitude towards armed insurrection," there is a difference in the respective resolutions on a provisional government. "A similar difference is revealed in relation to the workers' trade unions. The 'Leninists' do not say a single word in their resolution about this most important

starting point in the political education and organisation of the working class. The Minority, on the other hand, drew up a very weighty resolution." With regard to the liberals, both factions, he says, are unanimous, but the Third Congress "repeats almost word for word Plekhanov's resolution on the attitude towards the liberals adopted at the Second Congress and rejects Starover's resolution adopted by the same Congress, which was more favourably inclined towards the liberals." Although the Congress and the Conference resolutions on the peasant movement coincide on the whole, "the 'Majority' lays more emphasis on the idea of the revolutionary confiscation of the landlords' estates and other land, while the 'Minority' wants to make the demand for democratic state and administrative reforms the basis of its agitation."

Finally, the *Osvobozhdeniye* cites from the *Iskra*, No. 100, a Menshevik resolution, the main clause of which reads as follows: "In view of the fact that at the present time underground work alone does not secure adequate participation of the masses in Party life and in some degree leads to the masses as such being contrasted to the Party as an illegal organisation, the latter must assume leadership of the trade union struggle of the workers on a legal basis, strictly linking up this struggle with the Social-Democratic tasks." Commenting on this resolution the *Osvobozhdeniye* exclaims: "We heartily welcome this resolution as a triumph of common sense, as evidence that a definite section of the Social-Democratic Party is beginning to see the light with regard to tactics."

The reader now has before him all the essential opinions of the *Osvobozhdeniye*. It would, of course, be the greatest mistake to regard these opinions as correct in the sense that they correspond to objective truth. Every Social-Democrat will easily detect mistakes in them at every step. It would be naïve to forget that

these opinions are thoroughly permeated with the interests and the points of view of the liberal bourgeoisie, and that accordingly they are utterly biased and tendentious. They reflect the views of the Social-Democrats in the same way as objects are reflected in a concave or convex mirror. But it would be an even greater mistake to forget that in the final analysis these bourgeois-distorted opinions reflect the real interests of the bourgeoisie, which, as a class, undoubtedly understands correctly which trends in Social-Democracy are advantageous, close, akin and agreeable, and which trends are harmful, distant, alien and antipathetic to it. A bourgeois philosopher or a bourgeois publicist can never understand Social-Democracy properly, neither Menshevik nor Bolshevik Social-Democracy. But if he is at all a sensible publicist, his class instinct will not deceive him, and he will always grasp the significance for the bourgeoisie of one or another trend in the Social-Democratic movement, on the whole correctly, although he may present it in a distorted way. That is why the class instinct of our enemy, his class opinion, is always deserving of the most serious attention of every class-conscious proletarian. What, then, does the class instinct of the Russian bourgeoisie, as expressed by the *Osvobozhdentsi*, tell us?

It quite definitely expresses its satisfaction with the trend represented by the new *Iskra*, praises it for its realism, sober-mindedness, the triumph of common sense, the seriousness of its resolutions, it's beginning to see the light on questions of tactics, its practicalness, etc.—and it expresses dissatisfaction with the trend of the Third Congress, censures it for its narrow-mindedness, revolutionism, its rebel spirit, its repudiation of practically useful compromises, etc. The class instinct of the bourgeoisie suggests to it exactly what has been repeatedly proved with the help of most precise facts in our literature, namely, that the new-*Iskraists* are the opportunist and their

opponents the revolutionary wing of the present-day Russian Social-Democratic movement. The liberals cannot but sympathise with the trend of the former and cannot but censure the trend of the latter. The liberals, being the ideologists of the bourgeoisie, perfectly well understand the advantages to the bourgeoisie of "practicalness, sober-mindedness and seriousness" on the part of the working class, i.e., of actually restricting its field of activity within the boundaries of capitalism, reforms, the trade union struggle, etc. Dangerous and terrible to the bourgeoisie is the "revolutionary narrow-mindedness" of the proletariat and its endeavour in order to promote its own class aims to win the leadership in a popular Russian revolution.

That this is the real meaning of the word "realism" as employed by the Osvobozhdeniye is evident among other things from the way it was used previously by the Osvobozhdeniye and Mr. Struve. The Iskra itself could not but admit that this was the meaning of the Osvobozhdeniye's "realism." Take, for instance, the article entitled "It Is High Time!" in the supplement to the Iskra, No. 73-74. The author of this article (a consistent exponent of the views of the "Marsh" at the Second Congress of the Russian Social-Democratic Labour Party) frankly expressed the opinion that "at the Congress Akimov played the part of the ghost of opportunism rather than of its real representative." And the editors of the Iskra were forthwith obliged to correct the author of the article "It Is High Time!" by stating in a note:

"We cannot agree with this opinion. Comrade Akimov's views on the programme bear the clear imprint of opportunism, which fact is admitted even by the Osvobozhdeniye critic, who—in one of its recent issues—stated that Comrade Akimov is an adherent of the 'realist' — read: revisionist—tendency."

Thus the Iskra itself is perfectly aware that the Osvobozhdeniye's "realism" is simply opportunism and nothing else. If in attacking

“liberal realism” (Iskra, No. 102) the Iskra now says nothing about how it was praised by the liberals for its realism, the explanation of this circumstance is that such praise is harder to swallow than any censure. Such praise (which the Osvobozhdeniye uttered not by mere chance and not for the first time) actually proves the affinity between liberal realism and those tendencies of Social-Democratic “realism” (read: opportunism) that run through every resolution of the new-Iskraists as a result of the mistaken character of their whole tactical line.

Indeed, the Russian bourgeoisie has already fully revealed its inconsistency and egoism in the “popular” revolution—has revealed it in Mr. Struve’s arguments, by the whole tone and content of the numerous liberal newspapers, and by the nature of the political utterances of the bulk of the Zemstvo-ists, the bulk of the intellectuals and in general of all the adherents of Messrs. Trubetskoy, Petrunkevich, Rodichev and Co. of course, the bourgeoisie does not always clearly understand, but in general and on the whole, its class instinct enables it to grasp perfectly well that, on the one hand, the proletariat and the “people” are useful for its revolution as cannon fodder, as a battering-ram against the autocracy, but that, on the other hand, the proletariat and the revolutionary peasantry will be terribly dangerous to it if they win a “decisive victory over tsarism” and carry the democratic revolution to completion. That is why the bourgeoisie strains every effort to induce the proletariat to be content with a “modest” role in the revolution, to be more sober-minded, practical and realistic, to be guided in its activities by the principle, “lest the bourgeoisie recoil.”

The bourgeois intellectuals know full well that they will not be able to get rid of the working-class movement. That is why they do not come out against the working-class movement, they do



not come out against the class struggle of the proletariat—no, they even pay lip service to the right to strike, to a genteel class struggle, understanding the working-class movement and the class struggle in the Brentano or Hirsch-Duncker sense. In other words they are fully prepared to “yield” to the workers the right to strike and to organise in trade unions (which in fact has already been almost won by the workers themselves), provided the workers renounce their “rebelliousness,” their “narrow-minded revolutionism,” their hostility to “practically-useful compromises,” their claims and aspirations to put on the “popular Russian revolution,” the imprint of their class struggle, the imprint of proletarian consistency, proletarian determination and “plebeian Jacobinism.” That is why the bourgeois intellectuals all over Russia exert every effort, resort to thousands of ways and means—books, lectures, speeches, talks, etc., etc.—to imbue the workers with the ideas of (bourgeois) sober-mindedness, (liberal) practicalness, (opportunist) realism, (Brentano) class struggle, (Hirsch-Duncker) trade unions, etc. The latter two slogans are particularly convenient for the bourgeois of the “constitutional-democratic” party, or the party of “liberation,” since outwardly they coincide with the Marxian slogans, since with a few small omissions and some slight distortions they can easily be confused with and sometimes even passed off as Social-Democratic slogans. For instance, the legal liberal newspaper *Rassvyet* (which we will try some day to discuss in greater detail with the readers of the *Proletary*) frequently says such “bold” things about the class struggle, about the possible deception of the proletariat by the bourgeoisie, about the working-class movement, about the initiative of the proletariat, etc., etc., that the inattentive reader or an unenlightened worker might easily be led to believe that its “social-democratism” is genuine. Actually, however, it is a

bourgeois imitation of social-democratism, an opportunist distortion and perversion of the concept class struggle.

At the bottom of the whole of this gigantic (in breadth of influence on the masses) bourgeois subterfuge lies the tendency to reduce the working-class movement mainly to a trade union movement, to keep it as far away as possible from an independent (i.e., revolutionary and directed towards a democratic dictatorship) policy, to “overshadow in the minds of the workers the idea of a Russian revolution involving the whole people with the idea of the class struggle.”

As the reader will perceive, we have turned the Osvobozhdeniye formulation upside down. This is an excellent formulation that excellently expresses the two views of the role of the proletariat in a democratic revolution: the bourgeois view and the Social-Democratic view. The bourgeoisie wants to confine the proletariat to the trade union movement and thereby to “overshadow in its mind the idea of a Russian revolution involving the whole people with the idea of the (Brentano) class struggle”—which is wholly in the spirit of the Bernsteinian authors of the Credo, who overshadowed in the minds of the workers the idea of political struggle with the idea of a “purely working-class” movement. Social-Democracy, however, wants, on the contrary, to develop the class struggle of the proletariat to the point where the latter will take the leading part in the popular Russian revolution, i.e., will lead this revolution to a the democratic-dictatorship of the proletariat and the peasantry.

The revolution in our country is one that involves the whole people, says the bourgeoisie to the proletariat. Therefore, you, as a separate class, must confine yourselves to your class struggle, must in the name of “common sense” devote your attention mainly to the trade unions, and their legalisation, must consider these trade unions as “the most important starting point in your

political education and organisation," must in a revolutionary situation draw up for the most part "serious" resolutions like the new Iskra resolution, must pay careful heed to resolutions that are "more favourably inclined towards the liberals," must show preference for leaders who display a tendency to become "practical leaders of the real political movement of the working class," must "preserve the realistic elements of the Marxian world outlook" (if you have unfortunately already become infected with the "strict formulae" of this "unscientific" catechism).

The revolution in our country is one involving the whole people, Social-Democracy says to the proletariat. Therefore, you, as the most progressive and the only thoroughly revolutionary class, must strive not only to take the most active part, but also the leading, part in it. Therefore, you must not confine yourselves to narrowly conceived limits of the class struggle, meaning mainly the trade union movement, but, on the contrary, you must strive to widen the limits and the content of your class struggle to include not only all the aims of the present, democratic, Russian revolution of the whole of the people, but the aims of the subsequent socialist revolution as well. Therefore, while not ignoring the trade union movement, while not refusing to take advantage of even the slightest legal possibilities, you must, in a revolutionary period, put in the forefront the tasks of armed insurrection and the formation of a revolutionary army and a revolutionary government as being the only way to the complete victory of the people over tsarism, to the winning of a democratic republic and real political liberty.

It would be superfluous to speak about the half-hearted and inconsistent stand, which, naturally, is so pleasing to the bourgeoisie, that the new Iskra resolutions took on this question because of their mistaken "line."

Lenin

### **The Landlords on the Boycott of the Duma**

October 10 (September 27), 1905

Collected Works, Volume 9, pages 323-326.

The abridged minutes of the July Zemstvo Congress have been published in No. 76 of *Osvobozhdeniye*. At present, when the question of the tactics towards the State Duma is in the limelight, this material is most noteworthy, for it is unique in showing just how the Zemstvo and *Osvobozhdeniye* people discussed the boycott issue. Certainly no one doubts that prior to the conclusion of peace—the appearance of the Duma Act—they were, or tried to appear, more revolutionary than they are at present. Nevertheless, the nature of their arguments is most useful for a verification of our own appraisal of the issue. After all, this is probably the first case in Russian political history of concrete political steps being discussed simultaneously by both opposition and revolutionary parties.

It is quite natural that the bourgeois democrats were impelled to raise the boycott issue not by the general programme of their struggle or by the interests, of definite classes, but primarily by a vague feeling of embarrassment, of shame at the contradictory and false position they have placed themselves in. “How can we take part in something we have ourselves condemned?” Mr. Shishkov asked. “Why, the people will think that we endorse the scheme.” As you see, this liberal’s very first thought of the boycott is linked with the question of the people—he feels instinctively that to go into the Duma means wronging the people. He cannot get rid of gleams of good intentions to march with the people. Mr. Rayevsky, another speaker, puts the question on a more abstract plane: “We have always been steadfast in principle, but in tactics we are entering into a

compromise. It will turn out that we condemned the Bulygin scheme and yet are bent on becoming representatives of the people. We shall not tread this slippery path." This, of course, is a slight exaggeration on the part of Mr. Rayevsky, for the Osvobozhdeniye League has never been steadfast in principle. **It is also incorrect to reduce the question to a bare repudiation of compromise:** revolutionary Social-Democrats who have absorbed the spirit of **Marxism would have told this speaker that it is ridiculous to absolutely reject compromises that are imposed by life itself, and that this is not the point at issue;** what matters is a clear understanding and persistent pursuit of the aims of the struggle under all circumstances. However, we repeat, any materialistic presentation of the problem is basically alien to a bourgeois democrat. His doubts are merely a symptom of the deep split within the various strata of bourgeois democracy.

Mr. Rodichev, the phrase-monger who spoke after Mr. Rayevsky, settled the question very simply: "At one time we protested against the new Zemstvo regulations, yet we entered the Zemstvos.... If we had the forces with which to effect a boycott, we should declare one" (and is not this "lack of forces", gentlemen, due to the fact that the interests of the property-owners are hostile to an unyielding struggle against the autocracy, and hostile to the workers and peasants?).... "The first rule of military art is to get away in time..." (believe it or not, that is what this knight of liberalism from Tver actually said! And yet the liberals jeer at Kuropatkin). "There will be a boycott if we, after entering the Duma, make the following our first decision: 'We are leaving. This is not a genuine representation, which you can no longer do without. Give us a real representation!'" That would be a real "boycott". (Why, of course! To say "give us" !— could anything be more "real" for a Zemstvo Balalaikin? No wonder they laughed so heartily when Mr. Golovin told them

how “easily he had dispelled” the Governor of Moscow’s apprehensions lest the Zemstvo Congress declare itself a constituent assembly.)

Mr. Kolyubakin said: “The preceding speakers put the question as follows: ‘Either go into the Bulygin Duma or do nothing at all’” (Iskra puts the question exactly like these ‘preceding speakers’ of the monarchist bourgeoisie’s right wing). “We must appeal to the people, who will be unanimously opposed to the Bulygin Duma.... Appeal to the people, exercise freedom of speech and of assembly in actual practice. But by entering a disreputable institution you are disgracing yourselves. You will be in the minority there, and this minority will disgrace itself in the eyes of the population.” In this speech one again senses the link between the boycott idea and an appeal to the peasantry, the significance of that idea as a turn away from the tsar and towards the people. And with admirable candour, Mr. Shchepkin hastened to rejoin to Mr. Kolyubakin’s speech, which he so thoroughly understood: “Never mind if we make a mistake in the eyes of the people, if only we save the cause” (... the cause of the bourgeoisie, would probably have been the workers’ interjection had they been present at this illustrious gathering). “I do not dispute that we may soon have to tread the revolutionary path. But the draft drawn up by the Bureau” (the draft resolution against a boycott) “seeks to avoid this, since we are not revolutionary either by upbringing or by inclination” (class upbringing, class inclination).

Mr. Shchepkin argues wisely! Better than the whole new-Iskra lot taken together, he understands that the crux of the matter is not the choice of ways and means, but the disparity of aims. It is necessary to “save the cause” of law and order—that is what really matters. The revolutionary path, which may lead to the victory of the workers and peasants, cannot be risked.

On the other hand, that magniloquent windbag Mr. de Roberti talks exactly like a new-Iskra adherent: "What is to be done if, owing to its inefficacy, the draft becomes law? An armed uprising?" (Come, come, Mr. Roberti, how can one "link up an uprising with the Duma!"? What a pity you are not acquainted with our Bund, which would have explained to you that the two cannot be linked together.) "That, I believe, will undoubtedly come in due time. But at present, resistance can either be merely passive, or passive while always ready to become active." (Oh, what a charming radical! He ought to borrow the slogan "revolutionary self-government" from the new Iskra—what arias he could render on this theme, what arias!...)... "to elect only those who would enter with the determination to effect a revolution at all costs". That's the kind of people we are! Well, were we wrong when we said that Parvus met a friend in such an Osvobozhdeniye man, or that the new Iskra had risen to the bait of the high-flown phrases of the magniloquent landed proprietors?

Lenin

**The Victory of the Cadets and the Tasks of the Workers' Party**

March 24-28 (April 6-10), 1906

Collected Works, Volume 10, pages 199-276.

Digression

A Popular Talk With Cadet Publicists and Learned Professors

But what was the real reason that induced Mr. Blank to come to the monstrously wrong conclusion that all Marxist principles and ideas vanished in the period of the "whirl wind"? It is very interesting to examine this circumstance; it still further exposes the real nature of philistinism in politics.

What is it that mainly distinguished the period of the revolutionary whirlwind" from the present "Cadet" period, as regards the various, forms of political activity and the various methods by which the people make history? First and mainly, it is that during the period of the "whirlwind" certain special methods of making history were employed which are foreign to other periods of political life. The following were the most important of these methods: (1) the seizure" by the people of political liberty—its exercise without any rights and laws, and without any limitations (freedom of assembly, even if only in the universities, freedom of the press, freedom of association, the holding of congresses, etc.); (2) the creation of new organs of revolutionary authority— Soviets of Workers', Soldiers', Railwaymen's and Peasants' Deputies, new rural and urban authorities, and so on, and so forth. These bodies were set up exclusively by the revolutionary sections of the people; they were formed irrespective of all laws and regulations, entirely in a revolutionary way, as a product of the native genius of the people, as a manifestation of the independent activity of the



people which had rid itself, or was ridding itself, of its old police fetters. Lastly, they were indeed organs of authority, for all their rudimentary, spontaneous, amorphous and diffuse character, in composition and in activity. They acted as a government when, for example, they seized printing plants (in St. Petersburg) and arrested police officials who were preventing the revolutionary people from exercising their rights (such cases also occurred in St. Petersburg, where the new organ of authority concerned was weakest, and where the old government was strongest). They acted as a government when they appealed to the whole people to withhold money from the old government. They confiscated the old government's funds (the railway strike committees in the South) and used them for the needs of the new, people's government. Yes, these were undoubtedly the embryos of a new, people's, or, if you will, revolutionary government. In their social and political character, they were the rudiments of the dictatorship of the revolutionary elements of the people. This surprises you, Mr. Blank and Mr. Kiesewetter! You do not see here the "reinforced security", which for the bourgeois is tantamount to dictatorship? We have already told you that you have not the faintest notion of the scientific concept "dictatorship". We will explain it to you in a moment; but first we will deal with the third "method" of activity in the period of the "revolutionary whirlwind"; the use by the people of force against those who used force against the people.

The organs of authority that we have described represented a dictatorship in embryo, for they recognised no other authority, no law and no standards, no matter by whom established. Authority—unlimited, outside the law, and based on force in the most direct sense of the word—is dictatorship. But the force on which this new authority was based and sought to base itself was not the force of bayonets usurped by a handful of militarists, not the power of the "police force", not the power of money nor the

power of any previously established institutions. It was nothing of the kind. The new organs of authority possessed neither arms, nor money, nor old institutions. Their power—can you imagine it, Mr. Blank and Mr. Kiesewetter? — had nothing in common with the old instruments of power, nothing in common with “rein forced security”, if we do not have in mind the reinforced security established to protect the people from the tyranny of the police and of the other organs of the old regime.

What was this power based on, then? It was based on the mass of the people. This is the main feature that distinguished this new authority from all the preceding organs of the old regime. The latter were the instruments of the rule of the minority over the people, over the masses of workers and peasants. The former was an instrument of the rule of the people, of the workers and peasants, over the minority, over a handful of police bullies, over a handful of privileged nobles and government officials. Such is the difference between dictatorship over the people and dictatorship of the revolutionary people: mark this well, Mr. Blank and Mr. Kiesewetter! As the dictatorship of a minority, the old regime was able to maintain itself solely with the aid of police devices, solely by preventing the masses of the people from taking part in the government and from supervising the government. The old authority persistently distrusted the masses, feared the light, maintained itself by deception. As the dictatorship of the overwhelming majority, the new authority maintained itself and could maintain itself solely because it enjoyed the confidence of the vast masses, solely because it, in the freest, widest and most resolute manner, enlisted all the masses in the task of government. It concealed nothing, it had no secrets, no regulations, no formalities. It said, in effect: Are you a working man? Do you want to fight to rid Russia of the gang of police bullies? You are our comrade. Elect your deputy. Elect him at once, immediately, whichever way you think best. We will

willingly and gladly accept him as a full member of our Soviet of Workers' Deputies, Peasant Committee, Soviet of Soldiers' Deputies, and so forth. It was an authority open to all, it carried out all its functions before the eyes of the masses, was accessible to the masses, sprang directly from the masses, and was a direct and immediate instrument of the popular masses, of their will. Such was the new authority, or, to be exact, its embryo, for the victory of the old authority trampled down the shoots of this young plant very soon.

Perhaps, Mr. Blank or Mr. Kiesewetter, you will ask: Why "dictatorship", why "force"? Is it necessary for a vast mass to use force against a handful? Can tens and hundreds of millions be dictators over a thousand or ten thousand?

This question is usually put by people who for the first time hear the term dictatorship used in what to them is a new connotation. People are accustomed to see only a police authority and only a police dictatorship. The idea that there can be government without any police, or that dictatorship need not be a police dictatorship, seems strange to them. You say that millions need not resort to force against thousands? You are mistaken; and your mistake arises from the fact that you do not regard a phenomenon in its process of development. You forget that the new authority does not drop from the skies, but grows up, arises parallel with, and in opposition to, the old authority, in struggle against it. Unless force is used against tyrants armed with the weapons and instruments of power, the people cannot be liberated from tyrants.

Here is a very simple analogy, Mr. Blank and Mr. Kiesewetter, which will help you to grasp this idea, which seems so remote and "fantastic" to the Cadet mind. Let us suppose that Avramov is injuring and torturing Spiridonova. On Spiridonova's side, let us say, are tens and hundreds of unarmed people. On Avramov's

side there is a handful of Cossacks. What would the people do if Spiridonova were being tortured, not in a dungeon, but in public? They would resort to force against Avramov and his body-guard. Perhaps they would sacrifice a few of their comrades, shot down by Avramov; but in the long run, they would forcibly disarm Avramov and his Cossacks, and in all probability would kill on the spot some of these brutes in human form; and they would clap the rest into some gaol to prevent them from committing any more outrages and to bring them to judgement before the people.

So you see, Mr. Blank and Mr. Kiesewetter, when Avramov and his Cossacks torture Spiridonova, that is military and police dictatorship over the people. When a revolutionary people (that is to say, a people capable of fighting the tyrants, and not only of exhorting, admonishing, regretting, condemning, whining and whimpering; not a philistine narrow-minded, but a revolutionary people) resorts to force against Avramov and the Avramovs, that is a dictatorship of the revolutionary people. It is a dictatorship, because it is the authority of the people over Avramov, an authority unrestricted by any laws (the philistine, perhaps, would be opposed to rescuing Spiridonova from Avramov by force, thinking it to be against the "law". They would no doubt ask: Is there a "law" that permits the killing of Avramov? Have not some philistine ideologists built up a theory of non-resistance to evil?). The scientific term "dictatorship" means nothing more nor less than authority untrammelled by any laws, absolutely unrestricted by any rules whatever, and based directly on force. The term "dictatorship" has no other meaning but this— mark this well, Cadet gentlemen. Again, in the analogy we have drawn, we see the dictatorship of the people, because the people, the mass of the population, unorganised, "casually" assembled at the given spot, itself appears on the scene, exercises justice and metes out punishment, exercises power and creates

a new, revolutionary law. Lastly, it is the dictatorship of the revolutionary people. Why only of the revolutionary, and not of the whole people? Because among the whole people, constantly suffering, and most cruelly, from the brutalities of the Avramovs, there are some who are physically cowed and terrified; there are some who are morally degraded by the “resist not evil” theory, for example, or simply degraded not by theory, but by prejudice, habit, routine; and there are indifferent people, whom we call philistines, petty-bourgeois people who are more inclined to hold aloof from intense struggle, to pass by or even to hide themselves (for fear of getting mixed up in the fight and getting hurt). That is why the dictatorship is exercised, not by the whole people, but by the revolutionary people who, however, do not shun the whole people, who explain to all the people the motives of their actions in all their details, and who willingly enlist the whole people not only in “administering” the state, but in governing it too, and indeed in organising the state.

Thus, our simple analogy contains all the elements of the scientific concept “dictatorship of the revolutionary people”, and also of the concept “military and police dictatorship”. We can now pass from this simple analogy, which even a learned Cadet professor can grasp, to the more complex developments of social life.

Revolution, in the strict and direct sense of the word, is a period in the life of a people when the anger accumulated during centuries of Avramov brutalities breaks forth into actions, not merely into words; and into the actions of millions of the people, not merely of individuals. The people awaken and rise up to rid themselves of the Avramovs. The people rescue the countless numbers of Spiridonovas in Russian life from the Avramovs, use force against the Avramovs, and establish their authority over the Avramovs. Of course, this does not take place so easily, and

not “all at once”, as it did in our analogy, simplified for the benefit of Professor Kiesewetter. This struggle of the people against the Avramovs, a struggle in the strict and direct sense of the word, this act of the people in throwing the Avramovs off their backs, stretches over months and years of “revolutionary whirlwind”. This act of the people in throwing the Avramovs off their backs is the real content of what is called the great Russian revolution. This act, regarded from the standpoint of the methods of making history, takes place in the forms we have just described in discussing the revolutionary whirl wind, namely: the people seize political freedom, that is, the freedom which the Avramovs had prevented them from exercising; the people create a new, revolutionary authority, authority over the Avramovs, over the tyrants of the old police regime; the people use force against the Avramovs in order to remove, disarm and make harmless these wild dogs, all the Avramovs, Durnovos, Dubasovs, Mins, etc., etc.

Is it good that the people should apply such unlawful, irregular, unmethodical and unsystematic methods of struggle as seizing their liberty and creating a new, formally unrecognised and revolutionary authority, that it should use force against the oppressors of the people? Yes, it is very good. It is the supreme manifestation of the people’s struggle for liberty. It marks that great period when the dreams of liberty cherished by the best men and women of Russia come true, when liberty becomes the cause of the vast masses of the people, and not merely of individual heroes. It is as good as the rescue by the crowd (in our analogy) of Spiridonova from Avramov, and the forcible disarming of Avramov and making him harmless.

But this brings us to the very pivot of the Cadets’ hidden thoughts and apprehensions. A Cadet is the ideologist of the philistines precisely because he looks at politics, at the liberation

of the whole people, at revolution, through the spectacles of that same philistine who, in our analogy of the torture of Spiridonova by Avramov, would try to restrain the crowd, advise it not to break the law, not to hasten to rescue the victim from the hands of the torturer, since he is acting in the name of the law. In our analogy, of course, that philistine would be morally a monster; but in social life as a whole, we repeat, the philistine monster is not an individual, but a social phenomenon, conditioned, perhaps, by the deep-rooted prejudices of the bourgeois-philistine theory of law.

Why does Mr. Blank hold it as self-evident that all Marxist principles were forgotten during the period of "whirl wind"? Because he distorts Marxism into Brentanoism, and thinks that such "principles" as the seizure of liberty, the establishment of revolutionary authority and the use of force by the people are not Marxist. This idea runs through the whole of Mr. Blank's article; and not only Mr. Blank's, but the articles of all the Cadets, and of all the writers in the liberal and radical camp who, today, are praising Plekhanov for his love of the Cadets; all of them, right up to the Bernsteinians of Bez Zaglavia, the Prokopoviches, Kuskovas and tutti quanti.

Let us see how this opinion arose and why it was bound to arise.

It arose directly out of the Bernsteinian or, to put it more broadly, the opportunist concepts of the West-European Social-Democrats. The fallacies of these concepts, which the "orthodox" Marxists in Western Europe have been systematically exposing all along the line, are now being smuggled into Russia "on the sly", in a different dressing and on a different occasion. The Bernsteinians accepted and accept Marxism minus its directly revolutionary aspect. They do not regard the parliamentary struggle as one of the weapons particularly suitable for definite historical periods, but as the main and almost the sole form of

struggle making “force”, “seizure”, “dictatorship”, unnecessary. It is this vulgar philistine distortion of Marxism that the Blanks and other liberal eulogisers of Plekhanov are now smuggling into Russia. They have become so accustomed to this distortion that they do not even think it necessary to prove that Marxist principles and ideas were forgotten in the period of the revolutionary whirlwind.

Why was such an opinion bound to arise? Because it accords very well with the class standing and interests of the petty bourgeoisie. The ideologists of “purified” bourgeois society agree with all the methods used by the Social-Democrats in their struggle except those to which the revolutionary people resort in the period of a “whirlwind”, and which revolutionary Social-Democrats approve of and help in using. The interests of the bourgeoisie demand that the proletariat should take part in the struggle against the autocracy, but only in a way that does not lead to the supremacy of the proletariat and the peasantry, and does not completely eliminate the old, feudal-autocratic and police organs of state power. The bourgeoisie wants to preserve these organs, only establishing its direct control over them. It needs them against the proletariat, whose struggle would be too greatly facilitated if they were completely abolished. That is why the interests of the bourgeoisie as a class require both a monarchy and an Upper Chamber, and the prevention of the dictatorship of the revolutionary people. Fight the autocracy, the bourgeoisie says to the proletariat, but do not touch the old organs of state power, for I need them. Fight in a “parliamentary” way, that is, within the limits that we will prescribe by agreement with the monarchy. Fight with the aid of organisations, only not organisations like general strike committees, Soviets of Workers’, Soldiers’ Deputies, etc., but organisations that are recognised, restricted and made safe for capital by a law that we shall pass by agreement with the monarchy.



It is clear, therefore, why the bourgeoisie speaks, with disdain, contempt, anger and hatred about the period of the “whirlwind”, and with rapture, ecstasy and boundless philistine infatuation for reaction, about the period of constitutionalism as protected by Dubasov. It is once again that constant, invariable quality of the Cadets: seeking to lean on the people and at the same time dreading their revolutionary initiative.

It is also clear why the bourgeoisie is in such mortal fear of a repetition of the whirlwind, why it ignores and obscures the elements of the new revolutionary crisis, why it fosters constitutional illusions and spreads them among the people.

Now we have fully explained why Mr. Blank and his like declare that in the period of the “whirlwind” all Marxist principles and ideas were forgotten. Like all philistines, Mr. Blank accepts Marxism minus its revolutionary aspect; he accepts Social-Democratic methods of struggle minus the most revolutionary and directly revolutionary methods.

Mr. Blank’s attitude towards the period of “whirlwind” is extremely characteristic as an illustration of bourgeois failure to understand proletarian movements, bourgeois horror of acute and resolute struggles, bourgeois hatred for every manifestation of a radical and directly revolutionary method of solving social historical problems, a method that breaks up old institutions. Mr. Blank has betrayed himself and all his bourgeois narrow-mindedness. Somewhere he heard and read that during the period of whirlwind the Social-Democrats made “mistakes”—and he has hastened to conclude, and to declare with self-assurance, in tones that brook no contradiction and require no proof, that all the “principles” of Marxism (of which he has not the least notion!) were forgot ten. As for these “mistakes”, we will remark: Has there been a period in the development of the working-class movement, in the development of Social-

Democracy, when no mistakes were made, when there was no deviation to the right or the left? Is not the history of the parliamentary period of the struggle waged by the German Social-Democratic Party—the period which all narrow-minded bourgeois all over the world regard as the utmost limit—filled with such mistakes? If Mr. Blank were not an utter ignoramus on problems of socialism, he would easily call to mind Mülberger, Dühning, the Dampfersubvention question, the “Youth”, the Bernsteiniad and many, many more. But Mr. Blank is not interested in studying the actual course of development of the Social-Democratic movement; all he wants is to minimise the scope of the proletarian struggle in order to exalt the bourgeois paltriness of his Cadet Party.

Indeed, if we examine the question in the light of the deviations that the Social-Democratic movement has made from its ordinary, “normal” course, we shall see that even in this respect there was more and not less solidarity and ideological integrity among the Social-Democrats in the period of “revolutionary whirlwind” than there was before it. The tactics adopted in the period of “whirlwind” did not further estrange the two wings of the Social-Democratic Party but brought them closer together. Former disagreements gave way to unity of opinion on the question of armed uprising. Social-Democrats of both factions were active in the Soviets of Workers’ Deputies, these peculiar instruments of embryonic revolutionary authority; they drew the soldiers and peasants into these Soviets, they issued revolutionary manifestos jointly with the petty-bourgeois revolutionary parties. Old controversies of the pre-revolutionary period gave way to unanimity on practical questions. The upsurge of the revolutionary tide pushed aside disagreements, compelling Social-Democrats to adopt militant tactics; it swept the question of the Duma into the background and put the question of insurrection on the order of the day; and it brought

closer together the Social-Democrats and revolutionary bourgeois democrats in carrying out immediate tasks. In *Severny Golos*, the Mensheviks, jointly with the Bolsheviks, called for a general strike and insurrection; and they called upon the workers to continue this struggle until they had captured power. The revolutionary situation itself suggested practical slogans. There were arguments only over matters of detail in the appraisal of events: for example, *Nachalo* regarded the Soviets of Workers' Deputies as organs of revolutionary local self-government, while *Novaya Zhizn* regarded them as embryonic organs of revolutionary state power that united the proletariat with the revolutionary democrats.

*Nachalo* inclined towards the dictatorship of the proletariat. *Novaya Zhizn* advocated the democratic dictatorship of the proletariat and the peasantry. But have not disagreements of this kind been observed at every stage of development of every socialist party in Europe?

Mr. Blank's misrepresentation of the facts and his gross distortion of recent history are nothing more nor less than a sample of the smug bourgeois banality, for which periods of revolutionary whirlwind seem folly ("all principles are forgotten", "even intellect and reason almost vanish"), while periods of suppression of revolution and philistine "progress" (protected by the Dubasovs) seem to be periods of reasonable, deliberate and methodical activity. This comparative appraisal of two periods (the period of "whirlwind" and the Cadet period) runs through the whole of Mr. Blank's article. When human history rushes forward with the speed of a locomotive, he calls it a "whirlwind", a "torrent", the "vanishing" of all "principles and ideas". When history plods along at dray-horse pace, the very symbol of it becomes reason and method. When the masses of the people themselves, with all their virgin primitiveness and

simple, rough determination begin to make history, begin to put “principles and theories” immediately and directly into practice, the bourgeois is terrified and howls that “intellect is retreating into the back ground” (is not the contrary the case, heroes of philistinism? Is it not the intellect of the masses, and not of individuals, that invades the sphere of history at such moments? Does not mass intellect at such a time become a virile, effective, and not an armchair force?). When the direct movement of the masses has been crushed by shootings, repressive measures, floggings, unemployment and starvation, when all the bugs of professorial science financed by Dubasov come creeping out of their crevices and begin to administer affairs on behalf of the people, in the name of the masses, selling and betraying their interests to a privileged few—then the knights of philistinism think that an era of calm and peaceful progress has set in and that “the turn of intellect and reason has come”. The bourgeois always and everywhere remains true to himself: whether you take *Polyarnaya Zvezda* or *Nasha Zhizn*, whether you read *Struve* or *Blank*, you will always find this same narrow-minded, professorially pedantic and bureaucratically lifeless appraisal of periods of revolution and periods of reform. The former are periods of madness, *tolle Jahre*, the disappearance of intellect and reason. The latter are periods of “deliberate and systematic” activities.

Do not misinterpret what I am saying. I am not arguing that the *Blanks* prefer some periods to others. It is not a matter of preference; our subjective preferences do not determine the changes in historical periods. The thing is that in analysing the characteristics of this or that period (quite apart from our preferences or sympathies), the *Blanks* shamelessly distort the truth. The thing is that it is just the revolutionary periods which are distinguished by wider, richer, more deliberate, more methodical, more systematic, more courageous and more vivid

making of history than periods of philistine, Cadet, reformist progress. But the Blanks turn the truth inside out! They palm off paltriness as magnificent making of history. They regard the inactivity of the oppressed or downtrodden masses as the triumph of "system" in the work of bureaucrats and bourgeois. They shout about the disappearance of intellect and reason when, instead of the picking of draft laws to pieces by petty bureaucrats and liberal penny-a-liner journalists, there begins a period of direct political activity of the "common people", who simply set to work without more ado to smash all the instruments for oppressing the people, seize power and take what was regarded as belonging to all kinds of robbers of the people—in short, when the intellect and reason of millions of downtrodden people awoken not only to read books, but for action, vital human action, to make history.

Look how majestically this Cadet knight argues: "The whirlwind raged for a time and then subsided on the spot where it began." Why, the fact that the liberal philistines are still alive, that they have not been gobbled up by the Dubasovs, is due entirely to this whirlwind. "On the spot where it began," you say? You say that Russia in the spring of 1906 is on the same spot as she was in September 1905?

Yes, throughout the "Cadet" period the Dubasovs and Durnovos have been dragging, and will drag Russia "deliberately, methodically and systematically" back, in order to return her to September 1905; but they haven't the strength to do so, because during the whirlwind the proletarians, the railway-men, the peasants, the mutinous soldiers, have driven all Russia forward with the speed of a locomotive.

Had this unreasoning whirlwind really subsided, the Cadet Duma would have been doomed to engage only in tinkering with wash-basins.

But Mr. Blank has no inkling that the question whether the whirlwind has subsided is a separate and purely scientific question, the answer to which will settle a number of problems of tactics, and an answer to which is essential if we want to understand at all clearly the problems of present-day tactics. Mr. Blank has not based his conclusion that the conditions for a movement in the form of a whirl wind are lacking at present on the examination of facts and arguments (if it were well-founded, such a conclusion would really be of fundamental importance in determining tactics, for, we repeat, these tactics cannot be determined simply by one's "preference" for one course or another). No, he is simply and frankly expressing his profound (and profoundly short sighted) conviction that it cannot be otherwise. Strictly speaking, Mr. Blank regards the "whirlwind" just as it is regarded by the Wittes, Durnovos, Bülow and other German bureaucrats, who long ago pronounced the year 1848 to have been a "mad year". Mr. Blank's phrase "the whirl wind subsided" expresses, not a scientific conviction, but philistine stupidity, which regards every whirlwind, and whirlwinds in general, as the "disappearing of intellect and reason

"The Social-Democrats have returned to their starting-point," Mr. Blank assures us. The Mensheviks' new tactics direct the Russian Social-Democratic movement along the path that is being followed by the entire international Social-Democratic movement.

You see that for some reason Mr. Blank declares the parliamentary path to be the "starting-point" (although it could not have been the starting-point for Social-Democracy in Russia). Mr. Blank regards the parliamentary path as what may be called the normal, the main and even the sole, all-embracing and exclusive path for international Social-Democracy. He has no inkling that, in this respect, he is repeating in its entirety the

bourgeois distortion of Social- Democracy that predominates in the German. liberal press, and which at one time was borrowed by the followers of Bern stein. The liberal bourgeois imagines that one of the methods of fighting is the sole method. This fully expresses the Brentano conception of the working-class movement and the class struggle. Mr. Blank has no inkling that the Social-Democrats in Europe took the parliamentary path, and were able to do so, only when objective conditions had removed the question of carrying the bourgeois revolution to its complete fulfilment from the agenda of history, only when the parliamentary system had really become the principal form of bourgeois rule and the principal arena of the social struggle. He does not even stop to think whether there is a parliament and a parliamentary system in Russia but declares in a peremptory manner: the Social-Democrats have returned to their starting-point. The bourgeois mind can conceive only of incomplete democratic revolutions (for at bottom the interests of the bourgeoisie require incomplete revolutions). The bourgeois mind shuns all non-parliamentary methods of struggle, all open mass actions, any revolution in the direct sense of the term. The bourgeois instinctively hastens to declare, proclaim and accept all sham parliamentarism as real parliamentarism in order to put a stop to the "dizzying whirlwind" (which may be dangerous not only for the heads of many weak-headed bourgeois, but also for their pockets). That is why the Cadet gentlemen are totally incapable even of understanding the scientific and really important question whether the parliamentary method of struggle can be recognised as having any real meaning for Russia, and whether the movement in the form of a "whirl wind" has spent itself. And the material, class background of this incomprehension is quite clear: let the workers support a Cadet Duma by a peaceful strike or some other action, but they must not think of waging an earnest and resolute war of

extermination, they must not think of rising in revolt against the autocracy and the monarchy.

“Now the turn of intellect and reason has come again,” says Mr. Blank, going into raptures over the period of Dubasov’s victories. Do you know what, Mr. Blank? There has been no period in the history of Russia to which the expression “the turn of intellect and reason has come again” could be better applied than the period of Alexander III! That is really a fact. It was in that period that the old Russian Narodism ceased to be merely the dreamy contemplation of the future and made its rich contribution to Russian social thought by its researches into the economic life of Russia. It was in that period that Russian revolutionary thought worked hardest and laid the groundwork for the Social-Democratic world-outlook. Yes, we revolutionaries are far from denying the revolutionary role of reactionary periods. We know that the form of the social movement changes, that periods of direct, constructive political activity by the masses of the people give way in history to periods of outward calm, when the masses, downtrodden and crushed by back-breaking toil and want, are silent or dormant (appear to be dormant), when modes of production become revolutionised with particular rapidity, when the intellect of the foremost representatives of human thought is summing up the past and devising new systems and new methods of research. After all, in Europe, too, the period after the suppression of the revolution of 1848 was distinguished by unprecedented economic progress and by the labours of the intellect that created, say, Marx’s Capital. In short, “the turn of intellect and reason” comes sometimes in periods of human history just as a period of imprisonment in the life of a political leader gives him an opportunity to engage in scientific study and work.



