



Lenin On Democratic Struggle

Democratic Tasks of Socialists

ON DEMOCRATIC STRUGGLE

DEMOCRATIC TASKS OF SOCIALISTS

LENIN

Selected writings from Lenin & Stalin researched and
compiled for various articles on the subject. E. A

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Introduction

"Can a class-conscious worker **forget the democratic struggle for the sake of the socialist struggle**, or forget the latter for the sake of the former? No, a class-conscious worker calls himself a Social-Democrat for the reason that **he understands the relation between the two struggles**. He knows that **there is no other road to socialism** save the road through democracy, through **political liberty**. " (P211)

One of the most striking examples of the **kinship between the right and left opportunism** -reinforcing each other-, shows itself on the question of " democratic struggle ", "democratic tasks" of Marxist Leninists.

In colonial, semi colonial or dependent countries in general, and in countries where capitalism developed due to unequal laws of economy such as in Turkey particular, the understanding of democratic struggle, either consciously or unconsciously, presents itself in two forms; one is **the Right deviation** which takes democratic struggle as the base and spread the illusion that the Republic as the ultimate goal, the other is the **left deviation** which ignores the concrete facts, conditions and situation and rejects the democratic struggle exclusively under the pretext that it is " bourgeois tailgating " and spreads the illusion that the socialist revolution is on the agenda.

As Lenin explains;

To the Marxist the problem is simply **to avoid either of two extremes**: on the one hand, not to fall into the error of those who say that, from the standpoint of the proletariat, **we are in no way concerned with any immediate and temporary non-proletarian tasks**, and on the other, **not to allow the proletariat's co-operation in the attainment of the immediate**,

democratic tasks to dim its class-consciousness and its class distinctiveness.” (P136)

For Marxist Leninists **democratic and socialist tasks** and struggle for both are dialectically connected, not isolated from each other. One cannot be achieved independently from the other. Lenin clearly explains the meaning of both and their dialectical interconnection;

"The object of the practical activities of the Social-Democrats is, as is well known, **to lead the class struggle** of the proletariat and to organise that struggle **in both** its manifestations: **socialist** (the fight against the capitalist class aimed at destroying the class system and organizing socialist society), and **democratic** (the fight against absolutism aimed at winning political liberty and **democratizing the political and social system**). We said as is well known. And indeed, **from the very moment they appeared as a separate social-revolutionary trend**, the Russian Social-Democrats have always quite definitely indicated this object of their activities, have **always emphasized the dual manifestation and content of the class struggle** of the proletariat and have always insisted on the **inseparable connection between their socialist and democratic tasks**—a connection clearly expressed in the name they have adopted.

Simultaneously with the dissemination of scientific socialism, Russian Social-Democrats **set themselves the task of propagating democratic ideas** among the working class masses; they strive to spread an understanding of absolutism in all its manifestations, of its class content, of the necessity to overthrow it, of the impossibility of waging a successful struggle for the workers' cause without achieving political liberty and

the democratization of Russia's political and social system.

.. every resolute and consistent democratic demand of the proletariat always and everywhere in the world causes the bourgeoisie to recoil.. " (P175)

This connection is especially much more important in countries where feudalism and semi-feudalism reigns. In regard to these types countries, **"the principal task of the proletariat at present "** says Lenin **"is to win the broadest freedom** and bring about the most complete destruction of landlord (feudal) landed proprietorship. Only by doing this, **only by completely smashing the old**, semi-feudal society through democratic action, **can the proletariat rise to full stature as an independent class**, lay full emphasis on its specific (i.e., socialist) tasks, **as distinct from the democratic tasks common to "all the oppressed"**, and secure for itself the most favourable conditions for an unrestricted, sweeping, and intensified struggle for socialism. If the bourgeois-democratic liberation movement stops half-way, if it is not carried through, **the proletariat will have to spend a great deal more of its forces on general democratic** (i.e., bourgeois-democratic) tasks than on its own class, **proletarian, i.e., socialist, tasks. "** (P249)

Lenin speaking of undeveloped countries states;

"The undeveloped countries are a different matter. They embrace the whole of Eastern Europe and all the **colonies and semi-colonies** In those areas, as a rule, there still exist **oppressed and capitalistically undeveloped nations**. Objectively, these nations still have general national tasks to accomplish, namely, **democratic tasks, the tasks of overthrowing foreign oppression.**

While the proletariat of the advanced countries is overthrowing the bourgeoisie and repelling its attempts at counter-revolution, **the undeveloped and oppressed nations do not just wait**, do not cease to exist, **do not disappear. ...**

The **social revolution can come only in the form of an epoch** in which are combined civil war by the proletariat against the bourgeoisie in the advanced countries and **a whole series of democratic and revolutionary movements**, including the national liberation movement, in the undeveloped, backward and oppressed nations." *Lenin, A Caricature of Marxism and Imperialist Economism, "Monism and Dualism"*

Related to the democratic revolution, emphasizing the importance of democratic struggle in these types of countries, Lenin states;

"the more incomplete and irresolute this revolution, the longer and the more heavily will general democratic tasks, **and not socialist, not purely class, proletarian tasks, weigh upon the proletariat.** The more complete the victory of the peasantry, **the sooner will the proletariat stand out as a distinct class**, and the more clearly will it **put forward its purely socialist tasks and aims.** " (*P254*)

Stalin summarizes the essence of democratic struggle in these types of countries;

" Today we are demanding a democratic republic. Can we say that a democratic republic is good in all respects, or bad in all respects? No, we cannot! Why? **Because a democratic republic is good only in one respect:** when it destroys the feudal system; **but it is bad in another respect:** when it strengthens the bourgeois system. Hence, **we say: in so far as the**

democratic republic destroys the feudal system it is good -- and we fight for it; but in so far as it strengthens the bourgeois system it is bad -- and we fight against it.
"" (P231)

Marxist Leninist does not forget the democratic struggle for the sake of the socialist struggle or forget the socialist struggle for the sake of democratic struggle. However, always subordinates the democratic struggle to the struggle for socialism. As Lenin points out in "Marxism and Proudhonism on the national Question;

"In contrast to the petty-bourgeois democrats, Marx regarded every democratic demand without exception not as an absolute, but as an historical expression of the struggle of the masses of the people, led by the bourgeoisie, against feudalism. There is not one of these demands which could not serve and has not served, under certain circumstances, as an instrument in the hands of the bourgeoisie for deceiving the workers. ..In practice, the proletariat can retain its independence only by subordinating its struggle for all democratic demands, not excluding the demand for a republic, to its revolutionary struggle for the overthrow of the bourgeoisie."

In his critique of Kautskyites, he stresses the fact that only the socialists wage sincere democratic struggle in connection with the socialist Struggle;

"“you are opposed to democratic demands,” the Kautskyists argue, in the hope that inattentive people will not notice that this objection substitutes non-existent bourgeois-democratic tasks for the existing socialist tasks."

Oh no, gentlemen, we reply to the Kautskyists. **We are in favour of democratic demands, we alone fight for them sincerely, for the objective historical situation prevents us from advancing them except in connection with the socialist revolution.**" (P299)

"The Commune " says Lenin, "was a splendid example of the unanimity with which the proletariat **was able to accomplish the democratic tasks which the bourgeoisie could only proclaim.**" Lessons of the Commune " **Let the liberals give democracy away for a few pennies** and throw away the whole for the sake of banal and feeble, paltry dreams of doles." Socialists "must rouse among the people **consciousness of integral democratic tasks** and imbue the proletariat with a clear understanding of revolutionary aims. We must enlighten the minds of the masses of workers and develop their readiness to struggle, **not befog their minds by toning down contradictions,** by toning down the aims of the struggle." (P270)

For Socialists " Instead of speaking about the "full" utilization of "broad" liberty (as a matter of fact, this is just vague phrase-mongering, which could very well be replaced, and should be, by **definite reference to a democratic republic and a democratic constitution,** for "full" utilization means consistent democracy)— instead of this, it was imperative to state **that it is not only the working class that is interested in political liberty.** Silence on this score is tantamount to **opening the door wide to the worst forms of "economism,"** and to forgetting our general democratic tasks. *Lenin, A Letter to the Northern League*

Lenin explains his statement " it was imperative to state **that it is not only the working class that is interested in political liberty**";

"Why are the conditions for the democratic struggle not the same as those for the socialist struggle? Because the workers will certainly have **different allies in each of those two struggles.** The **democratic struggle** is waged by the workers **together with a section of the bourgeoisie, especially the petty bourgeoisie.** On the other hand, the **socialist struggle** is waged **by the workers against the whole of the bourgeoisie.** The struggle against the bureaucrat and the landlord can and **must be waged together with all the peasants,** even the well-to-do and the middle peasants. On the other hand, **it is only together with the rural proletariat** that the struggle against the bourgeoisie, and therefore against the well-to-do peasants too, **can be properly waged."** (P211)

In contrast to the Permanent revolution theory of counter revolution which disregards and ignores any intermediate stages, processes and impatiently leaps to the last stage in a Utopian, abstract way, Marxist- Leninist theory of Uninterrupted revolution takes in to account the constant changes in the social content of the revolution; constantly changing relations between the classes, constant changes in development in one stage to other. **Revolution passes through a serious of stages.** At these stages' proletariat has different allies. **Democratic struggle** in particular will have various allies depending on the given situation and concrete conditions.

Stalin with his skill in clarifying the subject sheds light to the question;

"does not mean, of course, that since capitalism is decaying the **socialist system can be established any time we like.** Only Anarchists and other petty-bourgeois ideologists think that. **The socialist ideal is not the ideal of all classes.** It is the ideal only of the proletariat; **not all classes are directly interested in** its fulfillment the

proletariat alone is so interested. This means that **as long as the proletariat constitutes a small section** of society the establishment of the **socialist system is impossible**. The decay of the old form of production, the further concentration of capitalist production, and the proletarianisation of the majority in society -- such are the conditions needed for the achievement of socialism. But this is still not enough. **The majority in society may already be proletarianised, but socialism may still not be achievable**. This is because, in addition to all this, the achievement of socialism calls for class consciousness, **the unity of the proletariat and the ability of the proletariat** to manage its own affairs. In order that all this may be acquired, what is called political freedom is needed, i.e., freedom of speech, press, strikes and association, in short, freedom to wage the class struggle.

But political freedom is not equally ensured everywhere. **Therefore, the conditions under which it is obliged to wage the struggle:** under a feudal autocracy (Russia), a constitutional monarchy (Germany), a big bourgeois republic (France), or under a democratic republic (which Russian Social-Democracy is demanding), **are not a matter of indifference to the proletariat**. Political freedom is best and most fully ensured in a democratic republic, that is, of course, **in so far as it can be ensured under capitalism at all**. Therefore, all advocates of proletarian socialism necessarily strive for the establishment of a democratic republic as **the best "bridge" to socialism**

That is why, under present conditions, the Marxist programme is **divided into two parts:** the **maximum programme**, the goal of which is socialism, and the **minimum programme**, the object of which is to lay

the road to socialism through a democratic republic." (P231)

Lenin, reiterates the words of Engels to emphasize the dialectic connection between theory and the assessment of existing condition for related practice;

" Marxism requires of us a strictly exact and objectively verifiable analysis of the relations of classes and of the concrete features peculiar to each historical situation. We Bolsheviks have always tried to meet this requirement, which is absolutely essential for giving a scientific foundation to policy. " (P335)

Left and right deviation kinship have always found their justification in eclecticism, in far-left phrase making, memorized slogans that **has nothing to do with the concrete condition and situations**. Either the petty bourgeois impatiens that Engels identifies as childishly naive **"“What childish innocence it is to present one’s own impatience as a theoretically convincing argument!”"** (P351) or the petty bourgeois tactics to escape from the struggles of day to day and immediate questions. " Marx and Engels always said, rightly ridiculing the **mere memorising and repetition of "formulas"**, that at best are capable **only of marking out general tasks**, which are necessarily **modifiable by the concrete economic and political conditions of each particular period of the historical process.** “(P335)

The statements on the part of deviations to escape from the democratic struggle, have become a habitual routine losing its random nature same way the **rejection and belittling of the democratic struggle** to bond with the masses have become a habit. As Engels notes;

"...‘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.'" (P351)

Due to their impatience and/or escape from the struggle, regardless of the concrete situation, the **abstract slogans** such as **"revolution now"**, **"either all or nothing"** despite its catchy sounding, does not serve the interests of working class and its struggle - unless the revolutionary situation exists. For a **"Marxist must take cognisance of real life, of the true facts of reality. '"" ... " A Marxist must not abandon the ground of careful analysis of class relations."** (P335)

Lenin states that the **" general failure** of the representatives of old revolutionary theories to understand the principles of Social-Democracy, accustomed as **they are to base their programmes** and plans of activity **on abstract ideas** and **not on an exact appraisal of the actual** classes operating in the country, classes that have been placed in certain relationships by history." *The Tasks of the Russian Social-Democrats*

Criticizing the far-left with abstract approach and slogans, "German communists," says Engels, " are Communists because, through all the intermediate stations and all compromises created, not by them but by the course of historical development, 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.** "(P351)

On the absurdity of learning Marxism from rote and sloganization of phrases, Lenin was saying;

" 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." (P351)

Every democratic struggle duration may have "special situations" within, responses to which should be made based on the concrete assessment of the current special situation and determined the form of struggle and **the tactical alliance for it**. Lenin continues the previous quote;

"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 " (P351)

For those **opportunists who rejects any tactical alliance for the purpose of any given democratic struggle on the agenda**, again, with far-left sounding pretexts like "supporting bourgeoisie", "tailgating Bourgeoisie" and choosing to do nothing and thereby, serving the interests of bourgeoisie indeed, Lenin states following;

" it is our bounden duty to explain to the proletariat every liberal and democratic protest, **to widen and support it, with the active participation of the workers**, be it a conflict between the Zemstvo and the Ministry of the Interior, between the nobility and the police régime of the Orthodox Church, between statisticians and the bureaucrats, between peasants and the "Zemstvo" officials, between religious sects and the rural police, etc., etc. **Those who contemptuously turn**

up their noses at the slight importance of some of these conflicts, or at the “hopelessness” of the attempts to fan them into a general conflagration, do not realize that all-sided political agitation is a focus in which the vital interests of political education of the proletariat coincide with the vital interests of social development as a whole, of the entire people, that is, of all its democratic elements. It is our direct duty to concern ourselves with every liberal question, to determine our Social-Democratic attitude towards it, to help the proletariat to take an active part in its solution and to accomplish the solution in its own, proletarian way. Those who refrain from concerning themselves in this way (whatever their intentions) in actuality leave the liberals in command, place in their hands the political education of the workers and concede the hegemony in the political struggle to elements which, in the final analysis, are leaders of bourgeois democracy. " (P128)

Some of the” urgent task ” arise due to specific conditions requires the revolutionaries ” to have the task of approaching to various layers of population” , this task ” **should not be limited with** the ” intellectual layer ” (P25)

What we have seen in the example of Turkey, for example, is the tragic irony where rather than supporting and trying to gain the leadership of the spreading broad masses of opposition and spontaneous opposition movement to fascist power, they prefer an alliance with the variations of Trotskyism who has no base in masses.

If we consider the specific case (*religious-fascist dictatorship*) and urgent task, the revolutionaries have to meet the needs of ” awaking proletariat, to organize them, and strengthen the ties with the revolutionary groups and wage a

struggle in order to **integrate the " democratic tasks with the socialist tasks.**

Distrust to the masses in essence derives from the distrust to herself, her own theory and practice capacity. Thus, the choice would be either individual practice isolated from the masses or similar movements, even counter-revolutionary "intellectual" groups. "However, " says Lenin, "**the working class does not stand alone;** at its side are all the political opposition elements, strata and classes, **since they are hostile to absolutism and are fighting it in one form or another.** Here side by side with the proletariat stand the opposition elements of the bourgeoisie, or of the educated classes, or of the petty bourgeoisie, or of the nationalities, religions and sects, etc., etc., persecuted by the autocratic government. **The question naturally arises of what the attitude of the working class towards these elements should be.**" (P25)

It is unavoidable for the left and right deviations response to the question of "**what the attitude of the working class towards these elements should be**". Even though the response would look contradictory to each, in fact, in the final analyses, their approach would both be mutually supporting, reinforcing each other in the service of bourgeoisie. That is the nature of revisionism. Against the reformist outlook a " far - left outlook that turns its back to the democratic struggle with the claim of being pure socialist - that escapes from the struggle. Quote from Lenin below is quite important in understanding the subject;

""particularly in regard to the political struggle that **the "class point of view" demands that the proletariat give an impetus to every democratic movement.** The political demands of working-class democracy **do not differ in principle from those of bourgeois democracy,** they differ only in degree. In the struggle for economic emancipation, for the socialist

revolution, **the proletariat stands on a basis different in principle and it stands alone...** In the **struggle for political liberation**, however, we have **many allies, towards whom we must not remain indifferent.** But while our allies in the bourgeois-democratic camp, in **struggling for liberal reforms**, will always glance back and seek to adjust matters so that they will be able, as before, "to eat well, sleep peace fully, and live merrily" at other people's expense, the proletariat will march forward to the end, without looking back. While the confreres of R. N. S... **haggle with the government over the rights** of the authoritative Zemstvo, or over a constitution, **we will struggle for the democratic republic.** We will not forget, however, that **if we want to push someone forward, we must continuously keep our hands on that someone's shoulders.** The party of the **proletariat must learn to catch every liberal just at the moment when he is prepared to move forward an inch** and make him move forward a yard. If he is obdurate, we will go forward without him and over him." (P128)

In Turkey, for example, the current "chief enemy" is autocracy and the urgent agenda to fight against its anti-democratic, fascist attacks against. As Lenin explains;

" Since its immediate task is the overthrow of the autocracy, Social-Democracy must act as the vanguard in the fight for democracy, and consequently, if for no other reason, must give every support to all democratic elements of the population .. and win them as allies. "

The proletariat must not regard the other classes and parties as "one reactionary mass"; on the contrary, it must take part in all political and social life, support the progressive classes and parties against the reactionary

classes and parties, **support every revolutionary movement against the existing system, champion the interests of every oppressed nationality or race, of every persecuted religion, of the disfranchised sex, etc.**" (P53)

Lenin speaking of autocratic countries says;

" **The day-to-day work**, which the class-conscious proletariat should never forget under any circumstances, includes also the work of organisation. **Without broad and diverse workers' organisations**, and without their connection with revolutionary Social-Democracy, **it is impossible to wage a successful struggle against the autocracy.**" (P156)

In a struggle aiming the socialist revolution, "**Our principal and fundamental task**" says Lenin, " is to facilitate the political development and the political organisation of the working class. **Those who push this task into the background**, who refuse to subordinate to it all the special tasks and particular methods of struggle, are following a false path and **causing serious harm to the movement.** . (P83)

It is beneficial to repeat Lenin's words again which says; " Social-Democrats...have **always emphasized the dual manifestation and content of the class struggle** of the proletariat and have always insisted on the **inseparable connection between their socialist and democratic tasks**—a connection clearly expressed in the name they have adopted " (P25)

The struggle for the protection and expanding the Democratic rights is the preservation and expansion of struggle socialism, and also exposing the illusion of bourgeois democracy in the very practical life of the working masses. "**The more democratic the system of government, the clearer will the**

workers see that the root evil is capitalism, not lack of rights." *A Caricature of Marxism and Imperialist Economism, The Other Political Issues Raised and Distorted By P. Kievsky*

In addition, as Lenin puts it; "**.. every resolute and consistent democratic demand of the proletariat always and everywhere in the world causes the bourgeoisie to recoil..** " (P175)

Democratic struggle is also an undeniable task in order to bond with the masses. Vanguardship, Leadership cannot be achieved in one day, it can be gained in the process of **struggles integrated with the masses**. It is not through abstract call-outs like " Socialism now ", but through struggles for concrete, specific democratic rights. As Lenin puts it;

" 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."(P25)

So democratic struggle is unavoidable task, first of all for; 1) the development of revolutionary movement and the struggle 2) the exposure of bourgeoisie fraud in practice 3) the integration with the working masses, empowerment and gaining the leadership.

The history of struggle at every period encountered the problems of **not being able to comprehend the dialectical connection between these two tasks** and consequently without any regard to the specific conditions, have been rejecting either the democratic struggle (political), or the economic struggle

(socialist).

“In our opinion the ground has been prepared for this sad state of affairs by three circumstances. **First, in their early activity**, Russian Social-Democrats restricted themselves merely to work in propaganda circles. When we took up agitation among the masses, we were not always able to restrain ourselves from going to the other extreme. **Secondly**, in our early activity we often had to struggle for our right to existence against the Narodnaya Volya adherents, who understood by "politics" an activity isolated from the working-class movement and who reduced politics purely to conspiratorial struggle. In rejecting this sort of politics, the Social-Democrats went to the extreme of pushing politics entirely into the background. **Thirdly**, working in the isolation of small local workers' circles, the Social-Democrats did not devote sufficient attention to the necessity of organising a revolutionary party which would combine all the activities of the local groups and make it possible to organise the revolutionary work on correct lines. **The predominance of isolated work is naturally connected with the predominance of the economic struggle.**” (P83)

The approach, in order to set the balance **in order not to deviate**, is to **subordinate** the democratic struggle to socialist struggle and to safeguard the political independence in alliances. Because, isolated from political struggle " the working-class movement becomes petty and inevitably becomes bourgeois." That's why, its task is **not to serve** the working-class movement **passively at each of its separate stages**, but to **represent the interests of the movement as a whole**, to point out to this movement its ultimate aim and its political tasks, and to **safeguard its political and ideological independence.**” (P83)

Without waging a democratic struggle subordinated to socialist struggle, without creating a leadership embracing and

organizing the masses, "**without such organisation, the proletariat will never rise to the class-conscious struggle; without such organisation the working-class movement is doomed to impotency.**" (P83)

Here comes another subject of justification for the left-deviation in order to reject the democratic struggle. They refuse all kind of alliances and conciliation under the pretext of "**safeguarding their political and ideological independence.**" Although I will be taking the question of compromise on another title; "Lenin- On Compromise", it is important to touch the subject here in direct connection with the current title.

Lenin in "Left wing communism an infantile Disorder" states; "**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.**" ..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.....**It would be absurd to formulate a recipe or general rule** ("No Compromises!") to serve all cases. **One must use one's own brains** and be able to find one's bearings in each separate case." He continues; "**Naive and utterly inexperienced people imagine that it is sufficient to admit the permissibility of compromises in general in order to obliterate the dividing line between opportunism,** against which we wage and must wage an irreconcilable struggle, **and revolutionary Marxism, or Communism.**"

Conciliation for an alliance, requires to be in line with the interests of working peoples and their struggle and based on objective assessment of the concrete situation. A decision of support or an alliance made in line with this approach, is not called opportunism but a necessity for the struggle aiming a

specific issue on the agenda.

" to refuse beforehand to manoeuvre, to utilize the conflict of interests (even though temporary) among one's enemies, to refuse to temporize and compromise with possible (even though temporary, unstable, vacillating and conditional) allies -- is not this ridiculous in the extreme? ...The more powerful enemy can be vanquished only by exerting the utmost effort, and without fail, most thoroughly, carefully, attentively and skilfully using every, even the smallest, "rift" among the enemies,.. and also by taking advantage of every, even the smallest, opportunity of gaining a mass ally even though this ally be temporary, vacillating, unstable, unreliable and conditional. Those who fail to understand this, **fail to understand even a particle of Marxism, or of scientific, modern Socialism in general.** Those who have not proved by deeds over a fairly considerable period of time, and in fairly varied political situations, their ability to apply this truth in practice **have not yet learned to assist the revolutionary class in its struggle** to emancipate all toiling humanity from the exploiters. And **this applies equally to the period** before and after the proletariat has conquered political power. "*(P351)*

The confusion is in the difference between the support and or conciliation in **general**, and in **particular**. In some concrete situation cases, either negotiated or not, the support of an ally against the chief enemy, carries in it the the protection of immediate, short term interests but also of the long -term interests. Socialists, "says Lenin, " **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.” (P25)

In conclusion, **there cannot be a socialist struggle** by rejecting, ignoring the democratic tasks e.g. struggle for the protection and achievement of the existing and non-existing democratic rights and freedoms. Socialists struggle aiming to destroy the class system and to build a socialist society **cannot be isolated from the democratic tasks** which aims at gaining political freedom and democratize the existing political and social systems, struggles against the dictatorships, fascism, autocracy, religious reaction etc. The argument of” one is the tasks of the reformist” and” the other is the task of revolutionaries”, is **an argument from the marshes of revisionism** regardless of how skillfully concealed with far-left slogans and phrase making.

Marxist Leninists are conscious of the fact that under capitalism women's rights cannot be acquired, but this fact has not prevented and will not prevent them from waging the democratic struggle for women's rights within the boundaries of capitalist system.

Marxist Leninists are conscious of the fact that under capitalism labor rights cannot be realized, but they do not desert the democratic struggle for these rights.

Marxist Leninists are conscious of the fact that under capitalism secularism cannot be realized, but they do wage a democratic struggle for secularism.

Marxist Leninists are conscious of the fact that under capitalism justice, equality cannot be realized, but they do not desert the democratic struggle for these rights.

Marxist Leninists are conscious of the fact that under capitalism the salvation of oppressed peoples cannot be realized, but they do not make an excuse and desert the democratic struggle for it.

For dozens of such democratic rights which under capitalism cannot be realized, Marxist Leninists **do not give up the democratic struggle** for those with an attitude of "" nothing will change anyway "".

Marxist Leninists, **while struggling for these rights**, also prevent the spread of illusion of possibility by emphasizing that it cannot be fully realized under capitalism.

Why? Because these are **the tasks of democratic struggle** which is an integral part of socialist struggle. This struggle is the practice of bonding with masses, educating and organizing them, and creating more appropriate condition and the environment for the socialist struggle. Without putting this struggle into practice, to speak about the socialist struggle is an illusion, reaction with left phrase making.

Reiterating Lenin's words;

"such a presentation of the question is too narrow, **for it ignores the general democratic tasks**" ... "Can a class-conscious worker **forget the democratic struggle for the sake of the socialist struggle**, or forget the latter for the sake of the former? No, a class-conscious worker calls himself a Social-Democrat for the reason that **he understands the relation between the two struggles...** "Socialists "must rouse among the **people consciousness of integral democratic tasks** and **imbue the proletariat** with a clear understanding of **revolutionary aims**. "...We are **in favour of democratic demands, we alone fight for them sincerely**, for the **objective historical situation** prevents us from advancing them **except in connection with the socialist revolution.**" E.A

The Tasks of the Russian Social-Democrats

Written in exile at the end of 1897

Lenin Collected Works, Volume 2

The second half of the nineties witnessed a remarkable increase in the work being done on the presentation and solution of the problems of the Russian revolution. The appearance of a new revolutionary party, Narodnoye Pravo, the growing influence and successes of the Social Democrats, the evolution within Narodnaya Volya—all this has evoked a lively discussion on questions of programme both in study circles of socialist intellectuals and workers and in illegal literature. Regarding the latter sphere, reference should be made to “An Urgent Question” and the “Manifesto” (1894) of the Narodnoye Pravo Party, to the Leaflet of the Narodnaya Volya Group, to *Rabotnik* published abroad by the League of Russian Social-Democrats, to the increasing output of revolutionary pamphlets in Russia, mainly for workers, and the agitation conducted by the Social-Democratic League of Struggle for the Emancipation of the Working Class in St. Petersburg around the important strikes there in 1896, etc.

At the present time (the end of 1897), the most urgent question, in our opinion, is that of the practical activities of the Social-Democrats. We emphasize the practical side of Social-Democracy, because on the theoretical side the most critical period—the period of stubborn refusal by its opponents to understand it, of strenuous efforts to suppress the new trend the moment it arose, on the one hand, and of stalwart defence of the fundamentals of Social-Democracy, on the other—is now apparently behind us. Now the main and basic features of the

theoretical views of the Social-Democrats have been sufficiently clarified. The same cannot be said about the practical side of Social-Democracy, about its political programme, its methods, its tactics. It is in this sphere, we think, that misapprehension and mutual misunderstanding mostly prevail, preventing a complete rapprochement between Social-Democracy and those revolutionaries who in theory have completely renounced the principles of the Narodnaya Volya and in practice are either led by the very force of circumstances to carry on propaganda and agitation among the workers—nay, more: to conduct their activities among the workers on the basis of the class struggle—or else strive to base their whole programme and revolutionary activities on democratic tasks. If we are not mistaken, the latter description fits the two revolutionary groups which are operating in Russia at the present time, parallel to the Social-Democrats, namely, the Narodnaya Volya and Narodnoye Pravo.

We, therefore, think it particularly opportune to try to explain the practical tasks of the Social-Democrats and to state the grounds on which we consider their programme to be the most rational of the three now existing and the arguments advanced against it to be based very largely on misunderstanding.

The object of the practical activities of the Social-Democrats is, as is well known, **to lead the class struggle of the proletariat and to organise that struggle in both its manifestations: socialist (the fight against the capitalist class aimed at destroying the class system and organising socialist society), and democratic (the fight against absolutism aimed at winning political liberty in Russia and democratising the political and social system of Russia).** We said as is well known.

And indeed, from the very moment they appeared as a separate social-revolutionary trend, the Russian Social-Democrats have always quite definitely indicated this object of their activities, **have always emphasised the dual manifestation and content of the class struggle of the proletariat and have always insisted on the inseparable connection between their socialist and democratic tasks**—a connection clearly expressed in the name they have adopted. Nevertheless, to this day you often meet socialists who have the most distorted notions about the Social-Democrats and accuse them of ignoring the political struggle, etc. Let us, therefore, dwell a little on a description of both aspects of the practical activities of Russian Social-Democracy.

Let us begin with socialist activity. One would have thought that the character of Social-Democratic activity in this respect had become quite clear since the Social-Democratic League of Struggle for the Emancipation of the Working Class in St. Petersburg began its activities among the St. Petersburg workers. The socialist activities of Russian Social-Democrats consist in spreading by propaganda the teachings of scientific socialism, in **spreading among the workers a proper understanding of the present social and economic system**, its basis and its development, an understanding of the various classes in Russian society, of their interrelations, of the struggle between these classes, of the role of the working class in this struggle, of its attitude towards the declining and the developing classes, towards the past and the future of capitalism, an understanding of the historical task of international Social-Democracy and of the Russian working class. Inseparably connected with propaganda is agitation among the workers, which naturally comes to the forefront in

the present political conditions of Russia and at the present level of development of the masses of workers. Agitation among the workers means that the Social-Democrats **take part in all the spontaneous manifestations of the working-class struggle, in all the conflicts between the workers and the capitalists** over the working day, wages, working conditions, etc., etc. Our task is to merge our activities with the practical, everyday questions of working-class life, to help the workers understand these questions, to draw the workers' attention to the most important abuses, to help them formulate their demands to the employers more precisely and practically, to develop among the workers consciousness of their solidarity, consciousness of the common interests and common cause of all the Russian workers as a united working class that is part of the international army of the proletariat. To organise study circles among workers, to establish proper and secret connections between them and the central group of Social-Democrats, to publish and distribute working-class literature, to organise the receipt of correspondence from all centres of the working-class movement, to publish agitational leaflets and manifestos and to distribute them, and to train a body of experienced agitators—such, in broad outline, are the manifestations of the socialist activities of Russian Social-Democracy.

Our work is primarily and mainly directed to the factory, urban workers. Russian Social-Democracy must not dissipate its forces; it must concentrate its activities on the industrial proletariat, who are most susceptible to Social-Democratic ideas, most developed intellectually and politically, and most important by virtue of their numbers and concentration in the country's large political centres. The creation of a durable

revolutionary organisation among the factory, urban workers is therefore the first and most urgent task confronting Social-Democracy, one from which it would be highly unwise to let ourselves be diverted at the present time. But, while recognising the necessity of concentrating our forces on the factory workers and opposing the dissipation of our forces, we do not in the least wish to suggest that the Russian Social-Democrats should ignore other strata of the Russian proletariat and working class. Nothing of the kind. The very conditions of life of the Russian factory workers very often compel them to enter into the closest relations with the handicraftsmen, the industrial proletariat scattered outside the factory in towns and villages, and whose conditions are infinitely worse. The Russian factory worker also comes into direct contact with the rural population (very often the factory worker's family live in the country) and, consequently, he cannot but come into close contact with the rural proletariat, with the many millions of regular farm workers and day labourers, and also with those ruined peasants who, while clinging to their miserable plots of land, have to work off their debts and take on all sorts of "casual jobs," i.e., are also wage-labourers.

The Russian Social-Democrats think it inopportune to send their forces among the handicraftsmen and rural labourers, but they do not in the least intend to ignore them; they will try to enlighten the advanced workers also on questions affecting the lives of the handicraftsmen and rural labourers, so that when these workers come into contact with the more backward strata of the proletariat, they will imbue them with the ideas of the class struggle, socialism and the political tasks of Russian democracy in general and of the Russian proletariat in particular. It is impractical to send agitators among the

handicraftsmen and rural labourers when there is still so much work to be done among the factory, urban workers, but in numerous cases the socialist worker comes willy-nilly into contact with these people and must be able to take advantage of these opportunities and understand the general tasks of Social-Democracy in Russia. Hence, those who accuse the Russian Social-Democrats of being narrow-minded, of trying to ignore the mass of the labouring population for the sake of the factory workers, are profoundly mistaken. On the contrary, **agitation among the advanced sections of the proletariat is the surest and the only way to rouse** (as the movement expands) the entire Russian proletariat. The dissemination of socialism and of the idea of the class struggle among the urban workers will inevitably cause these ideas to flow in the smaller and more scattered channels. This requires that these ideas take deeper root among the better prepared elements and spread throughout the vanguard of the Russian working-class movement and of the Russian revolution. 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.** Convinced that the doctrine of scientific socialism and the class struggle is the only revolutionary theory that can today serve as the banner of the revolutionary movement, the Russian Social-Democrats will exert every effort to spread this doctrine, to guard it against false interpretation and to combat every attempt to impose vaguer doctrines on the still young

working-class movement in Russia. Theoretical reasoning proves and the practical activities of the Social-Democrats show that all socialists in Russia should become Social-Democrats.

Let us now deal with the democratic tasks and with the democratic work of the Social-Democrats. Let us repeat, once again, that this work is inseparably connected with socialist activity. In conducting propaganda among the workers, the Social-Democrats cannot avoid political problems, and they would regard any attempt to avoid them, or even to push them aside, as a profound mistake and a departure from the basic principles of international Social-Democracy. Simultaneously with the dissemination of scientific socialism, Russian Social-Democrats set themselves the task of propagating democratic ideas among the working class masses; they strive to spread an understanding of absolutism in all its manifestations, of its class content, of the necessity to overthrow it, of the impossibility of waging a successful struggle for the workers' cause without achieving political liberty and the democratisation of Russia's political and social system. In conducting agitation among the workers on their immediate economic demands, the Social-Democrats inseparably link this with agitation on the immediate political needs, the distress and the demands of the working class, agitation against police tyranny, manifested in every strike, in every conflict between workers and capitalists, agitation against the restriction of the rights of the workers as Russian citizens in general and as the class suffering the worst oppression and having the least rights in particular, agitation against every prominent representative and flunkey of absolutism who comes into direct contact with the workers and who clearly reveals to the working class its condition of political slavery. Just as there is no issue affecting the life of the workers

in the economic field that must be left unused for the purpose of economic agitation, so there is no issue in the political field that does not serve as a subject for political agitation. These two kinds of agitation are inseparably connected in the activities of the Social-Democrats as the two sides of the same medal. Both economic and political agitation are equally necessary to develop the class-consciousness of the proletariat; both economic and political agitation are equally necessary for guiding the class struggle of the Russian workers, because every class struggle is a political struggle. By arousing the class-consciousness of the workers, by organising, disciplining and training them for united action and for the fight for the ideals of Social-Democracy, both kinds of agitation will enable the workers to test their strength on immediate issues and immediate needs, to wring partial concessions from their enemy and thus improve their economic conditions, compel the capitalists to reckon with the strength of the organised workers, compel the government to extend the workers' rights, to pay heed to their demands and keep the government in constant fear of the hostility of the masses of workers led by a strong Social-Democratic organisation.

We have pointed to the inseparably close connection between socialist and democratic propaganda and agitation, to the complete parallelism of revolutionary activity in both spheres. Nevertheless, there is a big difference between these two types of activity and struggle. The difference is that in the economic struggle the proletariat stands absolutely alone against both the landed nobility and the bourgeoisie, except, perhaps, for the help it receives (and by no means always) from those elements of the petty bourgeoisie which gravitate towards the proletariat. In the democratic, political struggle,

however, the Russian working class does not stand alone; at its side are all the political opposition elements, strata and classes, since they are hostile to absolutism and are fighting it in one form or another. **Here side by side with the proletariat stand the opposition elements of the bourgeoisie, or of the educated classes, or of the petty bourgeoisie, or of the nationalities, religions and sects, etc., etc., persecuted by the autocratic government.** The question naturally arises of what the attitude of the working class towards these elements should be. Further, should it not combine with them in the common struggle against the autocracy? After all, all Social-Democrats admit that the political revolution in Russia must precede the socialist revolution; should they not, therefore, combine with all the elements in the political opposition to fight the autocracy, setting socialism aside for the time being? Is not this essential in order to strengthen the fight against the autocracy?

Let us examine these two questions.

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.

Support for all elements of the political opposition will be expressed in the propaganda of the Social-Democrats by the fact that, in showing that the autocracy is hostile to the workers' cause, they will also point to its hostility towards various other social groups; they will point to the solidarity of the working class with these groups on a particular issue, in a particular task, etc. In agitation, this support will be expressed by the Social-Democrats' taking advantage of every manifestation of the police tyranny of the autocracy to point out to the workers how this tyranny affects all Russian citizens in general, and the representatives of the exceptionally oppressed social estates, nationalities, religions, sects, etc., in particular; and how that tyranny affects the working class especially. Finally, in practice, this support is expressed in the readiness of the Russian Social-Democrats to enter into alliances with revolutionaries of other trends for the purpose of achieving certain particular aims, and this readiness has been shown in practice on more than one occasion.

This brings us to the second question. While pointing to the solidarity of one or other of the various opposition groups with the workers, the Social-Democrats will always single out the workers from the rest, they will always point out that this solidarity is temporary and conditional, they will always emphasise the independent class identity of the proletariat,

who tomorrow may find themselves in opposition to their allies of today. We shall be told that “such action will weaken all the fighters for political liberty at the present time.” We shall reply that such action will strengthen all the fighters for political liberty. Only those fighters are strong who rely on the consciously recognised real interests of certain classes, and any attempt to obscure these class interests, which already play a predominant role in contemporary society, will only weaken the fighters. That is the first point. The second point is that, in the fight against the autocracy, the working class must single itself out, for it is the only thoroughly consistent and unreserved enemy of the autocracy, only between the working class and the autocracy is no compromise possible, only in the working class can democracy find a champion who makes no reservations, is not irresolute and does not look back. The hostility of all other classes, groups and strata of the population towards the autocracy is not unqualified; their democracy always looks back.

The bourgeoisie cannot but realise that industrial and social development is being retarded by the autocracy, but it fears the complete democratisation of the political and social system and can at any moment enter into alliance with the autocracy against the proletariat.

The petty bourgeoisie is two-faced by its very nature, and while it gravitates, on the one hand, towards the proletariat and democracy, on the other, it gravitates towards the reactionary classes, tries to hold up the march of history, is apt to be seduced by the experiments and blandishments of the autocracy (for example, the “people’s policy” of Alexander III), is capable of concluding an alliance with the ruling classes

against the proletariat for the sake of strengthening its own small-proprietor position. Educated people, and the “intelligentsia” generally, cannot but revolt against the savage police tyranny of the autocracy, which hunts down thought and knowledge; but the material interests of this intelligentsia bind it to the autocracy and to the bourgeoisie, compel it to be inconsistent, to compromise, to sell its oppositional and revolutionary ardour for an official salary, or a share of profits or dividends. As for the democratic elements among the oppressed nationalities and the persecuted religions, everybody knows and sees that the class antagonisms within these categories of the population are much deeper-going and stronger than the solidarity binding all classes within any one category against the autocracy and in favour of democratic institutions.

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.** We said above that all socialists in Russia should become Social-Democrats. We now add: all true and consistent democrats in Russia should become Social-Democrats.

We will illustrate what we mean by quoting the following example. Take the civil service, the bureaucracy, as representing a special category of persons who specialise in the work of administration and occupy a privileged position as compared with the people. We see this institution everywhere, from autocratic and semi-Asiatic Russia to cultured. free and civilised England, as an essential organ of bourgeois society. The complete lack of rights of the people in relation to government officials and the complete absence of control over the privileged bureaucracy correspond to the backwardness of Russia and to its absolutism In England powerful popular control is exercised over the administration, but even there that control is far from being complete, even there the bureaucracy retains not a few of its privileges, and not infrequently is the master and not the servant of the people. Even in England we see that powerful social groups support the privileged position of the bureaucracy and hinder the complete democratisation of that institution. Why? Because it is in the interests of the proletariat alone to democratise it completely ; the most

progressive strata of the bourgeoisie defend certain prerogatives of the bureaucracy and are opposed to the election of all officials, opposed to the complete abolition of electoral qualifications, opposed to making officials directly responsible to the people, etc., because these strata realise that the proletariat will take advantage of such complete democratisation in order to use it against the bourgeoisie. This is the case in Russia, too. Many and most diverse strata of the Russian people are opposed to the omnipotent, irresponsible, corrupt, savage, ignorant and parasitic Russian bureaucracy. But except for the proletariat, not one of these strata would agree to the complete democratisation of the bureaucracy, because all these strata (bourgeoisie, petty bourgeoisie, the "intelligentsia" in general) have some ties with the bureaucracy, because all these strata are kith and kin of the Russian bureaucracy. Who does not know how easy it is in Holy Russia for a radical intellectual, or socialist intellectual, to turn into an official of The Imperial Government, an official who takes comfort from the thought that he does "good" within the limits of office routine, an official who pleads this "good" in justification of his political indifference, his servility towards the government of the knout and the whip? The proletariat alone is unreservedly hostile to the autocracy and the Russian bureaucracy, the proletariat alone has no ties with these organs of aristocratic bourgeois society and the proletariat alone is capable of irreconcilable hostility towards them and of waging a determined struggle against them.

When we show that the proletariat, led in its class struggle by Social-Democracy, is the vanguard fighter of Russian democracy, we encounter the very widespread and very strange opinion that Russian Social-Democracy relegates

political tasks and political struggle to the background. As we see, this opinion is the very opposite of the truth. How are we to explain this astonishing failure to understand the principles of Social-Democracy that have often been expounded and were expounded in the very first Russian Social-Democratic publications, in the pamphlets and books published abroad by the Emancipation of Labour group? In our view, the explanation of this amazing fact lies in the following three circumstances.

First, it lies in the general failure of the representatives of old revolutionary theories to understand the principles of Social-Democracy, accustomed **as they are to base their programmes and plans of activity on abstract ideas and not on an exact appraisal of the actual classes operating in the country, classes that have been placed in certain relationships by history.** This lack of realistic discussion of the interests which support Russian democracy can only give rise to the opinion that Russian Social-Democracy leaves the democratic tasks of Russian revolutionaries in the background.

Second, it lies in the failure to understand that when economic and political issues, and socialist and democratic activities, are united into one whole, into the single class struggle of the proletariat, this does not weaken but strengthens the democratic movement and the political struggle, by bringing it closer to the real interests of the mass of the people, dragging political issues out of the “stuffy studies of the intelligentsia” into the street, into the midst of the workers and labouring classes, and replacing abstract ideas by real manifestations of political oppression from which the greatest sufferers are the proletariat, and on the basis of which the Social-Democrats

conduct their agitation. It often seems to the Russian radical that instead of frankly and directly calling upon the advanced workers to join the political struggle, the Social-Democrat points to the task of developing the working-class movement, of organising the class struggle of the proletariat, and thereby retreats from his democracy, relegates the political struggle to the background. But if this is retreat, it is the kind of retreat that is meant in the French proverb: "Il faut reculer pour mieux sauter !" (Step back in order to leap farther forward.)

Third, the misunderstanding arises from the fact that the very term "political struggle" means something different to the Narodovoltsi and Narodopravtsi, on the one hand, and to the Social-Democrats, on the other. The Social-Democrats understand the political struggle differently, they understand it much more broadly than do the representatives of the old revolutionary theories. A clear illustration of this seeming paradox is provided by the Leaflet of the Narodnaya Volya Group, No. 4, December 9, 1895. While heartily welcoming this publication, which testifies to the profound and fruitful thinking that is going on among the present-day Narodovoltsi, we cannot refrain from mentioning P. L. Lavrov's article, "Programme questions" (pp. 19-22), which vividly reveals the different conception of the political struggle entertained by the old-style Narodovoltsi. "... Here," writes P. L. Lavrov, speaking of the relation of the Narodnaya Volya programme to the Social-Democratic programme, "one thing and one thing alone is material, viz., is it possible to organise a strong workers' party under the autocracy and to do so apart from the organisation of a revolutionary party directed against the autocracy?" (p. 21, col. 2); also a little before that (in col. 1): ". . . to organise a Russian workers' party while autocracy reigns without at the

same time organising a revolutionary party against this autocracy." We cannot at all understand these distinctions which seem to be of such cardinal importance to P. L. Lavrov. What is the meaning of "a workers' party apart from a revolutionary party against the autocracy"?? Is not a workers' party itself a revolutionary party? Is it not directed against the autocracy? This queer idea is explained in the following passage in P. L. Lavrov's article: "A Russian workers' party will have to be organised under the rule of the autocracy with all its charms. If the Social-Democrats succeeded in doing this without at the same time organising a political conspiracy against the autocracy, with all that goes with such a conspiracy, then, of course, their political programme would be a fit and proper programme for Russian socialists, since the emancipation of the workers by the efforts of the workers themselves would be accomplished. But this is very doubtful, if not impossible" (p. 21, col. 1).

So that's the point! To the Narodovoltsi, the term political struggle is synonymous with the term political conspiracy ! It must be confessed that in these words P. L. Lavrov has managed to bring out in bold relief the fundamental difference between the tactics in the political struggle adopted by the Narodovoltsi and by the Social-Democrats. Blanquist, conspiratorial traditions are fearfully strong among the former, so much so that they cannot conceive of political struggle except in the form of political conspiracy. The Social-Democrats, however, are not guilty of such a narrow outlook; they do not believe in conspiracies; they think that the period of conspiracies has long passed away, that to reduce political struggle to conspiracy means, on the one hand, immensely restricting its scope, and, on the other hand, choosing the most

unsuitable methods of struggle. Everyone will understand that P. L. Lavrov's remark that "the Russian Social-Democrats take the activities of the West as an unfailing model" (p. 21, col. 1) is nothing more than a polemical manoeuvre, and that actually the Russian Social-Democrats have never forgotten the political conditions here, they have never dreamed of being able to form a workers' party in Russia legally, they have never separated the task of fighting for socialism from that of fighting for political liberty. But they have always thought, and continue to think, that this fight must be waged not by conspirators, but by a revolutionary party based on the working-class movement. They think that the fight against the autocracy must consist not in organising conspiracies, but in educating, disciplining and organising the proletariat, in political agitation among the workers which denounces every manifestation of absolutism, which pillories all the knights of the police government and compels this government to make concessions. Is this not precisely the kind of activity being conducted by the St. Petersburg League of Struggle for the Emancipation of the Working Class? Does not this organisation represent the embryo of a revolutionary party based on the working-class movement, which leads the class struggle of the proletariat against capital and against the autocratic government without hatching any conspiracies, while deriving its strength from the combination of socialist and democratic struggle into the single, indivisible class struggle of the St. Petersburg proletariat? Brief as they may have been, have not the activities of the League already shown that the proletariat, led by Social-Democracy, is a big political force with which the government is already compelled to reckon, and to which it hastens to make concessions? Both the haste with which the law of June 2, 1897,

was passed, and the content of that law clearly reveal its significance as a concession wrung by the proletariat, as a position won from the enemy of the Russian people. This concession is a very tiny one, the position won is very small, but the working-class organisation that has succeeded in forcing this concession is also not distinguished for breadth, stability, long standing or wealth of experience or resources. As is well known, the League of Struggle was formed only in 1895-96, and its appeals to the workers have been confined to hectographed or lithographed leaflets. Can it be denied that an organisation like this, if it united, at least, the biggest centres of the working-class movement in Russia (the St. Petersburg, Moscow-Vladimir, and the southern areas, and also the most important towns like Odessa, Kiev, Saratov, etc.), if it had a revolutionary organ at its disposal and enjoyed as much prestige among the Russian workers generally as the League of Struggle does among the St. Petersburg workers—can it be denied that such an organisation would be a tremendous political factor in contemporary Russia, a factor that the government would have to reckon with in its entire home and foreign policy. By leading the class struggle of the proletariat, developing organisation and discipline among the workers, helping them to fight for their immediate economic needs and to win position after position from capital, by politically educating the workers and systematically and unswervingly attacking the autocracy and making life a torment for every tsarist bashi-bazouk who makes the proletariat feel the heavy paw of the police government—such an organisation would at one and the same time be a workers' party organisation adapted to our conditions, and a powerful revolutionary party directed against the autocracy. To discuss in advance what methods this organisation will resort

to in order to deliver a smashing blow at the autocracy, whether, for example, it will prefer insurrection, a mass political strike, or some other form of attack, to discuss these things in advance and to decide this question now would be empty doctrinairism. It would be akin to generals calling a council of war before they had mustered their troops, mobilised them, and undertaken a campaign against the enemy. When the army of the proletariat fights unswervingly and under the leadership of a strong Social-Democratic organisation for its economic and political emancipation, that army will itself indicate the methods and means of action to the generals. Then, and then only, will it be possible to decide the question of striking the final blow at the autocracy; for the solution of the problem depends on the state of the working-class movement, on its breadth, on the methods of struggle developed by the movement, on the qualities of the revolutionary organisation leading the movement, on the attitude of other social elements to the proletariat and to the autocracy, on the conditions governing home and foreign politics—in a word, it depends on a thousand and one things which cannot be guessed, and which it would be useless to try to guess in advance.

That is why the following argument of P. L. Lavrov's is also extremely unfair:

"If, however, they" (the Social-Democrats) "have, in one way or another, not only to group the workers' forces for the struggle against capital, but also to rally revolutionary individuals and groups for the struggle against the autocracy, the Russian Social-Democrats will actually be adopting the programme of their opponents, the Narodnaya Volya, no matter what they may call themselves. Differences of opinion concerning the

village community, the destiny of capitalism in Russia and economic materialism are points of detail of very little importance to the real cause, either facilitating or hindering the solution of particular problems, particular methods of preparing the main points, but nothing more" (p. 21, col. 1).

It is strange to have to challenge this last proposition—that differences of opinion on the fundamental questions of Russian life and of the development of Russian society, on the fundamental problems of the conception of history, concern only "points of detail"! It was said long ago that without a revolutionary theory there can be no revolutionary movement, and it is hardly necessary to advance proof of this truth at the present time. The theory of the class struggle, the materialist conception of Russian history and the materialist appraisal of the present economic and political situation in Russia, recognition of the need to relate the revolutionary struggle strictly to the definite interests of a definite class and to analyse its relation to other classes—to call these great revolutionary questions "points of detail" is so colossally wrong and unexpected, coming from a veteran of revolutionary theory, that we are almost prepared to regard this passage as a lapsus. As for the first part of the tirade quoted, its unfairness is still more astonishing. To state in print that the Russian Social-Democrats only group the workers' forces for the struggle against capital (i.e., only for the economic struggle!) and do not rally revolutionary individuals and groups for the struggle against the autocracy, means that the author either does not know or does not want to know generally known facts concerning the activities of the Russian Social-Democrats. Or, perhaps, P. L. Lavrov does not regard the Social-Democrats who are engaged in practical work in Russia as "revolutionary

individuals" and "revolutionary groups"?! Or (and this, perhaps, is more likely) by "struggle" against the autocracy he means only conspiracies against it? (Cf. p. 21, col. 2: ". . . it is a matter of . . . organising a revolutionary conspiracy"; our italics.) Perhaps, in P. L. Lavrov's opinion, those who do not organise political conspiracies are not engaged in political struggle? We repeat once again: opinions like these fully correspond to the old-time traditions of the old-time Narodnaya Volya, but do not correspond at all either to contemporary conceptions of the political struggle or to contemporary conditions.

We have still to say a few words about the Narodopravtsi. P. L. Lavrov is quite right, in our opinion, when he says that the Social-Democrats "recommend the Narodopravtsi as being more frank, and are ready to support them, without, however, merging with them" (p. 19, col. 2); he should only have added: as more frank democrats, and to the degree that the Narodopravtsi act as consistent democrats. Unfortunately, this condition is more a matter of the desired future than of the actual present. The Narodopravtsi expressed a desire to free the democratic tasks from Narodism and from the obsolete forms of "Russian socialism" generally; but they themselves were still far from being freed from old prejudices, and were far from consistent when they described their party, exclusively a party for political reforms, as a "social (??!)-revolutionary" party (see their "Manifesto" dated February 19, 1894), and declared in their "Manifesto" that "the term people's rights includes the organisation of people's industry" (we are obliged to quote from memory) and thus introduced Narodnik prejudices sub rosa. Hence, P. L. Lavrov was, perhaps, not altogether wrong when he described them as "masquerade politicians" (p. 20, col.

2). But perhaps it would be fairer to regard the doctrine of Narodnoye Pravo as transitional, to the credit of which it must be said that it was ashamed of the original character of the Narodnik doctrines and openly gave battle to those most abominable Narodnik reactionaries who, despite the existence of absolute rule by the police and the upper class, have the audacity to speak of the desirability of economic and not political reforms (see "An Urgent Question," published by the Narodnoye Pravo Party). If the Narodnoye Pravo Party does not really contain anybody but ex-socialists who conceal their socialist banner for tactical considerations, and who merely don the mask of non-socialist politicians (as P. L. Lavrov assumes, p. 20, col. 2), then, of course, that party has no future whatever. If, however, the party also contains not masquerade, but real non-socialist politicians, non-socialist democrats, then this party can do no little good by striving to draw closer to the political opposition among our bourgeoisie, by striving to arouse the political consciousness of our petty bourgeoisie, small shopkeepers, small artisans, etc.—the class which, everywhere in Western Europe, played a part in the democratic movement and, in Russia, has made exceptionally rapid progress in cultural and other respects in the post-Reform period, and which cannot avoid feeling the oppression of the police government that gives its cynical support to the big factory owners, the magnates of finance and industrial monopoly. All that is needed for this is that the Narodopravtsi should make it their task to draw closer to various strata of the population and should not confine themselves to the very same "intelligentsia" whose impotence, owing to their isolation from the real interests of the masses, is admitted even in "An Urgent Question." What is needed is that the Narodopravtsi abandon

all idea of merging different social elements and of pushing socialism aside in favour of political tasks, that they abandon the false shame which prevents them from drawing closer to the bourgeois strata of the population, i.e., that they not only talk about a programme for non-socialist politicians, but act according to this programme, rousing and developing the class-consciousness of those social groups and classes for whom socialism is quite unnecessary, but who, as time goes on, increasingly feel the oppression of the autocracy and the need for political liberty.