But the trouble with our bourgeois philistine is that he does not realise that his remarks have, so to speak, a prison or Dubasov ring. He does not notice the fundamental question: Is the Russian revolution crushed, or is it on the eve of a revival? Has the form of the social movement changed from a revolutionary form to one adjusted to the Dubasov regime? Have the forces making for a "whirlwind" spent themselves, or not? The bourgeois intellect does not trouble itself with these questions because, in general, it regards revolution as an unreasoning whirlwind, and reform as the return of intellect and reason.

Examine his most edifying argument about organisation. "The first thing" intellect and reason must do, he informs us, "is to take precautions to prevent a repetition of what occurred in the first period of the Russian revolution, in its Sturm- und Drang-Zeit, that is, measures against the destructive effects of revolutionary torrents and hurricanes. The only effective precaution against this is to enlarge and strengthen the organisation."

You see that, as the Cadet conceives it, the period of hurricane destroyed organisations and organisation itself (see *Novoye Vremya*, I mean *Polyarnaya Zvezda*, containing Struve's articles against anarchy, spontaneity, lack of firm authority during revolutions, etc., etc.); whereas the period of intellect and reason protected by Dubasov is a period for building up organisations. Revolution is evil; it destroys, it is a hurricane, a dizzying whirlwind. Reaction is good; it creates, it is a favourable wind and a time for deliberate, methodical, and systematic activity.

So once again the philosopher of the Cadet Party slanders the revolution and betrays all his infatuation with bourgeois-restricted forms and conditions of the movement. The hurricane destroyed organisations! What a glaring untruth! Mention a period in Russian or world history, find any six months or six years, when as much was done for the free and independent

organisation of the masses of the people as was done during the six weeks of the revolutionary whirlwind in Russia when, according to the slanderers of the revolution, all principles and ideas were forgotten and reason and intellect disappeared! What was the all-Russian general strike? Was it not organisation? True, it was not registered by the police, it was not a permanent organisation, and therefore you refuse to take it into account. Take the political organisations. Do you know that the working people, the raw masses, never joined political organisations so eagerly, never increased the membership of the political associations so enormously, never created such original, semi-political organisations as the Soviets of Workers' Deputies? But you are a bit afraid of the political organisations of the proletariat. Like a true disciple of Brentano, you think that trade unions are safer for the bourgeoisie (and therefore more sound and respectable). If we take the trade unions, we shall find that, in spite of all the philistine tittle-tattle about their being ignored in time of revolution, Russia never saw such a multitude of trade union organisations formed by the workers as in those days. The columns of the socialist, and precisely the socialist, newspapers, both *Novaya Zhizn* and *Nachalo*, were packed with reports of the formation of more and more trade unions. Even backward sections of the proletariat, like domestic servants, who could barely be roused in decades of "methodical and systematic" philistine progress, displayed the greatest eagerness and ability to organise. Take the Peasant Union. One often meets Cadets today who speak about this Union with magnificent disdain. Why, it was a semi-fictitious organisation, they say. It has disappeared without leaving a trace. I wonder, gentlemen, how much of your Cadet organisations would be left had you been obliged to contend with punitive expeditions, with innumerable rural Luzhenovskys, Rimans, Filonovs, Avramovs and Zhdanovs. The Peasant Union grew with fabulous speed in the

period of the revolutionary whirl wind. It was a genuinely popular, mass organisation, sharing, of course, in a number of peasant prejudices, and susceptible to the petty-bourgeois illusions of the peasants (just like our Socialist-Revolutionaries); but it was undoubtedly a real organisation of the masses, of "men of the soil", unquestionably revolutionary at bottom, capable of employing genuinely revolutionary methods of struggle. It did not restrict but extended the scope of the political initiative of the peasantry, and brought them, with their hatred of the government officials and the landlords, into the arena—not the semi-intellectuals who are so often inclined to hatch all sorts of proposals for a deal between the revolutionary peasantry and the liberal landlords. The current disdain for the Peasant Union most of all expresses the philistine bourgeois narrow-mindedness of the Cadet, who has no faith in the independent revolutionary activity of the masses and is afraid of it. In the days of liberty, the Peasant Union was one of the mightiest realities, and we can confidently predict that, if the Luzhenovskys and Rimans do not butcher more tens of thousands of young, progressive peasants, if the slightest breeze of liberty blows again, this Union will grow with lightning speed, and will become an organisation against which the present Cadet committees will look like specks of dust.

To sum up: the organising abilities of the people, particularly of the proletariat, but also of the peasantry, are revealed a million times more strongly, fully and productively in periods of revolutionary whirlwind than in periods of so-called calm (dray-horse) historical progress. The Blanks' opinion to the contrary is a bourgeois-bureaucratic distortion of history. The good bourgeois and honest bureaucrat regard as "genuine" only such organisations as have been properly registered by the police and scrupulously conform to all sorts of "provisional regulations". They cannot conceive of methods and system without provisional regulations. We must therefore have no illusions

about the true significance of high-sounding words from a Cadet about romantic contempt for legality and aristocratic disdain for economics. These words have only one real meaning—a bourgeois opportunist dread of the independent revolutionary activity of the people.

Finally, let us examine the last point in Mr. Blank's Cadet "theory": the relation between worker democrats and bourgeois democrats. Mr. Blank's arguments on this subject deserve the closest attention of Social-Democrats, for they provide an example of how Marx is misrepresented by quotations from Marx. Just as Brentano, Sombart, Bernstein and Co. substituted Brentanoism for Marxism by employing Marxian terminology, by quoting some of Marx's statements and by assuming a Marxist disguise, so our Cadets indulge in the "subtle art" of faking Marxism on the question of the relation between worker democrats and bourgeois democrats.

Unless the activities of the worker democrats and bourgeois democrats are co-ordinated, the bourgeois-democratic revolution cannot be successful. This is gospel truth. Absolute truth. It seems to you, Messrs. Blank, Izgoyev and Co., that the revolutionary Social-Democrats forgot this particularly during the days of the "whirlwind"? You are mistaken or are deliberately substituting for the concept revolutionary bourgeois democrats the concept bourgeois democrats in general, which includes the monarchist-liberal democrats and the opportunist democrats, but above all the monarchist-liberal democrats. Take *Novaya Zhizn*, and you will find that it deals with the question of joint action, of a fighting agreement between the worker democrats and the revolutionary bourgeois democrats in nearly every issue. It speaks of the importance of the Peasant Union and of the peasant movement in the most emphatic terms. Despite the Cadet fables about the Marxists' intolerance and narrow-minded

dogmatism, you will find that that paper fully recognises the importance of non-party associations and organisations : but of course only non-party revolutionary organisations. The pivot of the question that is so artfully concealed by our Brentanoists in politics is: Which elements of bourgeois democracy are capable of pushing the bourgeois-democratic revolution to its complete fulfilment when that revolution is, so to speak, half-way towards its goal? Is it the elements that accept the monarchist-liberal programme, that are completely submerged in constitutional illusions and bespatter revolutionary periods and revolutionary methods of making history with the slime of their philistine anger, condemnation and regret? Or is it those who accept the programme of a complete victory of the peasant uprising (instead of a deal between the peasants and the landlords), of complete victory for democracy (instead of a deal between the democratic Lower Chamber, on the one hand, and the Upper Chamber and the monarchy, on the other)? Have these gentlemen, the Blanks and the Izgoyevs, ever given a thought to this question? Must we at the present time “strike together” **with the bourgeois-democratic compromisers or with the bourgeois-democratic revolutionaries?**

Have you, esteemed gentlemen, who are so fond of quoting and misrepresenting Marx, ever heard how mercilessly Marx lashed the bourgeois-democratic compromisers in Germany in 1848? And yet these compromisers were members of a National Assembly and not of a paltry State Duma: as democrats, they were far more “resolute” (in words) than our Cadets.

And fifteen years later, during the “constitutional conflict” in Prussia, the same Marx and Engels advised the workers’ party to support the bourgeois-democratic Progressists, who were not a whit better than the Frankfurt democrats. You think that this shows that Marx and Engels were inconsistent and contradicted

themselves? You think this proves that they, too, in the period of the “revolutionary whirlwind” almost lost their “intellect and reason” (this view is held by the majority of the Bernsteinians and most of the Cadets)? As a matter of fact, there is no contradiction here at all. In the period of revolutionary struggle, Marx concentrated his attack on constitutional illusions and constitutional compromisers. When the force of the revolutionary “whirlwind” was spent, and there could no longer be any doubt that the German Cadets had utterly betrayed the revolution, when the insurrections had been finally and completely suppressed, and economic prosperity was making any repetition of them hopeless, then and only then (Marx and Engels were not craven-hearted, and their faith in insurrection did not dwindle after the very first defeat!), did they recognise the parliamentary struggle as the main form of struggle. In parliament, once you have gone into it, it is not only permissible but obligatory, in certain circumstances, to support the turncoat Izgoyev against Shipov, and Shipov against Durnovo. In the fight for real parliamentarism there is sometimes nothing more dangerous than Cadet “compromisers”.

If you want to quote Marx, gentlemen, try to prove that our Duma is already an instrument of the rule of the bourgeoisie in a free Russia, and not a fig-leaf for the autocracy. You will say that the latter may evolve into the former through a few slight changes, and that the election of the Cadets is already not a slight, but an important testimony of this “evolution”.

Very well. But in that way, you are only putting the question off, you are not answering it. Has the present Duma, right now, already outgrown its limits to such an extent that it can become an organ of state power? Those of you who think so, and are trying to make the people think so, are deliberately spreading the most harmful constitutional illusions: you are downright

counter-revolutionaries. Those of you, however, who think it probable that "Durnovo will remain in order to disperse the Duma", or who realise that nothing is certain yet without an extra-"parliamentary", revolutionary onslaught, are proving how shaky your position is. Their admissions clearly show that the Cadets' policy is a policy of the moment, and not a policy of earnestly defending the permanent and fundamental interests of the revolution. These admissions show that during the solution of the new revolutionary crisis that is now maturing, a large number of revolutionary bourgeois democrats will break away from the Cadets and will be impelled by the Durnovos' outrages against the Duma to go to the barricades. Thus the whole difference is that you want to restrict this inevitable new battle, to fetter it, to narrow it down to the task of supporting the Cadet Duma; whereas we want to concentrate all our plans, all our energies, all our work of agitation, propaganda and organisation on extending the scope of this battle beyond the limits of Cadet programmes, to extend it to the complete overthrow of the autocracy., to the complete victory of the peasant uprising, to the convocation of a national constituent assembly by revolutionary means.

It seems to you that there are no revolutionary bourgeois democrats in Russia, that the Cadets are the only, or at all events, the main force of bourgeois democracy in Russia. But it seems so to you only because you are short-sighted, because you are content to observe only the surface of political events; you do not see or understand the "essence of the constitution". Being hand-to-mouth politicians, you are most typical opportunists, for the momentary interests of democracy shut out from your view its more profound and fundamental interests: because, engrossed in the tasks of the moment, you forget the more serious tasks of the future: the label prevents you from seeing the contents. There are revolutionary bourgeois democrats in Russia, and there must be,

so long as there is a revolutionary peasantry, which by thousands of millions of threads is also bound up with the poorer classes in the towns. These democrats are lying low only because of the activities of the Rimans and Luzhenovskys. The events of the very near future will dispel Cadet illusions. Either the regime of repression continues, the Rimans and Luzhenovskys “do things” while the Cadet Duma talks—and in that case the paltriness of this Duma and of the party that predominates in it will immediately become evident to the vast masses of the people. There will be a strong outbreak, in which it will not be the Cadets as a party that will participate, of course, but those elements among the people that constitute the revolutionary democracy. Or the regime of repression will be relaxed, the government will make a few concessions, and the Cadet Duma, of course, will begin to melt as a result of the very first concessions, and will settle for Shipov, or even perhaps for something worse. The counter revolutionary nature of the Cadets (which stood out in striking relief during the days of the “whirlwind” and is constantly evident in their literature) will display itself in full. But the very first fresh breeze of liberty, the slightest relaxation of repression, will again inevitably call into being hundreds and thousands of organisations, unions, groups, circles and undertakings of a revolutionary-democratic nature. And this will as inevitably result in another “whirlwind”, in a repetition of the October-December struggle, but on an immeasurably greater scale. The Cadets, who are shining so brightly today, will be dimmed once again. Why? Because maggots are found near corpses, not near living people.

In other words, the Cadets may finally make the people “acquire a taste”, as Durnovo would say, for “people’s freedom”, but they can never under any circumstances wage a genuine struggle for real freedom of the people, freedom without inverted commas, **without a compromise with the autocracy**. This struggle has still



inevitably to be waged; but it will be waged, not by the Cadets, but by other parties, other social elements. It is clear, therefore, why the revolutionary Social-Democrats do not in the least envy the successes of the Cadets, and continue to concentrate on this forthcoming real, and not sham, fight.

Mr. Blank quotes what Marx said about the supreme significance of bourgeois democracy. To express Marx's real opinion, he should have added: and supremely treacherous significance. Marx said this a thousand times in different passages in his various writings. Comrade Plekhanov, who is inclining towards Brentanoism in present-day politics, has forgotten what Marx said on this score. Indeed, Comrade Plekhanov has no inkling of what the liberal democrats may betray. The answer to this is very simple, Comrade Plekhanov. The party of "people's freedom" has betrayed the freedom of the people and will continue to do so.

Mr. Blank admonishes us not to push the bourgeois democrats "into the camp of reaction and counter-revolution". We ask this sagacious Cadet: do you want to take the world of ideas, theories, programmes and lines of tactics, or the world of material class interests? Let us take both. Who pushed your friend Mr. Struve into the camp of counter revolution, and when? Mr. Struve was a counter-revolutionary in 1894, when, in his Critical Remarks, he made Brentanoist reservations concerning Marxism. And despite the efforts some of us made to "push" him from Brentanoism to Marxism, Mr. Struve went over entirely to Brentanoism. And the counter-revolutionary tone never left the pages of *Osvobozhdeniye*, the illegal "*Osvobozhdeniye*". Was this mere chance? Was it by chance that Mr. Struve was prompted to start that model organ of reactionary spleen, *Polyarnaya Zvezda*, precisely in the period of the "whirlwind", of the independent revolutionary activity of the people?

What, in general, pushes the small producer in a commodity economy over to the side of reaction and counter-revolution? The position he occupies in capitalist society between the bourgeoisie and the proletariat. The petty bourgeois inevitably, in all countries and in every combination of political circumstances, vacillates between revolution and counter-revolution. He wants to free himself from the yoke of capital and to strengthen his position as a small proprietor. This is virtually impossible; and the vacillations of the petty bourgeois are inevitable and ineradicable owing to the very system of modern society. That is why no one but the ideologists of the petty bourgeoisie can imagine that it is thinkable for the workers, or for the peasants rising in revolt against landlordism, to display independent revolutionary activity that will not push a certain section of the bourgeois democrats into the camp of reaction. Only knights of philistinism can regret this.

Do the Blanks and the Izgoyevs (or Comrade Plekhanov) really imagine that it is possible, for example, to have a complete victory of the peasant uprising, that it is possible completely to "take the land" (Plekhanov's slogan) from the landlords without compensation, without three-fifths of the Cadet "bourgeois democrats" being pushed into the camp of counter-revolution? Should we, therefore, begin bargaining with the Cadets about a "reasonable" peasant programme? What do you think, Comrade Plekhanov? What is your opinion, Messrs. Blank and Izgoyev?

And now for the finale of the political arguments advanced by our Cadet: if the bourgeois democrats are opposed to armed uprising at the present time, it is useless talking about it.

These words express the whole sum and substance of Cadet policy: to subordinate the proletariat to the Cadets, to take it in tow on the fundamental question of its political conduct and its political struggle. It is no use shutting our eyes to that. Mr. Blank

rather dexterously tries to distract our attention from the main point. He speaks not about the Cadets, but about bourgeois democrats in general. He talks about the "present juncture", but not about insurrection in general. But only a child could be taken in by this trick and fail to realise that the true meaning of Blank's conclusion is the one we have indicated. We have already cited a number of examples to show that Mr. Blank (like all the Cadets) systematically ignores the bourgeois democrats who are more to the left than the Cadets; and that, in keeping with his whole position as an advocate of constitutional illusions, he identifies the Cadets with the bourgeois democrats, and ignores the revolutionary bourgeois democrats. It only remains for us to prove that the Cadets are opposed to armed uprising in general, and not only to choosing the wrong "moment" (it is curious how often these two things are confused, and it is particularly to the advantage of the Cadets to confuse them, and to cover up their repudiation of insurrection by arguments about the moment chosen for it). This is quite easy to prove. It is sufficient to refer to the illegal "Osvobozhdeniye", where Mr. Struve, in the spring and summer of 1905, after January 9 and before October 9, strongly opposed armed uprising, and argued that to preach it was "folly and a crime". Events have sufficiently refuted this counter-revolutionary. Events have proved that it was the combination of general strike and armed uprising—which the Marxists foresaw and put forward as a watchword — that alone won the recognition of liberty and the rudiments of constitutionalism in Russia. Only a very few Social-Democrats, with no supporters in Russia (like Plekhanov), cravenly said about the December insurrection: "It was wrong to take up arms." On the contrary, the overwhelming majority of Social-Democrats agree that insurrection was a necessary act of resistance to the withdrawal of liberties; that it raised the entire movement to a higher plane and demonstrated the possibility of

fighting against regular troops. The latter circumstance has been admitted by such an impartial, sober-minded and cautious witness as Kautsky.

Now let us see what the moral that the Blanks draw amounts to: the proletariat must not think of insurrection if the Cadet Party (which was never revolutionary) is not in sympathy with it (although at present, and at all other times, it is opposed to insurrection). No, Mr. Blank! The proletariat will certainly reckon with the bourgeois democrats on the question of insurrection in general, and on the question of the moment to be chosen for it in particular—only, it will reckon not with the Cadet bourgeois democrats, but with the revolutionary bourgeois democrats; not with the liberal-monarchist, but with the revolutionary-republican trends and parties; not with windbags who are satisfied with a toy parliament, but with the masses of the peasantry (who are also bourgeois democrats), whose attitude towards insurrection differs from that of the Cadets.

“The Cadets are opposed to insurrection.” Why, they have never been in favour, nor can they ever be in favour of it. They dread it. They naively imagine that it depends on their wishes—the wishes of the intermediary elements who stand aloof from the most acute and direct struggle—whether there is to be an insurrection or not. What a delusion! The autocracy is preparing for civil war and is just now preparing for it very methodically. A new, much wider and more profound political crisis is maturing because of the Duma. Both the peasant masses and the proletariat still have in their midst vast numbers of militants who are emphatically demanding freedom for the people, not deals that will curtail the freedom of the people. Can the wishes of this or that party determine in these circumstances whether an insurrection will break out or not?

Just as the West-European philistine on the eve of socialist revolution yearns for an abatement of the class antagonisms between the bourgeoisie and the proletariat, pleads with the latter not to push the representatives of the bourgeoisie into the camp of reaction, declares in favour of social peace, and with profound moral indignation rejects the unscientific, narrow-minded, conspiratorial, anarchist, and so forth, idea of a cataclysm, so the Russian philistine, half way on the road towards our bourgeois-democratic revolution, yearns for an abatement of the antagonism between the autocracy and people's freedom, pleads with the revolutionaries, that is, with all resolute and consistent supporters of the people's freedom, not to push the liberal bourgeoisie into the camp of reaction, advocates the constitutional path, and with sincere indignation, reinforced with philosophical idealism, rejects the unscientific, narrow-minded, conspiratorial, anarchist, and so forth, idea of insurrection. The class-conscious worker says to the West-European philistine:

"The question of a cataclysm will be decided by the intensification of extremes and not by the intermediary elements." To the Russian philistine (and the Cadet is the ideal philistine in politics) the class-conscious worker says: "The question of insurrection depends, not on the will of the liberals, but on the actions of the autocracy and the growth of the class-consciousness and the indignation of the revolutionary peasantry and the proletariat. The West-European philistines say to the proletariat: "Don't repel the small peasants and the enlightened, social-liberal, reforming petty bourgeoisie generally; don't isolate yourselves; it is the reactionaries who want to isolate you." To this the proletarian replies: "I must, in the interests of the whole of toiling humanity, isolate myself from those who advocate compromise between the bourgeoisie and the proletariat, for these compromisers are advising me to

disarm; they are exercising the most harmful, immediately and practically harmful influence on the minds of the oppressed class by preaching compromise, abatement of antagonisms, etc. But I do not isolate myself from that vast mass of the petty bourgeoisie, the working masses, who are capable of adopting the point of view of the proletariat, of not yearning for compromise, of not being carried away by the consolidation of petty economy in capitalist society, and of not renouncing the struggle against the capitalist system itself.”

Much the same is taking place in Russia, but in different conditions, in a different historical period, on the eve (and not even on the eve, but in the midst) of a bourgeois-democratic and not a socialist revolution. The philistine says to the proletarian: “The reactionaries want to isolate you; you must isolate the reactionaries; don’t repel the enlightened, politically-liberal Cadets who want reforms.” To this the proletarian replies: “In the interests of the genuine struggle for real freedom, I must isolate myself from the advocates of a compromise between the autocracy and the representatives of the people, for these compromisers are advising us to disarm, they are befogging the civic consciousness of the people by their advocacy of ‘political peace’ and constitutional illusions. But these compromisers, all these Cadets, are not the people at all, they are not the masses at all, they are not a force at all, as seems to those who give way to the moods and impressions of the moment, and are now shouting about the danger of the proletariat being isolated. The real masses are the revolutionary peasantry and the poorer sections of the town population. From these masses I do not isolate myself; I call upon them to cast off their constitutional illusions, I call upon them to take up the real struggle, I call them to insurrection. In deciding on the moment for the insurrection, I will pay very serious attention to the mood and to the process of political development of these masses (not of the Cadet

compromisers); but I will not for a moment forget the revolutionary struggle against the autocracy that is maturing very fast, and will probably break out in the near future, for the sake of momentary successes, for the sake of the tawdry brilliance of Cadet parliamentarism (or rather Dubasov parliamentarism, to put it more correctly)."

In Europe, not so long ago, the flashy and loud-mouthed social-liberal, the petty-bourgeois compromiser, importunately pressed his offers of alliances and agreements upon the proletariat. The intellectual wing of the Social-Democratic parties took the bait, succumbed to the policy of the moment, founded the notorious Bernsteinian, etc. A year or two passed, the fog of "social peace" was completely dispelled, and the correctness of the position taken up by the revolutionary wing of the Social-Democratic parties, which consistently adhered to the proletarian point of view, became perfectly evident.

In Russia today everybody is intoxicated with the Cadet victories and with the prospect of a Cadet Duma. There is a danger that the intellectual wing of our Party will be fascinated by these brilliant successes and will be taken in by the idea of an election bloc with the Cadets, by the idea of supporting them, by a policy of "dealing tactfully" with the Cadets. There is a danger that they will be reluctant clearly and distinctly to define from the proletarian point of view the petty-bourgeois class nature of this party, the harmfulness of its constitutional illusions and the constant danger created by its tactics of "compromise". But in a few years, or perhaps even months, the fog will be dispelled; the views of the revolutionary Social-Democrats will be borne out by reality, and the columns of the Cadet newspapers and magazines will cease to ring with eulogies of certain Social-Democrats, which are offensive to the proletariat and are symptomatic of some disease within the Social-Democratic Party.

Lenin

## **The Social-Democrats and Electoral Agreements**

Collected Works, Volume 11, pages 275-298.

October 1906

### II

What conclusion follows from the foregoing in regard to electoral agreements? First of all, that our basic, main task is to develop the class-consciousness and independent class organisation of the proletariat, as the only class that remains revolutionary to the end, as the only possible leader of a victorious bourgeois-democratic revolution. Therefore, class independence throughout the election and Duma campaigns is our most important general task. This does not exclude other, partial tasks, but the latter must always be subordinate to and in conformity with it. This general premise, which is confirmed by the theory of Marxism and the whole experience of the international Social-Democratic movement, must be our point of departure.

The special tasks of the proletariat in the Russian revolution may seem at once to controvert this general premise on the following grounds: the big bourgeoisie has already betrayed the revolution through the Octobrists, or has made it its aim to put a stop to the revolution by means of a constitution (the Cadets); the victory of the revolution is possible only if the proletariat is supported by the most progressive and politically conscious section of the peasantry, whose objective position impels it to fight and not to compromise, to carry through and not to curb the revolution. Hence, some may conclude, the Social-Democrats must enter into agreements with the democratic peasantry for the whole duration of the elections.



But such a conclusion cannot be drawn from the absolutely correct premise that the complete victory of our revolution is possible only in the form of a revolutionary-democratic dictatorship of the proletariat and the peasantry. It has yet to be proved that a bloc with the democratic peasantry for the whole duration of the elections is possible and advantageous from the point of view of present party relationships (the democratic peasantry in our country is now represented not by one, but by various parties) and from the point of view of the present electoral system. It has yet to be proved that by forming a bloc with this or that party we shall express and uphold the interests of the truly revolutionary sections of the peasantry better than by preserving the complete independence of our Party in criticising such-and-such democratic peasant parties, and in counterposing some elements of the democratic peasantry to others. The premise that the proletariat is closest to the revolutionary peasantry in the present revolution undoubtedly leads to the general political "line" of Social-Democracy: together with the democratic peasantry against the treacherous big-bourgeois "democrats" (the Cadets). But whether it leads to the formation at the present time of an election bloc with the Popular Socialists (Popular Socialist Party), or the Socialist-Revolutionaries cannot lie decided without an analysis of the features which distinguish these parties from each other and from the Cadets, without an analysis of the present electoral system with its numerous stages. Only one thing follows from it, directly and absolutely: under no circumstances can we during our election campaign confine ourselves to baldly and abstractly counterposing the proletariat to the bourgeois democrats in general. On the contrary, we must devote our whole attention to drawing a precise distinction, based on the historical facts of our revolution, between the liberal-monarchist and the revolutionary-democratic bourgeoisie, or, to put it more concretely, to the distinction

between the Cadets, Popular Socialists, and Socialist-Revolutionaries. Only by drawing such a distinction shall we be able to determine most correctly who our closest "allies" are. But, firstly, we shall not forget that the Social-Democrats must watch every ally from the bourgeois democrats as they would an enemy. Secondly, we shall examine very carefully to see which is most advantageous: to tie our hands in a general bloc with some Popular Socialists (for instance), or to preserve complete independence so as to be quite free at the decisive moment to split the non-party "Trudoviks" into opportunists (P. S.'s) and revolutionaries (S.-R.'s), to counterpose the latter to the former, etc.

Thus, the argument about the proletarian-peasant character of our revolution does not entitle us to conclude that we must enter into agreements with this or that democratic peasant party at this or that stage of the elections to the Second Duma. It is not even a sufficient argument for limiting the class independence of the proletariat during the elections, let alone for renouncing this independence.

Lenin

**Wavering Above, Determination Below**

June 9, 1906

Collected Works, Volume 11, pages 17-19.

It is quite evident that we are now passing through one of the most important periods of the revolution. Signs of a revival of the broad, mass movement against the old order have been visible for a long time. Now this revival is reaching its climax. The Duma elections and the first week of the sessions and activities of the opposition Duma acted as a “farthing dip” which ignited the conflagration throughout the country. The quantity of inflammatory material was still so vast, and the atmosphere was still so “heated”, that no precautionary measures could be of any avail.

And now it is becoming absolutely obvious to everyone that the conflagration has really spread throughout the country. The rising has spread to quite new strata, both of the proletariat—including even those who only six months ago provided recruits for the Black Hundreds—and, particularly, of the peasantry. The army, which is connected with the most backward sections of the peasantry, and whose ranks are carefully combed so as to get rid of, destroy and suppress all that is fresh and virile—even the army has proved to be almost entirely engulfed in the flames. News of “revolts” and outbreaks among the armed forces is flying in from all sides, like sparks from a great fire.

Newspaper reporters who have some connection with the bureaucracy report that the Minister of War has uttered a warning against dissolving the Duma, for in that case he could not rely upon the army.

Under these circumstances, it is no wonder the government is wavering. It is true nevertheless that, although wavering, the government is preparing very definitely to crush the revolution by bloodshed. Provocation is increasing. A war to the death has been declared on the free press. The Left newspapers "are being confiscated in defiance of all laws". Kronstadt is inundated with special troops. The pogrom in Belostok marked the opening of counter-revolutionary operations, and armed operations at that. The government is wavering; warning voices are heard from its ranks, voices recommending a deal with the Cadets. But this wavering, this "pause for reflection", is not causing the government for a moment to forget the old, customary, and well-tried policy of naked violence.

Lassalle said that reactionaries are business-like people. Our reactionaries are proving that this is true. They are reflecting, weighing things up, wavering, in doubt as to whether to start a general offensive on the new line (i.e., by dissolving the Duma) at once, or not. But they are preparing for an offensive and are not pausing in this "business" for a single moment. From the point of view of robbers around whose necks the noose is being drawn ever tighter, they are reasoning correctly. Shall we yield to the Cadets, who promise a "strong government", or take reprisals by fire and sword? Their decision today is: we need be in no hurry to adopt the first alternative, that can be done at any time in the future; but in any case we must prepare to adopt the second alternative. No doubt many of them also reason in the following way: let us first try the second alternative and choose the most opportune moment for it. We can yield to the Cadets at the last moment, when we are absolutely convinced that it is impossible to restore everything by wholesale bloodshed!

As robbers, they are reasoning quite correctly. Obviously, they will not surrender without a desperate and ruthless fight.

Meanwhile, of course, they are preparing a line of retreat—in case things turn out badly—in the shape of a deal with the Cadets, an alliance with them on the platform of the “strong government” about which Mr. Struve so opportunely reminds them. The reactionaries are preparing for a stern and decisive battle, and they regard a deal with the Cadets as a minor result of an unsuccessful battle.

The proletariat must weigh up the tasks of the revolution soberly and squarely. As regards handling big problems, it is no less “business-like” than the reactionaries. It must concentrate all its attention, all its cares and all its efforts on the decisive battle inevitable tomorrow or the day after— and regard a deal between the government and the Cadets as a by-product of one of the possible stages of the revolution. The proletariat has nothing to fear from such a deal; both the Trepovs and the moderate liberals will come to grief over it. But the proletariat must not under any circumstances, directly or indirectly, support such a deal, support the demand for a responsible Cabinet representing the majority in the Duma. We need not now prevent this deal; but we shall not support it. We shall pursue our own road. We shall continue to be the party of the advanced class, which will not issue to the masses a single ambiguous slogan, which will not, directly or indirectly, have any truck whatever with any of the sordid dealings of the bourgeoisie, and which will be able to protect the interests of the revolution under all circumstances, whatever the outcome of the struggle.

A compromise between the government and the Duma is by no means impossible as one of the specific episodes of the revolution. The **Social-Democrats must neither advocate, support nor “shatter” such a compromise at the present time.** They must concentrate all their attention, and the attention of the masses, on the main and essential thing and not on secondary

and side issues. They will take the utmost advantage of every compromise between the bourgeoisie and the old regime, of all the wavering above. But they will consistently warn the working class and the peasantry against the "friendship" of the Cadets. To the wavering above they must oppose invincible determination below and, not yielding to provocation, must firmly and persistently gather their forces for the decisive moment.

Lenin

## **The St. Petersburg Elections and the Crisis of Opportunism**

January 25, 1907

Collected Works, Volume 12, pages 57-61.

On January 6 a St. Petersburg general conference was held. The conference was to decide whether or not there were to be agreements in the capital with the Cadets.

Notwithstanding Plekhanov's appeals to "worker comrades", published in *Tovarishch*; notwithstanding Madame E. Kuskova's hysterical articles; notwithstanding Plekhanov's threat to list the workers among the "enemies of freedom" if they insist on maintaining an independent Social-Democratic position, and notwithstanding the Cadets' more or less alluring promises, the organised and class-conscious proletariat of St. Petersburg proved so politically mature that, after the discussions and the voting, the majority declared against agreements of any kind with the Cadets. It was clear that the conference, elected by organised workers after discussions and voting in accordance with platforms, would declare itself to the same effect.

Space prevents us from dealing in *Proletary* with the proceedings of the conference in detail; besides, considerable literature has been published on this subject. It is important to note here, however, that our opportunists have gone so far in their policy of bourgeois compromise that they cannot accept the conference's decision. It was obvious from the very outset of the conference that, supported by the Central Committee, the St. Petersburg Mensheviks would not submit to the conference decision. The friends of the Cadets were only seeking for a pretext to break with revolutionary Social-Democracy. A pretext had to be found, no matter what kind it would be. As the

question of the credentials failed to provide this pretext, the Mensheviks took advantage of the recommendation of the Central Committee that questions of election tactics be decided by the electoral units directly concerned, and walked out of the conference on the issue of dividing the conference into two parts, one especially for the city and one for the suburbs. They wanted to substitute the territorial administrative units of the police for Party organisational units. If the Mensheviks' advice had been taken, we should not only have had to keep the suburban districts out of the conference, but we should also have had to split up hitherto integral districts, such as the Neva, Moscow and Narva districts, and reorganise the Party to suit the authorities, not the Party.

It was also obvious that, whichever way the question of dividing the conference was decided, the majority would declare against agreements with the Cadets. The Mensheviks walked out and, to the delight of the entire bourgeois press, decided to conduct an independent campaign in St. Petersburg, wage a struggle against their own Party comrades, split the St. Petersburg proletariat for the sake of an agreement with the bourgeois and monarchist party—the “people's freedom” party.

The bourgeois press has every reason to rejoice! The gutter newspaper *Sevodnya* has solemnly declared in a special Leading article that, by taking this decision, the Mensheviks have saved Russia; and *Rech*, the official organ of the Cadets, has promised to reward the Mensheviks by ceding one seat in the worker curia to a “Menshevik”, but under no circumstances to a “Bolshevik”.

The first result of Menshevik independent action is that the bourgeoisie has begun to dictate its will to the worker curia.

Continuing its proceedings after the Mensheviks had walked out, the conference decided (hat, since there is no Black-Hundred



danger in St. Petersburg, and in order to undermine the hegemony of the Cadets and free the democratic petty bourgeoisie from their influence, an agreement should be entered into, on definite terms, with the Socialist-Revolutionaries and the Trudoviks for the distribution of seats (two to the worker curia, two to the Social-Democrats, one to the Socialist-Revolutionaries and one to the Trudoviks).

The bourgeois press is jubilant: the Trudoviks and the Socialist-Revolutionaries have formed a bloc with the Popular Socialists, which is gravitating to the Cadets; the Mensheviks have broken away—the Bolsheviks are isolated! Revolutionary tactics are condemned, “peaceful methods” are triumphant, hurrah for an agreement with the monarchy, and down with the method of popular mass struggle!

Having split the Social-Democrats and enfeebled the proletariat, the hydra of revolution, the Cadets shamelessly strike a bargain—with Mr. Stolypin. The newspapers report that the prime minister has granted Milyukov an audience to take place in a day or two, and that the prime minister’s condition for the legalisation of the Cadet Party is—no blocs with the Left. The Cadets are willing to concede to the entire “Left”—actually, to the petty-bourgeois — bloc (the Popular Socialists, Socialist-Revolutionaries, Trudoviks, and Mensheviks) only two out of the six seats in St. Petersburg. To pacify the gallery the Cadets are prepared to throw two seats to the importunate petty-bourgeois bloc. As they are certain the Left bloc will not accept this, the Cadets are negotiating with Stolypin, the head of the Black Hundreds.

The scene changes. The election campaign begins. Election meetings are being held. The Mensheviks, who very, very rarely speak at these meetings, blather timidly about agreements with the Cadets. The Bolsheviks, who speak at all meetings, call upon

proletarians and semi-proletarians to join a united workers' party—the Social-Democratic Party; they call upon all revolutionary and democratic voters to form a united revolutionary bloc against the Black Hundreds and the Cadets. The Cadets are shouted down, while the Bolsheviks are applauded. The democrats in the city—the workers and the petty bourgeoisie—are swinging towards the Left and shaking off the Cadet yoke.

The scene changes: the “compromisers” are in a tearing rage. It is with foaming mouth that they speak of the Bolsheviks. Down with the Bolsheviks! In moving unity *Novoye Vremya* and *Tovarishch*, the Octobrists and the Cadets, the *Vodovozovs* and the *Gromans* launch a crusade against the red spectre of Bolshevism. If Bolshevism ever needed justification for its revolutionary and class tactics, it has now found it in the fury with which it is being attacked by the entire bourgeois press. If the petty-bourgeois revolutionary democrats, sincerely striving to carry out their slogans, needed an object lesson, they are getting it now in the contempt with which they have been treated by the big and middle bourgeoisie, in the policy of compromise (with the government) which the Cadets are pursuing behind the backs of the people.

The revolutionary Social-Democrats say to all democrats among the urban and rural poor, only in alliance with the proletariat, only by throwing off the tutelage of the Cadets, only in a determined and consistent struggle against the autocracy will you find salvation. If you are mature enough for this, you will follow the proletariat. If not, you will remain under the tutelage of the Cadets; and, whatever the upshot of the election campaign, whatever the result of your bargaining among yourselves for seats, the proletariat will continue to pursue its own class revolutionary road.

Menshevism is now undergoing a severe test. The election campaign has become the corner-stone of its opportunist tactics. Part of the Social-Democrats have fallen under the hegemony of the bourgeois ideologists. Bourgeois ideologists are jeering scathingly at the Mensheviks, whom they call “moderate socialists” (the term Rech uses), who can always be depended on. Their friends from the Right do not take them into consideration ... they only count on their loyal service to the Cadets. A section of Social-Democrats have sunk so low that the liberal bourgeoisie regard them merely as subservient tools, and the revolutionary-minded proletariat prefers to vote for the Socialist-Revolutionaries (as was the case in the elections of delegates in the Menshevik stronghold—the Vyborg District) rather than vote for such Social-Democrats.

The crisis of opportunism is approaching. Menshevism is being dealt a decisive blow by the agreement with the “compromisers”. The Vasilyevs, Malishevskys and Larins have paved the way to ... the cemetery. Confusion and mutual expulsion reign in the ranks of the Mensheviks. Martov is expelling the Vasilyevs and the Malishevskys from the Party. Let the workers expel the very spirit of Menshevism from the Party!

#### Notes

Except in the Menshevik Vyborg District and Franco-Russian Subdistrict, where the platforms were not voted on.—Lenin

Lenin

**From; Revolution and Counter-Revolution**

October 20, 1907

Collected Works, Volume 13, pages 114-122.

At a moment like the present, a comparison between the revolution and counter-revolution in Russia, between the period of revolutionary onslaught (1905) and that of counter-revolutionary playing with a constitution (1906 and 1907) suggests itself as a matter of course. Such a comparison is implicit in any attempt to define a political line for the immediate future. Contrasting "errors of the revolution" or "revolutionary illusions" with "positive constitutional work" is the keynote of present-day political literature. The Cadets shout about it at their pre-election meetings. The liberal press chants, howls, and rants about it. We have here Mr. Struve, vehemently and spitefully venting his annoyance on the revolutionaries because hopes of a "compromise" have totally collapsed.

No one at this stage can tell what forms bourgeois democracy in Russia will assume in the future. Possibly, the bankruptcy of the Cadets may lead to the formation of a peasant democratic party, a truly mass party, and not an organisation of terrorists such as the Socialist-Revolutionaries have been and still are. It is also possible that the objective difficulties of achieving political unity among the petty bourgeoisie will prevent such a party from being formed and, for a long time to come, will keep the peasant democracy in its present state as a loose, amorphous, jelly like Trudovik mass. In either case our line is one: to hammer out the democratic forces by merciless criticism of all vacillations, by uncompromising struggle against the democrats joining the liberals, who have proved their counter revolutionariness.

Lenin

**Notes of a Publicist**

From; The Significance of the December (1908) Resolutions and the Attitude of the Liquidators to Them

March 6 (19) and May 25 (June 7) 1910

Collected Works, Volume 16, pages 195-259.

The editorial in Golos No. 19–20, which I have already cited, concerning the results of the plenum says outright that the introductory words to the resolution are a compromise. This is true, but it becomes untrue if the fact be suppressed that the compromise enforced by the ultimatum of the Mensheviks was the refusal of the majority of the Central Committee to directly confirm all the resolutions of December 1908, and not only the fundamental propositions contained in them.

Lenin

**The Cadets on 'Two Camps' and 'Sensible Compromise'**

February 5, 1911

Collected Works, Volume 17, pages 82-86.

The answer given by Rech to the semi-official organ of the Cabinet on the question of the “slogan” for the elections to the Fourth Duma and on the present-day political alignment represents an interesting and significant phenomenon.

Rech agrees with *Russkiye Vedomosti* that “the elections to the Fourth Duma will be a contest between two camps only: the Progressists and the Rights”. “Votes will have to be cast not for parties, nor for individual candidates, but for or against the consolidation of the constitutional system in Russia. [“Consolidation” is a very charming way of putting it!] The political meaning of this slogan ... is an objective acknowledgement of the indisputable fact that the line pursued by the government has again united the entire opposition, both to the right and to the left of the Cadets.” The Cadets will constitute “the centre of this politically heterogeneous group”, and, although they form part of it, “will renounce their former programme and tactics just as little as did the Social-Democrats when they joined the pre-October alliances” (the editorial, January 21).

“Gentlemen, we can say in reply to the semi-official and official press, it is you yourselves who have been instrumental in uniting us.... At present political trends in Russia are merging to an ever greater extent in two big camps—for and against the Constitution.... Our task at present is the same, again the same, just as it was before October 17...” (ibid.).

In assessing these observations, we must distinguish between the conditions attending the elections to the Fourth Duma and the social and political meaning of the changes under discussion (the "slogan" and the alignments). The circumstances of the elections in general, in the provinces in particular, will certainly compel the "opposition" to resort to the vague non-party term "Progressists" on an even wider scale than before. The refusal to legalise even such parties as the Cadets will inevitably lead to this, and the bewilderment of the semi-official organ of the Cabinet on this score is, of course, nothing but sheer hypocrisy. In the big cities, for instance, as the Cadets themselves admit in that very same editorial, independent candidates of "groups more to the left" (to use the expression of *Russkiye Vedomosti*) will stand for election. This alone shows that there can be no question of just two camps.

Further, Rech thought it best completely to forget the existence of a worker curia, as provided by the present election laws. Finally, with regard to the elections in the villages (the peasant curia) it must be said that here even the word "Progressists" will undoubtedly be avoided; but it will probably not be the Cadets who will constitute the actual "centre" of the "politically heterogeneous" or politically undefinable groups.

What, then, does the talk about two camps amount to? To the fact that it pleases the Cadets, in speaking of the present political situation, to narrow down their field of vision to include only those elements that constitute the majority in the Third Duma. The Cadet gentlemen are willing to recognise as political "camps" only that insignificant section of the population represented by these elements. Hitherto the main division in this small corner created by the coup d'état of June 3 has been: the Rights, the Octobrists, the Cadets. (It is well known that the character of the Third Duma was determined, in the final

analysis, by two majorities: the Rights with the Octobrists and the Octobrists with the Cadets.) Now (according to the forecast of *Russkiye Vedomosti*, with which Rech is in agreement) these three elements will be divided into two "camps": the Rights and Progressists.

We fully admit that these predictions of the liberals are based not on the wishes of the liberals alone, but on objective facts as well—on the changes in the political situation and in the political sentiments of the Russian bourgeoisie. It would be impermissible, however, to forget that one can speak of two camps only when the field of observation is limited to the majority in the Third Duma. It would be impermissible to forget that the actual meaning of all this talk is nothing more than the tendency on the part of the Octobrist and the Cadet "camps" to draw closer together, merge and unite in the Progressist "camp" (with the tacit understanding, of course, that a more or less considerable section of the Octobrist camp will defect to the camp of the Rights). When the Cadets say: "we" have been united, again "we" have one task, etc., these words "we", "us", "our" actually mean nothing more than the Octobrists and the Cadets.

Now, what has united "them"? What is "their" task? What is "their" slogan for the elections to the Fourth Duma? "The consolidation of the Constitution", reply *Russkiye Vedomosti* and Rech. This reply is only seemingly definite; actually, it defines absolutely nothing; it amounts to the same, absolutely meaningless, reference to some indefinite "mean" between the Octobrists and the Cadets. For both Milyukov and Guchkov agree that "Thank God, we have a Constitution", but when they dream of making common cause, it is for the purpose of "consolidating", not what "we" have, but what we have not. It is also a dream, and not a very sensible one at that, that Milyukov



and Guchkov, the Cadets and the Octobrists of today, and the "Progressists" of tomorrow, could agree on a definition of what should be included in the desired Constitution. They would be unable to agree either on the legal formulations expressing the Constitution, or on defining what real interests of what actual classes this Constitution should meet and safeguard. Hence, the real meaning of this joint slogan amounts to this: while they are being drawn more closely together by "a negative aim—that of the struggle against the common enemy" (as Rech puts it in the same editorial), the Octobrists and the Cadets cannot define their positive tasks, cannot find in their camps the forces that would be capable of emerging from the deadlock.

The observations of Rech on the subject of a "sensible compromise" in connection with another matter are a very clearly expressed admission that they are indeed in a state of deadlock, that it is necessary to emerge from this state, that this is necessary for both the Octobrists and the Cadets, and that, after they have emerged, both will be absolutely impotent by themselves.

"During the debate in the Duma on the St. Petersburg sewerage system," we read in an editorial in Rech of January 20, "the unhealthy undercurrent of the controversy was somewhat lessened, and even the Centre [i.e., the Octobrists] found it possible to accept the sensible compromise which the people's freedom group proposed and the municipality accepted; but the interference of P. A. Stolypin rudely tore away the veil [you, Messrs. Cadets, would like vexed questions to remain hidden under a veil, wouldn't you?] and revealed the same old background, with which everyone has been disgusted for some time—that of the political struggle of the state against the municipality."

The liberal bourgeoisie in the guise of an innocent—oh, how innocent!—person dreaming of “sensible compromises” on a businesslike, non-political basis, and the representatives of the old, “non-constitutional”, principles in the role of political educators who tear down the veils and reveal the class background! A sensible compromise, the liberal muses, means that what the Cadets, the Octobrists and the non-party bigwigs of capital (the St. Petersburg municipality) have agreed upon may be conceded. There is nothing sensible in the idea of our yielding to you, the government replies; the only sensible thing is that you yield to us.

The minor question of the sanitation of St. Petersburg, of the distribution of the responsibilities and rights between local self-government and autocratic government, became the occasion for the elucidation of truths of no mean importance. What, indeed, is more “sensible”—the wishes, dreams and demands of the whole bourgeoisie, or the power of, say, the Council of the United Nobility?

In the eyes of Rech, as well as of the whole Cadet Party, the criterion of the “wisdom” of a compromise is in its approval by men of affairs, businessmen, bigwigs, the Octobrists themselves, the wire-pullers of the St. Petersburg municipality themselves. But the actual state of affairs—no matter how it is furbished up with phrases like “Thank God, we have a Constitution”—unmasks these compromises and tears away these veils rather rudely.

To sum up: “You have been instrumental in uniting us”, Rech says to the semi-official organ of the Cabinet. Who do they mean by “us”? It appears that they mean the Octobrists and the Cadets. What have they united for? For a common task, the consolidation of the Constitution. And what are we to understand by the Constitution and its consolidation? A sensible compromise

between the Octobrists and the Cadets. What is the criterion of the wisdom of compromises of this kind? Their approval by the worst representatives of Russian “Kolupayev” capitalism, such as the St. Petersburg municipal councillors. And what is the practical result of these sensible compromises? The result is that P. A. Stolypin, or the Council of State, or Tolmachov, etc., “rudely unmask” these compromises.... Oh, these practical politicians!

But will there not be a third camp at the elections to the Fourth Duma—one that realises how senseless, ridiculous and naïve is the Cadet policy of “sensible compromise”? What do you think of that, gentlemen of Rech and Russkiye Vedomosti?

Lenin

## **A Liberal Labour Party Manifesto**

December 3, 1911

Collected Works, Volume 17, pages 313-324.

### II

Since we are not inclined to accept the liberal wishes or liberal conjectures as reality, we have reached a different conclusion. Without doubt the present agrarian policy is bourgeois in character. But since it is the Purishkeviches who are directing this bourgeois policy, who remain masters of the situation, the result is such a tremendous accentuation of the contradictions that, for the immediate future, at any rate, the likelihood of a compromise must be considered entirely out of the question.

Another important social process, says R-kov in continuing his analysis, is the process of the consolidation of the big industrial and commercial bourgeoisie. Correctly indicating the "mutual concessions" of the Constitutional-Democrats and the Octobrists, the author draws the conclusion: "We must not cherish any illusions—what we see in the offing is the triumph of a quite moderate bourgeois 'progressism'".

Triumph?—Where? Over whom? Is it at the elections to the Fourth Duma of which R-kov has just spoken? If that is what he means, then it will be a "triumph" within the narrow confines of the election law of June 3, 1907. Hence one of two conclusions is inevitable: either the "triumph" will not set up a wave and thus the actual domination of the Purishkeviches will in no way be changed; or this "triumph" will indirectly be the expression of a democratic revival which is bound to come into sharp conflict with the above-mentioned "narrow confines" and with the domination of the Purishkeviches.

In either case the triumph of moderation at elections conducted within moderate bounds will not bring about the least triumph of moderation in real life. The point is, how ever, that R-kov has already lapsed into a state of "parliamentary cretinism", which enables him to confuse elections conducted on the basis of the June Third law with reality! To demonstrate this incredible fact to the reader we must quote R-kov in full:

"And this triumph is all the more probable since the mass of the urban petty bourgeoisie which, in its philistine way, is dejectedly contemplating its shattered illusions, will helplessly gravitate towards moderate progressivism, and the peasantry will be all too weak at the elections because the peculiar features of our electoral system enable the landowners who predominate in the gubernia panels of electors to elect 'Rights' to represent the peasants. Such is the picture of the social changes that are taking place in Russia at present, if, for the time being, we leave the working class out of consideration. It is by no means a picture of stagnation or of regression. New, bourgeois, Russia is undoubtedly gaining in strength and is advancing. The State Duma, based on the electoral system established on June 3, 1907, will provide the political sanction for the coming domination of the moderately progressive industrial and commercial bourgeoisie that will share power with the conservative rural bourgeoisie. (England, pure and simple! We Omit the comparison with France and Prussia, on which we shall dwell below.) Thus, in summing up everything that has just been said, we must admit that there exist all the prerequisites for a slow, extremely painful for the masses, but nevertheless certain advance of the bourgeois social and political system in Russia. The possibility of storms and upheavals is, naturally, not out of the question, but they will not become something indispensable and inevitable, as was the case before the revolution."

An intricate philosophy, that one cannot deny. If we leave the peasantry out of account, because it is “weak at the elections”, and if “for the time being, we leave the working class out of consideration”, then, of course, there is absolutely no possibility of upheavals! But what it amounts to is that one who examines Russia from a liberal viewpoint can see nothing but liberal “progressism”. Remove your liberal blinkers and the picture becomes an entirely different one. Since the part played by the peasantry in life is quite different from the part it plays in the June Third electoral system, the fact that it is “weak at the elections”—far from opening the gates to a “moderate progressism”—accentuates the antagonism between the peasantry as a whole and the entire system. Since the working class cannot be left “out of consideration” either in a capitalist country in general, or in Russia after the experience of the first ten years of the twentieth century in particular, R-kov’s argumentation is entirely useless. Since the dominating factor in Russia (both in the Third Duma and above it) is Purishkevichism, occasionally moderated by the grumbling of the Guchkovs and Milyukovs, the talk about the “impending domination” of the moderately progressive bourgeoisie is just a liberal lullaby. Since the Guchkovs and Milyukovs by virtue of their class position can oppose the domination of the Purishkeviches with nothing but their grumbling, a conflict between the new, bourgeois Russia and the Purishkeviches is inevitable, and its motive forces will be those whom R-kov, following the example of the liberals, leaves “out of consideration”. Just because the Milyukovs and Guchkovs are making “mutual concessions” in cringing before the Purishkeviches, it is all the more necessary for the workers to draw the line between democracy and liberalism. N. R-kov sees neither the conditions giving rise to upheavals in Russia nor the task just indicated, which is obligatory even in the definite absence of an upheaval.

A vulgar democrat may reduce the whole matter to the question whether there is an upheaval or not. The Marxist is primarily concerned with the line of political demarcation between the classes, which is the same during an upheaval and in its absence. R-kov's statement that "the workers must assume the task of exercising political hegemony in the struggle for a democratic regime", is extraordinary after all he has written in his manifesto. What it means is that R-kov gets a guarantee from the bourgeoisie to recognise the hegemony of the workers, while he himself gives the bourgeoisie a guarantee to the effect that the workers renounce the tasks which constitute the substance of hegemony! After he has removed this substance, leaving no trace whatsoever, R-kov naïvely goes on to repeat a hollow phrase. First, he gives an appraisal of the situation from which it is evident that, as far as he is concerned, the hegemony of the liberals is an accomplished, irrevocable, and inescapable fact, and then he tries to assure us that he recognises the hegemony of the working class!

The "real" significance of the Duma, argues R-kov, "is no less than that of the French Legislative Corps during the last years of the Second Empire, or that of the proportional mean between the German Reichstag and the Prussian Landtag that was characteristic of Prussia in the eighties of the past century".

This kind of comparison is so frivolous that it is mere playing at historical parallels. In France in the sixties the epoch of bourgeois revolutions had long since come to an end, a direct clash between the proletariat and the bourgeoisie was already knocking at the door, and Bonapartism was the expression of the government's manoeuvring between these two classes. It is ridiculous to compare that situation with contemporary Russia. The Third Duma is more reminiscent of the *Chambre introuvable* of 1815! In Prussia, the eighties also marked the epoch of the

consummation of the bourgeois revolution, which had completed its work by 1870. The entire bourgeoisie, which included both the urban and rural petty bourgeoisie, was contented and reactionary.

Perhaps R-kov fancied he saw a comparison between the role of the democratic and the proletarian deputies in the Legislative Corps and in the Reichstag, and the role of the deputies of the same classes in the Third Duma? That would be a legitimate comparison; but, then, it would not prove his point, for the conduct of Gegechkori and, to a certain extent, also of Petrov the Third, testifies to such strength, self-confidence, and readiness for battle on the part of the classes which they represent that a "compromise" with the Purishkeviches is not only unlikely but appears to be absolutely out of the question.



Lenin

### Plan for a Lecture “Manifesto of the Liberal Labour Party”

November 14 (27), 1911

Collected Works, Volume 41, pages 242.2-243.1.

1. Why does N. Rozhkov’s article in No. 9–10 of *Nasha Zarya* deserve such a name and the most thorough analysis? It affords an opportunity of examining the question of the two lines in the labour movement and the “two parties” outside any “conflict” material, outside any “squabble”.
2. The type of “Social-Democrat of freedom days”. Bourgeois democrats in Marxist garb. Rozhkov as a specimen; his article is a wholesale substitution of liberalism for Marxism.
3. The role of the serf-owners in modern Russia from the standpoint of the liberals (Rozhkov) and the Marxists. The “December (1908) resolutions” of the R.S.D.L.P.
4. The attitude of democrats to the (Stolypin) solution of the agrarian problem **“through a compromise between various groups of the bourgeoisie”**.
5. Is Russia to have a “triumph of highly moderate bourgeois progressism”?
6. A comparison of modern Russia with her Third Duma and France of the 1860s with her Legislative Corps, and Prussia of 1880s.
7. Have the “old slogans” become a “dead letter”?
8. Why is the Society for the Protection of the Interests of the Working Class, which is being set up by Rozhkov, a society for the liberal protection of working-class interests in their liberal interpretation?

9. Ratio: Y. Larin is to the labour congress as N. Rozhkov is to the legal liquidationist party.

Lenin

### **From the Camp of the Stolypin "Labour" Party**

December 8 (21), 1911

*Collected Works*, Volume 17, pages 354-359.

An outstanding event in this camp is the article by N. R-kov published in No. 9–10 of the liquidationist *Nasha Zarya*. This article is a real *Credo* or manifesto of a liberal labour party. From the very beginning, from his assessment of the revolution and the role of all the classes involved, and proceeding with remarkable consistency to the end, to the scheme for a legal workers' (?) party, in all his arguments, R-kov substitutes liberalism for Marxism.

What is the real task facing Russia? The complete replacement of semi-feudal economy by "civilised capitalism".

That is not Marxism, however, but Struveism or liberalism, for a Marxist distinguishes between classes with their Octobrist, Cadet, Trudovik, or proletarian ideas as to what constitutes "civilised" capitalism.

What is the crux of the problem of appraising of the revolution? R-kov condemns the whining and renegacy of those who shout that the revolution has "failed" and against them puts forward ... the great professorial maxim that during periods of "reaction" too, new social forces are maturing. It is evident that R-kov's answer disguises the *essence* of the matter to the advantage of the counter-revolutionary liberals who fully acknowledge the maxim newly-discovered by R-kov. The essence of the question is: which of the classes that took part in the revolution showed that they were capable of waging a direct, mass revolutionary struggle, which classes betrayed the revolution and directly or indirectly joined the counter-revolution? R-kov concealed this

essence and was thus able to ignore the difference between revolutionary democracy and the liberal-monarchist “progressive” opposition.

As regards the role of the landlord class, R-kov managed without further ado to say something absurd. Not so long ago, he says, the representatives of that class “were” real serf-owners; now “a small handful are still grouped around Messrs. Purishkevich and Markov the Second, and are helplessly [U spluttering the venom of despair”. The majority of the landed nobility, he goes on to say, “are gradually and steadily being converted into an agricultural bourgeoisie”.

In actual fact, as everybody knows, the Markovs and the Purishkeviches have *full* power in the Duma, still more in the Council of State, and even more in the tsar’s Black-Hundred clique, and yet more in the administration of Russia. It is precisely “their power and their revenue” (resolution of the December 1908 conference) that are guaranteed by a step in *this kind* of transformation of tsarism into a bourgeois monarchy. The conversion of serf economy into bourgeois economy by no means does away immediately with the political power of these Black-Hundred-type landowners. This is obvious from the viewpoint of elementary Marxism, and it also follows from the experience, say, of Prussia after sixty years of “conversion” (since 1848). According to R-kov there is no absolutism and no monarchy in Russia! R-kov applies a liberal school method: the benign elimination (on paper) of social extremes serves as “proof” that a “compromise is inevitable”.

Present-day agrarian policy, according to R-kov, indicates an “imminent and inevitable [!] compromise” —between whom?— “between the different groups of the bourgeoisie”. But, we ask our “Marxist”, what social force will compel the Purishkeviches, who wield all the power, to agree to a compromise? R-kov does

not answer this question. But since he goes on to refer to the process of the consolidation of the big commercial and industrial bourgeoisie, and “the impending domination of the moderately progressive” bourgeoisie, there is only one conclusion to be drawn—R-kov expects that the moderately progressive bourgeoisie will peacefully take over power from the Purishkeviches and Romanovs.

Incredible as this is, it is a fact. It is precisely this most puerile of liberal utopias that forms the basis of R-kov’s conception, although he boasts that “there is not a grain of utopia” in what he says. There is no actual difference between N. R-kov and the extreme liquidators, all of whom—from Larin to Cherevanin, Dan, and Martov—set forth, in slightly different forms and phrases, *the very same fundamental idea* of a peaceful assumption of power by the bourgeoisie (with, at most, *pressure* exerted from “below”).

But in real life not in a liberal utopia, we see the domination of Purishkevichism moderated by the grumbling of the Guchkovs and Milyukovs. The “moderately progressive” Octobrists and Cadets, far from undermining this domination, are perpetuating it. The contradiction between this domination and the unquestionably advancing bourgeois development of Russia is becoming ever sharper (and not weaker, as the theorists of “inevitable compromise” think). The motive force in the solution of this contradiction can only be the masses, i.e., the proletariat with the peasantry following its lead.

This former Bolshevik, who has now become a liquidator, dismisses these masses so readily, that it is as if the Stolypin gallows and the torrent of filth let loose by *Vekhi* had eliminated them, not only from the arena of open politics, not only from the pages of liberal publications, but also from real life. The peasantry, says our liberal in his “analysis”, are weak at the

elections; and as for the Working class, he provisionally leaves it “out of consideration”!!

R-kov undertook to prove that a revolution (“upheaval”) in Russia, though possible, is not essential. Once the working class and the peasantry are “left out of consideration”, even if only provisionally, if only “for the time being”, if only because of their “weakness at the elections”, a revolution is not, of course, possible, to say nothing of its being essential. But liberal benevolence cannot conjure away either the unrestricted power of Purishkevich and Romanov, or the revolutionary resistance which is growing stronger both among the maturing proletariat and the starving and tormented peasantry. The trouble with R-kov is that he has abandoned the Marxist *line*, the line followed by revolutionary Social-Democrats, who always, under all circumstances and in every possible form, in speeches at mass meetings, from the rostrum of the Third Duma, at meetings of Soviets of Workers’ Deputies, or in the most peaceable and legally functioning workers’ associations, insist that this resistance must be given support, that it must be strengthened, developed, and properly directed toward the achievement of complete victory. In all his arguments N. R-kov has substituted for this line that of the liberal who refuses to see the force that has been driven underground, who refuses to see anything but the Purishkeviches who are being “converted” into “civilised Junkers”, or the “moderately progressive” Milyukovs.

That is the specific kind of blindness which is characteristic of the whole of *Nasha Zarya* and of the whole Stolypin labour party. Closely connected with this conception—one due to the blindness caused by liberal blinkers—is the extraordinarily strong emphasis on the legalisation of the workers’ party. Since “a compromise is inevitable”, there is no point in fighting the inevitable, and all that remains for the working class to do is to

follow the example of the other classes of the fully established bourgeois system and feather for itself a humble little philistine nest in a nook of this system. That is the real meaning of the legalists' propaganda, no matter how much Martov, given that role by the Potresovs, Yuri Chatskys, Larins, Dans, and others, may hide it behind "revolutionary" phraseology.

This *real* meaning of a legal "association for the protection of the interests of the working class" is very clearly revealed in R-kov's article. It is obvious that the "powers that be" will never permit such an association, even if it is dominated by the Prokopoviches. It is obvious that they will never agree to let it be "put into effect". Only blind liberals can fail to see this. But an *association* of intellectuals who, under the guise of socialism, are spreading *liberal* propaganda among the working masses is something that has already been put into effect. This "association" consists of the contributors to *Nasha Zarya* and *Dyelo Zhizni*. And it is their "banner", the ideological banner of liberalism, that R-kov "unfurls" when he asserts that, unless there exists an open organisation the struggle will inevitably (!) assume an anarchist character; that the old slogans have become dead letters; that tactics must not be reduced to a "scuffle"; that the new "association" harbours "*no thought* [!] of the need for a forcible revolution", etc. This liberal, renegade propaganda of intellectuals is a reality, whereas the talk of an open working-class association is mere eyewash. An association for the liberal protection of the interests of the working class as understood by the liberals is a reality; *Nasha Zarya* is this "association", and the "open and broad political organisation" of workers in present-day Russia, is an innocuous, empty, misleading liberal dream.

It is a useful thing to organise legally functioning trade unions, as long as we are aware that under present conditions they

cannot become either broad, or “political”, or stable. But it is an empty and harmful occupation to preach liberal concepts of a political workers’ association that *exclude* any idea of the use of force.

In conclusion, here are two amusing bits. The first: “If anyone,” writes R-kov, “blinded by reactionary frenzy, took it into his head to accuse the members of such an association of striving for violent revolution, the whole burden of such an absurd, unfounded, and juridically flimsy accusation would fall upon the head of the accuser.” We can just visualise the picture of the burden of juridically flimsy accusations falling upon the heads of Shcheglovitov and Co.—and it is not Rodichev but N. R-kov who crushes them under that “burden”.

The second: “The workers,” writes R-kov, “must assume the task of political hegemony in the struggle for a democratic system.” R-kov is in favour of hegemony after he has deprived it of its entire *meaning*. “Workers,” says R-kov in effect, “you must not fight against the ‘inevitable’ compromise, but you must call yourselves leaders.” But the very thing a leader has to do is to expose the fiction about a compromise being “inevitable” and to work to organise proletarian and proletarian-peasant resistance to undemocratic bourgeois compromises.

N. R-kov will be as useful in the struggle against liquidationism, as Y. Larin was in the struggle against the false idea of a labour congress. N. R-kov and Y. Larin have had the courage to appear ... naked. R-kov is an honest liquidator. By his fearlessness he will compel people *to think* about the ideological roots of liquidationism. He will provide ever more corroboration of the correctness of the December 1908 resolutions of the R.S.D.L.P., for he regularly poses (and invariably gives wrong answers to) the very problems which those resolutions analysed and answered correctly. R-kov will help the workers to obtain a



particularly clear idea of the wretchedness of those liquidationist diplomats who, like the editors of *Nasha Zarya* (or of *Golos*), twist and turn, piling up reservation upon reservation, and disclaiming responsibility for “certain passages” in R-kov’s article, or for the “detailed exposition” of his plan. As if it were a question of separate passages, and not of a uniform, integral, and consistent line—the line of a liberal labour policy!

Lenin

**Report of the C.C. of the R.S.D.L.P. to the Brussels Conference and Instructions to the C.C. Delegation**

June 23–30 (July 6–13), 1914

Collected Works, Volume 20, pages 495-535.

Before proceeding to the report on behalf of the Central Committee of the Russian Social-Democratic Labour Party, I shall first of all take this opportunity of performing a pleasant duty, and on behalf of that body express profound thanks to Comrade Vandervelde, Chairman of the Executive Committee of the International Socialist Bureau, for visiting our country and making himself personally acquainted with the leaders of the working-class movement in St. Petersburg. We are particularly grateful to Comrade Vandervelde for being the first to establish direct contact between prominent members of the International and the class-conscious and leading workers of Russia, and also for publishing in the foreign socialist press (we have in mind *Le Peuple* and *l'Hutmanité*) objective data on the working-class movement in Russia, data collected on the spot from the editors of the newspapers of the three trends, namely the Pravdist (i. e., our Party), the liquidationist and the Socialist-Revolutionary trends.

I shall divide my report on the question of the unity of the Russian Social-Democratic movement into the following four parts: (1) first, I shall explain the gist of the main differences among the Social-Democrats; (2) I shall then quote data concerning the mass working-class movement in Russia, showing how our Party line has been tested by the experience of this movement; (3) I shall explain how the line and position of our opponents have been tested by the same experience. Fourth and last, I shall formulate, on behalf of the Central Committee of

the Russian Social-Democratic Labour Party, concrete, positive and practical proposals for unity.

## I

There are two bodies of opinion on what is at present taking place in the Russian Social-Democratic movement.

One opinion, expounded by Rosa Luxemburg in the proposal she made to the International Socialist Bureau last year (December 1913) and shared by the liquidators and the groups which support them, is as follows: in Russia the "chaos" of factional strife reigns among a multitude of factions, the worst of which, namely, the Leninist faction, is most active in fomenting a split. Actually, the differences do not preclude the possibility of joint activities. The road to unity lies through agreement or compromise among all trends and groups.

The other opinion, which we hold, is that there is nothing resembling "chaos of factional strife" in Russia. The only thing we have there is a struggle against the liquidators, and it is only in the course of this struggle that a genuinely workers' Social-Democratic Party is being built up, which has already united the overwhelming majority—four-fifths—of the class-conscious workers of Russia. The illegal Party, in which the majority of the workers of Russia are organised, has been represented by the following conferences: the January Conference of 1912, the February Conference of 1913, and the Summer Conference of 1913. The legal organ of the Party is the newspaper *Pravda* (*Vérité*), hence the name *Pravdist*. Incidentally, this opinion was expressed by the St. Petersburg worker who, at a banquet in St. Petersburg which Comrade Vandervelde attended, stated that the workers in the factories of St. Petersburg are united, and that outside of this unity of the workers there are only "general staffs without armies".

In the second part of my report I shall deal with the objective data which prove that ours is the correct opinion. And now I shall deal with the substance of liquidationism.

The liquidationist groups were formally expelled from the Party at the R.S.D.L.P. Conference in January 1912, but the question of liquidationism was raised by our Party much earlier. A definite official resolution, binding upon the whole Party and unreservedly condemning liquidationism, was adopted by the All-Russia Conference of the R.S.D.L.P. held as far back as December 1908. In this resolution liquidationism is defined as follows:

(Liquidationism is) “an attempt on the part of some of the Party intelligentsia to liquidate the existing organisation of the R.S.D.L.P. and to substitute for it an amorphous federation acting at all cost within the limits of legality, even at the cost of openly abandoning the programme, tactics and traditions of the Party”.

From this it is evident that as far back as 1908 liquidationism was officially declared and recognised as an intellectualist trend, and that in substance it stood for the renunciation of the illegal Party and the substitution, or advocacy of the substitution, of a legal party for it.

The Central Committee’s plenary meeting held in January 1910 once again unanimously condemned liquidationism as “a manifestation of the influence of the bourgeoisie on the proletariat”.

From this we see how mistaken is the opinion that our differences with the liquidators are no deeper and are less important than those between the so-called radicals and moderates in Western Europe. There is not a single—literally not a single—West-European party that has ever had occasion to

adopt a general party decision against people who desired to dissolve the party and to substitute a new one for it!

Nowhere in Western Europe has there ever been, nor can there ever be, a question of whether it is permissible to bear the title of party member and at the same time advocate the dissolution of that party, to argue that the party is useless and unnecessary, and that another party be substituted for it. Nowhere in Western Europe does the question concern the very existence of the party as it does with us, i. e., whether that party is to be or not to be.

This is not disagreement over a question of organisation, of how the party should be built, but disagreement **concerning** the very existence of the party. Here, conciliation, agreement and compromise are totally out of the question.

We could not have built up our Party (to the extent of four-fifths) and cannot continue to build it otherwise than by relentlessly fighting those publicists who in the legal press fight against the “underground” (i.e., the illegal Party), declare it to be an “evil”, justify and eulogise desertion from it, and advocate the formation of an “open party”.

In present-day Russia, where even the party of the extremely moderate liberals is not legal, our Party can exist only as an illegal party. The exceptional and unique feature of our position, which somewhat resembles that of the German Social-Democrats under the Anti-Socialist Law (although, even then, the Germans enjoyed a hundred times more legality than we do in Russia), is that our illegal Social-Democratic Labour Party consists of illegal workers’ organisations (often called “cells”) which are surrounded by a more or less dense network of legal workers’ associations (such as sick insurance societies, trade unions, educational associations, athletic clubs, temperance societies,

and so forth). Most of these legal associations exist in the metropolis; in many parts of the provinces there are none at all.

Some of the illegal organisations are fairly large, others are quite small and in some cases they consist only of “trusted agents”.

The legal associations serve to some extent as a screen for the illegal organisations and for the extensive, legal advocacy of the idea of working-class solidarity among the masses. Nation-wide contacts between the leading working class organisations, the maintenance of a centre (the Central Committee) and the passing of precise Party resolutions on all questions—all these are of course carried out quite illegally and call for the utmost secrecy and trustworthiness on the part of advanced and tested workers.

To come out in the legal press against the “underground” or in favour of an “open party” is simply to disrupt our Party, and we must regard the people who do this as bitter enemies of our Party.

Naturally, repudiation of the “underground” goes hand in hand with repudiation of revolutionary tactics and advocacy of reformism. Russia is passing through a period of bourgeois revolutions. In Russia even the most moderate bourgeois—the Cadets and Octobrists—are decidedly dissatisfied with the government. But they are all enemies of revolution and detest us for “demagogy”, for striving again to lead the masses to the barricades as we did in 1905. They are all bourgeois who advocate only “reforms” and spread among the masses the highly pernicious idea that reform is compatible with the present tsarist monarchy.

Our tactics are different. We make use of every reform (insurance, for example) and of every legal society. But we use them to develop the revolutionary consciousness and the revolutionary struggle of the masses. In Russia, where political

freedom to this day does not exist, these words have far more direct implications for us than they have in Europe. Our Party conducts revolutionary strikes, which in Russia are growing as in no other country in the world. Take, for example, the month of May alone. In May 1912, 64,000 and in May 1914, 99,000 workers were involved in economic strikes.

The number involved in political strikes was: 364,000 in 1912 and (347,000 in 1914. The combination of political and economic struggle produces the revolutionary strike, which, by rousing the peasant millions, trains them for revolution. Our Party conducts campaigns of revolutionary meetings and revolutionary street demonstrations. For this purpose, our Party distributes revolutionary leaflets and an illegal newspaper, the Party's Central Organ. The ideological unification of all these propaganda and agitation activities among the masses is achieved by the slogans adopted by the supreme bodies of our Party, namely: (1) an eight-hour day; (2) confiscation of the landed estates, and (3) a democratic republic. In the present situation in Russia, where absolute tyranny and despotism prevail and where all laws are suppressed by the tsarist monarchy, only these slogans can effectually unite and direct the entire propaganda and agitation of the Party aimed at effectually sustaining the revolutionary working-class movement.

It amuses us to hear the liquidators say, for example, that we are opposed to "freedom of association", for we not only emphasised the importance of this point of our programme in a special resolution adopted by the January Conference of 1912, but we made ten times more effective use of the curtailed right of association (the insurance societies, for example) than the liquidators did. But when people tell us in the legal press that the slogans of confiscation of the land and of a republic cannot serve as subjects for agitation among the masses, we say that there can

be no question of our Party's unity with such people, and such a group of publicists.

Since the purpose of this first part of my report is to explain the gist of our differences, I shall say no more on this point, except to remind you that the fourth part of my report will contain practical proposals, with an exact list of all the cases where the liquidators have departed from our Party's programme and decisions.

I shall not here go into the details of the history of the liquidators' breakaway from our illegal Party, the R.S.D.L.P., but will merely indicate the three main periods of this history.

First period: from the autumn of 1908 to January 1910. The Party combated liquidationism with the aid of precise, official, Party decisions condemning it.

Second period: from January 1910 to January 1912. The liquidators hindered the work of restoring the Central Committee of the Party; they disrupted the Central Committee of the Party and dismissed the last remnants of it, namely, the Technical Commission of the Bureau Abroad of the Central Committee. The Party committees in Russia then (autumn 1911) set up the Russian Organising Commission for the purpose of restoring the Party. That Commission convened the January Conference of 1912. The Conference restored the Party, elected a Central Committee and expelled the liquidationist group from the Party.

Third period: from January 1912 to the present time. The specific feature of this period is that a majority of four-fifths of the class-conscious workers of Russia have rallied around the decisions and bodies created by the January Conference of 1912.



I now come to the second part of my report, in which I shall describe the present state of our Party and of the liquidators in the light of the mass working-class movement in Russia. I shall try to answer the question: does the experience of the mass movement confirm the correctness of our Party's line or of the liquidators' line?

## II

On April 22, 1912 (old style) the working-class daily, Pravda, began to appear in Russia, thanks to the restoration of the Party at the January Conference of 1912; this newspaper is pursuing the line (often by hints and always in a curtailed form) laid down by that Conference. Obviously, we never mention in any organ of the press the illegal connection that exists between the Party's illegal Conference of January 1912 and the Central Committee it set up, on the one hand, and the legal newspaper Pravda, on the other. In September 1912, the rival newspaper of the liquidators, Luch, now called *Nasha Rabochaya Gazeta*, began to appear. Then, in the autumn of 1912, the Fourth Duma elections took place. In 1913, a new insurance law came into force in Russia, establishing sick funds for the workers. Lastly, the legal trade unions, relentlessly persecuted by the government and repeatedly suppressed, were, nevertheless, constantly revived.

It is not difficult to understand that all these manifestations of the mass working-class movement—especially the daily newspapers of the two trends—provide a vast amount of public, verifiable, and objective data. We deem it our duty to the Executive Committee of the International Socialist Bureau emphatically to protest against the habit of the liquidators and their defenders abroad of making unsubstantiated statements, assurances and declamations, while ignoring the objective facts of the mass working-class movement in Russia.

It is these facts that have definitely strengthened us in our conviction that the line we are pursuing is the right one.

In January 1912 the Conference of the R.S.D.L.P., which restored the illegal Party, was held. The liquidators and the groups abroad (including Plekhanov) greeted it with abuse. But what about the workers in Russia?

The answer to this question was provided by the Fourth Duma elections.

These elections were held in the autumn of 1912. Whereas in the Third Duma 50 per cent (four out of eight) of the deputies elected by the worker curia belonged to our trend, in the Fourth Duma six out of nine, i.e., 67 per cent, of the deputies elected by the worker curia were supporters of the Party. This proves that the masses of the workers sided with the Party and rejected liquidationism. If the six members of the Duma, who incline towards liquidationism, now really desire unity with the Party group in the Duma, the Russian Social-Democratic Labour group, then we are obliged to say that recognition of the fact that these deputies are carrying out the will of the majority of the workers is the condition for unity.

To proceed. Daily newspapers are extremely important media of working-class organisation. They contain a vast amount of material proving this, i.e., the figures showing the number of contributions received from workers' groups. Both newspapers, the Pravdist (i.e., the Party) and the liquidationist, publish reports of financial contributions received from workers' groups. These reports are, for Russia, the best conceivable index—public and legal—of the actual state of organisation of the masses of the workers.

In Western Europe, where the socialist parties are legal, the number of party members is known to everybody, and

discussions concerning the organised working-class movement are always based on these figures.

In Russia we have no open, i.e., legal party. The Party's organisations are illegal, secret, "underground", as we say. But an indirect—and also unerring—index of the state of these organisations is provided by the number of financial contributions received from workers' groups.

These figures have been published openly and regularly in both newspapers—for over two years in ours and over eighteen months in the liquidators'—and if any false claim or mistake were made it would immediately have called forth a protest on the part of the workers themselves. Consequently, these figures are absolutely reliable and are the best public and legal index of the state of organisation of the masses of the workers.

Our liquidators, and the groups abroad which defend them, persistently ignore these figures, and say nothing about them in their press; but our workers merely regard this as evidence of their desire to flout the will of the majority of the workers, as evidence of their lack of honesty.

Here are the figures for the whole of 1913. The Pravdists received 2,181 money contributions from workers' groups, while the liquidators received 661. In 1914 (up to May 13), the Pravdists had the support of 2,873 workers' groups, and the liquidators, of 671. Thus, the Pravdists organised 77 per cent of the workers' groups in 1913, and 81 per cent in 1914.

The Pravdists have been publishing these figures regularly since 1912, inviting investigation, pointing to their objective character, and calling upon the genuine (not hypocritical) friends of "unity" straightforwardly and honestly to submit to the will of the majority of the workers. Failing this, all their talk about unity is sheer hypocrisy.

After the liquidators had been fighting the Party for eighteen months, the class-conscious workers of Russia, by a four-fifths majority, approved of the Pravda line and demonstrated their loyalty to the “underground” and to revolutionary tactics. What we expect from the liquidators and their friends is not phrases about “unity” against the Party’s will, but a straightforward answer to the question: do they or do they not accept the will of the vast majority of the class-conscious workers of Russia?

It is easy to give empty assurances, but it is very difficult to organise a genuine working-class newspaper that is really maintained by the workers. All the foreign comrades know this, and they are more experienced than we are. A real working-class newspaper, i.e., a newspaper that is really financed by the workers and which pursues the Party line, is a powerful instrument of organisation.

What do these figures show? These objective figures show that Pravda is a genuinely working-class newspaper, whereas the liquidationist newspaper, which repudiates the “underground”, i. e., the Party, both in its ideas and in the sources from which it obtains its funds is, in fact, a bourgeois newspaper.

From January 1 to May 13, 1914, both newspapers, as usual, published reports of collections, and our newspaper published a summary of these reports. Here are the results. Pravda collected R.21,584.11, of which R.18,934.10 came from workers’ groups. Thus, 87 per cent of the contributions came from organised workers and only 13 per cent from the bourgeoisie.

The liquidators collected R.12,055.89, of which R.5,296.12 came from workers’ groups, i.e., only 44 per cent—less than half. The liquidators get more than half their funds from bourgeois sources.

Moreover, day in day out the entire liberal-bourgeois press eulogises the liquidators, helps them to flout the will of the majority of the workers, and encourages them in their reformism and repudiation of the "underground".

The activities of the groups abroad are exemplified in the newspaper *Yedinstvo*, run by Comrade Plekhanov, deputy Buryanov, and others. I have before me three issues of this newspaper, the first for May 18 and the third for June 15 of this year. The reports in these issues show that somebody contributed 1,000 rubles to the newspaper through Comrade Olgin, who lives abroad, while collections made abroad amounted to R.207.52. Six (six!) workers' groups contributed 60 rubles.

And this newspaper, which is supported by six workers' groups in Russia, calls upon the workers not to heed the Party's decisions, and calls it a "splitters'" Party! A Party which in the course of two-and-a-half years rallied 5,600 groups of workers around the definitely formulated decisions of the three illegal conferences of 1912 and 1913 is a "splitters'" Party; whereas Plekhanov's group, which united six workers' groups in Russia and collected 1,200 rubles abroad for the purpose of thwarting the will of the Russian workers, is a group which stands for "unity", if you please!

Plekhanov accuses others of being factionalists, as though making separate collections for a separate group, and calling upon the workers not to carry out the decisions adopted by a four-fifths majority, is not factionalism.

As for us, we say plainly that we regard the behaviour of Plekhanov's group as a model of disruption. Plekhanov's conduct is the same as though Mehring, in Germany, were to organise six workers' groups and, in an independent newspaper,

call upon the German Social-Democrats to defy the party which had, let us assume, split away from the Poles.

Plekhanov and we speak in different tongues. We call the solidarity of four-fifths of the workers in Russia real unity, and not unity merely in word; and we call disruption the struggle conducted by groups abroad—financed with money collected abroad—against the majority of the Russian workers.

According to the figures Comrade Vandervelde obtained in St. Petersburg and made public in the press, Pravda has a circulation of 40,000, while the liquidationist newspaper has one of 16,000. Pravda is maintained by the workers and pays its way, but the liquidationist newspaper is maintained by those whom our newspaper calls their rich friends from among the bourgeoisie.

We are submitting to the Executive Committee of the International Socialist Bureau the financial reports published in both newspapers. To foreign comrades, who know what a serious business a working-class newspaper is, this will be far more convincing than assurances, promises, statements, and abuse of the Leninists.

We ask the liquidators: do they still choose to ignore the objective fact that their group's newspaper is in effect a bourgeois undertaking run for the purpose of advocating repudiation of the "underground" and of flouting the will of the majority of the class-conscious workers of Russia?

If they do, then all their talk about "unity" will continue to evoke derision from our workers.

Those who earnestly seek unity should sincerely admit that the entire liquidationist line is utterly fallacious, as has been proved by Party decisions commencing with 1908, as well as by the

experience of the struggle waged by the masses of the workers during the past two-and-a-half years.

To proceed. Here are the objective figures concerning the election of workers' representatives to the insurance bodies. We reject as mere liberalism all talk about political, constitutional reforms in present-day tsarist Russia and will have nothing to do with it; but we take advantage of real reforms, such as insurance, in deed and not in word. The entire workers' group on the All-Russia Insurance Board consists of Pravda supporters, i.e., of workers who have condemned and rejected liquidationism. During the election to this All-Russia Insurance Board, 47 out of the 57 delegates, i. e., 82 per cent, were Pravdists. During the election of the Metropolitan, St. Petersburg, Insurance Board, 37 of the delegates were Pravdists and 7 were liquidators, the Pravdists constituting 84 per cent.

The same can be said about the trade unions. When they hear the talk of the Russian Social-Democrats abroad about the "chaos of factional strife" in Russia (indulged in by Rosa Luxemburg, Plekhanov, Trotsky, and others), our foreign comrades perhaps imagine that the trade union movement in our country is split up.