Russian Social-Democracy is still very young. It is only just emerging from its embryonic state in which theoretical questions predominated. It is only just beginning to develop its practical activity. In place of criticism of Social-Democratic theories and programmes, revolutionaries of other parties have of necessity moved on to criticism of the practical activity of the Russian Social-Democrats. And it must be admitted that this latter criticism differs most sharply from the criticism of theory, differs so much, in fact, that it was possible to float the comical rumour that the St. Petersburg League of Struggle is not a Social-Democratic organisation. The very fact that such a rumour appeared shows how unfounded is the accusation now current that the Social-Democrats ignore the political struggle. The very fact that such a rumour appeared shows that many revolutionaries whom the Social-Democrats' theory could not convince are beginning to be convinced by their practice.

Russian Social-Democracy is still faced with an enormous, almost untouched field of work. The awakening of the Russian working class, its spontaneous striving for knowledge, organisation, socialism, for the struggle against its exploiters

and oppressors becomes more widespread, more strikingly apparent every day. The enormous progress made by Russian capitalism in recent times is a guarantee that the working-class movement will grow uninterruptedly in breadth and depth. We are apparently now passing through the period in the capitalist cycle when industry is "prospering," when business is brisk, when the factories are working at full capacity and when countless new factories, new enterprises, joint-stock companies, railway enterprises, etc., etc., are springing up like mushrooms. One need not be a prophet to foretell the inevitable and fairly sharp crash that is bound to succeed this period of industrial "prosperity." This crash will ruin masses of small owners, will throw masses of workers into the ranks of the unemployed, and will thus confront all the workers in an acute form with the problems of socialism and democracy which have long faced every class-conscious, every thinking worker. Russian Social-Democrats must see to it that when this crash comes the Russian proletariat is more class-conscious, more united, able to understand the tasks of the Russian working class, capable of putting up resistance to the capitalist class—which is now reaping huge profits and always strives to burden the workers with the losses—and capable of leading Russian democracy in a decisive struggle against the police autocracy, which binds and fetters the Russian workers and the whole of the Russian people.

And so, to work, comrades! Let us not lose precious time! Russian Social-Democrats have much to do to meet the requirements of the awakening proletariat, to organise the working-class movement, to strengthen the revolutionary groups and their mutual ties, to supply the workers with propaganda and agitational literature, and to unite the workers'

circles and Social-Democratic groups scattered all over Russia into a single Social-Democratic Labour Party!

To the Workers and Socialists of St. Petersburg From the League of Struggle

The St. Petersburg revolutionaries are experiencing hard times. It seems that the government has concentrated all its forces for the purpose of crushing the recently born working-class movement which has given such a display of strength. Arrests are being made on an unprecedented scale and the prisons are overcrowded. Intellectuals, men and women, and masses of workers are being dragged off and exiled. Almost every day brings news of ever new victims of the police government, which has flung itself in fury upon its enemies. The government has set itself the aim of preventing the new trend in the Russian revolutionary movement from gaining strength and getting on its feet. The public prosecutors and gendarmes are already boasting that they have smashed the League of Struggle.

This boast is a lie. The League of Struggle is intact, despite all the persecution. With deep satisfaction we declare that the wholesale arrests are doing their job—they are a powerful weapon of agitation among the workers and socialist intellectuals, that the places of the fallen revolutionaries are being taken by new people who are ready, with fresh energy, to join the ranks of the champions of the Russian proletariat and of the entire people of Russia. There can be no struggle without sacrifice, and to the brutal persecution of the tsarist bashibazouks we calmly reply: Revolutionaries have perished—long live the revolution!

So far, increased persecution has only been able to cause a temporary weakening of certain functions of the League of Struggle, a temporary shortage of agents and agitators. This is the shortage that we now feel and that impels us to call upon all class-conscious workers and all intellectuals desirous of devoting their energies to the revolutionary cause. The League of Struggle needs agents. Let all study circles and all individuals desirous of working in any sphere of revolutionary activity, even the most restricted, inform those in touch with the League of Struggle. (Should any group be unable to contact such individuals—this is very unlikely—they can do so through the League of Russian Social-Democrats Abroad.) People are needed for all kinds of work, and the more strictly revolutionaries specialise in the various aspects of revolutionary activity, the more strictly they give thought to their methods of underground work and ways of screening it, the more selflessly they concentrate on the minor, unseen, particular jobs, the safer will the whole thing be and the more difficult will it be for the gendarmes and spies to discover the revolutionaries. In advance the government has enmeshed not only the existing centres of anti-government elements, but also possible and probable ones, in a network of agents. The government is steadily developing the size and range of the activities of those of its lackeys who are hounding revolutionaries, is devising new methods, introducing more provocateurs, trying to exert pressure on the arrested by means of intimidation, confrontation with false testimony, forged signatures, planting faked letters, etc., etc. Without a strengthening and development of revolutionary discipline, organisation and underground activity, struggle against the government is impossible. And underground activity demands

above all that groups and individuals specialise in different aspects of work and that the job of co-ordination be assigned to the central group of the League of Struggle, with as few members as possible. The aspects of revolutionary work are extremely varied. Legal agitators are needed who can talk to the workers in a way that does not render them liable to prosecution, and can say just a, leaving it to others to say b and c. Literature and leaflet distributors are needed. Organisers of workers' study circles and groups are needed. Correspondents are needed who can give a complete picture of events in all factories. People are needed who will keep an eye on spies and provocateurs. People are needed who will arrange underground meeting places. People are needed to deliver literature, transmit instructions, and to arrange all kinds of contacts. Fund collectors are needed. Agents are needed to work among the intelligentsia and government officials, people in contact with the workers and factory life, with the administration (with the police, factory inspectors, etc.). People are needed for contact with the different towns of Russia and other countries. People are needed to arrange various ways of running off all sorts of literature. People are needed to look after literature and other things, etc., etc. The smaller and more specific the job undertaken by the individual person or individual group, the greater will be the chance that they will think things out, do the job properly and guarantee it best against failure, that they will consider all the details of underground work and use all possible means of hoodwinking and misleading the gendarmes, the more will success be assured, the harder will it be for the police and gendarmes to keep track of the revolutionaries and their links with their organisations, and the easier for the revolutionary party to

replace, without prejudice to the cause as a whole, agents and members who have fallen. We know that specialisation of this kind is a very difficult matter, difficult because it demands from the individual the greatest endurance and selflessness, demands the giving of all one's strength to work that is inconspicuous, monotonous, that deprives one of contact with comrades and subordinates the revolutionary's entire life to a grim and rigid routine. But it was only in conditions such as these that the greatest men of revolutionary practice in Russia succeeded in carrying out the boldest undertakings, spending years on all-round preparation, and we are profoundly convinced that the Social-Democrats will prove no less self-sacrificing than the revolutionaries of previous generations. We are also aware that the preliminary period envisaged by our system during which the League of Struggle will collect the necessary information about individuals or groups offering their services and give them something to do by way of trial will be a very difficult one for many people eager to devote their energies to revolutionary work. But without this preliminary testing, revolutionary activity in present-day Russia is impossible.

In suggesting this system of work to our new comrades we are expressing a view arrived at after long experience, being deeply convinced that it best of all guarantees successful revolutionary work.

Lenin

A Protest by Russian Social-Democrats

September 1899

Collected Works, Volume 4, pages 167-182.

A MEETING OF SOCIAL-DEMOCRATS, SEVENTEEN IN NUMBER, HELD AT A CERTAIN PLACE (IN RUSSIA), ADOPTED UNANIMOUSLY THE FOLLOWING RESOLUTION AND RESOLVED TO PUBLISH IT AND TO SUBMIT IT TO ALL COMRADES FOR THEIR CONSIDERATION

A tendency has been observed among Russian Social-Democrats recently to depart from the fundamental principles of Russian Social-Democracy that were proclaimed by its founders and foremost fighters, members of the Emancipation of Labour group as well as by the Social-Democratic publications of the Russian workers' organisations of the nineties. The Credo reproduced below, which is presumed to express the fundamental Views of certain ("young") Russian Social- Democrats, represents an attempt at a systematic and definite exposition of the "new views." The following is its full text:

"The guild and manufacture period in the West laid a sharp impress on all subsequent history and particularly on the history of Social- Democracy. The fact that the bourgeoisie had to fight for free forms, that it strove to release itself from the guild regulations fettering production, made the bourgeoisie a revolutionary element; everywhere in the West it began

with *liberté, fraternité, égalité* (liberty, fraternity, equality), with the achievement of free political forms. By these gains, however, as Bismarck expressed it, it drew a bill on the future payable to its antipode—the working class. Hardly anywhere in the West did the working class, as a class, win the democratic institutions—it made use of them. Against this it may be argued that the working class took part in revolutions. A reference to history will refute this opinion, for, precisely in 1848, when the consolidation of Constitutions took place in the West, the working class represented the urban artisan element, the petty-bourgeois democracy; a factory proletariat hardly existed, while the proletariat employed in large-scale industry (the German weavers depicted by Hauptmann, the weavers of Lyons) represented a wild mass capable only of rioting, but not of advancing any political demands. It can be definitely stated that the Constitutions of 1848 were won by the bourgeoisie and the small urban artisans. On the other hand, the working class (artisans, manufactory workers, printers, weavers, watchmakers, etc.) have been accustomed since the Middle Ages to membership in organisations, mutual benefit societies, religious societies, etc. This spirit of organisation is still alive among the skilled workers in the West, sharply distinguishing them from the factory proletariat, which submits to organisation badly and slowly and is capable only of loose-organisation (temporary organisations) and not of permanent organisations with rules and regulations. It was these manufactory skilled workers that comprised the core of

the Social-Democratic parties. Thus, we get the picture: on the one hand, the relative ease of political struggle and every possibility for it; on the other hand, the possibility for the systematic organisation of this struggle with the aid of the workers trained in the manufacturing period. It was on this basis that theoretical and practical Marxism grew up in the West. The starting-point was the parliamentary political struggle with the prospect—only superficially resembling Blanquism, but of totally different origin—of capturing power, on the one hand, and of a Zusammenbruch (collapse), on the other. Marxism was the theoretical expression of the prevailing practice: of the political struggle predominating over the economic. In Belgium, in France, and particularly in Germany, the workers organised the political struggle with incredible ease; but it was with enormous difficulty and tremendous friction that they organised the economic struggle. Even to this day the economic organisations as compared with the political organisations (leaving aside England) are extraordinarily weak and unstable, and everywhere laissent à désirer quelque chose (leave something to be desired). So long as the energy in the political struggle had not been completely exhausted, Zusammenbruch was an essential organisational Schlagwort (slogan) destined to play an extremely important historical role. The fundamental law that can be discerned by studying the working-class movement is that of the line of least resistance. In the West, this line was political activity, and Marxism, as formulated in the Communist Manifesto, was the best possible form the

movement could assume. But when all energy in political activity had been exhausted, when the political movement had reached a point of intensity difficult and almost impossible to surpass (the slow increase in votes in the recent period, the apathy of the public at meetings, the note of despondency in literature), this, in conjunction with the ineffectiveness of parliamentary action and the entry into the arena of the ignorant masses, of the unorganised and almost unorganisable factory proletariat, gave rise in the West to what is now called Bernsteinism, the crisis of Marxism. It is difficult to imagine a more logical course than the period of development of the labour movement from the Communist Manifesto to Bernsteinism, and a careful study of this whole process can determine with astronomical exactitude the outcome of this "crisis." Here, of course, the issue is not the defeat or victory of Bernsteinism—that is of little interest; It is the radical change in practical activity that has been gradually taking place for a long time within the party.

"The change will not only be towards a more energetic prosecution of the economic struggle and consolidation of the economic organisations, but also, and most importantly, towards a change in the party's attitude to other opposition parties. Intolerant Marxism, negative Marxism, primitive Marxism (whose conception of the class division of society is too schematic) will give way to democratic Marxism, and the social position of the party within modern society must undergo a sharp change. The party will recognise society; its narrow corporative and, in the majority of cases, sectarian tasks

will be widened to social tasks, and its striving to seize power will be transformed into a striving for change, a striving to reform present-day society on democratic lines adapted to the present state of affairs, with the object of protecting the rights (all rights) of the labouring classes in the most effective and fullest way. The concept 'politics' will be enlarged and will acquire a truly social meaning, and the practical demands of the moment will acquire greater weight and will be able to count on receiving greater attention than they have been getting up to now.

“It is not difficult to draw conclusions for Russia from this brief description of the course of development taken by the working-class movement in the West. In Russia, the line of least resistance will never tend towards political activity. The incredible political oppression will prompt much talk about it and cause attention to be concentrated precisely on this question, but it will never prompt practical action. While in the West the fact that the workers were drawn into political activity served to strengthen and crystallise their weak forces, in Russia, on the contrary, these weak forces are confronted with a wall of political oppression. Not only do they lack practical ways of struggle against this oppression, and hence, also for their own development, but they are systematically stifled and cannot give forth even weak shoots. If to this we add that the working class in our country has not inherited the spirit of organisation which distinguished the fighters in the West, we get a gloomy picture, one that is likely to drive into despondency the most optimistic Marxist who believes

that an extra factory chimney stack will by the very fact of its existence bring great welfare. The economic struggle too is hard, infinitely hard, but it is possible to wage it, and it is in fact being waged by the masses themselves. By learning in this struggle to organise, and coming into constant conflict with the political regime in the course of it, the Russian worker will at last create what may be called a form of the labour movement, the organisation or organisations best conforming to Russian conditions. At the present, it can be said with certainty that the Russian working-class movement is still in the amoeba state and has not yet acquired any form. The strike movement, which goes on with any form of organisation, cannot yet be described as the crystallised form of the, Russian movement, while the illegal organisations are not worth consideration even from the mere quantitative point of view (quite apart from the question of their usefulness under present conditions).

“Such is the situation. If to this we add the famine and the process of ruination of the countryside, which facilitate Streikbrecher-ism and, consequently, the even greater difficulty of raising the masses of the workers to a more tolerable cultural level, then ... well, what is there for the Russian Marxist to do?! The talk about an independent workers’ political party merely results from the transplantation of alien aims and alien achievements to our soil. The Russian Marxist, so far, is a sad spectacle. His practical tasks at the present time are paltry, his theoretical knowledge, insofar as he utilises it not as an instrument for research but as a

schema for activity, is worthless for the purpose of fulfilling even these paltry practical tasks. Moreover, these borrowed patterns are harmful from the practical point of view. Our Marxists, forgetting that the working class in the West entered political activity after that field had already been cleared, are much too contemptuous of the radical or liberal opposition activity of all other non-worker strata of society. The slightest attempt to concentrate attention on public manifestations of a liberal political character rouses the protest of the orthodox Marxists, who forget that a number of historical conditions prevent us from being Western Marxists and demand of us a different Marxism, suited to, and necessary in, Russian conditions. Obviously, the lack in even Russian citizen of political feeling and sense cannot be compensated by talk about politics or by appeals to a non-existent force. This political sense can only be acquired through education, i.e., through participation in that life (however un-Marxian it may be) which is offered by Russian conditions. 'Negation' is as harmful in Russia as it was appropriate (temporarily) in the West, because negation proceeding from something organised and possessing real power is one thing, while negation proceeding from an amorphous mass of scattered individuals is another.

"For the Russian Marxist there is only one course: participation in, i.e., assistance to, the economic struggle of the proletariat, and participation in liberal opposition activity. As a 'negator,' the Russian Marxist came on the scene very early, and this negation has weakened the share of his energy that should be turned in the direction

of political radicalism. For the time being, this is not terrible; but if the class schema prevents the Russian intellectual from taking an active part in life and keeps him too far removed from opposition circles, it will be a serious loss to all who are compelled to fight for legal forms separately from the working class, which has not yet put forward political aims. The political innocence concealed behind the celebrations of the Russian Marxist intellectual on political topics may play mischief with him."

We do not know whether there are many Russian Social-Democrats who share these views. But there is no doubt that ideas of this kind have their adherents, and we therefore **feel obliged to protest categorically against such views** and to warn all comrades against the menacing deflection of Russian Social-Democracy from the path it has already marked out—the formation of an independent political working-class party which is inseparable from the class struggle of the proletariat and which has for its immediate aim the winning of political freedom.

The above-quoted Credo represents, first, "a brief description of the course of development taken by the working-class movement in the West," and, secondly, "conclusions for Russia."

First of all, the authors of the Credo have an entirely false conception of the history of the West-European working-class movement. **It is not true to say that the working class in the West did not take part in the struggle for political liberty and in political revolutions.** The history of the Chartist movement and the revolutions of 1848 in France, Germany, and Austria

prove the opposite. It is absolutely untrue to say that “Marxism was the theoretical expression of the prevailing practice: of the political struggle predominating over the economic.” On the contrary, “Marxism” appeared at a time when non-political socialism prevailed (Owenism, “Fourierism,” “true socialism”) and the Communist Manifesto took up the cudgels at once against non-political socialism. Even when Marxism came out fully armed with theory (*Capital*) and organised the celebrated International Working Men’s Association, the political struggle was by no means the prevailing practice (narrow trade-unionism in England, anarchism and Proudhonism in the Romance countries). In Germany the great historic service performed by Lassalle was the transformation of the working class from an appendage of the liberal bourgeoisie into an independent political party. Marxism linked up the economic and the political struggle of the working class into a single inseparable whole; and the effort of the authors of the Credo to separate these forms of struggle is one of their most clumsy and deplorable departures from Marxism.

Further, the authors of the Credo also have an entirely wrong conception of the present state of the West-European working-class movement and of the theory of Marxism, under the banner of which that movement is marching. To talk about a “crisis of Marxism” is merely to repeat the nonsense of the bourgeois hacks who are doing all they can to exacerbate every disagreement among the socialists and turn it into a split in the socialist parties. The notorious Bernsteinism—in the sense in which it is commonly understood by the general public, and by the authors of the Credo in particular—is an attempt to narrow the theory of Marxism, to convert the revolutionary workers’ party into a reformist party. As was to be expected, this attempt

has been strongly condemned by the majority of the German Social-Democrats. Opportunist trends have repeatedly manifested themselves in the ranks of German Social-Democracy, and on every occasion they have been repudiated by the Party, which loyally guards the principles of revolutionary international Social-Democracy. We are convinced that every attempt to transplant opportunist views to Russia will encounter equally determined resistance on the part of the overwhelming majority of Russian Social-Democrats.

Similarly, there can be no suggestion of a “radical change in the practical activity” of the West—European workers parties, in spite of what the authors of the Credo say: the tremendous importance of the economic struggle of the proletariat, and the necessity for such a struggle, were recognised by Marxism from the very outset. As early as the forties Marx and Engels conducted a polemic against the utopian socialists who denied the importance of this struggle.

When the International Working Men’s Association was formed about twenty years later, the question of the importance of trade unions and of the economic struggle was raised at its very first Congress, in Geneva, in 1866. The resolution adopted at that Congress spoke explicitly of the importance of the economic struggle and warned the socialists and the workers, on the one hand, against exaggerating its importance (which the English workers were inclined to do at that time) and, on the other, against underestimating its importance (which the French and the Germans, particularly the Lassalleans, were inclined to do). The resolution recognised that the trade unions were not only a natural, but also an essential phenomenon

under capitalism and considered them an extremely important means for organising the working class in its daily struggle against capital and for the abolition of wage-labour. The resolution declared that the trade unions must not devote attention exclusively to the “immediate struggle against capital,” must not remain aloof from the general political and social movement of the working class; they must not pursue “narrow” aims, but must strive for the general emancipation of the millions of oppressed workers. Since then the workers’ parties in the various countries have discussed the question many times and, of course, will discuss it again and again—whether to devote more or less attention at any given moment to the economic or to the political struggle of the proletariat; but the general question, or the question in principle, today remains as it was presented by Marxism. The conviction that the class struggle must necessarily combine the political and the economic struggle into one integral whole has entered into the flesh and blood of international Social-Democracy. The experience of history has, furthermore, incontrovertibly proved that absence of freedom, or restriction of the political rights of the proletariat, always make it necessary to put the political struggle in the forefront.

Still less can there be any suggestion of a serious change in the attitude of the workers’ party towards the other opposition parties. In this respect, too, **Marxism has mapped out the correct line, which is equally remote from exaggerating the importance of politics, from conspiracy** (Blanquism, etc.), and from decrying politics or reducing it to opportunist, reformist social tinkering (anarchism, utopian and petty- bourgeois socialism, state socialism, professorial socialism, etc.). The proletariat must strive to form independent political workers’

parties, the main aim of which must be the capture of political power by the proletariat for the purpose of organising socialist society. **The proletariat must not regard the other classes and parties as “one reactionary mass”; on the contrary, it must take part in all political and social life, support the progressive classes and parties against the reactionary classes and parties, support every revolutionary movement against the existing system, champion the interests of every oppressed nationality or race, of every persecuted religion, of the disfranchised sex,** etc. The arguments the Credo authors advance on this subject merely reveal a desire to obscure the class character of the struggle of the proletariat, weaken this struggle by a meaningless “recognition of society,” and reduce revolutionary Marxism to a trivial reformist trend. We are convinced that the over-whelming majority of Russian Social-Democrats will resolutely reject this distortion of the fundamental principles of Social-Democracy. Their erroneous premises regarding the West-European working-class movement led the authors of the Credo to draw still more erroneous “conclusions for Russia.”

The assertion that the Russian working class “has not yet put forward political aims” simply reveals ignorance of the Russian revolutionary movement. The North-Russian Workers’ Union formed in 1878 and the South-Russian Workers’ Union formed in 1875 put forward even then the demand for political liberty in their programmes. After the reaction of the eighties, the working class repeatedly put forward the same demand in the nineties. The assertion that “the talk about an independent workers’ political party merely results from the transplantation of alien aims and alien achievements to our soil” reveals a complete failure to understand the historical role of the Russian working class and the most vital tasks of Russian Social-

Democracy. Apparently, the programme of the authors of the Credo inclines to the idea that the working class, following "the line of least resistance," should confine itself to the economic struggle, while the "liberal opposition elements" fight, with the "participation" of the Marxists, for "legal forms." The application of such a programme would be tantamount to the political suicide of Russian Social-Democracy, it would greatly retard and debase the Russian working-class movement and the Russian revolutionary movement (for us the two concepts coincide). The mere fact that it was possible for a programme like this to appear shows how well grounded were the fears expressed by one of the foremost champions of Russian Social-Democracy, P. B. Axelrod, when, at the end of 1897, he wrote of the possibility of the following prospect:

"The working-class movement keeps to the narrow but of purely economic conflicts between the workers and employers and, in itself, taken as a whole, is not of a political character, while in the struggle for political freedom the advanced strata of the proletariat follow the revolutionary circles and groups of the so-called intelligentsia" (Axelrod, *Present Tasks and Tactics of the Russian Social-Democrats*, Geneva, 1898, p. 19).

Russian Social-Democrats must declare determined war upon the whole body of ideas expressed in the Credo, for these ideas lead straight to the realisation of this prospect. Russian Social-Democrats must bend every effort to translate into reality another prospect, outlined by P. B. Axelrod in the following words:

"The other prospect: Social-Democracy organises the Russian proletariat into an independent political party which fights for liberty, partly side by side and in alliance with the bourgeois

revolutionary groups (if such should exist), and partly by recruiting directly into its ranks or securing the following the most democratic-minded and revolutionary elements from among the Intelligentsia" (ibid., p. 20).

At the time P. B. Axelrod wrote the above lines the declarations made by Social-Democrats in Russia showed clearly that the overwhelming majority of them adhered to the same point of view. It is true that one St. Petersburg workers' paper, *Rabochaya Mysl*, seemed to incline toward the ideas of the authors of the Credo. In a leading article setting forth its programme (No. 1, October 1897) it expressed, regrettably, the utterly erroneous idea, an idea running counter to Social-Democracy, that the "economic basis of the movement" may be "obscured by the effort to keep the political ideal constantly in mind." At the same time, however, another St. Petersburg workers' newspaper, *S. Peterburgsky Rabochy Listok* (No. 2, September 1897), emphatically expressed the opinion that "the overthrow of the autocracy ... can be achieved only by a well-organised and numerically strong working-class party" and that "organised in a strong party" the workers will "emancipate themselves, and the whole of Russia, from all political and economic oppression." A third newspaper, *Rabochaya Gazeta*, in its leading article in issue No. 2 (November 1897), wrote: "The fight against the autocratic government for political liberty is the immediate task of the Russian working-class movement" "The Russian working-class movement will increase its forces tenfold if it comes out as a single harmonious whole, with a common name and a well-knit organisation...." "The separate workers' circles should combine into one common party." "The Russian workers' party will be a Social-Democratic Party."

That precisely these views of Rabochaya Gazeta were fully shared by the vast majority of Russian Social-Democrats is seen, furthermore, from the fact that the Congress of Russian Social-Democrats in the spring of 1898 formed the Russian Social-Democratic Labour Party, published its manifesto and recognised Rabochaya Gazeta as the official Party organ. Thus, the Credo authors are taking an enormous step back ward from the stage of development which Russian Social-Democracy has already achieved and which it has recorded in the Manifesto of the Russian Social-Democratic Labour Party. Since the frenzied persecution by the Russian Government has led to the present situation in which the Party's activity has temporarily subsided and its official organ has ceased publication, it is the task of all Russian Social-Democrats to exert every effort for the utmost consolidation of the Party, to draw up a Party programme and revive its official organ. In view of the ideological vacillations evidenced by the fact that programmes like the above-examined Credo can appear, we think it particularly necessary to emphasise the following fundamental principles that were expounded in the Manifesto and that are of enormous importance to Russian Social-Democracy. First, Russian Social-Democracy "desires to be and to remain the class movement of the organised working masses." Hence it follows that the motto of Social-Democracy must be: aid to the workers, not only in their economic, but also in their political struggle; agitation, not only in connection with immediate economic needs, but also in connection with all manifestations of political oppression; propaganda, not only of the ideas of scientific socialism, but also of democratic ideas. **Only the theory of revolutionary Marxism can be the banner of the class movement of the workers**, and Russian Social-Democracy must concern itself

with the further development and implementation of this theory and must safeguard it against the distortions and vulgarisations to which “fashionable theories” are so often subjected (and the successes of revolutionary Social-Democracy in Russia have already made Marxism a “fashionable” theory). While concentrating all their present efforts on activity among factory and mine workers, Social-Democrats must not forget that with the expansion of the movement home workers, handicraftsmen, agricultural labourers, and the millions of ruined and starving peasants must be drawn into the ranks of the labouring masses they organise.

Secondly: “On his strong shoulders the Russian worker must and will carry to a finish the cause of winning political liberty.” **Since its immediate task is the overthrow of the autocracy, Social-Democracy must act as the vanguard in the fight for democracy, and consequently, if for no other reason, must give every support to all democratic elements of the population of Russia and win them as allies. Only an independent working-class party can serve as a strong bulwark in the fight against the autocracy, and only in alliance with such a party, only by supporting it, can all the other fighters for political liberty play an effective part.**

Thirdly and finally: “As a socialist movement and trend, the Russian Social-Democratic Party carries on the cause and the traditions of the whole preceding revolutionary movement in Russia; considering the winning of political liberty to be the most important of the immediate tasks of the Party as a whole, Social-Democracy marches towards the goal that was already clearly indicated by the glorious representatives of the old Narodnaya Volya.” The traditions of the whole preceding

revolutionary movement demand that the Social-Democrats shall at the present time concentrate all their efforts on organising the Party, on strengthening its internal discipline, and on developing the technique for illegal work. If the members of the old Narodnaya Volya managed to play an enormous role in the history of Russia, despite the fact that only narrow social strata supported the few heroes, and despite the fact that it was by no means a revolutionary theory which served as the banner of the movement, then Social-Democracy, relying on the class struggle of the proletariat, will be able to render itself invincible. "The Russian proletariat will throw off the yoke of autocracy in order to continue the struggle against capital and the bourgeoisie for the complete victory of socialism with still greater energy."

We invite all groups of Social-Democrats and all workers' circles in Russia to discuss the above-quoted Credo and our resolution, and to express a definite opinion on the question raised, in order that all differences may be removed and the work of organising and strengthening the Russian Social-Democratic Labour Party may be accelerated.

Groups and circles may send their resolutions to the Union of Russian Social-Democrats Abroad which, by Point 10 of the decision of the 1898 Congress of Russian Social-Democrats, is a part of the Russian Social-Democratic Party and its representative abroad.

Lenin

Draft of a Declaration of the Editorial Board of Iskra and Zarya

Written in the spring of 1900

Collected Works, Volume 4, pages 320-330.

In undertaking the publication of two Social-Democratic organs—a scientific and political magazine and an all-Russian working-class newspaper—we consider it necessary to say a few words concerning our programme, the objects for which we are striving, and the understanding we have of our tasks.

We are passing through an extremely important period in the history of the Russian working-class movement and Russian Social-Democracy. All evidence goes to show that our movement has reached a critical stage. It has spread so widely and has brought forth so many strong shoots in the most diverse parts of Russia that it is now striving with unrestrained vigour to consolidate itself, assume a higher form, and develop a definite shape and organisation. Indeed, the past few years have been marked by an astonishingly rapid spread of Social-Democratic ideas among our intelligentsia; and meeting this trend in social ideas is the spontaneous, completely independent movement of the industrial proletariat, which is beginning to unite and struggle against its oppressors and is manifesting an eager striving for socialism. Study circles of workers and Social-Democratic intellectuals are springing up everywhere, local agitation leaflets are beginning to appear, the demand for Social-Democratic literature is increasing and is far

outstripping the supply, and intensified government persecution is powerless to restrain the movement.

The prisons and places of exile are filled to overflowing. Hardly a month goes by without our hearing of socialists "caught in dragnets" in all parts of Russia, of the capture of underground couriers, of the arrest of agitators, and the confiscation of literature and printing-presses; but the movement goes on and is growing, it is spreading to ever wider regions, it is penetrating more and more deeply into the working class and is attracting public attention to an ever-increasing degree. The entire economic development of Russia and the history of social thought and of the revolutionary movement in Russia serve as a guarantee that the Social-Democratic working-class movement will grow and surmount all the obstacles that confront it.

The principal feature of our movement, which has become particularly marked in recent times, is its state of disunity and its amateur character, if one may so express it. Local study circles spring up and function in almost complete isolation from circles in other districts and—what is particularly important—from circles that have functioned and now function simultaneously in the same districts. Traditions are not established and continuity is not maintained; local publications fully reflect this disunity and the lack of contact with what Russian Social-Democracy has already achieved. The present period, therefore, seems to us to be critical precisely for the reason that the movement is outgrowing this amateur stage and this disunity, is insistently demanding a transition to a higher, more united, better and more organised form, which we consider it our duty to promote. It goes without saying that at a

certain stage of the movement, at its inception, this disunity is entirely inevitable; the absence of continuity is natural in view of the astonishingly rapid and universal growth of the movement after a long period of revolutionary calm. Undoubtedly, too, there will always be diversity in local conditions; there will always be differences in the conditions of the working class in one district as compared with those in another; and, lastly, there will always be the particular aspect in the points of view among the active local workers; this very diversity is evidence of the virility of the movement and of its sound growth. All this is true; yet disunity and lack of organisation are not a necessary consequence of this diversity. The maintenance of continuity and the unity of the movement do not by any means exclude diversity, but, on the contrary, create for it a much broader arena and a freer field of action. In the present period of the movement, however, disunity is beginning to show a definitely harmful effect and is threatening to divert the movement to a false path: narrow practicalism, detached from the theoretical clarification of the movement as a whole, may destroy the contact between socialism and the revolutionary movement in Russia, on the one hand, and the spontaneous working-class movement, on the other. That this danger is not merely imaginary is proved by such literary productions as the Credo—which has already called forth legitimate protest and condemnation—and the Separate Supplement to “Rabochaya Mysl” (September 1899). That supplement has brought out most markedly, the trend that permeates the whole of Rabochaya Mysl; in it a particular trend in Russian Social-Democracy has begun to manifest itself, a trend that may cause real harm and that must be combated. And the Russian legal publications, with their parody of

Marxism capable only of corrupting public consciousness, still further intensify the confusion and anarchy which have enabled the celebrated Bernstein (celebrated for his bankruptcy) to publish before the whole world the untruth that the majority of the Social-Democrats active in Russia support him.

It is still premature to judge how deep the cleavage is, and how far the formation of a special trend is probable (at the moment we are not in the least inclined to answer these questions in the affirmative and we have not yet lost hope of our being able to work together), but it would be more harmful to close our eyes to the gravity of the situation than to exaggerate the cleavage, and we heartily welcome the resumption of literary activity on the part of the Emancipation of Labour group, and the struggle it has begun against the attempts to distort and vulgarise Social-Democracy.

The following practical conclusion is to be drawn from the foregoing: we Russian Social-Democrats must unite and direct all our efforts towards the formation of a single, strong party, which must struggle under the banner of a revolutionary Social-Democratic programme, which must maintain the continuity of the movement and systematically support its organisation. This conclusion is not a new one. The Russian Social-Democrats reached it two years ago when the representatives of the largest Social-Democratic organisations in Russia gathered at a congress in the spring of 1898, formed the Russian Social-Democratic Labour Party, published the Manifesto of the Party, and recognised Rabochaya Gazeta as the official Party organ. Regarding ourselves as members of the Russian Social-Democratic Labour Party, we agree entirely with

the fundamental ideas contained in the Manifesto and attach extreme importance to it as the open and public declaration of the aims towards which our Party should strive. Consequently, we, as members of the Party, present the question of our immediate and direct tasks as follows: What plan of activity must we adopt to revive the Party on the firmest possible basis? Some comrades (even some groups and organisations) are of the opinion that in order to achieve this we must resume the practice of electing the central Party body and instruct it to resume the publication of the Party organ. We consider such a plan to be a false one or, at all events, a hazardous one. To establish and consolidate the Party means to establish and consolidate unity among all Russian Social-Democrats; such unity cannot be decreed, it cannot be brought about by a decision, say, of a meeting of representatives; it must be worked for. In the first place, it is necessary to develop a common Party literature—common, not only in the sense that it must serve the whole of the Russian movement rather than separate districts, that it must discuss the questions of the movement as a whole and assist the class-conscious proletarians in their struggle instead of dealing merely with local questions, but common also in the sense that it must unite all the available literary forces, that it must express all shades of opinion and views prevailing among Russian Social-Democrats, not as isolated workers, but as comrades united in the ranks of a single organisation by a common programme and a common struggle. Secondly, we must work to achieve an organisation especially for the purpose of establishing and maintaining contact among all the centres of the movement, of supplying complete and timely information about the movement, and of delivering our newspapers and periodicals regularly to all parts of Russia.

Only when such an organisation has been founded, only when a Russian socialist post has been established, will the Party possess a sound foundation, only then will it become a real fact and, therefore, a mighty political force. We intend to devote our efforts to the first half of this task, i.e., to creating a common literature, since we regard this as the pressing demand of the movement today, and a necessary preliminary measure towards the resumption of Party activity.

The character of our task naturally determines the programme for conducting our publications. They must devote considerable space to theoretical questions, i.e., to the general theory of Social-Democracy and its application to Russian conditions. The urgent need to promote a wide discussion of these questions at the present time in particular is beyond all doubt and requires no further explanation after what has been said above. It goes without saying that questions of general theory are inseparably connected with the need to supply information about the history and the present state of the working-class movement in the West. Furthermore, we propose systematically to discuss all political questions—the Social-Democratic Labour Party must respond to all questions that arise in all spheres of our daily life, to all questions of home and foreign politics, and we must see to it that every Social-Democrat and every class-conscious worker has definite views on all important questions. Unless this condition is fulfilled, it will be impossible to carry on wide and systematic propaganda and agitation. The discussion of questions of theory and policy will be connected with the drafting of a Party programme, the necessity for which was recognised at the congress in 1898. In the near future we intend to publish a draft programme; a comprehensive discussion of it should provide sufficient

material for the forthcoming congress that will have to adopt a programme. A further vital task, in our opinion, is the discussion of questions of organisation and practical methods of conducting our work. The lack of continuity and the disunity, to which reference has been made above, have a particularly harmful effect upon the present state of Party discipline, organisation, and the technique of secrecy. It must be publicly and frankly owned that in this respect we Social-Democrats lag behind the old workers in the Russian revolutionary movement and behind other organisations functioning in Russia, and we must exert all our efforts to come abreast of the tasks. The attraction of large numbers of working-class and intellectual young people to the movement, the increasing failures and the cunningness of governmental persecution make the propaganda of the principles and methods of Party organisation, discipline, and the technique of secrecy an urgent necessity.

Such propaganda, if supported by all the various groups and by all the more experienced comrades, can and must result in the training of young socialists and workers as able leaders of the revolutionary movement, capable of overcoming all obstacles placed in the way of our work by the tyranny of the autocratic police state and capable of serving all the requirements of the working masses, who are spontaneously striving towards socialism and political struggle. Finally, one of the principal tasks arising out of the above-mentioned issues must be the analysis of this spontaneous movement (among the working masses, as well as among our intelligentsia). We must try to understand the social movement of the intelligentsia which marked the late nineties in Russia and combined various, and sometimes conflicting, tendencies. We must carefully study

the conditions of the working class in all spheres of economic life, study the forms and conditions of the workers' awakening, and of the struggles now setting in, in order that we may unite the Russian working-class movement and Marxist socialism, which has already begun to take root in Russian soil, into one integral whole, in order that we may combine the Russian revolutionary movement with the spontaneous upsurge of the masses of the people. Only when this contact has been established can a Social-Democratic working-class party be formed in Russia; for Social-Democracy does not exist merely to serve the spontaneous working-class movement (as some of our present-day "practical workers" are sometimes inclined to think), but to combine socialism with the working-class movement. And it is only this combination that will enable the Russian proletariat to fulfil its immediate political task—to liberate Russia from the tyranny of the autocracy.

The distribution of these themes and questions between the magazine and the newspaper will be determined exclusively by differences in the size and character of the two publications—the magazine should serve mainly for propaganda, the newspaper mainly for agitation. But all aspects of the movement should be reflected in both the magazine and the newspaper, and we wish particularly to emphasise our opposition to the view that a workers' newspaper should devote its pages exclusively to matters that immediately and directly concern the spontaneous working-class movement, and leave everything pertaining to the theory of socialism, science, politics, questions of Party organisation, etc., to a periodical for the intelligentsia. On the contrary, it is necessary to combine all the concrete facts and manifestations of the working-class movement with the indicated questions; the light

of theory must be cast upon every separate fact; propaganda on questions of politics and Party organisation must be carried on among the broad masses of the working class; and these questions must be dealt with in the work of agitation. The type of agitation which has hitherto prevailed almost without exception—agitation by means of locally published leaflets—is now inadequate; it is narrow, it deals only with local and mainly economic questions. We must try to create a higher form of agitation by means of the newspaper, which must contain a regular record of workers' grievances, workers' strikes, and other forms of proletarian struggle, as well as all manifestations of political tyranny in the whole of Russia; which must draw definite conclusions from each of these manifestations in accordance with the ultimate aim of socialism and the political tasks of the Russian proletariat. "Extend the bounds and broaden the content of our propagandist, agitational, and organisational activity"—this statement by P. B. Axelrod must serve as a slogan defining the activities of Russian Social-Democrats in the immediate future, and we adopt this slogan in the programme of our publications.

Here the question naturally arises: if the proposed publications are to serve the purpose of uniting all Russian Social-Democrats and mustering them into a single party, they must reflect all shades of opinion, all local specific features, and all the various practical methods. How can we combine the varying points of view with the maintenance of a uniform editorial policy for these publications? Should these publications be merely a jumble of various views, or should they have an independent and quite definite tendency?

We hold to the second view and hope that an organ having a definite tendency will prove quite suitable (as we shall show below), both for the purpose of expressing various viewpoints; and for comradely polemics between contributors. Our views are in complete accord with the fundamental ideas of Marxism (as expressed in the Communist Manifesto, and in the programmes of Social-Democrats in Western Europe); we stand for the consistent development of these ideas in the spirit of Marx and Engels and emphatically reject the equivocating and opportunist corrections à la Bernstein which have now become so fashionable. As we see it, the task of Social-Democracy is to organise the class struggle of the proletariat, to promote that struggle, to point out its essential ultimate aim, and to analyse the conditions that determine the methods by which this struggle should be conducted. "The emancipation of the working classes must be conquered by the working classes themselves." But while we do not separate Social-Democracy from the working-class movement, we must not forget that the task of the former is to represent the interests of this movement in all countries as a whole, that it must not blindly worship any particular phase of the movement at any particular time or place. We think that it is the duty of Social-Democracy to support every revolutionary movement against the existing political and social system, and we regard its aim to be the conquest of political power by the working class, the expropriation of the expropriators, and the establishment of a socialist society. We strongly repudiate every attempt to weaken or tone down the revolutionary character of Social Democracy, which is the party of social revolution, ruthlessly hostile to all classes standing for the present social system. We believe the historical task of Russian Social Democracy is, in

particular, to overthrow the autocracy: Russian Social-Democracy is destined to become the vanguard fighter in the ranks of Russian democracy; it is destined to achieve the aim which the whole social development of Russia sets before it and which it has inherited from the glorious fighters in the Russian revolutionary movement. Only by inseparably connecting the economic and political struggles, only by spreading political propaganda and agitation among wider and wider strata of the working class, can Social-Democracy fulfil its mission.

From this point of view (outlined here only in its general features, since it has been dealt with in greater detail and more thoroughly substantiated on many occasions by the Emancipation of Labour group, in the Manifesto of the Russian Social-Democratic Labour Party and in the “commentary” to the latter—the pamphlet, *The Tasks of the Russian Social-Democrats*—and in *The Working-Class Cause in Russia* [a basis of the programme of Russian Social Democracy]), we shall deal with all theoretical and practical questions; and we shall try to connect all manifestations of the working-class movement and of democratic protest in Russia with these ideas.

Although we carry out our literary work from the stand point of a definite tendency, we do not in the least intend to present all our views on partial questions as those of all Russian Social-Democrats; we do not deny that differences exist, nor shall we attempt to conceal or obliterate them. On the contrary, we desire our publications to become organs for the discussion of all questions by all Russian Social-Democrats of the most diverse shades of opinion. We do not reject polemics between comrades, but, on the contrary, are prepared to give them

considerable space in our columns. Open polemics, conducted in full view of all Russian Social-Democrats and class-conscious workers, are necessary and desirable in order to clarify the depth of existing differences, in order to afford discussion of disputed questions from all angles, in order to combat the extremes into which representatives of various views, various localities, or various “specialities” of the revolutionary movement inevitably fall. Indeed, we regard one of the drawbacks of the present-day movement to be the absence of open polemics between avowedly differing views, the effort to conceal differences on fundamental questions.

Moreover, while recognising the Russian working class and Russian Social-Democracy as the vanguard in the struggle for democracy and for political liberty, we think it necessary to strive to make our publications general-democratic organs, not in the sense that we would for a single moment agree to forget the class antagonism between the proletariat and other classes, nor in the sense that we would consent to the slightest toning-down of the class struggle, but in the sense that we would bring forward and discuss all democratic questions, not confining ourselves merely to narrowly proletarian questions; in the sense that we would bring forward and discuss all instances and manifestations of political oppression, show the connection between the working-class movement and the political struggle in all its forms, attract all honest fighters against the autocracy, regardless of their views or the class they belong to, and induce them to support the working class as the only revolutionary force irrevocably hostile to absolutism. Consequently, although we appeal primarily to the Russian socialists and class-conscious workers, we do not appeal to them alone. We also call upon all who are oppressed by the present political system in

Russia, on all who strive for the emancipation of the Russian people from their political slavery to support the publications which will be devoted to organising the working-class movement into a revolutionary political party; we place the columns of our publications at their disposal in order that they may expose all the abominations and crimes of the Russian autocracy. We make this appeal in the conviction that the banner of the political struggle raised by Russian Social-Democracy can and will become the banner of the whole people.

The tasks we set ourselves are extremely broad and all-embracing, and we would not have dared to take them up, were we not absolutely convinced from the whole of our past experience that these are the most urgent tasks of the whole movement, were we not assured of the sympathy and of promises of generous and constant support on the part of: 1. several organisations of the Russian Social-Democratic Labour Party and of separate groups of Russian Social-Democrats working in various towns; 2. the Emancipation of Labour group, which founded Russian Social-Democracy and has always been in the lead of its theoreticians and literary representatives; 3. a number of persons who are unaffiliated with any organisation, but who sympathise with the Social-Democratic working-class movement, and have proved of no little service to it. We will exert every effort to carry out properly the part of the general revolutionary work which we have selected, and will do our best to bring every Russian comrade to regard our publications as his own, to which all groups would communicate every kind of information concerning the movement, in which they would express their views, indicate their needs for political literature, relate their

experiences, and voice their opinions concerning Social-Democratic editions; in a word, the medium through which they would thereby share whatever contribution they make to the movement and whatever they draw from it. Only in this way will it be possible to establish a genuinely all-Russian Social-Democratic organ. Russian Social-Democracy is already finding itself constricted in the underground conditions in which the various groups and isolated study circles carry on their work. It is time to come out on the road of open advocacy of socialism, on the road of open political struggle. The establishment of an all-Russian organ of Social-Democracy must be the first step on this road.

Lenin

THE URGENT TASKS OF OUR MOVEMENT

November 1900

Collected Works, Vol. 4, pp. 366-71.

Russian Social-Democracy has repeatedly declared the immediate political task of a Russian working-class party to be the overthrow of the autocracy, the achievement of political liberty. This was enunciated over fifteen years ago by the representatives of Russian Social-Democracy -- the members of the Emancipation of Labour group. It was affirmed two and a half years ago by the representatives of the Russian Social-Democratic organisations that, in the spring of 1898, founded the Russian Social-Democratic Labour Party. Despite these repeated declarations, however, the question of the political tasks of Social-Democracy in Russia is prominent again today. Many representatives of our movement express doubt as to the correctness of the above-mentioned solution of the question. It is claimed that the economic struggle is of predominant importance; the political tasks of the proletariat are pushed into the background, narrowed down, and restricted, and it is even said that to speak of forming an independent working-class party in Russia is merely to repeat somebody else's words, that the workers should carry on only the economic struggle and leave politics to the intelligentsia in alliance with the liberals. The latest profession of the new faith (the notorious Credo) amounts to a declaration that the Russian proletariat has not yet come of age and to a complete rejection of the Social-Democratic programme. *Rabochaya Mysl* (particularly in its Separate Supplement) takes practically the same attitude. Russian Social-Democracy is passing through a period of vacillation and doubt

bordering on self-negation. On the one hand, the working-class movement is being sundered from socialism, the workers are being helped to carry on the economic struggle, but nothing, or next to nothing, is done to explain to them the socialist aims and the political tasks of the movement as a whole. On the other hand, socialism is being sundered from the labour movement; Russian socialists are again beginning to talk more and more about the struggle against the government having to be carried on entirely by the intelligentsia because the workers confine themselves to the economic struggle.

In our opinion the ground has been prepared for this sad state of affairs by three circumstances. First, in their early activity, Russian Social-Democrats restricted themselves merely to work in propaganda circles. When we took up agitation among the masses we were not always able to restrain ourselves from going to the other extreme. **Secondly**, in our early activity we often had to struggle for our right to existence against the Narodnaya Volya adherents, who understood by "politics" an activity isolated from the working-class movement and who reduced politics purely to conspiratorial struggle. In rejecting this sort of politics, the Social-Democrats went to the extreme of pushing politics entirely into the background. **Thirdly**, working in the isolation of small local workers' circles, the Social-Democrats did not devote sufficient attention to the necessity of organising a revolutionary party which would combine all the activities of the local groups and make it possible to organise the revolutionary work on correct lines. The predominance of isolated work is naturally connected with the predominance of the economic struggle.

These circumstances resulted in concentration on one side of the movement only. The "economist" trend (that is, if we can speak of it as a "trend") has attempted to elevate this narrowness to the rank of a special theory and has tried to utilise for this purpose the fashionable Bernsteinism and the fashionable "criticism of Marxism," which peddles old bourgeois ideas under a new label. These attempts alone have given rise to the danger of a weakening of connection between the Russian working-class movement and Russian Social-Democracy, the vanguard in the struggle for political liberty. The most urgent task of our movement is to strengthen this connection.

Social-Democracy is the combination of the working-class movement and socialism. **Its task is not to serve the working-class movement passively at each of its separate stages, but to represent the interests of the movement as a whole, to point out to this movement its ultimate aim and its political tasks, and to safeguard its political and ideological independence.** Isolated from Social-Democracy, the working-class movement becomes petty and inevitably becomes bourgeois. **In waging only the economic struggle, the working class loses its political independence; it becomes the tail of other parties and betrays the great principle: "The emancipation of the working classes must be conquered by, the working classes themselves."** In every country there has been a period in which the working-class movement existed apart from socialism, each going its own way; and in every country this isolation has weakened both socialism and the working-class movement. Only the fusion of socialism with the working-class movement has in all countries created a durable basis for both. But in every country this combination of socialism and the

working-class movement was evolved historically, in unique ways, in accordance with the prevailing conditions of time and place. In Russia, the necessity for combining socialism and the working-class movement was in theory long ago proclaimed, but it is only now being carried into practice. It is a very difficult process and there is, therefore, nothing surprising in the fact that it is accompanied by vacillations and doubts.

What lesson can be learned from the past?

The entire history of Russian socialism has led to the condition in which the most urgent task is the struggle against the autocratic government and the achievement of political liberty. Our socialist movement concentrated itself, so to speak, upon the struggle against the autocracy. On the other hand, history has shown that **the isolation of socialist thought from the vanguard of the working classes is greater in Russia** than in other countries, and that if this state of affairs continues, the revolutionary movement in Russia is doomed to impotence. From this condition emerges the task which the Russian Social-Democracy is called upon to fulfil -- to imbue the masses of the proletariat with the ideas of socialism and political consciousness, and to organise a revolutionary party inseparably connected with the spontaneous working-class movement. Russian Social-Democracy has done much in this direction, but much more still remains to be done. With the growth of the movement, the field of activity for Social-Democrats becomes wider; the work becomes more varied, and an increasing number of activists in the movement will concentrate their efforts upon the fulfilment of various special tasks which the daily needs of propaganda and agitation bring to the fore. This phenomenon is quite natural and is inevitable,

but it causes us to be particularly concerned with preventing these special activities and methods of struggle from becoming ends in themselves and with preventing preparatory work from being regarded as the main and sole activity.

Our principal and fundamental task is to facilitate the political development and the political organisation of the working class. Those who push this task into the background, who refuse to subordinate to it all the special tasks and particular methods of struggle, are following a false path and causing serious harm to the movement. And it is being pushed into the background, firstly, by those who call upon revolutionaries to employ only the forces of isolated conspiratorial circles cut off from the working-class movement in the struggle against the government. It is being pushed into the background, secondly, by those who restrict the content and scope of political propaganda, agitation, and organisation; who think it fit and proper to treat the workers to "politics" only at exceptional moments in their lives, only on festive occasions; who too solicitously **substitute demands for partial concessions from the autocracy for the political struggle against the autocracy;** and who do not go to sufficient lengths to ensure that **these demands for partial concessions are raised to the status of a systematic, implacable struggle of a revolutionary, working-class party against the autocracy.**

"Organise!" Rabochaya Mysl keeps repeating to the workers in all keys, and all the adherents of the "economist" trend echo the cry. **We, of course, wholly endorse this appeal,** but we will not fail to add: organise, but not only in mutual benefit societies, strike funds, and workers' circles; organise also in a political party; **organise for the determined struggle against the**

autocratic government and against the whole of capitalist society. Without such organisation the proletariat will never rise to the class conscious struggle; without such organisation the working-class movement is doomed to impotency. With the aid of nothing but funds and study circles and mutual benefit societies the working class will never be able to fulfil its great historical mission -- to emancipate itself and the whole of the Russian people from political and economic slavery. **Not a single class in history has achieved power without producing its political leaders, its prominent representatives able to organise a movement and lead it.** And the Russian working class has already shown that it can produce such men and women. The struggle which has developed so widely during the past five or six years has revealed the great potential revolutionary power of the working class; it has shown that the most ruthless government persecution does not diminish, but, on the contrary, increases the number of workers who strive towards socialism, towards political consciousness, and towards the political struggle. The congress which our comrades held in 1898 correctly defined our tasks and did not merely repeat other people's words, did not merely express the enthusiasm of "intellectuals." . . . We must set to work resolutely to fulfil these tasks, placing the question of the Party's programme, organisation, and tactics on the order of the day. We have already set forth our views on the fundamental postulates of our programme, and, of course, this is not the place to develop them in detail. We propose to devote a series of articles in forthcoming issues to questions of organisation, which are among the most burning problems confronting us. In this respect we lag considerably behind the old workers in the Russian revolutionary movement. We must frankly admit this

defect and exert all our efforts to devise methods of greater secrecy in our work, to propagate systematically the proper methods of work, the proper methods of deluding the gendarmes and of evading the snares of the police. We must train people who will devote the whole of

their lives, not only their spare evenings, to the revolution; we must build up an organisation large enough to permit the introduction of a strict division of labour in the various forms of our work. Finally, with regard to questions of tactics, we shall confine ourselves to the following: Social-Democracy does not tie its hands, it does not restrict its activities to someone preconceived plan or method of political struggle; it recognises all methods of struggle, provided they correspond to the forces at the disposal of the Party and facilitate the achievement of the best results possible under the given conditions. If we have a strongly organised party, a single strike may turn into a political demonstration, into a political victory over the government. If we have a strongly organised party, a revolt in a single locality may grow into a victorious revolution. We must bear in mind that **the struggles with the government for partial demands and the gain of certain concessions are merely light skirmishes with the enemy**, encounters between outposts, whereas the decisive battle is still to come. Before us, in all its strength, towers the enemy fortress which is raining shot and shell upon us, mowing down our best fighters. We must capture this fortress, and we will capture it, if we unite all the forces of the awakening proletariat with all the forces of the Russian revolutionaries into one party which will attract all that is vital and honest in Russia. Only then will the great prophecy of the Russian worker-revolutionary, Pyotr Alexeyev, be fulfilled: "The muscular arm of the working millions will be

lifted, and the yoke of despotism, guarded by the soldiers' bayonets, will be smashed to atoms!