Nothing of the kind.

In Russia there are no duplicate unions. Both in St. Petersburg and in Moscow, the trade unions are united. The point is that in these unions the Pravdists completely predominate.

Not one of the thirteen trade unions in Moscow is liquidationist.

Of the twenty trade unions in St. Petersburg listed in our Workers' Calendar together with their membership, only the Draftsmen's, Druggist Employees' and Clerks' Unions, and half the members of the Printers' Union, are liquidationist; in all the

other unions—Metalworkers', Textile Workers', Tailors', Woodworkers', Shop Assistants', and so forth—the Pravdists completely predominate.

And we say plainly: if the liquidators do not want drastically to change their tactics and put a stop to their disruptive struggle against the organised majority of the class-conscious workers in Russia, let them stop talking about "unity".

Every day Pravda commends the "underground", if only obliquely, and condemns those who repudiate it. And the workers follow the lead of their Pravda.

Here are figures on the illegal press published abroad. After the liquidators' August Conference in 1912, our Party, up to June 1914, put out live issues of an illegal leading political newspaper; the liquidators—nil; the Socialist-Revolutionaries—nine. These figures do not include leaflets issued in Russia for revolutionary agitation during strikes, meetings and demonstrations.

In these five issues you will find mention of 44 illegal organisations of our Party; the liquidators—nil; the Socialist Revolutionaries—21 (mainly students and peasants).

Lastly, in October 1913, an independent Russian Social-Democratic Labour group was formed in the Duma, the aim of that group, unlike that of the liquidators, being to carry out, not flout, the will of the majority of the class-conscious workers of Russia. At that time both newspapers published resolutions from workers all over Russia supporting either the line of the Party group or that of the liquidationist group. The signatures to the resolutions in favour of the Pravdist, i. e., the Party group in the Duma, numbered 6,722, whereas those supporting the liquidationist group numbered 2,985 (including 1,086 signatures of Bundist workers and 719 of Caucasian workers). Thus,



together with all their allies, the liquidators succeeded in collecting less than one-third of the signatures.

These, briefly, are the objective data which we oppose to the bare statements by the liquidators. These objective data on the mass working-class movement in Russia during the past two-and-a-half years definitely prove, through the experience of the class-conscious workers, that our Party line is correct.

Here I must digress and quote a concrete case to prove why "unity" or even "peace" with the present newspaper of the present liquidators is entirely ruled out.

This is an extremely important case, which will explain the attitude of the liquidators towards our Party's illegal activities, and I therefore ask the comrades to pay special attention to it.

It is common knowledge that since 1912 the revolutionary mass strikes have been developing with remarkable success in Russia. The factory owners have tried to counter them with lockouts. To formulate the Party's attitude towards this form of struggle, a conference of our Party, held in February 1913 (note the date: 1913!) drew up and published a resolution illegally.

This resolution (page 11 of the illegal publication) definitely advanced "the immediate task of organising revolutionary street demonstrations". It definitely recommended (ibid.) that "to counteract lockouts, new forms of struggle should be devised, such as the go-slow strike, for example, and, instead of political strikes, revolutionary, meetings and revolutionary street demonstrations should be organised",

This, we repeat, was in February 1913, i. e., six months after the August Conference (1912) of the liquidators, the very same conference which assured the whole world that the liquidators were not opposed to the "underground". Neither during those

six months, from August 1912 to February 1913, nor during the ensuing twelve months, from February 1913 to February 1914, did the August bloc issue a single resolution on this question. Absolutely none! Listen further.

On March 20, 1914, the St. Petersburg factory owners decided to retaliate to a strike by declaring a lockout. In one day 70,000 workers in St. Petersburg were dismissed.

In conformity with our Party's resolution, the St. Petersburg Committee of the R.S.D.L.P., our Party's illegal organisation in St. Petersburg, decided to meet the lockout with a revolutionary demonstration on April 4, the anniversary of the shootings in the Lena gold-fields.

It illegally issued an appeal to the workers, a copy of which lies before me now. It is signed: "The St. Petersburg Committee of the R.S.D.L.P." It repeats the Party's slogans (a republic and confiscation of the land) and ends with the words:

"Comrades! Come out onto the Nevsky Prospekt at 11 a.m. on April 4."

Needless to say, Pravda itself, as a legal publication, could not mention this appeal, let alone reprint it.

What was to be done? How could it convey to its working-class readers, if only to the most class-conscious and advanced of them, the idea that it was necessary to support the illegal appeal for an illegal revolutionary demonstration?

The only thing was to resort to the method that we always resort to, namely, hinting.

And so, on the very day of the demonstration, on Friday, April 4, 1914, our paper (Put Pravdy No. 54) published an unsigned leading article under the discreet heading: "Forms of the

Working-Class Movement." This article makes direct mention of the "formal decision adopted by the Marxists in February 1913" and hints at a demonstration of a revolutionary character in the following words:

"The class-conscious workers are well acquainted with certain concrete cases when the movement rose to higher forms [i. e., forms of the struggle] which, historically, were subjected to repeated tests, and which are 'unintelligible' and 'alien' only to the liquidators." (Put Pravdy, 1914, No. 54.)

The Russian police and public prosecutors missed the hint. But the class-conscious workers did not.

The demonstration took place. All the bourgeois evening newspapers of April 4 were full of it. The next day, April 5, our paper (see Put Pravdy No. 55) quoted excerpts from the bourgeois newspapers, which stated that "during the last few days large numbers of leaflets signed by the St. Petersburg Committee of the R.S.D.L.P. were distributed among the workers, calling for a demonstration on April 4, the anniversary of the events in the Lena gold-fields".

Our paper could not be prosecuted for publishing this passage from the bourgeois newspapers. The result was that the decision of the illegal Party was carried out. A revolutionary demonstration was organised, and this work was backed by a legal newspaper with a readership of 40,000 workers.

And what did the liquidators do?

As I have already said, neither during the six months from August 1912 to February 1913, nor during the whole of the ensuing twelve months did a single illegal decision of the August bloc appear.

Nobody heard anything of illegal appeals by the liquidators (in connection with April 4, 1914) in St. Petersburg, nor did the bourgeois newspapers mention them. It must be said that evidence by the bourgeois newspapers is very important, for when leaflets are distributed in really large numbers, the bourgeois newspapers always hear and write about it. On the other hand, if leaflets are distributed in insignificant numbers, the masses are not aware of the fact, and the bourgeois newspapers say nothing about it.

Thus, the liquidators themselves did nothing to organise the revolutionary demonstration on April 4, 1914. They held aloof.

Moreover, in reporting the demonstration the next day, the legal liquidationist newspaper did not reproduce the information given in the bourgeois newspapers about the distribution of leaflets signed by the St. Petersburg Committee of our Party!

This is monstrous, but it is a fact. I attach here a copy of the liquidationist newspaper of April 5, 1914 (*Severnaya Rabochaya Gazeta* No. 48), in order to denounce this fact before the Executive Committee of the International Socialist Bureau.

Just think what this means! People who shout that they want "unity" with our Party, people who claim to be Social-Democrats, conceal from the workers the existence of the illegal organisation of our Party, the St. Petersburg Committee of the R.S.D.L.P., conceal the fact that the latter issued revolutionary, illegal, underground leaflets, and that it organised the demonstration on April 4, 1914.

People who shout about "unity" with our Party refrain from reproducing information published in the bourgeois newspapers about the mass distribution of underground leaflets signed by the St. Petersburg Committee of our Party!

This should help our comrades in the foreign parties to understand why the question of the “underground” is of such vital and cardinal importance to us.

But even that is not all. A week later, on April 11, 1914, an article appeared in the liquidationist newspaper (Severnaya Rabochaya Gazeta No. 51) in which the author sneered at the article published in Pravda of April 4, the day of the demonstration, on the “higher forms” of the struggle, sneered at the fact that Pravda had

“clothed its ideas in a form that is difficult to understand”!

Just think: the legal liquidationist newspaper, which is constantly criticising and abusing the “underground” sneers at the fact that our legal newspaper, which desires to help the “underground”, does this only in the form of hints!

And for our newspaper’s hint at “higher forms”, i.e., at the revolutionary, demonstration organised by the St. Petersburg Committee of our Party, the liquidators publicly, in their newspaper, in that very same article, called us “adventurists” and “most unprincipled adventurists”, “anarcho-syndicalists” “acting as agents provocateurs against the workers”!

I have with me all the documents, a copy of the leaflet issued by the St. Petersburg Committee, a copy of our newspaper; and a copy of the liquidationist newspaper. Let those comrades who are interested request that these documents be translated for them in full.

On behalf of the Central Committee of our Party and of the vast majority of the organised Social-Democratic workers of Russia, I declare: there can be no “unity” and no “peace” with this group of liquidators as long as a newspaper like this exists!

We cannot carry on our revolutionary activities among the masses in "unity" with such a newspaper.

### III

I now come to the third part of my report. Having examined the experience of the mass working-class movement in Russia, which has confirmed the correctness of our line, I now propose to examine the experience of our opponents.

Our opponents, both the liquidators and groups abroad, such as Plekhanov's, like to apply to us the abusive term of "usurpers". They repeated this abuse in the columns of Vorw\ "arts in March 1912. But Vorw\ "arts did not give us an opportunity of replying! Let us see what political significance there is in the accusation that we are "usurpers".

I have already said that the 1912 Conference was convened by the Russian Organising Commission which was set up by the Party committees after the liquidators had wrecked the old Central Committee. We take credit for having re stored the illegal Party, and the majority of the workers of Russia have recognised this.

But let us assume for a moment that our numerous opponents (numerous in the opinion of the intellectualist groups and the Party groups living abroad) are right. Let us assume that we are "usurpers", "splitters", and so forth. In that case, would it not be natural to expect our opponents to prove, not merely with words, but by the experience of their activities and their unity, that we are wrong.

If we are wrong in asserting that the Party can only be built up by fighting the liquidationist groups, then should we not expect the groups and organisations which disagree with us to prove

from the experience of their activities that unity with the liquidators is possible?

But the experience of our opponents shows this. In January 1912, our illegal Party was restored by our Conference, which was representative of the majority of organisations in Russia.

In March 1912, the following united in the columns of Vorwärts to abuse us:

the liquidators

the Bund

the Letts

the Poles

the Trotskyists

and the Vperyodists.

What a lot of "trends" and "groups", one might think! How easy it should have been for them to set the workers of Russia a good example by their unity!

But when steps were taken to convene the "August" Conference of the liquidators, it was found that our opponents could not march in step.

Both the Poles and Plekhanov refused to attend the "August" Conference of the liquidators.

Why?

Because they could not agree even on the meaning of the term: membership in the Party!

And so, when Plekhanov's group or Rosa Luxemburg or anybody else, assure themselves and others that it is possible to

unite with the liquidators, we answer: dear comrades, you just try yourselves to “unite” with the liquidators on a definition of Party membership, not in word, but indeed.

Further. The Vperyodists attended the August Conference, but afterwards walked out in protest and denounced it as a fiction.

Then, in February 1914, eighteen months after the “August Conference” of the liquidators, the Congress of the Lettish Party was held. The Letts had always been in favour of “unity”. The Lettish workers had wanted to work with the liquidators and had proved this, not merely in word, but indeed, by experience.

And after eighteen months’ experience, the Letts, while remaining strictly neutral, declared at their congress that they were withdrawing from the August bloc because:

—as the resolution of the Lettish Congress reads:

“The attempt by the conciliators to unite at all costs with the liquidators (the August Conference of 1912) proved fruitless, and the uniters themselves became ideologically and politically dependent upon the liquidators.”

If anybody else wants to make the “experiment of uniting with the liquidators”, let them do so. We, however, declare that until the liquidators definitely abandon their liquidationist line, unity with them is absolutely impossible.

Lastly, Trotsky’s group, the Caucasians under their leader An, and a number of other liquidators (“Em-El”, for example) have practically dropped out of the August bloc and founded their own journal, *Borba*. This journal has no connection with the workers whatsoever, but by its very existence, by its criticism of the liquidators’ opportunism, by its breakaway from the liquidators, this journal, which belongs to the group of former



liquidators, has proved indeed and by experience that unity with the liquidators is impossible.

Unity will be possible only when the liquidators are ready, once and for all, to abandon their entire tactics and cease to be liquidators.

I shall now proceed to formulate the precise and formal conditions for such "unity".

#### IV

The following are the practical, concrete conditions, formulated by our Central Committee, which will make "unity" with the liquidators possible for our Party.

First:

1. The Party resolutions on liquidationism, adopted in December 1908 and January 1910, shall be confirmed in the most emphatic and unreserved fashion, in application precisely to liquidationism.

In order that this confirmation may be accepted by all class-conscious workers in Russia as something really serious and final, and in order that no room may be left for any ambiguity, it shall be agreed that whoever opposes (especially in the legal press) the "underground", i. e., the illegal organisation, calls it a "corpse", declares it nonexistent, that its restoration is a reactionary utopia, and so forth, or, in general, deprecates the role and importance of the "underground", shall be deemed deserving of condemnation and shall not be tolerated in the ranks of the illegal R.S.D.L.P.

It shall be agreed that whoever opposes (especially in the legal press) the "advertising of the illegal press" shall be deemed deserving of condemnation and shall not be tolerated in the

ranks of the illegal Party. Membership in the illegal Party shall be open only to those who sincerely devote all their efforts to promoting the development of the illegal press, the publication of illegal leaflets, and so forth.

It shall be agreed that whoever, in any form whatsoever, advocates the formation in present-day Russia of an “open” (i. e., legal) workers’ party—for objectively such a party would be a tsarist-monarchist labour party—whoever proclaims the slogan of an “open party” or of “fighting” for such a party, shall be deemed deserving of condemnation and shall not be tolerated in the ranks of the illegal Party.

It shall be agreed that whoever, in any form whatsoever, opposes (especially in the legal press) revolutionary mass strikes (i. e., strikes which combine the economic and political struggle with revolutionary agitation) and opposes the organisation of revolutionary meetings and street demonstrations, shall be deemed, deserving of condemnation and shall not be tolerated in the ranks of the illegal Party. The banning of attacks against the revolutionary activities of the Party, which conducts strikes and demonstrations, shall also apply to condemnation, in the legal press, of the “strike craze” among the workers, or of “higher forms of the struggle” (=the legal pseudonym for demonstrations).

It shall be agreed that the journal *Nasha Zarya* and the newspaper *Nasha Rabochaya Gazeta* are guilty of such deviations from the Social-Democratic line towards “bourgeois influence”.

2. It shall be agreed that whoever, in any form whatsoever, declares (especially in the legal press) that the slogans of a democratic republic and confiscation of the landed estates—slogans incorporated in our Party’s programme and particularly

urgent in present-day Russia, where the tsarist monarchy has reduced the tsar's formal recognition of the constitution to sheer mockery of the people—are useless, or of little use for agitation among the masses, shall, be deemed deserving of condemnation and shall not be tolerated in the ranks of the illegal Party.

It shall be agreed that whereas the liberal press is broad casting the idea of reformism, the idea that political freedom is compatible with the existence of the tsarist monarchy, and that the revolutionary overthrow of tsarism is unnecessary, harmful, and sinful—in view of this, agitation for a constitutional reform such as freedom of association must be conducted, and conducted on the widest possible scale, with a clear realisation, however, that the working class is hostile to the propaganda of the liberal reformists; and this agitation must be closely combined with the task of explaining and disseminating the slogan of a republic, as a slogan for the revolutionary onslaught of the masses against the tsarist monarchy.

3. It shall be agreed that it is absolutely impermissible and incompatible with membership in the Party for any section of our Party—the Russian Social-Democratic Labour Party—to enter into a bloc or alliance with any other party.

It shall be agreed that the bloc of the Bund and the liquidators with the Left-wing of the P.S.P., a non-Social-Democratic party, against the will and without the consent of the Polish Social-Democrats, and without a decision by the Congress of the R.S.D.L.P., comes within the category of such prohibited blocs.

Deputy Jagiello, as a member of a non-Social-Democratic party, can be regarded only as being aligned with our Party group in the Duma, but not as a member of that group.

4. It shall be agreed that in every city and every locality there shall be only one united Social-Democratic organisation

embracing workers of all nationalities and conducting activities in all the languages spoken by the local proletariat.

The national-Jewish separatism of the Bund, which to this day, in spite of the decisions of the Stockholm Congress of the R.S.D.L.P. of 1906, which were reaffirmed by the Conference of December 1908, refuses to apply the principle of international unity among the Social-Democratic workers in the localities—a principle which has been applied with such outstanding success in the Caucasus since 1898—shall be condemned.

5. It shall be agreed that the demand for “cultural-national autonomy”, which divides the workers according to nationality and is a refined form of nationalism—a demand that was rejected by a formal decision of the Second (1903) Congress of the R.S.D.L.P.—contradicts the programme of the Party (as does also that pseudonym for cultural-national autonomy called “the establishment of institutions which will guarantee free national development”).

All decisions by all local, national or special organisations of our Party (including the group in the Duma) that accept the principle of cultural-national autonomy shall be annulled and their re-adoption without a decision of the Congress of the R.S.D.L.P. shall be considered incompatible with membership in the Party.

6. Social-Democratic workers of every shade of opinion shall forthwith be called upon by all Party organisations, and by all the Party’s publications in all languages, immediately to bring about unity from below, i. e., to form local, illegal Social-Democratic units, organisations and centres, or to join such organisations where they already exist. In this connection, the principle of federation, or of equality for all “trends” shall be unreservedly rejected, and the only principle to be recognised shall be that of loyal submission of the minority to the majority.

The number of financial contributions made by workers' groups to the newspapers of the various trends since 1913, as reported in the legal press, shall be taken as the most accurate though approximate index of the alignment of forces among the various trends in the working-class movement. Consequently, these figures shall be published in all Party publications, which shall advise all Social-Democrats in the localities to be guided by these figures in all practical steps they take, pending the next Congress of the R.S.D.L.P.

In the matter of defining Party membership, the sole criterion shall be membership in an illegal unit, group, or other organisation (local, factory, district organisation, or Social-Democratic group in some legal society), illegal activities in organising meetings, discussing Party decisions and distributing illegal literature.

All groups and "trends" shall immediately issue absolutely clear and definite illegal announcements about this.

7. The existence of two rival newspapers in the same town or locality shall be absolutely forbidden. The minority shall have the right to discuss before the whole Party, disagreements on programme, tactics and organisation in a discussion journal specially published for the purpose, but shall not have the right to publish, in a rival newspaper, pronouncements disruptive of the actions and decisions of the majority.

Inasmuch as the liquidators' newspaper in St. Petersburg, which is supported chiefly by bourgeois, not proletarian funds, is published contrary to the will of the acknowledged and indisputable majority of the class-conscious Social-Democratic workers in St. Petersburg, and causes extreme disorganisation by advocating disregard for the will of the majority, it shall be

deemed necessary to close this newspaper immediately and to issue a discussion journal in its place.

8. The resolution of the Second Congress of 1903, as well as that of the London Congress of 1907, on the bourgeois-democratic character of the Narodnik trend in general, including the Socialist-Revolutionary Party, shall be most definitely and unreservedly confirmed.

Any blocs, alliances, or temporary agreements between any one section of the Social-Democrats and the Socialist-Revolutionaries (or Narodniks in general) against another section of the Social-Democrats, shall be absolutely prohibited.

The St. Petersburg liquidators, who even at their own "August Conference" proclaimed no new Social-Democratic line towards the Socialist-Revolutionaries, and have been entering into blocs and agreements with the Socialist- Revolutionaries against the overwhelming majority of the Social-Democratic workers in St. Petersburg, as was the case during the elections to the Insurance Boards, shall be definitely and unreservedly condemned.

A publicists' bloc shall be forbidden between outstanding liquidators and prominent Social-Democrats belonging to groups that defend the liquidators (Plekhanov, Trotsky, and others), and the Socialist-Revolutionaries who in their St. Petersburg journal *Sovremennik* assert that "the old cleavage, at all events, has disappeared" and that "it is impossible to tell where Marxism ends and Narodism begins". (*Sovremennik* No. 7, p. 76.)

Publicists who wish to become members of the Social Democratic Party, but who contribute to that journal for reasons other than the necessity of seeking a livelihood by writing for bourgeois publications, shall be called upon to withdraw from the journal and make a public announcement to this effect.

9. In view of the extreme disorganisation introduced into the working-class movement of Russia by various detached groups abroad, which act without a mandate from any Party organisation in Russia, and without any agreement with such an organisation, it shall be deemed necessary to pass and put into effect a resolution that all groups resident abroad shall without exception communicate with organisations operating in Russia only through the Central Committee of the Party.

Groups abroad which do not submit to the Russian centre of Social-Democratic activity, i. e., the Central Committee, and which cause disorganisation by communicating with Russia independently of the Central Committee, shall have no right to speak on behalf of the R.S.D.L.P.

A Social-Democratic discussion journal shall be founded abroad, with funds collected there, for the purpose of discussing from all angles and free of the censorship, questions concerning the programme, tactics and organisation.

The Party rule (Clause 3) that only "endorsed organisations of the Party have a right to publish Party literature" shall be reaffirmed and strictly applied.

10. The resolution unanimously adopted at the beginning of January 1908 by the London Central Committee shall be deemed absolutely binding on all Social-Democrats.

The resolution reads:

"more vigorous Social-Democratic activity in the trade union movement is prescribed by the entire present situation and must be carried on in keeping with the spirit of the London and Stuttgart resolutions, i. e., under no circumstances in the spirit of recognising the principle that trade unions are neutral or non-Party, but on the contrary, in the spirit of unswerving effort to

establish the closest possible connection between the trade unions and the Social-Democratic Party.”

It shall be agreed that attempts to conduct agitation in the trade unions against the illegal R.S.D.L.P. are incompatible with membership in the Party.

The liquidators shall undertake to refrain from calling for insubordination to the executives of the unions, to loyally submit to the Marxist majority of the unions, and under no circumstances form separatist duplicate unions.

The same shall apply to activities in all kinds of workers’ societies—clubs and the like.

All Social-Democrats in every union, cultural and educational society and the like, shall join the illegal Social-Democratic unit in the respective organisation. The decisions of the illegal Party shall be binding on all such groups.

It shall be agreed that it is obligatory for all Social-Democrats to oppose the division of the trade unions according to nationality.

11. It shall be agreed that newspaper utterances against the representation elected by the St. Petersburg workers to the insurance bodies (the All-Russia Insurance Board, the Metropolitan Insurance Board, and so forth) and appeals for non-subordination to its direction, etc., must be forbidden. It shall be agreed that the insurance programme approved by this workers’ representation is obligatory.

The journal *Strakhovanie Rabochikh*, which is a rival to the official organ of the workers’ insurance representation (*Voprosy Strakhovania*) shall close down.



12. The Caucasian Social-Democrats must forbid agitation in favour of cultural-national autonomy, which has been rejected by the Programme of the R.S.D.L.P.

The Caucasian Social-Democrats shall undertake not to violate the principle of a united international organisation in every city, and under no circumstances adopt the principle, either in political or industrial organisations, of dividing workers according to nationality.

13. The six members of the Duma (the Chkheidze group), and also deputy Buryanov, must accept all the above conditions.

The Chkheidze group must declare from the Duma rostrum that, in conformity with the Programme of the Russian Social-Democrats, it withdraws its support of "cultural national autonomy" (and its pseudonym: "institutions" etc.).

The Chkheidze group must accept the leadership of the Party's Central Committee elected at the January Conference of 1912, and must recognise as binding all Party decisions, and also the Central Committee's right of veto.

Such are the terms on which the Central Committee of our Party considers unity possible, and on which it undertakes to launch a campaign in favour of unity. We consider it utterly impossible to have any negotiations or contacts with the liquidators' group which publishes *Nasha Zarya* and *Nasha Rabochaya Gazeta*, as long as it pursues its present tactics. As far as their political role in the working-class movement in Russia is concerned, we regard all the other groups, trends, factions and bodies which defend the liquidators or advocate unity or compromise with them, as fictions.

We declare that to feed the working class of Russia with verbal assurances and promises that unity with the liquidationist group

is possible and easy, means rendering very bad service to the cause, and passing off phrases for reality.

We therefore make the following practical proposal.

A year ago, the question was raised in our Party of convening a Party congress. This was announced in the resolutions of the 1913 Summer Conference of the Central Committee of the R.S.D.L.P. The arrangements for convening this congress are now almost completed. In all probability, a congress of our Party will be held in the very near future, immediately after the Vienna Congress, or even while it is being held. Of course, we ask the comrades not to announce this or speak of it. If arrests are very numerous, perhaps a conference will be held instead of a congress.

Thus, while refraining from any steps towards a rapprochement with the liquidationist group or its defenders until the above terms are accepted and carried out, we propose that all groups, trends and factions, which—unlike us—hold that unity, or peace, or compromise with the present liquidationist group such as it is, is possible considering its present tactics, we propose that these groups should take the opportunity provided by the Vienna Congress to organise a joint formal discussion of our terms.

Let those who advocate peace or compromise with the liquidators not confine themselves to propaganda but prove indeed that unity with the present liquidators is possible.

For our part, we shall be very glad if we are able to inform the representatives of four-fifths of the workers of Russia gathered at the congress or conference of our Party as to the outcome of the conference between all groups that defend the liquidators, and the liquidationist group.

14. In conclusion, I must touch upon one other point which, although very unpleasant, cannot be avoided if we are to have a

sincere and frank exchange of opinion on the question of Social-Democratic unity in Russia.

The point is the following:

In their press, our opponents, the liquidators, are conducting a bitter personal campaign against several members of our Party, accusing them publicly and before the masses, of a host of dishonourable, despicable and criminal actions, or else reporting in their newspaper "rumours" about such actions. Our Party press replies to these attacks and, in the name of the Central Committee of our Party, plainly and definitely calls the liquidators—and especially their two leaders, Dan and Martov—slanderers.

It is not difficult to realise the degree of disorganisation and demoralisation the liquidators are spreading among the masses by this sort of "campaign", to which we shall always retaliate on the principle "à corsaire—corsaire et demi". We shall briefly quote four examples:

1. In 1911, L. Martov published in Paris a pamphlet entitled *Saviours or Destroyers*, devoted in the main to accusations against Lenin of having committed dishonourable and criminal acts; Martov sent a German translation of this pamphlet to Kautsky, who was then acting as arbiter in a controversial question affecting Russian Social-Democracy. In a letter to Lunacharsky (of the Vperyod group) Kautsky described Martov's pamphlet as "disgusting", and this opinion was published in the Russian Social-Democratic press by Plekhanov. The liquidators' newspaper is now beginning, in the form of insinuations, gradually to spread the contents of this pamphlet among the Russian public.

2. Since 1913 the liquidators' newspaper has been constantly accusing Dansky, a member of our Party and an insurance

expert, of dishonesty. The pretext for these accusations is that Dansky works for an employers' organisation, thus serving the bourgeoisie. Our Party, as represented by a number of bodies (the editorial boards of Pravda and Prosveshcheniye, the Russian Social-Democratic Labour group in the Duma, several trade unions, etc.), examined these accusations and found that Dansky had gradually given up working for the employers and was serving the working-class movement, beginning as an anonymous contributor to Pravda. When Dansky definitely joined our Party he was requested, in conformity with the resolutions of our Party, to sever all connections with the employers' organisation. Dansky did so and gave up his job. On behalf of the Central Committee, I repeat that our Party regards this man as an honest comrade, and it will not permit anybody to besmirch his honour with impunity. Our press, in accusing the liquidators of slandering Dansky, pointed out that in this case the liquidators were particularly dishonest, because Martov himself constantly writes for a bourgeois newspaper under a different pseudonym (here I will fully reveal the fact: Yegorov, in Kievskaya Mysl); Yezhov, one of the closest collaborators of the liquidationist newspaper, was on the staff of an employers' association, as was, or is, also the case with Yermansky.

3. Malinovsky, a Duma member, suddenly left the Duma and resigned without giving any reason. Our workers called together their local and central leading bodies and sentenced Malinovsky to expulsion from the Party, describing his unexplained resignation without consultation with his colleagues as disruptive, and as desertion from his post. The liquidationist newspaper then began to publish anonymous rumours to the effect that Malinovsky was an agent provocateur and demanded a joint investigation by the different groups. Our Central Committee declared that it vouched for Malinovsky, had investigated the rumours, and was convinced that Dan and

Martov were indulging in base slander. The Central Committee rejected the proposal for a joint commission with the liquidators and, following on the opinion expressed by the representatives of ten trade unions in Moscow, denounced as slanderers those people who dared to publish in the press anonymous "rumours" about agents provocateurs, instead of submitting these rumours in an organised manner to our Central Committee, or to their own Central Committee (their "O. C."), to the Bund and to groups that trust the liquidators, to have them investigated by boards and responsible bodies. Burtsev declared that he did not believe the rumours. The Committee of Investigation set up by our Central Committee declared that it would publish the facts about those who were circulating these rumours. I can only add that these rumours were circulated by the liquidators.

4. Some days ago the liquidationist newspaper published an open letter from ex-member of the Second Duma Alexinsky, accusing Comrade Antonov, a member of our Party who had served a term of penal servitude, of being a traitor. But Comrade Antonov's conduct was pronounced unimpeachable both by a special committee consisting of comrades who had served sentence with him, as well as by a decision of the Central Committee of the Party adopted in 1907-08 in Finland, when the Mensheviks (i.e., the present liquidators) and all the "national organisations" were represented on the Central Committee. The answer given in our press is again tantamount to accusing Dan and Martov of spreading slander.

On instructions from the Central Committee, I must submit to the Executive Committee of the International Socialist Bureau the following practical proposal on this matter. We regard the liquidators' procedure as a specific method of political struggle used by people who have been expelled from the Party. We therefore harbour no hope that this matter can be "rectified" with

the aid of moral precepts. But when bodies which screen the liquidators (the "O. C." and the Bund, for example, as well as Trotsky), and the numerous groups abroad (including Plekhanov) talk to us about "unity" with these liquidators, we make them the following proposal before the Executive Committee of the International Socialist Bureau:

let them declare openly and publicly, without equivocation, whether they approve or disapprove of the liquidators' "campaign" on all the four points enumerated (to which we are sure the liquidators will add another 44).

If they disapprove, let the workers of Russia know it.

If they approve, let all groups that offer us "unity" or compromise with the liquidators elect a joint commission and formulate a reasoned, business-like, and open charge of dishonest conduct against certain members of our Party. We shall submit this charge to our Party congress and invite representatives of this commission of all groups which defend the liquidators to attend our congress and produce their evidence.

We deem it our duty to declare that if this is not done, it will strengthen the opinion, already being expressed in the ranks of our Party, that all groups that advocate "unity" with the liquidators are tacitly supporting the slanderers.

In the name of the majority of the class-conscious workers of Russia, we shall defend the organisation of our Party from the disruptors, and we shall recognise no means of defence other than those we have applied, and which I have enumerated above (not to mention the bourgeois law court, to which we shall resort at the first opportunity).

The report I have been instructed to make on behalf of the Central Committee of the Russian Social-Democratic Labour Party is finished. Permit me to sum up in two brief theses:

Formally, the situation is as follows. Our Party, which was restored at the January 1912 Conference in the teeth of the resistance from the liquidators' group, expelled that group. After this, after two-and-a-half years of the movement, the overwhelming majority of the class-conscious workers of Russia have approved of our Party line. We therefore have every reason to be convinced more firmly than ever that our line is correct, and we shall not depart from it. If the liquidators and the groups defending them want us to rescind the resolution expelling the liquidators from the Party, our Central Committee is prepared to submit a motion to that effect to our Party congress and to support it only on the terms I have mentioned.

Materially, i. e., in substance, the position is as follows. Russia is passing through a period of bourgeois revolutions, during which small and unstable groups of intellectuals are sometimes inclined to regard themselves as Social-Democrats, or to support the opportunist trend in the Social-Democratic movement, which our Party has been fighting against for the past twenty years (Economism in 1895–1902, Menshevism in 1903–08, and liquidationism in 1908–14). The experience of the August (1912) bloc of liquidators and its break-down have shown that the liquidators and their defenders are absolutely incapable of forming any kind of party or organisation. The genuine workers' Social-Democratic Party of Russia which, in spite of enormous difficulties, has already united eight-tenths of the class conscious workers (counting only Social-Democrats) or seven-tenths (counting Social-Democrats and Socialist Revolutionaries) can be built up, and is being built up, only in the struggle against these groups.

Lenin

**To: A. G. SHLYAPNIKOV**

March 11, 1916

Collected Works, Volume 35, pages 213-217.

Dear Friend,

As regards your letter and its mention of the current reproach that I am "uncompromising", I should like to discuss the subject with you in greater detail.

As regards James, he never understood politics and was always against the split. James is a wonderful person, but on these subjects his judgements are profoundly wrong.

In Russia (and now in the new International too) the question of a split is the basic one. Any compromise here would be a crime. I know well how many good people (James, Galyorka, the Petrograd "friends" among the intellectuals) were against the split in the Duma group. All of them were 1,000 times wrong. The split was essential. And the split with Chkheidze and Co. now, too, is absolutely essential. All who waver on this subject are enemies of the proletariat, and we must be uncompromising with them.

But who is wavering? Not only Trotsky and Co. but also Yuri+Eug. B. (as late as last summer they were "creating scenes" on account of Chkheidze!!). Then the Poles (the opposition). In their *Gazeta Robotnicza* No. 25, there is their resolution: once again for manoeuvring, as in Brussels on July 3 (16), 1914.

With them an uncompromising attitude is obligatory.

Radek is the best of them; it was useful to work with him (for the Zimmerwald Left as well, by the way), and we did work. But



Radek is also wavering. And our tactics here are two-sided (this Yuri+Nik. Iv. absolutely could not or would not understand): on the one hand, to help Radek to move left, to unite all who could be united for the Zimmerwald Left. On the other hand, not to allow one iota of wavering on the basic issue.

The basic issue is the break with the O.C., with Chkheidze and Co.

The Poles are wavering and published a most black-guardly resolution after No. 1 of Kommunist.

The conclusion?

Either to hang on to the title of Kommunist, and open the door to squabbling and wavering, to letters to the editor (from Radek, Bronski, perhaps Pannekoek and others), complaints, whining, gossip, etc.

Lenin

## **The Chkheidze Faction and Its Role**

December 1916

Collected Works, Volume 23, pages 171-174.

We have maintained all along that Messrs. Chkheidze and Co. do not represent the Social-Democratic proletariat and that a genuine Social-Democratic Labour Party will never be reconciled or united with this faction. Our contention was based on the following incontrovertible facts (1) Chkheidze's "save the country" formula does not in substance differ from defencism; (2) the Chkheidze faction has never opposed Mr. Potresov and Co., not even when Martov did; (3) the decisive fact: the faction has never opposed participation in the war industries committees.

Nobody has attempted to deny these facts. Chkheidze's adherents simply evade them.

The pressure of facts has increasingly compelled Nashe Slovo and Trotsky, who reproach us for our "factionalism", to take up the struggle against the O.C. and Chkheidze. The trouble, however, is that it was only "under pressure" (of our criticism and the criticism of the facts) that the Nashe Slovo supporters retreated from position to position; but they have not yet said the decisive word. Unity or a split with the Chkheidze faction? They are still afraid to decide!

No. 1 of the Bulletin of the Bund Committee Abroad (September 1916) contains a letter from Petrograd dated February 26, 1916. It is a valuable document and fully confirms our view. Its author declares unequivocally that there is "a definite crisis in the Menshevik camp itself", and what is particularly characteristic, he says nothing about the Mensheviks opposed to participation

in the war industries committees! He has not seen or heard of them in Russia!

Three out of the five members of the Chkheidze faction, he writes, are opposed to the "defencist position" (like the O. C.) and two are in favour of it.

"Those who serve the faction," he writes, "are unable to shift the majority from the position it has taken. The local 'initiating group', which rejects the defencist position, comes to the aid of the faction majority."

Those who serve the faction are liberal intellectuals of the type of Potresov, Maslov, Orthodox and Co., who call themselves Social-Democrats. Our repeated assertions that this group of intellectuals is a "hotbed" of opportunism and of liberal-labour politics have now been confirmed by a Bundist.

He writes further: "Life [and not Purishkevich and Guchkov?] has brought to the fore... a new organ, the workers group, which is more and more becoming the centre of the labour movement. [The writer means the Guchkov, or, to use an older term, the Stolypin labour movement; he recognises no other!] A compromise was reached in the elections to the workers' group: not defence and self-defence, but salvation of the country, by which something broader was implied."

This is how a Bundist exposes Chkheidze and Martov's lies about him! At the election of the Guchkov gang (Gvozdyov, Breido, etc.) to the war industries committees, Chkheidze and the O. C. entered into a compromise. The Chkheidze formula is: a compromise with the Potresovs and the Gvozdyovs!

Martov concealed and is now concealing this.

The compromise did not end there. The policy statement was also drawn up on the basis of a compromise, which the Bundist characterises in this way:

“Definiteness disappeared.” “The representatives of the faction majority and of the ‘initiating group’ were dissatisfied because, after all, the statement is a big step towards formulation of a defencist position.... In essence, the compromise is the position of German Social-Democracy, in application to Russia.”

So writes a Bundist.

Clear enough, it would seem? There is a party, that of the O.C., Chkheidze and Potresov. Within it there are two contending wings; they come to an agreement, they compromise and remain in one party. The compromise is concluded on the basis of participation in the war industries committees. The only point of disagreement is how to formulate the “motives” (i. e., how to dupe the workers). As a result of the compromise we have, “in essence, the position of German Social-Democracy”.

Well, were we not right when we said that the O.C. party was social-chauvinist, that, as a party, the O.C. and Chkheidze were the same as the Südekums in Germany?

Even a Bundist is compelled to admit their identity with the Südekums!

Neither Chkheidze and Co., nor the O.C. have ever expressed opposition to the compromise, although they are “dissatisfied” with it.

That was the position in February 1916. In April 1916, Martov appeared in Kienthal with a mandate from the “initiating group” to represent the whole O.C., the O.C. in general.

Is this not deceiving the International?

And see what we have now! Potresov, Maslov and Orthodox establish their own organ, *Dyelo*, which is openly defencist: they invite Plekhanov to contribute; they enlist Messrs. Dmitriev, Cherevanin, Mayevsky, G. Petrovich, etc., the whole crowd of intellectuals who were formerly the mainstay of liquidationism. What I said on behalf of the Bolsheviks in May 1910 (*Diskussionny Listok*) about the final consolidation of the independent-legalists' group has been fully confirmed.

*Dyelo* takes up a brazenly chauvinist and reformist position. See how Mme. Orthodox falsifies Marx and by mis-quoting him makes him appear to be an ally of Hindenburg (all on "philosophical" grounds, mind you!), how Mr. Masby (especially in *Dyelo* No. 2) champions reformism all along the line, how Mr. Potresov accuses Axelrod and Martov of "maximalism" and anarcho-syndicalism, how the magazine generally tries to palm off advocacy of defence as the cause of "democracy" while modestly evading the unpleasant question as to whether or not this reactionary war is being waged by tsarism for a predatory purpose, for throttling Galicia, Armenia, etc.

The Chkheidze faction and the O.C. are silent. Skobelev sends greetings to the "Liebknechts of all countries". The real Liebknecht has ruthlessly exposed and condemned his own Scheidemanns and Kautskyites, whereas Skobelev remains in permanent harmony and friendship with the Russian Scheidemanns (Potresov and Co., Chkhenkeli, et al.) and with the Russian Kautskyites (Axelrod et al.)

On behalf of himself and of his friends abroad, Martov announces in *Golos* No. 2 (Samara, September 20, 1916) a refusal to contribute to *Dyelo*, but at the same time he whitewashes Chkheidze; at the same time (*Izvestia* No. 6, September 12, 1916) he asserts that he has parted with Trotsky and *Nashe Slovo* because of the "Trotsky" idea of repudiating the bourgeois

revolution in Russia. But everybody knows that this is a lie, that Martov left *Nashe Slovo* because the latter could not tolerate Martov's whitewashing of the O.C.! In the same *Izvestia* Martov defends his deception of the German public, which even roused the indignation of Roland-Holst. He published a pamphlet in German from which he omitted the very part of the Petrograd and Moscow Mensheviks' policy statement in which they announced their willingness to participate in the war industries committees!

Recall the controversy between Trotsky and Martov in *Nashe Slovo* prior to the latter's resignation from the Editorial Board. Martov reproached Trotsky for not having made up his mind whether or not he would follow Kautsky at the decisive moment. Trotsky retorted that Martov was playing the part of a "bait", a "decoy", trying to entice the revolutionary workers into the opportunist and chauvinist party of the Potresovs, then the O.C., etc.

Both sides repeated our arguments. And both were right.

However much the truth about Chkheidze and Co. may be concealed, it will come to light. Chkheidze's role is to compromise with the Potresovs, to camouflage opportunist and chauvinist politics by vague or near-"Left" phrases. And Martov's role is to whitewash Chkheidze.

Lenin

**From; The Seventh (April) All-Russia Conference of the R.S.D.L.P.(B.)**

APRIL 24–29, 1917

Collected Works, Volume 24, pages 225-313.

growth of the revolution in the provinces in depth and scope is, on the one hand, the growth of a movement for transferring all power to the Soviets and putting the workers and peasants themselves in control of production. on the other hand, it serves as a guarantee for the build-up of forces, on a national scale, for the second stage of the revolution, which must transfer all state power to the Soviets or to other organs directly expressing the will of the majority of the nation (organs of local self-government, the Constituent Assembly, etc.).

In the capitals and in a few other large cities the task of transferring state power to the Soviets is particularly difficult and requires an especially long period of preparation of the proletariat's forces. This is where the largest forces of the bourgeoisie are concentrated, where a policy of compromise with the bourgeoisie is most strongly in evidence, a policy which often holds back the revolutionary initiative of the masses and weakens their independence; this is particularly dangerous in view of the leading role of these Soviets for the provinces.

Lenin

## **A Question of Principle**

May 25 (June 7) 1917

Collected Works, Vol. 24, pp. 536-38.

The filthy torrent of lies and slander which the capitalist papers have spewed out against the Kronstadt comrades has revealed once more how dishonest these papers are. They have seized on a quite ordinary and unimportant incident and magnified it to the dimensions of a "state" affair, of "secession" from Russia and so on and so forth.

Izvestia of the Petrograd Soviet No. 74 reports that the Kronstadt incident has been settled. As was to have been expected, Ministers Tsereteli and Skobelev easily came to an understanding with the Kronstadt people on the basis of a compromise resolution. Needless to say, we express our hope and confidence that this compromise resolution, provided both sides faithfully live up to it, will, for a sufficiently lengthy period of time, eliminate conflicts in the work of the revolution both in Kronstadt and the rest of Russia.

The Kronstadt incident is a matter of principle to us in two respects.

First, it has revealed a fact long ago observed by us and officially recognised in our Party's resolution (on the Soviets), namely, that in the local areas the revolution has gone farther than it has in Petrograd. Succumbing to the current craze for the revolutionary phrase, the Narodniks and Mensheviks as well as the Cadets did not wish to or could not grasp the significance of this fact.

Secondly, the Kronstadt incident raised an important fundamental issue of programmatic significance, which no



honest democrat, to say nothing of a socialist, can afford to treat with indifference. It is the question of whether the central authority has the right to endorse officials elected by the local population or not.

The Mensheviks, to whose party Ministers Tsereteli and Skobelev belong, still claim to be Marxists. Tsereteli and Skobelev got a resolution passed in favour of such endorsement. In doing so, did they stop to think of their duty as Marxists?

Should the reader find this question naïve and pass a remark to the effect that the Mensheviks now have really become a petty-bourgeois, even defencist (i.e., chauvinist) party, and therefore it would be ludicrous even to talk about Marxism, we shall not argue the point. All we shall say is that Marxism always gives close attention to questions of democratism, and the name of democrats can hardly be denied to citizens Tsereteli and Skobelev.

Did they stop to think of their duty as democrats, of their "title" as democrats, when they passed the resolution authorising the Provisional Government to "endorse" officials elected by the Kronstadt population?

Obviously, they did not.

In support of this conclusion, we shall quote the opinion of a writer who, we hope, even in the eyes of Tsereteli and Skobelev, is considered something of a scientific and Marxian authority. That writer is Frederick Engels.

In criticising the draft programme of the German Social-Democrats (now known as the Erfurt Programme) Engels wrote in 1891 that the German proletariat was in need of a single and united republic.

"But not," Engels added, "such a republic as the present French Republic, which is really an empire founded in 1798 but without an emperor. From 1792 to 1798 every French department, every commune enjoyed complete self-government after the American pattern. That is what we [the German Social-Democrats] should have too. How self-government can be organised and how a bureaucracy can be dispensed with has been demonstrated to us by America and the First French Republic, as well as by Australia, Canada and other British colonies even today. Such provincial and communal self-government is much freer than, for instance, Swiss federalism, where each canton is really independent of the confederation [i.e., the central government] but at the same time is the supreme authority as far as the minor subdivisions of the canton are concerned -- the Bezirk and the Commune. The cantonal governments appoint the Bezirkestatthalter and Prefects. This right of appointing local officers is entirely unknown in English-speaking countries, and in future we must politely abolish this right [i.e., appointment from above], just as we should the Prussian Landräthe and Regierungsräthe."

Such was Engels's opinion on questions of democracy as applied to the right of appointing officers from above. To express these views with greater precision and accuracy, he proposed that the German Social-Democrats should insert in their programme the following demand:

"Complete self-government in the communes, districts, and regions through officers elected by universal suffrage; abolition of all state-appointed local and regional authorities."

The italicised words leave nothing to be desired in the way of clarity and definiteness.

Worthy citizens, Ministers Tsereteli and Skobelev! You are probably flattered to have your names mentioned in history books. But will it be flattering to have every Marxist -- and every honest democrat -- say that Ministers Tsereteli and Skobelev helped the Russian capitalists to build such a republic in Russia as would turn out to be not a republic at all, but a monarchy without a monarch?

P.S. This article was written before the Kronstadt incident entered its last stage, as reported in today's papers. The Kronstadt people have not broken the compromise agreement. Not a single fact remotely suggesting a breach of this agreement has been cited. Rech 's reference to newspaper articles is mere subterfuge, since you can only break an agreement by deeds and not by newspaper articles. The fact then remains, that Ministers Tsereteli, Skobelev and Co. have allowed themselves to be scared for the hundredth and thousandth time by the screams of the frightened bourgeoisie and have resorted to gross threats against the people of Kronstadt. Crude, absurd threats, that merely serve the counter-revolution.

Lenin

**Resolution of the Central Committee of the R.S.D.L.P.**  
(Bolsheviks) Adopted in the Morning of April 22 (May 5), 1917

Collected Works, Volume 24, pages 210-212.

The political crisis that developed between April 19 and 21 must be regarded, at least in its initial stage, as having passed.

The petty-bourgeois mass, angered by the capitalists, first swung away from them towards the workers; but two days later they again followed the Menshevik and Narodnik leaders, who stand for "confidence" in and "compromise" with the capitalists.

These leaders have compromised, completely surrendered all their positions, contenting themselves with the empty and purely verbal reservations of the capitalists.

The causes of the crisis have not been removed, and the recurrence of such crises is unavoidable.

The nature of the crisis is that the petty-bourgeois mass is vacillating between its age-old faith in the capitalists and its resentment against them, a tendency to place its faith in the revolutionary proletariat.

The capitalists are dragging out the war and covering up the fact by phrase-mongering. Only the revolutionary proletariat can put an end to, and is working towards putting an end to the war by means of a world revolution of the workers, a revolution which is obviously mounting in our country, ripening in Germany, and drawing closer in a number of other countries.

The slogan "Down with the Provisional Government!" is an incorrect one at the present moment because, in the absence of a solid (i.e., a class-conscious and organised) majority of the people on the side of the revolutionary proletariat, such a slogan is either

an empty phrase, or, objectively, amounts to attempts of an adventurist character.

We shall favour the transfer of power to the proletarians and semi-proletarians only when the Soviets of Workers' and Soldiers' Deputies adopt our policy and are willing to take the power into their own hands.

The organisation of our Party, the consolidation of the proletarian forces, clearly proved inadequate at the time of the crisis.

The slogans of the moment are: (1) To explain the proletarian line and the proletarian way of ending the war; (2) To criticise the petty-bourgeois policy of placing trust in the government of the capitalists and compromising with it; (3) To carry on propaganda and agitation from group to group in every regiment, in every factory, and, particularly, among the most backward masses, such as domestic servants, unskilled labourers, etc., since it was their backing in the first place that the bourgeoisie tried to gain during the crisis; (4) To organise, organise and once more organise the proletariat, in every factory, in every district and in every city quarter.

The resolution of the Petrograd Soviet of April 21 banning all street meetings and demonstrations for two days must be unconditionally obeyed by every member of our Party. The Central Committee already distributed yesterday morning, and is today publishing in Pravda, a resolution which states that "at such a moment any thought of civil war would be senseless and preposterous", that all demonstrations must be peaceful ones, and that the responsibility for violence will fall on the Provisional Government and its supporters. Our Party therefore considers that the above mentioned resolution of the Soviet of Workers' and Soldiers' Deputies as a whole (and especially the part

banning armed demonstrations and shooting In the air) is entirely correct and must be unconditionally obeyed.

We call upon all the workers and soldiers to consider carefully the results of the crisis of the last two days and to send as delegates to the Soviet of Workers' and Soldiers' Deputies and to the Executive Committee only such comrades as express the will of the majority, in all cases where a delegate does not express the opinion of the majority, new elections should be held in the factories and barracks.

Lenin

### **A Class Shift**

July 10 (June 27), 1917

Collected Works, Volume 25, pages 131-133.

Every revolution, if it is a real revolution, amounts to a class shift. Therefore, the best way of enlightening the people, and of fighting those who deceive the people by invoking the revolution, is to analyse the class shift that has taken or is taking place in the present revolution.

From 1904 to 1916, in the last years of tsarism, the relative positions of the classes in Russia became particularly clear. A handful of semi-feudal landowners, headed by Nicholas II, was in power and maintained the closest alliance with the financial magnates who were reaping profits unheard of in Europe and for whose benefit predatory treaties were concluded with foreign countries.

The liberal bourgeoisie, led by the Cadets, were in opposition. They were more afraid of the people than of reaction and were moving closer and closer to power by compromising with the monarchy.

The people, i.e., the workers and peasants, whose leaders had been driven underground, were revolutionary. They constituted the “revolutionary democrats”—proletarian and petty-bourgeois.

The revolution of February 27, 1917 swept away the monarchy and put the liberal bourgeoisie in power, who, operating in direct concord with the Anglo-French imperialists, had wanted a minor court revolution. Under no circumstances were they willing to go beyond a constitutional monarchy with an electoral system

conditioned by various qualifications. And when the revolution actually went further, completely abolishing the monarchy and establishing Soviets (of Workers', Soldiers' and Peasants' Deputies), the entire liberal bourgeoisie became counter-revolutionary.

Now, four months after the revolution, the counter-revolutionary character of the Cadets, the main party of the liberal bourgeoisie, is as clear as day. Everyone sees that. And everyone is compelled to admit it. But not nearly everyone is willing to face up to it and think about what it implies.

Russia today is a democratic republic governed by a free agreement between political parties which are freely advocating their views among the people. The four months since February 27 have fully consolidated and given final shape to all parties of any importance, showed them up during the elections (to the Soviets and to local bodies), and revealed their links with the various classes.

In Russia, the counter-revolutionary bourgeoisie are in power today, while the petty-bourgeois democrats, namely, the Socialist-Revolutionary and Menshevik parties, have become "His Majesty's opposition". The policy of these parties is essentially one of compromise with the counter-revolutionary bourgeoisie. The petty-bourgeois democrats are rising to power by filling local bodies to begin with (just as the liberals did under tsarism—by first winning places in the zemstvos). These petty-bourgeois democrats want to share power with the bourgeoisie but not overthrow them, in exactly the same way as the Cadets wanted to share power with the monarchy but not overthrow it. The petty-bourgeois democrats (the Socialist-Revolutionaries and the Mensheviks) compromise with the Cadets because of the close class kinship between the petty and the big bourgeoisie, just as the class kinship between the capitalist and the landowner,



living in the twentieth century, made them embrace each other at the feet of their “adored” monarch.

It is the form of compromise that has changed. Under the monarchy it was crude, and the tsar allowed a Cadet no further than the Duma backyard. In a democratic republic, compromise has become as refined as in Europe, the petty bourgeoisie being permitted, in a harmless minority, to occupy harmless (for capital) posts in the Ministry.

The Cadets have taken the place of the monarchy. The Tseretelis and Chernovs have taken the place of the Cadets. Proletarian democracy has taken the place of a truly revolutionary democracy.

The imperialist war has hastened developments fantastically. Had it not been for this war, the Socialist-Revolutionaries and Mensheviks might have sighed for decades for ministerial posts. The same war, however, is hastening further developments. For it poses problems in a revolutionary rather than a reformist manner.

The Socialist-Revolutionary and Menshevik parties could have given Russia many a reform by agreement with the bourgeoisie. But the objective situation in world politics is revolutionary and it cannot be dealt with by reforms.

The imperialist war is crushing the peoples and threatens to crush them completely. The petty-bourgeois democrats can perhaps stave off disaster for a while. But It is only the revolutionary proletariat that can prevent a tragic end.

Lenin

### **On Compromises**

September 1–3 (14–16), 1917

Collected Works, Volume 25, pages 309-314.

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

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

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

To agree, for instance, to participate in the Third and Fourth Dumas was a compromise, a temporary renunciation of revolutionary demands. But this was a compromise absolutely forced upon us, for the balance of forces made it impossible for

us for the time being to conduct a mass revolutionary struggle, and in order to prepare this struggle over a long period we had to be able to work even from inside such a "pigsty". History has proved that this approach to the question by the Bolsheviks as a party was perfectly correct.

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

Our Party, like any other political party, is striving after political domination for itself. Our aim is the dictatorship of the revolutionary proletariat. Six months of revolution have proved very clearly, forcefully and convincingly that this demand is correct and inevitable in the interests of this particular revolution, for otherwise the people will never obtain a democratic peace, land for the peasants, or complete freedom (a fully democratic republic). This has been shown and proved by the course of events during the six months of our revolution, by the struggle of the classes and parties and by the development of the crises of April 20–21, June 9–10 and 18–19, July 3–5 and August 27–31.

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

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

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

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

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

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

The Mensheviks and S.R.s, being the government bloc, would then agree (assuming that the compromise had been reached) to form a government wholly and exclusively responsible to the Soviets, the latter taking over all power locally as well. This would constitute the “new” condition. I think the Bolsheviks

would advance no other conditions, trusting that the revolution would proceed peacefully and party strife in the Soviets would be peacefully overcome thanks to really complete freedom of propaganda and to the immediate establishment of a new democracy in the composition of the Soviets (new elections) and in their functioning.

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

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

The Bolsheviks would gain the opportunity of quite freely advocating their views and of trying to win influence in the Soviets under a really complete democracy. In words, “everybody” now concedes the Bolsheviks this freedom. In reality, this freedom is impossible under a bourgeois government or a government in which the bourgeoisie participate, or under any government, in fact, other than the Soviets. Under a Soviet government, such freedom would be possible (we do not say it would be a certainty, but still it would be possible). For the sake of such a possibility at such a difficult time, it would be worth compromising with the present majority in the Soviets. We have nothing to fear from real democracy, for reality is on our side,

and even the course of development of trends within the S.R. and Menshevik parties, which are hostile to us, proves us right.

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

really democratic republic. This is what the second voice would say.

There may also be a third voice coming from among the supporters of Martov or Spiridonova, which would say: I am indignant, "comrades", that both of you, speaking about the Commune and its likelihood, unhesitatingly side with its opponents. In one form or another, both of you side with those who suppressed the Commune. I will not undertake to campaign for the Commune and I cannot promise beforehand to fight in its ranks as every Bolshevik will do, but I must say that if the Commune does start in spite of my efforts, I shall rather help its defenders than its opponents.

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

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



remains is to send these notes to the editor with the request to have them entitled: "Belated Thoughts". Perhaps even belated thoughts are sometimes not without interest

Lenin

### **Lessons of the Revolution**

September 6 (19), 1917

Collected Works, Volume 25, pages 227-243.

Every revolution means a sharp turn in the lives of a vast number of people. Unless the time is ripe for such a turn, no real revolution can take place. And just as any turn in the life of an individual teaches him a great deal and brings rich experience and great emotional stress, so a revolution teaches an entire people very rich and valuable lessons in a short space of time.

During a revolution, millions and tens of millions of people learn in a week more than they do in a year of ordinary, somnolent life. For at the time of a sharp turn in the life of an entire people it becomes particularly clear what aims the various classes of the people are pursuing, what strength they possess, and what methods they use.

Every class-conscious worker, soldier and peasant should ponder thoroughly over the lessons of the Russian revolution, especially now, at the end of July, when it is clear that the first phase of our revolution has failed.

I

Let us see, in fact, what the workers and peasants were striving for when they made the revolution. What did they expect of the revolution? As we know, they expected liberty, peace, bread and land.

But what do we see now?

Instead of liberty, the old tyranny is coming back. The death penalty is being introduced for the soldiers at the front. Peasants

are prosecuted for the unauthorised seizure of landed estates. Printing presses of workers' newspapers are wrecked. Workers' newspapers are closed down without trial. Bolsheviks are arrested, often without any charge or upon blatantly trumped-up charges.

It may be argued that the persecution of Bolsheviks does not constitute a violation of freedom, for only certain individuals are being prosecuted and on certain charges. Such an argument, however, would be a deliberate and obvious lie; for how can anyone wreck printing presses and close down newspapers for the crimes of individuals, even if these charges were proved and established by a court of law? It would be a different thing if the government had legally declared the whole party of the Bolsheviks, their very trend and views, to be criminal. But everybody knows that the government of free Russia could not, and did not, do anything of the kind.

What chiefly exposes the libelous character of the charges against the Bolsheviks is that the newspapers of the landowners and capitalists furiously abused the Bolsheviks for their struggle against the war and against the landowners and capitalists, and openly demanded the arrest and prosecution of the Bolsheviks even when not a single charge against a single Bolshevik had been trumped up.

The people want peace. Yet the revolutionary government of free Russia has resumed the war of conquest on the basis of those very same secret treaties which ex-Tsar Nicholas II concluded with the British and French capitalists so that the Russian capitalists might plunder other nations. Those secret treaties remain unpublished. The government of free Russia resorted to subterfuges, and to this day has not proposed a just peace to all nations.

There is no bread. Famine is again drawing near. Everybody sees that the capitalists and the rich are unscrupulously cheating the treasury on war deliveries (the war is now costing the nation fifty million rubles daily), that they are raking in fabulous profits through high prices, while nothing whatsoever has been done to establish effective control by the workers over the production and distribution of goods. The capitalists are becoming more brazen every day; they are throwing workers out into the street, and this at a time when the people are suffering from shortages.

A vast majority of the peasants, at congress after congress, have loudly and clearly declared that landed proprietorship is an injustice and robbery. Meanwhile, a government which calls itself revolutionary and democratic has been leading peasants by the nose for months and deceiving them by promises and delays. For months the capitalists did not allow Minister Chernov to issue a law prohibiting the purchase and sale of land. And when this law was finally passed, the capitalists started a foul slander campaign against Chernov, which they are still continuing. The government has become so brazen in its defense of the landowners that it is beginning to bring peasants to trial for "unauthorised" seizures of land.

They are leading the peasants by the nose, telling them to wait for the Constituent Assembly. The convocation of the Assembly, however, is being steadily postponed by the capitalists. Now that owing to Bolshevik pressure it has been set for September 30, the capitalists are openly clamouring about this being "impossibly" short notice and are demanding the Constituent Assembly's postponement. The most influential members of the capitalist and landowner party, the "Cadet", or "people's freedom", Party, such as Panina, are openly urging that the convocation of the Constituent Assembly be delayed until after the war.

As to land, wait until the Constituent Assembly. As to the Constituent Assembly, wait until the end of the war. As to the end of the war, wait until complete victory. That is what it comes to. The capitalists and landowners, having a majority in the government, are plainly mocking at the peasants.

## II

But how could this happen in a free country, after the overthrow of the tsarist regime?

In a non-free country, the people are ruled by a tsar and a handful of landowners, capitalists and bureaucrats who are not elected by anybody.

In a free country, the people are ruled only by those who have been elected for that purpose by the people themselves. At the elections the people divide themselves into parties, and as a rule each class of the population forms its own party; for instance, the landowners, the capitalists, the peasants and the workers all form separate parties. In free countries, therefore, the people are ruled through an open struggle between parties and by free agreement between these parties.

For about four months after the overthrow of the tsarist regime on February 27, 1917, Russia was ruled as a free country, i.e., through an open struggle between freely formed parties and by free agreement between them. To understand the development of the Russian revolution, therefore, it is above all necessary to study the chief parties, the class interests they defended, and the relations among them all.

## III

After the overthrow of the tsarist regime state power passed into the hands of the first Provisional Government, consisting of representatives of the bourgeoisie, i.e., the capitalists, who were

joined by the landowners. The "Cadet" Party, the chief capitalist party, held pride of place as the ruling and government party of the bourgeoisie.

It was no accident this party secured power, although it was not the capitalists, of course, but the workers and peasants, the soldiers and sailors, who fought the tsarist troops and shed their blood for liberty. Power was secured by the capitalist party because the capitalist class possessed the power of wealth, organisation and knowledge. Since 1905, and particularly during the war, the class of the capitalists, and the landowners associated with them, have made in Russia the greatest progress in organising.

The Cadet Party has always been monarchist, both in 1905 and from 1905 to 1917. After the people's victory over tsarist tyranny it proclaimed itself a republican party. The experience of history shows that whenever the people triumphed over a monarchy, capitalist parties were willing to become republican as long as they could uphold the privileges of the capitalists and their unlimited power over the people.

The Cadet Party pays lip-service to "people's freedom". But actually, it stands for the capitalists, and it was immediately backed by all the landowners, monarchists and Black Hundreds. The press and the elections are proof of this. After the revolution, all the bourgeois papers and the whole Black Hundred press began to sing in unison with the Cadets. Not daring to come out openly, all the monarchist parties supported the Cadet Party at the elections, as, for example, in Petrograd.

Having obtained state power, the Cadets made every effort to continue the predatory war of conquest begun by Tsar Nicholas II, who had concluded secret predatory treaties with the British and French capitalists. Under these treaties, the Russian

capitalists were promised, in the event of victory, the seizure of Constantinople, Galicia, Armenia, etc. As to the people, the government of the Cadets put them off with empty subterfuges and promises, deferring the decision of all matters of vital and essential importance to the workers and peasants until the Constituent Assembly met, without appointing the date of its convocation.

Making use of liberty, the people began to organise independently. The chief organisation of the workers and peasants, who form the overwhelming majority of the population of Russia, was the Soviets of Workers', Soldiers' and Peasants' Deputies. These Soviets already began to be formed during the February Revolution, and within a few weeks all class-conscious and advanced workers and peasants were united in Soviets in most of the larger cities of Russia and in many rural districts.

The Soviets were elected in an absolutely free way. They were genuine organisations of the people, of the workers and peasants. They were genuine organisations of the vast majority of the people. The workers and peasants in soldiers' uniforms were armed.

It goes without saying that the Soviets could and should have taken over state power in full. Pending the convocation of the Constituent Assembly there should have been no other power in the state but the Soviets. Only then would our revolution have become a truly popular and truly democratic revolution. Only then could the working people, who are really striving for peace, and who really have no interest in a war of conquest, have begun firmly and resolutely to carry out a policy which would have ended the war of conquest and led to peace. Only then could the workers and peasants have curbed the capitalists, who are making fabulous profits "from the war" and who have reduced

the country to a state of ruin and starvation. But in the Soviets only a minority of the deputies were on the side of the revolutionary workers' party, the Bolshevik Social Democrats, who demanded that all state power should be transferred to the Soviets. The majority of the deputies to the Soviets were on the side of the parties of the Menshevik Social-Democrats and the Socialist-Revolutionaries, who were opposed to the transfer of power to the Soviets. Instead of removing the bourgeois government and replacing it by a government of the Soviets, these parties insisted on supporting the bourgeois government, compromising with it and forming a coalition government with it. This policy of compromise with the bourgeoisie pursued by the Socialist-Revolutionary and Menshevik parties, who enjoyed the confidence of the majority of the people, is the main content of the entire course of development of the revolution during the five months since it began.

#### IV

Let us first see how this compromising of the Socialist-Revolutionaries and Mensheviks with the bourgeoisie proceeded, and then let us try to explain why the majority of the people trusted them.

#### V

The Mensheviks and Socialist-Revolutionaries have compromised with the capitalists in one way or another at every stage of the Russian revolution.

At the very close of February 1917, as soon as the people had triumphed and the tsarist regime had been overthrown, the capitalist Provisional Government admitted Kerensky as a "socialist". As a matter of fact, Kerensky has never been a socialist; he was only a Trudovik, and he enlisted himself with the "Socialist-Revolutionaries" only in March 1917, when it was



already safe and quite profitable to do so. Through Kerensky, as Deputy Chairman of the Petrograd Soviet, the capitalist Provisional Government immediately set about gaining control of and taming the Soviet. The Soviet, i.e., the Socialist-Revolutionaries and Mensheviks who predominated in it, allowed itself to be tamed, agreeing immediately after the formation of the capitalist Provisional Government to "support it" – "to the extent" that it carried out its promises.

The Soviet regarded itself as a body verifying and exercising control over the activities of the Provisional Government. The leaders of the Soviet established what was known as a Contact Commission to keep in touch with the government. Within that Contact Commission, the Socialist-Revolutionary and Menshevik leaders of the Soviet held continuous negotiations with the capitalist government, holding, properly speaking, the status of Ministers without portfolio or unofficial Ministers.

This state of affairs lasted throughout March and almost the whole of April. Seeking to gain time, the capitalists resorted to delays and subterfuges. Not a single step of any importance to further the revolution was taken by the capitalist government during this period. It did absolutely nothing even to further its direct and immediate task, the convocation of the Constituent Assembly; it did not submit the question to the localities or even set up a central commission to handle the preparations. The government was concerned with only one thing, namely, surreptitiously renewing the predatory international treaties concluded by the tsar with the capitalists of Britain and France, thwarting the revolution as cautiously and quietly as possible, and promising everything without fulfilling any of its promises. The Socialist-Revolutionaries and Mensheviks in the Contact Commission acted like simpletons who were fed on fancy phrases, promises, and more promises. Like the crow in the fable,

the Socialist-Revolutionaries and Mensheviks succumbed to flattery and listened with pleasure to the assurances of the capitalists that they valued the Soviets highly and did not take a single step without them.

But time passed and the capitalist government did absolutely nothing for the revolution. On the contrary, during this period it managed, to the detriment of the revolution, to renew the secret predatory treaties, or, rather, to reaffirm them and "vitalise" them by supplementary and no less secret negotiations with Anglo-French imperialist diplomats. During this period it managed, to the detriment of the revolution, to lay the foundations of a counter-revolutionary organisation of (or at least of a rapprochement among) the generals and officers in the army in the field. To the detriment of the revolution it managed to start the organisation of industrialists, of factory-owners, who, under the onslaught of the workers, were compelled to make concession after concession, but who at the same time began to sabotage (damage) production and prepare to bring it to a standstill when the opportunity came.

However, the organisation of the advanced workers and peasants in the Soviets made steady progress. The foremost representatives of the oppressed classes felt that, in spite of the agreement between the government and the Petrograd Soviet, in spite of Kerensky's pompous talk, in spite of the "Contact Commission", the government remained an enemy of the people, an enemy of the revolution. The people felt that unless the resistance of the capitalists was broken, the cause of peace, liberty and the revolution, would inevitably be lost. The impatience and bitterness of the people kept on growing.

VI

It burst out on April 20–21. The movement flared up spontaneously; nobody had cleared the ground for it. The movement was so markedly directed against the government that one regiment even appeared fully armed at the Marinsky Palace to arrest the ministers. It became perfectly obvious to everybody that the government could not retain power. The Soviets could (and should) have taken overpower without meeting the least resistance from any quarter. Instead, the Socialist-Revolutionaries and Mensheviks supported the collapsing capitalist government, entangled themselves even further in compromises with it and took steps that were even more fatal to the revolution, that tended to lead to its doom.

Revolution enlightens all classes with a rapidity and thoroughness unknown in normal, peaceful times. The capitalists, better organised and more experienced than anybody else in matters of class struggle and politics, learnt their lesson quicker than the others. Realising that the government's position was hopeless, they resorted to a method which for many decades, ever since 1848, has been practised by the capitalists of other countries in order to fool, divide and weaken the workers. This method is known as a "coalition" government, i.e., a joint cabinet formed of members of the bourgeoisie and turncoats from socialism.

In countries where freedom and democracy have long existed side by side with a revolutionary labour movement, in Britain and France, the capitalists have repeatedly and very successfully resorted to this method. When the "socialist" leaders entered a bourgeois cabinet, they invariably proved to be figureheads, puppets, screens for the capitalists, instruments for deceiving the workers. The "democratic and republican" capitalists of Russia resorted to this very method. The Socialist-Revolutionaries and Mensheviks let themselves be fooled at once, and the "coalition"

cabinet, joined by Chernov, Tsereteli and Co., became a fact on May 6.

The simpletons of the Socialist-Revolutionary and Menshevik parties were jubilant and fatuously bathed in the rays of the ministerial glory of their leaders. The capitalists gleefully rubbed their hands at having found helpers against the people in the persons of the "leaders of the Soviets" and at having secured their promise to support "offensive operations at the front", i.e., a resumption of the imperialist predatory war, which had come to a standstill for a while. The capitalists were well aware of the puffed-up impotence of these leaders, they knew that the promises of the bourgeoisie – regarding control over production, and even the organisation of production, regarding a peace policy, and so forth – would never be fulfilled.

And so it turned out. The second phase in the development of the revolution, May 6 to June 9, or June 18, fully corroborated the expectations of the capitalists as to the ease with which the Socialist-Revolutionaries and Mensheviks could be fooled.

While Peshekhonov and Skobelev were deceiving themselves and the people with florid speeches to the effect that one hundred per cent of the profits of the capitalists would be taken away from them, that their "resistance was broken", and so forth, the capitalists continued to consolidate their position. Nothing, absolutely nothing, was undertaken during this period to curb the capitalists. The ministerial turncoats from socialism proved to be mere talking machines for distracting the attention of the oppressed classes, while the entire apparatus of state administration actually remained in the hands of the bureaucracy (the officialdom) and the bourgeoisie. The notorious Palchinsky, Deputy Minister for Industry, was a typical representative of that apparatus, blocking every measure against

the capitalists. While the ministers prated everything remained as of old.

The bourgeoisie used Minister Tsereteli in particular to fight the revolution. He was sent to "pacify" Kronstadt when the local revolutionaries had the audacity to remove an appointed commissar. The bourgeoisie launched in their newspapers an incredibly vociferous, violent and vicious campaign of lies, slander and vituperation against Kronstadt, accusing it of the desire "to secede from Russia", and repeating this and similar absurdities in a thousand ways to intimidate the petty bourgeoisie and the philistines. A most typically stupid and frightened philistine, Tsereteli, was the most "conscientious" of all in swallowing the bait of bourgeois slander; he was the most zealous of all in "smashing up and subduing" Kronstadt, without realising that he was playing the role of a lackey of the counter-revolutionary bourgeoisie. He turned out to be the instrument of the "compromise" arrived at with revolutionary Kronstadt, whereby the commissar for Kronstadt was not simply appointed by the government but was elected locally and was confirmed by the government. It was on such miserable compromises that the ministers who had deserted socialism for the bourgeoisie wasted their time.

Wherever a bourgeois minister could not appear in defence of the government, before the revolutionary workers or in the Soviets, Skobelev, Tsereteli, Chernov or some other "socialist" Minister appeared (or, to be precise, was sent by the bourgeoisie) and faithfully performed their assignment; he would do his level best to defend the Cabinet, whitewash the capitalists and fool the people by making promise after promise and by advising people to wait, wait and wait.

Minister Chernov particularly was engaged in bargaining with his bourgeois colleagues; down to July, to the new "crisis of

power" which began after the movement of July 3-4, to the resignation of the Cadets from the Cabinet, Minister Chernov was continuously engaged in the useful and interesting work, so beneficial to the people, of "persuading" his bourgeois colleagues, exhorting them to agree at least to prohibition of the purchase and sale of land. This prohibition had been most solemnly promised to the peasants at the All-Russia Congress of Peasant Deputies in Petrograd. But the promise remained only a promise. Chernov proved unable to fulfil it either in May or in June, until the revolutionary tide, the spontaneous outbreak of July 3-4, which coincided with the resignation of the Cadets from the Cabinet, made it possible to enact this measure. Even then, however, it proved to be an isolated measure, incapable of promoting to any palpable extent the struggle of the peasants against the landowners for land.

Meanwhile, at the front, the counter-revolutionary, imperialist task of resuming the imperialist, predatory war, a task which Guchkov, so hated by the people, had been unable to accomplish, was being accomplished successfully and brilliantly by the "revolutionary democrat" Kerensky, that new-baked member of the Socialist-Revolutionary Party. He revelled in his own eloquence, incense was burned to him by the imperialists, who were using him as a pawn, he was flattered and worshipped – all because he served the capitalists faithfully, trying to talk the "revolutionary troops" into agreeing to resume the war being waged in pursuance of the treaties concluded by Tsar Nicholas II with the capitalists of Britain and France, a war waged so that Russian capitalists might secure Constantinople and Lvov, Erzurum and Trebizond.

So passed the second phase of the Russian revolution – May 6 to June 9. Shielded and defended by the "socialist" Ministers, the counter-revolutionary bourgeoisie grew in strength,

consolidated their position and prepared an offensive both against the external enemy and against the internal enemy, i.e., the revolutionary workers.

## VII

On June 9, the revolutionary workers' party, the Bolsheviks, was preparing for a demonstration in Petrograd to give organised expression to the irresistibly growing popular discontent and indignation. The Socialist-Revolutionary and Menshevik leaders, entangled in compromises with the bourgeoisie and bound by the imperialist policy of an offensive, were horrified, feeling that they were losing their influence among the masses. A general howl went up against the demonstration, and the counter-revolutionary Cadets joined in this howl, this time together with the Socialist-Revolutionaries and Mensheviks. Under their direction, and as a result of their policy of compromise with the capitalists, the swing of the petty-bourgeois masses to an alliance with the counter-revolutionary bourgeoisie became quite definite and strikingly obvious. This is the historical significance and class meaning of the crisis of June 9.

The Bolsheviks called off the demonstration, having no wish to lead the workers at that moment into a losing fight against the united Cadets, Socialist-Revolutionaries and Mensheviks. The latter, however, so as to retain at least a vestige of the people's confidence, were compelled to call a general demonstration for June 18. The bourgeoisie were beside themselves with rage, rightly discerning in this a swing of the petty-bourgeois democrats towards the proletariat, and they decided to paralyse the action of the democrats by an offensive at the front.

In fact, June 18 was marked by an impressive victory for the slogans of the revolutionary proletariat, the slogans of

Bolshevism, among the people of Petrograd. And on June 19 the bourgeoisie and the Bonapartist Kerensky solemnly announced that the offensive at the front had begun on June 18.

The offensive meant in effect the resumption of the predatory war in the interests of the capitalists and against the will of the vast majority of the working people. That is why the offensive was inevitably accompanied, on the one hand, by a gigantic growth of chauvinism and the transfer of military power (and consequently of state power) to the military gang of Bonapartists, and, on the other, by the use of violence against the masses, the persecution of the internationalists, the abolition of freedom of agitation, and the arrest and shooting of those who were against the war.

Whereas May 6 bound the Socialist-Revolutionaries and Mensheviks to the triumphal chariot of the bourgeoisie with a rope, June 19 shackled them, as servants of the capitalists, with a chain.

## VIII

Owing to the resumption of the predatory war, the bitterness of the people naturally grew even more rapidly and intensely. July 3–4 witnessed an outburst of their anger which the Bolsheviks attempted to restrain and which, of course, they had to endeavour to make as organised as possible.

The Socialist-Revolutionaries and Mensheviks, being slaves of the bourgeoisie, shackled by their master, agreed to everything: dispatching reactionary troops to Petrograd, bringing back the death penalty, disarming the workers and revolutionary troops, arresting and hounding, and closing down newspapers without trial. The power which the bourgeoisie in the government were unable to take entirely, and which the Soviets did not want to take, fell into the hands of the military clique, the Bonapartists,



who, of course, were wholly backed by the Cadets and the Black Hundreds, by the landowners and capitalists.

Down the ladder, step by step. Having once set foot on the ladder of compromise with the bourgeoisie, the Socialist Revolutionaries and Mensheviks slid irresistibly downwards, to rock bottom. On February 28, in the Petrograd Soviet, they promised conditional support to the bourgeois government. On May 6 they saved it from collapse and allowed themselves to be made its servants and defenders by agreeing to an offensive. On June 9 they united with the counter revolutionary bourgeoisie in a campaign of furious rage, lies and slander against the revolutionary proletariat. On June 19 they approved the resumption of the predatory war. On July 3 they consented to the summoning of reactionary troops, which was the beginning of their complete surrender of power to the Bonapartists. Down the ladder, step by step.

This shameful finale of the Socialist-Revolutionary and Menshevik parties was not fortuitous but a consequence of the economic status of the small owners, the petty bourgeoisie, as has been repeatedly borne out by experience in Europe.

## IX

Everybody, of course, has seen the small owner bend every effort and strain every nerve to "get on in the world", to become a real master, to rise to the position of a "strong" employer, to the position of a bourgeois. As long as capitalism rules the roost, there is no alternative for the small owner other than becoming a capitalist (and that is possible at best in the case of one small owner out of a hundred), or becoming a ruined man, a semi-proletarian, and ultimately a proletarian. The same is true in politics: the petty-bourgeois democrats, especially their leaders, tend to trail after the bourgeoisie. The leaders of the petty-

bourgeois democrats console their people with promises and assurances about the possibility of reaching agreement with the big capitalists; at best, and for a very brief period, they obtain certain minor concessions from the capitalists for a small upper section of the working people; but on every decisive issue, on every important matter, the petty-bourgeois democrats have always tailed after the bourgeoisie as a feeble appendage to them, as an obedient tool in the hands of the financial magnates. The experience of Britain and France has proved this over and over again.

The experience of the Russian revolution from February to July 1917, when events developed with unusual rapidity, particularly under the influence of the imperialist war and the deep-going crisis brought about by it, has most strikingly and palpably confirmed the old Marxist truth that the position of the petty bourgeoisie is unstable.

The lesson of the Russian revolution is that there can be no escape for the working people from the iron grip of war, famine, and enslavement by the landowners and capitalists unless they completely break with the Socialist-Revolutionary and Menshevik parties and clearly understand the latter's treacherous role, unless they renounce all compromises with the bourgeoisie and resolutely side with the revolutionary workers. Only the revolutionary workers, if supported by the peasant poor, are capable of smashing the resistance of the capitalists and leading the people in gaining land without compensation, complete liberty, victory over famine and the war, and a just and lasting peace.

Afterword

This article was written at the end of July, as is apparent from the text.

The history of the revolution during August has fully corroborated what is said in this article. Then, at the end of August, the Kornilov revolt caused a new turn in the revolution by clearly demonstrating to the whole people that the Cadets, in alliance with the counter-revolutionary generals, were striving to disband the Soviets and restore the monarchy. The near future will show how strong this new turn of the revolution is, and whether it will succeed in putting an end to the fatal policy of compromise with the bourgeoisie.

N. Lenin

September 6, 1917

Lenin

From; **Heroes of Fraud and the Mistakes of the Bolsheviks**

September 22, 1917

Collected Works, Volume 26, 1972, pp. 43-51

If the turn taken by history called for a compromise with the Socialist-Revolutionaries and Mensheviks (personally I believe it did) the Bolsheviks should have proposed it clearly, openly and speedily, so that they could immediately turn to account the possible and probable refusal of the Bonapartist Kerensky's friends to agree to a compromise with them.

The refusal was already indicated by articles in *Dyelo Naroda* and *Rabochaya Gazeta* on the eve of the Conference. The masses should have been told as officially, openly and clearly as possible, they should have been told without the loss of a minute, that the Socialist-Revolutionaries and Mensheviks had rejected our offer of a compromise—Down with the Socialist-Revolutionaries and Mensheviks!

Lenin

**From; Meeting of the Central Committee of the R.S.D.L.P.(B.)**

October 16 (29), 1917

Collected Works, Volume 26

Report Minutes

Comrade Lenin read the resolution adopted by the Central Committee at the previous meeting. He stated that the resolution had been adopted with two dissenting votes. If the dissident comrades wished to make a statement, a discussion could be held; meanwhile he continued with the motives of the resolution.

If the Menshevik and Socialist-Revolutionary parties were to break with their policy of conciliation, a compromise with them could be proposed. The proposal had been made, but those parties had obviously rejected the compromise. On the other hand, by that time it had become definitely clear that the masses were following the Bolsheviks. That had been before the Kornilov revolt. Lenin cited election returns from Petrograd and Moscow as evidence. The Kornilov revolt had pushed the masses still more decisively to the side of the Bolsheviks. The alignment of forces at the Democratic Conference. The position was clear—either Kornilov's dictatorship or the dictatorship of the proletariat and the poorer strata of the peasantry. The Party could not be guided by the temper of the masses because it was changeable and incalculable; the Party must be guided by an objective analysis and an appraisal of the revolution. The masses had put their trust in the Bolsheviks and demanded deeds from them and not words, a decisive policy both in the struggle against the war and in the struggle against economic ruin. If the political analysis of the revolution were taken as the basis, it

would be perfectly clear that even anarchic outbursts confirmed that.

Lenin went on to analyse the situation in Europe and showed that revolution would be even more difficult in Europe than in Russia; if matters had gone as far as a revolt in the navy in such a country as Germany, there too they must already have gone very far. Certain objective data on the international situation showed that by acting at that moment the Bolsheviks would have all proletarian Europe on their side; he showed that the bourgeoisie wanted to surrender Petrograd. That could only be prevented by the Bolsheviks taking over Petrograd. The obvious conclusion from all this was—the armed uprising was on the order of the day as was stated in the resolution of the Central Committee.

It would be better to draw practical conclusions from the resolution after hearing the reports of representatives from the centres.

From a political analysis of the class struggle in Russia and in Europe there emerged the necessity to pursue the most determined and most active policy, which could be only the armed uprising.

Lenin

## **Speech On The Agrarian Question**

November 14, 1917

Collected Works, Volume 26, 1972, pp. 321-332

Newspaper Report

On the instructions of the Bolshevik group, Comrade Lenin delivered a speech setting forth the views of the Bolshevik Party on the agrarian question.

He said that the Party of Socialist-Revolutionaries had suffered defeat over the agrarian question, since it had advocated the confiscation of the landed estates but refused to carry it into effect.

Landed proprietorship forms the basis of feudal oppression, and the confiscation of the landed estates is the first step of the revolution in Russia. But the land question cannot be settled independently of the other problems of the revolution. A correct view of these problems can be derived from an analysis of the stages through which the revolution has passed. The first stage was the overthrow of the autocracy and the establishment of the power of the bourgeoisie and the landowners. The interests of the landowners were closely interwoven with those of the bourgeoisie and the banks. The second stage was the consolidation of the Soviets and a policy of compromise with the bourgeoisie. The mistake of the Left Socialist-Revolutionaries was that at that time they failed to oppose the policy of compromise on the plea that the masses were not sufficiently enlightened. A party is the vanguard of a class, and its duty is to lead the masses and not merely to reflect the average political level of the masses. But in order to lead those who vacillate the

Left Socialist-Revolutionary comrades must themselves stop vacillating.