Lenin

The “Unity” Conference of R.S.D.L.P. Organisations Abroad

SEPTEMBER 21–22 (OCTOBER 4–5), 1901

Collected Works, Volume 5, pages 223-230.

Speech Delivered on September 21 (October 4)

(NOTE FROM THE MINUTES)

Comrades!

Let us begin with the point on which the success of the conference depends.

As a representative of Iskra I consider it necessary to touch on the history of our attitude to the other organisations. Iskra has been completely independent from its very inception, recognising only ideological connections with Russian Social-Democracy and functioning on instructions from many comrades in Russia. In its first issue Iskra declared that it would not deal with the organisational differences that had arisen in the Union of Russian Social-Democrats Abroad and attached the greatest importance to its position on matters of principle.

Some members of the Union Abroad proposed that we hold a conference to come to an agreement with the organisations abroad. We understood the proposal to mean that a group in the Union was in agreement with our principles, which made it possible that the Union would also accept them. The revolutionary organisation Sotsial-Demokrat, voiced agreement, notwithstanding considerable organisational

differences, as well as differences on principle. The Union, unfortunately, refused to negotiate. When a new group of initiators appeared, the Union consented to the negotiations. Since the Union had no distinct physiognomy and since a new trend towards revolutionary Marxism had manifested itself within it it was to be hoped that an agreement on principle would be possible. Iskra and Sotsial-Demokrat again consented, and the Geneva Conference was held. At the beginning of our session Comrade Kruglov read the conference resolution without any comments. No one from the Union took the floor in opposition.

We affirm that in its tenth issue, Rabocheye Dyelo made a decisive break with the traditions of revolutionary Marxism and opposed the agreement on principles elaborated at the Geneva Conference, with whose tendencies the Union is apparently in agreement.

In view of this, my criticism will be directed against the editors of Rabocheye Dyelo, and not against the entire Union.

Let us compare the Geneva resolution with the articles in issue No. 10 of Rabocheye Dyelo.

The Geneva resolution astonishes one by its amazing detail and its stressing of points that are considered generally known.

Point 1 of the agreement on principles reads: "Accepting the basic principles of scientific socialism and acting in solidarity with international revolutionary Social-Democracy, we reject all attempts to introduce opportunism into the class struggle of the proletariat—attempts that find expression in so-called Economism, Bernsteinism, Millerandism, etc." Here there is an obvious allusion to something; obviously a struggle was taking

place between opportunism and revolutionary Marxism. Whatever the contents of issue No. 10 of *Rabocheye Dyelo* may be, it cannot, in any event, destroy the historical fact that the Geneva Conference took place and that the resolution it adopted can serve as a basis for unification. In its third point, for instance, the Geneva resolution recognises that Social-Democracy should assume leadership in the struggle for democracy. Apparently, there were previous differences of opinion on this point, too. In its effort to keep well away from opportunism, the resolution descends almost to the ridiculous. (See Point "e" in Paragraph 5.) It follows, therefore, that there were differences even on such elementary questions. Now let us compare that resolution with the articles in *Rabocheye Dyelo* (No. 10). Unfortunately, I have had the articles at my disposal for three days only, not more than enough for a cursory examination.

These articles give a detailed explanation of the difference in our views; there are some just remarks addressed to *Zarya* and *Iskra* which we shall turn to account. But that is not what concerns us at the moment; we are concerned with the principles underlying the articles. The position on principle adopted by *Rabocheye Dyelo* (No. 10) contradicts the position adopted by the Union delegates at the Geneva Conference. It is impossible to reconcile these two positions. It is necessary to reveal the differences contained in them in order to know on what basis the Union takes its stand, in order to know whether it is possible to effect ideological unity, without which organisational unity would be meaningless; we have not sought and could not seek such unity. On pages 32 and 33 of issue No. 10 of *Rabocheye Dyelo* the author of the article demurs at the contraposing of *Mountain* and *Gironde* in international Social-

Democracy. Look but at the Geneva Conference—does it not represent a clash between the Mountain and the Gironde? Does not Iskra represent the Mountain? Did not Iskra in its very first editorial declare itself against organisational unity prior to the demarcation of ideological boundaries? In *Rabocheye Dyelo*, No. 10, it is stated that even the most rabid Bernsteinians take a stand on the basis of class interests. The resolution makes special mention of Bernsteinism, to refute which the delegates at the conference devoted considerable effort; and now, in the articles of *Rabocheye Dyelo* (No. 10), the same old fare is rehashed. What is this, a challenge or a sneer? To what end the effort we put forth? People are simply laughing at our pains to elaborate a theoretical basis. We must not forget that without a common ideological basis there can be no question of unity. In the same article, moreover, we get the prospect of a widened scope of our differences. On page 33, for example, the author writes: “Perhaps our differences arise out of different interpretations of Marxism?” Again, I ask, to what end the effort we put forth?

Point “c” of Paragraph 4 of the Geneva resolution speaks of the necessity to struggle against all opponents of revolutionary Marxism; however, we are told that perhaps, in general, we understand Marxism differently.

I must also mention that all this is accompanied by arguments on the harmfulness of fettering thought, etc., which is precisely what all the Bernsteinians are saying. This was stated at the Lübeck Parteitag, and it is also repeated by the followers of Jaurès, while the points of the agreement say nothing about this, since the agreement was made expressly on the basis of revolutionary Marxism. Even faint manifestations of criticism

would have led to a complete breach. We have met to discuss the content of the opinions and not the freedom of opinion. References to French and German models are most unfortunate. The Germans have already achieved what we are still struggling for. They have a united Social-Democracy which exercises leadership in the political struggle. Our Social-Democracy is not yet the leader of the revolutionary groups; on the contrary, there are signs of the revival of other revolutionary tendencies. In the articles in *Rabocheye Dyelo* (No. 10), not only are there no signs of a complete break in principle with opportunism, there is even something worse—there is praise of the predominance of the spontaneous movement. I am not cavilling at words. All of us, the comrades from *Iskra*, the comrades from *Sotsial-Demokrat*, and I, are calling attention only to the basic tendencies of the articles; but those words, as the Germans say, *ins Gesicht schlagen*. [Offend the nostrils.—Ed.] Particularly as regards these points the Geneva resolution could not be clearer. The recently emerged Workers' Party for the Political Liberation of Russia chants in harmony with these publications.

Consider in the article the famous distinction between tactics-as-plan and tactics-as-process. The author says that tactics-as-plan is in contradiction to the fundamental principle of revolutionary Marxism, and he thinks that one may speak of tactics-as-"process", taken to mean the growth of the Party's tasks, which increase as the Party grows. In my opinion this is simply unwillingness to discuss. We have expended so much time and effort on the formulation of definite political tasks, and at the Geneva Conference so much was said about them; and now we are suddenly being talked to about "tactics-as-plan" and "tactics-as-process". To me this represents a return to the

specific, narrow Bernsteinian product of Rabochaya Mysl which asserted that only that struggle should be conducted which is possible, and that the possible struggle is that which is going on. We on our part maintain that only the distortion of Marxism is growing. The Geneva resolution says that no stages are necessary for the transition to political agitation, and then an article suddenly appears in which "the literature of exposure" is contraposed to the "proletarian struggle". Martynov writes about students and liberals, holding that they can worry about democratic demands themselves. We, however, think that the entire peculiarity of Russian Social-Democracy consists in the fact that the liberal democracy has not taken the initiative in the political struggle. If the liberals know better what they have to do and can do it themselves, there is nothing for us to do. The author of the article goes as far as to assume that the government will adopt concrete, administrative measures of its own accord.

As we all know, there were differences of opinion on the question of terror at the Geneva Conference. After the Conference, a part of the Union Abroad, the Bund, at its conference, came out decisively against terror. On page 23, however, the author writes that we "do not wish to set ourselves against the terrorist moods". This is the sheerest opportunism. [The minutes break off at this point.—Ed.]

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Questions Submitted to the Union of Russian Social-Democrats
Abroad at the “Unity” Conference, September 21 (October 4),
1901

1. Do all the three organisations accept, in principle, the resolution of the June Conference?
2. Is the Union of Russian Social-Democrats Abroad willing and able so to organise publication activity as to render impossible unprincipled and opportunist deviations from revolutionary Marxism—deviations that create confusion of mind so dangerous for our movement—and to eliminate all flirting with tacit and avowed Bernsteinism, as well as servile acceptance of the elementary forms and spontaneity of the movement, which must inevitably lead to the conversion of the labour movement into an instrument of bourgeois democracy?

Lenin

A Talk with Defenders of Economism

Iskra, No. 12, December 6, 1901.

Collected Works, Volume 5, pages 313-320.

Below we publish in full, as received from one of our representatives,

“A Letter to the Russian Social-Democratic Press.

“In response to the suggestion made by our comrades in exile that we express our views on Iskra, we have resolved to state the reasons for our disagreement with that organ.

“While recognising that the appearance of a special Social-Democratic organ specially devoted to questions of the political struggle is entirely opportune, we do not think that Iskra, which has under taken this task, has performed it satisfactorily. The principal drawback of the paper, which runs like a scarlet thread through its columns, and which is the cause of all its other defects, large and small, is the exaggerated importance it attaches to the influence which the ideologists of the movement exert upon its various tendencies. At the same time, Iskra gives too little consideration to the material elements and the material environment of the movement, whose interaction creates a definite type of labour movement and determines its path, the path from which the ideologists, despite all their efforts, are incapable of diverting it, even if they are inspired by the finest theories and programmes.

“This defect becomes most marked when Iskra is compared with Yuzhny Rabochy, which, like Iskra, raises the banner of

political struggle but connects it with the preceding phase of the South-Russian working-class movement. Such a presentation of the question is alien to Iskra. It has set itself the task of fanning 'the spark into a great conflagration', [A play on the word Iskra, which means "spark".—Tr.] but it forgets that necessary inflammable material and favourable environmental conditions are required for such a task. In dissociating itself completely from the 'Economists', Iskra loses sight of the fact that their activity prepared the ground for the workers' participation in the February and March events, upon which Iskra lays so much stress and, to all appearances, greatly exaggerates. While criticising adversely the activity of the Social-Democrats of the late nineties, Iskra ignores the fact that at that time the conditions were lacking for any work other than the struggle for minor demands, and ignores also the enormous educational significance of that struggle. Iskra is entirely wrong and unhistorical in its appraisal of that period and of the direction of the activities of the Russian Social Democrats at the time, in identifying their tactics with those of Zubatov, in failing to differentiate between the 'struggle for minor demands', which widens and deepens the labour movement, and 'minor concessions', whose purpose was to paralyse every struggle and every movement.

"Thoroughly imbued with the sectarian intolerance so characteristic of ideologists in the infantile period of social movements, Iskra is ready to brand every disagreement with it, not only as a departure from Social-Democratic principles, but as desertion to the camp of the enemy. Of such a nature is its extremely indecent and most reprehensible attack upon Rabochaya Mysl, contained in the article on Zubatov, in which the latter's success among a certain section of the working class

was attributed to that publication. Negatively disposed to the other Social-Democratic organisations, which differ from it in their views on the progress and the tasks of the Russian labour movement, Iskra, in the heat of controversy, at times forgets the truth and, picking on isolated unfortunate expressions, attributes to its opponents views they do not hold, emphasises points of disagreement that are frequently of little material importance, and obstinately ignores the numerous points of contact in views. We have in mind Iskra's attitude towards Rabocheye Dyelo.

"Iskra's excessive predilection for controversy is due primarily to its exaggerating the role of 'ideology' (programmes, theories...) in the movement, and is partly an echo of the internecine squabbles that have flared up among Russian political exiles in Western Europe, of which they have hastened to inform the world in a number of polemical pamphlets and articles. In our opinion, these disagreements exercise almost no influence upon the actual course of the Russian Social-Democratic movement, except perhaps to damage it by bringing an undesirable schism into the midst of the comrades working in Russia. For this reason, we cannot but express our disapproval of Iskra's fervent polemics, particularly when it oversteps the bounds of decency.

"This basic drawback of Iskra is also the cause of its inconsistency on the question of the attitude of Social-Democracy to the various social classes and tendencies. By theoretical reasoning, Iskra solved the problem of the immediate transition to the struggle against absolutism. In all probability it senses the difficulty of such a task for the workers under the present state of affairs but lacking the patience to wait

until the workers will have gathered sufficient forces for this struggle, Iskra begins to seek allies in the ranks of the liberals and intellectuals. In this quest, it not infrequently departs from the class point of view, obscures class antagonisms, and puts into the forefront the common nature of the discontent with the government, although the causes and the degree of the discontent vary considerably among the 'allies. Such, for example, is Iskra's attitude towards the Zemstvo. It tries to fan into flames of political struggle the Zemstvo's Frondian demonstrations, which are frequently called forth by the fact that the government pays more attention to the protection of industry than to the agrarian aspirations of the Zemstvo gentry, [Lenin's reference is to the liberal landlords, members of the Zemstvo Boards.—Tr.] and it promises the nobles that are dissatisfied with the government's sops the assistance of the working class, but it does not say a word about the class antagonism that exists between these social strata. It may be conceded that it is admissible to say that the Zemstvo is being roused and that it is an element fighting the government; but this must be stated so clearly and distinctly that no doubt will be left as to the character of a possible agreement with such elements. Iskra, however, approaches the question of our attitude towards the Zemstvo in a way that to our mind can only dim class-consciousness; for in this matter, like the advocates of liberalism and of the various cultural endeavours Iskra goes against the fundamental task of Social-Democratic literature, which is, not to obscure class antagonism, but to criticise the bourgeois system and explain the class interests that divide it. Such, too, is Iskra's attitude towards the student movement. And yet in other articles Iskra sharply condemns all

'compromise' and defends, for instance, the intolerant conduct of the Guesdists.

"We shall refrain from dwelling upon Iskra's minor defects and blunders, but in conclusion we think it our duty to observe that we do not in the least desire by our criticism to belittle the significance which Iskra can acquire, nor do we close our eyes to its merits. We welcome it as a political, Social-Democratic newspaper in Russia. We regard one of its greatest merits to be its able explanation of the question of terror to which it devoted a number of timely articles. Finally, we can not refrain from noting the exemplary, literary style in which Iskra is written, a thing so rare in illegal publications, its regular appearance, and the abundance of fresh and interesting material which it publishes.

"A group of comrades"

September 1901."

In the first place, we should like to say that we cordially welcome the straightforwardness and frankness of the authors of this letter. It is high time to stop playing at hide-and-seek, concealing one's Economist "credo" (as is done by a section of the Odessa Committee from which the "politicians" broke away), or declaring, as if in mockery of the truth, that at the present time "not a single Social-Democratic organisation is guilty of the sin of Economism" (Two Conferences, p. 32, published by Rabocheye Dyelo). And now to the matter.

The authors of the letter fall into the very same fundamental error as that made by Rabocheye Dyelo (see particularly issue No. 10). They are muddled over the question of the relations between the "material" (spontaneous, as Rabocheye Dyelo puts

it) elements of the movement and the ideological (conscious, operating "according to plan"). They fail to understand that the "ideologist" is worthy of the name only when he precedes the spontaneous movement, points out the road, and is able ahead of all others to solve all the theoretical, political, tactical, and organisational questions which the "material elements" of the movement spontaneously encounter. In order truly to give "consideration to the material elements of the movement", one must view them critically, one must be able to point out the dangers and defects of spontaneity and to elevate it to the level of consciousness, To say, however, that ideologists (i.e., politically conscious leaders) cannot divert the movement from the path determined by the interaction of environment and elements is to ignore the simple truth that the conscious element participates in this interaction and in the determination of the path. Catholic and monarchist labour unions in Europe are also an inevitable result of the interaction of environment and elements, but it was the consciousness of priests and Zubatovs and not that of socialists that participated in this interaction. The theoretical views of the authors of this letter (like those of Rabocheye Dyelo) do not represent Marxism, but that parody of it which is nursed by our "Critics" and Bernsteinians who are unable to connect spontaneous evolution with conscious revolutionary activity.

In the prevailing circumstances of today this profound theoretical error inevitably leads to a great tactical error, which has brought incalculable damage to Russian Social-Democracy. It is a fact that the spontaneous awakening of the masses of the workers and (due to their influence) of other social strata has been taking place with astonishing rapidity during the past few years. The "material elements" of the movement have grown

enormously even as compared with 1898, but the conscious leaders (the Social-Democrats) lag behind this growth. This is the main cause of the crisis which Russian Social-Democracy is now experiencing. The mass (spontaneous) movement lacks "ideologists" sufficiently trained theoretically to be proof against all vacillations; it lacks leaders with such a broad political outlook, such revolutionary energy, and such organisational talent as to create a militant political party on the basis of the new movement.

All this in itself would, however, be but half the evil. Theoretical knowledge, political experience, and organising ability are things that can be acquired. If only the desire exists to study and acquire these qualities. But since the end of 1897, particularly since the autumn of 1898, there have come forward in the Russian Social-Democratic movement individuals and periodicals that not only close their eyes to this drawback, but that have declared it to be a special virtue, that have elevated the worship of, and servility towards, spontaneity to the dignity of a theory and are preaching that Social-Democrats must not march ahead of the movement, but should drag along at the tail-end. (These periodicals include not only *Rabochaya Mysl*, but *Rabocheye Dyelo*, which began with the "stages theory" and ended with the defence, as a matter of principle, of spontaneity, of the "full rights of the movement of the moment", of "tactics-as process", etc.)

This was, indeed, a sad situation. It meant the emergence of a separate trend, which is usually designated as Economism (in the broad sense of the word), the principal feature of which is its incomprehension, even defence, of lagging, i.e., as we have explained, the lagging of the conscious leaders behind the

spontaneous awakening of the masses. The characteristic features of this trend express themselves in the following: with respect to principles, in a vulgarisation of Marxism and in helplessness in the face of modern "criticism", that up-to-date species of opportunism; with respect to politics, in the striving to restrict political agitation and political struggle or to reduce them to petty activities, in the failure to understand that unless Social-Democrats take the leadership of the general democratic movement in their own hands, they will never be able to overthrow the autocracy; with respect to tactics, in utter instability (last spring Rabocheye Dyelo stood in amazement before the "new" question of terror, and only six months later, after considerable wavering and, as always, dragging along at the tail end of the movement, did it express itself against terror, in a very ambiguous resolution); and with respect to organisation, in the failure to understand that the mass character of the movement does not diminish, but increases, our obligation to establish a strong and centralised organisation of revolutionaries capable of leading the preparatory struggle, every unexpected outbreak, and, finally, the decisive assault.

Against this trend we have conducted and will continue to conduct an irreconcilable struggle. The authors of the letter apparently belong to this trend. They tell us that the economic struggle prepared the ground for the workers' participation in the demonstrations. True enough; but we appreciated sooner and more profoundly than all others the importance of this preparation, when, as early as December 1900, in our first issue, we opposed the stages theory,[See present edition, Vol. 4, pp. 366-71.—Ed.] and when, in February, in our second issue, immediately after the drafting of the students into the army, and prior to the demonstrations, we called upon the workers to

come to the aid of the students.[Ibid., pp. 414-19.—Ed.] The February and March events did not “refute the fears and alarms of Iskra” (as Martynov, who thereby displays his utter failure to understand the question, thinks—Rabocheye Dyelo, No. 10, p. 53), but wholly confirmed them, for the leaders lagged behind the spontaneous rise of the masses and proved to be unprepared for the fulfilment of their duties as leaders. Even at the present time the preparations are far from adequate, and for that reason all talk about “exaggerating the role of ideology or the role of the conscious element as compared with the spontaneous element, etc., continues to exercise a most baneful influence upon our Party.

No less harmful is the influence exerted by the talk, allegedly in defence of the class point of view, about the need to lay less stress on the general character of discontent manifested by the various strata of the population against the government. On the contrary, we are proud of the fact that Iskra rouses political discontent among all strata of the population, and the only thing we regret is that we are unable to do this on a much wider scale. It is not true to say that in doing so, we obscure the class point of view; the authors of the letter have not pointed to a single concrete instance in evidence of this, nor can they do so. Social-Democracy, as the van guard in the struggle for democracy, must (notwithstanding the opinion expressed in Rabocheye Dyelo, No. 10, p. 41) lead the activities of the various oppositional strata, explain to them the general political significance of their partial and professional conflicts with the government, rally them to the support of the revolutionary party, and train from its own ranks leaders capable of exercising political influence upon all oppositional strata. Any renunciation of this function, however florid the phrases about

close, organic contact with the proletarian struggle, etc., with which it may deck it self, is tantamount to a fresh "defence of lagging", the defence of lagging behind the nation-wide democratic movement on the part of Social-Democrats; it is tantamount to a surrender of the leadership to bourgeois democracy. Let the authors of the letter ponder over the question as to why the events of last spring served so strongly to stimulate non-Social-Democratic revolutionary tendencies, instead of raising the authority and prestige of Social-Democracy.

Nor can we refrain from protesting against the astonishing short-sightedness displayed by the authors of the letter in regard to the controversies and internecine squabbles among the political exiles. They repeat the stale nonsense about the "indecent" of devoting to Rabochaya Mysl an article on Zubatov. Do they wish to deny that the spreading of Economism facilitates the tasks of the Zubatovs? In asserting this, however, we do not in the slightest "identify" the tactics of the Economists with those of Zubatov. As for the "political exiles" (if the authors of the letter were not so unpardonably careless concerning the continuity of ideas in the Russian Social-Democratic movement, they would have known that the warning about Economism sound ed by the "political exiles", to be precise, by the Emancipation of Labour group, has been strikingly confirmed!), note the manner in which Lassalle, who was active among the Rhine workers in 1852, judged the controversies of the exiles in London. Writing to Marx, he said:

"...The publication of your work against the 'big men', Kinkel, Ruge, etc., should hardly meet with any difficulties on the part of the police.... For, in my opinion, the government is not

averse to the publication of such works, because it thinks that 'the revolutionaries will cut one another's throats'. Their bureaucratic logic neither suspects nor fears the fact that it is precisely internal Party struggles that lend a party strength and vitality; that the greatest proof of a party's weakness is its diffuseness and the blurring of clear demarcations; and that a party becomes stronger by purging itself" (letter from Lassalle to Marx, June 24, 1852).

Let the numerous complacent opponents of severity, irreconcilability, and fervent polemics, etc., take note!

In conclusion, we shall observe that in these remarks we have been able to deal only briefly with the questions in dispute. We intend to devote a special pamphlet to the analysis of these questions, which we hope will appear in the course of six weeks.

Lenin

What Is To Be Done?

BURNING QUESTIONS of our MOVEMENT

Collected Works, Volume 5, pp. 347-530.

The Working Class As Vanguard Fighter For Democracy

We have seen that the conduct of the broadest political agitation and, consequently, of all-sided political exposures is an absolutely necessary and a paramount task of our activity, if this activity is to be truly Social-Democratic. However, we arrived at this conclusion solely on the grounds of the pressing needs of the working class for political knowledge and political training. But such a presentation of the question is too narrow, for it ignores the general democratic tasks of Social-Democracy, in particular of present-day Russian Social-Democracy. In order to explain the point more concretely we shall approach the subject from an aspect that is "nearest" to the Economist, namely, from the practical aspect. "Everyone agrees" that it is necessary to develop the political consciousness of the working class. The question is, how that is to be done and what is required to do it. The economic struggle merely "impels" the workers to realise the government's attitude towards the working class. Consequently, however much we may try to "lend the economic, struggle itself a political character", we shall never be able to develop the political consciousness of the workers (to the level of Social-Democratic political consciousness) by keeping within the framework of the economic struggle, for that framework is too narrow. The Martynov formula has some value for us, not because it illustrates Martynov's aptitude for confusing things, but

because it pointedly expresses the basic error that all the Economists commit, namely, their conviction that it is possible to develop the class political consciousness of the workers from within, so to speak, from their economic struggle, i.e., by making this struggle the exclusive (or, at least, the main) starting-point, by making it the exclusive (or, at least, the main) basis. Such a view is radically wrong. Piqued by our polemics against them, the Economists refuse to ponder deeply over the origins of these disagreements, with the result that we simply cannot understand one another. It is as if we spoke in different tongues.

Class political consciousness can be brought to the workers only from without, that is, only from outside the economic struggle, from outside the sphere of relations between workers and employers. The sphere from which alone it is possible to obtain this knowledge is the sphere of relationships of all classes and strata to the state and the government, the sphere of the interrelations between all classes. For that reason, the reply to the question as to what must be done to bring political knowledge to the workers cannot be merely the answer with which, in the majority of cases, the practical workers, especially those inclined towards Economism, mostly content themselves, namely: "To go among the workers." To bring political knowledge to the workers the Social Democrats must go among all classes of the population; they must dispatch units of their army in all directions.

We deliberately select this blunt formula, we deliberately express ourselves in this sharply simplified manner, not because we desire to indulge in paradoxes, but in order to "impel" the Economists to a realisation of their tasks which they

unpardonably ignore, to suggest to them strongly the difference between trade-unionist and Social-Democratic politics, which they refuse to understand. We therefore beg the reader not to get wrought up, but to hear us patiently to the end.

Let us take the type of Social-Democratic study circle that has become most widespread in the past few years and examine its work. It has "contacts with the workers" and rests content with this, issuing leaflets in which abuses in the factories, the government's partiality towards the capitalists, and the tyranny of the police are strongly condemned. At workers' meetings the discussions never, or rarely ever, go beyond the limits of these subjects. Extremely rare are the lectures and discussions held on the history of the revolutionary movement, on questions of the government's home and foreign policy, on questions of the economic evolution of Russia and of Europe, on the position of the various classes in modern society, etc. As to systematically acquiring and extending contact with other classes of society, no one even dreams of that. In fact, the ideal leader, as the majority of the members of such circles picture him, is something far more in the nature of a trade union secretary than a socialist political leader. For the secretary of any, say English, trade union always helps the workers to carry on the economic struggle, he helps them to expose factory abuses, explains the injustice of the laws and of measures that hamper the freedom to strike and to picket (i. e., to warn all and sundry that a strike is proceeding at a certain factory), explains the partiality of arbitration court judges who belong to the bourgeois classes, etc., etc. In a word, every trade union secretary conducts and helps to conduct "the economic struggle against the employers and the government". It cannot be too strongly maintained that this is still not Social-Democracy, that the Social-Democrat's

ideal should not be the trade union secretary, but the tribune of the people, who is able to react to every manifestation of tyranny and oppression, no matter where it appears, no matter what stratum or class of the people it affects; who is able to generalise all these manifestations and produce a single picture of police violence and capitalist exploitation; who is able to take advantage of every event, however small, in order to set forth before all his socialist convictions and his democratic demands, in order to clarify for all and everyone the world-historic significance of the struggle for the emancipation of the proletariat. Compare, for example, a leader like Robert Knight (the well-known secretary and leader of the Boiler-Makers' Society, one of the most powerful trade unions in England), with Wilhelm Liebknecht, and try to apply to them the contrasts that Martynov draws in his controversy with Iskra. You will see — I am running through Martynov's article — that Robert Knight engaged more in "calling the masses to certain concrete actions" (Martynov, *op. cit.*, p. 39), while Willielin Liebknecht engaged more in "the revolutionary elucidation of the whole of the present system or partial manifestations of it"; that Robert Knight "formulated the immediate demands of the proletariat and indicated the means by which they can be achieved", whereas Wilhelm Liebknecht, while doing this, did not hold back from "simultaneously guiding the activities of various opposition strata", "dictating a positive programme of action for them"; that Robert Knight strove "as far as possible to lend the economic struggle itself a political character" and was excellently able "to submit to the government concrete demands promising certain palpable results"), whereas Liebknecht engaged to a much greater degree in "one-sided" "exposures"; that Robert Knight attached more significance to

the “forward march of the drab everyday struggle”, whereas Liebknecht attached more significance to the “propaganda of brilliant and completed ideas”; that Liebknecht converted the paper he was directing into “an organ of revolutionary opposition that exposed the state of affairs in our country, particularly the political state of affairs, insofar as it affected the interests of the most varied strata of the population” (63), whereas Robert Knight “worked for the cause of the working class in close organic connection with the proletarian struggle” (63) — if by “close and organic connection” is meant the subservience to spontaneity which we examined above, by taking the examples of Krichevsky and Martynov — and “restricted the sphere of his influence”, convinced, of course, as is Martynov, that “by doing so he deepened that influence” (63). In a word, you will see that de facto Martynov reduces Social-Democracy to the level of trade-unionism, though he does so, of course, not because he does not desire the good of Social-Democracy, but simply because he is a little too much in a hurry to render Plekhanov more profound, instead of taking the trouble to understand him.

Let us return, however, to our theses. We said that a Social Democrat, if he really believes it necessary to develop comprehensively the political consciousness of the proletariat, must “go among all classes of the population”. This gives rise to the questions: how is this to be done? have we enough forces to do this? is there a basis for such work among all the other classes? will this not mean a retreat, or lead to a retreat, from the class point of view? Let us deal with these questions.

We must “go among all classes of the population” as theoreticians, as proagandists, as agitators, and as organisers.

Noone doubts that the theoretical work of Social-Democrats should aim at studying all the specific features of the social and political condition of the various classes. But extremely little is done in this direction as compared with the work that is done in studying the specific features of factory life. In the committees and study circles, one can meet people who are immersed in the study even of some special branch of the metal industry; but one can hardly ever find members of organisations (obliged, as often happens, for some reason or other to give up practical work) who are especially engaged in gathering material on some pressing question of social and political life in our country which could serve as a means for conducting Social-Democratic work among other strata of the population. In dwelling upon the fact that the majority of the present-day leaders of the working-class movement lack training, we cannot refrain from mentioning training in this respect also, for it too is bound up with the Economist conception of "close organic connection with the proletarian struggle". The principal thing, of course, is propaganda and agitation among all strata of the people. The work of the West European Social-Democrat is in this respect facilitated by the public meetings and rallies which all are free to attend, and by the fact that in parliament he addresses the representatives of all classes. We have neither a parliament nor freedom of assembly; nevertheless, we are able to arrange meetings of workers who desire to listen to a Social-Democrat. We must also find ways and means of calling meetings of representatives of all social classes that desire to listen to a democrat; for he is no Social-Democrat who forgets in practice that "the Communists support every revolutionary movement", that we are obliged for that reason to expound and emphasise general democratic

tasks before the whole people, without for a moment concealing our socialist convictions. He is no Social-Democrat who forgets in practice his obligation to be ahead of all in raising, accentuating, and solving every general democratic question.

“But everyone agrees with this!” the impatient reader will exclaim, and the new instructions adopted by the last conference of the Union Abroad for the Editorial Board of Rabocheye Dyelo definitely say: “All events of social and political life that affect the proletariat either directly as a special class or as the vanguard of all the revolutionary forces in the struggle for freedom should serve as subjects for political propaganda and agitation” (Two Conferences, p. 17, *our italics*). Yes, these are very true and very good words, and we would be fully satisfied if Rabocheye Dyelo understood them and if it refrained from saying in the next breath things that contradict them. For it is not enough to call ourselves the “vanguard”, the advanced contingent; we must act in such a way that all the other contingents recognise and are obliged to admit that we are marching in the vanguard. And we ask the reader: Are the representatives of the other “contingents” such fools as to take our word for it when we say that we are the “vanguard”? just picture to yourselves the following: a Social-Democrat comes to the “contingent” of Russian educated radicals, or liberal constitutionalists, and says, We are the vanguard; “the task confronting us now is, as far as possible, to lend the economic struggle itself a political character”. The radical, or constitutionalist, if he is at all intelligent (and there are many intelligent men among Russian radicals and constitutionalists), would only smile at such a speech and would say (to himself, of course, for in the majority of cases he is an experienced diplomat): “Your ‘vanguard’ must be made

up of simpletons. They do not even understand that it is our task, the task of the progressive representatives of bourgeois democracy to lend the workers' economic struggle itself a political character. Why, we too, like the West-European bourgeois, want to draw the workers into politics, but only into trade-unionist, not into Social-Democratic politics. Trade-unionist politics of the working class is precisely bourgeois politics of the working class, and this 'vanguard's' formulation of its task is the formulation of trade-unionist politics! Let them call themselves Social-Democrats to their heart's content, I am not a child to get excited over a label. But they must not fall under the influence of those pernicious orthodox doctrinaires, let them allow 'freedom of criticism' to those who unconsciously are driving Social-Democracy into trade-unionist channels."

And the faint smile of our constitutionalist will turn into Homeric laughter when he learns that the Social-Democrats who talk of Social-Democracy as the vanguard, today, when spontaneity almost completely dominates our movement, fear nothing so much as "belittling the spontaneous element", as "underestimating the significance of the forward movement of the drab everyday struggle, as compared with the propaganda of brilliant and completed ideas", etc., etc.! A "vanguard" which fears that consciousness will outstrip spontaneity, which fears to put forward a bold "plan" that would compel general recognition even among those who differ with us. Are they not confusing "vanguard" with "rearguard"?

Indeed, let us examine the following piece of reasoning by Martynov. On page 40 he says that Iskra is one-sided in its tactics of exposing abuses, that "however much we may spread

distrust and hatred of the government, we shall not achieve our aim until we have succeeded in developing sufficient active social energy for its overthrow". This, it may be said parenthetically, is the familiar solicitude for the activation of the masses, with a simultaneous striving to restrict one's own activity. But that is not the main point at the moment. Martynov speaks here, accordingly, of revolutionary energy ("for overthrowing"). And what conclusion does he arrive at? Since in ordinary times various social strata inevitably march separately, "it is therefore, clear that we Social-Democrats cannot simultaneously guide the activities of various opposition strata, we cannot dictate to them a positive programme of action, we cannot point out to them in what manner they should wage a day-to-day struggle for their interests.... The liberal strata will themselves take care of the active struggle for their immediate interests, the struggle that will bring them face to face with our political regime" (p. 41). Thus, having begun with talk about revolutionary energy, about the active struggle for the overthrow of the autocracy, Martynov immediately turns toward trade union energy and active struggle for immediate interests! It goes without saying that we cannot guide the struggle of the students, liberals, etc., for their "immediate interests"; but this was not the point at issue, most worthy Economist! The point we were discussing was the possible and necessary participation of various social strata in the overthrow of the autocracy; and not only are we able, but it is our bounden duty, to guide these "activities of the various opposition strata", if we desire to be the "vanguard". Not only will our students and liberals, etc., themselves take care of "the struggle that brings them face to face with our political regime"; the police and the officials of the autocratic

government will see to this first and foremost. But if “we” desire to be front-rank democrats, we must make it our concern to direct the thoughts of those who are dissatisfied only with conditions at the university, or in the Zemstvo, etc., to the idea that the entire political system is worthless. We must take upon ourselves the task of organising an all-round political struggle under the leadership of our Party in such a manner as to make it possible for all oppositional strata to render their fullest support to the struggle and to our Party. We must train our Social-Democratic practical workers to become political leaders, able to guide all the manifestations of this all-round struggle, able at the right time to “dictate a positive programme of action” for the aroused students, the discontented Zemstvo people, the incensed religious sects, the offended elementary schoolteachers, etc., etc. For that reason, Martynov’s assertion that “with regard to these, we can function merely in the negative role of exposers of abuses... we can only dissipate their hopes in various government commissions” is completely false (our italics). By saying this, Martynov shows that he absolutely fails to understand the role that the revolutionary “vanguard” must really play. If the reader bears this in mind, he will be clear as to the real meaning of Martynov’s concluding remarks: “Iskra is the organ of the revolutionary opposition which exposes the state of affairs in our country, particularly the political state of affairs, insofar as it affects the interests of the most varied strata of the population. We, however, work and will continue to work for the cause of the working class in close organic contact with the proletarian struggle. By restricting the sphere of our active influence we deepen that influence” (63). The true sense of this conclusion is as follows: Iskra desires to elevate the trade-unionist politics of the working class (to

which, through misconception, through lack of training, or through conviction, our practical workers frequently confine themselves) to the level of Social-Democratic politics. Rabocheye Dyelo, however, desires to degrade Social-Democratic politics to trade-unionist politics. Moreover, it assures the world that the two positions are “entirely compatible within the common cause” (63). 0, sancta simplicitas!

To proceed. Have we sufficient forces to direct our propaganda and agitation among all social classes? Most certainly. Our Economists, who are frequently inclined to deny this, lose sight of the gigantic progress our movement has made from (approximately) 1894 to 1901. Like real “tail-enders” they often go on living in the bygone stages of the movement’s inception. In the earlier period, indeed, we had astonishingly few forces, and it was perfectly natural and legitimate then to devote ourselves exclusively to activities among the workers and to condemn severely any deviation from this course. The entire task then was to consolidate our position in the working class. At the present time, however, gigantic forces have been attracted to the movement. The best representatives of the younger generation of the educated classes are coming over to us. Everywhere in the provinces there are people, resident there by dint of circumstance, who have taken part in the movement in the past or who desire to do so now and who, are gravitating towards Social-Democracy (whereas in 1894 one could count the Social-Democrats on the fingers of one’s hand). A basic political and organisational shortcoming of our movement is our inability to utilise all these forces and give them appropriate work (we shall deal with this more fully in the next chapter). The overwhelming majority of these forces entirely lack the

opportunity of “going among the workers”, so that there are no grounds for fearing that we shall divert forces from our main work. In order to be able to provide the workers with real, comprehensive, and live political knowledge, we must have “our own people”, Social-Democrats, everywhere, among all social strata, and in all positions from which we can learn the inner springs of our state mechanism. Such people are required, not only for propaganda and agitation, but in a still larger measure for organisation.

Is there a basis for activity among all classes of the population? Whoever doubts this lags in his consciousness behind the spontaneous awakening of the masses. The working-class movement has aroused and is continuing to arouse discontent in some, hopes of support for the opposition in others, and in still others the realisation that the autocracy is unbearable and must inevitably fall. We would be “politicians” and Social-Democrats in name only (as all too often happens in reality), if we failed to realise that our task is to utilise every manifestation of discontent, and to gather and turn to the best account every protest, however small. This is quite apart from the fact that the millions of the labouring peasantry, handicraftsmen, petty artisans, etc., would always listen eagerly to the speech of any Social-Democrat who is at all qualified. Indeed, is there a single social class in which there are no individuals, groups, or circles that are discontented with the lack of rights and with tyranny and, therefore, accessible to the propaganda of Social-Democrats as the spokesmen of the most pressing general democratic needs? To those who desire to have a clear idea of what the political agitation of a Social-Democrat among all classes and strata of the population should be like, we would

point to political exposures in the broad sense of the word as the principal (but, of course, not the sole) form of this agitation.

“We must arouse in every section of the population that is at all politically conscious a passion for political exposure,” I wrote in my article “Where To Begin” [Iskra, May (No. 4), 1901], with which I shall deal in greater detail later. “We must not be discouraged by the fact that the voice of political exposure is today so feeble, timid, and infrequent. This is not because of a wholesale submission to police despotism, but because those who are able and ready to make exposures have no tribune from which to speak, no eager and encouraging audience, they do not see anywhere among the people that force to which it would be worth while directing their complaint against the ‘omnipotent’ Russian Government.... We are now in a position to provide a tribune for the nation-wide exposure of the tsarist government, and it is our duty to do this. That tribune must be a Social-Democratic newspaper.”

The ideal audience for political exposure is the working class, which is first and foremost in need of all-round and live political knowledge, and is most capable of converting this knowledge into active struggle, even when that struggle does not promise “palpable results”. A tribune for nation-wide exposures can be only an all-Russia newspaper. “Without a political organ, a political movement deserving that name is inconceivable in the Europe of today”; in this respect Russia must undoubtedly be included in present-day Europe. The press long ago became a power in our country, otherwise the government would not spend tens of thousands of rubles to bribe it and to subsidise the Katkovs and Meshcherskys. And it is no novelty in autocratic Russia for the underground press to

break through the wall of censorship and compel the legal and conservative press to speak openly of it. This was the case in the seventies and even in the fifties. How much broader and deeper are now the sections of the people willing to read the illegal underground press, and to learn from it "how to live and how to die", to use the expression of a worker who sent a letter to Iskra (No. 7). Political exposures are as much a declaration of war against the government as economic exposures are a declaration of war against the factory owners. The moral significance of this declaration of war will be all the greater, the wider and more powerful the campaign of exposure will be and the more numerous and determined the social class that has declared war in order to begin the war. Hence, political exposures in themselves serve as a powerful instrument for disintegrating the system we oppose, as a means for diverting from the enemy his casual or temporary allies, as a means for spreading hostility and distrust among the permanent partners of the autocracy.

In our time only a party that will organise really nation-wide exposures can become the vanguard of the revolutionary forces. The word "nation-wide" has a very profound meaning. The overwhelming majority of the non-working-class expositors (be it remembered that in order to become the vanguard, we must attract other classes) are sober politicians and level-headed men of affairs. They know perfectly well how dangerous it is to "complain" even against a minor official, let alone against the "omnipotent" Russian Government. And they will come to us with their complaints only when they see that these complaints can really have effect, and that we represent a political force. In order to become such a force in the eyes of outsiders, much persistent and stubborn work is required to raise our own

consciousness, initiative, and energy.. To accomplish this it is not enough to attach a “vanguard” label to rearguard theory and practice.

But if we have to undertake the organisation of a really nationwide exposure of the government, in what way will then the class character of our movement be expressed? — the overzealous advocate of “close organic contact with the proletarian struggle” will ask us, as indeed he does. The reply is manifold: we Social-Democrats will organise these nationwide exposures; all questions raised by the agitation will be explained in a consistently Social-Democratic spirit, without any concessions to deliberate or undeliberate distortions of Marxism; the all-round political agitation will be conducted by a party which unites into one inseparable whole the assault on the government in the name of the entire people, the revolutionary training of the proletariat, and the safeguarding of its political independence, the guidance of the economic struggle of the working class, and the utilisation of all its spontaneous conflicts with its exploiters which rouse and bring into our camp increasing numbers of the proletariat.

But a most characteristic feature of Economism is its failure to understand this connection, more, this identity of the most pressing need of the proletariat (a comprehensive political education through the medium of political agitation and political exposures) with the need of the general democratic movement. This lack of understanding is expressed, not only in “Martynovite” phrases, but in the references to a supposedly class point of view identical in meaning with these phrases. Thus, the authors of the Economist letter in Iskra, No. 12, state: “This basic drawback of Iskra (overestimation of ideology) is

also the cause of its inconsistency on the question of the attitude of Social-Democracy to the various social classes and tendencies. By theoretical reasoning (not by "the growth of Party tasks, which grow together with the Party"), Iskra solved the problem of the immediate transition to the struggle against absolutism. In all probability it senses the difficulty of such a task for the workers under the present state of affairs (not only senses, but knows full well that this task appears less difficult to the workers than to the Economist intellectuals with their nursemaid concern, for the workers are prepared to fight even for demands which, to use the language of the never-to-be-forgotten Martynov, do not "promise palpable results") but lacking the patience to wait until the workers will have gathered sufficient forces for this struggle, Iskra begins to seek allies in the ranks of the liberals and intellectuals". . . .

Yes, we have indeed lost all "patience" "waiting" for the blessed time, long promised us by diverse "conciliators", when the Economists will have stopped charging the workers with their own backwardness and justifying their own lack of energy with allegations that the workers lack strength. We ask our Economists: What do they mean by "the gathering of workingclass strength for the struggle"? Is it not evident that this means the political training of the workers, so that all the aspects of our vile autocracy are revealed to them? And is it not clear that precisely for this work we need "allies in the ranks of the liberals and intellectuals", who are prepared to join us in the exposure of the political attack on the Zemstvos, on the teachers, on the statisticians, on the students, etc.? Is this surprisingly "intricate mechanism" really so difficult to understand? Has not P. B. Axelrod constantly repeated since 1897 that "the task before the Russian Social-Democrats of

acquiring adherents and direct and indirect allies among the non-proletarian classes will be solved principally and primarily by the character of the propagandist activities conducted among the proletariat itself"? But the Martynovs and the other Economists continue to imagine that "by economic struggle against the employers and the government" the workers must first gather strength (for trade-unionist politics) and then "go over" — we presume from trade-unionist "training for activity" to Social-Democratic activity!

"...In this quest," continue the Economists, "Iskra not infrequently departs from the class point of view, obscures class antagonisms, and puts into the forefront the common nature of the discontent with the government, although the causes and the degree of the discontent vary considerably among the 'allies'. Such, for example, is Iskra's attitude towards the Zemstvo . . ." Iskra, it is alleged, "promises the nobles that are dissatisfied with the government's sops the assistance of the working class, but it does not say a word about the class antagonism that exists between these social strata." If the reader will turn to the article "The Autocracy and the Zemstvo" (Iskra, Nos. 2 and 4), to which, in all probability, the authors of the letter refer, he will find that they deal with the attitude of the government towards the "mild agitation of the bureaucratic Zemstvo, which is based on the social-estates", and towards the "independent activity of even the propertied classes". The article states that the workers cannot look on indifferently while the government is waging a struggle against the Zemstvo, and the Zemstvos are called upon to stop making mild speeches and to speak firmly and resolutely when revolutionary Social-Democracy confronts the government in all its strength. What the authors of the letter do not agree with here is not clear. Do

they think that the workers will “not understand” the phrases “propertied classes” and “bureaucratic Zemstvo based on the social-estates”? Do they think that urging the Zemstvo to abandon mild speeches and to speak firmly is “overestimating ideology”? Do they imagine the workers can “gather strength” for the struggle against the autocracy if they know nothing about the attitude of the autocracy towards the Zemstvo as well? All this too remains unknown. One thing alone is clear and that is that the authors of the letter have a very vague idea of what the political tasks of Social-Democracy are. This is revealed still more clearly by their remark: “Such, too, is Iskra’s attitude towards the student movement” (i.e., it also “obscures the class antagonisms”). Instead of calling on the workers to declare by means of public demonstrations that the real breeding-place of unbridled violence, disorder, and outrage is not the university youth but the Russian Government (Iskra, No. 2) we ought probably to have inserted arguments in the spirit of Rabochaya Mysl! Such ideas were expressed by Social-Democrats in the autumn of 1901, after the events of February and March, on the eve of a fresh upsurge of the student movement, which reveals that even in this sphere the “spontaneous” protest against the autocracy is outstripping the conscious Social-Democratic leadership of the movement. The spontaneous striving of the workers to defend the students who are being assaulted by the police and the Cossacks surpasses the conscious activity of the Social-Democratic organisation!

“And yet in other articles,” continue the authors of the letter, “Iskra sharply condemns all compromise and defends, for instance, the intolerant conduct of the Guesdists.” We would advise those who are wont so conceitedly and frivolously to declare that the present disagreements among the Social-

Democrats are unessential and do not justify a split, to ponder these words. Is it possible for people to work together in the same organisation, when some among them contend that we have done extremely little to explain the hostility of the autocracy to the various classes and to inform the workers of the opposition displayed by the various social strata to the autocracy, while others among them see in this clarification a “compromise” — evidently a compromise with the theory of “economic struggle against the employers and the government”?

We urged the necessity of carrying the class struggle into the rural districts in connection with the fortieth anniversary of the emancipation of the peasantry (issue No. 3 and spoke of the irreconcilability of the local government bodies and the autocracy in relation to Witte’s secret Memorandum (No. 4). In connection with the new law we attacked the feudal landlords and the government which serves them (No. 8[21]) and we welcomed the illegal Zemstvo congress. We urged the Zemstvo to pass over from abject petitions (No. 8[22]) to struggle. We encouraged the students, who had begun to understand the need for the political struggle, and to undertake this struggle (No. 3), while, at the same time, we lashed out at the “outrageous incomprehension” revealed by the adherents of the “purely student” movement, who called upon the students to abstain from participating in the street demonstrations (No. 3, in connection with the manifesto issued by the Executive Committee of the Moscow students on February 25). We exposed the “senseless dreams” and the “lying hypocrisy” of the cunning liberals of Rossiya[26] (No. 5), while pointing to the violent fury with which the government-gaoler persecuted “peaceful writers, aged professors, scientists, and well-known

liberal Zemstvo members" (No. 5, "Police Raid on Literature"). We exposed the real significance of the programme of "state protection for the welfare of the workers" and welcomed the "valuable admission" that "it is better, by granting reforms from above, to forestall the demand for such reforms from below than to wait for those demands to be put forward" (No. 6[23]). We encouraged the protesting statisticians (No. 7) and censured the strike-breaking statisticians (No. 9). He who sees in these tactics an obscuring of the class-consciousness of the proletariat and a compromise with liberalism reveals his utter failure to understand the true significance of the programme of the Credo and carries out that programme de facto, however much he may repudiate it. For by such an approach he drags Social-Democracy towards the "economic struggle against the employers and the government" and yields to liberalism, abandons the task of actively intervening in every "liberal" issue and of determining his own, Social-Democratic, attitude towards this question.

Political Agitation and “The Class Point of View”

Iskra, No. 16, February 1, 1902

Lenin Collected Works, Volume 5

Let us begin with an illustration.

The reader will remember the sensation that was created by the speech delivered by M. A. Stakhovich, Marshal of the Nobility of Orel Gubernia, at a missionary congress, in the course of which he urged that freedom of conscience be recognised by law. The conservative press, led by *Moskovskiye Vedomosti*, is conducting a furious campaign against Mr. Stakhovich. It cannot find names vile enough with which to call him and almost goes so far as to accuse the entire Orel nobility of high treason for having re-elected Mr. Stakhovich as Marshal. Now, this re-election is indeed very significant and to a certain degree it bears the character of a demonstration of the nobility against police tyranny and outrage.

Stakhovich, says *Moskovskiye Vedomosti*, “is not so much Marshal of the Nobility, as the oh, so gay Misha Stakhovich, the life and soul of the party, the clever conversationalist...” (No. 348, 1901). So much the worse for you, gentlemen, defenders of the bludgeon. If even our jovial landlords begin to talk about freedom of conscience, then the infamies of the priests and the police must verily be without number....

“What does our ‘intellectual’, frivolous crowd that instigates and applauds the Stakhoviches care for the affairs of our sacred orthodox faith and our time-honoured attitude towards it?”... Once again, so much the worse for you, gentlemen, champions of the autocracy, the orthodox faith, and the national essence. A

fine system indeed our police ridden autocracy must be, if it has permeated even religion with the spirit of the prison-cell, so that the "Stakhoviches" (who have no firm convictions in matters of religion, but who are interested, as we shall see, in preserving a stable religion) become utterly indifferent (if not actually hostile) to this notorious "national" faith. "... They call our faith a delusion!! They mock at us because, thanks to this 'delusion', we fear and try to avoid sin and we carry out our obligations uncomplainingly, no matter how severe they may be; because we find the strength and courage to bear sorrow and privations and forbear pride in times of success and good fortune...." So! The orthodox faith is dear to them because it teaches people to bear misery "uncomplainingly". What a profitable faith it is indeed for the governing classes! In a society so organised that an insignificant minority enjoys wealth and power, while the masses constantly suffer "privations" and bear "severe obligations", it is quite natural for the exploiters to sympathise with a religion that teaches people to bear "uncomplainingly" the hell on earth for the sake of an alleged celestial paradise. But in its zeal Moskovskiye Vedomosti became too garrulous. So garrulous, in fact, that unwittingly it spoke the truth. We read on: "... They do not suspect that if they, the Stakhoviches, eat well, sleep peacefully, and live merrily, it is thanks to this 'delusion'."

The sacred truth! This is precisely the case. It is because religious "delusions" are so widespread among the masses that the Stakhoviches and the Oblomovs," and all our capitalists who live by the labour of the masses, and even Moskovskiye Vedomosti itself, "sleep peacefully". And the more education spreads among the people, the more will religious prejudices give way to socialist consciousness, the nearer will be the day

of victory for the proletariat — the victory that will emancipate all oppressed classes from the slavery they endure in modern society.

But having blurted out the truth on one point, *Moskovskiye Vedomosti* disposed, far too easily, of another interesting point. It is obviously mistaken in believing that the Stakhoviches “do not realise” the significance of religion, and that they demand liberal forms out of sheer “thoughtlessness”. Such an interpretation of a hostile political trend is too childishly naïve. The fact that in this instance Mr. Stakhovich came forward as advocate of the entire liberal trend was proved best of all by *Moskovskiye Vedomosti* itself; otherwise, what need was there for waging such a campaign against a single speech? What need was there for speaking, not about Stakhovich, but about the Stakhoviches, about the “intellectual crowd”?

Moskovskiye Vedomosti's error was, of course, deliberate. That paper is more unwilling than it is unable to analyse the liberalism it bates from the class point of view. That it does not desire to do so goes without saying; but its inability to do so interests us very much more, because this is a complaint that even very many revolutionaries and socialists suffer from. Thus, the authors of the letter published in No. 12 of *Iskra*, who accuse us of departing from the “class point of view” for striving in our newspaper to follow all manifestations of liberal discontent and protest, suffer from this complaint, as do also the authors of *Proletarskaya Borba* and of several pamphlets in “The Social-Democratic Library”, who imagine that our autocracy represents the absolutist rule of the bourgeoisie; likewise the Martynovs, who seek to persuade us to abandon the many-sided campaign of exposure (i.e., the widest possible

political agitation) against the autocracy and to concentrate our efforts mainly upon the struggle for economic reforms (to give something “positive” to the working class, to put forward in its name “concrete demands” for legislative and administrative measures “which promise certain palpable results”); likewise, too, the Nadezhdins, who, on reading the correspondence in our paper on the statistical conflicts, ask in astonishment: “Good Lord, what is this—a Zemstvo paper?”

All these socialists forget that the interests of the autocracy coincide only with certain interests of the proper tied classes, and only under certain circumstances; frequently it happens that its interests do not coincide with the interests of these classes, as a whole, but only with those of certain of their strata. The interests of other bourgeois strata and the more widely understood interests of the entire bourgeoisie, of the development of capitalism as a whole, necessarily give rise to a liberal opposition to the autocracy. For instance, the autocracy guarantees the bourgeoisie opportunities to employ the crudest forms of exploitation, but, on the other hand, places a thousand obstacles in the way of the extensive development of the productive forces and the spread of education; in this way it arouses against itself, not only the petty bourgeoisie, but at times even the big bourgeoisie. The autocracy guarantees (?) the bourgeoisie protection against socialism, but since the people are deprived of rights, this protection is necessarily transformed into a system of police outrages that rouse the indignation of the entire people. What the result of these antagonistic tendencies is, what relative strength of conservative and liberal views, or trends, among the bourgeoisie obtains at the present moment, cannot be learned from a couple of general theses, for this depends on all the

special features of the social and political situation at a given moment. To determine this, one must study the situation in detail and carefully watch all the conflicts with the government, no matter by what social stratum they are initiated. **It is precisely the “class point of view” that makes it impermissible for a Social-Democrat to remain indifferent to the discontent and the protests of the “Stakhoviches”.**

The reasoning and activity of the above-mentioned socialists show that they are indifferent to liberalism and thus reveal their incomprehension of the basic theses of the Communist Manifesto, the “Gospel” of international Social-Democracy. Let us recall, for instance, the words that the bourgeoisie itself provides material for the political education of the proletariat by its struggle for power, by the conflicts of various strata and groups within it, etc. Only in politically free countries has the proletariat easy access to this material (and then only to part of it). In enslaved Russia, however, we Social-Democrats must work hard to obtain this “material” for the working class, i.e., we must ourselves undertake the task of conducting general political agitation, of carrying on a public exposure campaign against the autocracy. This task is particularly imperative in periods of political ferment. **We must bear in mind that in one year of intensified political life the proletariat can obtain more revolutionary training than in several years of political calm.** For this reason, the tendency of the above-mentioned socialists consciously or unconsciously to restrict the scope and content of **political’ agitation is particularly harmful.**

Let us recall also the words that the Communists support every revolutionary movement against the existing system. **Those words are often interpreted too narrowly and are not taken to**

imply support for the liberal opposition. It must not be forgotten, however, that there are periods when every conflict with the government arising out of progressive social interests, however small, may under certain conditions (of which our support is one) flare up into a general conflagration. Suffice it to recall the great social movement which developed in Russia out of the struggle between the students and the government over academic demands, or the conflict that arose in France between all the progressive elements and the militarists over a trial in which the verdict had been rendered on the basis of forged evidence. **Hence, it is our bounden duty to explain to the proletariat every liberal and democratic protest, to widen and support it, with the active participation of the workers,** be it a conflict between the Zemstvo and the Ministry of the Interior, between the nobility and the police régime of the Orthodox Church, between statisticians and the bureaucrats, between peasants and the “Zemstvo” officials, between religious sects and the rural police, etc., etc. Those who contemptuously turn up their noses at the slight importance of some of these conflicts, or at the “hopelessness” of the attempts to fan them into a general conflagration, do not realise that all-sided political agitation is a focus in which the vital interests of political education of the proletariat coincide with the vital interests of social development as a whole, of the entire people, that is, of all its democratic elements. **It is our direct duty to concern ourselves with every liberal question,** to determine our Social-Democratic attitude towards it, to help the proletariat to take an active part in its solution and to accomplish the solution in its own, **proletarian way.** Those who refrain from concerning themselves in this way (whatever their intentions) in actuality leave the liberals in command, place in

their hands the political education of the workers, and concede the hegemony in the political struggle to elements which, **in the final analysis, are leaders of bourgeois democracy.**

The class character of the Social-Democratic movement must not be expressed in the restriction of our tasks to the direct and immediate needs of the “labour movement pure and simple”. It must be expressed in our leadership of every aspect and every manifestation of the great struggle for liberation that is being waged by the proletariat, the only truly revolutionary class in modern society. Social-Democracy must constantly and unswervingly spread the influence of the labour movement to all spheres of the social and political life of contemporary society. It must lead, not only the economic, but also the political, struggle of the proletariat. **It must never for a moment lose sight of our ultimate goal, but always carry on propaganda for the proletarian ideology** —the theory of scientific socialism, viz., Marxism—guard it against distortion, and develop it further. We must untiringly combat any and every bourgeois ideology, regardless of the fashionable and striking garb in which it may drape itself. The socialists we have mentioned above depart from the “class” point of view also because, and to the extent that, they remain indifferent to the task of combating the “criticism of Marxism”. Only the blind fail to see that this “criticism” has taken root more rapidly in Russia than in any other country, and has been more enthusiastically taken up by Russian liberal propaganda than by any other, precisely for the reason that it is one of the elements of the bourgeois (now consciously bourgeois) democracy now information in Russia.

It is particularly in regard to the political struggle that **the “class point of view” demands that the proletariat give an impetus to every democratic movement.** The political demands of working-class democracy do not differ in principle from those of bourgeois democracy, they differ only in degree. In the struggle for economic emancipation, for the socialist revolution, the proletariat stands on a basis different in principle and it stands alone (the small producer will come to its aid only to the extent that he enters, or is preparing to enter, its ranks). **In the struggle for political liberation, however, we have many allies, towards whom we must not remain indifferent.** But while our allies in the bourgeois-democratic camp, in struggling for liberal reforms, will always glance back and seek to adjust matters so that they will be able, as before, “to eat well, sleep peace fully, and live merrily” at other people’s expense, the proletariat will march forward to the end, without looking back. While the confreres of R. N. S. (author of the preface to Witte’s Memorandum) haggle with the government over the rights of the authoritative Zemstvo, or over a constitution, we will struggle for the democratic republic. We will not forget, however, that if we want to push someone forward, we must continuously keep our hands on that someone’s shoulders. **The party of the proletariat must learn to catch every liberal just at the moment when he is prepared to move forward an inch and make him move forward a yard. If he is obdurate, we will go forward without him and over him.**

REPLY TO CRITICISM OF OUR DRAFT PROGRAMME

1903

Lenin, *Collected Works*, Vol. 6, pp. 438-53.

Comrade X rejects the third and fourth points of the agrarian section of our draft and submits his own draft, in which all the points of the agrarian programme, as well as the preamble to it, are revised. We shall first examine Comrade X's objections to our draft, and then his own draft.

Against the third point, Comrade X advances the objection that the confiscation of the monasterial (and we would willingly add: church) estates and the royal demesnes as proposed by us would mean that the capitalists would grab the lands for next to nothing. It would be precisely those who plunder the peasants, he says, who would buy up these lands on the money they had plundered. To this we must remark that, in speaking about the sale of the confiscated estates, Comrade X draws an arbitrary conclusion that our programme does not contain. Confiscation means alienation of property without compensation. It is only of such alienation that our draft speaks. Our draft programme says nothing as to whether these lands are to be sold, and if so to whom and how, in what manner and on what terms. We are not binding ourselves, but reserve judgement as to the most expedient form in which to dispose of the confiscated properties when they are confiscated, when all the social and political conditions of such confiscation are clear. In this respect Comrade X's draft differs from our draft in demanding, not only confiscation, but the transference of the

confiscated lands "to the democratic state for their most advantageous utilisation by the population.

" Thus, Comrade X excludes one of the forms of the disposal of what has been confiscated (sale) and does not suggest any definite form (since it remains unclear just what constitutes or will constitute or should constitute the "most advantageous" utilisation, and just what classes of the "population" will receive the right to this utilisation and on what terms). Hence, Comrade X fails in any case to bring complete definiteness into the question of how the confiscated lands should be disposed of (nor can this be determined in advance), while he wrongly excludes their sale as one of the methods. It would be wrong to say that, under all circumstances and at all times, the Social-Democrats will be opposed to the sale of the land. In a police-controlled class state, even if it is a constitutional state, the class of property-owners may not infrequently be a far stauncher pillar of democracy than the class of tenant farmers dependent on that state. That is on the one hand. On the other hand, our draft makes for greater provision than Comrade X's draft does against confiscated lands being turned into "gifts to the capitalists" (insofar as any provision against this can be spoken of in general in the wording of a programme). And indeed, let us imagine the worst: let us imagine that, despite all its efforts, the workers' party will be unable to curb the capitalists' wilfulness and greed.[*] In that case, Comrade X's formulation affords free scope for the "most advantageous" utilisation of the confiscated lands by the capitalist class of the "population." On the contrary, our formulation, while it does not link up the basic demand with the form of its realisation, nevertheless envisages a strictly definite application of sums received from such realisation. When Comrade X says that "the Social-Democratic

Party cannot undertake in advance to decide in what concrete form the popular representative body will utilise the land which it will have at its command," he is confusing two different things: the method of realising (in other words: "the form of utilising") this land and the application of the sums received from this realisation. By leaving the question of the application of these-sums absolutely indefinite and tying his hands, even in part, in the question of the method of realisation, Comrade X introduces a double impairment into our draft.

* And if we are able to curb-them, then the sale of the land will not turn into plundering and gifts to the capitalists.

In our opinion, Comrade X is just as wrong when he presents the following objection to us: "It is likewise impossible to recover land redemption payments from the nobles, since many of them have squandered them all." As a matter of fact, this is no objection at all, since we do not even propose that these sums should simply be "recovered," but propose a special tax. In his article Comrade X himself cites facts showing that the big landowners "cut off" a particularly large share of the peasants' land for themselves, in some cases seizing as much as three-quarters of the land. Hence the demand for a special tax on the big landed nobility in particular is quite natural. It is likewise quite natural to designate funds thus obtained for the special use we demand, for in addition to the general task of returning to the people all revenues received by the state (a task which can be fully accomplished only under socialism), liberated Russia will inescapably be faced with the special and most pressing task of raising the peasants' standard of living, rendering serious aid to the poverty-stricken and hungry

masses, whose ranks are swelling so extremely rapidly under our autocratic system.

Let us pass to the fourth point, which Comrade X rejects in full, although he analyses only the first part of this point -- about the cut-off lands -- without any mention of the second part, envisaging eradication of the remnants of serfdom, which vary in different parts of the country. We shall begin with a formal remark by the author: he sees a contradiction in the fact that we demand abolition of the social-estates and the establishment of peasant, i.e., social-estate, committees. In fact, the contradiction is only a seeming one: the abolition of the social-estates requires a "dictatorship" of the lowest, oppressed social-estate, just as the abolition of classes in general, including the class of proletarians, requires the dictatorship of the proletariat. The object of our entire agrarian programme is the eradication of feudal and social-estate traditions in the sphere of agrarian relations, and to bring that about the only possible appeal can be to the lowest social-estate, to those who are oppressed by these remnants of the serf-owning system.

The author's principal objection boils down to the following: "it is hardly provable" that the cut-off lands are the principal basis of the labour-rent system, since the size of these cut-off lands depended on whether the serf peasants were quit-rent peasants, and hence had much land, or corvée peasants, and hence had little land. "The size of the cut off lands and their importance depend on a combination of historical conditions"; for instance, the percentage of cut off lands is negligible on the small estates in Volsk Uyezd, while on the large estates it is enormous. This is how the author reasons, without noticing that he is getting away from the point. The cut-off lands were indubitably

distributed most unevenly, depending on a combination of the most varied conditions (including a condition such as the existence of the *corvée* system or quit-rent under the serf-owning system). But what does that prove? Is not the labour-rent system also most unevenly distributed? Is not the existence of this system also determined by a combination of the most varied historical conditions? The author undertakes to disprove the connection between the cut-off lands and the labour-rent system but talks only about the reasons for the cut-off lands and the differences in their size, without referring by as much as a single word to this connection. Only once does the author make an assertion which approaches immediately the substance of his thesis, and yet it is in this very assertion that he is absolutely wrong. "Consequently," he says, summing up his arguments about the influence of quit-rent or the *corvée* system, "where the peasants were *corvée* peasants (mainly in the central agricultural area), these cut-off lands will be negligible, whereas in those places where they were quit-rent peasants, all of the landlords' land may consist of 'cut-off lands.'" The words italicised by us contain a blunder which destroys the author's whole line of argument. It is precisely in the central agricultural area, this main centre of the labour-rent system and all sorts of remnants of serfdom, that the cut-off lands are not "negligible" but enormous, much greater than in the non-black-earth zone, where quit-rent predominates over *corvée*. Here are data on this question, received from a comrade who is a professional statistician. He has compared data given in the Military-Statistical Abstract on the holdings of landlords' peasants prior to the Reform with the figures showing land holdings in 1878, thus determining the size of the cut-off lands in each gubernia. It appeared that in nine gubernias of the non-black-earth

zone[*] the landlords' peasants held 10,421,000 dessiatines prior to the Reform, whereas only 9,746,000 dessiatines were left to them in 1878, i.e., 675,000 dessiatines, or 6.5 per cent of the land, were cut off, the average per gubernia being 72,800 dessiatines. On the other hand, in fourteen black-earth gubernias [**] the peasants held 12,795,000 dessiatines and were left with 9,996,000 dessiatines, i.e., 2,799,000 dessiatines, or 21.9 per cent, were cut off, an average of 199,100 dessiatines per gubernia. The only exception was the third area, in the steppes, where in five gubernias [***] the peasants held 2,203,000 dessiatines and they were left with 1,580,000, i.e., 623,000, or 28.3 per cent, were cut off, the average per gubernia being 124,600 dessiatines.[****]

* Pskov, Novgorod, Tver, Moscow, Vladimir, Smolensk, Kaluga, Yaroslavl, and Kostroma gubernias.

** Orel, Tula, Ryazan, Kursk, Voronezh, Tambov, Nizhni Novgorod, Simbirsk, Kazan, Penza, Saratov, Chernigov, Kharkov, and Poltava gubernias (37 per cent of the land cut off).

*** Kherson, Ekaterinoslav, Taurida, Don (approximate figure), and Samara gubernias.

**** Comparing these figures on the cut-off lands in three areas with the figures on the proportion of corvée peasants to the total number of peasants (according to the data of the Drafting Commissions: see Vol. 32, p. 686 of the Encyclopaedic Dictionary, the article "The Peasants"), we get the following relationship. Non-black-earth area (9 gubernias): cut-off lands - 6.5 per cent; corvée peasants -- 43.9 per cent (average for 9 gubernias). Central black-earth area (14 gubernias): cut-off lands -- 21.9 per cent, corvée peasants -- 76 per cent. Steppe area (5 gubernias): cut-off lands -- 28.3 per cent; corvée peasants --

95.3 per cent. Hence the relationship is just the opposite to what Comrade X wants to make out.

This area is an exception, since here the capitalist system predominates over the labour-rent system, while the percentage of cut-off lands is the highest here. But this exception only goes to prove the general rule, for here the influence of the cut-off lands has been paralysed by such important circumstances as the peasants possessing the largest allotments, despite the cut-off lands, and the greatest amount of free land available here for renting. Thus, the author's attempt to cast doubt on the existence of a connection between the cut-off lands and the labour-rent system is quite unsuccessful. On the whole, there is no doubt that the centre of the labour-rent system in Russia (the central black-earth area) is at the same time the centre of the cut-off lands. We emphasise "on the whole" in reply to the following question put by the author. Against the words in our programme about restitution of land which has been cut off and is now used as a means of bondage, the author has put in brackets the following question: "but what about that which is not used as such?" Our reply to him is that the programme is not a legislative bill on the restitution of the cut-off lands. We define and explain the general significance of the cut-off lands, but do not speak of individual cases. Is it really still possible, after all the Narodnik literature on the position of the post-Reform peasantry, to have any doubts about the fact that on the whole the cut-off lands serve as a means of serf bondage? Is it really possible, we ask further, to deny the connection between the cut-off lands and the labour-rent system, when this connection follows from the most elementary concepts on the post-Reform economy of Russia? The labour-rent system is a combination of the corvée system

and capitalism, of the "old regime" and "modern" economy, of the system of exploitation through land allotment and the system of exploitation through separation from the land. What could be a more glaring example of present-day corvée than a system of farming based on labour rendered in return for the use of cut-off lands (a system described as such, as a special system, and not something incidental, in Narodnik literature in the good old days, when nobody had even heard of the hackneyed and narrow-minded Marxists)? Is it really possible to believe that today the peasant is tied down to the land only because there is no law granting freedom of movement, and not because of the existence, in addition to that (and partly at the root of that), of bondage service for the use of the cut-off lands?

After failing to prove in any way that there is any basis for his doubting the existence of a connection between the cut-off lands and bondage, the author continues his argument as follows: restitution of the cut-off lands is the allotting of small plots of land based not so much on the requirements of peasant farming as on historical "tradition." Like any allotment of an insufficient quantity of land (there can be no question of an adequate allotment), it will not destroy bondage but will rather create it, since it will cause renting of land that is lacking, renting because of need, subsistence tenancy, and will consequently be a reactionary measure.

Here too the argument misses the mark, for the agrarian section of our programme does not at all "promise" to do away with all want in general (this promise is given only in the general socialist section of the programme), but promises only to eradicate (at least in part) the remnants of the serf-owning system. Our programme refers, not to allotment of all sorts of

small plots of land in general, but specifically to doing away with at least one of the already existing forms of bondage. The author has departed from the trend of thought underlying our programme, and arbitrarily and incorrectly attributed another meaning to it. Indeed, just examine his line of reasoning. He rejects (and in this respect, he is of course right) the interpretation of cut-off lands as implying just strips of land belonging to different owners, and says: "If the cut-off lands are to constitute additional allotment land, it is necessary to see whether there are enough cut-off lands to remove relationships entailing bondage, since from this standpoint bondage relationships are a result of land-hunger." Absolutely nowhere in our programme is the assertion made that there are enough cut-off lands to do away with bondage. Only the socialist revolution can do away with all bondage, whereas in the agrarian programme we take our stand on the ground of bourgeois relationships and demand certain measures "with a view to eradicating" (we do not even say that this can be complete eradication) the remnants of the serf-owning system. The whole essence of our agrarian programme is that the rural proletariat must fight together with the rich peasantry for the abolition of the remnants of serfdom, for the cut-off lands. Anyone who examines this proposition closely will grasp the incorrectness, the irrelevance and illogicality of an objection such as: why only the cut-off lands, if that is not enough? Because together with the rich peasantry the proletariat will be unable to go, and must not go, beyond the abolition of serfdom, beyond restitution of the cut-off lands, etc. Beyond that, the proletariat in general and the rural proletariat in particular will march alone ; not together with the "peasantry," not together with the rich peasant, but against him. The reason we do not go

beyond the demand for the cut-off lands is not because we do not wish the peasant well or because we are afraid of scaring the bourgeoisie, but because we do not want the rural proletariat to help the rich peasant more than is necessary, more than is essential to the proletariat. Both the proletariat and the rich peasant suffer from serf bondage; against this bondage they can and should go together; but against the other forms of bondage, the proletariat will go alone. Hence the distinction made in our programme between serf bondage and all other bondage necessarily follows from the strict observance of the class interests of the proletariat. We would be running counter to these interests and would be abandoning the class standpoint of the proletariat, if we allowed our programme to state that the "peasantry" (i.e., the rich plus the poor) will go together beyond eradication of the remnants of serfdom; we would thereby be putting a brake on this absolutely essential, and, from the standpoint of the Social-Democrat, the most important, process of the final separation of the rural proletariat from the land-holding peasantry, the process of the development of proletarian class-consciousness in the countryside. When the Narodniks, people of the old faith, and the Socialist-Revolutionaries, people without faith or convictions of any kind, shrug their shoulders at our agrarian programme, that is because they (for instance, Mr. Rudin and Co.) have no idea of the real economic system in our countryside and its evolution, have no idea of the bourgeois relations which have been developing and have almost taken shape within the village commune, or of the strength of the bourgeois peasantry. They approach our agrarian programme with the old Narodnik prejudices, or more frequently with fragments of these prejudices, and begin to criticise individual

points or their wording, without even comprehending the aim of our agrarian programme or the social and economic relations it has in view. When they are told that our agrarian programme does not refer to the struggle against the bourgeois system, but to the evolution of bourgeois relations in the countryside, they merely rub their eyes in amazement, unaware (because of their characteristic indifference to theory) that their perplexity is simply an echo of the struggle between the Narodnik and the Marxist world outlook.

To the Marxist who undertakes to draft an agrarian programme, the question of the remnants of serfdom in the bourgeois and capitalistically developing Russian countryside is one that has already been settled, and it is only owing to their utter lack of principle that the Socialist-Revolutionaries are unable to see that if they want to offer any material criticism they must contrapose to our solution of this question something that is at least coherent and integral. To the Marxist the problem is simply to avoid either of two extremes: on the one hand, not to fall into the error of those who say that, from the standpoint of the proletariat, we are in no way concerned with any immediate and temporary non-proletarian tasks, and on the other, not to allow the proletariat's co-operation in the attainment of the immediate democratic tasks to dim its class-consciousness and its class distinctiveness. In the sphere of agrarian relationships proper, this task reduces itself to the following: the bringing forward of a slogan of such an agrarian reform on the basis of the existing society as would most completely sweep away the remnants of serfdom and most rapidly single out the rural proletariat from the undifferentiated mass of the peasantry as a whole.

We believe that our programme has coped with this task. Moreover, we are not at all put out by Comrade X's question: what should we do if the peasant committees demand not the cut-off lands but all the land? We ourselves demand all the land, only, of course, not "with a view to eradicating the remnants of the serf-owning system" (to which end the agrarian section of our programme limits itself), but with a view to the socialist revolution. And it is precisely this goal that we are always and under all circumstances tirelessly pointing out to the "rural poor." There is no grosser error than to think that the Social-Democrat can go to the villages only with the agrarian section of his programme, that he can even for a moment furl his socialist banner. If the demand for all the land is a demand for the nationalisation of the land or its transference to the land-holding peasants of today, we shall appraise this demand from the standpoint of the proletariat's interests, taking all factors into consideration: we cannot, for instance, say in advance whether, when the revolution awakens them to political life, our land-holding peasants will come out as a democratic revolutionary party or as a party of Order. We must draft our programme so as to be prepared even for the worst, and if the best combinations ensue, then that will only facilitate our work and give it a new stimulus.

It remains for us to deal with the following argument by Comrade X on the question under discussion. "To this," he writes concerning his thesis that the allotment of the cut-off lands will strengthen subsistence farming tenancy, "to this, exception might be taken on the ground that the allotment of the cut-off lands is important as a means of abolishing bondage forms of renting these lands, and not as a means of increasing and strengthening small subsistence farming. However, it is

easy to see that there is a logical contradiction in this objection. The allotment of small plots of land is the allotment of land in insufficient quantity for the conduct of progressive farming but sufficient to strengthen subsistence farming. Hence, subsistence farming is strengthened by the allotment of an insufficient quantity of land. But as to whether bondage forms of renting will be abolished by this -- that still remains to be proved. We have shown that they will become stronger because of the increase in the number of petty proprietors -- competitors in renting the landlord's land."

We have quoted this argument of Comrade X's in full so as to make it easier for the reader to judge where the "logical contradiction" actually lies. As a general rule the peasants are at present using the cut-off lands on terms of serf bondage. Upon the restitution of the cut-off lands, the peasants will use them as free owners. Does it really "still remain to be proved" that this restitution will abolish the serf bondage resulting from these cut-off lands? It is a matter of special plots of land that have already given rise to a special form of bondage, but the author substitutes for this particular concept the general category of "an insufficient quantity of land"! This means skipping the question. It means assuming that at present the cut-off lands do not engender any special form of bondage: in which case their restitution would really be simply the "allotment of an insufficient quantity of land," and then we would really be unable to support this measure. But it is perfectly obvious to everyone that this is not the case.

Further. The author should not confuse serf bondage (the labour-rent system of farming) engendered by the cut-off lands with subsistence farming tenancy, with renting as a result of

need in general. The latter form of renting exists in all European countries: under the capitalist system of farming, the competition of petty proprietors and small tenants everywhere and always inflates land prices and land rent to the proportions of "bondage." We cannot do away with this kind of bondage[*] until we get rid of capitalism. But can this be regarded as an objection to particular measures of struggle against particular and purely Russian forms of bondage? Comrade X reasons as though he objected to a reduction of the working day on the grounds that the intensity of labour would be increased as a result of this reduction. The reduction of the working day is a partial reform, which eradicates only one form of bondage, viz., enslavement by means of longer working hours. Other forms of bondage, as, for instance, "speeding up" the workers, are not eliminated by this reform, and all forms of bondage in general cannot be eradicated by any reforms on the basis of capitalism.

When the author says: "Allotment of the cut-off lands is a reactionary measure, which reinforces bondage," he is advancing a proposition which stands in such glaring contradiction to all the data on post-Reform peasant farming that he himself is unable to maintain this stand. He contradicts himself when he says somewhat earlier: ". . . It goes without saying that it is not the business of the Social-Democratic Party to implant capitalism. This will take place irrespective of the desire of any party, if peasant tenure extends. . . ." But if the extension of peasant tenure in general leads to the development of capitalism, how much the more inevitably will this result from the extension of peasant land ownership to the special plots of land which engender a specifically serf form of bondage. The restitution of the cut-off lands will raise the peasants' standard of living, expand the home market, increase

the demand for wage-workers in the towns, and likewise the demand for wage-labourers among the rich peasants and landlords, who lose a certain mainstay of the labour-rent system of farming. As to the "implanting of capitalism," that is an altogether queer objection. The restitution of the cut-off lands would signify the implanting of capitalism only were that restitution necessary and advantageous solely to the bourgeoisie. But that is not the case. It is no less, if not more, necessary and advantageous to the rural poor, who are suffering from bondage and the labour-rent system. The rural proletariat is oppressed together with the rural bourgeois by serf bondage, which is based to a considerable degree on these very cut-off lands. That is why the rural proletariat cannot emancipate himself from this bondage without thereby emancipating the rural bourgeois too. Only Messrs. the Rudins and similar Socialist-Revolutionaries, who have forgotten their kinship with the Narodniks, can see in this an "implanting" of capitalism.

* This bondage may be limited, kept in check, by empowering the courts to reduce rents -- a demand we advance in our programme.

Still less convincing are Comrade X's arguments on the question of the feasibility of restituting the cut-off lands. The Volsk Uyezd data he cites speak against him: almost one-fifth of the estates (18 out of 99) have remained in the hands of the old proprietors, i.e., the cut-off lands could be transferred to the peasants directly and without any redemption. Another third of the estates have changed hands entirely, i.e., here it would be necessary to redeem the cut-off lands at the expense of the big landed nobility. And only in 16 cases out of 99 would it be

necessary to redeem land from peasants and other owners who purchased it in portions. We simply cannot understand how the restitution of the cut-off lands can be "unfeasible" under such circumstances. Let us take the data referring to the selfsame Saratov Gubernia. We have before us the latest "Materials on the Question of the Needs of the Agricultural Industries in Saratov Gubernia" (Saratov, 1903). The size of all the cut-off lands held by former landlords' peasants is given as 600,000 dessiatines, or 42.7 per cent.*

* These latest Zemstvo statistics, we might note, fully bear out the contention of the aforementioned statistician that the data he submitted on the cut-off lands are an underestimation. According to those data the cut-off lands in Saratov Gubernia amounted only to 512,000 dessiatines (= 38 per cent). As a matter of fact, even 600,000 dessiatines is below the actual size of the cut-off lands, for in the first place, it does not include all the village communes of the former landlords' peasants, and, secondly, it covers only cultivable lands.

If in 1896 the Zemstvo statisticians could determine the size of the cut-off lands on the basis of extracts from the title-deeds and other documents, why can their size not be determined even more accurately by the peasant committees in, say, 1906? And if the figures for Volsk Uyezd are taken as a standard, then it would appear that approximately 120,000 dessiatines could be returned to the peasants at once and without any redemption, that about 200,000 dessiatines could be redeemed at once (at the expense of the noblemen's land) from estates which changed hands in their entirety, and that only with regard to the remaining land would the process of redemption (at the expense of the landed nobility), exchange, etc., be somewhat

more complicated. but in any case by no means "unfeasible." The significance the restitution of their 600,000 dessiatines of land would have for the peasants is, for example, evident from the fact that the total amount of privately owned land rented in Saratov Gubernia at the end of the nineties was approximately 900,000 dessiatines. Naturally, we do not intend to assert that all cut-off lands are being rented at the present time; we merely want to show graphically the proportion of the amount of land to be returned as property, to the amount of land which is now being rented very often on terms entailing bondage and serf bondage. This comparison testifies most eloquently to the force of the blow which the restitution of the cut-off lands would deal at relations entailing serf bondage, to the stimulus it would give to the revolutionary energy of the "peasantry" and -- what is most important from the viewpoint of the Social-Democrat -- to the tremendous impetus it would give to the ideological and political cleavage between the rural proletariat and the peasant bourgeoisie. For the peasant committees' work of expropriation would immediately and inevitably bring about just such a decided and irrevocable cleavage, and by no means a union of the entire "peasantry" for "semi-socialist" "egalitarian" demands for all the land, as the modern epigones of Narodism fondly imagine. The more revolutionary the action of the "peasantry" against the landlords, the more rapid and deep will this cleavage be, which will then be made manifest not by the statistical computations of Marxist research but by the political action of the peasant bourgeoisie, by the struggle of parties and classes within the peasant committees.

And note: by advancing the demand for the restitution of the cut-off lands we are deliberately confining our task to the framework of the existing order; we are obliged to do this if we

are to speak of a minimum programme and if we do not want to lapse into that kind of barefaced scheme-making, verging on charlatanry, in which "first place" is given to co-operatives, on the one hand, and to socialisation, on the other. We are replying to a question that has been raised but not by us,* to the question of the reforms of tomorrow which are being discussed by the illegal press, "society," by the Zemstvos, and, perhaps, even by the government.

* To what extent the question of agrarian reforms on the basis of the existing order has been raised "not by us" is evident, for example, from the following quotation which we have taken from an article by Mr. V. V., one of the most prominent theoreticians of Narodism, which dates back to the best period of his activity (*Otechestvenniye Zapiski*, 1882, Nos. 8 and 9). "The order which we are analysing," Mr. V. V. wrote at the time about our system of agriculture, "has been inherited by us from the serf-owning system. . . . Serfdom has collapsed but so far only in its juridical aspect and a few others; the system of agriculture, however, has remained the same as it was prior to the Reform. . . . The peasants were unable to continue running their farms solely on their own curtailed allotments; they absolutely had to use the lands that had been taken from them. . . . In order to secure the proper running of the small farms, it is necessary to guarantee the peasant the use of at least those lands that . . . in one way or another were at his disposal at the time of serfdom. This is the minimum desideratum that can be advanced on behalf of small scale farming." This is how the question was put by those who believed in Narodism and openly preached it, instead of unseemingly playing at hide-and-seek as the Socialist-Revolutionary gentlemen do. And Social-Democracy has appraised this Narodnik presentation in its

essence, as it always appraises bourgeois and petty-bourgeois demands. It took over in full the positive and progressive side of the demands (the struggle against all remnants of serfdom), rejecting petty-bourgeois illusions and pointing out that the eradication of the remnants of the serf-owning system will clear the road for, and speed up, capitalist development and not any other kind. It is precisely in the interests of social development and of untying the proletariat's hands, and not "for the sake of small-scale farming" that we present our demand for the restitution of the cut-off lands, while by no means pledging ourselves to assist the "small" peasant bourgeoisie either against serfdom or even against the big bourgeoisie.

We would be anarchists or simply windbags if we held ourselves aloof from this pressing, but by no means socialist, problem which has been raised by the entire post-Reform history of Russia. We must provide a correct solution, from the Social-Democratic standpoint, to this problem which has not been raised by us; we must define our position with regard to the agrarian reforms which all liberal society has already demanded and without which no reasonable person can imagine the political emancipation of Russia. And we define our stand on this liberal reform (liberal in the scientific, that is the Marxist, sense of the word), while remaining wholly true to our principle of support for the genuinely democratic movement, coupled with steady and persistent work to develop the class-consciousness of the proletariat. We lay down a practical line of conduct with regard to this kind of reform, which the government or the liberals must very soon adopt. We advance a slogan that impels towards a revolutionary issue a reform which has actually been prompted by life itself and not

concocted from the fantasy of a hazy, humanitarian Allerwelts socialism.

It is in this latter respect that the draft programme of Comrade X is in error. No answer whatever is given to the question of the attitude to be taken towards the forthcoming liberal reforms in agrarian relationships. Instead, we are offered (in points 5 and 7) an inferior and contradictory formulation of the demand for the nationalisation of the land. Contradictory, because the abolition of rent is at one time proposed by means of a tax, at another by means of transferring the land to society; inferior, because rents cannot be abolished by taxes, and because the land should (generally speaking) preferably be transferred to a democratic state, and not to small public organisations (like the present or future Zemstvos). The reasons for non-inclusion in our programme of the demand for the nationalisation of the land have already been given more than once, and we shall not repeat them here.

Point 8 does not at all bear upon the practical section of the programme, while Point 6 has been formulated by Comrade X in such a way as to have nothing "agrarian" left in it. Why he deletes the point on the courts and reduction of rents remains a mystery.

The author formulates Point 1 less clearly than is done in our draft, while his addition: "in the interests of defending the petty proprietor (and not of developing petty proprietorship)," is once again non-"agrarian," inaccurate (we are not out to defend petty proprietors who employ wage labour) and superfluous, for, inasmuch as we defend the person and not the property of the petty bourgeois, we do this through our demand for strictly defined social, financial, and other reforms.

The Autocracy and the Proletariat

Vperyod, No. 1, January 4, 1905 (December 22, 1904)

Lenin Collected Works, Volume 8, pages 17-28.

Russia is experiencing a resurgence of the constitutional movement. Our generation has never witnessed anything like the present political ferment. Legal newspapers are attacking the bureaucracy, demanding participation of the people's representatives in the state administration and pressing for liberal reforms. All varieties of meetings of Zemstvo officials, doctors, lawyers, engineers, farmers, municipal councillors, etc., etc., are adopting resolutions more or less definitely demanding a constitution. Passionate appeals for liberty and political accusations of a boldness to which the Russian man in the street is unaccustomed can be heard at every turn. Under pressure of the workers and the radical youth, liberal gatherings are converted into open public meetings and street demonstrations. Undercurrents of discontent are manifestly stirring among wide sections of the proletariat, among the poor of town and country. Although the proletariat is taking a comparatively small part in the more spectacular and ceremonious manifestations of the liberal movement, although it seems to be standing somewhat aloof from the polite conferences of the solid citizens, everything points to the fact that the workers are keenly interested in the movement. Everything points to the fact that the workers are eager for big public meetings and open street demonstrations. The proletariat is holding itself back, as it were, carefully taking its bearings, gathering its forces, and deciding the question whether or not the moment for the decisive struggle for freedom has come.

Apparently, the wave of liberal excitation is beginning to subside somewhat. The rumours and foreign newspaper reports to the effect that reactionaries have gained the upper hand in the most influential Court circles are being confirmed. The ukase of Nicholas II, published the other day, was a direct slap in the face for the liberals. The tsar intends to preserve and uphold the autocratic regime. The tsar does not want to change the form of government and has no intention of granting a constitution. He promises—only promises—all manner of reforms of a quite paltry nature. No guarantees, of course, are given that these reforms will really be implemented. Police restrictions against the liberal press are becoming daily and hourly more stringent. All open demonstrations are being suppressed again, if anything, with greater severity than before. The screw is being put on the liberal councillors again, both Zemstvo and municipal, still more so in the case of those officials who play the liberal. The liberal newspapers are falling into a despondent tone and apologising to their correspondents for not publishing their letters, which they dare not do.

It is quite within the realm of possibility that the wave of liberal agitation which rose so rapidly after the permission granted by Svyatopolk-Mirsky will abate just as quickly after the new ban. One must distinguish between the profound causes, which inevitably and unavoidably lead—and will lead more and more—to opposition and struggle against the autocracy, and the trivial reasons of a passing liberal ferment. The profound causes lead to profound, powerful, and persistent popular movements. Trivial reasons are at times Cabinet changes or the usual attempt on the part of the government to pursue for an hour the policy of “the sly fox” after some terrorist act. The assassination of Plehve evidently cost the terrorist organisation

tremendous effort and involved long preparation. The very success of this terrorist act hears out all the more strikingly the experience of the entire history of the Russian revolutionary movement, which warns us against such methods of struggle as terrorism. Russian terrorism has always been a specifically intellectualist method of struggle. And whatever may be said of the importance of terrorism, not in lieu of, but in conjunction with, the people's movement, the facts irrefutably testify that in our country individual political assassinations have nothing in common with the forcible actions of the people's revolution. In capitalist society a mass movement is possible only as a class movement of the workers. This movement is developing in Russia according to its own independent laws; it is proceeding in its own way, gaining in depth and in breadth, and passing from a temporary lull to a new upsurge. It is only the liberal wave that rises and falls strictly in accord with the moods of the different ministers, whose replacement is accelerated by bombs. Small wonder, then, that sympathy with terrorism is to be met with so often in our country among the radical (or radical-posing) representatives of the bourgeois Opposition. Small wonder that; among the revolutionary intelligentsia, the people most likely to be carried away (whether for long or for a moment) by terrorism are those who have no faith in the vitality and strength of the proletariat and the proletarian class struggle.

The fact that the spurt of liberal activity for one or another reason is short-lived and unstable cannot, of course, make us forget the irremovable contradiction that exists between the autocracy and the needs of the developing bourgeois society. The autocracy is bound to be a drag on social development. The interests of the bourgeoisie as a class, as well as the interests of

the intelligentsia, without which modern capitalist production is inconceivable, clash more and more with the autocracy as time goes on. Superficial though the reason for the liberals' declarations may be and petty though the character of the liberals' half-hearted and equivocal position, the autocracy can maintain real peace only with a handful of highly privileged magnates from the landowning and merchant class, but in no sense with that class as a whole. Direct representation of the interests of the ruling class in the form of a constitution is essential for a country that wants to be a European country and, on pain of political and economic defeat, is obliged by its position to become a European country. It is therefore extremely important for the class-conscious proletariat to have a clear understanding both of the inevitability of the liberals' protests against the autocracy and of the actual bourgeois character of these protests.

The working class is setting itself the great and epoch-making aims of liberating humanity from every form of oppression and exploitation of man by man. Throughout the World it has striven hard for decades on end to achieve these aims, steadily widening its struggle and organising itself in mass parties, undaunted by occasional defeats and temporary set-backs. Nothing can be more vital for such a truly revolutionary class than to rid itself of all self-deception, of all mirages and illusions. One of the most widespread and persistent illusions with us in Russia is the notion that our liberal movement is not a bourgeois movement, and that the impending revolution in Russia will not be a bourgeois revolution. The Russian intellectual, from the most moderate Osvobozhdeniye liberal to the most extreme Socialist-Revolutionary, always thinks that one makes our revolution colourless, that one degrades and

vulgarises it, by admitting it to be a bourgeois revolution. To the Russian class-conscious proletarian this admission is the only true class characterisation of the actual state of affairs. To the proletarian the struggle for political liberty and a democratic republic in a bourgeois society is only one of the necessary stages in the struggle for the social revolution which will overthrow the bourgeois system. Strictly differentiating between stages that are essentially different, soberly examining the conditions under which they manifest themselves, does not at all mean indefinitely postponing one's ultimate aim, or slowing down one's progress in advance. On the contrary, it is for the purpose of accelerating the advance and of achieving the ultimate aim as quickly and securely as possible that it is necessary to understand the relation of classes in modern society. Nothing but disillusionment and unending vacillation await those who shun the allegedly one-sided class point of view, who would be socialists, yet are afraid openly to call the impending revolution in Russia—the revolution that has begun in Russia—a bourgeois revolution.

Characteristically, at the very height of the present constitutional movement, the more democratic of the legal publications took advantage of the unusual freedom to attack, not only the "bureaucracy", but also the "exclusive and hence erroneous theory of the class struggle" which is alleged to be "scientifically untenable" (Nasha Zhizn, No. 28). If you please, the problem of bringing the intelligentsia closer to the masses "has hitherto been dealt with solely by throwing the emphasis on the class contradictions existing between the masses and those sections of society from which ... the greater part of the intelligentsia springs". Needless to say, this presentation of the facts is completely at variance with the real state of affairs. The

very opposite is true. The entire mass of the Russian legally-active uplift intelligentsia, all the old Russian socialists, all political figures of the Osvobozhdeniye type have always completely ignored the profound nature of the class contradictions in Russia in general and in the Russian countryside in particular. Even the extreme Left Russian radical intelligentsia, the Socialist-Revolutionary Party, sins most in ignoring this fact; one need only recall its usual arguments about the "labouring peasantry", or about the impending revolution being "not a bourgeois, but a democratic one".

No, the nearer the moment of revolution draws and the more acute the constitutional movement becomes, the more strictly must the party of the proletariat guard its class independence and not allow its class demands to be swamped in general democratic phrases. The more frequently and decidedly the representatives of so-called society come forward with what they claim to be the demands of the whole people, the more relentlessly must the Social-Democrats expose the class nature of this "society". Take the notorious resolution of the "secret" Zemstvo congress, held on November 6-8. You will find there, thrust into the background, deliberately hazy and half-hearted constitutional aspirations. You will find mention there of the people and society, more often society than the people. You will find the most detailed and comprehensive suggestions for reforms of the Zemstvo and municipal institutions — institutions, that is, which represent the interests of the landowners and the capitalists. You will find mention of reforms in the living conditions of the peasantry, of the liberation of the peasantry from tutelage, and of the safeguarding of correct judicial forms. It is quite clear that you are dealing with representatives of the propertied classes who

are only bent on securing concessions from the autocracy and have no thought of changing in any way the foundations of the economic system. If people like these want a "radical [allegedly radical] change in the present state of inequality and oppression of the peasantry", it only proves anew that the Social-Democrats were right in tirelessly stressing the backwardness of the system and of the living conditions of the peasantry in relation to the general conditions of the bourgeois order. The Social-Democrats have always urged that the class-conscious proletariat should strictly distinguish in the general peasant movement the over-riding interests and demands of the peasant bourgeoisie, however much these demands may be veiled and nebulous, and in whatever cloak of utopian "levelling" the peasant ideology (and "Socialist-Revolutionary" phrase-mongering) may invest them. Take the resolutions of the engineers' banquet in St. Petersburg on December 4. You will find that the 590 banquet guests, and together with them the 6,000 engineers who subscribed to the resolution, declared for a constitution, "without which Russian industry cannot be properly protected", while at the same time protesting against the placing of government orders with foreign concerns.

Can anyone still fail to see that it is the interests of all sections of the landowning, commercial, industrial and peasant bourgeoisie which are at the bottom of the constitutional aspirations that have erupted to the surface? Are we to be led astray by the fact that these interests are represented by the democratic intelligentsia, which everywhere and always, in all European revolutions of the bourgeoisie, has assumed the role of publicists, speakers, and political leaders?

A grave task now confronts the Russian proletariat. 'The autocracy is wavering. The burdensome and hopeless war into which it has plunged has seriously undermined the foundations of its power and rule. It cannot maintain itself in power now without an appeal to the ruling classes, without the support of the intelligentsia; such an appeal and such support, however, are bound to lead to constitutional demands. The bourgeois classes are trying to force an advantage for themselves out of the government's predicament. The government is playing a desperate game; it is trying to wriggle out of its difficulties, to get off with a few paltry concessions, non-political reforms, and non-committal promises, with which the tsar's new ukase is replete. Whether this game will succeed, even temporarily and partially, will in the long run depend on the Russian proletariat, on the degree of its organisation and the force of its revolutionary onset. The proletariat must take advantage of the political situation, which is greatly in its favour. The proletariat must support the constitutional movement of the bourgeoisie; it must rouse and rally to its side the broadest possible sections of the exploited masses, muster all its forces, and start an uprising at the moment when the government is in the most desperate straits and popular unrest is at its highest.

What immediate form should the proletariat's support of the constitutionalists take? Chiefly, the utilisation of the general unrest for the purpose of carrying on agitation and organising the least involved and most backward sections of the working class and the peasantry. Naturally, the organised proletariat, Social-Democracy, should send its forces among all' classes of the population; yet the more independently the classes now act, the more acute the struggle becomes, and the nearer the

moment of the decisive battle approaches, the more should our work be concentrated on preparing the proletarians and semi-proletarians themselves for the direct struggle for freedom. At such a moment only opportunists can qualify the speeches of individual workingmen in Zemstvo and other public assemblies as a very active struggle, or a new method of struggle, or the highest type of demonstration. Such manifestations can only be of quite secondary importance. It is far more important now to turn the attention of the proletariat to really high and active forms of struggle, such as the famous mass demonstration in Rostov and a number of mass demonstrations in the South. It is far more important now to increase our ranks, organise our forces, and prepare for an even more direct and open mass conflict.

Of course, there is no suggestion in this that the ordinary day-to-day work of the Social-Democrats should be abandoned. Social-Democrats will never give up that work, which they regard as the real preparation for the decisive fight; for they rely wholly and exclusively on the activity, the class-consciousness, and the organisation of the proletariat, on its influence among the labouring and exploited masses. It is a question of pointing out the right road, of calling attention to the need for going forward, to the harmfulness of tactical vacillations. The day-to-day work, which the class conscious proletariat should never forget under any circumstances, includes also the work of organisation. Without broad and diverse workers' organisations, and without their connection with revolutionary Social-Democracy, it is impossible to wage a successful struggle against the autocracy. On the other hand, organisational work is impossible without a firm rebuff to the disorganising tendencies displayed in our country, as everywhere else, by the

weak-willed intellectual elements in the Party, who change their slogans like gloves; organisational work is impossible without a struggle against the absurd and reactionary organisation-as-process "theory", which serves to conceal confusion of every description.

The development of the political crisis in Russia will now depend chiefly on the course of the war with Japan. This war has done more than anything else to expose the rotteness of the autocracy; it is doing more than anything else to drain its strength financially and militarily, and to torment and spur on to revolt the long-suffering masses of the people, of whom this criminal and shameful war is demanding such endless sacrifices. Autocratic Russia has already been defeated by constitutional Japan and dragging on the war will only increase and aggravate the defeat. The best part of the Russian navy has been destroyed; the position of Port Arthur is hopeless, and the naval squadron sent to its relief has not the slightest chance of even reaching its destination, let alone of achieving success; the main army under Kuropatkin has lost over 200,000 men and stands exhausted and helpless before the, enemy, who is bound to crush it after the capture of Port Arthur. Military disaster is inevitable, and together with it discontent, unrest, and indignation will inevitably increase tenfold.

We must prepare for that moment with the utmost energy. At that moment, one of the outbreaks which are recurring, now here, now there, with such growing frequency, will develop into a tremendous popular movement. At that moment the proletariat will rise and take its stand at the head of the insurrection to win freedom for the entire people and to secure for the working class the possibility of waging the open and

broad struggle for socialism, a struggle enriched by the whole experience of Europe.

Vperyod, No. 1, January 4, 1905 (December 22, 1904)

Lenin Collected Works, Volume 8, pages 17-28.

Lenin

From Narodism to Marxism

Vperyod, No. 3, January 24 (11), 1905

Collected Works, Volume 8, pages 83-89.

ARTICLE ONE

A legal newspaper recently expressed the opinion that this is no time to dwell on the “antagonism” of interests among the different classes opposing the autocracy. This opinion is not new. We have come across it, of course, with reservations of one sort or other, in the columns of *Osvobozhdeniye* and *Revolutsionnaya Rossiya*. It is natural that such a point of view should prevail among the representatives of the bourgeois democrats. As far as the Social-Democrats are concerned, there can be no two opinions among them on this question. The combined struggle of the proletariat and the bourgeoisie against the autocracy must not and cannot make the proletariat forget the antagonism of interests between it and the propertied classes. To get a clear idea of this antagonism it is necessary to have a clear idea of the profound differences that exist between the points of view of the different trends. This does not imply, of course, that we should reject temporary agreements with the adherents of other trends, both with the Socialists-Revolutionaries and the liberals, such as the Second Congress of our Party declared permissible for Social-Democrats.

The Social-Democrats consider the Socialists-Revolutionaries to be the representatives of the extreme Left group of our bourgeois democracy. The Socialists-Revolutionaries resent this opinion of them and regard it as a mean attempt to humiliate

an opponent and to question his sincerity and good faith. Actually, such an opinion has nothing whatever to do with suspicion; it is merely a Marxist definition of the class origin and the class nature of the views of the Socialists-Revolutionaries. The more clearly and definitely the Socialists-Revolutionaries state their views, the more they confirm the Marxist characterisation of them. Of great interest in this respect is the draft programme of the Party of the Socialists-Revolutionaries published in *Revolutsionnaya Rossiya*, No. 46.

This draft is a considerable step forward, not only in relation to clarity of exposition of principles. The progress is to be noted in the content of the principles themselves, the progress from Narodism to Marxism, from democracy to socialism. Our criticism of the Socialists-Revolutionaries has obviously borne fruit; it has compelled them to lay particular stress on their socialist good intentions and the views which they hold in common with Marxism. All the more glaring, on the other hand, are the features of their old, Narodnik, vaguely democratic views. We would remind those who are prone to accuse us of being contradictory (recognising the socialist good intentions of the Socialists-Revolutionaries, while defining their social nature as bourgeois-democratic) that examples of socialism, not only of the petty-bourgeois but of the bourgeois variety, were long ago analysed in the Communist Manifesto. The good intentions of being a socialist do not rule out a bourgeois-democratic essence.

A study of the draft reveals three main features of the Socialist-Revolutionary world outlook. First, theoretical emendations of Marxism. Second, the survivals of Narodism in their views of the labouring peasantry and the agrarian question. Third, the

same Narodnik survivals in their view of the impending Russian revolution as non-bourgeois in character.

I said emendations of Marxism. Precisely. The whole main trend of thought, the whole framework of the programme, points to the victory of Marxism over Narodism. The latter is still alive (kept so with the aid of injections of revisionism of the latest style), but only as partial "corrections" of Marxism. Let us take the main general theoretical emendation, the theory of the favourable and unfavourable relation between the positive and negative sides of capitalism. This emendation, insofar as it is not completely muddled, introduces the old Russian subjectivism into Marxism. The recognition of the "creative" historical activity of capitalism, which socialises labour and creates "a social force" capable of transforming society, the force of the proletariat, denotes a break with Narodism and a transition to Marxism. The theory of socialism is founded on the objective development of economic forces and of class division. The emendation: "In some branches of industry, especially agriculture, and in en tire countries" the relation between the positive and negative sides of capitalism "is becoming [how far they have gone!] less and less favourable". This is a repetition of Hertz and David, of Nik. —on, and of V. V. with his theory of the special "destinies of capitalism in Russia". The backwardness of Russia in general and of Russian agriculture in particular is no longer regarded as the backwardness of capitalism, but as a uniqueness justifying backward theories. Alongside the materialist conception of history we get the time-worn view according to which the intelligentsia is capable of choosing more or less favourable paths for the country and of becoming the supraclass judge of capitalism, not the mouthpiece of the class that is begotten by capitalism's

destruction of the old forms of life. The fact that capitalist exploitation in Russia takes on particularly repellent forms because of the survival of pre-capitalist relations is overlooked in typical Narodnik fashion.

The Narodnik theory stands revealed still more clearly in the notions on the peasantry. Throughout the draft the following words and phrases are used without discrimination: the toilers, the exploited, the working class, the labouring masses, the class of the exploited, the exploited classes. If the authors stopped to think over the last term ("classes"), which escaped them unguardedly, they would realise that it is the petty bourgeois as well as the proletarians who work and are exploited under capitalism. What has been said of the legal Narodniks can be said of our Socialists-Revolutionaries: to them goes the honour of discovering an unheard-of type of capitalism without a petty bourgeoisie. They speak of the labouring peasantry, but shut their eyes to a fact which has been proved, studied, weighed, described, and pondered, namely, that the peasant bourgeoisie now definitely predominates among our labouring peasantry, and that the well-to-do peasantry, although entitled to the designation labouring peasantry, cannot get along without hiring farm-hands and already controls the better half of the peasantry's productive forces.

Very odd, indeed, from this point of view, is the goal which the Party of the Socialists-Revolutionaries has set itself in its minimum programme: "In the interests of socialism and of the struggle against bourgeois-proprietary principles, to make use of the views, traditions, and modes of life of the Russian peasantry, both as toilers in general and as members of the village communes, particularly its conception of the land as

being the common property of all the toiling people." This objective seems, at first blush, to be a quite harmless, purely academic repetition of the village-commune utopias long since refuted both by theory and life. In reality, however, we are dealing with a pressing political issue which the Russian revolution promises to solve in the very near future: Who will take advantage of whom? Will the revolutionary intelligentsia, which believes itself to be socialist, utilise the toiler conceptions of the peasantry in the interests of the struggle against bourgeois-proprietary principles? Or will the bourgeois proprietary and at the same time toiling peasantry utilise the socialist phraseology of the revolutionary-democratic intelligentsia in the interests of the struggle against socialism?

We are of the view that the second perspective will be realised (despite the will and the consciousness of our opponents). We are convinced that it will be realised because it has already nine-tenths been realised. The "bourgeois proprietary" (and at the same time labouring) peasantry has already made good use of the socialist phrases of the Narodnik, democratic intelligentsia, which harboured illusions of sustaining "the toiler traditions and modes of life" by means of its artels, co-operatives, fodder grass cultivation, ploughs, Zemstvo warehouses, and banks, but which actually promoted the development of capitalism within the village commune. Russian economic history has thus proved what Russian political history will prove tomorrow. The class-conscious proletariat has the duty to explain to the rural proletarian, without in any way withholding support of the progressive and revolutionary aspirations of the bourgeois labouring peasantry, that a struggle against that peasantry is inevitable in the future; it has the duty to explain to him the real aims of socialism, as opposed to the bourgeois-democratic

fancies of equalised land tenure. With the bourgeois peasantry against the survivals of serfdom, against the autocracy, the priests, and the landlords; with the urban proletariat against the bourgeoisie in general and against the bourgeois peasantry in particular—this is the only correct slogan for the rural proletariat, this is the only correct agrarian programme for Russian Social-Democracy at the present moment. It was this programme that our Second Congress adopted. With the peasant bourgeoisie for democracy, with the urban proletariat for socialism—this slogan will have a far stronger appeal to the rural poor than the showy but empty slogans of the Socialist-Revolutionary dabblers in Narodism.

We come now to the third of the above-mentioned main points of the draft. Its authors have by now broken with the view of the consistent Narodniks, who were opposed to political freedom on the grounds that it could only result in turning over power to the bourgeoisie. But the survivals of Narodism stand out very clearly in the part of the draft which characterises the autocracy and the attitude of the various classes towards it. Here too, as always, we see that the very first attempts of the petty-bourgeois revolutionary intelligentsia to clarify its conception of reality lead inevitably to the complete exposure of its contradictory and superannuated views. (Let us, therefore, remark, parenthetically, that disputes with the Socialists-Revolutionaries should always be reduced to this very question of their conception of reality, since this question alone clearly reveals the causes of our deep-seated political divergence.)

“The class of big, manufacturers and tradesmen, who are more reactionary than anywhere else,” we read in the draft, “stands

more and more in need of the protection of the autocracy against the proletariat" This is false; for nowhere in Europe is the indifference of the advanced bourgeoisie towards the autocratic form of rule so evident as in our country. Discontent with the autocratic regime is growing among the bourgeoisie, regardless of its fear of the proletariat, in part simply because the police, for all its unlimited powers, cannot crush the working-class movement. In speaking of "a class" of big manufacturers, the draft confounds the subdivisions and groups within the bourgeoisie with the entire bourgeoisie as a class. The in correctness is all the more patent in that it is precisely the middle and petty bourgeoisie that the autocracy is least of all capable of satisfying.