Comrades Left Socialist-Revolutionaries! In July there began a period in which the masses of the people started breaking away from the policy of compromise, but to this very day the Left Socialist-Revolutionaries are stretching out a hand to the Avksentyevs, while offering the workers only their little finger. If compromise continues, the revolution is doomed. Only if the peasantry supports the workers can the problems of the revolution be solved. **Compromise is an attempt on the part of the masses of workers, peasants and soldiers to get their needs satisfied by means of reforms, by concessions on the part of capital, without a socialist revolution.** But it is impossible to give the people peace and land without overthrowing the bourgeoisie, without socialism. It is the duty of the revolution to put an end to compromise, and to put an end to compromise means taking the path of socialist revolution.

Comrade Lenin went on to defend the instructions to the volost committees and spoke of the necessity of breaking with the leading organs, such as the army committees, the Executive Committee of the Peasants' Deputies, etc. We adopted our law on the volost committees, he said, from the peasants. The peasants want land and the prohibition of hired labour; they want implements for the cultivation of the soil. And this cannot be obtained without defeating capital. You want land, we said to them, but the land is mortgaged and belongs to Russian and world capital. You are throwing down a challenge to capital, you are following a different path from ours; but we are at one with you in that we are marching, and must march, towards the social revolution. As for the Constituent Assembly, the speaker said that its work will depend on the mood in the country, but he added, trust in the mood, but don't forget your rifles.



Comrade Lenin went on to deal with the question of the war. When he referred to the removal of Dukhonin and the appointment of Krylenko as Commander-in-Chief, there was laughter among the audience. It may be funny to you, he retorted, but the soldiers will condemn you for this laughter. If there are people here who think it funny that we removed a counter-revolutionary general and appointed Krylenko, who is against the general and has gone to conduct negotiations, we have nothing to say to them. We have nothing in common with those who do not recognise the need to fight the counter-revolutionary generals. Rather than have anything to do with such people we prefer to retire from power, go underground if necessary.

**Lenin**

**Report On The Economic Condition Of Petrograd Workers  
And The Tasks Of The Working Class**

4 December, 1917

*Collected Works*, Volume 26, 1972, pp. 364-366

The Revolution of October 25 had shown the exceptional political maturity of the proletariat and its ability to stand firm in opposition to the bourgeoisie, said the speaker. The complete victory of socialism, however, would require a tremendous organisational effort filled with the knowledge that the proletariat must become the ruling class.

The proletariat was faced with the tasks of transforming the state system on socialist lines, for no matter how easy it would be to cite arguments in favour of a middle course such a course would be insignificant, the country's economic situation having reached a state that would rule out any middle course. There was no place left for half-measures in the gigantic struggle against imperialism and capitalism.

The point at issue was—win or lose.

The workers should and did understand this; this was obvious because they had rejected half-way, compromise decisions. The more profound the revolution, the greater the number of active workers required to accomplish the replacement of capitalism by a socialist machinery. Even if there were no sabotage, the forces of the petty bourgeoisie would be inadequate. The task was one that could be accomplished only by drawing on the masses, only by the independent activity of the masses. The proletariat, therefore, should not think of improving its position at the moment, but should think of becoming the ruling class. It could not be expected that the rural proletariat would be clearly and

firmly conscious of its own interests. Only the working class could be, and every proletarian, conscious of the great prospects, should feel himself to be a leader and carry the masses with him.

The proletariat should become the ruling class in the sense of being the leader of all who work; it should be the ruling class politically.

The illusion that only the bourgeoisie could run the state must be fought against. The proletariat must take the rule of the state upon itself.

The capitalists were doing everything they could to complicate the tasks of the working class. And all working-class organisations—trade unions, factory committees and others—would have to conduct a determined struggle in the economic sphere. The bourgeoisie was spoiling everything, sabotaging everything, in order to wreck the working-class revolution. And the tasks of organising production devolved entirely on the working class. They should do away, once and for all, with the illusion that state affairs or the management of banks and factories were beyond the power of the workers. All this could be solved only by tremendous day-to-day organisational work.

It was essential to organise the exchange of products and introduce regular accounting and control—these were tasks for the working class, and the knowledge necessary for their accomplishment had been provided by factory life.

Every factory committee should concern itself not only with the affairs of its own factory but should also be an organisation nucleus helping arrange the life of the state as a whole.

It was easy to issue a decree on the abolition of private property, but it must and could be implemented only by the workers

themselves. Let there be mistakes—they would be the mistakes of a new class creating a new way of life.

There was not and could not be a definite plan for the organisation of economic life.

Nobody could provide one. But it could be done from below, by the masses, through their experience. Instructions would, of course, be given and ways would be indicated, but it was necessary to begin simultaneously from above and from below.

The Soviets would have to become bodies regulating all production in Russia, but in order that they should not become staff headquarters without troops, work in the lower echelons was needed.... [Several illegible words were omitted—Editor]

The working-class masses must set about the organisation of control and production on a country-wide scale. Not the organisation of individuals, but the organisation of all the working people, would be a guarantee of success; if they achieved that, if they organised economic life, everything opposing them would disappear of its own accord.

Lenin

## **Marxism and Insurrection**

**From; A Letter to the Central Committee of the R.S.D.L.P.(B.)**

September 13-14, 1917

Collected Works, Volume 26, 1972, pp. 22-27

We are in the advantageous position of a party that knows for certain which way to go at a time when imperialism, as a whole and the Menshevik and Socialist-Revolutionary bloc as a whole are vacillating in an incredible fashion.

Our victory is assured, for the people are close to desperation, and we are showing the entire people a sure way out; we demonstrated to the entire people during the "Kornilov days" the value of our leadership, and then proposed to the politicians of the bloc a compromise, which they rejected, although there is no let-up in their vacillations.

It would be a great mistake to think that our offer of a compromise had not yet been rejected, and that the Democratic Conference may still accept it. The compromise was proposed by a party to parties; it could not have been proposed in any other way. It was rejected by parties. The Democratic Conference is a conference, and nothing more. One thing must not be forgotten, namely, that the majority of the revolutionary people, the poor, embittered peasants, are not represented in it. It is a conference of a minority of the people—this obvious truth must not be forgotten. It would be a big mistake, sheer parliamentary cretinism on our part, if we were to regard the Democratic Conference as a parliament; for even if it were to proclaim itself a permanent and sovereign parliament of the revolution, it would nevertheless decide nothing. The power of decision lies

outside it in the working-class quarters of Petrograd and Moscow.

All the objective conditions exist for a successful insurrection. We have the exceptional advantage of a situation in which only our victory in the insurrection can put an end to that most painful thing on earth, vacillation, which has worn the people out; in which only our victory in the insurrection will give the peasants land immediately; a situation in which only our victory in the insurrection can foil the game of a separate peace directed against the revolution —foil it by publicly proposing a fuller, juster and earlier peace, a peace that will benefit the revolution.

Lenin

**From; Speech On The Dissolution Of The Constituent  
Assembly**

Delivered To The All-Russia Central Executive Committee

January 6 (19), 1918

Collected Works, Volume 26, 1972, pp. 437-441

The transition from capitalism to a socialist system entails a long and bitter struggle. Having overthrown tsarism, the Russian revolution was bound to go farther; it could not stop at the victory of the bourgeois revolution; for the war, and the untold sufferings it caused the exhausted peoples, created a soil favourable for the outbreak of the social revolution. Nothing, therefore, is more ludicrous than the assertion that the subsequent development of the revolution, and the revolt of the masses that followed, were caused by a party, by an individual, or, as they vociferate, by the will of a “dictator”. The fire of revolution broke out solely because of the incredible sufferings of Russia, and because of the conditions created by the war, which sternly and inexorably faced the working people with the alternative of taking a bold, desperate and fearless step, or of perishing, of dying from starvation.

And revolutionary fire was manifest in the creation of the Soviets—the mainstay of the workers’ revolution. The Russian people have made a gigantic advance, a leap from tsarism to the Soviets. That is a fact, irrefutable and unparalleled. While the bourgeois parliaments of all countries and states, confined within the bounds of capitalism and private property, have never anywhere supported a revolutionary movement, the Soviets, having lit the fire of revolution, imperatively command the people to fight, take everything into their own hands, and

organise themselves. In the course of a revolution called forth by the strength of the Soviets there are certain to be all kinds of errors and blunders. But everybody knows that revolutionary movements are always and inevitably accompanied by temporary chaos, destruction and disorder. Bourgeois society is the same war, the same shambles; and it was this circumstance that gave rise to and accentuated the conflict between the Constituent Assembly and the Soviets. Those who point out that we are now "dissolving" the Constituent Assembly although at one time we defended it are not displaying a grain of sense, but are merely uttering pompous and meaningless phrases. At one time, we considered the Constituent Assembly to be better than tsarism and the republic of Kerensky with their famous organs of power; but as the Soviets emerged, they, being revolutionary organisations of the whole people, naturally became incomparably superior to any parliament in the world, a fact that I emphasised as far back as last April. By completely smashing bourgeois and landed property and by facilitating the final upheaval which is sweeping away all traces of the bourgeois system, the Soviets impelled us on to the path that has led the people to organise their own lives. We have taken up this great work of organisation, and it is well that we have done so. Of course, the socialist revolution cannot be immediately presented to the people in a clean, neat and impeccable form; it will inevitably be accompanied by civil war, sabotage and resistance. Those who assert the contrary are either liars or cowards. (Stormy applause.) The events of April 20, when the people, without any directions from "dictators" or parties, came out independently and solidly against the government of compromisers, showed even then that the bourgeoisie were weak and had no solid support. The masses sensed their power, and to placate them the famous game of ministerial leapfrog began, the object of which was to fool the people. But the people



very soon saw through the game, particularly after Kerensky, both his pockets stuffed with predatory secret treaties with the imperialists, began to move the armies for an offensive. Gradually the activities of the compromisers became obvious to the deceived people, whose patience began to be exhausted. The result was the October Revolution. The people learned by experience, having suffered torture, executions and wholesale shootings and it is nonsense for the butchers to assert that the Bolsheviks, or certain "dictators", are responsible for the revolt of the working people. They are given the lie by the split that is occurring among the people themselves at congresses, meetings, conferences, and so forth. The people have not yet fully understood the October Revolution. This revolution has shown in practice how the people must take into their own hands, the hands of the workers' and peasants state, the land, the natural resources, and the means of transport and production. Our cry was, All power to the Soviets; it is for this we are fighting. The people wanted the Constituent Assembly summoned, and we summoned it. But they sensed immediately what this famous Constituent Assembly really was. And now we have carried out the will of the people, which is— All power to the Soviets. As for the saboteurs, we shall crush them. When I came from Smolny, that fount of life and vigour, to the Taurida Palace, I felt as though I were in the company of corpses and lifeless mummies. They drew on all their available resources in order to fight socialism, they resorted to violence and sabotage, they even turned knowledge—the great pride of humanity—into a means of exploiting the working people. But although they managed to hinder somewhat the advance towards the socialist revolution, they could not stop it and will never be able to. Indeed the Soviets that have begun to smash the old, outworn foundations of the bourgeois system, not in gentlemanly, but in a blunt proletarian and peasant fashion, are much too strong.

To hand over power to the Constituent Assembly would again be compromising with the malignant bourgeoisie. The Russian Soviets place the interests of the working people far above the interests of a treacherous policy of compromise disguised in a new garb. The speeches of those outdated politicians, Chernov and Tsereteli, who continue whining tediously for the cessation of civil war, give off the stale and musty odour of antiquity. But as long as Kaledin exists, and as long as the slogan "All power to the Constituent Assembly" conceals the slogan "Down with Soviet power", civil war is inevitable. For nothing in the world will make us give up Soviet power! (Stormy applause.) And when the Constituent Assembly again revealed its readiness to post-pont' all the painfully urgent problems and tasks that were placed before it by the Soviets, we told the Constituent Assembly that they must not be postponed for one single moment. And by the will of Soviet power the Constituent Assembly, which has refused to recognise the power of the people, is being dissolved. The Byabushinskys have lost their stakes; their attempts at resistance will only accentuate and provoke a new outbreak of civil war.

The Constituent Assembly is dissolved. The Soviet revolutionary republic will triumph, no matter what the cost. (Stormy applause. Ovation.)

Lenin

**From; Speech in The Moscow Soviet Of Workers', Peasants'  
And Red Army Deputies**

March 12, 1918

Collected Works, 1972 Volume 27, pp. 164-68.

The Russian revolution produced results which sharply distinguish it from the revolutions in Western Europe. It produced revolutionary people prepared by the events of 1905 to take independent action; it produced the Soviets of Workers', Soldiers' and Peasants' Deputies, bodies incomparably more democratic than all those preceding them, able to educate, elevate and lead the oppressed mass of workers, soldiers and peasants. **Thanks to these circumstances** the Russian revolution within a few months passed through that period of compromise with the bourgeoisie which in Western Europe took entire decades.

Lenin

**Six Theses On The Immediate Tasks Of The Soviet Government**

May 3, 1918

Collected Works, Volume 27, pages 314-317

1. The international position of the Soviet Republic is extremely difficult and critical, because the deepest and fundamental interests of international capital and imperialism induce it to strive not only for a military onslaught on Russia, but also for an agreement on the partition of Russia and the strangulation of the Soviet power.

Only the intensification of the imperialist slaughter of the peoples in Western Europe and the imperialist rivalry between Japan and America in the Far East paralyse, or restrain, these aspirations, and then only partially, and only for a certain, probably short, time.

Therefore, the tactics of the Soviet Republic must be, on the one hand, to exert every effort to ensure the country's speediest economic recovery, to increase its defence capacity, to build up a powerful socialist army; on the other hand, in international policy, the tactics must be those of manoeuvring, retreat, waiting for the moment when the international proletarian revolution—which is now maturing more quickly than before in a number of advanced countries—fully matures.

2. In the sphere of domestic policy, the task that comes to the forefront at the present time in conformity with the resolution adopted by the All-Russia Congress of Soviets on March 15, 1918, is the task of organisation. It is this task, in connection with the new and higher organisation of production and distribution on the basis of socialised large-scale machine (labour) production,

that constitutes the chief content—and chief condition of complete victory —of the socialist revolution that was begun in Russia on October 25, 1917.

3. From the purely political point of view, the essence of the present situation is that the task of convincing the working people of Russia that the programme of the socialist revolution is correct and the task of winning Russia from the exploiters for the working people have, in main and fundamental outline, been carried out, and the chief problem that comes to the forefront now is—how to administer Russia. The organisation of proper administration, the undeviating fulfilment of the decisions of the Soviet government—this is the urgent task of the Soviets, this is the condition for the complete victory of the Soviet type of state, which it is not enough to proclaim in formal decrees, which it is not enough to establish and introduce in all parts of the country, but which must also be practically organised and tested in the course of the regular, everyday work of administration.

4. In the sphere of the economic building of socialism, the essence of the present situation is that our work of organising the country-wide and all-embracing accounting and control of production and distribution, and of introducing proletarian control of production, lags far behind the direct expropriation of the expropriators—the landowners and capitalists. This is the fundamental fact determining our tasks.

From this it follows, on the one hand, that the struggle against the bourgeoisie is entering a new phase, namely: the centre of gravity is shifting to the organisation of accounting and control. Only in this way is it possible to consolidate all the economic achievements directed against capital, all the measures in nationalising individual branches of the national economy that we have carried out since October; and only in this way is it possible to prepare for the successful consummation of the

struggle against the bourgeoisie, i.e., the complete consolidation of socialism.

From this basic fact follows, on the other hand, the explanation as to **why the Soviet government was obliged in certain cases to take a step backward, or to agree to compromise with bourgeois tendencies.** Such a step backward and departure from the principles of the Paris Commune was, for example, the introduction of high salaries for a number of bourgeois experts. Such a compromise was the agreement with the bourgeois co-operatives concerning steps and measures for gradually bringing the entire population into the co-operatives. Compromises of this kind **will be necessary until the proletarian government has put country-wide control and accounting firmly on its feet;** and our task is, while not in the least concealing their unfavourable features from the people, to exert efforts to improve accounting and control as the only means and method of completely eliminating all compromises of this kind. Compromises of this kind are needed at the present time as the sole (because we are late with accounting and control) guarantee of slower, but surer progress. **When the accounting and control of production and distribution is fully introduced the need for such compromises will disappear.**

5. Particular significance now attaches to measures for raising labour discipline and the productivity of labour. Every effort must be exerted for the steps already undertaken in this direction, especially by the trade unions, to be sustained, consolidated and increased. This includes, for example, the introduction of piece-work, the adoption of much that is scientific and progressive in the Taylor system, the payment of wages commensurate with the general results of the work of a factory, the exploitation of rail and water transport, etc. This also includes the organisation of competition between individual

producers' and consumers' communes, selection of organisers, etc.

6. The proletarian dictatorship is absolutely indispensable during the transition from capitalism to socialism, and in our revolution this truth has been fully confirmed in practice. Dictatorship, however, presupposes a revolutionary government that is really firm and ruthless in crushing both exploiters and hooligans, and our government is too mild. Obedience, and unquestioning obedience at that, during work to the one-man decisions of Soviet directors, of the dictators elected or appointed by Soviet institutions, vested with dictatorial powers (as is demanded, for example, by the railway decree), is far, very far from being guaranteed as yet. This is the effect of the influence of petty-bourgeois anarchy, the anarchy of small-proprietor habits, aspirations and sentiments, which fundamentally contradict proletarian discipline and socialism. The proletariat must concentrate all its class-consciousness on the task of combating this petty-bourgeois anarchy, which is not only directly apparent (in the support given by the bourgeoisie and their hangers-on, the Mensheviks, Right Socialist-Revolutionaries, etc., to every kind of resistance to the proletarian government), but also indirectly apparent (in the historical vacillation displayed on the major questions of policy by both the petty-bourgeois Left Socialist-Revolutionaries and the trend in our Party called "Left Communist", which descends to the methods of petty-bourgeois revolutionariness and copies the Left Socialist-Revolutionaries).

Iron discipline and the thorough exercise of proletarian dictatorship against petty-bourgeois vacillation—this is the general and summarising slogan of the moment.

Lenin

**From; Speech At A Meeting In Butyrsky District**

August 2, 1918

Collected Works, Volume 28, pages 40-42

Now there are two fronts: the workers and peasants on one side, and the capitalists on the other. **The last, decisive battle is near.** Now **there can be no compromise** with the bourgeoisie. Either them or us.



Lenin

## **Draft Decree On The Dissolution Of The Constituent Assembly**

6 January 1918

Collected Works, Volume 26, 1972, pp. 434-482

At its very inception, the Russian revolution produced the Soviets of Workers', Soldiers' and Peasants' Deputies as the only mass organisation of all the working and exploited classes capable of leading the struggle of these classes for their complete political and economic emancipation.

During the whole of the initial period of the Russian Revolution the Soviets multiplied in number, grew and gained strength and were taught by their own experience to discard the illusions of compromise with the bourgeoisie and to realise the deceptive nature of the forms of the bourgeois-democratic parliamentary system; they arrived by practical experience at the conclusion that the emancipation of the oppressed classes was impossible unless they broke with these forms and with every kind of compromise. The break came with the October Revolution, which transferred the entire power to the Soviets.

The Constituent Assembly, elected on the basis of electoral lists drawn up prior to the October Revolution, was an expression of the old relation of political forces which existed when power was held by the compromisers and the Cadets. When the people at that time voted for the candidates of the Socialist-Revolutionary Party, they were not in a position to choose between the Right Socialist-Revolutionaries, the supporters of the bourgeoisie, and the Left Socialist-Revolutionaries, the supporters of socialism. The Constituent Assembly, therefore, which was to have crowned the bourgeois parliamentary republic, was bound to

become an obstacle in the path of the October Revolution and Soviet power.

The October Revolution, by giving power to the Soviets, and through the Soviets to the working and exploited classes, aroused the desperate resistance of the exploiters, and in the crushing of this resistance it fully revealed itself as the beginning of the socialist revolution. The working classes learned by experience that the old bourgeois parliamentary system had outlived its purpose and was absolutely incompatible with the aim of achieving socialism, and that not national institutions, but only class institutions (such as the Soviets) were capable of overcoming the resistance of the propertied classes and of laying the foundations of socialist society. To relinquish the sovereign power of the Soviets, to relinquish the Soviet Republic won by the people, for the sake of the bourgeois parliamentary system and the Constituent Assembly, would now be a step backwards and would cause the collapse of the October workers' and peasants' revolution.

Owing to the above-mentioned circumstances, the Party of Right Socialist-Revolutionaries, the party of Kerensky, Avksentyev and Chernov, obtained the majority in the Constituent Assembly which met on January 5. Naturally, this party refused to discuss the absolutely clear, precise and unambiguous proposal of the supreme organ of Soviet power, the Central Executive Committee of the Soviets, to recognise the programme of Soviet power, to recognise the Declaration of Rights of the Working and Exploited People, to recognise the October Revolution and Soviet power. By this action the Constituent Assembly severed all ties with the Soviet Republic of Russia. It was inevitable that the Bolshevik group and the Left Socialist-Revolutionary group, who now patently constitute the overwhelming majority in the Soviets and enjoy the confidence of the workers and the majority

of the peasants, should withdraw from such a Constituent Assembly.

The Right Socialist-Revolutionary and Menshevik parties are in fact carrying on outside the Constituent Assembly a most desperate struggle against Soviet power, calling openly in their press for its overthrow and describing as arbitrary and unlawful the crushing of the resistance of the exploiters by the forces of the working classes, which is essential in the interests of emancipation from exploitation. They are defending the saboteurs, the servants of capital, and are going as far as undisguised calls to terrorism, which certain "unidentified groups" have already begun. It is obvious that under such circumstances the remaining part of the Constituent Assembly could only serve as a screen for the struggle of the counter-revolutionaries to overthrow Soviet power.

Accordingly, the Central Executive Committee resolves that the Constituent Assembly is hereby dissolved.

Lenin

**From; The Proletarian Revolution and the Renegade Kautsky**

Subservience To The Bourgeoisie In The Guise of "Economic Analysis" - October—November, 1918

Collected Works, Volume 28, 1974, pages 227-325

The Russian revolution is a bourgeois revolution, said all the Marxists of Russia before 1905. The Mensheviks, substituting liberalism for Marxism, drew the following conclusion from this: the proletariat therefore must not go beyond what is acceptable to the bourgeoisie and must pursue a policy of compromise with them. The Bolsheviks said this was a bourgeois-liberal theory. The bourgeoisie were trying to bring about the reform of the state on bourgeois, reformist, not revolutionary lines, while preserving the monarchy, the landlord system, etc., as far as possible. The proletariat must carry through the bourgeois-democratic revolution to the end, not allowing itself to be "bound" by the reformism of the bourgeoisie. The Bolsheviks formulated the alignment of class forces in the bourgeois revolution as follows: the proletariat, winning over the peasants, will neutralise the liberal bourgeoisie and utterly destroy the monarchy, medievalism and the landlord system.

Kautsky displays a philistine inability to take into account the real policy of a definite party. He quotes the empty phrases of the Menshevik Maslov and refuses to see the real policy the Menshevik Party pursued in 1917, when, in "coalition" with the landowners and Cadets, they advocated what was virtually a liberal agrarian reform and compromise with the landowners (proof: the arrest of the members of the Land Committees and S. Maslov's land bill).

Kautsky failed to notice that P. Maslov's phrases about the reactionary and utopian character of petty-bourgeois equality are really a screen to conceal the Menshevik policy of compromise between the peasants and the landowners (i.e., of supporting the landowners in duping the peasants), instead of the revolutionary overthrow of the landowners by the peasants.

What a "Marxist" Kautsky is!

Lenin

## No Compromises?

April–May 1920

Collected Works, Volume 31, pp. 17–118

In the quotation from the Frankfurt pamphlet, we have seen how emphatically the “Lefts” have advanced this slogan. It is sad to see people who no doubt considers themselves Marxists, and want to be Marxists, forget the fundamental truths of Marxism. This is what Engels—who, like Marx, was one of those rarest of authors whose every sentence in every one of their fundamental works contains a remarkably profound content—wrote in 1874, against the manifesto of the thirty-three Blanquist Communards:

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

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

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

In the same article, Engels expresses his profound esteem for Vaillant, and speaks of the “unquestionable merit” of the latter (who, like Guesde, was one of the most prominent leaders of international socialism until their betrayal of socialism in August 1914). But Engels does not fail to give a detailed analysis of an obvious error. Of course, to very young and inexperienced revolutionaries, as well as to petty-bourgeois revolutionaries of even very respectable age and great experience, it seems extremely “dangerous”, incomprehensible and wrong to “permit compromises”. Many sophists (being unusually or excessively “experienced” politicians) reason exactly in the same way as the British leaders of opportunism mentioned by Comrade Lansbury: “If the Bolsheviki are permitted a certain compromise, why should we not be permitted any kind of compromise?” However, proletarians schooled in numerous strikes (to take only this manifestation of the class struggle) usually assimilate in admirable fashion the very profound truth (philosophical, historical, political and psychological) expounded by Engels. Every proletarian has been through strikes and has experienced “compromises” with the hated oppressors and exploiters, when the workers have had to return to work either without having achieved anything or else agreeing to only a partial satisfaction of their demands. Every proletarian—as a result of the conditions of the mass struggle and the acute intensification of class antagonisms he lives among—sees **the difference between a compromise enforced by objective conditions** (such as lack of strike funds, no outside support, starvation and exhaustion)—a

compromise which in **no way minimizes** the revolutionary devotion and readiness to carry on the struggle on the part of the workers who have agreed to such a compromise—and, on the other hand, a compromise by traitors who try to ascribe to objective causes their self-interest (strike-breakers also enter into “compromises”!), their cowardice, desire to toady to the capitalists, and readiness to yield to intimidation, sometimes to persuasion, sometimes to sops, and sometimes to flattery from the capitalists. (The history of the British labour movement provides a very large number of instances of such treacherous compromises by British trade union leaders, but, in one form or another, almost all workers in all countries have witnessed the same sort of thing.)

Naturally, there are individual cases of exceptional difficulty and complexity, when the greatest efforts are necessary for a proper assessment of the actual character of this or that “compromise”, just as there are cases of homicide when it is by no means easy to establish whether the homicide was fully justified and even necessary (as, for example, legitimate self-defence), or due to unpardonable negligence, or even to a cunningly executed perfidious plan. Of course, in politics, where it is sometimes a matter of extremely complex relations—national and international—between classes and parties, very many cases will arise that will be much more difficult than the question of a legitimate “compromise” in a strike or a treacherous “compromise” by a strike-breaker, treacherous leader, etc. It would be absurd to formulate a recipe or general rule (“No compromises!”) to suit all cases. One must use one’s own brains and be able to find one’s bearings in each particular instance. It is, in fact, one of the functions of a party organisation and of party leaders worthy of the name, to acquire, through the prolonged, persistent, variegated and comprehensive efforts of all thinking representatives of a given class, the knowledge, experience



and—in addition to knowledge and experience—the political flair necessary for the speedy and correct solution of complex political problems.

**Naïve and quite inexperienced people imagine that the permissibility of compromise in general is sufficient to obliterate any distinction between opportunism**, against which we are waging, and must wage, an unremitting struggle, and revolutionary Marxism, or communism. But if such people do not yet know that in nature and in society all distinctions are fluid and up to a certain point conventional, nothing can help them but lengthy training, education, enlightenment, and political and everyday experience. In the practical questions that arise in the politics of any particular or specific historical moment, it is important to single out those which display the principal type of intolerable and treacherous compromises, such as embody an opportunism that is fatal to the revolutionary class, and to exert all efforts to explain them and combat them. During the 1914–18 imperialist war between two groups of equally predatory countries, social-chauvinism was the principal and fundamental type of opportunism, i.e., support of “defence of country”, which in such a war was really equivalent to defence of the predatory interests of one’s “own” bourgeoisie. After the war, defence of the robber League of Nations, defence of direct or indirect alliances with the bourgeoisie of one’s own country against the revolutionary proletariat and the “Soviet” movement, and defence of bourgeois democracy and bourgeois parliamentarianism against “Soviet power” became the principal manifestations of those intolerable and treacherous compromises, whose sum total constituted an opportunism fatal to the revolutionary proletariat and its cause.

“. . . All compromise with other parties . . . any policy of manoeuvring and compromise must be emphatically rejected,” the German Lefts write in the Frankfurt pamphlet.

It is surprising that, with such views, these Lefts do not emphatically condemn Bolshevism! After all, the German Lefts cannot but know that the entire history of Bolshevism, both before and after the October Revolution, is full of instances of changes of tack, conciliatory tactics and compromises with other parties, including bourgeois parties!

To carry on a war for the overthrow of the international bourgeoisie, a war which is a hundred times more difficult, protracted and complex than the most stubborn of ordinary wars between states, and to renounce in advance any change of tack, or any utilisation of a conflict of interests (even if temporary) among one’s enemies, or any conciliation or compromise with possible allies (even if they are temporary, unstable, vacillating or conditional allies)—is that not ridiculous in the extreme? Is it not like making a difficult ascent of an unexplored and hitherto inaccessible mountain and refusing in advance ever to move in zigzags, ever to retrace one’s steps, or ever to abandon a course once selected, and to try others? And yet people so immature and inexperienced (if youth were the explanation, it would not be so bad; young people are preordained to talk such nonsense for a certain period) have met with support—whether direct or indirect, open or covert, whole or partial, it does not matter—from some members of the Communist Party of Holland.

After the first socialist revolution of the proletariat, and the overthrow of the bourgeoisie in some country, the proletariat of that country remains for a long time weaker than the bourgeoisie, simply because of the latter’s extensive international links, and also because of the spontaneous and continuous restoration and regeneration of capitalism and the bourgeoisie by the small

commodity producers of the country which has overthrown the bourgeoisie. The more powerful enemy can be vanquished only by exerting the utmost effort, and by the most thorough, careful, attentive, skilful and obligatory use of any, even the smallest, rift between the enemies, any conflict of interests among the bourgeoisie of the various countries and among the various groups or types of bourgeoisie within the various countries, and also by taking advantage of any, even the smallest, opportunity of winning a mass ally, even though this ally is temporary, vacillating, unstable, unreliable and conditional. Those who do not understand this reveal a failure to understand even the smallest grain of Marxism, of modern scientific socialism in general. Those who have not proved in practice, over a fairly considerable period of time and in fairly varied political situations, their ability to apply this truth in practice have not yet learned to help the revolutionary class in its struggle to emancipate all toiling humanity from the exploiters. And this applies equally to the period before and after the proletariat has won political power.

Our theory is not a dogma, but a guide to action, said Marx and Engels. The greatest blunder, the greatest crime, committed by such "out-and-out" Marxists as Karl Kautsky, Otto Bauer, etc., is that they have not understood this and have been unable to apply it at crucial moments of the proletarian revolution. "Political activity is not like the pavement of Nevsky Prospekt" (the well-kept, broad and level pavement of the perfectly straight principal thoroughfare of St. Petersburg), N. G. Chernyshevsky, the great Russian socialist of the pre-Marxist period, used to say. Since Chernyshevsky's time, disregard or forgetfulness of this truth has cost Russian revolutionaries countless sacrifices. We must strive at all costs to prevent the Left Communists and West-European and American revolutionaries that are devoted to the

working class from paying as dearly as the backward Russians did to learn this truth.

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

Natanson); we were together with them at Zimmerwald and Kienthal, and issued joint manifestos. However, we never ceased and never relaxed our ideological and political struggle against the Kautskyites, Martov and Chernov (when Natanson died in 1919, a “Revolutionary-Communist” Narodnik, he was very close to and almost in agreement with us). At the very moment of the October Revolution, we entered into an informal but very important (and very successful) political bloc with the petty-bourgeois peasantry by adopting the Socialist-Revolutionary agrarian programme in its entirety, without a single alteration—i.e., we effected an undeniable compromise in order to prove to the peasants that we wanted, not to “steam-roller” them but to reach agreement with them. At the same time we proposed (and soon after effected) a formal political bloc, including participation in the government, with the Left Socialist-Revolutionaries, who dissolved this bloc after the conclusion of the Treaty of Brest-Litovsk and then, in July 1918, went to the length of armed rebellion, and subsequently of an armed struggle, against us.

It is therefore understandable why the attacks made by the German Lefts against the Central Committee of the Communist Party of Germany for entertaining the idea of a bloc with the Independents (the Independent Social-Democratic Party of Germany—the Kautskyites) are absolutely insane, in our opinion, and clear proof that the “Lefts” are in the wrong. In Russia, too, there were Right Mensheviks (participants in the Kerensky government), who corresponded to the German Scheidemanns, and Left Mensheviks (Martov), corresponding to the German Kautskyites and standing in opposition to the Right Mensheviks. A gradual shift of the worker masses from the Mensheviks over to the Bolsheviks was to be clearly seen in 1917. At the First All-Russia Congress of Soviets, held in June 1917, we had only 13 per cent of the votes; the Socialist-Revolutionaries

and the Mensheviks had a majority. At the Second Congress of Soviets (October 25, 1917, old style) we had 51 per cent of the votes. Why is it that in Germany the same and absolutely identical shift of the workers from Right to Left did not immediately strengthen the Communists, but first strengthened the midway Independent Party, although the latter never had independent political ideas or an independent policy, but merely wavered between the Scheidemanns and the Communists?

One of the evident reasons was the erroneous tactics of the German Communists, who must fearlessly and honestly admit this error and learn to rectify it. The error consisted in their denial of the need to take part in the reactionary bourgeois parliaments and in the reactionary trade unions; the error consisted in numerous manifestations of that "Left-wing" infantile disorder which has now come to the surface and will consequently be cured the more thoroughly, the more rapidly and with greater advantage to the organism.

The German Independent Social-Democratic Party is obviously not a homogeneous body. Alongside the old opportunist leaders (Kautsky, Hilferding and apparently, to a considerable extent, Crispian, Ledebour and others)—these have revealed their inability to understand the significance of Soviet power and the dictatorship of the proletariat, and their inability to lead the proletariat's revolutionary struggle—there has emerged in this party a Left and proletarian wing, which is growing most rapidly. Hundreds of thousands of members of this party (which has, I think, a membership of some three-quarters of a million) are proletarians who are abandoning Scheidemann and are rapidly going over to communism. This proletarian wing has already proposed—at the Leipzig Congress of the Independents (1919)—immediate and unconditional affiliation to the Third International. To fear a "compromise" with this wing of the party

is positively ridiculous. On the contrary, it is the duty of Communists to seek and find a suitable form of compromise with them, a compromise which, on the one hand, will facilitate and accelerate the necessary complete fusion with this wing and, on the other, will in no way hamper the Communists in their ideological and political struggle against the opportunist Right wing of the Independents. It will probably be no easy matter to devise a suitable form of compromise—but only a charlatan could promise the German workers and the German Communists an “easy” road to victory.

Capitalism would not be capitalism if the proletariat *pur sang* were not surrounded by a large number of exceedingly motley types intermediate between the proletarian and the semi-proletarian (who earns his livelihood in part by the sale of his labour-power), between the semi-proletarian and the small peasant (and petty artisan, handicraft worker and small master in general), between the small peasant and the middle peasant, and so on, and if the proletariat itself were not divided into more developed and less developed strata, if it were not divided according to territorial origin, trade, sometimes according to religion, and so on. From all this follows the necessity, the absolute necessity, for the Communist Party, the vanguard of the proletariat, its class-conscious section, to resort to changes of tack, to conciliation and compromises with the various groups of proletarians, with the various parties of the workers and small masters. It is entirely a matter of knowing how to apply these tactics in order to raise—not lower—the general level of proletarian class-consciousness, revolutionary spirit, and ability to fight and win. Incidentally, it should be noted that the Bolsheviks’ victory over the Mensheviks called for the application of tactics of changes of tack, conciliation and compromises, not only before but also after the October Revolution of 1917, but the changes of tack and compromises

were, of course, such as assisted, boosted and consolidated the Bolsheviks at the expense of the Mensheviks. The petty-bourgeois democrats (including the Mensheviks) inevitably vacillate between the bourgeoisie and the proletariat, between bourgeois democracy and the Soviet system, between reformism and revolutionism, between love for the workers and fear of the proletarian dictatorship, etc. The Communists' proper tactics should consist in utilising these vacillations, not ignoring them; utilising them calls for concessions to elements that are turning towards the proletariat—whenever and in the measure that they turn towards the proletariat—in addition to fighting those who turn towards the bourgeoisie. As a result of the application of the correct tactics, Menshevism began to disintegrate, and has been disintegrating more and more in our country; the stubbornly opportunist leaders are being isolated, and the best of the workers and the best elements among the petty-bourgeois democrats are being brought into our camp. This is a lengthy process, and the hasty “decision”—“No compromises, no manoeuvres”—can only prejudice the strengthening of the revolutionary proletariat's influence and the enlargement of its forces.

Lastly, one of the undoubted errors of the German “Lefts” lies in their downright refusal to recognise the Treaty of Versailles. The more “weightily” and “pompously”, the more “emphatically” and peremptorily this viewpoint is formulated (by K. Horner, for instance), the less sense it seems to make. It is not enough, under the present conditions of the international proletarian revolution, to repudiate the preposterous absurdities of “National Bolshevism” (Laufenberg and others), which has gone to the length of advocating a bloc with the German bourgeoisie for a war against the Entente. One must realise that it is utterly false tactics to refuse to admit that a Soviet Germany (if a German Soviet republic were soon to arise) would have to recognise the



Treaty of Versailles for a time, and to submit to it. From this it does not follow that the Independents—at a time when the Scheidemanns were in the government, when the Soviet government in Hungary had not yet been overthrown, and when it was still possible that a Soviet revolution in Vienna would support Soviet Hungary—were right, under the circumstances, in putting forward the demand that the Treaty of Versailles should be signed. At that time the Independents tacked and manoeuvred very clumsily, for they more or less accepted responsibility for the Scheidemann traitors, and more or less backslid from advocacy of a ruthless (and most calmly conducted) class war against the Scheidemanns, to advocacy of a “classless” or “above-class” standpoint.

In the present situation, however, the German Communists should obviously not deprive themselves of freedom of action by giving a positive and categorical promise to repudiate the Treaty of Versailles in the event of communism’s victory. That would be absurd. They should say: the Scheidemanns and the Kautskyites have committed a number of acts of treachery hindering (and in part quite ruining) the chances of an alliance with Soviet Russia and Soviet Hungary. We Communists will do all we can to facilitate and pave the way for such an alliance. However, we are in no way obligated to repudiate the Treaty of Versailles, come what may, or to do so at once. The possibility of its successful repudiation will depend, not only on the German, but also on the international successes of the Soviet movement. The Scheidemanns and the Kautskyites have hampered this movement; we are helping it. That is the gist of the matter; therein lies the fundamental difference. And if our class enemies, the exploiters and their Scheidemann and Kautskyite lackeys, have missed many an opportunity of strengthening both the German and the international Soviet movement, of strengthening both the German and the international Soviet

revolution, the blame lies with them. The Soviet revolution in Germany will strengthen the international Soviet movement, which is the strongest bulwark (and the only reliable, invincible and world-wide bulwark) against the Treaty of Versailles and against international imperialism in general. To give absolute, categorical and immediate precedence to liberation from the Treaty of Versailles and to give it precedence over the question of liberating other countries oppressed by imperialism, from the yoke of imperialism, is philistine nationalism (worthy of the Kautskys, the Hilferdings, the Otto Bauers and Co.), not revolutionary internationalism. The overthrow of the bourgeoisie in any of the large European countries, including Germany, would be such a gain for the international revolution that, for its sake, one can, and if necessary, should, tolerate a more prolonged existence of the Treaty of Versailles. If Russia, standing alone, could endure the Treaty of Brest-Litovsk for several months, to the advantage of the revolution, there is nothing impossible in a Soviet Germany, allied with Soviet Russia, enduring the existence of the Treaty of Versailles for a longer period, to the advantage of the revolution.

The imperialists of France, Britain, etc., are trying to provoke and ensnare the German Communists: "Say that you will not sign the Treaty of Versailles!" they urge. Like babes, the Left Communists fall into the trap laid for them, instead of skilfully manoeuvring against the crafty and, at present, stronger enemy, and instead of telling him, "We shall sign the Treaty of Versailles now." It is folly, not revolutionism, to deprive ourselves in advance of any freedom of action, openly to inform an enemy who is at present better armed than we are whether we shall fight him, and when. To accept battle at a time when it is obviously advantageous to the enemy, but not to us, is criminal; political leaders of the revolutionary class are absolutely useless if they are incapable of

“changing tack or offering conciliation and compromise” in order to take evasive action in a patently disadvantageous battle.

Lenin

## **On Compromises**

March-April 1920

Collected Works, Volume 30, pages 491-493

In a talk with me, Comrade Lansbury laid particular stress on the following argument of the British opportunist leaders in the labour movement.

The Bolsheviks are compromising with the capitalists, agreeing, in the Peace Treaty with Estonia, for instance, to timber concessions; if that is the case, compromises with capitalists concluded by the moderate leaders of the British labour movement are equally legitimate.

Comrade Lansbury considers this argument, very widespread in Britain, of importance to the workers and urgently requiring examination.

I shall try to meet this desire.

May an advocate of proletarian revolution conclude compromises with capitalists or with the capitalist class?

This, apparently, is the question underlying the above argument. But to present it in this general way shows either the extreme political inexperience and low level of political consciousness of the questioner, or his chicanery in using a sophism to veil his justification of brigandage, plunder and every other sort of capitalist violence.

Indeed, it would obviously be silly to give a negative reply to this general question. Of course, an advocate of proletarian revolution may conclude compromises or agreements with capitalists. It all depends on what kind of agreement is concluded

and under what circumstances. Here and here alone can and must one look for the difference between an agreement that is legitimate from the angle of the proletarian revolution and one that is treasonable, treacherous (from the same angle). To make this clear I shall first recall the argument of the founders of Marxism and then add some very simple and obvious examples.