"...The landed nobility and the village kulaks stand more and more in need of such support against the labouring masses in the villages...." Indeed? Where, then, does Zemstvo liberalism come from? Whence the attraction for the enterprising muzhik on the part of the uplift (democratic) intelligentsia and vice versa? Or does the kulak have nothing in common with the enterprising muzhik?

"...An irreconcilable and growing antagonism is arising between the existence of autocracy and the whole economic, social-political and cultural development of the country....

In this they have reduced their own premises ad absurdum. Is it possible to conceive of an "irreconcilable antagonism" with the entire economic, as well as other, growth of the country that would not be reflected in the mood of the classes in economic command? It is one or the other: Either the autocracy is really incompatible with the economic development of the country; in that case it is incompatible also with the interests of the entire

class of manufacturers, tradespeople, landlords, and enterprising muzhiks. That this class has been controlling “our” economic development since 1861 is probably not unknown even to the Socialists-Revolutionaries (although they were taught the contrary by V. V.). That a government incompatible with the bourgeois class in general can make capital out of the conflicts between the groups and strata of the bourgeoisie, that it can make peace with the protectionists against the free traders, enlist the support of one stratum against another, and keep up these equilibristics for years and decades, is borne out by the whole trend of European history. Or, in our country the manufacturers, the landlords, and the peasant bourgeoisie “stand more and more in need” of the autocracy. In that case we should have to accept the notion that they, the economic lords of the country, even taken as a whole, as a class, do not understand the interests of the country’s economic development, that not even the advanced, educated and intelligent representatives and leaders of these classes understand these interests!

But would it not be simpler to accept the idea that it is our Socialists-Revolutionaries who do not understand the situation? We need but see: a little further on, they themselves admit “the existence of a liberal-democratic opposition, which embraces chiefly (in point of class) the intermediate elements of the educated society”. But is our educated society not a bourgeois society? Is it not bound by a thousand ties to the tradesmen, manufacturers, land lords, and enterprising muzhiks? Can God have possibly ordained for Russia a capitalism in which the liberal-democratic opposition is not a bourgeois-democratic opposition? Do the Socialists-Revolutionaries know of any precedent in history or can they

conceive of any case in which the opposition of the bourgeoisie to the autocratic regime was not or would not be expressed through the liberal, educated "society"?

The muddle in the draft is the inevitable outcome of confounding Narodism with Marxism. Only Marxism has given a scientifically correct analysis, confirmed more and more by reality, of the relation between the struggle for democracy and the struggle for socialism. We, like the rest of the world, have bourgeois democratism and working-class democratism. With us, as with the rest of the world, the Social-Democrats must expose mercilessly the inevitable illusions of the bourgeois democrats and their ignorance of their own nature. With us, as with the rest of the world, the class-conscious proletariat must support the bourgeois democrats in their opposition to the survivals of serfdom and their struggle against them, against the autocracy, without forgetting for an instant that it is a class by itself, and that it has as its class aim the overthrow of the bourgeoisie.

Lenin

July 1905

Lenin's Collected Works, Volume 9, pp. 15-140.

Two Tactics of Social-Democracy in the Democratic Revolution

Will the Sweep of the Democratic Revolution be Diminished if the Bourgeoisie Recoils from it?

The foregoing lines were already written when we received a copy of the resolutions adopted by the Caucasian Conference of the new Iskra supporters, published by the Iskra. Better material than this pour la bonne bouche (for dessert) we could not even have invented.

The editors of the Iskra quite justly remark: "On the fundamental question of tactics, the Caucasian Conference also arrived at a decision analogous" (in truth!) "to the one adopted by the All-Russian Conference" (i.e., of the new Iskra-ists). "The question of the attitude of Social-Democracy towards a provisional revolutionary government has been settled by the Caucasian comrades in the spirit of most outspoken opposition to the new method advocated by the Vpeyod group and by the delegates of the so-called Congress who joined it." "It must be admitted that the formulation of the tactics of the proletarian party in a bourgeois revolution as given by the Conference is very apt."

What is true is true. No one could have given a more "apt" formulation of the fundamental error of the new Iskra-ists. We shall quote this formulation in full, indicating in parentheses first the blossoms and then the fruit presented at the end.

Here is the resolution of the Caucasian Conference of new-Iskraists on a provisional revolutionary government:

“Whereas we consider it to be our task to take advantage of the revolutionary situation to render more profound” (of course! They should have added: “à la Martynov!”) “the Social-Democratic consciousness of the proletariat” (only to render the consciousness more profound, and not to win a republic? What a “profound” conception of revolution 1) “and in order to secure for the Party fullest freedom to criticise the nascent bourgeois-state system” (it is not our business to secure a republic! Our business is only to secure freedom of criticism. Anarchist ideas give rise to anarchist language: “bourgeois-state” system!), “the Conference declares against the formation of a Social-Democratic provisional government and joining such a government” (recall the resolution passed by the Bakunists ten months before the Spanish revolution and referred to by Engels: see the Proletary, No. 3), “and considers it to be the most expedient course to exercise pressure from without” (from below and not from above) “upon the bourgeois provisional government in order to secure a feasible measure” (!) “of democratisation of the state system. The Conference believes that the formation of a provisional government by Social-Democrats, or their joining such a government, would lead, on the one hand, to the masses of the proletariat becoming disappointed in the Social-Democratic Party and abandoning it because the Social-Democrats, in spite of the fact that they had seized power, would not be able to satisfy the pressing needs of the working class, including the establishment of Socialism” (a republic is not a pressing need! The authors, in their innocence, do not notice that they are speaking a purely anarchist language, as if they were repudiating participation in bourgeois

revolutions!), “and, on the other hand, would cause the bourgeois classes to recoil from the revolution and diminish its sweep.”

That is the crux of the matter. That is where anarchist ideas become interwoven (as is constantly the case among the West-European Bernsteinians also) with the purest opportunism. Just think of it: not to join a provisional government because this will cause the bourgeoisie to recoil from the revolution and thus diminish the sweep of the revolution! Here, indeed, we have the new Iskra philosophy in its complete, pure and consistent form: the revolution is a bourgeois revolution, therefore we must bow down to bourgeois philistinism and make way for it. If we are guided, even in part, even for a moment, by the consideration that our participation may cause the bourgeoisie to recoil, we thereby simply yield leadership in the revolution entirely to the bourgeois classes. We thereby place the proletariat entirely under the tutelage of the bourgeoisie (while retaining complete “freedom of criticism”!!), compelling the proletariat to be meek and mild so as not to cause the bourgeoisie to recoil. We emasculate the most vital needs of the proletariat, namely, its political needs—which the Economists and their epigones have never properly understood—so as not to cause the bourgeoisie to recoil. We completely abandon the field of revolutionary struggle for the achievement of democracy to the extent required by the proletariat for the field of bargaining with the bourgeoisie, betraying our principles, betraying the revolution to purchase the bourgeoisie’s voluntary consent (“that it might not recoil”).

In two brief lines, the Caucasian new-Iskraists managed to express the quintessence of the tactics of betrayal of the

revolution and of converting the proletariat into a wretched appendage of the bourgeois classes. The tendency, which we traced above to the mistakes of the new Iskra-ists, now stands out before us as a clear and definite principle, viz., to drag at the tail of the monarchist bourgeoisie. Since the establishment of a republic would cause (and is already causing: Mr. Struve, for example) the bourgeoisie to recoil, therefore, down with the fight for a republic. Since every resolute and consistent democratic demand of the proletariat always and everywhere in the world causes the bourgeoisie to recoil, therefore, hide in your lairs, comrades and fellow workers, act only from without, do not dream of using the instruments and weapons of the "bourgeois-state" system in the interests of the revolution, and reserve for yourselves "freedom to criticize"!

The fundamental fallacy of their very conception of the term "bourgeois revolution" has come to the surface. The Martynov or new Iskra "conception" of this term leads straight to a betrayal of the cause of the proletariat to the bourgeoisie.

Those who have forgotten the old Economism, those who do not study it or remember it, will find it difficult to understand the present echo of Economism. Recall the Bernsteinian Credo. From "purely proletarian" views and programs, people arrived at the conclusion: we, the Social-Democrats, must concern ourselves with economics, with the real cause of labour, with freedom to criticise all political chicanery, with rendering Social-Democratic work really more profound. Politics are for the liberals. God save us from dropping into "revolutionism": that will cause the bourgeoisie to recoil. Those who read the whole Credo over again or the Supplement to No. 9 of the

Rabochaya Mysl (September 1899) will be able to follow this entire line of reasoning.

Today we have the same thing, only on a large scale, applied to an appraisal of the whole of the "great" Russian revolution—alas, already vulgarised and reduced to a travesty in advance by the theoreticians of orthodox philistinism! We, the Social-Democrats, must concern ourselves with freedom of criticism, with rendering class consciousness more profound, with action from without. They, the bourgeois classes, must have freedom to act, a free field for revolutionary (read: liberal) leadership, freedom to put through "reforms" from above.

These vulgarizers of Marxism have never pondered over what Marx said about the need of substituting the criticism of weapons for the weapon of criticism. Taking the name of Marx in vain, they, in actual fact, draw up resolutions on tactics wholly in the spirit of the Frankfurt bourgeois windbags, who freely criticised absolutism and rendered democratic consciousness more profound, but failed to understand that the time of revolution is the time of action, of action both from above and from below. Having converted Marxism into pedantry, they have made the ideology of the advanced, most determined and energetic revolutionary class the ideology of its most undeveloped strata, which shrink from the difficult revolutionary-democratic tasks and leave it to Messrs. the Struves to take care of these democratic tasks.

If the bourgeois classes recoil from the revolution because the Social-Democrats join the revolutionary government, they will thereby "diminish the sweep" of the revolution.

Listen to this, Russian workers: The sweep of the revolution will be mightier if it is carried out by Messrs. the Struves, who are not frightened away by the Social-Democrats and who want, not victory over tsarism, but to come to terms with it. The sweep of the revolution will be mightier if, of the two possible outcomes which we have outlined above, the first eventuates, i.e., if the monarchist bourgeoisie comes to terms with the autocracy concerning a "constitution" à la Shipov!

Social-Democrats who write such disgraceful things in resolutions intended for the guidance of the whole Party, or who approve of such "apt" resolutions, are so blinded by their pedantry, which has utterly eroded the living spirit out of Marxism, that they do not see how these resolutions convert all their other fine words into mere phrase-mongering. Take any of their articles in the *Iskra*, or take even the notorious pamphlet written by our celebrated Martynov—you will read there about a popular insurrection, about carrying the revolution to completion, about striving to rely upon the common people in the fight against the inconsistent bourgeoisie. But then all these excellent things become miserable phrase-mongering immediately you accept or approve of the idea that "the sweep of the revolution" will be "diminished" as a consequence of the alienation of the bourgeoisie. One of two things, gentlemen: either we, together with the people, must strive to carry out the revolution and win a complete victory over tsarism in spite of the inconsistent, self-seeking and cowardly bourgeoisie, or we do not accept this "in spite of," we fear lest the bourgeoisie "recoil" from the revolution, in which case we betray the proletariat and the people to the bourgeoisie—to the inconsistent, self-seeking and cowardly bourgeoisie.

Don't try to misinterpret what I have said. Don't start howling that you are being accused of deliberate treachery. No, you have always been crawling and have at last crawled into the mire as unconsciously as the Economists of old, drawn inexorably and irrevocably down the inclined plane of making Marxism "more profound" to anti-revolutionary, soulless and lifeless "philosophising."

Have you ever considered, gentlemen, what real social forces determine "the sweep of the revolution"? Let us leave aside the forces of foreign politics, of international combinations, which have turned out very favourably for us at the present time, but which we all leave out of our discussion, and rightly so, inasmuch as we are concerned with the question of the internal forces of Russia. Look at these internal social forces. Aligned against the revolution are the autocracy, the imperial court, the police, the bureaucracy, the army and the handful of high nobility. The deeper the indignation of the people grows, the less reliable become the troops, and the more the bureaucracy wavers. Moreover, the bourgeoisie, on the whole, is now in favour of the revolution, is zealously making speeches about liberty, holding forth more and more frequently in the name of the people, and even in the name of the revolution. But we Marxists all know from theory and from daily and hourly observation of our liberals, Zemstvo people and Orvobozhdentsi, that the bourgeoisie is inconsistent, self-seeking and cowardly in its support of the revolution. The bourgeoisie, in the mass, will inevitably turn towards counterrevolution, towards the autocracy, against the revolution and against the people, immediately its narrow, selfish interests are met, immediately it "recoils" from consistent democracy (and it is already recoiling from it!). There

remains the “people,” that is, the proletariat and the peasantry: the proletariat alone can be relied on to march to the end, for it is going far beyond the democratic revolution. That is why the proletariat fights in the front ranks for a republic and contemptuously rejects silly and unworthy advice to take care not to frighten away the bourgeoisie. The peasantry includes a great number of semi-proletarian as well as petty-bourgeois elements. This causes it also to be unstable and compels the proletariat to unite in a strictly class party. But the instability of the peasantry differs radically from the instability of the bourgeoisie, for at the present time the peasantry is interested not so much in the absolute preservation of private property as in the confiscation of the landed estates, one of the principal forms of private property. While this does not make the peasantry become socialist or cease to be petty-bourgeois, it is capable of becoming a wholehearted and most radical adherent of the democratic revolution. The peasantry will inevitably become such if only the progress of revolutionary events, which is enlightening it, is not checked too soon by the treachery of the bourgeoisie and the defeat of the proletariat. Subject to this condition, the peasantry will inevitably become a bulwark of the revolution and the republic, for only a completely victorious revolution can give the peasantry everything in the sphere of agrarian reforms—everything that the peasants desire, of which they dream, and of which they truly stand in need (not for the abolition of capitalism as the “Socialist-Revolutionaries” imagine, but) in order to emerge from the mire of semi-serfdom, from the gloom of oppression and servitude, in order to improve their living conditions as much as it is possible to improve them under the system of commodity production.

Moreover, the peasantry is attached to the revolution not only by the prospect of radical agrarian reform but by its general and permanent interests. Even in fighting the proletariat the peasantry stands in need of democracy, for only a democratic system is capable of giving exact expression to its interests and of ensuring its predominance as the mass, as the majority. The more enlightened the peasantry becomes (and since the war with Japan it is becoming enlightened much more rapidly than those who are accustomed to measure enlightenment by the school standard suspect), the more consistently and determinedly will it favour a thoroughgoing democratic revolution; for, unlike the bourgeoisie, it has nothing to fear from the supremacy of the people, but, on the contrary, stands to gain by it. A democratic republic will become the ideal of the peasantry as soon as it begins to free itself from its naïve monarchism, because the enlightened monarchism of the bourgeois stock-jobbers (with an upper chamber, etc.) implies for the peasantry the same disfranchisement and the same down-troddenness and ignorance as it suffers from today, only slightly glossed over with the varnish of European constitutionalism.

That is why the bourgeoisie as a class naturally and inevitably strives to come under the wing of the liberal-monarchist party, while the peasantry, in the mass, strives to come under the leadership of the revolutionary and republican party. That is why the bourgeoisie is incapable of carrying the democratic revolution to its consummation, while the peasantry is capable of doing so, and we must exert all our efforts to help it to do so.

It may be objected: but this requires no proof, this is all ABC; all Social-Democrats understand this perfectly well. But that is not

so. It is not understood by those who can talk about “the sweep” of the revolution being “diminished” because the bourgeoisie will fall away from it. Such people repeat the words of our agrarian program that they have learned by rote without understanding their meaning, for otherwise they would not be frightened by the concept of the revolutionary-democratic dictatorship of the proletariat and the peasantry, which inevitably follows from the entire Marxian world outlook and from our program; otherwise they would not restrict the sweep of the great Russian revolution to the limits to which the bourgeoisie is prepared to go. Such people defeat their abstract Marxian revolutionary phrases by their concrete anti-Marxian and anti-revolutionary resolutions.

Those who really understand the role of the peasantry in a victorious Russian revolution would not dream of saying that the sweep of the revolution would be diminished if the bourgeoisie recoiled from it. For, as a matter of fact, the Russian revolution will begin to assume its real sweep, will really assume the widest revolutionary sweep possible in the epoch of bourgeois-democratic revolution, only when the bourgeoisie recoils from it and when the masses of the peasantry come out as active revolutionaries side by side with the proletariat. In order that it may be consistently carried to its conclusion, our democratic revolution must rely on such forces as are capable of paralysing the inevitable inconsistency of the bourgeoisie (i.e., capable precisely of “causing it to recoil from the revolution,” which the Caucasian adherents of Iskra fear so much because of their lack of judgement).

The proletariat must carry to completion the democratic revolution, by allying to itself the mass of the peasantry in order

to crush by force the resistance of the autocracy and to paralyse the instability of the bourgeoisie. The proletariat must accomplish the socialist revolution, by allying to itself the mass of the semi-proletarian elements of the population in order to crush by force the resistance of the bourgeoisie and to paralyse the instability of the peasantry and the petty bourgeoisie. Such are the tasks of the proletariat which the new-Iskraists present so narrowly in all their arguments and resolutions about the sweep of the revolution.

One circumstance, however, must not be forgotten, although it is frequently lost sight of in discussions about the "sweep" of the revolution. It must not be forgotten that the point at issue is not the difficulties this problem presents, but the road along which we must seek and attain its solution. The point is not whether it is easy or difficult to make the sweep of the revolution mighty and invincible, but how we must act in order to make this sweep more powerful. It is precisely on the fundamental nature of our activity, on the direction it should take, that our views differ. We emphasise this because careless and unscrupulous people too frequently confuse two different questions, namely, the question of the direction in which the road leads, i.e., the selection of one of two different roads, and the question of how easily the goal can be reached, or of how near the goal is on the given road.

We have not dealt with this last question at all in the foregoing because it has not evoked any disagreement or divergency in the Party. But it goes without saying that the question itself is extremely important and deserves the most serious attention of all Social-Democrats. It would be a piece of unpardonable optimism to forget the difficulties which accompany the task of

drawing into the movement the masses not only of the working class, but also of the peasantry. These difficulties have more than once been the rock against which the efforts to carry a democratic revolution to completion have been wrecked; and it was the inconsistent and self-seeking bourgeoisie which triumphed most of all, because it "made capital" in the shape of monarchist protection against the people, and at the same time "preserved the virginity" of liberalism . . . or of the *Osvobozhdeniye* trend. But difficult does not mean impossible. The important thing is to be convinced that the path chosen is the correct one, and this conviction will multiply a hundred-fold the revolutionary energy and revolutionary enthusiasm which can perform miracles.

The depth of the rift among present-day Social-Democrats on the question of the path to be chosen can be seen at once by comparing the Caucasian resolution of the new-Iskraists with the resolution of the Third Congress of the Russian Social-Democratic Labour Party. The Congress resolution says: the bourgeoisie is inconsistent, it will certainly try to deprive us of the gains of the revolution. Therefore, make more energetic preparations for the fight, comrades and fellow workers! Arm yourselves, win the peasantry to your side! We shall not surrender our revolutionary gains to the self-seeking bourgeoisie without a fight. The resolution of the Caucasian new-Iskraists says: the bourgeoisie is inconsistent, it may recoil from the revolution. Therefore, comrades and fellow workers, please do not think of joining a provisional government, for, if you do, the bourgeoisie will certainly recoil, and the sweep of the revolution will thereby be diminished!

One side says: advance the revolution forward, to its consummation, in spite of the resistance or the passivity of the inconsistent bourgeoisie. The other side says: do not think of carrying the revolution to completion independently, for if you do, the inconsistent bourgeoisie will recoil from it.

Are these not two diametrically opposite paths? Is it not obvious that one set of tactics absolutely excludes the other? That the first tactics are the only correct tactics of revolutionary Social-Democracy, while the second are in fact purely Osvobozhdeniye tactics?

Will the Sweep of the Democratic Revolution be Diminished if the Bourgeoisie Recoils from it?

The foregoing lines were already written when we received a copy of the resolutions adopted by the Caucasian Conference of the new Iskra supporters, published by the Iskra. Better material than this pour la bonne bouche (for dessert) we could not even have invented.

The editors of the Iskra quite justly remark: "On the fundamental question of tactics, the Caucasian Conference also arrived at a decision analogous" (in truth!) "to the one adopted by the All-Russian Conference" (i.e., of the new Iskra-ists). "The question of the attitude of Social-Democracy towards a provisional revolutionary government has been settled by the Caucasian comrades in the spirit of most outspoken opposition to the new method advocated by the Vpeyod group and by the delegates of the so-called Congress who joined it." "It must be admitted that the formulation of the tactics of the proletarian party in a bourgeois revolution as given by the Conference is very apt."

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Here is the resolution of the Caucasian Conference of new-Iskraists on a provisional revolutionary government:

“Whereas we consider it to be our task to take advantage of the revolutionary situation to render more profound” (of course! They should have added: “à la Martynov!”) “the Social-Democratic consciousness of the proletariat” (only to render the consciousness more profound, and not to win a republic? What a “profound” conception of revolution 1) “and in order to secure for the Party fullest freedom to criticise the nascent bourgeois-state system” (it is not our business to secure a republic! Our business is only to secure freedom of criticism. Anarchist ideas give rise to anarchist language: “bourgeois-state” system!), “the Conference declares against the formation of a Social-Democratic provisional government and joining such a government” (recall the resolution passed by the Bakunists ten months before the Spanish revolution and referred to by Engels: see the Proletary, No. 3), “and considers it to be the most expedient course to exercise pressure from without” (from below and not from above) “upon the bourgeois provisional government in order to secure a feasible measure” (!) “of democratisation of the state system. The Conference believes that the formation of a provisional government by Social-Democrats, or their joining such a government, would lead, on the one hand, to the masses of the proletariat becoming disappointed in the Social-Democratic Party and abandoning it because the Social-Democrats, in spite of the fact that they had

seized power, would not be able to satisfy the pressing needs of the working class, including the establishment of Socialism” (a republic is not a pressing need! The authors, in their innocence, do not notice that they are speaking a purely anarchist language, as if they were repudiating participation in bourgeois revolutions!), “and, on the other hand, would cause the bourgeois classes to recoil from the revolution and diminish its sweep.”

That is the crux of the matter. That is where anarchist ideas become interwoven (as is constantly the case among the West-European Bernsteinians also) with the purest opportunism. Just think of it: not to join a provisional government because this will cause the bourgeoisie to recoil from the revolution and thus diminish the sweep of the revolution! Here, indeed, we have the new Iskra philosophy in its complete, pure and consistent form: the revolution is a bourgeois revolution, therefore we must bow down to bourgeois philistinism and make way for it. If we are guided, even in part, even for a moment, by the consideration that our participation may cause the bourgeoisie to recoil, we thereby simply yield leadership in the revolution entirely to the bourgeois classes. We thereby place the proletariat entirely under the tutelage of the bourgeoisie (while retaining complete “freedom of criticism”!!), compelling the proletariat to be meek and mild so as not to cause the bourgeoisie to recoil. We emasculate the most vital needs of the proletariat, namely, its political needs — which the Economists and their epigones have never properly understood — so as not to cause the bourgeoisie to recoil. We completely abandon the field of revolutionary struggle for the achievement of democracy to the extent required by the proletariat for the field of bargaining with the bourgeoisie, betraying our principles, betraying the revolution

to purchase the bourgeoisie's voluntary consent ("that it might not recoil").

In two brief lines, the Caucasian new-Iskraists managed to express the quintessence of the tactics of betrayal of the revolution and of converting the proletariat into a wretched appendage of the bourgeois classes. The tendency, which we traced above to the mistakes of the new Iskra-ists, now stands out before us as a clear and definite principle, viz., to drag at the tail of the monarchist bourgeoisie. Since the establishment of a republic would cause (and is already causing: Mr. Struve, for example) the bourgeoisie to recoil, therefore, down with the fight for a republic. Since every resolute and consistent democratic demand of the proletariat always and everywhere in the world causes the bourgeoisie to recoil, therefore, hide in your lairs, comrades and fellow workers, act only from without, do not dream of using the instruments and weapons of the "bourgeois-state" system in the interests of the revolution, and reserve for yourselves "freedom to criticize"!

The fundamental fallacy of their very conception of the term "bourgeois revolution" has come to the surface. The Martynov or new Iskra "conception" of this term leads straight to a betrayal of the cause of the proletariat to the bourgeoisie.

Those who have forgotten the old Economism, those who do not study it or remember it, will find it difficult to understand the present echo of Economism. Recall the Bernsteinian Credo. From "purely proletarian" views and programs, people arrived at the conclusion: we, the Social-Democrats, must concern ourselves with economics, with the real cause of labour, with freedom to criticise all political chicanery, with rendering Social-Democratic work really more profound. Politics are for

the liberals. God save us from dropping into "revolutionism": that will cause the bourgeoisie to recoil. Those who read the whole Credo over again or the Supplement to No. 9 of the Rabochaya Mysl (September 1899) will be able to follow this entire line of reasoning.

Today we have the same thing, only on a large scale, applied to an appraisal of the whole of the "great" Russian revolution—alas, already vulgarised and reduced to a travesty in advance by the theoreticians of orthodox philistinism! We, the Social-Democrats, must concern ourselves with freedom of criticism, with rendering class consciousness more profound, with action from without. They, the bourgeois classes, must have freedom to act, a free field for revolutionary (read: liberal) leadership, freedom to put through "reforms" from above.

These vulgarizers of Marxism have never pondered over what Marx said about the need of substituting the criticism of weapons for the weapon of criticism. Taking the name of Marx in vain, they, in actual fact, draw up resolutions on tactics wholly in the spirit of the Frankfurt bourgeois windbags, who freely criticised absolutism and rendered democratic consciousness more profound, but failed to understand that the time of revolution is the time of action, of action both from above and from below. Having converted Marxism into pedantry, they have made the ideology of the advanced, most determined and energetic revolutionary class the ideology of its most undeveloped strata, which shrink from the difficult revolutionary-democratic tasks and leave it to Messrs. the Struves to take care of these democratic tasks.

If the bourgeois classes recoil from the revolution because the Social-Democrats join the revolutionary government, they will thereby “diminish the sweep” of the revolution.

Listen to this, Russian workers: The sweep of the revolution will be mightier if it is carried out by Messrs. the Struves, who are not frightened away by the Social-Democrats and who want, not victory over tsarism, but to come to terms with it. The sweep of the revolution will be mightier if, of the two possible outcomes which we have outlined above, the first eventuates, i.e., if the monarchist bourgeoisie comes to terms with the autocracy concerning a “constitution” à la Shipov!

Social-Democrats who write such disgraceful things in resolutions intended for the guidance of the whole Party, or who approve of such “apt” resolutions, are so blinded by their pedantry, which has utterly eroded the living spirit out of Marxism, that they do not see how these resolutions convert all their other fine words into mere phrase-mongering. Take any of their articles in the *Iskra*, or take even the notorious pamphlet written by our celebrated Martynov—you will read there about a popular insurrection, about carrying the revolution to completion, about striving to rely upon the common people in the fight against the inconsistent bourgeoisie. But then all these excellent things become miserable phrase-mongering immediately you accept or approve of the idea that “the sweep of the revolution” will be “diminished” as a consequence of the alienation of the bourgeoisie. One of two things, gentlemen: either we, together with the people, must strive to carry out the revolution and win a complete victory over tsarism in spite of the inconsistent, self-seeking and cowardly bourgeoisie, or we do not accept this “in spite of,” we fear lest the bourgeoisie

“recoil” from the revolution, in which case we betray the proletariat and the people to the bourgeoisie—to the inconsistent, self-seeking and cowardly bourgeoisie.

Don’t try to misinterpret what I have said. Don’t start howling that you are being accused of deliberate treachery. No, you have always been crawling and have at last crawled into the mire as unconsciously as the Economists of old, drawn inexorably and irrevocably down the inclined plane of making Marxism “more profound” to anti-revolutionary, soulless and lifeless “philosophising.”

Have you ever considered, gentlemen, what real social forces determine “the sweep of the revolution”? Let us leave aside the forces of foreign politics, of international combinations, which have turned out very favourably for us at the present time, but which we all leave out of our discussion, and rightly so, inasmuch as we are concerned with the question of the internal forces of Russia. Look at these internal social forces. Aligned against the revolution are the autocracy, the imperial court, the police, the bureaucracy, the army and the handful of high nobility. The deeper the indignation of the people grows, the less reliable become the troops, and the more the bureaucracy wavers. Moreover, the bourgeoisie, on the whole, is now in favour of the revolution, is zealously making speeches about liberty, holding forth more and more frequently in the name of the people, and even in the name of the revolution. But we Marxists all know from theory and from daily and hourly observation of our liberals, Zemstvo people and Orvobozhdentsi, that the bourgeoisie is inconsistent, self-seeking and cowardly in its support of the revolution. The bourgeoisie, in the mass, will inevitably turn towards

counterrevolution, towards the autocracy, against the revolution and against the people, immediately its narrow, selfish interests are met, immediately it “recoils” from consistent democracy (and it is already recoiling from it!). There remains the “people,” that is, the proletariat and the peasantry: the proletariat alone can be relied on to march to the end, for it is going far beyond the democratic revolution. That is why the proletariat fights in the front ranks for a republic and contemptuously rejects silly and unworthy advice to take care not to frighten away the bourgeoisie. The peasantry includes a great number of semi-proletarian as well as petty-bourgeois elements. This causes it also to be unstable and compels the proletariat to unite in a strictly class party. But the instability of the peasantry differs radically from the instability of the bourgeoisie, for at the present time the peasantry is interested not so much in the absolute preservation of private property as in the confiscation of the landed estates, one of the principal forms of private property. While this does not make the peasantry become socialist or cease to be petty-bourgeois, it is capable of becoming a wholehearted and most radical adherent of the democratic revolution. The peasantry will inevitably become such if only the progress of revolutionary events, which is enlightening it, is not checked too soon by the treachery of the bourgeoisie and the defeat of the proletariat. Subject to this condition, the peasantry will inevitably become a bulwark of the revolution and the republic, for only a completely victorious revolution can give the peasantry everything in the sphere of agrarian reforms—everything that the peasants desire, of which they dream, and of which they truly stand in need (not for the abolition of capitalism as the “Socialist-Revolutionaries” imagine, but) in order to emerge from the mire of semi-serfdom,

from the gloom of oppression and servitude, in order to improve their living conditions as much as it is possible to improve them under the system of commodity production.

Moreover, the peasantry is attached to the revolution not only by the prospect of radical agrarian reform but by its general and permanent interests. Even in fighting the proletariat the peasantry stands in need of democracy, for only a democratic system is capable of giving exact expression to its interests and of ensuring its predominance as the mass, as the majority. The more enlightened the peasantry becomes (and since the war with Japan it is becoming enlightened much more rapidly than those who are accustomed to measure enlightenment by the school standard suspect), the more consistently and determinedly will it favour a thoroughgoing democratic revolution; for, unlike the bourgeoisie, it has nothing to fear from the supremacy of the people, but, on the contrary, stands to gain by it. A democratic republic will become the ideal of the peasantry as soon as it begins to free itself from its naïve monarchism, because the enlightened monarchism of the bourgeois stock-jobbers (with an upper chamber, etc.) implies for the peasantry the same disfranchisement and the same downtroddenness and ignorance as it suffers from today, only slightly glossed over with the varnish of European constitutionalism.

That is why the bourgeoisie as a class naturally and inevitably strives to come under the wing of the liberal-monarchist party, while the peasantry, in the mass, strives to come under the leadership of the revolutionary and republican party. That is why the bourgeoisie is incapable of carrying the democratic

revolution to its consummation, while the peasantry is capable of doing so, and we must exert all our efforts to help it to do so.

It may be objected: but this requires no proof, this is all ABC; all Social-Democrats understand this perfectly well. But that is not so. It is not understood by those who can talk about “the sweep” of the revolution being “diminished” because the bourgeoisie will fall away from it. Such people repeat the words of our agrarian program that they have learned by rote without understanding their meaning, for otherwise they would not be frightened by the concept of the revolutionary-democratic dictatorship of the proletariat and the peasantry, which inevitably follows from the entire Marxian world outlook and from our program; otherwise they would not restrict the sweep of the great Russian revolution to the limits to which the bourgeoisie is prepared to go. Such people defeat their abstract Marxian revolutionary phrases by their concrete anti-Marxian and anti-revolutionary resolutions.

Those who really understand the role of the peasantry in a victorious Russian revolution would not dream of saying that the sweep of the revolution would be diminished if the bourgeoisie recoiled from it. For, as a matter of fact, the Russian revolution will begin to assume its real sweep, will really assume the widest revolutionary sweep possible in the epoch of bourgeois-democratic revolution, only when the bourgeoisie recoils from it and when the masses of the peasantry come out as active revolutionaries side by side with the proletariat. In order that it may be consistently carried to its conclusion, our democratic revolution must rely on such forces as are capable of paralysing the inevitable inconsistency of the bourgeoisie (i.e., capable precisely of “causing it to recoil from the

revolution," which the Caucasian adherents of Iskra fear so much because of their lack of judgement).

The proletariat must carry to completion the democratic revolution, by allying to itself the mass of the peasantry in order to crush by force the resistance of the autocracy and to paralyse the instability of the bourgeoisie. The proletariat must accomplish the socialist revolution, by allying to itself the mass of the semi-proletarian elements of the population in order to crush by force the resistance of the bourgeoisie and to paralyse the instability of the peasantry and the petty bourgeoisie. Such are the tasks of the proletariat which the new-Iskraists present so narrowly in all their arguments and resolutions about the sweep of the revolution.

One circumstance, however, must not be forgotten, although it is frequently lost sight of in discussions about the "sweep" of the revolution. It must not be forgotten that the point at issue is not the difficulties this problem presents, but the road along which we must seek and attain its solution. The point is not whether it is easy or difficult to make the sweep of the revolution mighty and invincible, but how we must act in order to make this sweep more powerful. It is precisely on the fundamental nature of our activity, on the direction it should take, that our views differ. We emphasise this because careless and unscrupulous people too frequently confuse two different questions, namely, the question of the direction in which the road leads, i.e., the selection of one of two different roads, and the question of how easily the goal can be reached, or of how near the goal is on the given road.

We have not dealt with this last question at all in the foregoing because it has not evoked any disagreement or divergency in

the Party. But it goes without saying that the question itself is extremely important and deserves the most serious attention of all Social-Democrats. It would be a piece of unpardonable optimism to forget the difficulties which accompany the task of drawing into the movement the masses not only of the working class, but also of the peasantry. These difficulties have more than once been the rock against which the efforts to carry a democratic revolution to completion have been wrecked; and it was the inconsistent and self-seeking bourgeoisie which triumphed most of all, because it "made capital" in the shape of monarchist protection against the people, and at the same time "preserved the virginity" of liberalism . . . or of the *Osvobozhdeniye* trend. But difficult does not mean impossible. The important thing is to be convinced that the path chosen is the correct one, and this conviction will multiply a hundred-fold the revolutionary energy and revolutionary enthusiasm which can perform miracles.

The depth of the rift among present-day Social-Democrats on the question of the path to be chosen can be seen at once by comparing the Caucasian resolution of the new-Iskraists with the resolution of the Third Congress of the Russian Social-Democratic Labour Party. The Congress resolution says: the bourgeoisie is inconsistent, it will certainly try to deprive us of the gains of the revolution. Therefore, make more energetic preparations for the fight, comrades and fellow workers! Arm yourselves, win the peasantry to your side! We shall not surrender our revolutionary gains to the self-seeking bourgeoisie without a fight. The resolution of the Caucasian new-Iskraists says: the bourgeoisie is inconsistent, it may recoil from the revolution. Therefore, comrades and fellow workers, please do not think of joining a provisional government, for, if

you do, the bourgeoisie will certainly recoil, and the sweep of the revolution will thereby be diminished!

One side says: advance the revolution forward, to its consummation, in spite of the resistance or the passivity of the inconsistent bourgeoisie.

The other side says: do not think of carrying the revolution to completion independently, for if you do, the inconsistent bourgeoisie will recoil from it.

Are these not two diametrically opposite paths? Is it not obvious that one set of tactics absolutely excludes the other? That the first tactics are the only correct tactics of revolutionary Social-Democracy, while the second are in fact purely Osvobozhdeniye tactics?

Lenin

July 1905

Lenin's Collected Works, 1962, Moscow, Volume 9, pp. 15-140.

Two Tactics of Social-Democracy in the Democratic Revolution

The Vulgar Bourgeois Representation of Dictatorship and Marx's View of It

Mehring tells us in his notes to Marx's articles from the *Neue Rheinische Zeitung* of 1848 that he published, that one of the reproaches levelled at this newspaper by bourgeois publications was that it had allegedly demanded "the immediate introduction of a dictatorship as the sole means of achieving democracy" (Marx, *Nachlass*, Volume III, p. 53). From the vulgar bourgeois standpoint the terms dictatorship and democracy are mutually exclusive. Failing to understand the theory of class struggle, and accustomed to seeing in the political arena the petty squabbling of the various bourgeois circles and coteries, the bourgeois conceives dictatorship to mean the annulment of all the liberties and guarantees of democracy, tyranny of every kind, and every sort of abuse of power in the personal interests of a dictator. In essence, it is precisely this vulgar bourgeois view that is manifested in the writings of our Martynov, who winds up his "new campaign" in the new *Iskra* by attributing the partiality of the *Vperyod* and the *Proletary* for the slogan of dictatorship to Lenin's "passionate desire to try his luck" (*Iskra*, No. 103, p. 3, col. 2). In order to explain to Martynov the meaning of the term class dictatorship as distinct from personal dictatorship, and the tasks of a democratic dictatorship as distinct from those of a

socialist dictatorship, it would not be amiss to dwell on the views of the *Neue Rheinische Zeitung*.

“Every provisional organisation of the state after a revolution,” wrote the *Neue Rheinische Zeitung* on September 14, 1848, “requires a dictatorship, and an energetic dictatorship at that. From the very beginning we have reproached Camphausen” (the head of the Ministry after March 8, 1848) “for not acting dictatorially, for not having immediately smashed up and eliminated the remnants of the old institutions. And while Herr Camphausen was lulling himself with constitutional illusions, the defeated party (i.e., the party of reaction) strengthened its positions in the bureaucracy, and in the army, and here and there even began to venture upon open struggle.”

These words, Mehring justly remarks, sum up in a few propositions all that was propounded in detail in the *Neue Rheinische Zeitung* in long articles on the Camphausen Ministry. What do these words of Marx tell us? That a provisional revolutionary government must act dictatorially (a proposition which the *Iskra* was totally unable to grasp since it was fighting shy of the slogan: dictatorship) and that the task of such a dictatorship is to destroy the remnants of the old institutions (which is precisely what was clearly stated in the resolution of the Third Congress of the Russian Social-Democratic Labour Party about the struggle against counterrevolution, and what was omitted in the resolution of the Conference, as we showed above). Thirdly, and lastly, it follows from these words that Marx castigated the bourgeois democrats for entertaining “constitutional illusions” in a period of revolution and open civil war. The meaning of these words becomes particularly obvious from the article in the *Neue*

Rheinische Zeitung of June 6, 1848. "A Constituent National Assembly," wrote Marx, "must first of all be an active, revolutionary-active assembly. The Frankfurt Assembly, however, is busying itself with school exercises in parliamentarism while allowing the government to act. Let us assume that this learned assembly succeeds after mature consideration in working out the best possible agenda and the best possible constitution. But what is the use of the best possible agenda and of the best possible constitution, if the German governments have in the meantime placed the bayonet on the agenda?"

That is the meaning of the slogan: dictatorship. We can judge from this what Marx's attitude would have been towards resolutions which call a "decision to organise a constituent assembly" a decisive victory, or which invite us to "remain the party of extreme revolutionary opposition"!

Major questions in the life of nations are settled only by force. The reactionary classes themselves are usually the first to resort to violence, to civil war; they are the first to "place the bayonet on the agenda," as the Russian autocracy has been doing systematically and undeviatingly everywhere ever since January 9. And since such a situation has arisen, since the bayonet has really become the main point on the political agenda, since insurrection has proved to be imperative and urgent—constitutional illusions and school exercises in parliamentarism become only a screen for the bourgeois betrayal of the revolution, a screen to conceal the fact that the bourgeoisie is "recoiling" from the revolution. It is therefore the slogan of dictatorship that the genuinely revolutionary class must advance.

On the question of the tasks of this dictatorship Marx wrote, already in the *Neue Rheinische Zeitung* [of June 6, 1848]: "The National Assembly should have acted dictatorially against the reactionary attempts of the obsolete governments; the force of public opinion in its favour would then have been so strong as to shatter all bayonets.... But this Assembly bores the German people instead of carrying the people with it or being carried away by it [them]." In Marx's opinion, the National Assembly should have "eliminated from the regime actually existing in Germany everything that contradicted the principle of the sovereignty of the people," then it should have "consolidated the revolutionary ground on which it stands in order to make the sovereignty of the people, won by the revolution, secure against all attacks."

Thus, the tasks which Marx set before a revolutionary government or dictatorship in 1848 amounted in substance primarily to a democratic revolution: defence against counterrevolution and the actual elimination of everything that contradicted the sovereignty of the people. This is nothing else than a revolutionary-democratic dictatorship.

To proceed: which classes, in Marx's opinion, could and should have achieved this task (actually to exercise to the full the principle of the sovereignty of the people and to beat off the attacks of the counterrevolution)? Marx speaks of the "people." But we know that he always ruthlessly combated the petty-bourgeois illusions about the unity of the "people" and about the absence of a class struggle within the people. In using the word "people," Marx did not thereby gloss over class distinctions, but combined definite elements that were capable of carrying the revolution to completion.

After the victory of the Berlin proletariat on March 18, wrote the *Neue Rheinische Zeitung* [of June 14, 1848], the results of the revolution proved to be twofold: "On the one hand the arming of the people, the right of association, the sovereignty of the people actually attained; on the other hand, the preservation of the monarchy and the Camphausen-Hansemann Ministry, i.e., the government of representatives of the big bourgeoisie. Thus, the revolution had two series of results, which had inevitably to diverge. The people had achieved victory, it had won liberties of a decisive democratic nature, but the direct power passed not into its hands, but into those of the big bourgeoisie. In a word, the revolution was not completed. The people allowed the big bourgeois to form a ministry, and the big bourgeois immediately displayed their strivings by offering an alliance to the old Prussian nobility and bureaucracy. Arnim, Canitz and Schwerin joined the Ministry.

"The upper bourgeoisie, ever anti-revolutionary, concluded a defensive end offensive alliance with the reaction out of fear of the people, that is to say, the workers and the democratic bourgeoisie." (Our italics.)

Thus, not only a "decision to organise a constituent assembly," but even its actual convocation is insufficient for a decisive victory of the revolution! Even after a partial victory in an armed struggle (the victory of the Berlin workers over the troops on March 18, 1848) an "incomplete" revolution, a revolution "that has not been carried to completion," is possible. On what, then, does its completion depend? It depends on whose hands the immediate rule passes into, whether into the hands of the Petrunkeviches and Rodichevs, that is to say, the Camphausens and the Hansemanns, or into

the hands of the people, i.e., the workers and the democratic bourgeoisie. In the first case the bourgeoisie will possess power, and the proletariat “freedom of criticism.” freedom to “remain the party of extreme revolutionary opposition.” Immediately after the victory, the bourgeoisie will conclude an alliance with the reaction (this would inevitably happen in Russia too, if, for example, the St. Petersburg workers gained only a partial victory in street fighting with the troops and left it to Messrs. Petrunkeviches and Co. to form a government). In the second case, a revolutionary-democratic dictatorship, i.e., the complete victory of the revolution, would be possible.

It now remains to define more precisely what Marx really meant by “democratic bourgeoisie” (demokratische Bürgerschaft), which together with the workers he called the people, in contradistinction to the big bourgeoisie.

A clear answer to this question is supplied by the following passage from an article in the *Neue Rheinische Zeitung* of July 30, 1848: “...The German revolution of 1848 is only a parody of the French revolution of 1789.

“On August 4, 1789, three weeks after the storming of the Bastille, the French people in a single day prevailed over all the feudal burdens.

“On July 11, 1848, four months after the March barricades, the feudal burdens prevailed over the German people. *Teste Gierke cum Hansemanno.*

“The French bourgeoisie of 1789 did not for a moment leave its allies, the peasants, in the lurch. It knew that the foundation of its rule was the destruction of feudalism in the countryside, the creation of a free landowning (*grundbesitzenden*) peasant class.

“The German bourgeoisie of 1848 is without the least compunction betraying the peasants, who are its most natural allies, the flesh of its flesh, and without whom it is powerless against the nobility.

“The continuance of feudal rights, their sanction under the guise of (illusory) redemption—such is the result of the German revolution of 1848. The mountain brought forth a mouse.”

This is a very instructive passage: it gives us four important propositions: 1) The incompleted German revolution differs from the completed French revolution in that the German bourgeoisie betrayed not only democracy in general, but also the peasantry in particular. 2) The foundation for the full consummation of a democratic revolution is the creation of a free class of peasants. 3) The creation of such a class means the abolition of feudal burdens, the destruction of feudalism, but does not yet mean a socialist revolution. 4) The peasants are the “most natural” allies of the bourgeoisie, that is to say, of the democratic bourgeoisie, which without them is “powerless” against the reaction.

Making proper allowances for concrete national peculiarities and substituting serfdom for feudalism, all these propositions can be fully applied to Russia in 1905. There is no doubt that by learning from the experience of Germany, as elucidated by Marx, we cannot arrive at any other slogan for a decisive victory of the revolution than: a revolutionary-democratic dictatorship of the proletariat and the peasantry. There is no doubt that the chief components of the “people,” whom Marx in 1848 contrasted with the resisting reactionaries and the treacherous bourgeoisie, are the proletariat and the peasantry. There is no doubt that in Russia too the liberal bourgeoisie and the

gentlemen of the Osvobozhdeniye League are betraying and will continue to betray the peasantry, i.e., will confine themselves to a pseudo reform and taking the side of the landlords in the decisive battle between them and the peasantry. Only the proletariat is capable of supporting the peasantry to the end in this struggle. There is no doubt, finally, that in Russia also the success of the peasant struggle, i.e., the transfer of the whole of the land to the peasantry, will signify a complete democratic revolution and constitute the social support of the revolution carried to its completion, but it will by no means be a socialist revolution, or "socialisation" that the ideologists of the petty bourgeoisie, the Socialist-Revolutionaries talk about. The success of the peasant insurrection, the victory of the democratic revolution will merely clear the way for a genuine and decisive struggle for Socialism on the basis of a democratic republic. In this struggle the peasantry as a landowning class will play the same treacherous, vacillating part as is now being played by the bourgeoisie in the struggle for democracy. To forget this is to forget Socialism, to deceive oneself and others as to the real interests and tasks of the proletariat.

In order to leave no gaps in the presentation of the views held by Marx in 1848, it is necessary to note one essential difference between German Social-Democracy of that time (or the Communist Party of the Proletariat, to use the language of that period) and present-day Russian Social Democracy. Here is what Mehring says:

"The Neue Rheinische Zeitung appeared in the political arena as the 'organ of democracy.' There is no mistaking the thread that ran through all its articles. But in the direct sense, it

championed the interests of the bourgeois revolution against absolutism and feudalism more than the interests of the proletariat against the bourgeoisie. Very little is to be found in its columns about the separate working-class movement during the years of the revolution, although one should not forget that along with it there appeared twice a week, under the editorship of Moll and Schapper, a special organ of the Cologne Workers' League. [Zeitung des Arbeiter-Vereins zu Köln] At any rate, the present day reader will be struck by the little attention the *Neue Rheinische Zeitung* paid to the German working-class movement of its day, although its most capable mind, Stephan Born, was a pupil of Marx and Engels in Paris and Brussels and in 1848 was the Berlin correspondent for their newspaper. Born relates in his Memoirs that Marx and Engels never expressed a single word in disapproval of his agitation among the workers; nevertheless, it appears probable from subsequent declarations of Engels' that they were dissatisfied, at least with the methods of this agitation. Their dissatisfaction was justified inasmuch as Born was obliged to make many concessions to the as yet totally undeveloped class consciousness of the proletariat in the greater part of Germany, concessions which do not stand the test of criticism from the viewpoint of the Communist Manifesto. Their dissatisfaction was unjustified inasmuch as Born managed nonetheless to maintain the agitation conducted by him on a relatively high plane. . . . Without doubt, Marx and Engels were historically and politically right in thinking that the primary interest of the working class was to push the bourgeois revolution forward as far as possible. . . . Nevertheless, a remarkable proof of how the elementary instinct of the working-class movement is able to correct the conceptions of the greatest minds is provided by the fact that in April 1849 they

declared in favour of a specific workers' organisation and decided to participate in the workers' congress, which was being prepared especially by the East Elbe (Eastern Prussia) proletariat."

Thus, it was only in April 1849, after the revolutionary newspaper had been appearing for almost a year (the *Neue Rheinische Zeitung* began publication on June 1, 1848) that Marx and Engels declared in favour of a special workers' organisation! Until then they were merely running an "organ of democracy" unconnected by any organisational ties with an independent workers' party. This fact, monstrous and improbable as it may appear from our present-day standpoint, clearly shows us what an enormous difference there is between the German Social-Democratic Party of those days and the Russian Social-Democratic Labour Party of today. This fact shows how much less the proletarian features of the movement, the proletarian current within it, were in evidence in the German democratic revolution (because of the backwardness of Germany in 1848 both economically and politically—its disunity as a state). This should not be forgotten in judging Marx's repeated declarations during this period and somewhat later about the need for organising an independent proletarian party. Marx arrived at this practical conclusion only as a result of the experience of the democratic revolution, almost a year later—so philistine, so petty-bourgeois was the whole atmosphere in Germany at that time. To us this conclusion is an old and solid acquisition of half a century's experience of international Social-Democracy—an acquisition with which we began to organise the Russian Social-Democratic Labour Party. In our case there can be no question, for instance, of revolutionary proletarian newspapers being outside the Social-

Democratic Party of the proletariat, or of their appearing even for a moment simply as “organs of democracy.”

But the contrast which had hardly begun to reveal itself between Marx and Stephan Born exists in our case in a form which is more developed by reason of the more powerful manifestation of the proletarian current in the democratic stream of our revolution. Speaking of the probable dissatisfaction of Marx and Engels with the agitation conducted by Stephan Born, Mehring expresses himself too mildly and too evasively. Here is what Engels wrote of Born in 1885 (in his preface to the *Enthüllungen über den Kommunistenprozess zu Köln*. Zürich, 1885):

The members of the Communist League everywhere stood at the head of the extreme democratic movement, proving thereby that the League was an excellent school of revolutionary action. “. . . the compositor Stephan Born, who had worked in Brussels and Paris as an active member of the League, founded a Workers’ Brotherhood” (“*Arbeiterverbrüderung*”) “in Berlin which became fairly widespread and existed until 1850. Born, a very talented young man, who, however, was a bit too much in a hurry to become a big political figure, ‘fraternised’ with the most miscellaneous ragtag and bobtail” (Kreti und Plethi) “in order to get a crowd together, and was not at all the man who could bring unity into the conflicting tendencies, light into the chaos. Consequently, in the official publications of the association the views represented in the Communist Manifesto were mingled hodgepodge with guild recollections and guild aspirations, fragments of Louis Blanc and Proudhon, protectionism, etc.; in short, they wanted to please everybody [allen alles sein].” “In particular, strikes, trade unions and

producers' co-operatives were set going and it was forgotten that above all it was a question of first conquering, by means of political victories, the field in which alone such things could be realised on a lasting basis." (Our italics.) "When, afterwards, the victories of the reaction made the leaders of the Brotherhood realise the necessity of taking a direct part in the revolutionary struggle, they were naturally left in the lurch by the confused mass which they had grouped around themselves. Born took part in the Dresden uprising in May, 1849 and had a lucky escape. But, in contrast to the great political movement of the proletariat, the Workers' Brotherhood proved to be a pure Sonderbund [separate league], which to a large extent existed only on paper and played such a subordinate role that the reaction did not find it necessary to suppress it until 1850, and its surviving branches until several years later. Born, whose real name was Buttermilch has not become a big political figure but a petty Swiss professor, who no longer translates Marx into guild language but the meek Renan into his own fulsome German." That is how Engels judged the two tactics of Social Democracy in the democratic revolution!

Our new-Iskraists are also pushing towards "Economism," and with such unreasonable zeal as to earn the praises of the monarchist bourgeoisie for their "seeing the light." They too collect around themselves a motley crowd, flattering the "Economists," demagogically attracting the undeveloped masses by the slogans of "initiative," "democracy," "autonomy," etc., etc. Their labour unions, too, exist only on the pages of the Khlestakov-type new Iskra. Their slogans and resolutions betray a similar failure to understand the tasks of the "great political movement of the proletariat."

Petty-Bourgeois and Proletarian Socialism

Proletary, No. 24, November 7 (October 25), 1905

Collected Works, Volume 9, pages 438-446.

Of the various socialist doctrines, Marxism is now predominant in Europe, the struggle for the achievement of a socialist order being almost entirely waged as a struggle of the working class under the guidance of the Social-Democratic parties. This complete predominance of proletarian socialism grounded in the teachings of Marxism was not achieved all at once, but only after a long struggle against all sorts of outworn doctrines, petty-bourgeois socialism, anarchism, and so on. Some thirty years ago, Marxism was not predominant even in Germany, where the prevailing views of the time were in fact transitional, mixed and eclectic, lying between petty-bourgeois and proletarian socialism. The most widespread doctrines among advanced workers in the Romance countries, in France, Spain and Belgium, were Proudhonism, Blanquism and anarchism, which obviously expressed the viewpoint of the petty bourgeois, not of the proletarian.

What has been the cause of this rapid and complete victory of Marxism during the last decades? **The correctness of the Marxist views has been confirmed to an ever-greater extent by all the development of contemporary societies, both politically and economically,** and by the whole experience of the revolutionary movement and of the struggle of the oppressed classes. The decline of the petty bourgeoisie inevitably led, sooner or later, to the extinction of all kinds of petty-bourgeois prejudices, while the growth of capitalism and

the intensification of the class struggle within capitalist society were the best agitation for the ideas of proletarian socialism.

Russia's backwardness naturally accounts for the firm footing that various obsolete socialist doctrines gained in our country. **The entire history of Russian revolutionary thought during the last quarter of a century is the history of the struggle waged by Marxism against petty-bourgeois Narodnik socialism.** While the rapid growth and remarkable successes of the Russian working-class movement have already brought victory to Marxism in Russia too, the development of an indubitably revolutionary peasant movement—especially after the famous peasant revolts in the Ukraine in 1902—has on the other hand caused a certain revival of senile Narodism. The Narodnik theories of old, embellished with modish European opportunism (revisionism, Bernsteinism, and criticism of Marx), make up all the original ideological stock-in-trade of the so-called Socialist-Revolutionaries. That is why the peasant question is focal in the Marxists' controversies with both the pure Narodniks and the Socialist-Revolutionaries.

To a certain extent Narodism was an integral and consistent doctrine. It denied the domination of capitalism in Russia; it denied the factory workers' role as the front-line fighters of the entire proletariat; **it denied the importance of a political revolution and bourgeois political liberty;** it preached an immediate socialist revolution, stemming from the peasant commune with its petty forms of husbandry. All that now survives of this integral theory is mere shreds, but to understand the controversies of the present day intelligently, and to prevent these controversies from degenerating into mere

squabbles, one should always remember the general and basic Narodnik roots of the errors of our Socialist-Revolutionaries.

The **Narodniks considered the muzhik the man of the future in Russia**, this view springing inevitably from their faith in the socialist character of the peasant commune, from their lack of faith in the future of capitalism. The Marxists considered the worker the man of the future in Russia, and the development of Russian capitalism in both agriculture and industry is providing more and more confirmation of their views. The working-class movement in Russia has won recognition for itself, but as for the peasant movement, the gulf separating Narodism and Marxism is to this day revealed in their different interpretations of this movement. To the Narodniks the peasant movement provides a refutation of Marxism. It is a movement that stands for a direct socialist revolution; it does not recognise bourgeois political liberty; it stems from small-scale, not large-scale, production. In a word, to the Narodnik, it is the peasant movement that is the genuine, truly socialist and immediately socialist movement. The Narodnik faith in the peasant commune and the Narodnik brand of anarchism fully explain why such conclusions are inevitable.

To the Marxist, **the peasant movement is a democratic, not a socialist, movement**. In Russia, just as was the case in other countries, it is a necessary concomitant of the democratic revolution, which is bourgeois in its social and economic content. It is not in the least directed against the foundations of the bourgeois order, against commodity production, or against capital. On the contrary, it is directed against the old, serf, pre-capitalist relationships in the rural districts, and against landlordism, which is the mainstay of all the survivals of serf-

ownership. Consequently, full victory of this peasant movement will not abolish capitalism; on the contrary, it will create a broader foundation for its development, and will hasten and intensify purely capitalist development. **Full victory of the peasant uprising can only create a stronghold for a democratic bourgeois republic**, within which a proletarian struggle against the bourgeoisie will for the first time **develop in its purest form**.

These, then, are the two contrasting views which must be clearly understood by anyone who wishes to examine the gulf in principles that lies between the Socialist-Revolutionaries and the Social-Democrats. According to one view, the peasant movement is socialist, while according to the other it is a democratic-bourgeois movement. Hence one can see what ignorance our Socialist-Revolutionaries reveal when they repeat for the hundredth time (see, for example, *Revolutsionnaya Rossiya*, No. 75) that orthodox Marxists have ignored the peasant question. There is only one way of combating such crass ignorance, and that is by repeating the ABC, by setting forth the old consistently Narodnik views, and by pointing out for the hundredth or the thousandth time that the real distinction between us does not lie in a desire or the non-desire to reckon with the peasant question, in recognition or non-recognition of it, but in our different appraisals of the present-day peasant movement and of the present-day peasant question in Russia. He who says that the Marxists ignore the peasant question in Russia is, in the first place, an absolute ignoramus since all the principal writings of Russian Marxists, beginning with Plekhanov's *Our Differences* (which appeared over twenty years ago), have in the main been devoted to explaining the erroneousness of the Narodnik views on the

Russian peasant question. Secondly, he who says that the Marxists ignore the peasant question thereby proves his desire to avoid giving a complete appraisal of the actual difference in principles, giving the answer to the question whether or not the present-day peasant movement is democratic-bourgeois, whether or not it is objectively directed against the survivals of serfdom.

The Socialist-Revolutionaries have never given, nor will they ever be able to give, a clear and precise answer to this question, for they are floundering hopelessly between the old Narodnik view and the present-day Marxist view on the peasant question in Russia. The Marxists say that the Socialist-Revolutionaries represent the standpoint of the petty bourgeoisie (are ideologists of the petty bourgeoisie) **for the very reason that they cannot rid themselves of petty-bourgeois illusions** and of the Narodnik imaginings in appraising the peasant movement.

That is why we have to go over the ABC once again. What is the present-day peasant movement in Russia striving for? For land and liberty. What significance will the complete victory of this movement have? After winning liberty, it will abolish the rule of the landlords and bureaucrats in the administration of the state. After securing the land, it will give the landlords' estates to the peasants. Will the fullest liberty and expropriation of the landlords do away with commodity production? No, it will not. Will the fullest liberty and expropriation of the landlords abolish individual farming by peasant households on communal, or "socialised", land? No, it will not. Will the fullest liberty and expropriation of the landlords bridge the deep gulf that separates the rich peasant, with his numerous horses and

cows, from the farm-hand, the day-labourer, i.e., the gulf that separates the peasant bourgeoisie from the rural proletariat? No, it will not. On the contrary, the more completely the highest social-estate (the landlords) is routed and annihilated, the more profound will the class distinction between the bourgeoisie and the proletariat be. What will be the objective significance of the complete victory of the peasant uprising? This victory will do away with all survivals of serfdom, but it will by no means destroy the bourgeois economic system, or destroy capitalism or the division of society into classes—into rich and poor, the bourgeoisie and the proletariat. Why is the present-day peasant movement a democratic-bourgeois movement? Because, after destroying the power of the bureaucracy and the landlords, it will set up a democratic system of society, **without, however, altering the bourgeois foundation of that democratic society**, without abolishing the rule of capital. How should the class-conscious worker, the socialist, regard the present-day peasant movement? He must support this movement, help the peasants in the most energetic fashion, help them throw off completely both the rule of the bureaucracy and that of the landlords. At the same time, however, he should explain to the peasants that it is not enough to overthrow the rule of the bureaucracy and the landlords. When they overthrow that rule, **they must at the same time prepare for the abolition of the rule of capital**, the rule of the bourgeoisie, and for that purpose a doctrine that is fully socialist, i.e., Marxist, should be immediately disseminated, the rural proletarians should be united, welded together, and organised for the struggle against the peasant bourgeoisie and the entire Russian bourgeoisie. **Can a class-conscious worker forget the democratic struggle for the sake of the socialist struggle, or forget the latter for the sake of the**

former? No, a class-conscious worker calls himself a Social-Democrat for the reason that he understands the relation between the two struggles. He knows that there is no other road to socialism save the road through democracy, through political liberty. He therefore strives to achieve democratism completely and consistently in order to attain the ultimate goal—socialism. **Why are the conditions for the democratic struggle not the same as those for the socialist struggle? Because the workers will certainly have different allies in each of those two struggles.** The democratic struggle is waged by the workers together with a section of the bourgeoisie, especially the petty bourgeoisie. On the other hand, the socialist struggle is waged by the workers against the whole of the bourgeoisie. The struggle against the bureaucrat and the landlord can and must be waged together with all the peasants, even the well-to-do and the middle peasants. On the other hand, it is only together with the rural proletariat that the struggle against the bourgeoisie, and therefore against the well-to-do peasants too, can be properly waged.

If we keep in mind all these elementary Marxist truths, which the Socialist-Revolutionaries always prefer to avoid going into, we shall have no difficulty in appraising the latter's "latest" objections to Marxism, such as the following:

"Why was it necessary," *Revolutsionnaya Rossiya* (No. 75) exclaims, "first to support the peasant in general against the landlord, and then (i.e., at the same time) to support the proletariat against the peasant in general, instead of at once supporting the proletariat against the landlord; and what Marxism has to do with this, heaven alone knows."

This is the standpoint of the most primitive, childishly naïve anarchism. For many centuries and even for thousands of years, mankind has dreamt of doing away “at once” with all and every kind of exploitation. These dreams remained mere dreams until millions of the exploited all over the world began to unite for a consistent, staunch and comprehensive struggle to change capitalist society in the direction the evolution of that society is naturally taking. Socialist dreams turned into the socialist struggle of the millions only when Marx’s scientific socialism had linked up the urge for change with the struggle of a definite class. Outside the class struggle, socialism is either a hollow phrase or a naïve dream. In Russia, however, two different struggles of two different social forces are taking place before our very eyes. The proletariat is fighting against the bourgeoisie wherever capitalist relations of production exist (and they exist—be it known to our Socialist-Revolutionaries— even in the peasant commune, i.e., on the land which from their standpoint is one hundred per cent “socialised”). As a stratum of small landowners, of petty bourgeois, the peasantry, is fighting against all survivals of serfdom, against the bureaucrats and the landlords. Only those who are completely ignorant of political economy and of the history of revolutions throughout the world can fail to see that these are two distinct and different social wars. To shut one’s eyes to the diversity of these wars by demanding “at once”, is like hiding one’s head under one’s wing and refusing to make any analysis of reality.

The Socialist-Revolutionaries, who have lost the integrity of the old Narodnik views, have even forgotten many of the teachings of the Narodniks themselves. As the selfsame *Revolutsionnaya Rossiya* writes in the same article: “By helping the peasantry to appropriate the landlords, Mr. Lenin is unconsciously assisting

in building up petty-bourgeois economy on the ruins of the more or less developed forms of capitalist agriculture. Is not this a 'step backward' from the standpoint of orthodox Marxism?"

For shame, gentlemen! Why, you have forgotten your own Mr. V. V.! Consult his *Destiny of Capitalism*, the *Sketches* by Mr. Nikolai — on, and other sources of your wisdom. You will then recollect that landlord farming in Russia combines within itself features both of capitalism and of serf-ownership. You will then find out that there is a system of economy based on labour rent, which is a direct survival of the *corvée* system. If, moreover, you take the trouble to consult such an orthodox Marxist book as the third volume of Marx's *Capital*, you will find that nowhere could the *corvée* system develop, and nowhere did it develop, and turn into capitalist farming except through the medium of petty-bourgeois peasant farming. In your efforts to scatter Marxism to the winds, you resort to methods too primitive, methods too long ago exposed; you ascribe to Marxism a grotesquely oversimplified conception of large-scale capitalist farming directly succeeding to large-scale farming based on the *corvée* system. You argue that since the yield on the landlords' estates is higher than on the peasant farms the expropriation of the landlords is a step backward. This argument is worthy of a fourth-form schoolboy. Just consider, gentlemen: was it not a "step backward" to separate the low-yielding peasant lands from the high-yielding landlords' estates when serfdom was abolished?

Present-day landlord economy in Russia combines features of both capitalism and serf-ownership. Objectively, the peasants' struggle against the landlords today is a struggle against

survivals of serfdom. However, to attempt to enumerate all individual cases, to weigh each individual case, and to determine with the precision of an apothecary's scales exactly where serf-ownership ends and pure capitalism begins, is to ascribe one's own pedantry to the Marxists. We cannot calculate what portion of the price of provisions bought from a petty shopkeeper represents labour-value and what part of it represents swindling, etc. Does that mean, gentlemen, that we must discard the theory of labour-value?

Contemporary landlord economy combines features of both capitalism and serfdom. But only pedants can conclude from this that it is our duty to weigh, count and copy out every minute feature in every particular instance, and pigeon-hole it in this or that social category. Only utopians can hence conclude that "there is no need" for us to draw a distinction between the two different social wars. Indeed, the only actual conclusion that does follow is that both in our programme and in our tactics we must combine the purely proletarian struggle against capitalism with the general 'democratic (and general peasant) struggle against serfdom.

The more marked the capitalist features in present-day landlord semi-feudal economy, the more imperative is it to get right down to organising the rural proletariat separately, for this will help 'purely capitalist, or purely proletarian, antagonisms to assert themselves the sooner, whenever confiscation takes place. The more marked the capitalist features in landlord economy, the sooner will democratic confiscation give an impetus to the real struggle for socialism—and, consequently, the more dangerous is false idealisation of the democratic revolution through use of the catchword of "socialisation".

Such is the conclusion to be drawn from the fact that landlord economy is a mixture of capitalism and serf-ownership relations.

Thus, we must combine the purely proletarian struggle with the general peasant struggle, but not confuse the two. We must support the general democratic and general peasant struggle, but not become submerged in this non-class struggle; we must never idealise it with false catchwords such as "socialisation", or ever forget the necessity of organising both the urban and the rural proletariat in an entirely independent class party of Social-Democracy. While giving the utmost support to the most determined democratism, that party will not allow itself to be diverted from the revolutionary path by reactionary dreams and experiments in "equalisation" under the system of commodity production. The peasants' struggle against the landlords is now a revolutionary struggle; the confiscation of the landlords' estates at the present stage of economic and political evolution is revolutionary in every respect, and we back this revolutionary-democratic measure. However, to call this measure "socialisation", and to deceive oneself and the people concerning the possibility of "equality" in land tenure under the system of commodity production, is a reactionary petty-bourgeois utopia, which we leave to the socialist-reactionaries.

The Democratic Tasks of the Revolutionary Proletariat

Lenin Collected Works, Volume 8, pages 511-518.

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The [Russian] Social Democratic Party, as the conscious exponent of the working-class movement, aims at the complete liberation of the toiling masses from every form of oppression and exploitation. The achievement of this objective—the abolition of private property in the means of production and the creation of the socialist society—calls for a very high development of the productive forces of capitalism and a high degree of organisation of the working class. The full development of the productive forces in modern bourgeois society, a broad, free, and open class struggle, and the political education, training, and rallying of the masses of the proletariat are inconceivable without political freedom. Therefore it has always been the aim of the class-conscious proletariat to wage a determined struggle for complete political freedom and the democratic revolution.

The proletariat is not alone in setting this task before itself. The bourgeoisie, too, needs political freedom. The enlightened members of the propertied classes hung out the banner of liberty long ago; the revolutionary intelligentsia, which comes mainly from these classes, has fought heroically for freedom. But the bourgeoisie as a whole is incapable of waging a determined struggle against the autocracy; it fears to lose in this struggle its property which binds it to the existing order; it fears an all-too-revolutionary action of the workers, who will not stop at the democratic revolution but will aspire to the socialist revolution; it fears a complete break with officialdom, with the

bureaucracy, whose interests are bound up by a thousand ties with the interests of the propertied classes. For this reason the bourgeois struggle for liberty is notoriously timorous, inconsistent, and half-hearted. One of the tasks of the proletariat is to prod the bourgeoisie on, to raise before the whole people slogans calling for a complete democratic revolution, to start working boldly and independently for the realisation of these slogans—in a word, to be the vanguard, to take the lead in the struggle for the liberty of the whole people.

In the pursuit of this aim the Russian Social-Democrats have had to fight many a battle against the inconsistency of bourgeois liberalism. Let us recall, for instance, how Mr. Struve began his career, unhampered by the censor, as a political champion of the “liberation” of Russia. He made his *début* with his preface to the Witte “Memorandum”, in which he advanced the markedly “Shipovian” (to use the current political nomenclature) slogan, “Rights, and an Authoritative Zemstvo”. The Social-Democratic Party exposed the retrogressive, absurd, and reactionary nature of that slogan; it demanded a definite and uncompromising democratic platform, and itself put forward such a platform as an integral part of its Party programme. Social-Democracy had to combat the narrow conception of the aims of democracy which obtained in its own ranks when the so-called Economists did their best to play down these aims, when they advocated the “economic struggle against the employers and the, government”, and insisted that we must start by winning rights, continue with political agitation, and only then gradually (the theory of stages) pass on to political struggle.

Now the political struggle has become vastly extended, the revolution has spread throughout the land, the mildest liberals have become "extremists"; it may therefore seem that historical references to the recent past such as we have just made are out of place, with no bearing on the actual turbulent present. But this may seem so only at first glance. To be sure, such slogans as the demand for a Constituent Assembly and for universal, direct, and equal suffrage by secret ballot (which the Social-Democrats long since and in advance of all presented in their Party programme) have become common property; they have been adopted by the illegal *Osvobozhdeniye*, incorporated in the programme of the *Osvobozhdeniye* League, turned into *Zemstvo* slogans, and are now being repeated in every shape and form by the legal press. That Russian bourgeois democracy has made progress in recent years and months cannot be doubted. Bourgeois democracy is learning by experience, is discarding primitive slogans (like the Shipovian "Rights, and an Authoritative *Zemstvo*") and is hobbling along behind the revolution. But it is only hobbling along behind; new contradictions between its words and its deeds, between democracy in principle and democracy in "Realpolitik", are arising in place of the old; for revolutionary developments are making steadily growing demands on democracy. But bourgeois democracy always drags at the tail of events; while adopting more advanced slogans, it always lags behind; it always formulates the slogans several degrees below the level really required in the real revolutionary struggle for real liberty.

Indeed, let us take that now current and generally accepted slogan, "For a Constituent Assembly on the basis of universal, direct, and equal suffrage by secret ballot". Is that slogan adequate from the standpoint of consistent democracy? Is it

adequate in the light of the urgent revolutionary tasks of the present moment? The answer to both these questions can be only in the negative. To be convinced that this is so one has only to examine carefully our Party programme, to which our organisations, unfortunately, do not often refer and which they quote and disseminate all too little. (As a happy exception, worthy of the widest emulation, we note the recent reprint of our Party programme in leaflet form by the Riga, Voronezh, and Moscow committees.) The keynote of our programme, too, is the demand for a popular Constituent Assembly (let us agree, for brevity's sake, to use the word "popular" as denoting suffrage that is universal, etc.). But this slogan does not stand isolated in our programme. The context and the addenda and notes prevent any misconstruction on the part of those who are least consistent in the struggle for liberty or who even struggle against it. It occurs in our programme in conjunction with the following other slogans: (1) the overthrow of the tsarist autocracy; (2) its replacement by the democratic republic; (3) the sovereignty of the people, safeguarded by a democratic constitution, i.e., the concentration of supreme governmental authority entirely in the hands of a legislative assembly composed of representatives of the people and forming a single chamber.

Can there be any doubt that every consistent democrat is obligated to accept all these slogans? Why, the very word "democrat", both by its etymology and by virtue of the political significance it has acquired throughout the history of Europe, denotes an adherent of the sovereignty of the people. It is absurd, therefore, to talk of democracy and in the same breath to reject even a single one of these slogans. But the main contradiction, the contradiction between the desire of the

bourgeoisie to preserve private property at all costs and its desire for liberty, is so profound that spokesmen or followers of the liberal bourgeoisie inevitably find themselves in this ridiculous position. As everyone knows, a very broad liberal party is forming itself in Russia with enormous rapidity, a party which has the adherence of the Osvobozhdeniye League, of the mass of the Zemstvo people, and of newspapers like *Nasha Zhizn*, *Nashi Dni*, *Syn Otechestva*, *Russkiye Vedomosti*, etc., etc. This liberal-bourgeois party likes to be called the "Constitutional-Democratic" Party. In actual fact, however, as can be seen from the declarations and the programme of the illegal Osvobozhdeniye, it is a monarchist party. It does not want a republic at all. It does not want a unicameral assembly, and it proposes for the Upper House indirect and virtually non-universal suffrage (residence qualification). It is anything but anxious for the supreme governmental authority to pass entirely into the hands of the people (although for window-dressing purposes it is very fond of talking about the transfer of power to the people). It does not want the autocracy to be overthrown. It wants only a division of power among (1) the monarchy; (2) the Upper House (where landowners and capitalists will predominate); and (3) the Lower House, which alone is to be built on democratic principles.

Thus, we have before us the indisputable fact that our "democratic" bourgeoisie, even as represented by its most advanced, most educated elements, those least subject to the direct influence of capital, is trailing behind the revolution. This "democratic" party fears the sovereignty of the people. While repeating our slogan of a popular Constituent Assembly, it in fact completely distorts its sense and significance and misleads the people by its use, or, rather, abuse.

What is a “popular Constituent” Assembly? It is an assembly which, in the first place, really expresses the will of the people. To this end we must have universal suffrage in all of its democratic aspects, and a full guarantee of freedom to conduct the election campaign. It is an assembly which, in the second place, really has the power and authority to “inaugurate” a political order which will ensure the sovereignty of the people. It is clear as daylight that without these two conditions the assembly can be neither truly popular nor truly constituent. Yet our liberal bourgeois, our constitutional monarchists (whose claim to be democrats is a mockery of the people) do not want real safeguards to ensure either of these conditions! Not only do they fail to ensure in any way complete freedom of election propaganda or the actual transfer of power and authority to the Constituent Assembly, but, on the contrary, they seek to make both impossible since they aim at maintaining the monarchy. The real power and authority is to remain in the hands of Nicholas the Bloody. This means that the dire enemy of the people is to convene the assembly and “ensure” that the elections will be free and universal. How very democratic! It means that the Constituent Assembly will never have and (according to the idea of the liberal bourgeois) must never have all power and all authority; it is to be utterly devoid of power, devoid of authority; it is merely to come to terms, to reach an agreement, to arrive at an understanding, to strike a bargain with Nicholas II for the assembly to be granted a modicum of his royal power! The Constituent Assembly elected by universal suffrage is to differ in no way from a Lower House. That is to say, the Constituent Assembly, convened for expressing and executing the will of the people, is designed by the liberal bourgeoisie to “constitute”, over the will of the

people, the will of an Upper House and on top of that the will of the monarchy, the will of Nicholas.

Is it not obvious that in talking, speechifying, and shouting about a popular Constituent Assembly, the liberal bourgeois, the Osvobozhdeniye gentry, are actually planning an anti-popular consultative assembly? Instead of emancipating the people, they want to subject the people, by constitutional means, first, to the power of the tsar (monarchism), and, secondly, to the power of the organised big bourgeoisie (the Upper House).

If anyone wishes to dispute this conclusion, let him assert: (1) that there can be a true expression of the popular will in elections without complete freedom of propaganda and without the actual abolition of all the propaganda privileges of the tsarist government; or (2) that an assembly of delegates devoid of real power and authority, in that these are left in the hands of the tsar, is not, in effect, a mere consultative body. To make either of these assertions one must be either a brazen charlatan or a hope less fool. History proves conclusively that a representative assembly coexisting with a monarchical form of government is in actual fact, so long as governmental power remains in the hands of the monarchy, a consultative body which does not bend the will of the monarch to the will of the people, but only conforms the will of the people to the will of the monarch, i. e., divides the power between monarch and people, bargains for a new order, but does not constitute it. History proves conclusively that there can be no such thing as really free elections, that the significance and character of these elections can hardly be brought home to the whole people unless the government that is combating the revolution is

replaced by a provisional revolutionary government. Granting for a moment the improbable and the impossible, namely, that the tsarist government, having decided to convene a "Constituent" (read: consultative) Assembly, will give formal guarantees of freedom of propaganda, all the vast advantages and superior facilities for campaigning which accrue from the organised power of the state will nevertheless remain in its hands. These advantages and facilities for propaganda during the elections to the first people's assembly will be enjoyed by the very ones who have oppressed the people by all the means in their power, and from whom the people have begun to wrest liberty by force.

In a word, we arrive at the very conclusion we reached on the previous occasion (*Proletary*, No. 3), when we examined this question from another angle. The slogan of a popular Constituent Assembly, taken by itself, separately, is at the present time a slogan of the monarchist bourgeoisie, a slogan calling for a deal between the bourgeoisie and the tsarist government. Only the overthrow of the tsarist government and its replacement by a provisional revolutionary government, whose duty it will be to convene the popular Constituent Assembly, can be the slogan of the revolutionary struggle. Let the proletariat of Russia have no illusions on this score; in the din of the general excitation it is being deceived by the use of its own slogans. If we fail to match the armed force of the government with the force of an armed people, if the tsarist government is not utterly defeated and replaced by a provisional revolutionary government, every representative assembly, whatever title—"popular", "constituent", etc.—may be conferred upon it, will in fact be an assembly of

representatives of the big bourgeoisie convened for the purpose of bargaining with the tsar for a division of power.

The more the people's struggle against the tsar comes to a head and the greater likelihood there is of a speedy realisation of the demand for an assembly of people's representatives, the more closely must the revolutionary proletariat watch the "democratic" bourgeoisie. The sooner we gain freedom, the sooner will this ally of the proletariat become its enemy. Two circumstances will serve to cloak this change: (1) the vagueness, incompleteness, and non-committal character of the would-be democratic slogans of the bourgeoisie; and (2) the endeavour to turn the slogans of the proletariat into mere phrases, to substitute empty promises for real safeguards of liberty and revolution. The workers must now watch the "democrats" with intensified vigilance. The words "popular Constituent Assembly" will be nothing more than words if, owing to the actual conditions under which the election campaign and the elections themselves are conducted, this assembly fails to express the will of the people, if it lacks the strength independently to establish the new order. The cardinal issue is now shifting from the question of summoning the popular Constituent Assembly to the question of the method by which it is to be summoned. We are on the eve of decisive events. The proletariat must not pin its faith in general democratic slogans but must contrapose to them its own proletarian-democratic slogans in their full scope. Only a force guided by these slogans can really ensure the complete victory of the revolution.

Anarchism or Socialism? Dialectic Materialism , 1906

Stalin, Works, Vol. 1, November 1901 - April 1907

Marxism is not only the theory of socialism, it is an integral world outlook, a philosophical system, from which Marx 's proletarian socialism logically follows. This philosophical system is called dialectical materialism.

Hence, to expound Marxism means to expound also dialectical materialism.

Why is this system called dialectical materialism?

Because its method is dialectical, and its theory is materialistic.

What is the dialectical method?

It is said that social life is in continual motion and development. And that is true: life must not be regarded as something immutable and static; it never remains at one level, it is in eternal motion, in an eternal process of destruction and creation. Therefore, life always contains the new and the old, the growing and the dying, the revolutionary and the counter-revolutionary.

The dialectical method tells us that we must regard life as it actually is. We have seen that life is in continual motion; consequently, we must regard life in its motion and ask: Where is life going? We have seen that life presents a picture of constant destruction and creation; consequently, we must examine life in its process of destruction and creation and ask: What is being destroyed and what is being created in life?

That which in life is born and grows day by day is invincible, its progress cannot be checked. That is to say, if, for example, in

life the proletariat as a class is born and grows day by day, no matter how weak and small in numbers it may be today, in the long run it must triumph. Why? Because it is growing, gaining strength and marching forward. On the other hand, that which in life is growing old and advancing to its grave must inevitably suffer defeat, even if today it represents a titanic force. That is to say, if, for example, the bourgeoisie is gradually losing ground and is slipping farther and farther back every day, then, no matter how strong and numerous it may be today, it must, in the long run, suffer defeat. Why? Because as a class it is decaying, growing feeble, growing old, and becoming a burden to life.

Hence arose the well-known dialectical proposition all that which really exists, i.e., all that which grows day by day is rational, and all that which decays day by day is irrational and, consequently, cannot avoid defeat.

For example. In the eighties of the last century a great controversy flared up among the Russian revolutionary intelligentsia. The Narodniks asserted that the main force that could undertake the task of "emancipating Russia" was the petty bourgeoisie, rural and urban. Why? -- the Marxists asked them. Because, answered the Narodniks, the rural and urban petty bourgeoisie now constitute the majority and, moreover, they are poor, they live in poverty.

To this the Marxists replied: It is true that the rural and urban petty bourgeoisie now constitute the majority and are really poor, but is that the point? The petty bourgeoisie has long constituted the majority, but up to now it has displayed no initiative in the struggle for "freedom" without the assistance of the proletariat. Why? Because the petty bourgeoisie as a class is

not growing; on the contrary, it is disintegrating day by day and breaking up into bourgeois and proletarians. On the other hand, nor is poverty of decisive importance here, of course: "tramps" are poorer than the petty bourgeoisie, but nobody will say that they can undertake the task of "emancipating Russia."

As you see, the point is not which class today constitutes the majority, or which class is poorer, but which class is gaining strength and which is decaying.

And as the proletariat is the only class which is steadily growing and gaining strength, which is pushing social life forward and rallying all the revolutionary elements around itself, our duty is to regard it as the main force in the present-day movement, join its ranks and make its progressive strivings our strivings.

That is how the Marxists answered.

Obviously the Marxists looked at life dialectically, whereas the Narodniks argued metaphysically -- they pictured social life as having become static at a particular stage.

That is how the dialectical method looks upon the development of life.

But there is movement and movement. There was movement in social life during the "December days," when the proletariat, straightening its back, stormed arms depots and launched an attack upon reaction. But the movement of preceding years, when the proletariat, under the conditions of "peaceful" development, limited itself to individual strikes and the formation of small trade unions, must also be called social movement.

Clearly, movement assumes different forms.

And so the dialectical method says that movement has two forms: the evolutionary and the revolutionary form.

Movement is evolutionary when the progressive elements spontaneously continue their daily activities and introduce minor, quantitative changes into the old order.

Movement is revolutionary when the same elements combine, become imbued with a single idea and sweep down upon the enemy camp with the object of uprooting the old order and of introducing qualitative changes in life, of establishing a new order.

Evolution prepares for revolution and creates the ground for it; revolution consummates the process of evolution and facilitates its further activity.

Similar processes take place in nature. The history of science shows that the dialectical method is a truly scientific method: from astronomy to sociology, in every field we find confirmation of the idea that nothing is eternal in the universe, everything changes, everything develops. Consequently, everything in nature must be regarded from the point of view of movement, development. And this means that the spirit of dialectics permeates the whole of present-day science.

As regards the forms of movement, as regards the fact that according to dialectics, minor, quantitative changes sooner or later lead to major, qualitative changes -- this law applies with equal force to the history of nature. Mendeleev's "periodic system of elements" clearly shows how very important in the history of nature is the emergence of qualitative changes out of

quantitative changes. The same thing is shown in biology by the theory of neo-Lamarckism, to which neo-Darwinism is yielding place.

We shall say nothing about other facts, on which F. Engels has thrown sufficiently full light in his *Anti-Dühring*.

Such is the content of the dialectical method.* * *

How do the Anarchists look upon the dialectical method?

Everybody knows that Hegel was the father of the dialectical method. Marx purged and improved this method. The Anarchists are aware of this, of course. They know that Hegel was a conservative, and so, taking advantage of this, they vehemently revile Hegel as a supporter of "restoration," they try with the utmost zeal to "prove" that "Hegel is a philosopher of restoration . . . that he eulogizes bureaucratic constitutionalism in its absolute form, that the general idea of his philosophy of history is subordinate to and serves the philosophical trend of the period of restoration," and so on and so forth (see Nobati, No. 6. Article by V. Cherkezishvili.)

The well-known Anarchist Kropotkin tries to "prove" the same thing in his works (see, for example, his *Science and Anarchism*, in Russian).

Our Kropotkinites, from Cherkezishvili right down to Sh. G., all with one voice echo Kropotkin (see Nobati).

True, nobody contests what they say on this point; on the contrary, everybody agrees that Hegel was not a revolutionary. Marx and Engels themselves proved before anybody else did, in their *Critique of Critical Criticism*, that Hegel's views on history fundamentally contradict the idea of the sovereignty of

the people. But in spite of this, the Anarchists go on trying to "prove," and deem it necessary to go on day in and day out trying to "prove," that Hegel was a supporter of "restoration." Why do they do this? Probably, in order by all this to discredit Hegel and make their readers feel that the "reactionary~ Hegel's method also cannot be other than "repugnant" and unscientific.

The Anarchists think that they can refute the dialectical method in this way.

We affirm that in this way they can prove nothing but their own ignorance. Pascal and Leibnitz were not revolutionaries, but the mathematical method they discovered is recognised today as a scientific method. Mayer and Helmholtz were not revolutionaries, but their discoveries in the field of physics became the basis of science. Nor were Lamarck and Darwin revolutionaries, but their evolutionary method put biological science on its feet. . . . Why, then, should the fact not be admitted that, in spite of his conservatism, Hegel succeeded in working out a scientific method which is called the dialectical method?

No, in this way the Anarchists will prove nothing but their own ignorance.

To proceed. In the opinion of the Anarchists, "dialectics is metaphysics, " and as they "want to free science from metaphysics, philosophy from theology," they epudiate the dialectical method (see Nobati, Nos. 3 and 9. Sh. G. See also Kropotkin's Science and Anarchism).

Oh, those Anarchists! As the saying goes: "Blame others for your own sins." Dialectics matured in the struggle against metaphysics and gained fame in this struggle; but according to the Anarchists, dialectics is metaphysics!

Dialectics tells us that nothing in the world is eternal, everything in the world is transient and mutable; nature changes, society changes, habits and customs change, conceptions of justice change, truth itself changes -- that is why dialectics regards everything critically; that is why it denies the existence of a once-and-for-all established truth. Consequently, it also repudiates abstract "dogmatic propositions, which, once discovered, had merely to be learned by heart" (see F. Engels, Ludwig Feuerbach).

Metaphysics, however, tells us something altogether different. From its standpoint the world is something eternal and immutable (see F. Engels, *Anti-Dühring*), it has been once and for all determined by someone or something -- that is why the metaphysicians always have "eternal justice" or "immutable truth" on their lips.

Proudhon, the "father" of the Anarchists, said that there existed in the world an immutable justice determined once and for all, which must be made the basis of future society. That is why Proudhon has been called a metaphysician. Marx fought Proudhon with the aid of the dialectical method and proved that since every thing in the world changes, "justice" must also change, and that, consequently, "immutable justice" is metaphysical nonsense (see K. Marx, *The Poverty of Philosophy*). The Georgian disciples of the metaphysician Proudhon, however, keep reiterating that "Marx's dialectics is metaphysics"!

Metaphysics recognises various nebulous dogmas, such as, for example, the "unknowable," the "thing-in itself," and, in the long run, passes into empty theology. In contrast to Proudhon and Spencer, Engels combated these dogmas with the aid of the

dialectical method (see Ludwig Feuerbach); but the Anarchists -- the disciples of Proudhon and Spencer -- tell us that Proudhon and Spencer were scientists, whereas Marx and Engels were metaphysicians!

One of two things: either the Anarchists are deceiving themselves, or else they do not know what they are talking about.

At all events, it is beyond doubt that the Anarchists confuse Hegel's metaphysical system with his dialectical method.

Needless to say, Hegel's philosophical system, which rests on the immutable idea, is from beginning to end metaphysical. But it is also clear that Hegel's dialectical method, which repudiates all immutable ideas, is from beginning to end scientific and revolutionary.

That is why Karl Marx, who subjected Hegel's metaphysical system to devastating criticism, at the same time praised his dialectical method, which, as Marx said, "lets nothing impose upon it, and is in its essence critical and revolutionary " (see *Capital*, Vol. I . Preface).

That is why Engels sees a big difference between Hegel's method and his system. "Whoever placed the chief emphasis on the Hegelian system could be fairly conservative in both spheres; whoever regarded the dialectical method as the main thing could belong to the most extreme opposition, both in politics and religion" (see Ludwig Feuerbach).

The Anarchists fail to see this difference and thoughtlessly maintain that "dialectics is metaphysics."

To proceed. The Anarchists say that the dialectical method is "subtle word-weaving," "the method of sophistry, ""logical somersaults" (see Nobati, No.8. Sh.G.), "with the aid of which both truth and falsehood are proved with equal facility" (see Nobati, No. 4. Article by V. Cherkezishvili).

Thus, in the opinion of the Anarchists, the dialectical method proves both truth and falsehood.

At first sight it would seem that the accusation advanced by the Anarchists has some foundation. Listen, for example, to what Engels says about the follower of the metaphysical method:

". . . His communication is: 'Yea, yea; nay, nay, for whatsoever is more than these cometh of evil.' For him a thing either exists, or it does not exist; it is equally impossible for a thing to be itself and at the same time something else. Positive and negative absolutely exclude one another . . ." (see Anti-Dühring. Introduction).

How is that? -- the Anarchists cry heatedly. Is it possible for a thing to be good and bad at the same time?! That is "sophistry," "juggling with words," it shows that "you want to prove truth and falsehood with equal facility"! . . .

Let us, however, go into the substance of the matter.

Today we are demanding a democratic republic. Can we say that a democratic republic is good in all respects, or bad in all respects? No we cannot! Why? Because a democratic republic is good only in one respect: when it destroys the feudal system; but it is bad in another respect: when it strengthens the bourgeois system. Hence we say: in so far as the democratic republic destroys the feudal system it is good -- and we fight for

it; but in so far as it strengthens the bourgeois system it is bad -
- and we fight against it.

So the same democratic republic can be "good" and "bad" at the same time -- it is "yes" and "no."

The same thing may be said about the eight-hour day, which is good and bad at the same time: "good" in so far as it strengthens the proletariat, and "bad" in so far as it strengthens the wage system.

It was facts of this kind that Engels had in mind when he characterised the dialectical method in the words we quoted above.

The Anarchists, however, fail to understand this, and an absolutely clear idea seems to them to be nebulous "sophistry."

The Anarchists are, of course, at liberty to note or ignore these facts, they may even ignore the sand on the sandy seashore -- they have every right to do that. But why drag in the dialectical method, which, unlike anarchism, does not look at life with its eyes shut, which has its finger on the pulse of life and openly says: since life changes and is in motion, every phenomenon of life has two trends: a positive and a negative; the first we must defend, the second we must reject.

To proceed further. In the opinion of our Anarchists, "dialectical development is catastrophic development, by means of which, first the past is utterly destroyed, and then the future is established quite separately. . . . Cuvier's cataclysms were due to unknown causes, but Marx and Engels's catastrophes are engendered by dialectics" (see Nobati, No. 8. Sh. G.).

In another place the same author writes: "Marxism rests on Darwinism and treats it uncritically" (see Nobati, No. 6). Now listen!

Cuvier rejects Darwin's theory of evolution, he recognises only cataclysms, and cataclysms are unexpected upheavals "due to unknown causes." The Anarchists say that the Marxists adhere to Cuvier's view and therefore repudiate Darwinism.

Darwin rejects Cuvier's cataclysms, he recognises gradual evolution. But the same Anarchists say that "Marxism rests on Darwinism and treats it uncritically," i.e., the Marxists repudiate Cuvier's cataclysms.

In short, the Anarchists accuse the Marxists of adhering to Cuvier's view and at the same time reproach them for adhering to Darwin's and not to Cuvier's view.

This is anarchy if you like! As the saying goes: the Sergeant's widow flogged herself! Clearly, Sh. G. of No. 8 of Nobati forgot what Sh. G. of No. 6 said.

Which is right: No. 8 or No. 6?

Let us turn to the facts. Marx says:

"At a certain stage of their development, the material productive forces of society come in conflict with the existing relations of production, or -- what is but a legal expression for the same thing -- with the property relations. . . . Then begins an epoch of social revolution." But "no social order ever perishes before all the productive forces for which there is room in it have developed" (see K. Marx, A Contribution to the Critique of Political Economy. Preface).

If this thesis of Marx is applied to modern social life, we shall find that between the present-day productive forces, which are social in character, and the form of appropriation of the product, which is private in character, there is a fundamental conflict which must culminate in the socialist revolution (see F. Engels, *Anti-Dühring*, Part III, Chapter II).

As you see, in the opinion of Marx and Engels, revolution is engendered not by Cuvier's "unknown causes," but by very definite and vital social causes called "the development of the productive forces."

As you see, in the opinion of Marx and Engels, revolution comes only when the productive forces have sufficiently matured, and not unexpectedly, as Cuvier thought.

Clearly, there is nothing in common between Cuvier's cataclysms and Marx's dialectical method.

On the other hand, Darwinism repudiates not only Cuvier's cataclysms, but also dialectically understood development, which includes revolution; whereas, from the standpoint of the dialectical method, evolution and revolution, quantitative and qualitative changes, are two essential forms of the same motion.

Obviously, it is also wrong to assert that "Marxism . . . treats Darwinism uncritically."

It turns out therefore, that Nobati is wrong in both cases, in No. 6 as well as in No. 8.

Lastly, the Anarchists tell us reproachfully that "dialectics . . . provides no possibility of getting, or jumping, out of oneself, or of jumping over oneself" (see Nobati, No. 8. Sh. G.).

Now that is the downright truth, Messieurs Anarchists! Here you are absolutely right, my dear sirs: the dialectical method does not, indeed, provide such a possibility. But why not? Because "jumping out of oneself, or jumping over oneself" is an exercise for wild goats, while the dialectical method was created for human beings.

That is the secret! . . .

Such, in general, are the Anarchists' views on the dialectical method.

Clearly, the Anarchists fail to understand the dialectical method of Marx and Engels; they have conjured up their own dialectics, and it is against this dialectics that they are fighting so ruthlessly.

All we can do is to laugh as we gaze at this spectacle, for one cannot help laughing when one sees a man fighting his own imagination, smashing his own inventions, while at the same time heatedly asserting that he is smashing his opponent.

II "It is not the consciousness of men that determines their being, but, on the contrary, their social being that determines their consciousness." Karl Marx

Lenin

The First Important Step

February 21, 1907

Novy Luch, No. 2, February 21, 1907.

Collected Works, Volume 12, pages 161-164.

St. Petersburg, February 21, 1907.

Yesterday we expressed the hope that the Mensheviks, who have fine words to say in *Russkaya Zhizn* on the independence of Social-Democracy, would pursue a correct policy.

On the evening of the day before yesterday a Cadet meeting was held that shattered all those hopes....

This is what happened.

After lunch on February 19, the Social-Democratic Duma group held a meeting. It was proposed that they should attend a private conference arranged by the Cadets. Some of the deputies objected strenuously. They said that it was a disgrace for working-class deputies to go to liberal bourgeois who were bargaining with Stolypin, and that the Social-Democrats should pursue a proletarian and not a Cadet policy, should not lead the peasants to the liberal landowner, and should not assist the formation of a Cadet "Left" bloc. The Mensheviks got their own decision adopted.

On the evening of February 19, a meeting of some 300 members of the Duma "opposition" was held at Dolgorukov's apartment. It was attended by Cadets, Narodowci (Polish Black-Hundred bourgeois nationalists), all the Lefts—Trudoviks, S.R.'s and ...

Social-Democrats. Some of the Social-Democrat deputies did not go to the Cadets.

What happened at the meeting at the Cadet's apartment?

At this meeting all the Lefts, all democrats, petty bourgeois (Narodniks, Trudoviks, S.R.'s) and all Cadet-like Social-Democrats signed the Cadet proposals. According to Tovarishch, the Mensheviks made the formal proviso that their decision was not final, they would still have to consult the group. According to Rech (the Cadet central newspaper) however, nobody made any proviso at all.

And so, there were Social-Democrats who, like faithful servants of the liberals, accepted their entire plan, gave the majority of seats in the presidium (two out of three) to the Cadets, and agreed to the Trudoviks taking the third place, thus tying up the Trudoviks with the Cadets, and agreed to refrain from explaining to the people what political significance the selection of the presidium has, or why it is obligatory for every conscientious citizen to decide that question from the standpoint of party alignment, and not by private arrangement behind the scenes.

Can such conduct be justified by the fear that a Black-Hundred presidium would be elected in the Duma? No. In Comrade P. Orlovsky's article of yesterday, we demonstrated that the Black Hundreds could not win, whatever the division of votes between the Cadets and the Lefts.

The Menshevik policy is actually determined, not by the danger of a Black-Hundred victory, but by the desire to render service to the liberals.

What must the policy of the Social-Democrats be?

Either abstain, and, as socialists, stand aside from the liberals, who betray liberty and exploit the people, or give the lead to the democratic petty bourgeoisie that is capable of struggle, both against the Black Hundreds and against the liberals.

The former policy is obligatory for socialists when there is no longer any substantial difference between any of the bourgeois parties from the standpoint of the struggle for democracy. That is what happens in Europe. There is no revolution. All the bourgeois parties have lost the ability to struggle for democracy, and are struggling only for the petty, selfish interests of big or small proprietors. Under such circumstances, Social-Democracy alone defends the interests of democracy, and in so doing persistently unfolds its own socialist views to the masses.

The latter policy is obligatory when the conditions of a bourgeois-democratic revolution obtain, when, in addition to the working class, there are certain bourgeois and petty-bourgeois strata capable of struggle for the democracy that is essential to the proletariat.

In present-day Russia the second policy is obligatory. Without ever forgetting their socialist agitation and propaganda, and the organisation of the proletarians into a class, Social-Democrats must, jointly with the democratic petty bourgeoisie, crush both the Black Hundreds and the liberals, as the situation may demand.

That is because the liberals (Cadets, Polish Narodowci (?), the Party of Democratic Reform, etc., etc.) have already turned emphatically away from the revolution and have entered into a

deal with the autocracy against the people's freedom they talk so falsely about. It has now even transpired that last year the Cadets helped the government obtain 2,000 million from France to spend on summary military courts and shootings; Clemenceau said out right to the Cadets that there would be no loan if the Cadet Party came out officially against it. The Cadets refused to oppose the loan for fear of losing their position as the government party of the morrow! Russia was shot down, not only by Trepov's machine-guns, but by the Franco-Cadet millions.

It is impermissible for revolutionary Social-Democrats to support the hegemony of the Cadets. It is, however, not enough for them to have spoken against going to the Cadet meeting on February 19. They must demand, categorically and unconditionally, that the group break with the Cadet-like policy and come out forthrightly and openly in the Duma with an independent policy of the proletariat.

On the question of the presidium, the Social-Democrats should have said: we do not want our own presidium. We support the whole list of Lefts or Trudoviks against the Cadets, that is, we support all three candidates for the presidium, against the Cadet candidates, and will abstain if the Trudoviks follow in the wake of the Cadets, despite our warnings. In any case it would be essential to put up a candidate from the Lefts even though there would be no chance of his being elected; at the first voting, the number of votes given for him would show what forces the Social-Democrats could rely on in the event of a struggle against the Cadets. And if it should turn out that he obtained more votes than the Cadet, even if it were less than the absolute majority required for election, the voting would show

the people clearly that this is not a Cadet Duma, and that the Cadet is not everything in the Duma.

The election of the presidium is not a mere bagatelle. It is the first step, after which others will follow. The die is cast.

There must be either a Cadet-like policy which would mean turning the Social-Democrats into an appendage to the liberals; or there must be the policy of revolutionary Social-Democracy, in which case we should not begin by kowtowing to the Cadets, but by openly unfurling our own banner. Then we would not go to the Cadets. Then we would call on the petty bourgeoisie, and especially on the peasant democracy, to do battle against both the Black Hundreds and the liberals.

Lenin

The Agrarian Question and the Forces of the Revolution

Nashe Ekho, No. 7, April 1, 1907

Collected Works, Volume 12, pages 333-336.

The newspaper *Trudovoi Narod*, organ of the Trudoviks and members of the Peasant Union, has defined the alignment of forces in the Duma on the land question, that "life or death question" for the peasantry.

"The Trudoviks (100), Popular Socialists (14), and Socialist-Revolutionaries (34), 148 in all, may act together on the land question, to uphold the interests of the working people. Assuming that the Social-Democrats will join them on many points of that question, the total will be 212.

"All these will be opposed by the Constitutional-Democrats (91), the Polish Kolo (46), Independents, Octobrists and Moderates, 221 in all.

"Thus there is a preponderance of votes against. And we have counted neither the Moslems (30) nor the Cossacks; it is likely that, at the very best, one half will side with the Left, and the other half with the Right. In any case there are more votes against the Trudoviks' land law than for it."

The enumeration omits the monarchists, but their inclusion only bears out the inference drawn by the Trudoviks.

This conclusion is of interest in two respects: firstly, it throws light on the fundamental question of the alignment of social forces in the present Russian revolution, and secondly, it helps

to clarify the significance, for the liberation movement, of the Duma and the struggle in the Duma.

All Social-Democrats are convinced that, in its social and economic content, the present revolution is a bourgeois revolution. This means that it is proceeding on the basis of capitalist production relations, and will inevitably result in a further development of those same production relations. To put it more simply, the entire economy of society will still remain under the domination of the market, of money, even when there is the broadest freedom and the peasants have won a complete victory in their struggle for the land. The struggle for land and freedom is a struggle for the conditions of existence of bourgeois society, for the rule of capital will remain in the most democratic republic, irrespective of how the transfer of "all the land to the people" is effected.

Such a view may seem strange to anyone unfamiliar with Marx's theory. Yet it is not hard to see that it is the correct view—one need but recall the great French Revolution and its outcome, the history of the "free lands" in America, and so on.

The Social-Democrats by no means wish to minimise the tasks of the present revolution, or to belittle its significance, by calling it a bourgeois revolution. On the contrary. The struggle of the working class against the capitalist class cannot develop on a wide enough scale and end in victory until the older historical enemies of the proletariat are overthrown.

Hence, the principal task of the proletariat at present is to win the broadest freedom and bring about the most complete destruction of landlord (feudal) landed proprietorship. Only by doing this, only by completely smashing the old, semi-feudal

society through democratic action, can the proletariat rise to full stature as an independent class, lay full emphasis on its specific (i.e., socialist) tasks, as distinct from the democratic tasks common to "all the oppressed", and secure for itself the most favourable conditions for an unrestricted, sweeping, and intensified struggle for socialism. If the bourgeois-democratic liberation movement stops half-way, if it is not carried through, the proletariat will have to spend a great deal more of its forces on general democratic (i.e., bourgeois-democratic) tasks than on its own class, proletarian, i.e., socialist, tasks.

But can the socialist proletariat accomplish the bourgeois revolution independently and as the guiding force? Does not the very concept "bourgeois revolution" imply that it can be accomplished only by the bourgeoisie?

The Mensheviks often fall into this error, although, as a viewpoint, it is a caricature of Marxism. A liberation movement that is bourgeois in social and economic content is not such because of its motive forces. The motive force may be, not the bourgeoisie, but the proletariat and the peasantry. Why is this possible? Because the proletariat and the peasantry suffer even more than the bourgeoisie from the survivals of serfdom, because they are in greater need of freedom and the abolition of landlord oppression. For the bourgeoisie, on the contrary, complete victory constitutes a danger, since the proletariat will make use of full freedom against the bourgeoisie, and the fuller that freedom and the more completely the power of the landlords has been destroyed, the easier will it be for the proletariat to do so.

Hence the bourgeoisie strives to put an end to the bourgeois revolution half-way from its destination, when freedom has

been only half-won, by a deal with the old authorities and the landlords. This striving is grounded in the class interests of the bourgeoisie. It was manifested so clearly in the German bourgeois revolution of 1848 that the Communist Marx spearheaded proletarian policy against the “compromising” (the expression is Marx’s) liberal bourgeoisie.

Our Russian bourgeoisie is still more cowardly, and our proletariat far more class-conscious and better organised than was the German proletariat in 1848. In our country the full victory of the bourgeois-democratic movement is possible only despite the “compromising” liberal bourgeoisie, only in the event of the mass of the democratic peasantry following the proletariat in the struggle for full freedom and all the land.

The Second Duma offers still more striking confirmation of this view. Even the peasants have now realised that the liberal bourgeoisie, the Constitutional-Democrats, belong to the Right, and the peasants and the workers to the Left. True, the Trudoviks, Popular Socialists, and Socialist-Revolutionaries constantly vacillate between the bourgeoisie and the proletariat, and as often as not are in reality political hangers-on of the liberals (the voting for Golovin, the “tactics of silence”, agreement to refer the budget to a commission, etc., etc.). This vacillation is not accidental. It springs from the class nature of the petty bourgeoisie.

Why must the Constitutional-Democrats be included among the Rights in a question as pressing as that of the land? Because the Constitutional-Democrat agrarian policy is essentially a landlord policy. The “compulsory alienation” advocated by the Constitutional-Democrats actually means the landlords compelling the peasants to pay ruinous compensation, for in

fact both the amount of these payments and rates of taxation are determined by the landlords; the land lords and officials will constitute the majority in the local land committees (in the First Duma the Constitutional-Democrats were opposed to the election of these committees by universal ballot), and in the central all-Russian legislature the landlords will be predominant through the Council of State, etc. Cadet "liberalism" is the liberalism of the bourgeois lawyer who reconciles the peasant with the landlord, and does that to the advantage of the landlord.

Take the second question. The Constitutional-Democrats and the Rights constitute a majority in the Duma. "What is the way out?" asks Trudovoi Narod. The answer is simple: the "way out" is to rise above Duma discussions which lead nowhere.

This would be necessary even if the Left had a majority in the Duma, for the Duma is powerless, and the Council of State would, in the interests of the landlords, "improve" any project passed by the Duma. And it is necessary now — not from any subjective party viewpoint, but in the objective historical sense; unless this is done, the land question can be settled only in favour of the landlords.

Lenin

The Fifth Congress of the Russian Social-Democratic Labour Party

April 30-May 19 (May 13-June 1), 1907

Speech on the Attitude Towards Bourgeois Parties

May 12 (25)

The question of our attitude to the bourgeois parties is the nub of the differences in matters of principle that have long divided Russian Social-Democracy into two camps. Even before the first major successes of the revolution, or even before the revolution—if it is permissible to express oneself in this way about the first half of 1905—two distinct points of view on this question already existed. The disputes were over the appraisal of the bourgeois revolution in Russia. The two trends in the Social-Democracy agreed that this revolution was a bourgeois revolution. But they parted company in their understanding of this category, and in their appraisal of the practical and political conclusions to be drawn from it. One wing of the Social-Democracy—the Mensheviks—interpreted this concept to mean that the bourgeoisie was the motive force in the bourgeois revolution, and that the proletariat could occupy only the position of the “extreme opposition”. The proletariat could not undertake the task of conducting the revolution independently or of leading it. These differences of opinion stood out in particularly high relief during the disputes on the question of a provisional government (to be more exact, whether the Social-Democrats should participate in a provisional government)—disputes which raged in 1905. The Mensheviks denied that the

Social-Democrats could be permitted to participate in a provisional revolutionary government, primarily because they considered the bourgeoisie the motive force or leader in the bourgeois revolution. This view found most clear expression in the resolution of the Caucasian Mensheviks (1905), approved by the new Iskra. This resolution stated forth right that Social-Democratic participation in a provisional government might frighten the bourgeoisie away, and thereby reduce the scope of the revolution. We have here a clear admission that the proletariat cannot and should not go further than the bourgeoisie in the bourgeois revolution.

The Bolsheviks held the opposite view. They maintained unequivocally that in its social and economic content our revolution was a bourgeois revolution. This means that the aims of the revolution that is now taking place in Russia do not exceed the bounds of bourgeois society. Even the fullest possible victory of the present revolution— in other words, the achievement of the most democratic republic possible, and the confiscation of all landed estates by the peasantry—would not in any way affect the foundations of the bourgeois social system. Private ownership of the means of production (or private farming on the land, irrespective of its juridical owner) and commodity economy will remain. The contradictions of capitalist society—and the most important of them is the contradiction between wage-labour and capital—will not only remain, but become even more acute and profound, developing in a more extensive and purer form.