It is not for nothing that Marx and Engels are considered the founders of scientific socialism. They were ruthless enemies of all phrase-mongering. They taught that problems of socialism (including problems of socialist tactics) must be presented scientifically. In the seventies of last century, when Engels analysed the revolutionary manifesto of the French Blanquists, Commune fugitives, he told them in plain terms that their boastful declaration of "no compromise" was an empty phrase. The idea of compromises must not be renounced. The point is through all the compromises which are sometimes necessarily imposed by force of circumstance upon even the most revolutionary party of even the most revolutionary class, to be able to preserve, strengthen, steel and develop the revolutionary tactics and organisation, the revolutionary consciousness, determination and preparedness of the working class and its organised vanguard, the Communist Party.

Anybody acquainted with the fundamentals of Marx's teachings must inevitably draw this conclusion from the totality of those teachings. But since in Britain, due to a number of historical causes, Marxism has ever since Chartism" (which in many respects was something preparatory to Marxism, the "last word but one" before Marxism) been pushed into the background by the opportunist, semi-bourgeois leaders of the trade unions and co-operatives, I shall try to explain the truth of the view expounded by means of typical examples drawn from among the universally known facts of ordinary, political, and economic life.

I shall begin with an illustration I gave once before in one of my speeches. Let us suppose the car you are travelling in is attacked by armed bandits. Let us suppose that when a pistol is put to your temple you surrender your car, money and revolver to the bandits, who proceed to use this car, etc., to commit other robberies.

Here is undoubtedly a case of compromising with highwaymen, of agreement with them. The agreement, though unsigned and tacitly concluded, is nevertheless quite a definite and precise one: "I give you, Mr. Robber, my car, weapon and money; you rid me of your pleasant company."

The question arises: do you call the man who concluded such an agreement with highwaymen an accomplice in banditry, an accomplice in a robbers' assault upon third persons despoiled by the bandits with the aid of the car, money and weapon received by them from the person who concluded this agreement?

No, you do not.

The matter is absolutely plain and simple, down to the smallest detail.

And it is likewise clear that under other circumstances the tacit surrender to the highwaymen of the car, money and weapon would be considered by every person of common sense to be complicity in banditry.

The conclusion is clear: it is just as silly to renounce the idea of literally all agreements or compromises with robbers as it is to acquit a person of complicity in banditry on the basis of the abstract proposition that, generally speaking, agreements with robbers are sometimes permissible and necessary.

Lenin

**“Left-Wing” Communism: An Infantile Disorder**

April–May 1920

Collected Works, Volume 31, pp. 17–118

The Struggle Against Which Enemies Within the Working-Class Movement Helped Bolshevism Develop, Gain Strength, and Become Steeled

First and foremost, the struggle against opportunism which in 1914 definitely developed into social-chauvinism and definitely sided with the bourgeoisie, against the proletariat. Naturally, this was Bolshevism’s principal enemy within the working-class movement. It still remains the principal enemy on an international scale. The Bolsheviks have been devoting the greatest attention to this enemy. This aspect of Bolshevik activities is now fairly well known abroad too.

It was, however, different with Bolshevism’s other enemy within the working-class movement. Little is known in other countries of the fact that Bolshevism took shape, developed and became steeled in the long years of struggle against petty-bourgeois revolutionism, which smacks of anarchism, or borrows something from the latter and, in all essential matters, does not measure up to the conditions and requirements of a consistently proletarian class struggle. Marxist theory has established—and the experience of all European revolutions and revolutionary movements has fully confirmed—that the petty proprietor, the small master (a social type existing on a very extensive and even mass scale in many European countries), who, under capitalism, always suffers oppression and very frequently a most acute and rapid deterioration in his conditions of life, and even ruin, easily goes to revolutionary extremes, but is incapable of perseverance,

organisation, discipline and steadfastness. A petty bourgeois driven to frenzy by the horrors of capitalism is a social phenomenon which, like anarchism, is characteristic of all capitalist countries. The instability of such revolutionism, its barrenness, and its tendency to turn rapidly into submission, apathy, phantasms, and even a frenzied infatuation with one bourgeois fad or another—all this is common knowledge. However, a theoretical or abstract recognition of these truths does not at all rid revolutionary parties of old errors, which always crop up at unexpected occasions, in somewhat new forms, in a hitherto unfamiliar garb or surroundings, in an unusual—a more or less unusual—situation.

Anarchism was not infrequently a kind of penalty for the opportunist sins of the working-class movement. The two monstrosities complemented each other. And if in Russia—despite the more petty-bourgeois composition of her population as compared with the other European countries—anarchism's influence was negligible during the two revolutions (of 1905 and 1917) and the preparations for them, this should no doubt stand partly to the credit of Bolshevism, which has always waged a most ruthless and uncompromising struggle against opportunism. I say "partly", since of still greater importance in weakening anarchism's influence in Russia was the circumstance that in the past (the seventies of the nineteenth century) it was able to develop inordinately and to reveal its absolute erroneousness, its unfitness to serve the revolutionary class as a guiding theory.

When it came into being in 1903, Bolshevism took over the tradition of a ruthless struggle against petty-bourgeois, semi-anarchist (or dilettante-anarchist) revolutionism, a tradition which had always existed in revolutionary Social-Democracy and had become particularly strong in our country during the



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

History, incidentally, has now confirmed on a vast and world-wide scale the opinion we have always advocated, namely, that German revolutionary Social-Democracy (note that as far back as 1900–03 Plekhanov demanded Bernstein’s expulsion from the Party, and in 1913 the Bolsheviks, always continuing this tradition, exposed Legien’s baseness, vileness and treachery) came closest to being the party the revolutionary proletariat needs in order to achieve victory. Today, in 1920, after all the

ignominious failures and crises of the war period and the early post-war years, it can be plainly seen that, of all the Western parties, the German revolutionary Social-Democrats produced the finest leaders and recovered and gained new strength more rapidly than the others did. This may be seen in the instances both of the Spartacists and the Left, proletarian wing of the Independent Social-Democratic Party of Germany, which is waging an incessant struggle against the opportunism and spinelessness of the Kautskys, Hilferdings, Ledebours and Crispiens. If we now cast a glance to take in a complete historical period, namely, from the Paris Commune to the first Socialist Soviet Republic, we shall find that Marxism's attitude to anarchism in general stands out most definitely and unmistakably. In the final analysis, Marxism proved to be correct, and although the anarchists rightly pointed to the opportunist views on the state prevalent among most of the socialist parties, it must be said, first, that this opportunism was connected with the distortion, and even deliberate suppression, of Marx's views on the state (in my book, *The State and Revolution*, I pointed out that for thirty-six years, from 1875 to 1911, Bebel withheld a letter by Engels, which very clearly, vividly, bluntly and definitively exposed the opportunism of the current Social-Democratic views on the state); second, that the rectification of these opportunist views, and the recognition of Soviet power and its superiority to bourgeois parliamentary democracy proceeded most rapidly and extensively among those trends in the socialist parties of Europe and America that were most Marxist.

The struggle that Bolshevism waged against "Left" deviations within its own Party assumed particularly large proportions on two occasions: in 1908, on the question of whether or not to participate in a most reactionary "parliament" and in the legal workers' societies, which were being restricted by most

reactionary laws; and again in 1918 (the Treaty of Brest-Litovsk), on the question of whether one “compromise” or another was permissible.

In 1908 the “Left” Bolsheviks were expelled from our Party for stubbornly refusing to understand the necessity of participating in a most reactionary “parliament”. The “Lefts”—among whom there were many splendid revolutionaries who subsequently were (and still are) commendable members of the Communist Party—based themselves particularly on the successful experience of the 1905 boycott. When, in August 1905, the tsar proclaimed the convocation of a consultative “parliament”, the Bolsheviks called for its boycott, in the teeth of all the opposition parties and the Mensheviks, and the “parliament” was in fact swept away by the revolution of October 1905. The boycott proved correct at the time, not because nonparticipation in reactionary parliaments is correct in general, but because we accurately appraised the objective situation, which was leading to the rapid development of the mass strikes first into a political strike, then into a revolutionary strike, and finally into an uprising. Moreover, the struggle centred at that time on the question of whether the convocation of the first representative assembly should be left to the tsar, or an attempt should be made to wrest its convocation from the old regime. When there was not, and could not be, any certainty that the objective situation was of a similar kind, and when there was no certainty of a similar trend and the same rate of development, the boycott was no longer correct.

The Bolsheviks’ boycott of “parliament” in 1905 enriched the revolutionary proletariat with highly valuable political experience and showed that, when legal and illegal parliamentary and non-parliamentary forms of struggle are combined, it is sometimes useful and even essential to reject

parliamentary forms. It would, however, be highly erroneous to apply this experience blindly, imitatively and uncritically to other conditions and other situations. The Bolsheviks' boycott of the Duma in 1906 was a mistake, although a minor and easily remediable one. The boycott of the Duma in 1907, 1908 and subsequent years was a most serious error and difficult to remedy, because, on the one hand, a very rapid rise of the revolutionary tide and its conversion into an uprising was not to be expected, and, on the other hand, the entire historical situation attendant upon the renovation of the bourgeois monarchy called for legal and illegal activities being combined. Today, when we look back at this fully completed historical period, whose connection with subsequent periods has now become quite clear, it becomes most obvious that in 1908–14 the Bolsheviks could not have preserved (let alone strengthened and developed) the core of the revolutionary party of the proletariat, had they not upheld, in a most strenuous struggle, the viewpoint that it was obligatory to combine legal and illegal forms of struggle, and that it was obligatory to participate even in a most reactionary parliament and in a number of other institutions hemmed in by reactionary laws (sick benefit societies, etc.).

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

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

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

But when, in 1914–18 and then in 1918–20, the Mensheviks and Socialist-Revolutionaries in Russia, the Scheidemannites (and to a large extent the Kautskyites) in Germany, Otto Bauer and Friedrich Adler (to say nothing of the Renners and Co.) in Austria, the Renaudels and Longuets and Co. in France, the Fabians, the Independents and the Labourites in Britain entered into compromises with the bandits of their own bourgeoisie, and sometimes of the "Allied" bourgeoisie, and against the revolutionary proletariat of their own countries, all these gentlemen were actually acting as accomplices in banditry.

The conclusion is clear: to reject compromises "on principle", to reject the permissibility of compromises in general, no matter of what kind, is childishness, which it is difficult even to consider

seriously. A political leader who desires to be useful to the revolutionary proletariat must be able to distinguish concrete cases of compromises that are inexcusable and are an expression of opportunism and treachery; he must direct all the force of criticism, the full intensity of merciless exposure and relentless war, against these concrete compromises, and not allow the past masters of "practical" socialism and the parliamentary Jesuits to dodge and wriggle out of responsibility by means of disquisitions on "compromises in general". It is in this way that the "leaders" of the British trade unions, as well as of the Fabian society and the "Independent" Labour Party, dodge responsibility for the treachery they have perpetrated, for having made a compromise that is really tantamount to the worst kind of opportunism, treachery and betrayal.

There are different kinds of compromises. One must be able to analyse the situation and the concrete conditions of each compromise, or of each variety of compromise. One must learn to distinguish between a man who has given up his money and fire-arms to bandits so as to lessen the evil they can do and to facilitate their capture and execution, and a man who gives his money and fire-arms to bandits so as to share in the loot. In politics this is by no means always as elementary as it is in this childishly simple example. However, anyone who is out to think up for the workers some kind of recipe that will provide them with cut-and-dried solutions for all contingencies or promises that the policy of the revolutionary proletariat will never come up against difficult or complex situations, is simply a charlatan.

To leave no room for misinterpretation, I shall attempt to outline, if only very briefly, several fundamental rules for the analysis of concrete compromises.

The party which entered into a compromise with the German imperialists by signing the Treaty of Brest-Litovsk had been

evolving its internationalism in practice ever since the end of 1914. It was not afraid to call for the defeat of the tsarist monarchy and to condemn “defence of country” in a war between two imperialist robbers. The parliamentary representatives of this party preferred exile in Siberia to taking a road leading to ministerial portfolios in a bourgeois government. The revolution that overthrew tsarism and established a democratic republic put this party to a new and tremendous test—it did not enter into any agreements with its “own” imperialists, but prepared and brought about their overthrow. When it had assumed political power, this party did not leave a vestige of either landed or capitalist ownership. After making public and repudiating the imperialists’ secret treaties, this party proposed peace to all nations, and yielded to the violence of the Brest-Litovsk robbers only after the Anglo-French imperialists had torpedoed the conclusion of a peace, and after the Bolsheviks had done everything humanly possible to hasten the revolution in Germany and other countries. The absolute correctness of this compromise, entered into by such a party in such a situation, is becoming ever clearer and more obvious with every day.

The Mensheviks and the Socialist-Revolutionaries in Russia (like all the leaders of the Second International throughout the world, in 1914–20) began with treachery—by directly or indirectly justifying “defence of country”, i.e., the defence of their own predatory bourgeoisie. They continued their treachery by entering into a coalition with the bourgeoisie of their own country, and fighting, together with their own bourgeoisie, against the revolutionary proletariat of their own country. Their bloc, first with Kerensky and the Cadets, and then with Kolchak and Denikin in Russia—like the bloc of their confrères abroad with the bourgeoisie of their respective countries—was in fact desertion to the side of the bourgeoisie, against the proletariat. From beginning to end, their compromise with the bandits of

imperialism meant their becoming accomplices in imperialist banditry.



Lenin

From; "Left-Wing" Communism in Great Britain

**"Left-Wing" Communism in Germany. The Leaders, the Party, the Class, the Masses**

April–May 1920

The German Communists we must now speak of call themselves, not "Left-wingers" but, if I am not mistaken, an "opposition on principle". From what follows below it will, however, be seen that they reveal all the symptoms of the "infantile disorder of Leftism".

Published by the "local group in Frankfurt am Main", a pamphlet reflecting the point of view of this opposition and entitled *The Split in the Communist Party of Germany (The Spartacus League)* sets forth the substance of this opposition's views most saliently, and with the utmost clarity and concision. A few quotations will suffice to acquaint the reader with that substance:

*"The Communist Party is the party of the most determined class struggle. . . ."*

*". . . Politically, the transitional period [between capitalism and socialism] is one of the proletarian dictatorship. . . ."*

*". . . The question arises: who is to exercise this dictatorship: the Communist Party or the proletarian class? . . . Fundamentally, should we strive for a dictatorship of the Communist Party, or for a dictatorship of the proletarian class? . . ."*

(All italics as in the original)

The author of the pamphlet goes on to accuse the Central Committee of the Communist Party of Germany of seeking ways

of achieving a coalition with the Independent Social-Democratic Party of Germany, and of raising “the question of recognising, in principle, all political means” of struggle, including parliamentarianism, with the sole purpose of concealing its actual and main efforts to form a coalition with the Independents. The pamphlet goes on to say:

*“The opposition have chosen another road. They are of the opinion that the question of the rule of the Communist Party and of the dictatorship of the Party is merely one of tactics. In any case, rule by the Communist Party is the ultimate form of any party rule. Fundamentally, we must work for the dictatorship of the proletarian class. And all the measures of the Party, its organisations, methods of struggle, strategy and tactics should be directed to that end. Accordingly, all compromise with other parties, all reversion to parliamentary forms of struggle which have become historically and politically obsolete, and any policy of manoeuvring and compromise must be emphatically rejected.”*

*“Specifically proletarian methods of revolutionary struggle must be strongly emphasised. New forms of organisation must be created on the widest basis and with the widest scope in order to enlist the most extensive proletarian circles and strata to take part in the revolutionary struggle under the leadership of the Communist Party. A Workers’ Union, based on factory organisations, should be the rallying point for all revolutionary elements. This should unite all workers who follow the slogan: ‘Get out of the trade unions!’ It is here that the militant proletariat musters its ranks for battle. Recognition of the class struggle, of the Soviet system and of the dictatorship should be sufficient for enrolment. All subsequent political education of the fighting masses and their political orientation in the struggle are the task of the Communist Party, which stands outside the Workers’ Union. . . .*

*“. . . Consequently, two Communist parties are now arrayed against each other:*

*“One is a party of leaders, which is out to organise the revolutionary struggle and to direct it from above, accepting compromises and parliamentarianism so as to create a situation enabling it to join a coalition government exercising a dictatorship.*

*“The other is a mass party, which expects an upsurge of the revolutionary struggle from below, which knows and applies a single method in this struggle—a method which clearly leads to the goal—and rejects all parliamentary and opportunist methods. That single method is the unconditional overthrow of the bourgeoisie, so as then to set up the proletarian class dictatorship for the accomplishment of socialism. . .*

*. .*

*“. . . There—the dictatorship of leaders; here—the dictatorship of the masses! That is our slogan.”*

Such are the main features characterising the views of the opposition in the German Communist Party.

Any Bolshevik who has consciously participated in the **development of Bolshevism since 1903** or has closely observed that development will at once say, after reading these arguments, **“What old and familiar rubbish! What ‘Left-wing’ childishness!”**

But let us examine these arguments a little more closely.

The mere presentation of the question—“dictatorship of the party or dictatorship of the class; dictatorship (party) of the leaders, or dictatorship (party) of the masses?”—testifies to most incredibly and hopelessly muddled thinking. These people want to invent something quite out of the ordinary, and, in their effort to be clever, make themselves ridiculous. It is common knowledge that the masses are divided into classes, that the masses can be contrasted with classes only by contrasting the vast majority in general, regardless of division according to

status in the social system of production, with categories holding a definite status in the social system of production; that as a rule and in most cases—at least in present-day civilised countries—classes are led by political parties; that political parties, as a general rule, are run 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. All this is elementary. All this is clear and simple. Why replace this with some kind of rigmarole, some new Volapük? On the one hand, these people seem to have got muddled when they found themselves in a predicament, when the party's abrupt transition from legality to illegality upset the customary, normal and simple relations between leaders, parties and classes. In Germany, as in other European countries, people had become too accustomed to legality, to the free and proper election of "leaders" at regular party congresses, to the convenient method of testing the class composition of parties through parliamentary elections, mass meetings the press, the sentiments of the trade unions and other associations, etc. When, instead of this customary procedure, it became necessary, because of the stormy development of the revolution and the development of the civil war, to go over rapidly from legality to illegality, to combine the two, and to adopt the "inconvenient" and "undemocratic" methods of selecting, or forming, or preserving "groups of leaders"—people lost their bearings and began to think up some unmitigated nonsense. Certain members of the Communist Party of Holland, who were unlucky enough to be born in a small country with traditions and conditions of highly privileged and highly stable legality, and who had never seen a transition from legality to illegality, probably fell into confusion, lost their heads, and helped create these absurd inventions.

On the other hand, one can see simply a thoughtless and incoherent use of the now "fashionable" terms: "masses" and

“leaders”. These people have heard and memorised a great many attacks on “leaders”, in which the latter have been contrasted with the “masses”; however, they have proved unable to think matters out and gain a clear understanding of what it was all about.

The divergence between “leaders” and “masses” was brought out with particular clarity and sharpness in all countries at the end of the imperialist war and following it. The principal reason for this was explained many times by Marx and Engels between the years 1852 and 1892, from the example of Britain. That country’s exclusive position led to the emergence, from the “masses”, of a semi-petty-bourgeois, opportunist “labour aristocracy”. The leaders of this labour aristocracy were constantly going over to the bourgeoisie, and were directly or indirectly on its pay roll. Marx earned the honour of incurring the hatred of these disreputable persons by openly branding them as traitors. Present-day (twentieth-century) imperialism has given a few advanced countries an exceptionally privileged position, which, everywhere in the Second International, has produced a certain type of traitor, opportunist, and social-chauvinist leaders, who champion the interests of their own craft, their own section of the labour aristocracy. The opportunist parties have become separated from the “masses”, i.e., from the broadest strata of the working people, their majority, the lowest-paid workers. The revolutionary proletariat cannot be victorious unless this evil is combated, unless the opportunist, social-traitor leaders are exposed, discredited and expelled. That is the policy the Third International has embarked on.

To go so far, in this connection, as to contrast, in general, the dictatorship of the masses with a dictatorship of the leaders is ridiculously absurd, and stupid. What is particularly amusing is that, in fact, instead of the old leaders, who hold generally

accepted views on simple matters, new leaders are brought forth (under cover of the slogan "Down with the leaders!"), who talk rank stuff and nonsense. Such are Laufenberg, Wolffheim, Horner, Karl Schroder, Friedrich Wendel and Karl Erler, \*2 in Germany. Erler's attempts to give the question more "profundity" and to proclaim that in general political parties are unnecessary and "bourgeois" are so supremely absurd that one can only shrug one's shoulders. It all goes to drive home the truth that a minor error can always assume monstrous proportions if it is persisted in, if profound justifications are sought for it, and if it is carried to its logical conclusion.

Repudiation of the Party principle and of Party discipline—that is what the opposition has arrived at. And this is tantamount to completely disarming the proletariat in the interests of the bourgeoisie. It all adds up to that petty-bourgeois diffuseness and instability, that incapacity for sustained effort, unity and organised action, which, if encouraged, must inevitably destroy any proletarian revolutionary movement. From the standpoint of communism, repudiation of the Party principle means attempting to leap from the eve of capitalism's collapse (in Germany), not to the lower or the intermediate phase of communism, but to the higher. We in Russia (in the third year since the overthrow of the bourgeoisie) are making the first steps in the transition from capitalism to socialism or the lower stage of communism. Classes still remain, and will remain everywhere for years after the proletariat's conquest of power. Perhaps in Britain, where there is no peasantry (but where petty proprietors exist), this period may be shorter. The abolition of classes means, not merely ousting the landowners and the capitalists—that is something we accomplished with comparative ease; it also means abolishing the small commodity producers, and they cannot be ousted, or crushed; we must learn to live with them. They can (and must) be transformed and re-educated only by

means of very prolonged, slow, and cautious organisational work. They surround the proletariat on every side with a petty-bourgeois atmosphere, which permeates and corrupts the proletariat, and constantly causes among the proletariat relapses into petty-bourgeois spinelessness, disunity, individualism, and alternating moods of exaltation and dejection. The strictest centralisation and discipline are required within the political party of the proletariat in order to counteract this, in order that the organisational role of the proletariat (and that is its principal role) may be exercised correctly, successfully and victoriously. The dictatorship of the proletariat means a persistent struggle—bloody and bloodless, violent and peaceful, military and economic, educational and administrative—against the forces and traditions of the old society. The force of habit in millions and tens of millions is a most formidable force. Without a party of iron that has been tempered in the struggle, a party enjoying the confidence of all honest people in the class in question, a party capable of watching and influencing the mood of the masses, such a struggle cannot be waged successfully. It is a thousand times easier to vanquish the centralised big bourgeoisie than to “vanquish” the millions upon millions of petty proprietors; however, through their ordinary, everyday, imperceptible, elusive and demoralising activities, they produce the very results which the bourgeoisie need and which tend to restore the bourgeoisie. Whoever brings about even the slightest weakening of the iron discipline of the party of the proletariat (especially during its dictatorship), is actually aiding the bourgeoisie against the proletariat.

Parallel with the question of the leaders—the party—the class—the masses, we must pose the question of the “reactionary” trade unions. But first I shall take the liberty of making a few concluding remarks based on the experience of our Party. There have always been attacks on the “dictatorship of leaders” in our

Party. The first time I heard such attacks, I recall, was in 1895, when, officially, no party yet existed, but a central group was taking shape in St. Petersburg, which was to assume the leadership of the district groups. At the Ninth Congress of our Party (April 1920) , there was a small opposition, which also spoke against the “dictatorship of leaders”, against the “oligarchy”, and so on. There is therefore nothing surprising, new, or terrible in the “infantile disorder” of “Left-wing communism” among the Germans. The ailment involves no danger, and after it the organism even becomes more robust. In our case, on the other hand, the rapid alternation of legal and illegal work, which made it necessary to keep the general staff—the leaders—under cover and cloak them in the greatest secrecy, sometimes gave rise to extremely dangerous consequences. The worst of these was that in 1912 the agent provocateur Malinovsky got into the Bolshevik Central Committee. He betrayed scores and scores of the best and most loyal comrades, caused them to be sentenced to penal servitude, and hastened the death of many of them. That he did not cause still greater harm was due to the correct balance between legal and illegal work. As member of the Party’s Central Committee and Duma deputy, Malinovsky was forced, in order to gain our confidence, to help us establish legal daily papers, which even under tsarism were able to wage a struggle against the Menshevik opportunism and to spread the fundamentals of Bolshevism in a suitably disguised form. While, with one hand, Malinovsky sent scores and scores of the finest Bolsheviks to penal servitude and death, he was obliged, with the other, to assist in the education of scores and scores of thousands of new Bolsheviks through the medium of the legal press. Those German (and also British, American, French and Italian) comrades who are faced with the task of learning how to conduct revolutionary work within the



reactionary trade unions would do well to give serious thought to this fact. \*3

In many countries, including the most advanced, the bourgeoisie are undoubtedly sending agents provocateurs into the Communist parties and will continue to do so. A skilful combining of illegal and legal work is one of the ways to combat this danger.

Lenin

**From; "Left-Wing" Communism in Great Britain**

April–May 1920

Collected Works, Volume 31, pp. 17–118

A number of Liberals are deserting to the Labour Party like rats from a sinking ship. The Left Communists believe that the transfer of power to the Labour Party is inevitable and admit that it now has the backing of most workers. From this they draw the strange conclusion which Comrade Sylvia Pankhurst formulates as follows:

"The Communist Party must not compromise. . . The Communist Party must keep its doctrine pure, and its independence of reformism inviolate, its mission is to lead the way, without stopping or turning, by the direct road to the communist revolution."

On the contrary, the fact that most British workers still follow the lead of the British Kerenskys or Scheidemanns and have not yet had experience of a government composed of these people—an experience which was necessary in Russia and Germany so as to secure the mass transition of the workers to communism—undoubtedly indicates that the British Communists should participate in parliamentary action, that they should, from within parliament, help the masses of the workers see the results of a Henderson and Snowden government in practice, and that they should help the Hendersons and Snowdens defeat the united forces of Lloyd George and Churchill. To act otherwise would mean hampering the cause of the revolution, since revolution is impossible without a change in the views of the majority of the working class, a change brought about by the political experience of the masses, never by propaganda alone.

“To lead the way without compromises, without turning” — this slogan is obviously wrong if it comes from a patently impotent minority of the workers who know (or at all events should know) that given a Henderson and Snowden victory over Lloyd George and Churchill, the majority will soon become disappointed in their leaders and will begin to support communism (or at all events will adopt an attitude of neutrality, and, in the main, of sympathetic neutrality, towards the Communists). It is as though 10,000 soldiers were to hurl themselves into battle against an enemy force of 50,000, when it would be proper to “halt”, “take evasive action”, or even effect a “compromise” so as to gain time until the arrival of the 100,000 reinforcements that are on their way but cannot go into action immediately. That is intellectualist childishness, not the serious tactics of a revolutionary class.

The fundamental law of revolution, which has been confirmed by all revolutions and especially by all three Russian revolutions in the twentieth century, is as follows: for a revolution to take place it is not enough for the exploited and oppressed masses to realise the impossibility of living in the old way, and demand changes; for a revolution to take place it is essential that the exploiters should not be able to live and rule in the old way.

Lenin

**Letter To G. K. Orjonikidze**

Collected Works, Volume 32, page 160

March 2, 1921

Serge Orjonikidze

Please convey to the Georgian Communists, and in particular to all members of the Georgian Revolutionary Committee, my warm greetings to Soviet Georgia. My special request to them is to inform me whether or not we are in complete agreement on the following three questions:

First, immediate arming of the workers and poor peasants and formation of a strong Georgian Red Army.

Second, there is need for a special policy of concessions with regard to the Georgian intelligentsia and small merchants. It should be realised that it is not only imprudent to nationalise them, but that there is even need for certain sacrifices in order to improve their position and enable them to continue their small trade.

Third, it is of tremendous importance to devise an acceptable compromise for a bloc with Jordania or similar Georgian Mensheviks, who before the uprising had not been absolutely opposed to the idea of Soviet power in Georgia on certain Terms.

Please bear in mind that Georgia's domestic and international positions both require that her Communists should avoid any mechanical copying of the Russian pattern. They must skilfully work out their own flexible tactics, based on bigger concessions to all the petty-bourgeois elements.

Please reply, Lenin

Lenin

From; Speech At The Opening Of The Congress

**Tenth Congress of the R.C.P.(B.) 8-16 March 1921**

Collected Works, Volume 32, pages 165-271

March 8

On February 1, 1921, the Council of People's Commissars decided to purchase 18,500,000 poods of coal abroad, for our fuel crisis was already in evidence. It had already become clear by then that we would have to expend our gold reserves not only on the purchase of machinery. In the latter case, our coal output would have increased, for we would have boosted our production if, instead of coal, we had bought machines abroad to develop our coal industry, but the crisis was so acute that we had to opt for the worse economic step and spend our money on the coal we could have produced at home. We shall have to make further compromises to buy consumer goods for the peasants and workers.

Today 's papers, I think, say that Krasin has told the press in London that he expects the trade agreement to be signed shortly. I do not know whether these hopes are fully justified. I cannot be certain that it will actually take place, but for my part I must say that we in the Central Committee have devoted a great deal of attention to this question and considered it correct for us to compromise in order to achieve a trade agreement with Britain. Not only because we could obtain more from Britain than from other countries—she is, in this respect, not as advanced as, say, Germany or America. She is a colonial power, with too great a stake in Asian politics, and is sometimes too sensitive to the successes of the Soviet power in certain countries lying near her colonies. That is why our relations with Britain are especially

tenuous. This tenuousness arises from such an objective tangle of causes that no amount of skill on the part of the Soviet diplomatists will help. But we need a trade treaty with Britain owing to the possibility opening up for a treaty with America, whose industrial capacity is so much greater.

Lenin

### **The Tax in Kind**

(The Significance Of The New Policy And Its Conditions)

21 April 1921

Collected Works, Volume 32, pages 329-365

In Lieu Of Introduction

The question of the tax in kind is at present attracting very great attention and is giving rise to much discussion and argument. This is quite natural, because in present conditions it is indeed one of the principal questions of policy.

The discussion is somewhat disordered, a fault to which, for very obvious reasons, we must all plead guilty. All the more useful would it be, therefore, to try to approach the question, not from its "topical" aspect, but from the aspect of general principle. In other words, to examine the general, fundamental background of the picture on which we are now tracing the pattern of definite practical measures of present-day policy.

In order to make this attempt I will take the liberty of quoting a long passage from my pamphlet, *The Chief Task of Our Day Left-Wing" Childishness and the Petty-Bourgeois Mentality*. It was published by the Petrograd Soviet of Workers' and Soldiers' Deputies in 1918 and contains, first, a newspaper article, dated March 11, 1918, on the Brest Peace, and, second, my polemic against the then existing group of Left Communists, dated May 5, 1918. The polemic is now superfluous, and I omit it, leaving what appertains to the discussion on, "state capitalism" and the main elements of our present-day economy, which is transitional from capitalism to socialism.

Here is what I wrote at the time:

## The Present-Day Economy of Russia

(Extract from the 1918 Pamphlet)

State capitalism would be a step forward as compared with the present state of affairs in our Soviet Republic. If in approximately six months' time state capitalism became established in our Republic, this would be a great success and a sure guarantee that within a year socialism will have gained a permanently firm hold and will have become invincible in this country.

I can imagine with what noble indignation some people will recoil from these words... What! The transition to state capitalism in the Soviet Socialist Republic would be a step forward? . . . Isn't this the betrayal of socialism?

We must deal with this point in greater detail.

Firstly, we must examine the nature of the transition from capitalism to socialism that gives us the right and the grounds to call our country a Socialist Republic of Soviets.

Secondly, we must expose the error of those who fail to see the petty-bourgeois economic conditions and the petty-bourgeois element as the principal enemy of socialism in our country.

Thirdly, we must fully understand the economic implications of the distinction between the Soviet state and the bourgeois state.

Let us examine these three points.

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



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

Let us enumerate these elements:

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

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

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

It is in this field that the main struggle is being waged. Between what elements is this struggle being waged if we are to speak in terms of economic categories such as “state capitalism”? Between

the fourth and fifth in the order in which I have just enumerated them? Of course not. It is not state capitalism that is at war with socialism, but the petty bourgeoisie plus private capitalism fighting together against state capitalism and socialism. The petty bourgeoisie oppose every kind of state interference, accounting and control, whether it be state-capitalist or state-socialist. This is an unquestionable fact of reality whose misunderstanding lies at the root of many economic mistakes. The profiteer, the commercial racketeer, the disrupter of monopoly—these are our principal “internal” enemies, the enemies of the economic measures of the Soviet power. A hundred and twenty-five years ago it might have been excusable for the French petty bourgeoisie, the most ardent and sincere revolutionaries, to try to crush the profiteer by executing a few of the “chosen” and by making thunderous declarations. Today, however, the purely French approach to the question assumed by some Left Socialist-Revolutionaries can arouse nothing but disgust and revulsion in every politically conscious revolutionary. We know perfectly well that the economic basis of profiteering is both the small proprietors, who are exceptionally widespread in Russia, and private capitalism, of which every petty bourgeois is an agent. We know that the million tentacles of this petty-bourgeois octopus now and again encircle various sections of the workers, that instead of state monopoly, profiteering forces its way into every pore of our social and economic organism.

Those who fail to see this show by their blindness that they are slaves of petty-bourgeois prejudices. . . .

The petty bourgeoisie have money put away, the few thousands that they made during the war by “honest” and especially by dishonest means. They are the characteristic economic type, that is, the basis of profiteering and private capitalism. Money is a

certificate entitling the possessor to receive social wealth; and a vast section of small proprietors, numbering millions, cling to this certificate and conceal it from the "state". They do not believe in socialism or communism, and "mark time" until the proletarian storm blows over. Either we subordinate the petty bourgeoisie to our control and accounting (we can do this if we organise the poor, that is, the majority of the population or semi-proletarians, round the politically conscious proletarian vanguard), or they will overthrow our workers' power as surely and as inevitably as the revolution was overthrown by the Napoleons and the Cavaignacs who sprang from this very soil of petty proprietorship. That is how the question stands. That is the only view we can take of the matter. . . .

The petty bourgeois who hoards his thousands is an enemy of state capitalism. He wants to employ these thousands just for himself, against the poor, in opposition to any kind of state control. And the sum total of these thousands, amounting to many thousands of millions, forms the base for profiteering, which undermines our socialist construction. Let us assume that a certain number of workers produce in a few days values equal to 1,000. Let us then assume that 200 of this total vanishes owing to petty profiteering, various kinds of embezzlement and the evasion by the small proprietors of Soviet decrees and regulations. Every politically conscious worker will say that if better order and organisation could be obtained at the price of 300 out of the 1,000 he would willingly give 300 instead of 200, for it will be quite easy under the Soviet power to reduce this "tribute" later on to, say, 100 or 50, once order and organisation are established and the petty-bourgeois disruption of state monopoly is completely overcome.

This simple illustration in figures, which I have deliberately simplified to the utmost in order to make it absolutely clear,

explains the present correlation of state capitalism and socialism. The workers hold state power and have every legal opportunity of "taking" the whole thousand, without giving up a single kopek, except for socialist purposes. This legal opportunity, which rests upon the actual transition of power to the workers, is an element of socialism. But in many ways, the small-proprietary and private-capitalist element undermines this legal position, drags in profiteering and hinders the execution of Soviet decrees. State capitalism would be a gigantic step forward even if we paid more than we are paying at present (I took the numerical example deliberately to bring this out more sharply), because it is worth paying for "tuition", because it is useful for the workers, because victory over disorder, economic ruin and laxity is the most important thing, because the continuation of the anarchy of small ownership is the greatest, the most serious danger, and it will certainly be our ruin (unless we overcome it), whereas not only will the payment of a heavier tribute to state capitalism not ruin us, it will lead us to socialism by the surest road. When the working class has learned how to defend the state system against the anarchy of small ownership, when it has learned to organise large-scale production on a national scale along state-capitalist lines, it will hold, if I may use the expression, all the trump cards, and the consolidation of socialism will be assured.

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

In the second place there is nothing terrible in it for the Soviet power, for the Soviet state is a state in which the power of the workers and the poor is assured. . . .

To make things even clearer, let us first of all take the most concrete example of state capitalism. Everybody knows what this example is. It is Germany. Here we have "the last word" in

modern large-scale capitalist engineering and planned organisation, subordinated to Junker-bourgeois imperialism. Cross out the words in italics, and in place of the militarist, Junker, bourgeois, imperialist state put also a state, but of a different social type, of a different class content—a Soviet state, that is, a proletarian state, and you will have the sum total of the conditions necessary for socialism.

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

At the same time socialism is inconceivable unless the proletariat is the ruler of the state. This also is ABC. And history (which nobody, except Menshevik blockheads of the first order, ever expected to bring about “complete” socialism smoothly, gently, easily and simply) has taken such a peculiar course that it has given birth in 1918 to two unconnected halves of socialism existing side by side like two future chickens in the single shell of international imperialism. In 1918, Germany and Russia had become the most striking embodiment of the material realisation of the economic, the productive and the socio-economic conditions for socialism, on the one hand, and the political conditions, on the other.

A victorious proletarian revolution in Germany would immediately and very easily smash any shell of imperialism (which unfortunately is made of the best steel, and hence cannot be broken by the efforts of any chicken) and would bring about the victory of world socialism for certain, without any difficulty,

or with only slight difficulty—if, of course, by “difficulty” we mean difficulty on a world historical scale, and not in the parochial philistine sense.

While the revolution in Germany is still slow in “coming forth”, our task is to study the state capitalism of the Germans, to spare no effort in copying it and not shrink from adopting dictatorial methods to hasten the copying of Western culture by barbarian Russia, without hesitating to use barbarous methods in fighting barbarism. If there are anarchists and Left Socialist-Revolutionaries (I recall offhand the speeches of Karelin and Ghe at the meeting of the Central Executive Committee) who indulge in Karelin-like reflections and say that it is unbecoming for us revolutionaries to “take lessons” from German imperialism, there is only one thing we can say in reply: the revolution that took these people seriously would perish irrevocably (and deservedly).

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

Let it be said in parenthesis that this is the very theoretical mistake which misled the best people in the Novaya Zhizn and Vperyod camp. The worst and the mediocre of these, owing to their stupidity and spinelessness, tag along behind the bourgeoisie, of whom they stand in awe; the best of them have

failed to understand that it was not without reason that the teachers of socialism spoke of a whole period of transition from capitalism to socialism and emphasised the “prolonged birth pangs” of the new society. And this new society is again an abstraction which can come into being only by passing through a series of varied, imperfect and concrete attempts to create this or that socialist state.

It is because Russia cannot advance from the economic situation now existing-here without traversing the ground which is common to state capitalism and to socialism (national accounting and control) that the attempt to frighten others as well as themselves with “evolution towards state capitalism” is utter theoretical nonsense. This is letting one’s thoughts wander away from the true road of “evolution” and failing to understand what this road is. In practice, it is equivalent to pulling us back to small proprietary capitalism.

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

“Try to substitute for the Junker-capitalist state, for the landowner-capitalist state, a revolutionary-democratic state, i.e., a state which in a revolutionary way abolishes all privileges and does not fear to introduce the fullest democracy in a revolutionary way. You will find that, given a really revolutionary-democratic state, state-monopoly capitalism inevitably and unavoidably implies a step . . . towards socialism.

“For socialism is merely the next step forward from state-capitalist monopoly. . . .

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

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

The following is also extremely instructive.

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

That is a very interesting statement. . . .

Let us consider Marx’s idea carefully.

Marx was talking about the Britain of the seventies of the last century, about the culminating point in the development of pre-monopoly capitalism. At that time Britain was a country in which



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

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

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

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

Bukharin is an extremely well-read Marxist economist. He therefore remembered that Marx was profoundly right when he taught the workers the importance of preserving the organisation of large-scale production, precisely for the purpose of facilitating the transition to socialism. Marx taught that (as an exception, and Britain was then an exception) the idea was conceivable of paying the capitalists well, of buying them out, if

the circumstances were such as to compel the capitalists to submit peacefully and to come over to socialism in a cultured and organised fashion, provided they were paid well.

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

On the other hand, it would be an obvious mistake to give free rein to ranters and phrase-mongers who allow themselves to be carried away by the “dazzling” revolutionary spirit, but who are incapable of sustained, thoughtful and deliberate revolutionary work which takes into account the most difficult stages of transition.

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

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

Now power has been seized, retained and consolidated in the hands of a single party, the party of the proletariat, even without the “unreliable fellow-travellers”. To speak of compromise at the present time when there is no question, and can be none, of sharing power, of renouncing the dictatorship of the proletariat

over the bourgeoisie, is merely to repeat, parrot-fashion, words which have been learned by heart but not understood. To describe as "compromise" the fact that, having arrived at a situation when we can and must rule the country, we try to win over to our side, not grudging the cost, the most efficient people capitalism has trained and to take them into our service against small proprietary disintegration, reveals a total incapacity to think about the economic tasks of socialist construction.

### Tax In Kind, Freedom To Trade And Concessions

In the arguments of 1918 quoted above there are a number of mistakes as regards the periods of time involved. These turned out to be longer than was anticipated at that time. That is not surprising. But the basic elements of our economy have remained the same. In a very large number of cases the peasant "poor" (proletarians and semi-proletarians) have become middle peasants. This has caused an increase in the small-proprietor, petty-bourgeois "element". The Civil War of 1918-20 aggravated the havoc in the country, retarded the restoration of its productive forces, and bled the proletariat more than any other class. To this was added the 1920 crop failure, the fodder sbortage and the loss of cattle, which still further retarded the rehabilitation of transport and industry, because, among other things, it interfered with the employment of peasants' horses for carting wood, our main type of fuel.

As a result, the political situation in the spring of 1921 was such that immediate, very resolute and urgent measures had to be taken to improve the condition of the peasants and to increase their productive forces.

Why the peasants and not the workers?