All this should be absolutely beyond doubt to any Marxist. But from this it does not at all follow that the bourgeoisie is the motive force or leader in the revolution. Such a conclusion

would be a vulgarisation of Marxism, would be a failure to understand the class struggle between the proletariat and the bourgeoisie. The fact of the matter is that our revolution is taking place at a time when the proletariat has already begun to recognise itself as distinct class and to unite in an independent, class organisation. Under such circumstances the proletariat makes use of all the achievements of democracy, makes use of every step towards freedom, to strengthen its class organisation against the bourgeoisie. Hence the inevitable endeavour of the bourgeoisie to smooth off the sharp corners of the revolution, not to allow it to reach its culmination, not to give the proletariat the opportunity of carrying on its class struggle unhampered. The antagonism between the bourgeoisie and the proletariat forces the bourgeoisie to strive to preserve certain instruments and institutions of the old regime in order to use them against the proletariat.

At the very best, therefore, the bourgeoisie, in the period of greatest revolutionary upsurge, still constitutes an element that wavers between revolution and reaction (and does not do so fortuitously, but of necessity, by force of its economic interests). Hence the bourgeoisie cannot be the leader in our revolution.

The major distinguishing feature of this revolution is the acuteness of the agrarian question. It is much more acute in Russia than in any other country in similar conditions. The so-called peasant reform of 1861 was carried out so inconsistently and so undemocratically that the principal foundations of feudal landlord domination remained unshaken. For this reason, the agrarian question, that is, the struggle of the peasants against the landowners for the land, proved one of the touchstones of the present revolution. This struggle for the land

inevitably forces enormous masses of the peasantry into the democratic revolution, for only democracy can give them land by giving them supremacy in the state. The victory of the peasantry presupposes the complete destruction of landlordism.

Such an alignment of social forces inevitably leads to the conclusion that the bourgeoisie can be neither the motive force nor the leader in the revolution. Only the proletariat is capable of consummating the revolution, that is, of achieving a complete victory. But this victory can be achieved only provided the proletariat succeeds in getting a large section of the peasantry to follow its lead. The victory of the present revolution in Russia is possible only as the revolutionary democratic dictatorship of the proletariat and the peasantry.

The correctness of this presentation of the question, which dates back to the beginning of 1905—I am referring to the Third Congress of the R.S.D.L.P. in the spring of 1905—found full confirmation in events at all the most important stages of the Russian revolution. Our theoretical conclusions were confirmed in practice in the course of the revolutionary struggle. In October 1905, at the very height of the revolution, the proletariat was at the head, the bourgeoisie wavered and vacillated, and the peasantry wrecked the landed estates. In all the embryonic organs of revolutionary power (the Soviets of Workers' Deputies, the Soviets of Peasants' and Soldiers' Deputies, etc.) representatives of the proletariat were the main participants, followed by the most advanced of the insurgent peasantry. At the time of the First Duma, the peasants immediately formed a democratic "Trudovik" group, which was more to the Left, in other words, more revolutionary, than

the liberals—the Cadets. In the elections to the Second Duma, the peasants defeated the liberals outright. The proletariat marched ahead, the peasantry more or less resolutely following it against the autocracy and against the vacillating liberals.

I shall now pass to the draft resolutions we have before us. The difference in points of view I have described is fully reflected in the antithesis between the Bolshevik and Menshevik resolutions. The Bolshevik draft is based on a definition of the class content of the principal types of bourgeois parties. We drew up our resolution in the same way for the Unity Congress in Stockholm. There we noted three principal types of bourgeois parties: the Octobrists, the liberals and the peasant democrats (at that time they were not yet fully delineated, and the word “Trudovik” did not exist in the Russian political vocabulary). Our resolution of today retains that same structure. It is simply a modification of the Stockholm resolution. The course of events has confirmed its basic postulates to such an extent that only very small changes were required for due consideration to be paid to experience acquired in the First and Second Dumas.

The Menshevik resolution for the Unity Congress gave no analysis whatever either of types of parties or their class content. The resolution states helplessly that “bourgeois-democratic parties are only just forming in Russia and therefore have not yet had the time to acquire the character of stable parties”, and that “at the present historical moment in Russia there are no parties in existence that could simultaneously blend within themselves a consistent democracy and a revolutionary character”. Is this not a helpless declaration? Is this not a deviation from Marxist tasks? Outside the ranks of the

proletariat there will never be absolute stability of parties or fully "consistent" democracy. It is, however, our duty to lay bare the class roots of all parties that appear on the historical scene. And our resolution shows that this is something quite feasible. The three types of parties outlined in this resolution have proved sufficiently "stable" throughout a whole year of revolution, as I have already shown by the example of the First and Second Dumas.

What has proved unstable is the views of the Mensheviks. Their present resolution is a tremendous step backward in comparison with their draft of last year. Let us examine this resolution, which was published in Narodnaya Duma, No. 12 (March 24, 1907). The preamble to this resolution points first to a "number of tasks common" to the proletariat and to bourgeois democracy; secondly, it says that the proletariat must "combine its activities with those of other social classes and groups"; thirdly, it says that in a country where the peasantry predominates and urban democracy is weak, the proletariat "by its own movement impels forward"... "the entire bourgeois democracy of the country"; fourthly, "that the democratic movement of the country has not yet found its ultimate expression in the present grouping of bourgeois parties", which reflects the "realism" and unpreparedness to fight on the part of the urban bourgeoisie at one extreme, and at the other, peasant "illusions of petty-bourgeois revolutionism and agrarian utopias". Such is the preamble. Now let us look at the conclusions; the first conclusion is that, while pursuing an independent policy, the proletariat must fight both against the opportunism and constitutional illusions of the one, and the revolutionary illusions and reactionary economic projects of the

other. The second conclusion is that it is necessary to “combine our activities with the activities of the other parties”.

A resolution like this does not answer any one of the questions that every Marxist is obliged to ask himself, if he wants to define the attitude of the workers’ party to the bourgeois parties. What are these general questions? First of all, it is necessary to define the class nature of the parties. Then it is necessary to make clear to oneself the basic alignment of the various classes in the present revolution in general, that is, in what relation the interests of these classes stand to the continuation or development of the revolution. Further, it is necessary to pass over from classes in general to the present-day role of the various parties, or various groups of parties. Finally, it is necessary to furnish practical directives concerning the policy of the workers’ party on this question.

There is nothing of this in the Menshevik resolution. It is simply an evasion of these questions, evasion by means of general phrase-mongering about “combining” the policy of the proletariat with the policy of the bourgeoisie. Not a word is said about how to “combine”, and with precisely which bourgeois-democratic parties. This is a resolution about parties, but without parties. This is a resolution to define our attitude, which does nothing to define our attitude towards the various parties. It is impossible to take such a resolution as a guide, for it provides the greatest freedom to “combine” anything you like and in any way you like. Such a resolution does not restrict anyone; it is a most “liberal” resolution in the fullest sense of that word. It can be interpreted backwards and forwards. But of Marxism— not a grain. The fundamental propositions of Marxism have been so thoroughly forgotten here that any Left

Cadet could have subscribed to such a resolution. Take its main points— “tasks in common” for the proletariat and bourgeois democracy—is that not the very thing the entire liberal press is vociferating about?... The need to “combine”—the very thing the Cadets are demanding.... The struggle against opportunism on the Right and revolutionism on the Left— but that is the pet slogan of the Left Cadets, who say they want to sit between the Trudoviks and bourgeois liberals! This is not the position of a workers’ party distinct from and independent of bourgeois democracy; it is the position of a liberal who wants to occupy the “centre” in the midst of the bourgeois democrats.

Let us examine the gist of the Mensheviks’ proposition: by its own movement the proletariat “impels forward” “the entire bourgeois democracy of the country”. Is this true? Absolutely not. Just recall the major events in our revolution. Take the Bulygin Duma. In reply to the tsar’s appeal to take the legal path, to adopt his, the tsar’s, conditions for convening the first popular representative body, the proletariat answered with a resolute refusal. The proletariat called on the people to wipe out this institution, to prevent its birth. The proletariat called on all the revolutionary classes to fight for better conditions for the convocation of a popular representative body. This in no way ruled out the question of utilising even bad institutions if they actually came into being despite all our efforts. This was a fight against allowing the implementation of worse conditions for convening a popular representative body. In appraising the boycott, the logical and historical mistake is often made of confusing the fight on the basis of the given institution, with the fight against the establishment of that institution.

What reply did the liberal bourgeoisie make to the proletariat's appeal? It replied with a general outcry against the boycott. It invited us to the Bulygin Duma. The liberal professors urged the students to go on with their studies, instead of organising strikes. In reply to the proletariat's appeal to fight, the bourgeoisie answered by fighting against the proletariat. As far back as that, the antagonism between these classes, even in a democratic revolution, manifested itself fully and definitely. The bourgeoisie wanted to narrow the scope of the proletariat's struggle, to prevent it going beyond the bounds of the convocation of the Bulygin Duma.

Professor Vinogradov, the shining light of liberal science, wrote just at that time: "It would be the good fortune of Russia if our revolution proceeded along the road of 1848-49, and its misfortune if it proceeded along the road taken by the revolution of 1789-93." What this "democrat" called good fortune was the road of an unconsummated revolution, the road of a defeated uprising! If our revolution were to deal as ruthlessly with its enemies as the French revolution did in 1793, then, according to this "liberal", it would be necessary to call upon the Prussian drill sergeant to re-establish law and order. The Mensheviks say that our bourgeoisie are "unprepared to fight". Actually, however, the bourgeoisie were prepared to fight, prepared to fight against the proletariat, to fight against the "excessive" victories of the revolution.

To proceed. Take October to December 1905. There is no need to prove that during this period of the high tide of our revolution, the bourgeoisie displayed "preparedness to fight" against the proletariat. This was fully acknowledged by the Menshevik press of that day. The bourgeoisie, including the

Cadets, tried in every way to denigrate the revolution, to picture it as blind and savage anarchy. The bourgeoisie not only failed to support the organs of insurrection set up by the people—all the various Soviets of Workers' Deputies, Soviets of Peasants' and Soldiers' Deputies, etc.—but it feared these institutions and fought against them. Call to mind Struve, who termed these institutions a degrading spectacle. In them the bourgeoisie saw a revolution that had gone too far ahead. The liberal bourgeoisie wanted to divert the energy of the popular revolutionary struggle into the narrow channel of police-controlled constitutional reaction.

There is no need to dwell at length on the behaviour of the liberals in the First and the Second Dumas. Even the Mensheviks acknowledged that, in the First Duma, the Cadets hindered the revolutionary policy of the Social-Democrats and, to some extent, of the Trudoviks, that they hampered their activity. And in the Second Duma the Cadets openly joined up with the Black Hundreds, gave outright support to the government.

To say at present that the movement of the proletariat "impels the entire bourgeois democracy of the country forward" means scorning facts. To maintain silence at the present time about the counter-revolutionary nature of our bourgeoisie means departing entirely from the Marxist point of view, means completely forgetting the viewpoint of the class struggle.

In their resolution, the Mensheviks speak of the "realism" of the urban bourgeois classes. Strange terminology this, which betrays them, against their will. We are accustomed to seeing a special meaning attached to the word realism, among the Right-wing Social-Democrats. For instance, Plekhanov's

Sovremennaya Zhizn contrasted the “realism” of the Right Social-Democrats with the “revolutionary romanticism” of the Left Social-Democrats. What then does the Menshevik resolution have in view when it speaks of realism? It appears that the resolution praises the bourgeoisie for its moderation and punctiliousness!

These arguments of the Mensheviks about the “realism” of the bourgeoisie, about its “unpreparedness” to fight— taken in conjunction with the open declaration of their tactical platform on the “one-sided hostility” of the Social-Democrats towards the liberals—speak of one thing, and of one thing only. In point of fact, it all means that the independent policy of the workers’ party is replaced by a policy of dependence on the liberal bourgeoisie. And this, the substance of Menshevism, is not something that we have invented or have drawn solely from their theoretical arguments—it has manifested itself in all the major steps of their policy throughout the past year. Take the “responsible ministry”, blocs with the Cadets, voting for Golovin, etc. This is what has actually constituted the policy of dependence on the liberals.

And what do the Mensheviks say about peasant democracy? The resolution puts the “realism” of the bourgeoisie and the “agrarian utopias” of the peasantry on a par, off setting the one by the other as being of equal significance or at any rate wholly analogous. We must fight, say the Mensheviks, equally against the opportunism of the bourgeoisie and against the utopianism, the “petty-bourgeois revolutionism”, of the peasantry. This is typical of the Menshevik line of reasoning. And it is worth while dwelling on this, for it is radically wrong. From it inevitably ensue a number of mistaken conclusions in practical

policy. This criticism of peasant utopias harbours a lack of understanding of the proletariat's task—to urge the peasantry on ward to complete victory in the democratic revolution.

Just look carefully at what is behind the agrarian utopias of the peasantry in the present revolution. What is their main utopia? Undoubtedly, it is the idea of equalitarianism, the conviction that the abolition of the private property in land and the equal division of the land (or of land tenure) are able to destroy the roots of want, poverty, unemployment and exploitation.

No one disputes the fact that, from the point of view of socialism, this is a utopia, a utopia of the petty bourgeois. From the point of view of socialism, this is a reactionary prejudice, for proletarian socialism sees its ideal, not in the equality of small proprietors, but in large-scale socialised production. But do not forget that what we are now appraising is the significance of the peasants' ideals, not in the socialist movement, but in the present, bourgeois-democratic revolution. Can we say that it is utopian or reactionary in the present revolution for all the land to be taken away from the landlords and be handed over to, or divided up equally among, the peasants?! No! Not only is this non-reactionary, but, on the contrary, it reflects most conclusively and most consistently the desire for the most thorough abolition of the entire old regime, of all the remnants of serfdom. The idea that "equality" can exist under commodity production and even serve as a foundation for semi-socialism is utopian. The peasants' desire to take the land away from the landlords at once and divide it up on an equalitarian basis is not utopian, but revolutionary in the fullest, strictest, scientific meaning of the word. Such confiscation and such division

would lay the foundation for the speediest, broadest and freest development of capitalism.

Speaking objectively, from the point of view not of our desires, but of the present economic development of Russia, the basic question of our revolution is whether it will secure the development of capitalism through the peasants' complete victory over the landowners or through the landowners' victory over the peasants. A bourgeois-democratic revolution in Russia's economy is absolutely inevitable. No power on earth can hinder it. But this revolution is possible in either of two ways: in the Prussian, if one might say so, or in the American way. This means the following; the landlords may win, may foist compensation payments or other petty concessions on the peasants, may unite with a handful of the wealthy, pauperise the masses, and convert their own farms into Junker-type, capitalist, farms. Such a revolution will be bourgeois-democratic but it will be to the least advantage of the peasants—to their least advantage from the angle of the rapidity of capitalist development. Or, on the contrary, the complete victory of the peasant uprising, the confiscation of all landed estates and their equal division will signify the most rapid development of capitalism, the form of bourgeois-democratic revolution most advantageous to the peasants.

Nor is this most advantageous to the peasants alone. It is just as advantageous to the proletariat. The class conscious proletariat knows that there is, and there can be, no path leading to socialism otherwise than through a bourgeois-democratic revolution.

Hence the more incomplete and irresolute this revolution, the longer and the more heavily will general democratic tasks, and

not socialist, not purely class, proletarian tasks, weigh upon the proletariat. The more complete the victory of the peasantry, the sooner will the proletariat stand out as a distinct class, and the more clearly will it put forward its purely socialist tasks and aims.

From this, you see that the peasants' ideas on equality, reactionary and utopian from the standpoint of socialism, are revolutionary from the standpoint of bourgeois democracy. That is why the equating of the liberals' reactionary nature in the present revolution and the reactionary utopianism of the peasants in their ideas of the socialist revolution is a glaring logical and historical error. To put on a par the liberals' endeavours to cut the present revolution off short at compensation for land, a constitutional monarchy, at the level of the Cadet agrarian programme, etc., and the peasants' attempts at utopian idealisation, in a reactionary spirit, of their endeavours to crush the landlords immediately, to confiscate all the land, to divide it all up—to attempt to equate these things is to abandon completely, not only the standpoint of the proletariat, but also the standpoint of a consistent revolutionary democrat. To write a resolution on the struggle against liberal opportunism and muzhik revolutionism in the present revolution is to write a resolution that is not Social-Democratic. This is not a Social-Democrat writing, but an intellectual who sits between the liberal and the muzhik in the camp of bourgeois democracy.

I cannot deal here in as great detail as I should on the famous tactical platform of the Mensheviks with their much vaunted slogan of struggle against the "one-sided hostility of the

proletariat towards liberalism". The non-Marxist and non-proletarian nature of such a slogan is more than obvious.

In conclusion, I shall deal with a frequent objection that is raised against us. In the majority of cases, we are told, "your" Trudoviks follow the Cadets against us. That is true, but it is no objection against our point of view and our resolution, since we have quite definitely and outspokenly admitted it.

The Trudoviks are definitely not fully consistent democrats. The Trudoviks (including the Socialist-Revolutionaries) undoubtedly vacillate between the liberals and the revolutionary proletariat. We have said this, and it had to be said. Such vacillation is by no means fortuitous. It is an inevitable consequence of the very nature of the economic condition of the small producer. On the one hand, he is oppressed and subject to exploitation. He is unconsciously impelled into the fight against this position, into the fight for democracy, for the ideas of abolishing exploitation. On the other hand, he is a petty proprietor. In the peasant lives the instinct of a proprietor—if not of today, then of tomorrow. It is the proprietor's, the owner's instinct that repels the peasant from the proletariat, engendering in him an aspiration to become someone in the world, to become a bourgeois, to hem himself in against all society on his own plot of land, on his own dung-heap, as Marx irately remarked.

Vacillation in the peasantry and the peasant democratic parties is inevitable. And the Social-Democratic Party, therefore, must not for a moment be embarrassed at the fear of isolating itself from such vacillation. Every time the Trudoviks display lack of courage, and drag along in the wake of the liberals, we must

fearlessly and quite firmly oppose the Trudoviks, expose and castigate their petty-bourgeois inconsistency and flaccidity.

Our revolution is passing through difficult times. We need all the will-power, all the endurance and fortitude of the organised proletarian party, in order to be capable of resisting sentiments of distrust, despondency, indifference, and denial of the struggle. The petty bourgeoisie will always and inevitably succumb most easily to such sentiments, display irresolution, betray the revolutionary path, whine and repent. And in all such cases, the workers' party will isolate itself from the vacillating petty-bourgeois democrats. In all such cases we must be able to unmask the irresolute democrats openly, even from the Duma platform. "Peasants!" we must say in the Duma in such circumstances, "peasants! You should know that your representatives are betraying you by following in the wake of the liberal landlords. Your Duma deputies are betraying the cause of the peasantry to the liberal windbags and advocates." Let the peasants know— we must demonstrate this to them by facts—that only the workers' party is the genuinely reliable and thoroughly faithful defender of the interests, not only of socialism but also of democracy, not only of all working and exploited people, but also of the entire peasant masses, who are fighting against feudal exploitation.

If we pursue this policy persistently and undeviatingly, we shall derive from our revolution enormous material for the class development of the proletariat; we shall achieve this under all circumstances, whatever vicissitudes may be in store for us, whatever setbacks for the revolution (under particularly unfavourable circumstances) may fall to our lot. A firm proletarian policy will give the entire working class such a

wealth of ideas, such clarity of understanding and such endurance in the struggle that no one on earth will be able to win them away from Social-Democracy. Even if the revolution suffers defeat, the proletariat will learn, first and foremost, to understand the economic class foundations of both the liberal and the democratic parties; then it will learn to hate the bourgeoisie's treacheries and to despise the petty bourgeoisie's infirmity of purpose and its vacillations.

And it is only with such a fund of knowledge, with such habits of thinking, that the proletariat will be able to approach the new, the socialist revolution more unitedly and more boldly. (Applause from the Bolsheviks and the Centre.)

Lenin

The Fifth Congress of the Russian Social-Democratic Labour Party

April 30-May 19 (May 13-June 1), 1907

Report of the Commission Formed to Draft a Resolution on the State Duma

May 18 (31)

Our commission has not come to any agreement. Six voted for the Bolshevik draft and six against. Five voted for the Menshevik draft and five against. One abstained. I must now briefly defend our Bolshevik draft to you, since the Polish Social-Democrats and the Latvians are in agreement with it.

We proceeded from the proposition that everything already stated in the resolution on the bourgeois parties must be deleted from the resolution on the State Duma, since the Duma struggle is only a part, and not the principal part, of our struggle against the bourgeois parties and the autocracy.

In the present resolution we speak only of what our policy in the Duma must be. As to an assessment of how we managed to get into the Duma, we deleted this part of the resolution— the point on the boycott—for the following reasons. It seems to me personally, and to all the Bolsheviks, that in view of the stand taken by all the liberal press we should have given an appraisal of how we got into the Duma. In opposition to the entire liberal bourgeoisie, the workers' party must declare that, for the time being, we must reckon with such an ugly institution because of the treachery of the bourgeoisie. But the Latvian comrades were

opposed to this point, and in order not to hinder the rapid completion of our work (and we must hurry if we are to end the Congress tomorrow as we decided) we withdrew this point. What the Congress wants is clear in any case, and lack of time makes it impossible to conduct debates on matters of principle.

I shall dwell on the basic ideas expressed in our resolution. In essence, all this is a repetition of what was said in our draft resolution at the Stockholm Congress. The first point stresses the complete uselessness of the Duma as such. This is a necessary idea, for extremely broad sections of the peasantry and the petty bourgeoisie in general still place the most naïve hopes on the Duma. It is our plain duty to dispel these naïve illusions, which are sustained by the liberals for their own selfish class ends.

The second part of the first point speaks of the uselessness of the parliamentary path in general, and about explaining the inevitability of an open struggle of the masses. Here we give an explanation of our positive views on ways of getting out of the present situation. We absolutely must emphasise it, and clearly repeat our revolutionary slogans, since wavering and vacillation, even among the Social-Democrats, is no rare thing in such a question. Let everyone know that Social-Democracy sticks to its old, revolutionary path.

The second point is devoted to an explanation of the relation between direct "legislative" activity in the Duma, and agitation, criticism, propaganda, organisation. The workers' party regards the connection between work within and without the Duma very differently from the way the liberal bourgeoisie regards it. It is necessary to stress this radical difference of views. On the one hand, there are the bourgeois politicians,

enraptured by their parliamentary games behind the backs of the people. On the other hand, there is a contingent of the organised proletariat that has been sent into the enemy camp and is carrying on work closely connected with the struggle of the proletariat as a whole. For us there is only one, single and indivisible, workers' movement—the class struggle of the proletariat. All its separate, partial forms, including the parliamentary struggle, must be fully subordinated to it. For us it is the extra-Duma struggle of the proletariat that is decisive. It would not be sufficient for us to say that we take into account the economic interests and needs of the masses, etc. Such phrases (in the spirit of the old Menshevik resolution) are hazy and can be subscribed to by any liberal. Every liberal is ready to chatter about, the economic needs of the people in general. But no liberal would be willing to subordinate Duma activity to the class struggle; it is, however, precisely this view that we Social-Democrats must express with the utmost clarity. It is only by reason of this principle that we really distinguish ourselves from all possible varieties of bourgeois democracy.

It is sometimes pointed out (especially by the members of the Bund—alleged conciliators) that it is also necessary to note the contrary—the links between the extra-Duma Social-Democratic struggle and the work of the Social-Democratic Duma group. I maintain that this is false, and can only serve to sow the most harmful parliamentary illusions. The part must conform to the whole, and not vice versa. The Duma may temporarily serve as an arena of the class struggle as a whole, but only if that whole is never lost sight of, and if the revolutionary tasks of the class struggle are not concealed.

The next point in our resolution is devoted to the liberal policy in the Duma. The slogan of this policy—"save the Duma"—merely serves to conceal the liberals' alliance with the Black Hundreds. We must frankly tell the people this, and explain it to them. The liberal slogan systematically corrupts the political and class consciousness of the masses. It is our duty to wage a ruthless struggle against this liberal haziness. By tearing the mask from liberalism, by showing that, behind the talk about democracy, there lurks voting hand in glove with the Black Hundreds, we shall be wresting the remnants of democracy from the bourgeois betrayers of freedom.

What must guide us in determining our Duma policy? Leaving aside all thought of engendering conflicts for their own sake, our resolution gives a positive definition of "timeliness" in the Social-Democratic sense of the word—we must take into account the revolutionary crisis developing outside the Duma, by force of objective circumstances.

The last point is devoted to the famous "responsible ministry". It was not fortuitous, but inevitable, that the liberal bourgeoisie should advance this slogan to utilise the period of lull in its own interests, and weaken the revolutionary consciousness of the masses. This slogan was supported by the Mensheviks both in the First and Second Dumas, and during the period of the Second Duma Plekhanov said forthright in the Menshevik newspaper that the Social-Democrats should make this demand "their own". Hence this slogan played a very definite role in the history of our revolution. It is absolutely essential for the workers' party to define its attitude towards the slogan. We must not be guided by the fact that the liberals are not advancing this slogan at the moment: they have temporarily

withdrawn it for opportunist reasons, but actually they are striving even more earnestly to come to terms with tsarism. And the slogan "a Duma ministry" most graphically expresses this innate tendency of liberalism towards a deal with tsarism.

We do not and cannot deny that a Duma ministry may prove a stage in the revolution, or that circumstances may force us to utilise it. That is not the point. The Social-Democrats utilise reforms as a by-product of the revolutionary class struggle of the proletariat, but it is not our business to mobilise the people for half-hearted reforms that are not feasible without a revolutionary struggle. The Social-Democrats must expose all the inconsistency of such slogans even from the purely democratic point of view. The Social-Democrats must explain to the proletariat the conditions for its victory, and not link up its policy in advance with the possibility of an incomplete victory, the possibility of a partial defeat—yet such are the conditions for the problematic establishment of a "Duma ministry".

Let the liberals give democracy away for a few pennies and throw away the whole for the sake of banal and feeble, paltry dreams of doles. Social-Democracy must rouse among the people consciousness of integral democratic tasks, and imbue the proletariat with a clear understanding of revolutionary aims. We must enlighten the minds of the masses of workers and develop their readiness to struggle, not befog their minds by toning down contradictions, by toning down the aims of the struggle. (Applause.)

Lenin

Revolution and Counter-Revolution

Proletary, No. 17, October 20, 1907.

Collected Works, Volume 13, pages 114-122.

In October 1905, Russia was at the peak of the revolutionary upsurge. The proletariat swept away the Bulygin Duma and drew the mass of the people into an open struggle against the autocracy. In October 1907, we are apparently at the lowest ebb of the open mass struggle. But the period of decline that set in after the defeat of December 1905 brought with it not only a flowering of constitutional illusions, but a complete shattering of these illusions. After the dissolution of the two Dumas and the coup d'état of June 3, the Third Duma, which is to be convened, clearly puts an end to the period of belief in peaceful cohabitation between the autocracy and popular representation and ushers in a new epoch in the development of the revolution.

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. We have here Milyukov, who, for all his mincing manners and Jesuitism, has been forced by events to arrive at the clear, accurate and—above all—truthful statement: “the enemies are on the left”. We have here publicists in the vein of Tovarishch, such as Kuskova, Smirnov, Plekhanov, Gorn, Yordansky, Cherevanin, and others who denounce the October-December struggle as folly, and more or less openly advocate a “democratic” coalition with the Cadets. The real Cadet elements in this turbid stream express the counter-revolutionary interests of the bourgeoisie and the boundless servility of intellectualist philistinism. As for the elements which have not yet sunk quite to the level of Struve, their dominant feature is failure to understand the connection between revolution and counter-revolution in Russia, an inability to see everything we have experienced as an integral social movement developing in accordance with its own inner logic.

The period of revolutionary onslaught demonstrated in action the class composition of Russia’s population and the attitude of the different classes towards the old autocracy. Events have now taught everyone, even people who are utter strangers to Marxism, to reckon the chronology of the revolution from January 9, 1905, that is, from the first consciously political movement of the masses belonging to a single definite class. When the Social-Democrats, from an analysis of Russia’s economic realities, deduced the leading role, the hegemony of the proletariat in our revolution, this seemed to be a bookish infatuation of theoreticians. The revolution confirmed our theory, because it is the only truly revolutionary theory. The

proletariat actually took the lead in the revolution all the time. The Social-Democrats actually proved to be the ideological vanguard of the proletariat. The struggle of the masses developed under the leadership of the proletariat with remarkable speed, much faster than many revolutionaries had expected. In the course of a single year it rose to the most decisive forms of revolutionary onslaught that history has ever known—to mass strikes and armed uprisings. The organisation of the proletarian masses went forward with astonishing speed in the course of the struggle itself. Other sections of the population, comprising the fighting ranks of the revolutionary people, followed the proletariat's lead and began to organise. The semi-proletarian mass of various kinds of non-manual workers began to organise, followed by the peasant democracy, the professional intelligentsia, and so on. The period of proletarian victories was a period of growth in mass organisation unprecedented in Russian history and vast even by European standards. The proletariat at that time won for itself a number of improvements in working conditions. The peasant mass won a "reduction" in the arbitrary power of the landlords and lower prices for the lease and sale of land. All Russia won a considerable degree of freedom of assembly, speech, and association, and made the autocracy publicly renounce its old practices and recognise the constitution.

All that the liberation movement in Russia has won up to now was won entirely and exclusively by the revolutionary struggle of the masses headed by the proletariat.

The turning-point in the struggle began with the defeat of the December uprising. Step by step the counter-revolution passed to the offensive as the mass struggle weakened. During the

period of the First Duma this struggle was still formidably manifest in the intensification of the peasant movement, in widespread attacks upon the nests of the semi-feudal landlords, and in a number of revolts among the soldiers. The reaction attacked slowly at that time, not daring to carry out a coup d'état straightaway. Only after the suppression of the Sveaborg and Kronstadt revolts of July 1906 did it act more boldly, when it introduced the regime of military tribunals, began piecemeal to deprive the population of their franchise (the Senate interpretations), and, finally, surrounded the Second Duma completely with a police siege and overthrew the whole notorious constitution. All self-established free organisations of the masses were replaced at that time by "legal struggle" within the framework of the police constitution as interpreted by the Dubasovs and Stolypins. The supremacy of the Social-Democrats gave place to the supremacy of the Cadets, who predominated in both Dumas. The period of decline in the movement of the masses was a period of peak development for the Party of the Cadets. It exploited this decline by coming forward as the "champion" of the constitution. It upheld faith in this constitution among the people with all its might and preached the need to keep strictly to "parliamentary" struggle.

The bankruptcy of the "Cadet constitution" is the bankruptcy of Cadet tactics and Cadet hegemony in the emancipatory struggle. The selfish class character of all the talk by our liberals about "revolutionary illusions" and the "errors of the revolution" becomes patently obvious when we compare the two periods of the revolution. The proletarian mass struggle won gains for the whole people. The liberal leadership of the movement produced nothing but defeats. The revolutionary onslaught of the proletariat steadily raised the political

consciousness of the masses and their organisation. It set increasingly higher aims before them, stimulated their independent participation in political life, and taught them how to fight. The hegemony of the liberals during the period of the two Dumas lowered the political consciousness of the masses, demoralised their revolutionary organisation, and dulled their comprehension of democratic aims.

The liberal, leaders of the First and Second Dumas gave the people a splendid demonstration of slavish legal "struggle", as a result of which the autocratic advocates of serfdom swept away the constitutional paradise of the liberal wind-bags with a stroke of the pen and ridiculed the subtle diplomacy of the visitors to ministerial ante-rooms. The liberals have not a single gain to show throughout the Russian revolution, not a single success, not a single attempt, at all democratic, to organise the forces of the people in the struggle for freedom.

Until October 1905, the liberals sometimes maintained a benevolent neutrality towards the revolutionary struggle of the masses, but already at that time they had begun to oppose it, sending a deputation to the tsar with abject speeches and supporting the Bulygin Duma not out of thoughtlessness, but out of sheer hostility to the revolution. After October 1905, all that the liberals did was to shame fully betray the cause of the people's freedom.

In November 1905, they sent Mr. Struve to have an intimate talk with Mr. Witte. In the spring of 1900, they undermined the revolutionary boycott, and by refusing to speak out openly against the loan for Europe to hear, helped the government to obtain millions of rubles for the conquest of Russia. In the summer of 1900, they carried on backdoor haggling with

Trepov over ministerial portfolios and fought the "Left", i. e., the revolution, in the First Duma. January 1907 saw them running again to the police authorities (Milyukov's call on Stolypin). In the spring of 1907, they supported the government in the Second Duma. The revolution exposed the liberals very quickly and showed them in their true counter-revolutionary colours.

In this respect the period of constitutional hopes served a very useful purpose as far as the people were concerned. The experience of the First and Second Dumas has not only made them realise how utterly contemptible is the role that liberalism plays in our revolution. It has also, in actual fact, quashed the attempt at leadership of the democratic movement by a party which only political infants or senile dotards can regard as being really constitutionally "democratic".

In 1905 and the beginning of 1906, the class composition of the bourgeois democrats in Russia was not yet clear to everyone. Hopes that the autocracy could be combined with actual representation of more or less broad masses of the people existed not only among the ignorant and downtrodden inhabitants of various out-of-the-way places. Such hopes were not absent even in ruling spheres of the autocracy. Why did the electoral law in both the Bulygin and the Witte Dumas grant a considerable degree of representation to the peasantry? Because belief in the monarchist sentiments of the countryside still persisted. "The muzhik will help us out" — this exclamation of an official newspaper in the spring of 1906 expressed the government's reliance on the conservatism of the peasant mass. In those days the Cadets were not only not aware of the antagonism between the democracy of the peasants and

bourgeois liberalism, but even feared the backwardness of the peasants and desired only one thing—that the Duma should help to convert the conservative or indifferent peasant into a liberal. In the spring of 1906, Mr. Struve expressed an ambitious wish when he wrote, “the peasant in the Duma will be a Cadet”. In the summer of 1907, the same Mr. Struve raised the banner of struggle against the Trudovik or Left parties, which he regarded as the main obstacle to an agreement between bourgeois liberalism and the autocracy. In the course of eighteen months the slogan of a struggle for the political enlightenment of the peasants was changed by the liberals to a slogan of struggle against a “too” politically educated and demanding peasantry!

This change of slogans expresses as plainly as can be the complete bankruptcy of liberalism in the Russian revolution. The class antagonism between the mass of the democratic rural population and the semi-feudal landlords proved to be immeasurably deeper than the cowardly and dull-witted Cadets imagined. That is why their attempt to take the lead in the struggle for democracy failed so quickly and irrevocably. That is why their whole “line” aimed at reconciling the petty-bourgeois democratic mass of the people with the Octobrist and Black-Hundred landlords was a fiasco. A great, though negative, gain of the counter-revolutionary period of the two Dumas was this bankruptcy of the treacherous “champions” of the “people’s freedom”. The class struggle going on below threw these heroes of ministerial ante-rooms overboard, turned them from claimants to leadership into ordinary lackeys of Octobristism slightly touched up with constitutional varnish.

He who still fails to see this bankruptcy of the liberals, who have undergone a practical test of their worth as champions of democracy, or at least as fighters in the democratic ranks, has understood absolutely nothing of the political history of the two Dumas. Among these people the meaningless reiteration of a memorised formula about supporting bourgeois democracy becomes counter-revolutionary snivelling. The Social-Democrats should have no regrets at the shattering of constitutional illusions. They should say what Marx said about counter-revolution in Germany: the people gained by the loss of its illusions. Bourgeois democracy in Russia gained by the loss of worthless leaders and weak-kneed allies. So much the better for the political development of this democracy.

It remains for the party of the proletariat to see to it that the valuable political lessons of our revolution and counter-revolution should be more deeply pondered over and more firmly grasped by the broad masses. The period of onslaught on the autocracy saw the deployment of the forces of the proletariat and taught it the fundamentals of revolutionary tactics; it showed the conditions for the success of the direct struggle of the masses, which alone was able to achieve improvements of any importance. The long period during which the proletarian forces were prepared, trained, and organised preceded those actions of hundreds of thousands of workers which dealt a mortal blow to the old autocracy in Russia. The sustained and imperceptible work of guiding all the manifestations of the proletarian class struggle, the work of building a strong and seasoned party preceded the outbreak of the truly mass struggle and provided the conditions necessary for turning that outbreak into a revolution. And now the proletariat, as the people's fighting vanguard, must strengthen

its organisation, scrape off all the green mould of intellectualist opportunism, and gather its forces for a similar sustained and stubborn effort. The tasks which history and the objective position of the broad masses have posed before the Russian revolution have not been solved. Elements of a new, national political crisis have not been eliminated, but, on the contrary, have grown deeper and wider. The advent of this crisis will place the proletariat once more at the head of the movement of the whole people. The workers' Social-Democratic Party should be prepared for this role. And the soil, fertilized by the events of 1905 and subsequent years, will yield a harvest tenfold richer. If a party of several thousand class-conscious advanced members of the working class could rally a million proletarians behind it at the end of 1905, then today, when our Party has tens of thousands of Social-Democrats tried and tested in the revolution, who have become still more closely linked with the mass of the workers during the struggle itself, it will rally tens of millions behind it and crush the enemy.

Both the socialist and the democratic tasks of the working-class movement in Russia have been focused much more sharply and brought to the fore more urgently under the impact of revolutionary events. The struggle against the bourgeoisie is rising to a higher stage. The capitalists are uniting in national associations, are leaguering themselves more closely with the government, and are resorting more often to extreme methods of economic struggle, including mass lock-outs, in order to "curb" the proletariat. But only moribund classes are afraid of persecutions. The more rapidly the capitalists achieve successes the more rapidly does the proletariat grow in numbers and unity. The economic development of both Russia and the whole world is a guarantee of the proletariat's invincibility. The

bourgeoisie first began to take shape as a class, as a united and conscious political force during our revolution. All the more effectively will the workers organise into a united class all over Russia. And the wider the gulf between the world of capital and the world of labour, the clearer will be the socialist consciousness of the workers. Socialist agitation among the proletariat, enriched by the experience of the revolution, will become more definite. The political organisation of the bourgeoisie is the best stimulus to the definitive shaping of a socialist workers' party.

The aims of this party in the struggle for democracy can henceforth be considered controversial only among the sympathising" intellectuals, who are making ready to go over to the liberals. For the mass of the workers these aims have been made tangibly clear in the fire of revolution. The proletariat knows from experience that the peasant masses are the basis and the only basis of bourgeois democracy as a historical force in Russia. On a national scale the proletariat has already acted as leader of this mass in the struggle against the semi-feudal landlords and the autocracy and no power can now deflect the workers' party from its right path. The role of the liberal Party of the Cadets, who, under the flag of democracy, guided the peasantry under the wing of Octoberism, is now played out, and the Social-Democrats, in spite of individual whiners, will continue their work of explaining this bankruptcy of the liberals to the masses, explaining that bourgeois democrats cannot do what they want to do unless they disentangle themselves once for all from their alliance with the lackeys of Octoberism.

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.

The farther reaction goes, the more violent does the Black-Hundred landlord become; the more control he gets over the autocracy, the slower will be Russia's economic progress and her emancipation from the survivals of serfdom. And that means, all the stronger and wider will class-conscious and militant democracy develop among the masses of the urban and rural petty bourgeoisie. All the stronger will be the mass resistance to the famines, tyrannies, and outrages to which the peasantry is doomed by the Octobrists. The Social-Democrats will see to it that, when the democratic struggle inevitably breaks out with new force, the band of liberal careerists called the Cadet Party does not once again divide the democratic ranks and spread discord among them. Either with the people or against the people, that is the alternative that the Social-Democrats have long put to all claimants to the role of "democratic" leaders in the revolution. Up to now not all Social-Democrats have been able to pursue this line consistently; some of them even believed the liberals' promises, others closed their eyes to the liberals' flirting with the counter-revolution. Now

we already have the educational experience of the first two Dumas.

The revolution has taught the proletariat to wage a mass struggle. The revolution has shown that the proletariat is able to lead the peasant masses in the struggle for democracy. The revolution has united the purely proletarian party still more closely by casting out petty-bourgeois elements from it. The counter-revolution has taught the petty-bourgeois democrats to give up seeking for leaders and allies among the liberals, who are mortally afraid of the mass struggle. On the basis of these lessons of history we can boldly say to the government of the Black-Hundred landlords: continue along the same line, Mr. Stolypin and Co.! We shall reap the fruits of what you are sowing!

Lenin

Lessons of the Commune

Zagranichnaya Gazeta, No. 2 March 23, 1908.

Collected Works, Volume 13, pages 475-478.

After the coup d'état, which marked the end of the revolution of 1848, France fell under the yoke of the Napoleonic regime for a period of 18 years. This regime brought upon the country not only economic ruin but national humiliation. In rising against the old regime, the proletariat undertook two tasks—one of them national and the other of a class character—the liberation of France from the German invasion and the socialist emancipation of the workers from capitalism. This union of two tasks forms a unique feature of the Commune.

The bourgeoisie had formed a “government of national defence” and the proletariat had to fight for national independence under its leadership. Actually, it was a government of “national betrayal” which saw its mission in fighting the Paris proletariat. But the proletariat, blinded by patriotic illusions, did not perceive this. The patriotic idea had its origin in the Great Revolution of the eighteenth century; it swayed the minds of the socialists of the Commune; and Blanqui, for example, undoubtedly a revolutionary and an ardent supporter of socialism, could find no better title for his newspaper than the bourgeois cry: “The country is in danger!”

Combining contradictory tasks—patriotism and socialism—was the fatal mistake of the French socialists. In the Manifesto of the International, issued in September 1870, Marx had warned the French proletariat against being misled by a false

national idea; the Great Revolution, class antagonisms had sharpened, and whereas at that time the struggle against the whole of European reaction united the entire revolutionary nation, now the proletariat could no longer combine its interests with the interests of other classes hostile to it; let the bourgeoisie bear the responsibility for the national humiliation—the task of the proletariat was to fight for the socialist emancipation of labour from the yoke of the bourgeoisie.

And indeed, the true nature of bourgeois “patriotism” was not long in revealing itself. Having concluded an ignominious peace with the Prussians, the Versailles government proceeded to its immediate task—it launched an attack to wrest the arms that terrified it from the hands of the Paris proletariat. The workers replied by proclaiming the Commune and civil war.

Although the socialist proletariat was split up into numerous sects, the Commune was a splendid example of the unanimity with which the proletariat was able to accomplish the democratic tasks which the bourgeoisie could only proclaim. Without any particularly complex legislation, in a simple, straightforward manner, the proletariat, which had seized power, carried out the democratisation of the social system, abolished the bureaucracy, and made all official posts elective.

But two mistakes destroyed the fruits of the splendid victory. The proletariat stopped half-way: instead of setting about “expropriating the expropriators”, it allowed itself to be led astray by dreams of establishing a higher justice in the country united by a common national task; such institutions as the banks, for example, were not taken over, and Proudhonist theories about a “just exchange”, etc., still prevailed among the socialists. The second mistake was excessive magnanimity on

the part of the proletariat: instead of destroying its enemies it sought to exert moral influence on them; it underestimated the significance of direct military operations in civil war, and instead of launching a resolute offensive against Versailles that would have crowned its victory in Paris, it tarried and gave the Versailles government time to gather the dark forces and prepare for the blood-soaked week of May.

But despite all its mistakes the Commune was a superb example of the great proletarian movement of the nineteenth century. Marx set a high value on the historic significance of the Commune—if, during the treacherous attempt by the Versailles gang to seize the arms of the Paris proletariat, the workers had allowed themselves to be disarmed without a fight, the disastrous effect of the demoralisation, that this weakness would have caused in the proletarian movement, would have been far, far greater than the losses suffered by the working class in the battle to defend its arms. The sacrifices of the Commune, heavy as they were, are made up for by its significance for the general struggle of the proletariat: it stirred the socialist movement throughout Europe, it demonstrated the strength of civil war, it dispelled patriotic illusions, and destroyed the naïve belief in any efforts of the bourgeoisie for common national aims. The Commune taught the European proletariat to pose concretely the tasks of the socialist revolution.

The lesson learnt by the proletariat will not be forgotten. The working class will make use of it, as it has already done in Russia during the December uprising.

The period that preceded the Russian revolution and prepared it bears a certain resemblance to the period of the Napoleonic

yoke in France. In Russia, too, the autocratic clique has brought upon the country economic ruin and national humiliation. But the outbreak of revolution was held back for a long time, since social development had not yet created the conditions for a mass movement and, notwithstanding all the courage displayed, the isolated actions against the government in the pre-revolutionary period broke against the apathy of the masses. Only the Social-Democrats, by strenuous and systematic work, educated the masses to the level of the higher forms of struggle—mass actions and armed civil war.

The Social-Democrats were able to shatter the “common national” and “patriotic” delusions of the young proletariat and later, when the Manifesto of October 17th had been wrested from the tsar due to their direct intervention, the proletariat began vigorous preparation for the next, inevitable phase of the revolution—the armed uprising. Having shed “common national” illusions, it concentrated its class forces in its own mass organisations—the Soviets of Workers’ and Soldiers’ Deputies, etc. And notwithstanding all the differences in the aims and tasks of the Russian revolution, compared with the French revolution of 1871, the Russian proletariat had to resort to the same method of struggle as that first used by the Paris Commune—civil war. Mindful of the lessons of the Commune, it knew that the proletariat should not ignore peaceful methods of struggle—they serve its ordinary, day-to-day interests, they are necessary in periods of preparation for revolution—but it must never forget that in certain conditions the class struggle assumes the form of armed conflict and civil war; there are times when the interests of the proletariat call for ruthless extermination of its enemies in open armed clashes. This was first demonstrated by the French proletariat in the Commune

and brilliantly confirmed by the Russian proletariat in the December uprising.

And although these magnificent uprisings of the working class were crushed, there will be another uprising, in face of which the forces of the enemies of the proletariat will prove ineffective, and from which the socialist proletariat will emerge completely victorious.

Lenin

Those Who Would Liquidate Us

January and February 1911

Collected Works, Volume 17, pages 60-81.

Re: Mr. Potresov and V. Bazarov

We sometimes come across literary efforts whose only significance lies in their Herostratean nature. A most ordinary literary work, as, for instance, Eduard Bernstein's well-known *The Premises of Socialism*, assumes outstanding political significance and becomes the manifesto of a trend amongst Marxists, although it departs from Marxism all along the line. Similar outstanding significance, by reason of their Herostratean nature, undoubtedly attaches to Mr. Potresov's article on trivialities in last year's February issue of *Nasha Zarya*, and V. Bazarov's article in reply to it in the April *Nasha Zarya*. To be sure, the questions discussed in these articles are far from being so profound or of such wide scope, and have not the same international significance, as the questions raised by Bernstein (or, rather, which he put forward after the bourgeoisie had already done so), but for us Russians, in the period of 1908-9-10-?, these are questions of tremendous and cardinal importance. That is why Mr. Potresov's and V. Bazarov's articles are not out of date, and it is necessary, it is our duty, to deal with them.

I

Mr. Potresov, who is fond of artificial, flowery and laboured expressions, devotes his article to "the contemporary drama of our social and political trends". Actually, there is not the

slightest trace of the dramatic in what he says, or can say, of the post-revolutionary evolution of liberalism, Narodism and Marxism, which he took it upon himself to discuss. But you cannot get away from the comic in Mr. Potresov's reflections.

"It is precisely liberalism as an ideological trend," writes Mr. Potresov, "that presents a picture of the greatest degeneration and the greatest helplessness. We need only consider the widening gulf between practical liberalism and theorising liberalism"—between the "empiricism" of Milyukov's Rech and the theories of Vekhi.

Tut, tut, my dear sir! The gulf is widening between what you and semi-liberals like you said and thought of the Cadets in 1905-6-7 and what you are compelled to admit, stuttering and contradicting yourself, in 1909-10. The contradiction between the "empiricism" of the practical liberals and the theories of gentlemen á la Struve was fully apparent even before 1905. Just recall how the Osvobozhdeniye of those days blundered in literally every one of its attempts at "theorising". Since you are now beginning to put two and two together, and find that liberalism "seems" to be "broken up" (this is yet another of your verbal tricks, an empty phrase, for Vekhi has not broken with Rech, or vice versa; they have been, are, and will go on living in perfect harmony with each other), that it is "sterile", "suspended in mid-air", and represents but the "least stable" (sic!) "section of bourgeois democrats", who are "not bad as voters", etc.—your cries about the "drama" of liberalism merely signify the tragicomedy of the collapse of your illusions. It is not at the present time, not during the three years 1908-10, but in the preceding three-year period that the liberals "seemed" to be the least stable section of bourgeois democrats. The "least

stable" are those quasi-socialists who serve mustard to the public after supper. The distinguishing feature of the previous three-year period (insofar as the question examined by Mr. Potresov is concerned) was liberalism "suspended in mid-air", "sterile", "voting", etc., liberalism. At that time it was the political duty of the day to recognise the nature of liberalism for what it was; it was the urgent duty, not only of socialists, but also of consistent democrats, to warn the masses of this. March 1906, not February 1910—that was the time when it was important to sound the warning that the liberalism of the Cadets was suspended in mid-air, that it was sterile, that the objective conditions reduced it to nothingness, to the farce of being "not bad as voters"; that the victories of the Cadets represented an unstable zigzag between the "serious" constitutionalism (read: sham constitutionalism) of the Shipovs or Guchkovs and the struggle for democracy waged by those elements that were not suspended in mid-air and did not confine themselves to the fond contemplation of ballots. Just call to mind, my dear sir, who it was that spoke the truth about the liberals at the proper time, in March 1906.

The distinguishing feature, the peculiar characteristic of the three-year period (1908–10) under discussion is by no means the "sterility" of liberalism "suspended in mid-air", etc. Quite the contrary. Nothing has changed in the class impotence of the liberals, in their dread of democracy, and in their political inanity; but this impotence reached its height at a time when there were opportunities to display strength, when conditions made it possible for the liberals to hold full sway in at least a certain field of action. Thus, for instance, at the time the Cadets had a majority in the First Duma, they were in a position to use their majority either to serve democracy or to hamper the cause

of democracy, to render assistance to democracy (even if only in such a small matter, as, let us say, the organisation of local land committees) or to stab democracy in the back. And that period was characterised by the Cadets being “suspended in mid-air”, and those who were “not bad as voters” proving to be nothing but inventors of instructions for the subsequent Octobrist Duma.

In the three-year period that followed, the Cadets, while remaining true to themselves, were less “suspended in mid air” than before. You, Mr. Potresov, resemble that hero of popular lore who loudly voices his wishes and opinions at inappropriate times. The 1909 Vekhi group is less “suspended in mid-air” than Muromtsev was in 1906, for it is of real use and renders practical service to the class which represents a great power in Russia’s national economy, namely, the landowners and capitalists. The Vekhi group helps these worthy gentlemen collect an armoury of weapons for their ideological and political struggle against democracy and socialism. This is something that cannot be destroyed by dissolutions of the Duma or, in general, by any political disturbances occurring under the existing social and economic system. As long as the class of landed proprietors and capitalists exists, their hack journalists, the Izgoyevs, Struves, Franks and Co. will also exist. As far as the “work” of the Muromtsevs and, in general, of the Cadets in the First Duma is concerned, it could be “destroyed” by the dissolution of the Duma (for, in point of fact, they did not do any work; they only indulged in words which, far from serving the people, corrupted them).

The Cadets in the Third Duma are the same party, with the same ideology, the same policy, and to a large degree even the

same people, as those in the First Duma. And that is precisely why the Cadets in the Third Duma are less “suspended in mid-air” than they were in the First Duma. Don’t you understand this, my dear Mr. Potresov? You were wrong in undertaking a discussion of “the contemporary drama of our social and political trends”! Let me tell you, in strict confidence, that in the future, too, and probably for quite some time to come, the political activity of the Cadets will not be “sterile”—not only because of the reactionary “fecundity” of Vekhi, but also because so long as there are political minnows in the ranks of democracy, there will be food for the big fish of liberalism to thrive on. So long as there is the kind of instability in the ranks of the socialists, the kind of flabbiness among the representatives of democracy so vividly exemplified by figures like Potresov, the skill of the “empiricists” of liberalism will always prove sufficient to catch these minnows. Don’t worry, Cadets: you’ll have plenty to feed on so long as the Potresovs exist!

Lenin

The Socialist Revolution and the Struggle for Democracy

February 1916

Collected Works, Volume 22, pages 143-156.

The socialist revolution is not a single act, it is not one battle on one front, but a whole epoch of acute class conflicts, a long series of battles on all fronts, i.e., on all questions of economics and politics, battles that can only end in the expropriation of the bourgeoisie. It would be a radical mistake to think that the struggle for democracy was capable of diverting the proletariat from the socialist revolution or of hiding, overshadowing it, etc. On the contrary, in the same way as there can be no victorious socialism that does not practise full democracy, so the proletariat cannot prepare for its victory over the bourgeoisie without an all-round, consistent and revolutionary struggle for democracy.

It would be no less a mistake to remove one of the points of the democratic programme, for example, the point on the self-determination of nations, on the grounds of it being "impracticable" or "illusory" under imperialism. The contention that the right of nations to self-determination is impracticable within the bounds of capitalism can be understood either in the absolute, economic sense, or in the conditional, political sense.

In the first case it is radically incorrect from the standpoint of theory. First, in that sense, such things as, for example, labour money, or the abolition of crises, etc., are impracticable under capitalism. It is absolutely untrue that the self-determination of nations is equally impracticable. Secondly, even the one example of the secession of Norway from Sweden in 1905 is

sufficient to refute "impracticability" in that sense. Thirdly, it would be absurd to deny that some slight change in the political and strategic relations of, say, Germany and Britain, might today or tomorrow make the formation of a new Polish, Indian and other similar state fully "practicable". Fourthly, finance capital, in its drive to expand, can "freely" buy or bribe the freest democratic or republican government and the elective officials of any, even an "independent", country. The domination of finance capital and of capital in general is not to be abolished by any reforms in the sphere of political democracy; and self-determination belongs wholly and exclusively to this sphere. This domination of finance capital, however, does not in the least nullify the significance of political democracy as a freer, wider and clearer form of class oppression and class struggle. Therefore, all arguments about the "impracticability", in the economic sense, of one of the demands of political democracy under capitalism are reduced to a theoretically incorrect definition of the general and basic relationships of capitalism and of political democracy as a whole.

In the second case the assertion is incomplete and inaccurate. This is because not only the right of nations to self-determination, but all the fundamental demands of political democracy are only partially "practicable" under imperialism, and then in a distorted form and by way of exception (for example, the secession of Norway from Sweden in 1905). The demand for the immediate liberation of the colonies that is put forward by all revolutionary Social-Democrats is also "impracticable" under capitalism without a series of revolutions. But from this it does not by any means follow that Social-Democracy should reject the immediate and most determined struggle for all these demands -- such a rejection

would only play into the hands of the bourgeoisie and reaction -- but, on the contrary, it follows that these demands must be formulated and put through in a revolutionary and not a reformist manner, going beyond the bounds of bourgeois legality, breaking them down, going beyond speeches in parliament and verbal protests, and drawing the masses into decisive action, extending and intensifying the struggle for every fundamental democratic demand up to a direct proletarian onslaught on the bourgeoisie, i.e., up to the socialist revolution that expropriates the bourgeoisie. The socialist revolution may flare up not only through some big strike, street demonstration or hunger riot or a military insurrection or colonial revolt, but also as a result of a political crisis such as the Dreyfus case or the Zabern incident, or in connection with a referendum on the secession of an oppressed nation, etc.

Increased national oppression under imperialism does not mean that Social-Democracy should reject what the bourgeoisie call the "utopian" struggle for the freedom of nations to secede but, on the contrary, it should make greater use of the conflicts that arise in this sphere, too, as grounds for mass action and for revolutionary attacks on the bourgeoisie.

Lenin

The Peace Programme

Sotsial-Demokrat No. 52, March 25, 1916

Collected Works, Volume 22, pages 161-168.

The question of the Social-Democratic "peace programme." Is one of the most important questions on the agenda of the Second International Conference of the "Zimmerwaldists". In order to bring home to the reader the essentials of this question we will quote a declaration made by Kautsky, the most authoritative representative of the Second International and most authoritative champion of the social-chauvinists in all countries.

"The International is not a fit instrument in time of war; it is, essentially, an instrument of peace... The fight for peace, class struggle in peace time." (Neue Zeit. November 27, 1914.) "All peace programmes formulated by the International; the programmes of the Copenhagen, London and Vienna Congresses, all demand, and quite rightly, the recognition of the independence of nations. This demand must also serve as our compass in the present war." (Ibid., May 21, 1915.)

These few words excellently express the "programme" of international social-chauvinist unity and conciliation. Everybody knows that Sudekum's friends and adherents met in Vienna and acted entirely in his spirit, championing the cause of German imperialism under the cloak of "defence of the fatherland." The French, English and Russian Sudekums met in London and championed the cause of "their" national imperialism under the same cloak. The real policy of the

London and Vienna heroes of social-chauvinism is to justify participation in the imperialist war, to justify the killing of German workers by French workers, and vice versa, for the sake of determining which national bourgeoisie shall have preference in robbing other countries. And to conceal their real policy, to deceive the workers, both the London and the Vienna heroes resort to the phrase: We "recognise" the "independence of nations," or in other words, recognise the self-determination of nations, repudiate annexations, etc., etc.

It is as clear as daylight that this "recognition" is a flagrant lie, despicable hypocrisy, for it justifies participation in a war which both sides are waging, not to make nations independent, but to enslave them. Instead of exposing, unmasking and condemning this hypocrisy, Kautsky, the great authority, sanctifies it. The unanimous desire of the chauvinist traitors to Socialism to deceive the workers is, in Kautsky's eyes, proof of the "unanimity" and virility of the International on the question of peace!!! Kautsky converts nationalist, crude, obvious, flagrant hypocrisy, which is obvious to the workers, into international, subtle, cloaked hypocrisy, calculated to throw dust in the eyes of the workers. Kautsky's policy is a hundred times more harmful and dangerous to the labour movement than Sudekum's policy; Kautsky's hypocrisy is a hundred times more repulsive.

This does not apply to Kautsky alone. Substantially the same policy is pursued by Axelrod, Martov and Chkheidze in Russia; by Longuet and Pressemane in France, Treves in Italy, etc. Objectively, this policy means fostering bourgeois lies among the working class; it means inculcating bourgeois ideas into the minds of the proletariat. That both Sudekum and Plekhanov

merely repeat the bourgeois lies of the capitalists of "their" respective nations is obvious; but it is not so obvious that Kautsky sanctifies these lies and elevates them to the sphere of the "highest truth" of a "unanimous" International. That the workers should regard the Sudekums and Plekhanovs as authoritative and unanimous "Socialists" who have temporarily fallen out is exactly what the bourgeoisie wants. The very thing the bourgeoisie wants is that the workers should be diverted from the revolutionary struggle in wartime by means of hypocritical, idle and non-committal phrases about peace; that they should be lulled and soothed by hopes of peace without annexations, a democratic peace, etc., etc.

Huysmans has merely popularised Kautsky's peace programme and has added: courts of arbitration, democratisation of foreign politics, etc. But the first and fundamental point of a Socialist peace programme must be to unmask the hypocrisy of the Kautskyist peace programme, which strengthens bourgeois influence over the proletariat.

Let us recall the fundamental postulates of Socialist doctrine, which the Kautskyists have distorted. War is the continuation, by forcible means, of the politics pursued by the ruling classes of the belligerent Powers long before the outbreak of war. Peace is a continuation of the very same politics, with a registration of the changes brought about in the relation of forces of the antagonists as a result of military operations. War does not change the direction in which politics developed prior to the war; it only accelerates that development.

The war of 1870-71 was a continuation of the progressive bourgeois policy (which was pursued for decades) of liberating and uniting Germany. The debacle and overthrow of Napoleon

III hastened that liberation. The peace programme of the Socialists of that epoch took this progressive bourgeois result into account and advocated support for the democratic bourgeoisie, urging: no plunder of France; an honourable peace with the republic.

How clownish is the attempt slavishly to repeat this example under the conditions prevailing during the imperialist war of 1914-16! This war is the continuation of the politics of an over-ripe reactionary bourgeoisie, which has plundered the world, which has seized colonies, etc. Owing to the objective situation, the present war cannot, on the basis of bourgeois relations, lead to any democratic "progress" whatever; no matter what the outcome of the war may be, it can lead only to the intensification and extension of oppression in general, and of national oppression in particular.

That war accelerated development in a democratic bourgeois-progressive direction: it resulted in the overthrow of Napoleon III and in the unification of Germany. This war is accelerating development only in the direction of the socialist revolution. Then the programme of a democratic (bourgeois) peace had an objective historical basis. Now there is no such basis, and all phrases about a democratic peace is a bourgeois lie, the objective purpose of which is to divert the workers from the revolutionary struggle for socialism! Then the Socialists, by their programme of a democratic peace, supported a deep-going bourgeois-democratic movement of the masses (for the overthrow of Napoleon III and the unification of Germany), which had been manifesting itself for decades. Now, with their programme of a democratic peace on the basis of bourgeois relations the Socialists are helping the deception of the people

by the bourgeoisie, whose aim is to divert the proletariat from the socialist revolution.

Just as phrases about "defence of the fatherland" inculcate into the minds of the masses the ideology of a national war of liberation by means of fraud, so phrases about a democratic peace inculcate that very same bourgeois lie in a roundabout way.

"That means that you have no peace programme, that you are opposed to democratic demands," the Kautskyists argue, in the hope that inattentive people will not notice that this objection substitutes non-existent bourgeois-democratic tasks for the existing socialist tasks.

Oh no, gentlemen, we reply to the Kautskyists. We are in favour of democratic demands, we alone fight for them sincerely, for the objective historical situation prevents us from advancing them except in connection with the socialist revolution. Take, for example, the "compass" which Kautsky and Co. employ for the bourgeois deception of the workers.

Südekum and Plekhanov are "unanimous" in their "peace programme." Down with annexations! Support the independence of nations! And note this: the Südekums are right when they say that Russia's attitude towards Poland, Finland, etc., is an annexationist attitude. And so is Plekhanov right when he says that Germany's attitude towards Alsace-Lorraine, Serbia, Belgium, etc, is also annexationist. Both are right, are they not) And in this way Kautsky "reconciles" the German Südekum with the Russian Südekums!!!

But every sensible worker will see immediately that Kautsky and both the Südekums are hypocrites. This is obvious. The

duty of a Socialist is not to make peace with hypocritical democracy, but to unmask it. How can it be unmasked? Very simply. "Recognition" of the independence of nations can be regarded as sincere only where the representative of the oppressing nation has demanded, both before and during the war, freedom of secession for the nation which is oppressed by his own "fatherland."

This demand alone is in accord with Marxism. Marx advanced it in the interests of the English proletariat when he demanded freedom for Ireland, although he admitted at the same time the probability that federation would follow secession. In other words, he demanded the right of secession, not for the purpose of splitting and isolating countries, but for the purpose of creating more durable and democratic ties. In all cases where there are oppressed and oppressing nations, where there are no special circumstances which distinguish revolutionary-democratic nations from reactionary nations (as was the case in the 'forties of the nineteenth century), Marx's policy in relation to Ireland must serve as a model for proletarian policy. But imperialism is precisely the epoch in which the division of nations into oppressors and oppressed is the essential and typical division, and it is utterly impossible to draw a distinction between reactionary and revolutionary nations in Europe.

As early as 1913, our Party, in a resolution on the national question, made it the duty of Social-Democrats to apply the term self-determination in the sense here indicated. And the war of 1914-16 has fully shown that we were right.

Take Kautsky's latest article in the *Neue Zeit* of March 3, 1916. He openly declares himself to be in agreement with Austerlitz,

the notorious, extreme German chauvinist in Austria, the editor of the chauvinist Vienna Arbeiter-Zeitung, when he says that “the independence of a nation must not be confused with its sovereignty”. In other words, national autonomy within a “nationality state” is good enough for the oppressed nations, and it is not necessary to demand for them the equal right to political independence. In this very article, however, Kautsky asserts that it is impossible to prove that “it is essential for the Poles to adhere to the Russian state”!!!

What does this mean? It means that to please Hindenburg, Südekum, Austerlitz and Co, Kautsky recognises Poland’s right to secede from Russia, although Russia is a “nationality state,” but not a word does he say about freedom for the Poles to secede from Germany!!! In this very article Kautsky declares that the French Socialists had departed from internationalism by wanting to achieve the freedom of Alsace-Lorraine by means of war. But he says nothing about the German Südekums and Co. deviating from internationalism when they refuse to demand freedom for Alsace-Lorraine to secede from Germany!

Kautsky employs the phrase “a nationality state”—a phrase that can be applied to England in relation to Ireland, and to Germany in relation to Poland, Alsace-Lorraine, etc.—obviously for the purpose of defending social-chauvinism. He has converted the slogan “fight against annexations” into a “programme of peace”... with the chauvinists, into glaring hypocrisy. And in this very article, Kautsky repeats the honeyed little udas speech: “The International has never ceased to demand the consent of the affected populations when state frontiers are to be altered.” Is it not clear that Südekum and Co. demand the “consent” of the Alsatians and Belgians to be

annexed to Germany and that Austerlitz and Co. demand the “consent” of the Poles and Serbs to be annexed to Austria!

And what about the Russian Kautskyist Martov? He wrote to the Gvozdevist journal *Nash Golos* (Samara) to prove the indisputable truth that self-determination of nations does not necessarily imply defence of the fatherland in an imperialist war. But Martov says nothing about the fact that a Russian Social-Democrat betrays the principle of self-determination if he does not demand the right of secession for the nations oppressed by the Great Russians; and in this way Martov stretches out the hand of peace to the Alexinskys, the Gvozdevs, the Dotresovs, and the Plekhanovs! Martov is silent on this point also in the underground press! He argues against the Dutchman Gorter, although Gorter, while wrongly repudiating the principle of self-determination of nations, correctly applies it by demanding political independence for the Dutch Indies and by unmasking the betrayal of Socialism by the Dutch opportunists who disagree with this demand. Martov, however, does not argue against his secretary, Semkovsky, who in 1912-15 was the only writer in the liquidationist press who repudiated the right of secession and self-determination in general!

Is it not plain that Martov “advocates” self-determination just as hypocritically as Kautsky does; that he, too, is covering up his desire to make peace with the chauvinists?

And what about Trotsky? He is body and soul for self-determination, but in his case, too, it is an idle phrase, for he does not demand freedom of secession for nations oppressed by the “fatherland” of the Socialist of the given nationality; he is silent about the hypocrisy of Kautsky and the Kautskyists!

This kind of “struggle against annexations” serves to deceive the workers and not to explain the programme of the Social-Democrats; it is an evasion of the problem and not a concrete indication of the duty of internationalists; it is a concession to nationalist prejudices and to the selfish interests of nationalism (“we” all, bourgeois and social-chauvinists alike, derive “benefits” from “our” fatherland’s oppression of other nations!) but not a struggle against nationalism.

The “peace programme” of Social-Democracy must, in the first place, unmask the hypocrisy of the bourgeois, social-chauvinist and Kautskyist phrases about peace. This is the first and fundamental thing. Unless we do that we shall be willingly or unwillingly helping to deceive the masses. Our “peace programme” demands that the principal democratic point on this question—the repudiation of annexations—should be applied in practice and not in words, that it should serve to promote the propaganda of internationalism, not of national hypocrisy. In order that this may do so, we must explain to the masses that the repudiation of annexations, i.e., the recognition of self-determination, is sincere only when the Socialists of every nation demand the right of secession for the nations that are oppressed by their nations. As a positive slogan, one capable of drawing the masses into the revolutionary struggle and explaining the necessity for adopting revolutionary measures to attain a “democratic peace,” we must advance the slogan: Repudiation of the National Debt.

Finally, our “peace programme” must explain that the imperialist Powers and the imperialist bourgeoisie cannot grant a democratic peace. Such a peace must be sought and fought for, not in the past, not in a reactionary utopia of a non-

imperialist capitalism, nor in a league of equal nations under capitalism, but in the future, in the socialist revolution of the proletariat. Not a single fundamental democratic demand can be achieved to any considerable extent, or any degree of permanency, in the advanced imperialist states, except by revolutionary battles under the banner of socialism.

Whoever promises the nations a “democratic” peace without at the same time preaching the socialist revolution, or while repudiating the struggle for it—the struggle which must be carried on now, during the war—is deceiving the proletariat.

Lenin

The Nascent Trend of Imperialist Economism

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The old Economism of 1894–1902 reasoned thus: the Narodniks have been refuted; capitalism has triumphed in Russia. Consequently, there can be no question of political revolution. The practical conclusion: either “economic struggle be left to the workers and political struggle to the liberals” — that is a curvet to the right — or, instead of political revolution, a general strike for socialist revolution. That curvet to the left was advocated in a pamphlet, now forgotten, of a Russian Economist of the late nineties.

Now a new Economism is being born. Its reasoning is similarly based on the two curvets: “Right” — we are against the “right to self-determination” (i.e., against the liberation of oppressed peoples, the struggle against annexations—that has not yet been fully thought out or clearly stated). “Left” — we are opposed to a minimum programme (i. e., opposed to struggle for reforms and democracy) as “contradictory” to socialist revolution.

It is more than a year now since this nascent trend was revealed to several comrades at the Berne Conference in the spring of 1915. At that time, happily, only one comrade, who met with universal disapproval, insisted on these ideas of imperialist Economism right up to the end of the Conference and

formulated them in writing in special "theses". No one associated himself with these theses.

Subsequently two others associated themselves with this comrade's theses against self-determination (unaware that the question was inextricably linked with the general line of the afore-mentioned "theses"). But the appearance of the "Dutch programme" in February 1916, published in No. 3 of the Bulletin of the International Socialist = Committee, immediately brought out this "misunderstanding" and again compelled the author of the original theses to restate his imperialist Economism, this time, too, as a whole, and not merely in application to one allegedly "partial" issue.

It is absolutely necessary again and again to warn the comrades concerned that they have landed themselves in a quagmire, that their "ideas" have nothing in common either with Marxism or revolutionary Social-Democracy. We can no longer leave the matter "in the dark": that would only encourage ideological confusion and direct it into the worst possible channel of equivocation, "private" conflicts, incessant "friction", etc. Our duty, on the contrary, is to insist, in the most emphatic and categorical manner, on the obligation thoroughly to think out and analyse questions raised for discussion.

In its theses on self-determination (which appeared in German as a reprint from No. 2 of *Vorbote*), the *Sotsial-Demokrat* editorial board purposely brought the matter into the press in an impersonal, but most detailed, form, emphasising in particular the link between self-determination and the general question of the struggle for reforms, for democracy, the impermissibility of ignoring the political aspect, etc. In his comments on the editorial board's theses, the author of the

original theses (imperialist Economism) comes out in solidarity with the Dutch programme, thereby clearly demonstrating that self-determination is by no means a “partial” question, as exponents of the nascent trend maintain, but a general and basic one.

The Dutch programme was laid before representatives of the Zimmerwald Left on February 5–8, 1916, at the Berne meeting of the International Socialist Committee. Not a single member of the Zimmerwald Left, not even Radek, spoke in favour of the programme, for it combines, indiscriminately, such points as “expropriation of the banks” and “repeal of customs tariffs”, “abolition of the first Senate chamber”, etc. The Zimmerwald Left unanimously, with practically no comment, in fact merely with a shrug of the shoulders, dismissed the Dutch programme as patently and wholly unsuitable.

However, the author of the original theses, written in the spring of 1915, was so fond of the programme that he declared: “Substantially, that is all I said, too [in the spring of 1915], “the Dutch have thought things out”: “with them the economic aspect is expropriation of the banks and large-scale production [enterprises], the political aspect is a republic and so on. Absolutely correct!”

The fact, however, is that the Dutch did not “think things out” but produced an unthought out programme. It is the sad fate of Russia that some among us grasp at precisely what is not thought out in the newest novelty....

The author of the 1915 theses believes that the Sotsial Demokrat editors lapsed into a contradiction when they “themselves” urged “expropriation of the banks”, and even added the word

“immediately” (plus “dictatorial measures”) in § 8 (“Concrete Measures”). “And how I was reproached for this very thing in Berne!” the author of the 1915 theses exclaims indignantly, recalling the Berne debates in the spring of 1915.

He forgets or fails to see this “minor” point: in §8 the Sotsial-Demokrat editors clearly distinguish two eventualities: I. The socialist revolution has begun. In that event, they say: “immediate expropriation of the banks”, etc. II. The socialist revolution has not begun, and in that event we shall have to postpone talking about these good things.

Since the socialist revolution, in the above-mentioned sense, has obviously not yet begun, the Dutch programme is incongruous. And the author of the theses adds his bit of “profundity” by reverting (he always seems to slip on the same spot!) to his old mistake of turning political demands (like “abolition of the first chamber”?) into a “political formula for social revolution”.

Having marked time for a whole year, the author returned to his old mistake. That is the “cruX” of his misadventures: he cannot solve the problem of how to link the advent of imperialism with the struggle for reforms and democracy— just as the Economism of blessed memory could not link the advent of capitalism with the struggle for democracy.

Hence—complete confusion concerning the “unachievability” of democratic demands under imperialism.

Hence—ignoring of the political struggle now, at present, immediately, and at all times, which is impermissible for a Marxist (and permissible only for a Rabochaya Mysl Economist).

Hence—the knack of persistently “sliding” from recognition of imperialism to apology for imperialism (just as the Economists of blessed memory slid from recognition of capitalism to apology for capitalism).

And so on, and so forth.

A detailed examination of the errors the author of the 1915 theses commits in his comments on the Sotsial-Demokrat self-determination theses is impossible, for every line is wrong! After all, you cannot write pamphlets or books in reply to “comments” if the initiators of imperialist Economism spend a whole year marking time and stubbornly refuse to concern themselves with what ought to be their direct party duty if they want to take a serious attitude to political issues, namely: a considered and articulate statement of what they designate as “our differences”.

I am therefore obliged to confine myself to a brief review of how the author applies his basic error and how he “supplements” it.

He believes that I contradict myself: in 1914 (in *Prosveshcheniye*) I wrote that it was absurd to look for self-determination “in the programmes of West-European socialists”, but in 1916 I proclaim self-determination to be especially urgent.

It did not occur (!!) to the author that these “programmes” were drawn up in 1875 1880, 1891!

Now let us take his objections (to the Sotsial-Demokrat self-determination theses) point by point.

§1. The same Economist refusal to see and pose political questions. Since socialism creates the economic basis for the

abolition of national oppression in the political sphere, therefore our author refuses to formulate our political tasks in this sphere! That's ridiculous!

Since the victorious proletariat does not negate wars against the bourgeoisie of other countries, therefore the author refuses to formulate our political tasks in relation to national oppression!! These are all examples of downright violation of Marxism and logic, or, if you like, manifestations of the logic of the fundamental errors of imperialist Economism.

§2. The opponents of self-determination are hopelessly confused in their references to its being "unachievable".

The Sotsial-Demokrat editors explain to them two possible interpretations of unachievability and their error in both cases.

Yet the author of the 1915 theses, without even trying to give his interpretation of "unachievability", i. e., accepting our explanation that two different things are confused here, persists in that confusion!!

He ties crises to "imperialist" "policy": our expert on political economy has forgotten that there were crises before imperialism!

To maintain that self-determination is unachievable economically is to confuse the issue, the editors explain. The author does not reply, does not state that he considers self-determination unachievable economically; he abandons his dubious position and jumps over to politics (unachievable "all the same") though he has been told with the utmost clarity that politically a republic is just as "unachievable" under imperialism as self-determination.

Cornered, the author “jumps” again: he accepts a republic and the whole minimum programme only as a “political formula for social revolution”!!!

He refuses to defend the “economic” unachievability of self-determination and jumps to politics, maintaining that political unachievability applies to the minimum programme as a whole. Here again there is not a grain of Marxism, not a grain of logic, save the logic of imperialist Economism.

The author wants imperceptibly (without stopping to think, without producing anything articulate, without making any effort to work out his programme) to jettison the Social-Democratic Party minimum programme! No wonder he has been marking time for a whole year!!

The question of combating Kautskyism is again not a partial, but a general and basic question of modern times: the author does not understand this struggle. Just as the Economists turned the struggle against the Narodniks into an apology for capitalism, so the author turns the struggle against Kautskyism into an apology for Imperialism (that applies also to §3).

The mistake of the Kautskyites lies in the fact that they present in a reformist manner such demands, and at such a time, that can be presented only in a revolutionary manner (but the author lapses into the position that their mistake is to advance these demands altogether, just as the Economists “understood” the struggle against Narodism to mean that the slogan “Down with the autocracy” was Narodism).

The mistake of Kautskyism lies in projecting correct democratic demands into the past, to peaceful capitalism, and not into the

future, to the social revolution (the author, however, falls into the position of regarding these demands as incorrect).

§3. See above. The author bypasses also the question of “federation”. The same old fundamental mistake of the same old Economism: inability to pose political questions.

§4. “From self-determination follows defence of the fatherland,” the author obstinately repeats. His mistake here is to make negation of defence of the fatherland a shibboleth, deduce it not from the concrete historical features of a given war, but apply it “in general”. That is not Marxism.

The author has been told long ago—try to think up a formula of struggle against national oppression or inequality which (formula) does not justify “defence of the fatherland”. You cannot devise such a formula, and the author has not challenged that.

Does that mean that we reject the fight against national oppression if it could be interpreted to imply defence of the fatherland?

No, for we are opposed not to “defence of the fatherland” “in general” (see our Party resolutions), but to using this fraudulent slogan to embellish the present imperialist war.

The author wants to pose the question of “defence of the fatherland” in a basically incorrect and unhistorical way (but he cannot; he has been trying in vain for a whole year...).

His reference to “dualism” shows that he does not understand the difference between monism and dualism.

If I “unite” a shoe brush and a mammal, will that be “monism”?

If I say that to reach goal a we must

(c)→a←(b)

travel to the left from point (b) and to the right from point (c), will that be “dualism”?

Is the position of the proletariat with regard to national oppression the same in oppressing and oppressed nations? No, it is not the same, not the same economically, politically, ideologically, spiritually, etc.

Meaning?

Meaning that some will approach in one way, others in another way the same goal (the merger of nations) from different starting-points. Denial of that is the “monism” that unites a shoe brush and a mammal.

“It is not proper to say this [i. e., to urge self-determination] to the proletarians of an oppressed nation”—that is how the author “interprets” the editors’ theses.

That’s amusing!! There is nothing of the kind in the theses. The author has either not read them to the end or has not given them any thought at all.

§5. See above on Kautskyism.

§6. The author is told there are three types of countries in the world. He “objects” and snatches out “cases”. That is casuistry, not politics.

You want a concrete “case”: “How about Belgium”?

See the Lenin and Zinoviev pamphlet: it says that we would be for the defence of Belgium (even by war) if this concrete war were different.

You do not agree with that?

Then say so!!

You have not properly thought out the question of why Social-Democrats are against “defence of the fatherland”.

We are not against it for the reasons you believe, because your presentation of the question (vain efforts, not really a presentation) goes against history. That is my reply to the author.

To describe as “sophistry” the fact that while justifying wars for the elimination of national oppression, we do not justify the present imperialist war, which on both sides is being waged to increase national oppression—is to use “strong” words without giving the matter the least bit of thought.

The author wants to pose the question of “defence of the fatherland” from a more “Left” position, but the result (for a whole year now) is utter confusion!

§7. The author criticises: “The question of ‘peace terms’ is not touched upon at all.”

Strange criticism: failure to deal with a question we did not even raise!!

But what is “touched upon” and discussed is the question of annexations, on which the imperialist Economists are utterly confused, this time together with the Dutch and Radek.

Either you reject the immediate slogan against old and new annexations—(no less “unachievable” under imperialism than self-determination, in Europe as well as in the colonies)—and in that case you pass from concealed to open apology for imperialism.

Or you accept the slogan (as Radek has done in the press)—and in that case you accept self-determination of nations under a different name!!

§8. The author proclaims “Bolshevism on a West-European scale” (“not your position,” he adds).

I attach no importance to this desire to cling to the word “Bolshevism”, for I know such “old Bolsheviks” from whom God save us. I can only say that the author’s proclamation of “Bolshevism on a West-European scale” is, I am deeply convinced, neither Bolshevism nor Marxism, but a minor variant of the same old Economism.

In my view it is highly intolerable, flippant and non-Party to proclaim for a whole year the new Bolshevism and leave things at that. Is it not time to think matters out and give the comrades an articulate and integrated expose of “Bolshevism on a West-European scale”?

The author has not proved and will not prove the difference between colonies and oppressed nations in Europe (as applied to the question under discussion).

The Dutch and the P.S.D. rejection of self-determination is not only, and even not so much, the result of confusion, for Gorter factually accepts it, and so does the Zimmerwald statement of the Poles, but rather the result of the special position of their

nations (small nations with centuries-old traditions and pretensions to Great-Power status).

It is extremely thoughtless and naive to take over and mechanically and uncritically repeat what in others has developed over decades of struggle against the nationalist bourgeoisie and its deception of the people. Here we have a case of people taking over precisely what should not be taken over.

Lenin

Reply to P. Kievsky (Y. Pyatakov)

August-September 1916

Proletarskaya Revolutsia No. 7 (90), 1929

Collected Works, Volume 23, pages 22-27.

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

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

One such form of oppression or repression of human thinking caused by the war is the contemptuous attitude of imperialist Economism towards democracy. P. Kievsky does not notice that running like a red thread through all his arguments is this war-inspired oppression, this fear, this refusal to analyse. What point is there in discussing defence of the fatherland when we are in the midst of such a terrible holocaust? What point is there in discussing nations' rights when outright strangulation is everywhere the rule? Self-determination and "independence"

of nations—but look what they have done to “independent” Greece! What is the use of talking and thinking of “rights”, when rights are every where being trampled upon in the interests of the militarists! What sense is there in talking and thinking of a republic, when there is absolutely no difference whatsoever between the most democratic republics and the most reactionary monarchies, when the war has obliterated every trace of difference!

Kievsky is very angry when told that he has given way to fear, to the extent of rejecting democracy in general. He is angry and objects: I am not against democracy, only against one democratic demand, which I consider “bad”. But though Kievsky is offended, and though he “assures” us (and himself as well, perhaps) that he is not at all “against” democracy, his arguments—or, more correctly, the endless errors in his arguments—prove the very opposite.

Defence of the fatherland is a lie in an imperialist war, but not in a democratic and revolutionary war. All talk of “rights” seems absurd during a war, because every war replaces rights by direct and outright violence. But that should not lead us to forget that history has known in the past (and very likely will know, must know, in the future) wars (democratic and revolutionary wars) which, while replacing every kind of “right”, every kind of democracy, by violence during the war, nevertheless, in their social content and implications, served the cause of democracy, and consequently socialism. The example of Greece, it would seem, “refutes” all national self-determination. But if you stop to think, analyse and weigh matters, and do not allow yourself to be deafened by the sound of words or frightened and oppressed by the nightmarish

impressions of the war, then this example is no more serious or convincing than ridiculing the republican system because the “democratic” republics, the most democratic—not only France, but also the United States, Portugal and Switzerland—have already introduced or are introducing, in the course of this war, exactly the same kind of militarist arbitrariness that exists in Russia.

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

That is all one trend of thought, one and the same theoretical and practical political error Kievsky unwittingly makes at every step. He thinks he is arguing only against self-determination, he wants to argue only against self-determination, [sic] but the result—against his will and conscience, and that is the curious thing!—is that he has adduced not a single argument which could not be just as well applied to democracy in general!

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

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

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

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

Capitalism in general, and imperialism in particular, turn democracy into an illusion—though at the same time capitalism engenders democratic aspirations in the masses, creates democratic institutions, aggravates the antagonism between imperialism’s denial of democracy and the mass striving for democracy. Capitalism and imperialism can be overthrown only by economic revolution. They cannot be overthrown by

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

It is in these "contradictions" that Kievsky, having forgotten the Marxist teaching on democracy, got himself confused. Figuratively speaking, the war has so oppressed his thinking that he uses the agitational slogan "break out of imperialism" to replace all thinking, just as the cry "get out of the colonies" is

used to replace analysis of what, properly speaking, is the meaning—economically and politically—of the civilised nations “getting out of the colonies”.

The Marxist solution of the problem of democracy is for the proletariat to utilise all democratic institutions and aspirations in its class struggle against the bourgeoisie in order to prepare for its overthrow and assure its own victory. Such utilisation is no easy task. To the Economists, Tolstoyans, etc., it often seems an unpardonable concession to “bourgeois” and opportunist views, just as to Kievsky defence of national self-determination “in the epoch of finance capital” seems an unpardonable concession to bourgeois views. Marxism teaches us that to “fight opportunism” by renouncing utilisation of the democratic institutions created and distorted by the bourgeoisie of the given, capitalist, society is to completely surrender to opportunism!

The slogan of civil war for socialism indicates the quickest way out of the imperialist war and links our struggle against the war with our struggle against opportunism. It is the only slogan that correctly takes into account both war-time peculiarities—the war is dragging out and threatening to grow into a whole “epoch” of war—and the general character of our activities as distinct from opportunism with its pacifism, legalism and adaptation to one’s “own” bourgeoisie. In addition, civil war against the bourgeoisie is a democratically organised and democratically conducted war of the propertyless mass against the propertied minority. But civil war, like every other, must inevitably replace rights by violence. However, violence in the name of the interests and rights of the majority is of a different nature: it tramples on the “rights” of the exploiters, the

bourgeoisie, it is unachievable without democratic organisation of the army and the "rear". Civil war forcibly expropriates, immediately and first of all, the banks, factories, railways, the big estates, etc. But in order to expropriate all this, we shall have to introduce election of all officials and officers by the people, completely merge the army conducting the war against the bourgeoisie with the mass of the population, completely democratise administration of the food supply, the production and distribution of food, etc. The object of civil war is to seize the banks, factories, etc., destroy all possibility of resistance by the bourgeoisie, destroy its armed forces. But that aim cannot be achieved either in its purely military, or economic, or political aspects, unless we, during the war, simultaneously introduce and extend democracy among our armed forces and in our "rear". We tell the masses now (and they instinctively feel that we are right): "They are deceiving you in making you fight for imperialist capitalism in a war disguised by the great slogans of democracy. You must, you shall wage a genuinely democratic war against the bourgeoisie for the achievement of genuine democracy and socialism." The present war unites and "merges" nations into coalitions by means of violence and financial dependence. In our civil war against the bourgeoisie, we shall unite and merge the nations not by the force of the ruble, not by the force of the truncheon, not by violence, but by voluntary agreement and solidarity of the working people against the exploiters. For the bourgeoisie the proclamation of equal rights for all nations has become a deception. For us it will be the truth that will facilitate and accelerate the winning over of all nations. Without effectively organised democratic relations between nations—and, consequently, without freedom of secession—civil war of the workers and working

people generally of all nations against the bourgeoisie is impossible.

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

Lenin

To: N. I. BUKHARIN, 1916

Collected Works, Volume 43, pages 575-579a.

14.X. 1916

Dear N. I.,

As regards the “ill-fated” article, as you call it, you argue very strangely, really, or rather you don’t argue at all, but get excited and skip your arguments. Now just look, really—from a distance—what you make of it:

“... I simply have a feeling (!) that it is not a matter (!) of points of accusation (!), but ‘generally’...”.

This is what you write, word for word!! How can one argue like this? It amounts to stopping the mouth of every person who wants to argue and discuss. The Editorial Board’s letter gives precise indications and formulations of the differences, but you work yourself up: feeling, accusation, generally....

You read a lecture “on the same subject”, and none of the O.C. writers “so much as mentioned anarchism”.

But again—is that an argument? There is nothing about anarchism in the Editorial Board’s letter either. What exactly you said at the lecture cannot be established. That the O.C. writers are foolish—is a fact. But you add: “I gave it to them hot on other points”....

“Opportunism is fear of what the liquidationist-yellow Maria Alexeyevna [Potresov] will say.”

Pretty strong. Yes. But it's wide of the mark! For I maintain that Potresov here is right against Bazarov.

(1) Is this correct or not? You do not go into it.—(2) Is it a bad thing for the yellows to be right against the errors of our people? You disposed of the issue by the use of strong language. It works out that it is you who “fear” to give thought to the significance of Potresov’s being right against Bazarov!

“...You cannot impute to me denial of the struggle for democracy....” I impute to you a number of mistakes on this question and point out exactly which. But you avoid the issue.

You formulate three “statements”, alleged to be “absolutely indisputable and orthodoxically Marxist”, to which the first chapter “could be reduced”.

But these statements are so general that they are still a long way off from concreteness; (2nd and most important of all) it is not what the article says!!

“Neither Gr. nor you even attempt to tell me where the heresy is.”

Pardon me, this is untrue. This is stated most precisely in the Editorial Board’s letter, but you do not answer the things we said and pointed out. Not a sound in reply to any of our numerous and precise remarks!!

One of our remarks: you break off quotations from Marx and Engels in a way that misrenders the sense or makes for inexact conclusions. You answer only on this point, and how do you answer? That “I know the continuation (of the quotations) perfectly well”. “But on the points in question they had views which are not liable to misinterpretation.”

And that's that!! It would be funny were it not so sad. "Misinterpretation" is just what we write about precisely; without examining a single argument or producing a single quotation (I compared them purposely; I did not write you for nothing; I compared more than one quotation!), you dismiss the matter: "not liable to misinterpretation". The blame rests fully upon you — instead of a discussion of differences, you wave the matter away.

No one accused you either of "heresy" or of "anarchism" in this connection, but we wrote: "let it mature". These are "two big differences". You not only do not answer our remarks, but you read a different meaning into them. You can't do that!

"The article has been lying a long time...." Now this is backdated caviling. We corresponded with Gr. on this for a long time, as we had other articles to attend to. You had not fixed any dates yet, and no one could know of your possible departure. This is just caviling.

As for "chucking out" and polemic in a non-break tone, I must say that I have not yet entered into polemic with you in the press, but exchanged letters with you before any polemic and in order to avoid it. That's a fact. Facts are stubborn things. You can't beat facts by gossip. My answer to P. Kievsky is for the press (not to you, but to P. Kievsky) and we grant him a privilege we have never granted anyone before: we send the article to him first for his "agreement". (Unfortunately, the copyist fell ill in the middle of the work: that is why we haven't got the article yet, and you probably won't see it before your departure; but we have the mail with America, and P. Kievsky will probably forward it on to you. We cannot take it from, this copyist and give it to another, because he is in a different town;

we have no other one in view; he is hard up, and we cannot deprive him of even these tiny earnings promised him beforehand.)

P. Kievsky's article is very bad and he's hopelessly muddled (generally on the question of democracy).

That we always thought highly of you and spent months, many months, corresponding in detail and pointing out since the spring of 1915 that on the question of a minimum programme and democracy you were vacillating—you are aware. I would sincerely be pleased if we had a polemic only with P. Kievsky, who started it, and if our differences with you were ironed out. To achieve this, however, it is necessary that you should go into the questions at issue carefully and attentively, and not wave them away.

I am very, very pleased that we both see eye to eye against "disarmament". I was also very glad to make the acquaintance of Franz: he must have had some good work done on him in the way of Bolshevik propaganda; no small credit for this is probably due to you. The man tries to go deep into things and promises well.

I am enclosing the certificate. Correspondence with America can be conducted only through Scandinavia: otherwise everything gets lost; the French censorship is brazen.

Regarding America. I wrote a number of letters there in 1915: all were confiscated by the accursed French and British censors.

I would very much like

(1) To have the manifesto of the Zimmerwald Left published there in English.

(2) Ditto—our pamphlet on the war (revised for the new edition).

(3) To arrange, if possible, for the most important publications and pamphlets of the Socialist Party and the Socialist Labour Party (I have only the Appeal to Reason) to be sent gratis to the C.C.

(4) Cahan, editor of a Jewish New York newspaper, visited me in Cracow in 1912 and promised me, among other things, to send publications of official economic statistics of the United States (these publications are given out to newspaper offices free of charge there), saying that his paper had such a huge forwarding office that this would be no trouble. He did not keep his promise. If you meet him, put out feelers as to whether it is hopeless or not.

(5) It would be a good thing to form a small group of Russian Bolsheviks and Lettish Bolsheviks capable of following interesting literature, sending it, writing about it, translating and printing what we send from here, and in general discussing together and “pushing” all kinds of questions about the III International and about the “Left” in the international socialist movement.

If a couple of Bolsheviks were actively linked with a couple of Letts possessing a good knowledge of English, then the thing might work.

(6) Generally, give special attention to the Letts. Try in particular to see Berzin. He can probably be traced through Strahdneks.

(7) At the end of 1914 or in 1915 I received from America a leaflet of the Socialist Propaganda League with a profession de foi in the spirit of the Zimmerwald Left. I am enclosing their address. I sent them a long letter in English. Probably went astray? I shall try and find the copy and send it to you, if you think it worthwhile on inquiry. I also wrote to the Letts about the League through Strahdneks: must have gone astray too.

(8) There should be a base in America for work against the English bourgeoisie, which has carried the censorship to crazy lengths. This to § 5.

(9) Try and answer us without delay, if only by a couple of lines in a postcard, so that we can make an attempt to establish proper contact with America; and give us notice (1-1 1/2, months) beforehand of the date of your return.

Lenin

LETTERS ON TACTICS

April 8 and 13 (21 and 26), 1917

Collected Works, Vol. 24, pp. 42-54.

First Letter

ASSESSMENT OF THE PRESENT SITUATION

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

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

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

Both in my first Letter from Afar ("The First Stage of the First Revolution") published in Pravda Nos. 14 and 15, March 21 and 22, 1917, and in my theses, I define "the specific feature of the present situation in Russia" as a period of transition from the first stage of the revolution to the second. I therefore considered the basic slogan, the "task of the day" at this moment to be:

"Workers, you have performed miracles of proletarian heroism, the heroism of the people, in the civil war against tsarism. You must perform miracles of organisation, organisation of the proletariat and of the whole people, to prepare the way for your victory in the second stage of the revolution" (Pravda No. 15)

What, then, is the first stage?

It is the passing of state power to the bourgeoisie.

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

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

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

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

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

My answer is: The Bolshevik slogans and ideas on the whole have been confirmed by history; but concretely things have

worked out differently; they are more original, more peculiar, more variegated than anyone could have expected.

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

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

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

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

The person who now speaks only of a "revolutionary-democratic dictatorship of the proletariat and the peasantry" is

behind the times, consequently, he has in effect gone over to the petty bourgeoisie against the proletarian class struggle; that person should be consigned to the archive of "Bolshevik" pre-revolutionary antiques (it may be called the archive of "old Bolsheviks").

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

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

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

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

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

peasantry, which is voluntarily ceding power to the bourgeoisie, voluntarily making itself an appendage of the bourgeoisie.

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

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

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

This is how the old Bolsheviki often argue.

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

And the reality reveals the fact that freely elected soldiers' and peasants' deputies are freely joining the second, parallel

government, and are freely supplementing, developing and completing it. And, just as freely, they are surrendering power to the bourgeoisie -- a fact which does not in the least "contravene" the theory of Marxism, for we have always known and repeatedly pointed out that the bourgeoisie maintains itself in power not only by force but also by virtue of the lack of class-consciousness and organisation, the routinism and downtrodden state of the masses.

In view of this present-day reality, it is simply ridiculous to turn one's back on the fact and talk about "possibilities".

Possibly the peasantry may seize all the land and all the power. Far from forgetting this possibility, far from confining myself to the present, I definitely and clearly formulate the agrarian programme, taking into account the new phenomenon, i.e., the deeper cleavage between the agricultural labourers and the poor peasants on the one hand, and the peasant proprietors on the other.

But there is also another possibility; it is possible that the peasants will take the advice of the petty-bourgeois party of the Socialist-Revolutionaries, which has yielded to the influence of the bourgeoisie, has adopted a defencist stand, and which advises waiting for the Constituent Assembly, although not even the date of its convocation has yet been fixed.

It is possible that the peasants will maintain and prolong their deal with the bourgeoisie, a deal which they have now concluded through the Soviets of Workers' and Soldiers' Deputies not only in form, but in fact.

Many things are possible. It would be a great mistake to forget the agrarian movement and the agrarian programme. But

it would be no less a mistake to forget the reality, which reveals the fact that an agreement, or -- to use a more exact, less legal, but more class-economic term -- class collaboration exists between the bourgeoisie and the peasantry.

When this fact ceases to be a fact, when the peasantry separates from the bourgeoisie, seizes the land and power despite the bourgeoisie, that will be a new stage in the bourgeois-democratic revolution; and that matter will be dealt with separately.

* Lest my words be misinterpreted, I shall say at once that I am positively in favour of the Soviets of Agricultural Labourers and Peasants immediately taking over all the land, but they should themselves observe the strictest order and discipline, not permit the slightest damage to machines, structures, or livestock, and in no case disorganise agriculture and grain production, but rather develop them, for the soldiers need twice as much bread, and the people must not be allowed to starve.

A Marxist who, in view of the possibility of such a future stage, were to forget his duties in the present, when the peasantry is in agreement with the bourgeoisie, would turn petty bourgeois. For he would in practice be preaching to the proletariat confidence in the petty bourgeoisie ("this petty bourgeoisie, this peasantry, must separate from the bourgeoisie while the bourgeois-democratic revolution is still on"). Because of the "possibility" of so pleasing and sweet a future, in which the peasantry would not be the tail of the bourgeoisie, in which the Socialist-Revolutionaries, the Chkheidzes, Tseretelis, and Steklovs would not be an appendage of the bourgeois government -- because of the "possibility" of so pleasing a future, he would be forgetting the unpleasant present, in which

the peasantry still forms the tail of the bourgeoisie, and in which the Socialist-Revolutionaries and Social-Democrats have not yet given up their role as an appendage of the bourgeois government, as "His Majesty" Lvov's Opposition.

This hypothetical person would resemble a sweetish Louis Blanc, or a sugary Kautskyite, but certainly not a revolutionary Marxist.

But are we not in danger of falling into subjectivism, of wanting to arrive at the socialist revolution by "skipping" the bourgeois-democratic revolution -- which is not yet completed and has not yet exhausted the peasant movement?

I might be incurring this danger if I said: "No Tsar, but a workers' government." But I did not say that, I said something else. I said that there can be no government (barring a bourgeois government) in Russia other than that of the Soviets of Workers', Agricultural Labourers'; Soldiers', and Peasants' Deputies. I said that power in Russia now can pass from Guchkov and Lvov only to these Soviets. And in these Soviets, as it happens, it is the peasants, the soldiers, i.e., petty bourgeoisie, who preponderate, to use a scientific, Marxist term, a class characterisation, and not a common, man-in-the-street, professional characterisation.

In my theses, I absolutely ensured myself against skipping over the peasant movement, which has not outlived itself, or the petty-bourgeois movement in general, against any playing at "seizure of power" by a workers' government, against any kind of Blanquist adventurism; for I pointedly referred to the experience of the Paris Commune. And this experience, as we know, and as Marx proved at length in 1871 and Engels in 1891,

absolutely excludes Blanquism, absolutely ensures the direct, immediate and unquestionable rule of the majority and the activity of the masses only to the extent that the majority itself acts consciously.

In the theses, I very definitely reduced the question to one of a struggle for influence within the Soviets of Workers', Agricultural Labourers', Peasants', and Soldiers' Deputies. To leave no shadow of doubt on this score, I twice emphasised in the theses the need for patient and persistent "explanatory" work "adapted to the practical needs of the masses".

Ignorant persons or renegades from Marxism, like Mr. Plekhanov, may shout about anarchism, Blanquism, and so forth. But those who want to think and learn cannot fail to understand that Blanquism means the seizure of power by a minority, whereas the Soviets are admittedly the direct and immediate organisation of the majority of the people. Work confined to a struggle for influence within these Soviets cannot, simply cannot, stray into the swamp of Blanquism. Nor can it stray into the swamp of anarchism, for anarchism denies the need for a state and state power in the period of transition from the rule of the bourgeoisie to the rule of the proletariat, whereas I, with a precision that precludes any possibility of misinterpretation, advocate the need for a state in this period, although, in accordance with Marx and the lessons of the Paris Commune, I advocate not the usual parliamentary bourgeois state, but a state without a standing army, without a police opposed to the people, without an officialdom placed above the people.

When Mr. Plekhanov, in his newspaper *Yedinstvo*, shouts with all his might that this is anarchism, he is merely giving

further proof of his break with Marxism. Challenged by me in Pravda (No. 26) to tell us what Marx and Engels taught on the subject in 1871, 1872 and 1875, Mr. Plekhanov can only preserve silence on the question at issue and shout out abuse after the manner of the enraged bourgeoisie.

Mr. Plekhanov, the ex-Marxist, has absolutely failed to understand the Marxist doctrine of the state. Incidentally, the germs of this lack of understanding are also to be found in his German pamphlet on anarchism.

Now let us see how Comrade Y. Kamenev, in Pravda No. 27, formulates his "disagreements" with my theses and with the views expressed above. This will help us to grasp them more clearly.

"As for Comrade Lenin's general scheme," writes Comrade Kamenev, "it appears to us unacceptable, inasmuch as it proceeds from the assumption that the bourgeois-democratic revolution is completed and builds on the immediate transformation of this revolution into a socialist revolution."

There are two big mistakes here.

First. The question of "completion" of the bourgeois-democratic revolution is stated wrongly. The question is put in an abstract, simple, so to speak one-colour, way, which does not correspond to the objective reality. To put the question this way, to ask now "whether the bourgeois-democratic revolution is completed" and say no more, is to prevent oneself from seeing the exceedingly complex reality, which is at least two-coloured. This is in theory. In practice, it means surrendering helplessly to petty-bourgeois revolutionism.

Indeed, reality shows us both the passing of power into the hands of the bourgeoisie (a "completed" bourgeois-democratic revolution of the usual type) and, side by side with the real government, the existence of a parallel government which represents the "revolutionary-democratic dictatorship of the proletariat and the peasantry". This "second government" has itself ceded the power to the bourgeoisie, has chained itself to the bourgeois government.

Is this reality covered by Comrade Kamenev's old Bolshevik formula, which says that "the bourgeois-democratic revolution is not completed"?

It is not. The formula is obsolete. It is no good at all. It is dead. And it is no use trying to revive it.

Second. A practical question. Who knows whether it is still possible at present for a special "revolutionary-democratic dictatorship of the proletariat and the peasantry", detached from the bourgeois government, to emerge in Russia? Marxist tactics cannot be based on the unknown.

But if this is still possible, then there is one, and only one, way towards it, namely, an immediate, resolute, and irrevocable separation of the proletarian Communist elements from the petty-bourgeois elements.

Why?

Because the entire petty bourgeoisie has, not by chance but of necessity, turned towards chauvinism (= defencism), towards "support" of the bourgeoisie, towards dependence on it, towards the fear of having to do without it, etc., etc.

How can the petty bourgeoisie be "pushed" into power, if even now it can take the power, but does not want to ?

This can be done only by separating the proletarian, the Communist, party, by waging a proletarian class struggle free from the timidity of those petty bourgeois. Only the consolidation of the proletarians who are free from the influence of the petty bourgeoisie in deed and not only in word can make the ground so hot under the feet of the petty bourgeoisie that it will be obliged under certain circumstances to take the power; it is even within the bounds of possibility that Guchkov and Milyukov -- again under certain circumstances -- will be for giving full and sole power to Chkheidze, Tsereteli, the S.R.s, and Steklov, since, after all, these are "defencists".

To separate the proletarian elements of the Soviets (i.e., the proletarian, Communist, party) from the petty-bourgeois elements right now, immediately and irrevocably, is to give correct expression to the interests of the movement in either of two possible events: in the event that Russia will yet experience a special "dictatorship of the proletariat and the peasantry" independent of the bourgeoisie, and in the event that the petty bourgeoisie will not be able to tear itself away from the bourgeoisie and will oscillate eternally (that is, until socialism is established) between us and it.

To be guided in one's activities merely by the simple formula, "the bourgeois-democratic revolution is not completed", is like taking it upon oneself to guarantee that the petty bourgeoisie is definitely capable of being independent of the bourgeoisie. To do so is to throw oneself at the given moment on the mercy of the petty bourgeoisie.

Incidentally, in connection with the "formula" of the dictatorship of the proletariat and the peasantry, it is worth mentioning that, in *Two Tactics* (July 1905), I made a point of emphasising (*Twelve Years*, p. 435) this:

"Like everything else in the world, the revolutionary democratic dictatorship of the proletariat and the peasantry has a past and a future. Its past is autocracy, serfdom, monarchy, and privilege. . . . Its future is the struggle against private property, the struggle of the wage-worker against the employer, the struggle for socialism. . . ."

Comrade Kamenev's mistake is that even in 1917 he sees only the past of the revolutionary-democratic dictatorship of the proletariat and the peasantry. As a matter of fact its future has already begun, for the interests and policies of the wage-worker and the petty proprietor have actually diverged already, even in such an important question as that of "defencism", that of the attitude towards the imperialist war.

This brings me to the second mistake in Comrade Kamenev's argument quoted above. He criticises me, saying that my scheme "builds" on "the immediate transformation of this [bourgeois-democratic] revolution into a socialist revolution".

This is incorrect. I not only do not "build" on the "immediate transformation" of our revolution into a socialist one, but I actually warn against it, when in Thesis No. 8, I state: "It is not our immediate task to 'introduce' socialism. . . ."

Is it not clear that no person who builds on the immediate transformation of our revolution into a socialist revolution could be opposed to the immediate task of introducing socialism?

Moreover, even a "commune state" (i.e., a state organised along the lines of the Paris Commune) cannot be introduced in Russia "immediately", because to do that it would be necessary for the majority of the deputies in all (or in most) Soviets to clearly recognise all the erroneousness and harm of the tactics and policy pursued by the S.R.s, Chkheidze, Tsereteli, Steklov, etc. As for me, I declared unmistakably that in this respect I "build" only on "patient" explaining (does one have to be patient to bring about a change which can be effected "immediately"?).

Comrade Kamenev has somewhat overreached himself in his eagerness and has repeated the bourgeois prejudice about the Paris Commune having wanted to introduce socialism "immediately". This is not so. The Commune, unfortunately, was too slow in introducing socialism. The real essence of the Commune is not where the bourgeois usually looks for it, but in the creation of a state of a special type. Such a state has already arisen in Russia, it is the Soviets of Workers' and Soldiers' Deputies!

Comrade Kamenev has not pondered on the fact, the significance, of the existing Soviets, their identity, in point of type and socio-political character, with the commune state, and instead of studying the fact, he began to talk about something I was supposed to be "building" on for the "immediate" future. The result is, unfortunately, a repetition of the method used by many bourgeois: from the question as to what are the Soviets, whether they are of a higher type than a parliamentary republic, whether they are more useful for the people, more democratic, more convenient for the struggle, for combating, for instance, the grain shortage, etc. -- from this real, urgent, vital issue, attention is diverted to the empty, would-be scientific, but

actually hollow, professorially dead question of "building on an immediate transformation".

An idle question falsely presented. I "build" only on this, exclusively on this -- that the workers, soldiers and peasants will deal better than the officials, better than the police, with the difficult practical, problems of producing more grain, distributing it better and keeping the soldiers better supplied, etc., etc.

I am deeply convinced that the Soviets will make the independent activity of the masses a reality more quickly and effectively than will a parliamentary republic (I shall compare the two types of state in greater detail in another letter) They will more effectively, more practically and more correctly decide what steps can be taken towards socialism and how these steps should be taken. Control over a bank, the merging of all banks into one, is not yet socialism, but it is a step towards socialism. Today such steps are being taken in Germany by the Junkers and the bourgeoisie against the people. Tomorrow the Soviet will be able to take these steps more effectively for the benefit of the people if the whole state power is in its hands.

What compels such steps?

Famine. Economic disorganisation. Imminent collapse. The horrors of war. The horrors of the wounds inflicted on mankind by the war.

Comrade Kamenev concludes his article with the remark that "in a broad discussion he hopes to carry his point of view, which is the only possible one for revolutionary Social-Democracy if it wishes to and should remain to the very end the party of the

revolutionary masses of the proletariat and not turn into a group of Communist propagandists".

It seems to me that these words betray a completely erroneous estimate of the situation. Comrade Kamenev contraposes to a "party of the masses" a "group of propagandists". But the "masses" have now succumbed to the craze of "revolutionary" defencism. Is it not more becoming for internationalists at this moment to show that they can resist "mass" intoxication rather than to "wish to remain" with the masses, i.e., to succumb to the general epidemic? Have we not seen how in all the belligerent countries of Europe the chauvinists tried to justify themselves on the grounds that they wished to "remain with the masses"? Must we not be able to remain for a time in the minority against the "mass" intoxication? Is it not the work of the propagandists at the present moment that forms the key point for disentangling the proletarian line from the defencist and petty-bourgeois "mass" intoxication? It was this fusion of the masses, proletarian and non-proletarian, regardless of class differences within the masses, that formed one of the conditions for the defencist epidemic. To speak contemptuously of a "group of propagandists" advocating a proletarian line does not seem to be very becoming.

Lenin

No Compromises?

April–May 1920

Lenin, *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 consider themselves Marxists, and want to be Marxists, forget the fundamental truths of Marxism. This is what Engels—who, like Marx, was one of those rarest of authors whose every sentence in every one of their 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).

"Can a class-conscious worker forget the democratic struggle for the sake of the socialist struggle, or forget the latter for the sake of the former? No, a class-conscious worker calls himself a Social-Democrat for the reason that he understands the relation between the two struggles. He knows that there is no other road to socialism save the road through democracy, through political liberty. "