Because you need grain and fuel to improve the condition of the workers. This is the biggest "hitch" at the present time, from the

standpoint of the economy as a whole. For it is impossible to increase the production and collection of grain and the storage and delivery of fuel except by improving the condition of the peasantry, and raising their productive forces. We must start with the peasantry. Those who fail to understand this, and think this putting the peasantry in the forefront is "renunciation" of the dictatorship of the proletariat, or something like that, simply do not stop to think, and allow themselves to be swayed by the power of words. The dictatorship of the proletariat is the direction of policy by the proletariat. The proletariat, as the leading and ruling class, must be able to direct policy in such a way as to solve first the most urgent and "vexed" problem. The most urgent thing at the present time is to take measures that will immediately increase the productive forces of peasant farming. Only in this way will it be possible to improve the condition of the workers, strengthen the alliance between the workers and peasants, and consolidate the dictatorship of the proletariat. The proletarian or representative of the proletariat who refused to improve the condition of the workers in this way would in fact prove himself to be an accomplice of the whiteguards and the capitalists; to refuse to do it in this way means putting the craft interests of the workers above their class interests, and sacrificing the interests of the whole of the working class, its dictatorship, its alliance with the peasantry against the landowners and capitalists, and its leading role in the struggle for the emancipation of labour from the yoke of capital, for the sake of an immediate, short-term and partial advantage for the workers.

Thus, the first thing we need is immediate and serious measures to raise the productive forces of the peasantry.

This cannot be done without making important changes in our food policy. One such change was the replacement of the surplus appropriation system by the tax in kind, which implies a free

market, at least in local economic exchange, after the tax has been paid.

What is the essence of this change?

Wrong ideas on this point are widespread. They are due mainly to the fact that no attempt is being made to study the meaning of the transition or to determine its implications, it being assumed that the change is from communism in general to the bourgeois system in general. To counteract this mistake, one has to refer to what was said in May 1918.

The tax in kind is one of the forms of transition from that peculiar War Communism, which was forced on us by extreme want, ruin and war, to regular socialist exchange of products. The latter, in its turn, is one of the forms of transition from socialism, with the peculiar features due to the predominantly small-peasant population, to communism.

Under this peculiar War Communism we actually took from the peasant all his surpluses—and sometimes even a part of his necessities—to meet the requirements of the army and sustain the workers. Most of it we took on loan, for paper money. But for that, we would not have beaten the landowners and capitalists in a ruined small-peasant country. The fact that we did (in spite of the help our exploiters got from the most powerful countries of the world) shows not only the miracles of heroism the workers and peasants can perform in the struggle for their emancipation; it also shows that when the Mensheviks, Socialist-Revolutionaries and Kautsky and Co. blamed us for this War Communism they were acting as lackeys of the bourgeoisie. We deserve credit for it.

Just how much credit is a fact of equal importance. It was the war and the ruin that forced us into War Communism. It was not, and could not be, a policy that corresponded to the economic tasks of

the proletariat. It was a makeshift. The correct policy of the proletariat exercising its dictatorship in a small-peasant country is to obtain grain in exchange for the manufactured goods the peasant needs. That is the only kind of food policy that corresponds to the tasks of the proletariat and can strengthen the foundations of socialism and lead to its complete victory.

The tax in kind is a transition to this policy. We are still so ruined and crushed by the burden of war (which was on but yesterday and could break out anew tomorrow, owing to the rapacity and malice of the capitalists) that we cannot give the peasant manufactured goods in return for all the grain we need. Being aware of this, we are introducing the tax in kind, that is, we shall take the minimum of grain we require (for the army and the workers) in the form of a tax and obtain the rest in exchange for manufactured goods.

There is something else we must not forget. Our poverty and ruin are so great that we cannot restore large-scale socialist state industry at one stroke. This can be done with large stocks of grain and fuel in the big industrial centres, replacement of worn-out machinery, and so on. Experience has convinced us that this cannot be done at one stroke, and we know that after the ruinous imperialist war even the wealthiest and most advanced countries will be able to solve this problem only over a fairly long period of years. Hence, it is necessary, to a certain extent, to help to restore small industry, which does not demand of the state machines, large stocks of raw material, fuel and food, and which can immediately render some assistance to peasant farming and increase its productive forces right away.

What is to be the effect of all this?



It is the revival of the petty bourgeoisie and of capitalism on the basis of some freedom of trade (if only local). That much is certain, and it is ridiculous to shut our eyes to it.

Is it necessary? Can it be justified? Is it not dangerous?

Many such questions are being asked, and most are merely evidence of simple-mindedness, to put it mildly.

Look at my May 1918 definition of the elements (constituent parts) of the various socio-economic structures in our economy. No one can deny the existence of all these five stages (or constituent parts), of the five forms of economy—from the patriarchal, i.e., semi-barbarian, to the socialist system. That the small-peasant “structure”, partly patriarchal, partly petty bourgeois, predominates in a small-peasant country is self-evident. It is an incontrovertible truth, elementary to political economy, which even the layman’s everyday experience will confirm, that once you have exchange the small economy is bound to develop the petty-bourgeois-capitalist way.

What is the policy the socialist proletariat can pursue in the face of this economic reality? Is it to give the small peasant all he needs of the goods produced by large-scale socialist industries in exchange for his grain and raw materials? This would be the most desirable and “correct” policy—and we have started on it. But we cannot supply all the goods, very far from it; nor shall we be able to do so very soon—at all events not until we complete the first stage of the electrification of the whole country. What is to be done? One way is to try to prohibit entirely, to put the lock on all development of private, non-state exchange, i.e., trade, i.e., capitalism, which is inevitable with millions of small producers. But such a policy would be foolish and suicidal for the party that tried to apply it. It would be foolish because it is economically impossible. It would be suicidal because the party that tried to

apply it would meet with inevitable disaster. Let us admit it: some Communists have sinned “in thought, word and deed” by adopting just such a policy. We shall try to rectify these mistakes, and this must be done without fail, otherwise things will come to a very sorry state.

The alternative (and this is the only sensible and the last possible policy) is not to try to prohibit or put the lock on the development of capitalism, but to channel it into state capitalism. This is economically possible, for state capitalism exists—in varying form and degree—wherever there are elements of unrestricted trade and capitalism in general.

Can the Soviet state and the dictatorship of the proletariat be combined with state capitalism? Are they compatible?

Of course, they are. This is exactly what I argued in May 1918. I hope I had proved it then. I had also proved that state capitalism is a step forward compared with the small proprietor (both small-patriarchal and petty-bourgeois) element. Those who compare state capitalism only with socialism commit a host of mistakes, for in the present political and economic circumstances it is essential to compare state capitalism also with petty-bourgeois production.

The whole problem—in theoretical and practical terms—is to find the correct methods of directing the development of capitalism (which is to some extent and for some time inevitable) into the channels of state capitalism, and to determine how we are to hedge it about with conditions to ensure its transformation into socialism in the near future.

In order to approach the solution of this problem we must first of all picture to ourselves as distinctly as possible what state capitalism will and can be in practice inside the Soviet system and within the framework of the Soviet state.

Concessions are the simplest example of how the Soviet government directs the development of capitalism into the channels of state capitalism and “implants” state capitalism. We all agree now that concessions are necessary, but have we all thought about the implications? What are concessions under the Soviet system, viewed in the light of the above-mentioned forms of economy and their interrelations? They are an agreement, an alliance, a bloc between the Soviet, i.e., proletarian, state power and state capitalism against the small-proprietor (patriarchal and petty-bourgeois) element. The concessionaire is a capitalist. He conducts his business on capitalist lines, for profit, and is willing to enter into an agreement with the proletarian government in order to obtain superprofits or raw materials which he cannot otherwise obtain or can obtain only with great difficulty. Soviet power gains by the development of the productive forces, and by securing an increased quantity of goods immediately, or within a very short period. We have, say, a hundred oilfields, mines and forest tracts. We cannot develop all of them for we lack the machines, the food and the transport. This is also why we are doing next to nothing to develop the other territories. Owing to the insufficient development of the large enterprises the small-proprietor element is more pronounced in all its forms, and this is reflected in the deterioration of the surrounding (and later the whole of) peasant farming, the disruption of its productive forces, the decline in its confidence in the Soviet power, pilfering and widespread petty (the most dangerous) profiteering, etc. By “implanting” state capitalism in the form of concessions, the Soviet government strengthens large-scale production as against petty production, advanced production as against backward production, and machine production as against hand production. It also obtains a larger quantity of the products of large-scale industry (its share of the output), and strengthens

state regulated economic relations as against the anarchy of petty-bourgeois relations. The moderate and cautious application of the concessions policy will undoubtedly help us quickly to improve (to a modest extent) the state of industry and the condition of the workers and peasants. We shall, of course, have all this at the price of certain sacrifices and the surrender to the capitalist of many millions of poods of very valuable products. The scale and the conditions under which concessions cease to be a danger and are turned to our advantage depend on the relation of forces and are decided in the struggle, for concessions are also a form of struggle, and are a continuation of the class struggle in another form, and in no circumstances are they a substitution of class peace for class war. Practice will determine the methods of struggle.

Compared with other forms of state capitalism within the Soviet system, concessions are perhaps the most simple and clear-cut form of state capitalism. It involves a formal written agreement with the most civilised, advanced, West European capitalism. We know exactly what our gains and our losses, our rights and obligations are. We know exactly the term for which the concession is granted. We know the terms of redemption before the expiry of the agreement if it provides for such redemption. We pay a certain "tribute" to world capitalism; we "ransom" ourselves under certain arrangements, thereby immediately stabilising the Soviet power and improving our economic conditions. The whole difficulty with concessions is giving the proper consideration and appraisal of all the circumstances when concluding a concession agreement, and then seeing that it is fulfilled. Difficulties there certainly are, and mistakes will probably be inevitable at the outset. But these are minor difficulties compared with the other problems of the social revolution and, in particular, with the difficulties arising from

other forms of developing, permitting and implanting state capitalism.

The most important task that confronts all Party and Soviet workers in connection with the introduction of the tax in kind is to apply the principles of the “concessions” policy (i.e., a policy that is similar to “concession” state capitalism) to the other forms of capitalism—unrestricted trade, local exchange, etc.

Take the co-operatives. It is not surprising that the tax in kind decree immediately necessitated a revision of the regulations governing the co-operatives and a certain extension of their “freedom” and rights. The co-operatives are also a form of state capitalism, but a less simple one; its outline is less distinct, it is more intricate and therefore creates greater practical difficulties for the government. The small commodity producers’ co-operatives (and it is these, and not the workers’ co-operatives, that we are discussing as the predominant and typical form in a small-peasant country) inevitably give rise to petty-bourgeois, capitalist relations, facilitate their development, push the small capitalists into the foreground and benefit them most. It cannot be otherwise, since the small proprietors predominate, and exchange is necessary and possible. In Russia’s present conditions, freedom and rights for the co-operative societies mean freedom and rights for capitalism. It would be stupid or criminal to close our eyes to this obvious truth.

But, unlike private capitalism, “co-operative” capitalism under the Soviet system is a variety of state capitalism, and as such it is advantageous and useful for us at the present time—in certain measure, of course. Since the tax in kind means the free sale of surplus grain (over and above that taken in the form of the tax), we must exert every effort to direct this development of capitalism—for a free market is development of capitalism—into the channels of co-operative capitalism. It resembles state

capitalism in that it facilitates accounting, control, supervision and the establishment of contractual relations between the state (in this case the Soviet state) and the capitalist. Co-operative trade is more advantageous and useful than private trade not only for the above-mentioned reasons, but also because it facilitates the association and organisation of millions of people, and eventually of the entire population, and this in its turn is an enormous gain from the standpoint of the subsequent transition from state capitalism to socialism.

Let us make a comparison of concessions and co-operatives as forms of state capitalism. Concessions are based on large-scale machine industry; co-operatives are based on small, handicraft, and partly even on patriarchal industry. Each concession agreement affects one capitalist, firm, syndicate, cartel or trust. Co-operative societies embrace many thousands and even millions of small proprietors. Concessions allow and even imply a definite agreement for a specified period. Co-operative societies allow of neither. It is much easier to repeal the law on the co-operatives than to annul a concession agreement, but the annulment of an agreement means a sudden rupture of the practical relations of economic alliance, or economic coexistence, with the capitalist, whereas the repeal of the law on the co-operatives, or any law, for that matter, does not immediately break off the practical coexistence of Soviet power and the small capitalists, nor, in general, is it able to break off the actual economic relations. It is easy to "keep an eye" on a concessionaire but not on the co-operators. The transition from concessions to socialism is a transition from one form of large-scale production to another. The transition from small-proprietor co-operatives to socialism is a transition from small to large-scale production, i.e., it is more complicated, but, if successful, is capable of embracing wider masses of the population, and pulling up the deeper and more tenacious roots of the old, pre-socialist and even pre-

capitalist relations, which most stubbornly resist all “innovations”. The concessions policy, if successful, will give us a few model—compared with our own—large enterprises built on the level of modern advanced capitalism. After a few decades these enterprises will revert to us in their entirety. The co-operative policy, if successful, will result in raising the small economy and in facilitating its transition, within an indefinite period, to large-scale production on the basis of voluntary association.

Take a third form of state capitalism. The state enlists the capitalist as a merchant and pays him a definite commission on the sale of state goods and on the purchase of the produce of the small producer. A fourth form: the state leases to the capitalist entrepreneur an industrial establishment, oilfields, forest tracts, land, etc., which belong to the state, the lease being very similar to a concession agreement. We make no mention of, we give no thought or notice to, these two latter forms of state capitalism, not because we are strong and clever but because we are weak and foolish. We are afraid to look the “vulgar truth” squarely in the face, and too often yield to “exalting deception”. We keep repeating that “we” are passing from capitalism to socialism, but do not bother to obtain a distinct picture of the “we”. To keep this picture clear we must constantly have in mind the whole list—without any exception—of the constituent parts of our national economy, of all its diverse forms that I gave in my article of May 5, 1918. “We”, the vanguard, the advanced contingent of the proletariat, are passing directly to socialism; but the advanced contingent is only a small part of the whole of the proletariat while the latter, in its turn, is only a small part of the whole population. If “we” are successfully to solve the problem of our immediate transition to socialism, we must understand what intermediary paths, methods, means and instruments are

required for the transition from pre-capitalist relations to socialism. That is the whole point.

Look at the map of the R.S.F.S.R. There is room for dozens of large civilised states in those vast areas which lie to the north of Vologda, the south-east of Rostov-on-Don and Saratov, the south of Orenburg and Omsk, and the north of Tomsk. They are a realm of patriarchalism, and semi- and downright barbarism. And what about the peasant backwoods of the rest of Russia, where scores of versts of country track, or rather of trackless country, lie between the villages and the railways, i.e., the material link with the big cities, large-scale industry, capitalism and culture? Isn't that also an area of wholesale patriarchalism, Oblomovism and semi-barbarism?

Is an immediate transition to socialism from the state of affairs predominating in Russia conceivable? Yes, it is, to a certain degree, but on one condition, the precise nature of which we now know thanks to a great piece of scientific work that has been completed. It is electrification. If we construct scores of district electric power stations (we now know where and how these can and should be constructed), and transmit electric power to every village, if we obtain a sufficient number of electric motors and other machinery, we shall not need, or shall hardly need, any transition stages or intermediary links between patriarchalism and socialism. But we know perfectly well that it will take at least ten years only to complete the first stage of this "one" condition; this period can be conceivably reduced only if the proletarian revolution is victorious in such countries as Britain, Germany or the U.S.A.

Over the next few years we must learn to think of the intermediary links that can facilitate the transition from patriarchalism and small production to socialism. "We" continue saying now and again that "capitalism is a bane and socialism is



a boon". But such an argument is wrong, because it fails to take into account the aggregate of the existing economic forms and singles out only two of them.

Capitalism is a bane compared with socialism. Capitalism is a boon compared with medievalism, small production, and the evils of bureaucracy which spring from the dispersal of the small producers. Inasmuch as we are as yet unable to pass directly from small production to socialism, some capitalism is inevitable as the elemental product of small production and exchange; so that we must utilise capitalism (particularly by directing it into the channels of state capitalism) as the intermediary link between small production and socialism, as a means, a path, and a method of increasing the productive forces.

Look at the economic aspect of the evils of bureaucracy. We see nothing of them on May 5, 1918. Six months after the October Revolution, with the old bureaucratic apparatus smashed from top to bottom, we feel none of its evils.

A year later, the Eighth Congress of the Russian Communist Party (March 18-23, 1919) adopted a new Party Programme in which we spoke forthrightly of "a partial revival of bureaucracy within the Soviet system"—not fearing to admit the evil, but desiring to reveal, expose and pillory it and to stimulate thought, will, energy and action to combat it.

Two years later, in the spring of 1921, after the Eighth Congress of Soviets (December 1920), which discussed the evils of bureaucracy, and after the Tenth Congress of the Russian Communist Party (March 1921), which summed up the controversies closely connected with an analysis of these evils, we find them even more distinct and sinister. What are their economic roots? They are mostly of a dual character: on the one hand, a developed bourgeoisie needs a bureaucratic apparatus,

primarily a military apparatus, and then a judiciary, etc., to use against the revolutionary movement of the workers (and partly of the peasants). That is something we have not got. Ours are class courts directed against the bourgeoisie. Ours is a class army directed against the bourgeoisie. The evils of bureaucracy are not in the army, but in the institutions serving it. In our country bureaucratic practices have different economic roots, namely, the atomised and scattered state of the small producer with his poverty, illiteracy, lack of culture, the absence of roads and exchange between agriculture and industry, the absence of connection and interaction between them. This is largely the result of the Civil War. We could not restore industry when we were blockaded, besieged on all sides, cut off from the whole world and later from the grain-bearing South, Siberia, and the coalfields. We could not afford to hesitate in introducing War Communism, or daring to go to the most desperate extremes: to save the workers' and peasants' rule we had to suffer an existence of semi-starvation and worse than semi-starvation, but to hold on at all costs, in spite of unprecedented ruin and the absence of economic intercourse. We did not allow ourselves to be frightened, as the Socialist-Revolutionaries and Mensheviks did (who, in fact, followed the bourgeoisie largely because they were scared). But the factor that was crucial to victory in a blockaded country—a besieged fortress—revealed its negative side by the spring of 1921, just when the last of the white guard forces were finally driven from the territory of the R.S.F.S.R. In the besieged fortress, it was possible and imperative to “lock up” all exchange; with the masses displaying extraordinary heroism this could be borne for three years. After that, the ruin of the small producer increased, and the restoration of large-scale industry was further delayed, and postponed. Bureaucratic practices, as a legacy of the “siege” and the superstructure built

over the isolated and downtrodden state of the small producer, fully revealed themselves.

We must learn to admit an evil fearlessly in order to combat it the more firmly, in order to start from scratch again and again; we shall have to do this many a time in every sphere of our activity, finish what was left undone and choose different approaches to the problem. In view of the obvious delay in the restoration of large-scale industry, the "locking up" of exchange between industry and agriculture has become intolerable. Consequently, we must concentrate on what we can do: restoring small industry, helping things from that end, propping up the side of the structure that has been half-demolished by the war and blockade. We must do everything possible to develop trade at all costs, without being afraid of capitalism, because the limits we have put to it (the expropriation of the landowners and of the bourgeoisie in the economy, the rule of the workers and peasants in politics) are sufficiently narrow and "moderate". This is the fundamental idea and economic significance of the tax in kind.

All Party and Soviet workers must concentrate their efforts and attention on generating the utmost local initiative in economic development—in the gubernias, still more in the uyezds, still more in the volosts and villages—for the special purpose of immediately improving peasant farming, even if by "small" means, on a small scale, helping it by developing small local industry. The integrated state economic plan demands that this should become the focus of concern and "priority" effort. Some improvement here, closest to the broadest and deepest "foundation", will permit of the speediest transition to a more vigorous and successful restoration of large-scale industry.

Hitherto the food supply worker has known only one fundamental instruction: collect 100 per cent of the grain appropriations. Now he has another instruction: collect 100 per

cent of the tax in the shortest possible time and then collect another 100 per cent in exchange for the goods of large-scale and small industry. Those who collect 75 per cent of the tax and 75 per cent (of the second hundred) in exchange for the goods of large scale and small industry will be doing more useful work of national importance than those who collect 100 per cent of the tax and 55 per cent (of the second hundred) by means of exchange. The task of the food supply worker now becomes more complicated. On the one hand, it is a fiscal task: collect the tax as quickly and as efficiently as possible. On the other hand, it is a general economic task: try to direct the co-operatives, assist small industry, develop local initiative in such a way as to increase the exchange between agriculture and industry and put it on a sound basis. Our bureaucratic practices prove that we are still doing a very bad job of it. We must not be afraid to admit that in this respect we still have a great deal to learn from the capitalist. We shall compare the practical experience of the various gubernias, uyezds, volosts and villages: in one place private capitalists, big and small, have achieved so much; those are their approximate profits. That is the tribute, the fee, we have to pay for the "schooling". We shall not mind paying for it if we learn a thing or two. That much has been achieved in a neighboring locality through co-operation. Those are the profits of the co-operatives. And in a third place, that much has been achieved by purely state and communist methods (for the present, this third case will be a rare exception).

It should be the primary task of every regional economic centre and economic conference of the gubernia executive committees immediately to organise various experiments, or systems of "exchange" for the surplus stocks remaining after the tax in kind has been paid. In a few months' time practical results must be obtained for comparison and study. Local or imported salt; paraffin oil from the nearest town; the handicraft wood-working

industry; handicrafts using local raw materials and producing certain, perhaps not very important, but necessary and useful, articles for the peasants; “green coal” (the utilisation of small local water power resources for electrification), and so on and so forth—all this must be brought into play in order to stimulate exchange between industry and agriculture at all costs. Those who achieve the best results in this sphere, even by means of private capitalism, even without the co-operatives, or without directly transforming this capitalism into state capitalism, will do more for the cause of socialist construction in Russia than those who “ponder over” the purity of communism, draw up regulations, rules and instructions for state capitalism and the co-operatives, but do nothing practical to stimulate trade.

Isn't it paradoxical that private capital should be helping socialism?

Not at all. It is, indeed, an irrefutable economic fact. Since this is a small-peasant country with transport in an extreme state of dislocation, a country emerging from war and blockade under the political guidance of the proletariat—which controls the transport system and large-scale industry—it inevitably follows, first, that at the present moment local exchange acquires first-class significance, and, second, that there is a possibility of assisting socialism by means of private capitalism (not to speak of state capitalism).

Let's not quibble about words. We still have too much of that sort of thing. We must have more variety in practical experience and make a wider study of it. In certain circumstances, the exemplary organisation of local work, even on the smallest scale, is of far greater national importance than many branches of central state work. These are precisely the circumstances now prevailing in peasant farming in general, and in regard to the exchange of the surplus products of agriculture for industrial goods in particular.

Exemplary organisation in this respect, even in a single volost, is of far greater national importance than the "exemplary" improvement of the central apparatus of any People Commissariat; over the past three and a half years our central apparatus has been built up to such an extent that it has managed to acquire a certain amount of harmful routine; we cannot improve it quickly to any extent, we do not know how to do it. Assistance in the work of radically improving it, securing an influx of fresh forces, combating bureaucratic practices effectively and overcoming this harmful routine must come from the localities and the lower ranks, with the model organisation of a "complex", even if on a small scale. I say "complex", meaning not just one farm, one branch of industry, or one factory, but a totality of economic relations, a totality of economic exchange, even if only in a small locality.

Those of us who are doomed to remain at work in the centre will continue the task of improving the apparatus and purging it of bureaucratic evils, even if only on a modest and immediately achievable scale. But the greatest assistance in this task is coming, and will come, from the localities. Generally speaking, as far as I can observe, things are better in the localities than at the centre; and this is understandable, for, naturally, the evils of bureaucracy are concentrated at the centre. In this respect, Moscow cannot but be the worst city, and in general the worst "locality", in the Republic. In the localities we have deviations from the average to the good and the bad sides, the latter being less frequent than the former. The deviations towards the bad side are the abuses committed by former government officials, landowners, bourgeois and other scum who play up to the Communists and who sometimes commit abominable outrages and acts of tyranny against the peasantry. This calls for a terrorist purge, summary trial and the firing squad. Let the Martovs, the Chernovs, and non-Party philistines like them, beat their breasts

and exclaim: "I thank Thee, Lord, that I am not as 'these', and have never accepted terrorism." These simpletons "do not accept terrorism" because they choose to be servile accomplices of the white guards in fooling the workers and peasants. The Socialist-Revolutionaries and Mensheviks "do not accept terrorism" because under the flag of "socialism" they are fulfilling their function of placing the masses at the mercy of the white guard terrorism. This was proved by the Kerensky regime and the Kornilov putsch in Russia, by the Kolchak regime in Siberia, and by Menshevism in Georgia. It was proved by the heroes of the Second International and of the "Two-and-a-Half" International in Finland, Hungary, Austria, Germany, Italy, Britain, etc. Let the flunkey accomplices of white guard terrorism wallow in their repudiation of all terrorism. We shall speak the bitter and indubitable truth: in countries beset by an unprecedented crisis, the collapse of old ties, and the intensification of the class struggle after the imperialist war of 1914-18—and that means all the countries of the world—terrorism cannot be dispensed with, notwithstanding the hypocrites and phrase-mongers. Either the white guard, bourgeois terrorism of the American, British (Ireland), Italian (the fascists), German, Hungarian and other types, or Red, proletarian terrorism. There is no middle course, no "third" course, nor can there be any.

The deviations towards the good side are the success achieved in combating the evils of bureaucracy, the great attention shown for the needs of the workers and peasants, and the great care in developing the economy, raising the productivity of labour and stimulating local exchange between agriculture and industry. Although the good examples are more numerous than the bad ones, they are, nevertheless, rare. Still, they are there. Young, fresh communist forces, steeled by civil war and privation, are coming forward in all localities. We are still doing far too little to promote these forces regularly from lower to higher posts. This

can and must be done more persistently, and on a wider scale than at present. Some workers can and should be transferred from work at the centre to local work. As leading men of uyezds, and of volosts, where they can organise economic work as a whole on exemplary lines, they will do far more good, and perform work of far greater national importance, than by performing some junction at the centre. The exemplary organisation of the work will help to train new workers and provide examples that other districts could follow with relative ease. We at the centre shall be able to do a great deal to encourage the other districts all over the country to "follow" the good examples, and even make it mandatory for them to do so.

By its very nature, the work of developing "exchange" between agriculture and industry, the exchange of after-tax surpluses for the output of small, mainly handicraft, industry, calls for independent, competent and intelligent local initiative. That is why it is now extremely important from the national standpoint to organise the work in the uyezds and volosts on exemplary lines. In military affairs, during the last Polish war, for example, we were not afraid of departing from the bureaucratic hierarchy, "downgrading", or transferring members of the Revolutionary Military Council of the Republic to lower posts (while allowing them to retain their higher rank at the centre). Why not now transfer several members of the All-Russia Central Executive Committee, or members of collegiums, or other high-ranking comrades, to uyezd or even volost work? Surely, we have not become so "bureaucratised" as to "be ashamed" of that. And we shall find scores of workers in the central bodies who will be glad to accept. The economic development of the whole Republic will gain enormously; and the exemplary volosts, or uyezds, will play not only a great, but a positively crucial and historic role.



incidentally, we should note as a small but significant circumstance the necessary change in our attitude to the problem of combating profiteering. We must foster "proper" trade, which is one that does not evade state control; it is to our advantage to develop it. But profiteering, in its politico-economic sense, cannot be distinguished from "proper" trade. Freedom of trade is capitalism; capitalism is profiteering. It would be ridiculous to ignore this.

What then should be done? Shall we declare profiteering to be no longer punishable?

No. We must revise and redraft all the laws on profiteering, and declare all pilfering and every direct or indirect, open or concealed evasion of state control, supervision and accounting to be a punishable offence (and in fact prosecuted with redoubled severity). It is by presenting the question in this way (the Council of People's Commissars has already started, that is to say, it has ordered that work be started, on the revision of the anti-profiteering laws) that we shall succeed in directing the rather inevitable but necessary development of capitalism into the channels of state capitalism.

#### Political Summary And Deductions

I still have to deal, if briefly, with the political situation, and the way it has taken shape and changed in connection with the economic developments outlined above.

I have already said that the fundamental features of our economy in 1921 are the same as those in 1918. The spring of 1921, mainly as a result of the crop failure and the loss of cattle, brought a sharp deterioration in the condition of the peasantry, which was bad enough because of the war and blockade. This resulted in political vacillations which, generally speaking, express the very

“nature” of the small producer. Their most striking expression was the Kronstadt mutiny.

The vacillation of the petty-bourgeois element was the most characteristic feature of the Kronstadt events. There was very little that was clear, definite and fully shaped. We heard nebulous slogans about “freedom”, “freedom of trade”, “emancipation”, “Soviets without the Bolsheviks”, or new elections to the Soviets, or relief from “Party dictatorship”, and so on and so forth. Both the Mensheviks and the Socialist-Revolutionaries declared the Kronstadt movement to be “their own”. Victor Chernov sent a messenger to Kronstadt. On the latter’s proposal, the Menshevik Valk, one of the Kronstadt leaders, voted for the Constituent Assembly. In a flash, with lightning speed, you might say, the whiteguards mobilised all their forces “for Kronstadt “. Their military experts in Kronstadt, a number of experts, and not Kozlovsky alone, drew up a plan for a landing at Oranienbaum, which scared the vacillating mass of Mensheviks, Socialist-Revolutionaries and non-party elements. More than fifty Russian whiteguard newspapers published abroad conducted a rabid campaign “for Kronstadt “. The big banks, all the forces of finance capital, collected funds to assist Kronstadt. That shrewd leader of the bourgeoisie and the landowners, the Cadet Milyukov, patiently explained to the simpleton Victor Chernov directly (and to the Mensheviks Dan and Rozhkov, who are in jail in Petrograd for their connection with the Kronstadt events, indirectly) that that there is no need to hurry with the Constituent Assembly, and that Soviet power can and must be supported — only without the Bolsheviks.

Of course, it is easy to be cleverer than conceited simpletons like Chernov, the petty-bourgeois phrase-monger, or like Martov, the knight of philistine reformism doctored to pass for Marxism. Properly speaking, the point is not that Milyukov, as an

individual, has more brains, but that, because of his class position, the party leader of the big bourgeoisie sees and understands the class essence and political interaction of things more clearly than the leaders of the petty bourgeoisie, the Chernovs and Martovs. For the bourgeoisie is really a class force which, under capitalism, inevitably rules both under a monarchy and in the most democratic republic, and which also inevitably enjoys the support of the world bourgeoisie. But the petty bourgeoisie, i.e., all the heroes of the Second International and of the "Two-and-a-Half" International, cannot, by the very economic nature of things, be anything else than the expression of class impotence; hence the vacillation, phrase-mongering and helplessness. In 1789, the petty bourgeois could still be great revolutionaries. In 1848, they were ridiculous and pathetic. Their actual role in 1917-21 is that of abominable agents and out-and-out servitors of reaction, be their names Chernov, Martov, Kautsky, MacDonald, or what have you.

Martov showed himself to be nothing but a philistine Narcissus when he declared in his Berlin journal that Kronstadt not only adopted Menshevik slogans but also proved that there could be an anti-Bolshevik movement which did not entirely serve the interests of the whiteguards, the capitalists and the landowners. He says in effect: "Let us shut our eyes to the fact that all the genuine whiteguards hailed the Kronstadt mutineers and collected funds in aid of Kronstadt through the banks!" Compared with the Chernovs and Martovs, Milyukov is right, for he is revealing the true tactics of the real whiteguard force, the force of the capitalists and landowners. He declares: "It does not matter whom we support, be they anarchists or any sort of Soviet government, as long as the Bolsheviks are overthrown, as long as there is a shift in power; it does not matter whether to the right or to the left, to the Mensheviks or to the anarchists, as long as it is away from the Bolsheviks. As for the rest—'we', the

Milyukovs, 'we', the capitalists and landowners, will do the rest 'ourselves'; we shall slap down the anarchist pygmies, the Chernovs and the Martovs, as we did Chernov and Maisky in Siberia, the Hungarian Chernovs and Martovs in Hungary, Kautsky in Germany and the Friedrich Adlers and Co. in Vienna." The real, hard-headed bourgeoisie have made fools of hundreds of these philistine Narcissuses—whether Menshevik, Socialist-Revolutionary or non-party—and have driven them out scores of times in all revolutions in all countries. History proves it. The facts bear it out. The Narcissuses will talk; the Milyukovs and whiteguards will act.

Milyukov is absolutely right when he says, "If only there is a power shift away from the Bolsheviks, no matter whether it is a little to the right or to the left, the rest will take care of itself." This is class truth, confirmed by the history of revolutions in all countries, and by the centuries of modern history since the Middle Ages. The scattered small producers, the peasants, are economically and politically united either by the bourgeoisie (this has always been—and will always be—the case under capitalism in all countries, in all modern revolutions), or by the proletariat (that was the case in a rudimentary form for a very short period at the peak of some of the greatest revolutions in modern history; that has been the case in Russia in a more developed form in 1917-21). Only the Narcissuses will talk and dream about a "third" path, and a "third force".

With enormous difficulty, and in the course of desperate struggles, the Bolsheviks have trained a proletarian vanguard that is capable of governing; they have created and successfully defended the dictatorship of the proletariat. After the test of four years of practical experience, the relation of class forces in Russia has become as clear as day: the steeled and tempered vanguard of the only revolutionary class; the vacillating petty-bourgeois

element; and the Milyukovs, the capitalists and landowners, lying in wait abroad and supported by the world bourgeoisie. It is crystal-clear: only the latter are able to take advantage of any “shift of power “ and will certainly do so.

In the 1918 pamphlet I quoted above, this point was put very clearly: “the principal enemy” is the “petty-bourgeois element”. “Either we subordinate it to our control and accounting, or it will overthrow the workers’ power as surely and as inevitably as the revolution was overthrown by the Napoleons and the Cavaignacs who sprang from this very soil of petty proprietorship. This is how the question stands. That is the only view we can take of the matter.” (Excerpt from the pamphlet of May 5, 1918, cf. above.)

Our strength lies in complete clarity and the sober consideration of all the existing class magnitudes, both Russian and international; and in the inexhaustible energy, iron resolve and devotion in struggle that arise from this. We have many enemies, but they are disunited, or do not know their own minds (like all the petty bourgeoisie, all the Martovs and Chernovs, all the non-party elements and anarchists). But we are united—directly among ourselves and indirectly with the proletarians of all countries; we know just what we want. That is why we are invincible on a world scale, although this does not in the least preclude the possibility of defeat for individual proletarian revolutions for longer or shorter periods.

There is good reason for calling the petty-bourgeois element an element, for it is indeed something that is most amorphous, indefinite and unconscious. The petty-bourgeois Narcissuses imagine that “universal suffrage” abolishes the nature of the small producer under capitalism. As a matter of fact, it helps the bourgeoisie, through the church, the press, the teachers, the police, the militarists and a thousand and one forms of economic

oppression, to subordinate the scattered small producers. Ruin, want and the hard conditions of life give rise to vacillation: one day for the bourgeoisie, the next, for the proletariat. Only the steeled proletarian vanguard is capable of withstanding and overcoming this vacillation.

The events of the spring of 1921 once again revealed the role of the Socialist-Revolutionaries and Mensheviks: they help the vacillating petty-bourgeois element to recoil from the Bolsheviks, to cause a "shift of power" in favour of the capitalists and landowners. The Mensheviks and Socialist-Revolutionaries have now learned to don the "non-party" disguise. This has been fully proved. Only fools now fail to see this and understand that we must not allow ourselves to be fooled. Non-Party conferences are not a fetish. They are valuable if they help us to come closer to the impassive masses—the millions of working people still outside politics. They are harmful if they provide a platform for the Mensheviks and Socialist Revolutionaries masquerading as "non-party" men. They are helping the mutinies, and the whiteguards. The place for Mensheviks and Socialist-Revolutionaries, avowed or in non-party guise, is not at a non-Party conference but in prison (or on foreign journals, side by side with the white guards; we were glad to let Martov go abroad). We can and must find other methods of testing the mood of the masses and coming closer to them. We suggest that those who want to play the parliamentary, constituent assembly and non-Party conference game, should go abroad; over there, by Martov's side, they can try the charms of "democracy" and ask Wrangel's soldiers about them. We have no time for this "opposition" at "conferences" game. We are surrounded by the world bourgeoisie, who are watching for every sign of vacillation in order to bring back "their own men" and restore the landowners and the bourgeoisie. We will keep in prison the

Mensheviks and Socialist Revolutionaries, whether avowed or in “non-party” guise.

We shall employ every means to establish closer contacts with the masses of working people untouched by politics— except such means as give scope to the Mensheviks and Socialist-Revolutionaries, and the vacillations that benefit Milyukov. In particular, we shall zealously draw into Soviet work, primarily economic work, hundreds upon hundreds of non-Party people, real non-Party people from the masses, the rank and file of workers and peasants, and not those who have adopted non-party colours in order to crib Menshevik and Socialist-Revolutionary instructions which are so much to Milyukov’s advantage. Hundreds and thousands of non-Party people are working for us, and scores occupy very important and responsible posts. We must pay more attention to the way they work. We must do more to promote and test thousands and thousands of rank-and-file workers, to try them out systematically and persistently, and appoint hundreds of them to higher posts, if experience shows that they can fill them.

Our Communists still do not have a sufficient understanding of their real duties of administration: they should not strive to do “everything themselves”, running themselves down and failing to cope with everything, undertaking twenty jobs and finishing none. They should check up on the work of scores and hundreds of assistants, arrange to have their work checked up from below, i.e., by the real masses. They should direct the work and learn from those who have the knowledge (the specialists) and the experience in organising large-scale production (the capitalists). The intelligent Communist will not be afraid to learn from the military expert, although nine-tenths of the military experts are capable of treachery at every opportunity. The wise Communist will not be afraid to learn from a capitalist (whether a big

capitalist concessionaire, a commission agent, or a petty capitalist co-operator, etc.), although the capitalist is no better than the military expert. Did we not learn to catch treacherous military experts in the Red Army, to bring out the honest and conscientious, and, on the whole, to utilise thousands and tens of thousands of military experts? We are learning to do the same thing (in an unconventional way) with engineers and teachers, although we are not doing it as well as we did it in the Red Army (there Denikin and Kolchak spurred us on, compelled us to learn more quickly, diligently and intelligently). We shall also learn to do it (again in an unconventional way) with the commission agents, with the buyers working for the state, the petty capitalist co-operators, the entrepreneur concessionaires, etc.

The condition of the masses of workers and peasants needs to be improved right away. And we shall achieve this by putting new forces, including non-Party forces, to useful work. The tax in kind, and a number of measures connected with it, will facilitate this; we shall thereby cut at the economic root of the small producer's inevitable vacillations. And we shall ruthlessly fight the political vacillations, which benefit no one but Milyukov. The waverers are many, we are few. The waverers are disunited, we are united. The waverers are not economically independent, the proletariat is. The waverers don't know their own minds: they want to do something very badly, but Milyukov won't let them. We know what we want.

And that is why we shall win.

Conclusion

To sum up.

The tax in kind is a transition from War Communism to a regular socialist exchange of products.



The extreme ruin rendered more acute by the crop failure in 1920 has made this transition urgently necessary owing to the fact that it was impossible to restore large-scale industry rapidly.

Hence, the first thing to do is to improve the condition of the peasants. The means are the tax in kind, the development of exchange between agriculture and industry, and the development of small industry.

Exchange is freedom of trade; it is capitalism. It is useful to us inasmuch as it will help us overcome the dispersal of the small producer, and to a certain degree combat the evils of bureaucracy; to what extent this can be done will be determined by practical experience. The proletarian power is in no danger, as long as the proletariat firmly holds power in its hands and has full control of transport and large-scale industry.

The fight against profiteering must be transformed into a fight against stealing and the evasion of state supervision, accounting and control. By means of this control we shall direct the capitalism that is to a certain extent inevitable and necessary for us into the channels of state capitalism.

The development of local initiative and independent action in encouraging exchange between agriculture and industry must be given the fullest scope at all costs. The practical experience gained must be studied; and this experience must be made as varied as possible.

We must give assistance to small industry servicing peasant farming and helping to improve it. To some extent, this assistance may be given in the form of raw materials from the state stocks. It would be most criminal to leave these raw materials unprocessed.

We must not be afraid of Communists “learning” from bourgeois experts, including merchants, petty capitalist co-operators and capitalists, in the same way as we learned from the military experts, though in a different form. The results of the “learning” must be tested only by practical experience and by doing things better than the bourgeois experts at your side; try in every way to secure an improvement in agriculture and industry, and to develop exchange between them. Do not grudge them the “tuition” fee: none will be too high, provided we learn something.

Do everything to help the masses of working people, to come closer to them, and to promote from their ranks hundreds and thousands of non-Party people for the work of economic administration. As for the “non-party” people who are only Mensheviks and Socialist-Revolutionaries disguised in fashionable non-party attire à la Kronstadt, they should be kept safe in prison, or packed off to Berlin, to join Martov in freely enjoying all the charms of pure democracy and freely exchanging ideas with Chernov, Milyukov and the Georgian Mensheviks.

April 21, 1921

Lenin

From: **Speech In Defense Of The Tactics Of The Communist International**

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If the Congress is not going to wage a vigorous offensive against such errors, against such "Leftist" stupidities, the whole movement is doomed. That is my deep conviction. But we are organised and disciplined Marxists. We cannot be satisfied with speeches against individual comrades. We Russians are already sick and tired of these Leftist phrases. We are men of organisation. In drawing up our plans, we must proceed in an organised way and try to find the correct line. It is, of course, no secret that our theses are a compromise. And why not? Among Communists, who have already convened their Third Congress and have worked out definite fundamental principles, compromises under certain conditions are necessary.

“to reject compromises “on principle”, to reject the permissibility of compromises in general, no matter of what kind, is childishness, which it is difficult even to consider seriously.” ... “it is ridiculous to absolutely reject compromises that are imposed by life itself...what matters is a clear understanding and persistent pursuit of the aims of the struggle under all circumstances.”